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## Proposed Commonwealth Governance Framework for Data and Data Exchange Standards

**Proposed Effective Date:** TBD

**Proposed Review Schedule:** TBD

### Purpose

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This Governance Framework establishes an approach to governance applied to the use of standards by Commonwealth agencies that will support and ensure interoperability between state agencies and between state agencies and external entities (including local government entities).

### Definitions

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**Standard:** Specific and, where applicable, technical documents containing directives and mandatory specifications governing the management, development, and use of information technology resources. (COV ITRM STANDARD GOV2000-01.1)

**Standards Development Organization (SDO):** “a domestic or international organization that plans, develops, establishes, or coordinates voluntary consensus standards using procedures that incorporate the attributes of openness, balance of interests, due process, an appeals process, and consensus in a manner consistent with the Office of Management and Budget Circular Number A–119, as revised February 10, 1998.” (Article I, Public Law 108–237).

**External Standard:** As used in this document, defined and maintained by an SDO to improve the ability to share electronic data and ensure semantic interoperability. Generally may apply to services, documents, vocabularies (i.e., reference terminologies) and/or messages. Includes extending (e.g., adding data elements or codes to) an existing external standard to accommodate requirements specific to the Commonwealth.

**Internal Standard:** As used in this document, defined by one or more Commonwealth agencies where external standards do not exist and the internal standard has been approved by the Secretary of Technology.

**State Agency:** Any Executive Branch agency or state institution of higher education.

**External Partner:** Any non-state agency or entity that shares or exchanges information with one or more state agencies (e.g., federal government agency, local government department, private sector company, non-profit organization).

**Data Owner:** Defines, manages and controls the use of data and ensures compliance with adopted standards within an Agency. The Agency Head or designee designates the Agency Data Owner(s) for the functional/subject areas within their jurisdictional control or authority and ensures adequate resources for

# DRAFT

Agency Data Owners to develop and maintain their respective functional/subject areas in support of the Commonwealth's Data Management Program.

**Data Steward:** Assigned by an agency to represent the agency's interagency data needs and ensure that proposed standards meets those needs. The Agency Data Steward works on behalf of their Agency Data Owner. The data steward should have a broad understanding of the agency's data, be able to research data usage, and be empowered to obtain agreement from data owners and speak authoritatively for the agency.

## Statement of Policy

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To ensure semantic interoperability within state government and between state government and external partners, the Commonwealth will adopt or adapt and implement external standards and implementation guides. Internal standards and implementation guides will only be developed when no applicable external standards exist. Pursuant to §2.2-225 of the Code of Virginia, the Secretary of Technology will and must approve the adoption and definition of all standards for electronic information exchange.

## Roles

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### The Secretary of Technology (SoTech):

- As recommended by the Chief Information Officer and in consultation with the relevant Cabinet Secretary(ies), approves the adoption of internal and external standards, including the scope of applicability and a timeline for adoption and implementation by Agencies.
- As recommended by the Chief Information Officer, considers and approves or denies requests from state agencies for modifications to a standard, the scope of applicability and the timeline for adoption and implementation by Agencies.

### The Relevant Cabinet Secretary(ies):

- Recommends the adoption of relevant internal and external standards before final approval by SoTech.
- Ensures timely implementation by state agencies within the Secretariat(s).
- In collaboration with SoTech, considers and recommends disposition of requests for modifications to the standards, the scope of applicability and the timeline for adoption and implementation by state agencies.

### The Chief Information Officer for the Commonwealth (CIO):

- Recommends adoption of any proposed internal or external standard to the Secretary of Technology (SoTech). The recommendation will include a statement of the scope of applicability of the external standard and a timeline for adoption and implementation by Agencies.

## DRAFT

The **Office of Health IT**: Consistent with Executive Order 95 (2009) (see [Executive Order 95\(2009\)](#)), serves as the central point of contact for health care providers and payers on data and data exchange standards.

