NIEM ENGAGEMENT PROCESS

CORE CAPABILITIES:

Characteristics that contribute to value realization

VERSION 2.0

⟨NIEM⟩

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1. Document Overview

1.1 Purpose

As organizations' needs, interest and adoption of NIEM continue to register growth across the federal, state, local, tribal, territorial, international and private sectors, there is a need for the NIEM Program Management Office (PMO), in collaboration with these organizations, to clearly and explicitly define the critical elements necessary for successful NIEM adoption. In order to identify all the critical elements, the following fundamental question should be answered: What does it take to adopt NIEM within an organization and make information sharing and exchange part of everyday business?

The intent of this document is to establish a common awareness of the characteristics that are necessary for the successful adoption of NIEM. It forms the foundation of the NIEM Engagement Process (NEP) and influences the documents and tools as shown below:
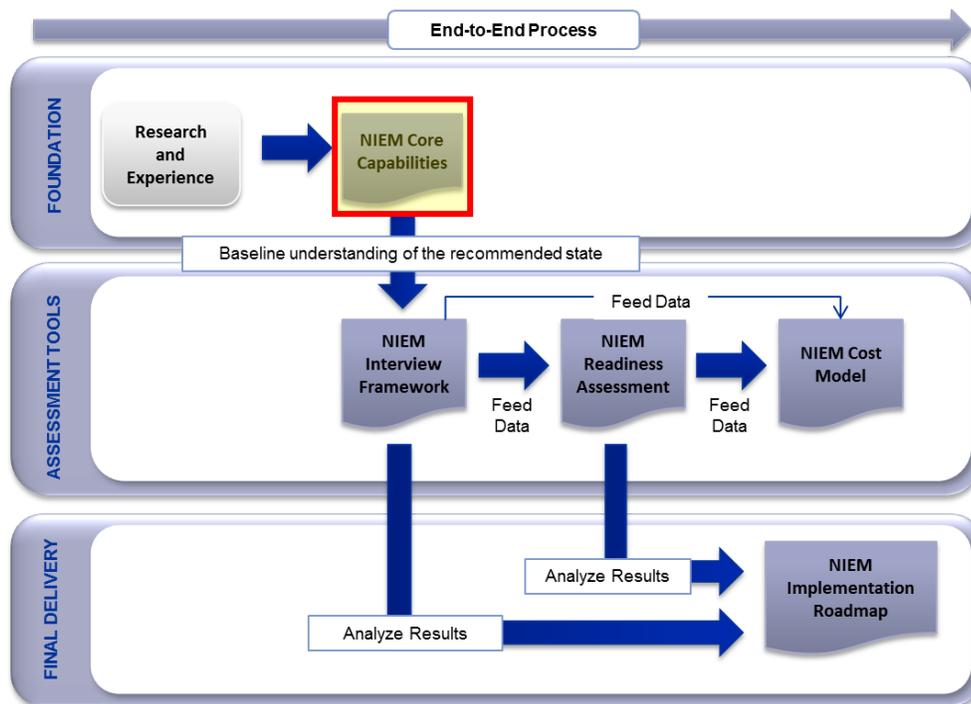
1.2 Scope

This document covers various levels of engagement within an organization to identify the characteristics that contribute to the value realization of NIEM. It is intended to target the specific level of interest in NIEM through key indicators. The three levels of an organization are detailed in the diagram below:

1.3   Target Audience

This document is intended for the following audience:

- Person(s) who want to gain a better understanding of NIEM readiness and adoption.
- Members of an organization or agency participating in the NEP.

1.4   Key Terms

Below are definitions for key terms and phrases used in this document:

Key Terms and Phrases	Definition
NIEM Adoption	The successful implementation of NIEM technical, functional and communication strategies **as applicable** to a program or organization.
Core Capabilities	Four key areas that are foundational to information sharing and exchange and facilitate successful NIEM adoption.
Indicator	A characteristic of a core capability that defines key aspects to consider for information sharing and exchange activities within an organization.

2. Core Capabilities

To successfully adopt NIEM and implement information sharing and exchange initiatives within an organization, there are four core capabilities that an organization should focus on as they define, develop and implement their adoption strategy:

1. Business Need
2. Stakeholder Community
3. Planning Process
4. Technical Capabilities

Each of these capabilities is comprised of indicators that are defined in the following four sub-sections.

2.1. Business Need

 The business need of an organization can be defined as its information sharing imperative. An organization's awareness of its current state of information sharing, understanding of the need for change, and a common agreement as to the desired end state are necessary to determine if NIEM can help to achieve information sharing and exchange goals and objectives.

