



Innovations

...an OCTO strategic focus area creating rapid, streamlined paths for enhancement and scaling

Key Benefits

- Helps strategically fulfill mission capabilities and gaps
- Spreads costs of Research & Development through MHS Innovation Alliance partnerships/members
- Lowers the costs of research by starting with reuse (when applicable)
- Increases research outcomes through architectures
- Increases visibility into risks and benefits of R&D projects
- Fosters and expands creativity down to the lowest level of inventors



Implementing and managing a comprehensive Innovations program throughout the MHS enterprise requires a high level of collaboration between stakeholders

Although innovation is happening both in and around the Military Health System (MHS) today, exposure and adoption is not always occurring uniformly. Efficiently leveraging decentralized innovation remains difficult and two or more approaches to the same problem are often pursued in tandem by different organizations. As a result, in the fall of 2010 the Office of the Chief Technology Officer (OCTO) was assigned responsibility to develop and execute a coordinated innovation portfolio and management process.

Through a series of strategic activities, this focus area will strive to develop a coordinated innovation management process to identify, research, develop, test, and evaluate innovative solutions that benefit the MHS enterprise.

The objective of an innovation lifecycle process is to discover capabilities and solutions in any phase of maturity, validate their functional relevancy and technical feasibility, and create rapid, streamlined paths of enhancement and/or scaling to achieve MHS requirements and portfolio acceptance while improving their ability to assimilate IT innovation into the organization and ensuring that programmatic elements such as funding, time, and other key resources are set aside for the organization to implement the innovation.

The OCTO's strategic initiative was created in direct support of the MHS IM/IT Strategic Plan, Goal 8 (Innovative Technologies), including its supporting objectives that aim to:

- Obj. 8.1: Establish an Innovation Lifecycle Management process that aligns IT innovation with MHS strategy and converts innovations into practice
- Obj. 8.2: Establish the policy, organization, structure, process, funding mechanisms, and metrics for Innovation Lifecycle Management
- Obj. 8.3: Develop and manage a process for defining, identifying, creating, and leveraging "Centers of Excellence (CoE)" for IM/IT development





KEY ACTIVITIES

Innovation, a process and construct that reinforces controlled development and application of useful enterprise capabilities, will help the MHS to provide cutting edge, value-add capabilities for consideration as enterprise assets. This strategic initiative is focused on establishing or improving the: (1) Strategy and Intent, (2) Processes and Practices, (3) Culture and People, (4) Organization and Infrastructure, (5) Partnerships and Open Innovation, and (6) Innovating How We Innovate. In order to accomplish this initiative, the OCTO has outlined the following key activities:

Activity #1: Develop and Implement MHS Innovation Alliance Charter (UNDERWAY)

In 2011, the OCTO completed the initial draft of the MHS Innovations Alliance Charter and is currently socializing the draft document with leadership. The Charter is centered closely on connecting the MHS and Service organizations as a business-to-business (B2B) "alliance" guided by agreements and charters. The intent of the Alliance is to lead and execute activities required to sustain early discovery of Health Information Technology (HIT) Research and Development (R&D) initiatives that contain attributed or significant capabilities needed by the operational environments of the MHS.

Activity #2: Establish and Adopt Criteria for Evaluating Innovation Candidates (COMPLETE)

In June 2011, the OCTO created a Use/Reuse Readiness Levels (URRLs) Guide that serves as a tool for assessing and quantifying a technology "asset" readiness for use or reuse based on concepts of functional relevancy and technical feasibility to achieve the given business goals of the MHS.

Activity #3: Create Reference Catalog of Current Needs and Available Solutions (UNDERWAY)

In support of this activity, the OCTO has established criteria for evaluating innovation candidates and has also developed a preliminary method/tool to collect such ideas from the community. Once approved, a "Call for Innovations" will be conducted and based on information collected, the OCTO will develop a catalog of what is desired (needs) versus what is offered (candidates). This catalog of "needs" will be used as a quick reference guide during discovery activities to scope initiatives for suitability and will also be used to communicate what HIT innovations are available for consideration as well as their maturity for consumption or further development.

Activity #4: Establish the Policy, Organization, Structure, Process, Funding mechanisms, and Metrics for Innovation Lifecycle Management (UNDERWAY)

In September 2011, the OCTO updated stakeholders on the progress of the Innovations Program during the OCTO's inaugural Strategic Collaboration Summit. Completed or ongoing innovation activities include: development of a revised Program Management Plan, drafting of the Alliance charter, development of the URRL guide, and creation of an innovation intake form. Such documents are currently under review with leadership and will be socialized amongst Alliance peers. The OCTO is also currently coordinating the Alliance's first business to business relationship between two DoD organizations.

Activity #5: Establish Processes for Migrating Innovation Projects to the Enterprise (UNDERWAY)

Leveraging work completed in other activities, the OCTO has developed a preliminary Self-Assessment Procedure Intake Form that creates a standard methodology for Innovators to document and share their ideas, while also classifying the concepts, capabilities, and maturity levels. This activity will ultimately involve establishing and/or leveraging a web tool that will allow internal and external organizations to submit new, innovative ideas for enterprise adoption. All submissions will be reviewed and graded based upon the Innovation Governance and Compliance Process (IGCP) process.

Activity #6: Conduct Call for Innovations

The "Call for Innovations" marks a milestone for full deployment of the Innovations program within the MHS and is heavily dependent on the completion of the other strategic innovation activities. This focus area supports an objective of the MHS IM/IT Strategic Plan Goal 8 (Innovative Technologies) which aims to establish an Innovation Lifecycle Management process that aligns IT innovation with MHS strategy and converts innovations into practice.

