

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY EXCEPTION REQUEST

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1. PURPOSE

This Agency Directive establishes the policy and processes for the submission and approval of Information Technology (IT) exceptions for the Marketing and Regulatory Programs (MRP) and its agencies, Agricultural Marketing Service (AMS), Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS).

2. SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS AND REPLACEMENT HIGHLIGHTS

- a. This Agency Directive supersedes APHIS 3130.1 APHIS Information Technology (IT) Exception Request Process, dated 4/29/2013.

The principal changes include the following:

- (1) Modifications and inclusion of both AMS and APHIS personnel.

- (2) Incorporating the Technology Review Board (TRB) and the Customer Relationship Branch.
- b. This Agency Directive is in force until canceled or superseded.

3. BACKGROUND

There are many United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), MRP, AMS, and APHIS policies which mandate specific technical configurations for IT operating systems, platforms, equipment, devices, and environments. Occasionally, if justified, an exception must be granted to a specific mandated configuration. Examples of reasons for such exceptions include budgetary inability to implement the required configuration; inability to implement the required configuration by the established deadline; inapplicability of the required configuration to the existing environment; and inability to implement the configuration due to technical or business process breakage.

4. ACRONYMS/ABBREVIATIONS

- a. ACIO – Associate Chief Information Officer
- b. AMS – Agriculture Marketing Service
- c. APHIS – Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service
- d. IT – Information Technology
- e. MRP – Marketing and Regulatory Programs
- f. MRP IT – Marketing and Regulatory Programs Information Technology
- g. TRB – Technology Review Board

5. SCOPE

- a. This Agency Directive applies to all AMS and APHIS employees and contractors.
- b. In general, exceptions to mandated policies and configurations can only be granted by the organization who issued the source regulation; therefore, the scope of this policy is limited to those situations where MRP, AMS and APHIS has the authority to grant exceptions.

- c. This Agency Directive does not apply to classified automated information systems. Refer to applicable Departmental regulations pertaining to classified automated information systems.

6. POLICY

- a. A request for exception must be approved by the TRB and the Office of the MRP IT ACIO prior to implementation in the AMS and APHIS production IT environment.
- b. A request for exception must be submitted in writing (may be electronic via email or automated system, if one exists).
- c. A request for software/hardware exception must be submitted through the approved TRB process and may include the following mandatory (*) and optional fields to the request:
 - (1) * Name (Software/Hardware)
 - (2) * Vendor
 - (3) * Link to product
 - (4) Requested for date (When do you need this by?)
 - (5) * Platform (Workstation/Server/Both)
 - (6) * Installation type (Full Installation/Product Update)
 - (7) Software Version
 - (8) * Path (If the software has been downloaded, what is the network path? If the software has not been downloaded, what is the specific URL where it can be downloaded.)
 - (9) * System Requirements (Additional Software or Required OS Version)
 - (10) Approximate Distribution Scope (Ex: More than 200 users/Less than 200 users)
 - (11) Testing URL
 - (12) * Business POC
 - (13) Technical POC 1
 - (14) Technical POC 2

- (15) * Previously Approved (Yes/No)
- (16) * License Required (Yes/No)
- (17) * Retain Previous Version (Yes/No/Unknown)
- (18) * Are you requesting a waiver to install the software while approval is pending? (Yes/No) If Yes! Why can't software installation wait for an approval decision? (If the software request is denied, the software will need to be removed even if a waiver has been approved.)
- (19) * Virtual Desktop Interface Application (Yes/No/Unknown)
- (20) Impact (User/ Multiple Users/ Site/Department/Enterprise)
- (21) * Prog/Org
- (22) * Submitted for
- (23) Priority (Low/Moderate/High/Critical/Planning)
- (24) Duration (Permanent/Temporary). If temporary, specify an Exception end date.
- (25) Business Case. The request must document the justification for the exception and the impact of granting versus not granting the request. The justification must include the business reasons that show a nonstandard option is in the best interest of the Agency for cyber security, technology development, and expense reduction. If insufficient funding is the reason for the exception, the requester must provide details about the failed attempts to procure funding to help the MRP IT ACIO decide whether to seek funding from another source rather than grant the exception on grounds of insufficient funding.
- (26) Risk of performing. The request must include a statement of security impact if the request is approved.
- (27) Risk of not performing.
- (28) Total cost
- (29) Cost Impact/Explanation. The request must include a statement of the cost impact of approving the exception. If increased cost is indicated, the request must include an estimate of the increased cost and must identify the funding source for the increased cost.

7. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The implementation of the policy and procedures as established by this Agency Directive requires the responsibilities of the following individuals and/or groups:

- a. The MRP IT ACIO will:
 - (1) Approve and ensure implementation of this directive.
 - (2) Approve any modifications to this directive.
 - (3) Review and approve/deny all requests for exception.
- b. Deputy Administrators/Directors of Program Units will:
 - (1) Disseminate this directive to their respective staffs.
 - (2) Ensure that the terms of this directive are followed within their Program.
- c. MRP IT Customer Relationship Branch will review and submit requests for exception on behalf of their respective customers and submit them for review by the TRB Chair through the approved TRB process for processing and final review and approval/denial by the Office of the MRP IT ACIO.
- d. MRP IT Chair, Technology Review Board will:
 - (1) Will facilitate a process to review exceptions with the TRB for recommending a final decision to the MRP IT ACIO.
 - (2) Maintain records of all requests for exception.
 - (3) Maintain this directive, including receiving requests for, and executing, modifications in response to change requests and/or new requirements.
- e. All MRP employees will:
 - (1) Comply with the terms of this directive.
 - (2) Refrain from procuring and/or implementing excepted configurations until formal approval is received in conformance with the terms of this directive.

8. RECORDS MANAGEMENT

Federal records created by this Agency Directive must be maintained in accordance with the established [General Records Schedule \(GRS\)](#) and/or the [AMS/APHIS](#) Records Management Handbook when applicable. If employees are named in an active litigation hold, Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) request, and/or other action, those records, regardless of media, must be preserved and maintained in their native format until otherwise notified by your Agency Records Officer and/or the Office of General Counsel.

- a. MRP-IT, Information Management Branch (IMB) is the official record keeper of this Agency Directive, which is to be preserved permanently, per [Paperwork and Data Management \(PDM\) 4-1](#).
- b. ITD Records Liaison, is the official record keeper of exemption requests via written or email, which will be destroyed 5 years after date received, in accordance with GRS, General Technology Management Records, 3.1, item 001, or AMS/APHIS Records Handbook.

9. INQUIRIES AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

- a. Address inquiries concerning this Agency Directive to the APHIS Technical Assistance Center (ATAC) at 1-800-944-8457 or via email to help@usda.gov.
- b. Records management inquiries should be directed to your Program Records Management Liaison for [AMS/APHIS](#).
- c. This Agency Directive can be accessed online via the [AMS/APHIS](#) Issuance Web site(s).

/s/

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