ID	Indicator
1.1	**Vision:** A clear understanding of the organization's information sharing objectives that is shared across all relevant stakeholders, both internal and external to that organization. The vision establishes the overarching purpose of the initiative.
1.2	**Value:** A shared understanding of the benefits of the information sharing activities to the organization and relevant stakeholders. This may include both qualitative and quantitative metrics that support the business case for the initiative.
1.3	**Policies and Standards:** Rules, memoranda or guidelines that govern or influence the information sharing and exchange activities of an organization. Existing policies and standards should be understood by stakeholders and considered as information sharing and exchange activities are conducted. This may include standards or guidelines developed internally to an organization or externally (domain specific). Examples include: • **Internal – Information Sharing Access Agreements** • **External – Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA**), Family Education and Privacy Act (FERPA).
1.4	**Strategic Priority Alignment:** The alignment of information sharing activities to an organization's mission objectives, funding priorities and desired organizational visibility.

2.2.   Stakeholder Community

Stakeholder community refers to the internal and external stakeholders involved in an information sharing and exchange initiative. Internal stakeholders may include program leadership, technical architects, business owners, project managers and implementers. External stakeholders may include information sharing partners and other organizations with a common mission interest. Establishing clear roles and responsibilities and engaging these stakeholders in an effective and timely manner will facilitate NIEM adoption.

ID	Indicator
2.1	**Executive Support:** Strong executive support demonstrates that there is political goodwill to foster the success of the initiative.
2.2	**Program Champion:** An established leader who can offer direction, coordination, and facilitation among the stakeholder groups in the information exchange initiative. Program champions help establish credibility and authority throughout the initiative, including conflict resolution.
2.3	**Personnel Skills and Training:** Availability of skilled personnel and accessibility of relevant training to support the information sharing and exchange initiative. Examples of personnel skills include: • Business – Project Planning skills, Communication skills, etc. • Technical – Service Oriented Architecture, XML development, Enterprise Architecture, etc. Examples of training include: • NIEM Technical Implementers Course • NIEM Business Owners Course, etc.
2.4	**Community Engagement and Ownership**: Information sharing partners and stakeholders may be involved in the initiative by providing feedback, input, and updates to the initiative as needed. A high degree of involvement shows that stakeholders are interested in the purpose and success of the initiative.
2.5	**Communication**: Regular communication between stakeholders and formalized structures for communication will increase stakeholder awareness of initiative activities and facilitate community engagement.
2.6	**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU)/Memorandum of Agreement (MOA):** A documented structure, scope, and purpose of the information sharing and exchange initiative. The MOA/MOU is a legally binding agreement that may include usage agreements, sharing agreements, and minimum security requirements.

2.3. Planning Process

The planning process for an information sharing and exchange initiative should address timelines, resource requirements, deliverables, and potential risks. An established plan for information sharing and exchange provides direction and enables coordination throughout the development and implementation of the initiative.

ID	Indicator
3.1	**Information Sharing and Exchange Initiative Definition:** A clear definition of the information sharing and exchange initiative that addresses requirements, resources and objectives that will help to carry out the initiative through all phases of implementation (e.g., a charter).
3.2	**Standards Adoption:** Selection and acceptance of a common standard to support the information sharing and exchange initiative. Effective and efficient information sharing is enabled by the use of standards.
3.3	**Risk Management:** A plan for identifying risks that could undermine the success of the information sharing and exchange initiative. Creating contingency plans and monitoring risks such as funding cuts, scope creep and staff turnover helps to enable continuity of operations.
3.4	**Sustainability:** Developing a plan that accounts for the human and financial resources needed to support and maintain the information sharing and exchange initiative beyond initial implementation. Long term vision and planning illustrates commitment to the initiative's success.
3.5	**Funding:** Adequate funding is needed to support development and continuation of the information sharing and exchange initiative.

2.4. Technical Capabilities

Technical capabilities refer to the current state and desired future state of an organization's information sharing and exchange infrastructure. An organization should first analyze its current technical landscape and ability to support information sharing and exchange before envisioning/planning for their desired future state. Having a clear understanding of the current and future states will enable an organization to determine the steps needed to achieve its desired information sharing and exchange capabilities.

ID	Indicator
4.1	**Impact Analysis:**
	An assessment of the effects that information sharing and exchange will have on the current system architecture. Additional research and analysis should be conducted to determine how to seamlessly transition to the future state of the system architecture.
4.2	**Target Architecture:**
	A conceptualization of the future state infrastructure supporting the information sharing and exchange initiative. Planning the hardware, software, and network requirements will allow for continuous operations, both during transition and execution.
4.3	**Standards Implementation:**
	Stakeholders have experience or relevant skills with information sharing and exchange standards and execution, particularly using NIEM.
4.4	**Data Storage:**
	The information sharing and exchange data should be stored and formatted in a repository where it can be queried to successfully execute the initiative.
4.5	**Data Access:**
	Stakeholders should be ready and willing to share their data, making it available and accessible to their approved information sharing and exchange partners.
4.6	**Data Transmission:**
	Stakeholders should research the appropriate data transmission method for their technical landscape. The transmission method should be selected based on stakeholders' information sharing and exchange needs and requirements.
4.7	**Privacy and Security:**
	A knowledge and understanding of the privacy laws and regulations surrounding the information sharing and exchange initiative. Adhering to privacy practices and protecting information against unauthorized access promotes continuous operations and confidence in the initiative.