

In 1999, then Pennsylvania Governor, Tom Ridge, launched a number of strategies that focused on technology as enabler of improved government effectiveness, efficiency and service provision (i.e., public value).⁽¹⁾ As one result, the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania (the Commonwealth), launched a large project to implement a new, fully integrated business information system using Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) software as the key enabler. In this initiative, the Commonwealth set out to redesign core business processes for five administrative functions (accounting, budgeting, human resources, payroll, and procurement) and to transition them from legacy systems into the new ERP (see Figure 2):

Figure 2. Key Government Functions Impacted by ERP Implementation

The ERP implementation project was named **Imagine PA** as a signal to:

- Encourage Commonwealth employees to imagine how different the workplace could be if they had the technological tools to perform their jobs better, and
- to invite all Pennsylvanians to imagine interacting with a world-class customer-focused state government that, provides excellent services over the Internet.

These two goals capture the project's focus on communicating value not only to citizens but also to government workers – a key stakeholder group whose support and active involvement in the project were critical to its success.

Between early 2001 and mid-2004, the ERP implementation for the five business functions was completed for 53 Commonwealth agencies including all 49 of the agencies under the Governor's jurisdiction. In July 2004, as a result of the successful implementation, the Imagine PA *project* began its transition to the ongoing Integrated Enterprise System (IES) *program*. This transition from a *project* to *program* was a very explicit and pragmatic strategy for the Commonwealth. Imagine PA was a high-visibility change project with start and end dates, dedicated funding, assigned organizational roles and responsibilities, and a project management office charged with design and implementation of both new technology and new business process standards. In contrast, the IES program is responsible for continuous and now institutionalized sustainment of the existing infrastructure and functionality of the initial ERP implementation project as well as the managed improvement and growth of the IES enterprise. The transition from project to program signaled new funding approaches, modified organizational roles and responsibilities, and an overarching program strategy to maintain existing enterprise capabilities and while creating new features and enhancements through multiple improvement projects.

From the beginning, Imagine PA was much more than a technology project. The ERP implementation continued through three gubernatorial administrations with consistent top level executive support; eventually putting in place the technical infrastructure and enterprise standards for core administrative functions with improved public value. Immediate returns in the form of improved government operations were realized soon after implementation and continue today. This infrastructure also provides the Commonwealth with capability that can be further leveraged to support additional improvements in government operations that go well beyond direct improvements in core administrative functions.

The Commonwealth has begun such efforts. The IES infrastructure provides public returns in the form of direct improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of core administrative functions. This infrastructure also provides the basis for improvements in the back office operations of other service areas which in turn offer improved services to the public. The Commonwealth has recently taken steps to move in this direction by implementing the necessary institutional structures and policies to take fuller advantage of this enterprise-level asset.

(1) For more background information on the IES program see <http://www.ies.state.pa.us/imaginepa/cwp/view.asp?A=6&Q=58215>.