The **Virginia Information Technologies Agency (VITA)**:

- Coordinates and oversees the consideration and adoption of external standards and approval of internal standards and their corresponding implementation guides and specifications.
- Develops and maintains a central searchable standards repository. The Standards Repository will contain information about each standard approved for adoption (including applicability and version) along with corresponding implementation guides and specifications.
- Monitors development of external standards by SDOs and ensures that each external standard adopted by the Commonwealth reflects the most current version promulgated by the relevant SDO.
- Reviews each standard listed in the Standards Repository at least once every three months to ensure that the standard as listed is current, accurate and complete.
- Within the Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) Center of Excellence, maintains a list of implemented services and messages and the standards and versions they support.
- Oversees the implementation of internal and external standards including the development of schedules for implementation for each standard and regular reporting on the status of implementation to applicable advisory Committees and Commissions, the CIO, SoTech and relevant Cabinet Secretaries. This includes oversight to ensure that Agencies remain in compliance over time as SDOs update or extend external standards.
- Develops and implements a process to review and approve technical architectures for new projects to ensure compliance with standards published in the Standards Repository.
- Receives requests from state agencies for exceptions to the published standards, reviews and evaluates these requests and makes recommendations for disposition of each request to the CIO, SoTech and relevant Cabinet Secretaries.
- Ensures that external standards are employed wherever possible and minimizes the use of customized internal standards.
- Develops and implements a process to catalog and review current information exchanges, identifies candidate exchanges requiring modification to comply with standards published in the Standards Repository and recommends related investments to the CIO, SoTech and other Cabinet Secretaries.
- Develops specific procedures for the implementation of this governance framework.

**State Agencies:**

- May propose new standards, both internal and external, to VITA.

## DRAFT

- Implement standards in accordance with the timeline for adoption and implementation approved by SoTech.
- Make regular (as prescribed by VITA) reports on the progress of implementation to VITA.
- Assist VITA in researching external standards and in developing standards narratives and other related documentation.
- Designate Data Owners and Data Stewards and provide the support they need to perform their duties as Owners and Stewards.
- May request changes (additions, deletions, modifications) to standards for consideration by VITA, the CIO, SoTech and relevant Cabinet Secretaries.
- May request modifications to implementation schedules for consideration by VITA, the CIO, SoTech and relevant Cabinet Secretaries.

**Data Owner:** Defines, manages and controls the use of data within their organizations.

**Data Steward:** Represents the agency's interagency data needs and ensures that proposed standards meet those needs. The Agency Data Steward works on behalf of the Agency Data Owner. The data steward should have a broad understanding of the agency's data, be able to research data usage, and be empowered to obtain agreement from data owners and speak authoritatively for the agency.

**Advisory Committees and Commissions:** Advise VITA, the CIO, Cabinet Secretaries and SoTech on the adoption and implementation of external standards. The Health Information Technologies Standards Advisory Committee (HITSAC) will advise on the adoption and implementation of standards (internal and external) related to health data.

## Procedures

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### New External Standard and Associated Implementation Guides

- Step 1. A state agency, Advisory Committee or Commission will identify an external standard as a candidate for adoption and implementation by the Commonwealth and proposes the external standard to VITA.
- Step 2. VITA will research the proposed external standard, identify the scope of potential applicability and convene a discussion with state agencies that may be affected by adoption of the proposed standard.
- Step 3. Based on the discussion with potentially affected state agencies, VITA will determine that the proposed standard is or is not a standard the Commonwealth should adopt. If the decision is the former, subsequent steps apply. If the decision is the latter, no further action will be taken

## DRAFT

on the proposal except to inform the entity proposing the standard of the negative decision, the reason for the decision and any alternatives available to the proposing agency.

- Step 4. VITA will prepare a draft standards narrative describing the standard, the scope of applicability to state agencies, the availability of the standard (i.e., identify the SDO and any requirements for obtaining a license to use the standard and standard documentation) and a high-level implementation schedule for state agencies.
- Step 5. VITA will circulate the draft standards narrative to and solicit feedback from the standard stakeholders including the entity proposing the standard, potentially affected state agencies and any Advisory Committee or Commission with a role in the domain represented by the proposed standard (e.g., HITSAC for health-related standards).
- Step 6. VITA will work with the stakeholders to accommodate requests for modifications to the narrative; however, VITA will have the final responsibility for preparing the draft narrative for presentation to the CIO.
- Step 7. Within 30 days of the initial receipt of a request, VITA will post the draft for public comment on VITA's Online Review and Comment Application (ORCA).
- Step 8. After a 30-day public comment period, VITA will work with the stakeholders to resolve any public comment, notify those submitting comments on the disposition of their comments and prepare a final draft.
- Step 9. Within 60 days of the close of the public comment period, VITA will present it to the CIO for consideration.
- Step 10. The CIO may recommend adoption of the proposed external standard to the SoTech and may consult with the Information Technology Advisory Council (ITAC). The CIO's recommendation will, at a minimum, include a statement of the scope of applicability of the external standard and a timeline for adoption and implementation by state agencies.
- Step 11. SoTech will consult with relevant Cabinet Secretaries and may consult with ITAC on the adoption and implementation of the proposed external standard.
- Step 12. Cabinet Secretaries will recommend the adoption of relevant external standards before final approval by SoTech and will be responsible for ensuring timely implementation by Agencies within their purview.
- Step 13. SoTech will approve the adoption of the external standard, including the scope of applicability and a timeline for adoption and implementation by Agencies.
- Step 14. VITA will publish the approved external standard in the Commonwealth Standards Repository.

