

The purpose of the RREC is to translate the Functional Requirements into a set of questions or prompts that identify application-specific records management requirements at the business process improvement stage of system development. Once identified, the records management requirements can be addressed through appropriate technology, management and policy strategies. The goal is to seamlessly integrate the capture of these requirements into business process analysis. In addition to identifying records management requirements, the tool categorizes the requirements into Legal, Regulatory, Best Practices and Agency Policy and Practices. During the process of developing the RREC, another categorization of the requirements emerged. It became clear that records management requirements should be viewed at three levels: Business Process, Record and Systems. The resulting structure of the RREC became a matrix with the questions associated with the various levels represented in the rows, and the categorization of the requirement as legal, regulatory, best practices or agency policies and practices as the columns. The Business Process Level set of questions is shown in the table on the following page.

The Business Process Level section of the RREC is intended for use during business process improvement activities. It focuses on records management requirements at the sub-task level as defined in the note in the table. Its purpose is to identify records management requirements for each sub-task and, further, to identify the category of the requirement - whether it is required by law, regulation, best practices in the field or is based on agency policy or practice. This designation facilitates the distinction between requirements that must be incorporated into a new system (without changes in legislation or regulation) versus those that could potentially be eliminated. It also aids in the identification of laws or regulations that could be considered for change to support radical re-engineering of a business process. With respect to overall process improvement, the questions also facilitate the identification of those sub-tasks that provide no value to the overall transaction. For example, if the record does not get modified during the sub-task, or if the modification is not required by law, regulation or professional best practices, the sub-task may be a candidate for elimination or modification.

Separate sets of questions have also been developed for record and system level requirements. The record level requirements focus on short- and long-term primary and secondary uses of the record and parts thereof. They also capture any requirements associated with the structure of a record and the authorization of responsibility for the creation of and modifications to a record. These requirements speak to internal agency or organizational uses of the records as well as external uses and include questions geared to identify the need for mechanisms to ensure efficient access to records. The system level requirements are more directly linked to the technology solutions and the capabilities of technology in meeting records management requirements, including migration to other systems.

The RREC was developed to meet several criteria. The first, and most obvious, criteria is that the tool aid in the effective and comprehensive capture of records management requirements. The second is that the tool can be seamlessly integrated into business process and system design activities. In other words, the tool was crafted such that its use is not a separate activity over and above those typically conducted in process improvement or information system design.

Preliminary Testing of the Business Process Level RREC at the New York State Adirondack Park Agency

The products developed during the Models for Action project are being tested and evaluated in the context of a practical application at the New York State Adirondack Park Agency (APA). APA was selected based on its business need to integrate information from a variety of formats in the creation of a record of a transaction. In particular, APA's land use permit process was selected based on the need to integrate information from a geographic information system (GIS), relational database, paper maps in a variety of sizes, legal documents, as well as a variety of others in order to create a record of a transaction. The agency is currently in the process of evaluating a network-based solution to replace its current predominately paper-based system. The goal of system implementation is to increase staff productivity and decrease customer turnaround time.

To date, only the Business Process Level portion of the RREC has been tested. This portion of the RREC was used and evaluated during a two-day business process improvement workshop conducted with agency staff. The workshop was preceded by a series of staff interviews which resulted in a preliminary model of the land-use permit process. During the first day of the workshop, the preliminary process model was revised by the group and sub-tasks were identified. The questions indicated in the table above were then applied to each of the various sub-tasks.

Overall, the results of the test with the APA were extremely positive. The information gathered through the use of

the tool was considered to be highly relevant to both records management issues and the examination of the process improvement alternatives. For example, many instances of proofs of authenticity were identified and categorized as legal, regulatory or agency policy and practice. This information will inform system developers that electronic alternatives to these proofs of authenticity will have to be implemented or redundant paper systems will have to be maintained. The tool also supported the identification of sub-tasks that could potentially be eliminated or shifted to other sub-tasks. The tool, therefore, greatly assisted in identifying areas for process improvement.

The tool was very easily and seamlessly integrated into the business process improvement activities. It never appeared as though there was a shift in focus from the process to records management requirements. In many cases, the questions from the tool brought to the forefront details about the sub-tasks that would not otherwise have been captured. The questions contained in the RREC were readily understood by the workshop participants. It is important to note that the ease of use of the tool, particularly ease with respect to the ability to answer the questions, is highly dependent upon appropriate participation. In other words, in order to identify whether a requirement falls under the legal, regulatory or another category, the individuals brought together to answer the questions must have this knowledge. In many cases, participation in these process improvement efforts will have to be expanded to include individuals who are not only familiar with the business process, but also those who have a knowledge about the laws and regulations that influence the business process and associated records management requirements. The workshop at APA had this type of participation and this contributed greatly to the success of the activity.