# DRAFT

## New Internal Standard and Associated Implementation Guide

- Step 1. A state agency will identify the need for an internal standard and proposes the development of a standard to VITA.
- Step 2. VITA will research the proposal, identify any external standards that may apply and work with the proposing state agency to determine whether an internal standard is required or an external standard may be used or adapted. Based on the research, there are three possible outcomes:
  - Outcome 1: VITA decides that an existing external standard is more appropriate. The development and approval process will follow the procedure outlined in the section titled **New External Standard and Associated Implementation Guides** (above).
  - Outcome 2: VITA determines that an internal standard is required; subsequent steps apply.
  - Outcome 3: VITA determines that no standard is needed or required. No further action will be taken on the proposal except to inform the state agency proposing the standard of the negative decision, the reason for the decision and any alternatives available to the proposing agency.
- Step 3. In collaboration with the proposing state agency, VITA will convene a discussion with all potentially affected state agencies, or, if all state agencies are potentially affected, a representative group of state agencies. The discussion will focus on the business need for a standard and the role each state agency will play in the development and implementation of the proposed standard.
- Step 4. VITA will work with the proposing state agency and other willing stakeholders to develop a draft standards narrative and other supporting documents as required by the published Data Standardization Process. The draft standards narrative will, at a minimum, describe the standard, the scope of applicability to state agencies, and a high-level implementation schedule for state agencies.
- Step 5. VITA will circulate the draft standards narrative to and solicit feedback from the standard stakeholders including the entity proposing the standard, potentially affected state agencies and any Advisory Committee or Commission with a role in the domain represented by the proposed standard (e.g., HITSAC for health-related standards).
- Step 6. VITA will work with the stakeholders to accommodate requests for modifications to the narrative; however, VITA will have the final responsibility for preparing the draft narrative for presentation to the CIO.
- Step 7. Within 60 days of the initial receipt of a request, VITA will post the draft for public comment on ORCA.

## DRAFT

- Step 8. After the 30-day public comment period, VITA will work with the stakeholders to resolve any public comment, notify those submitting comments on the disposition of their comments and prepare a final draft.
- Step 9. Within 60 days of the close of the public comment period, VITA will present it to the CIO for consideration.
- Step 10. The CIO may recommend adoption of the proposed standard to the SoTech and may consult with ITAC. The CIO's recommendation will, at a minimum, include a statement of the scope of applicability of the external standard and a timeline for adoption and implementation by state agencies.
- Step 11. SoTech will consult with relevant Cabinet Secretaries and may consult with ITAC on the adoption and implementation of the proposed internal standard.
- Step 12. Cabinet Secretaries will recommend the adoption of relevant internal standards before final approval by SoTech and will be responsible for ensuring timely implementation by Agencies within their purview.
- Step 13. SoTech will approve the adoption of the internal standard, including the scope of applicability and a timeline for adoption and implementation by Agencies.
- Step 14. VITA will publish the approved internal standard in the Commonwealth Standards Repository.

### Exception Requests

- Step 1. State agencies may submit exception requests (e.g., exemption from the standard, delay in implementation) to VITA.
- Step 2. Within 30 days, VITA will review the request and consult with the state agency making the request and other stakeholders.
- Step 3. VITA will prepare a recommendation and submit it to the CIO with all due haste.
- Step 4. The CIO will review VITA's recommendation and make a recommendation to SoTech.
- Step 5. SoTech will consult with the relevant Cabinet Secretaries, who will then jointly approve or deny each exception request.

### Changes Required to Related Documents

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Data Strategy: update to reflect distinction between internal and external standards.

Data Standardization Process: update to reflect distinction between internal and external standards.

# DRAFT

Enterprise Architecture Policy (EA 200-01): update to reflect policy statement regarding the preference for external standards, where they exist.

Enterprise Technical Architecture (ETA) Information Domain Report: update to reflect new requirements for external standards.

Enterprise Technical Architecture (ETA) Integration Domain Report: update to reflect new requirements for external standards.

## Authority

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### § 2.2-200. Appointment of Governor's Secretaries; general powers; severance. ...

C. Unless the Governor expressly reserves such power to himself and except as provided in Article 5 (§ [2.2-208](#) et seq.) of this chapter, each Secretary may: ...

3. Hold agency heads accountable for their administrative, fiscal and program actions in the conduct of the respective powers and duties of the agencies;

4. Direct the development of goals, objectives, policies and plans that are necessary to the effective and efficient operation of government; ...

E. As used in this chapter, "Governor's Secretaries" means the Secretary of Administration, the Secretary of Agriculture and Forestry, the Secretary of Commerce and Trade, the Secretary of Education, the Secretary of Finance, the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, the Secretary of Natural Resources, the Secretary of Public Safety, the Secretary of Technology, and the Secretary of Transportation.

### § 2.2-225. Position established; agencies for which responsible; additional powers.

The position of Secretary of Technology (the Secretary) is created. ...

Unless the Governor expressly reserves such power to himself, the Secretary may, with regard to strategy development, planning and budgeting for technology programs in the Commonwealth: ...

12. Review and approve statewide technical and data standards for information technology and related systems, including the utilization of nationally recognized technical and data standards for health information technology systems or software purchased by a state agency of the Commonwealth, as recommended by the CIO. ...

### § 2.2-2007. Powers of the CIO.

A. In addition to such other duties as the Secretary may assign, the CIO shall: ...

# DRAFT

2. Direct the formulation and promulgation of policies, guidelines, standards, and specifications for the purchase, development, and maintenance of information technology for state agencies, including, but not limited to, those (i) required to support state and local government exchange, acquisition, storage, use, sharing, and distribution of geographic or base map data and related technologies, (ii) concerned with the development of electronic transactions including the use of electronic signatures as provided in § [59.1-496](#), and (iii) necessary to support a unified approach to information technology across the totality of state government, thereby assuring that the citizens and businesses of the Commonwealth receive the greatest possible security, value, and convenience from investments made in technology. ...

12. Develop and recommend to the Secretary statewide technical and data standards for information technology and related systems, including the utilization of nationally recognized technical and data standards for health information technology systems or software purchased by a state agency of the Commonwealth. ...

## § 2.2-2010. Additional powers of VITA.

VITA shall have the following additional powers which, with the approval of the CIO, may be exercised by a division of VITA with respect to matters assigned to that division:

1. Prescribe regulations necessary or incidental to the performance of duties or execution of powers conferred under this chapter. ...
4. Develop and adopt policies, standards, and guidelines for managing information technology by state agencies and institutions. ...
6. Direct the establishment of statewide standards for the efficient exchange of electronic information and technology, including infrastructure, between the public and private sectors in the Commonwealth.
8. Develop statewide technical and data standards for information technology and related systems to promote efficiency and uniformity. ...

## § 2.2-2699.6. Powers and duties of the ITAC.

The ITAC shall have the power and duty to: ...

3. Advise the CIO on strategies, standards, and priorities for the use of information technology for state agencies in the executive branch of state government; ...
5. Advise the CIO on statewide technical and data standards for information technology and related systems, including the utilization of nationally recognized technical and data standards for health information technology systems or software purchased by a state agency of the Commonwealth; ...

## § 2.2-2699.7. Health Information Technology Standards Advisory Committee.

## DRAFT

The ITAC may appoint an advisory committee of persons with expertise in health care and information technology to advise the ITAC on the utilization of nationally recognized technical and data standards for health information technology systems or software pursuant to subdivision 5 of § [2.2-2699.6](#). The ITAC, in consultation with the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, may appoint up to five persons to serve on the advisory committee. Members appointed to the advisory committee shall serve without compensation, but shall be reimbursed for all reasonable and necessary expenses incurred in the performance of their duties as provided in § [2.2-2825](#). The CIO, the Secretary of Technology, and the Secretary of Health and Human Resources, or their designees, may also serve on the advisory committee.

### § 55-66.14. Uniform standards.

1. In consultation with the circuit court clerks, the Executive Secretary of the Supreme Court, and interested citizens and businesses, the Virginia Information Technology Agency shall develop standards to implement electronic recording of real property documents. The Agency shall consider standards and practices of other jurisdictions; the most recent standards promulgated by national standard-setting bodies, such as the Property Records Industry Association; views of interested persons and other governmental entities; and needs of localities of varying sizes, population, and resources.