WASHINGTON COURTS

Administrative Office of the Courts

Policy Recommendations on IT Governance Requests

November 17, 2010
Revised January 14, 2011

These questions came from the IT Governance Tabletop exercise on October 1, 2010 with the JISC. The questions are about the funding and review process for IT Governance Requests from the newly developed Governance framework that went into effect in August of 2010. The AOC agreed to provide feedback and recommendations for discussion for the JISC.

Funding/ Allocation

1. Does the JISC want to set a policy to designate a certain proportion of resources and funds for smaller projects (authorized by State Court Administrator/CIO)?

Review Process

2. On what cycle does JISC want to review requests – annually, quarterly or as they come in?

3. Does the JISC need to consider smaller change requests on a different cycle from larger strategic investment decisions?

4. At what point will the JISC choose not to re-prioritize the existing projects priority list for new projects coming in—after work has started on a project?

5. Does the JISC want to limit its review to requests that a CLUG ranks medium or low priority?

6. What additional information does the JISC need in order to make decisions? Possible information:

    - Potential cost savings as well as cost on each request, and cost savings to whom—state or local?
    - What are the potential non-technology costs—court staff, judges' time
    - Does the request require a change in law, court rule, or an exception to JISC principles or approved Enterprise Architecture?
    - Number of each type of resource available – to prioritize projects accordingly
    - Amount of funds remaining for the year

Funding/ Allocation

1. Does the JISC want to set a policy to designate a certain proportion of resources and funds for smaller projects (authorized by the State Court Administrator or CIO)?

Discussion/ Analysis

Currently, there is no budgetary distinction made between types or sizes of projects other than what is specified in the delegation matrix.

There are advantages and disadvantages to sorting the requests into different categories.

The benefits of this are:

- Provides a balance between requests of different sizes and types; ensures that not all the small projects get approved to the exclusion of doing larger projects and vice-versa.
- Enables some continual improvements throughout the cycle rather than one or a few at substantially longer intervals

The disadvantages of this are:

- Requires JISC/AOC Time: Fund allocations are estimated and the JISC will likely need to spend time re-estimating throughout the year.
- It may take several cycles to gain accuracy in the estimates.

The types of ITG Requests could be sorted into three main groups:

- Large Strategic Requests requiring a decision package
- JISC Standard Requests which are above the State Court Administrator / CIO delegation but not big enough to require a decision package
- State Court Administrator / CIO Requests

There should be an estimate for how much funding each one of these categories may need from the JIS fund. A large dollar strategic JISC investment defined as one that requires over a certain dollar amount, introduces a new service above the current AOC baseline, and/or has an expected duration of greater than one year.

The estimate for large strategic requests (those not funded by decision packages) should be estimated to include any strategic projects underway or planned. Initially, this could be targeted at a specific percentage of the JIS funding.

Currently, the ISD Transformation efforts are strategic and funded by JIS. The initiatives are multi-year, and offer new services above the baseline. They fall squarely into this JISC Strategic Projects Allocation category.

By example, the Superior Courts Management System Implementation (~$10M) is planned to be funded from a decision package submitted to the 11-13 biennium which hopefully triggers a legislative appropriation to do the work. In contrast, the Superior Courts Management *feasibility study* ($250K) was funded from JIS funding without an appropriation.

When AOC submits a decision package, we identify the fund account (general fund, JIS fund) that we want the funding to come out of. But the Legislature has the ability to change that. Most of the funding does come out of the JIS account.

AOC Recommendation

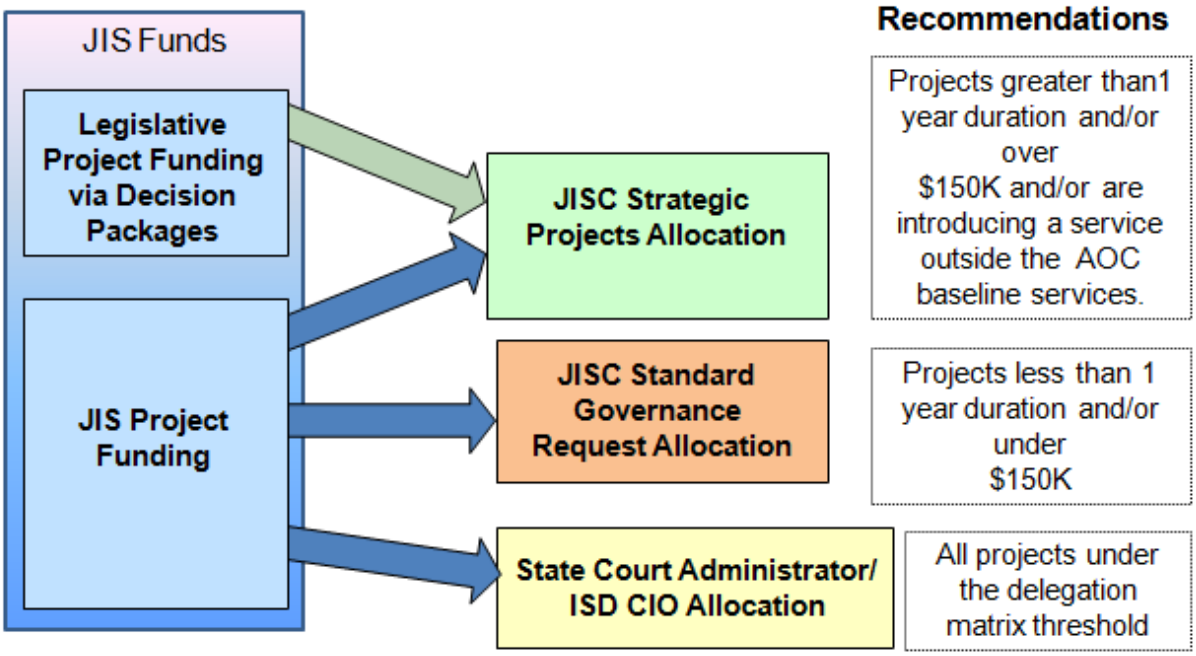
AOC recognizes the advantages for this idea and recommends for the budget allocations. This will address the need that projects have different resource needs and protect a certain level of funding for project size differences.

Recommendation 1
Sorting requests into categories will be helpful for allocation of funds. The categories should be based on size and type. They are:

- Legislative Funding via Decision Packages
- JISC Strategic Projects
- JISC Standard Requests
- AOC / CIO Authorized Requests

See the table below for funding source and criteria.

Recommended JISC Project Funding Breakdown



Recommendation 2
For the 2011 - 2013 budget AOC recommends:

- *set aside for the Administrator/CIO projects of $960,000*

  This assumes two requests approved per month under the State Court Administrator / CIO delegation matrix with an average $40,000 cost per request.

- *set aside for the Decision Packages of $10,030,222*

  This covers the pending decision package request for the Superior Court Case Management and Calendaring system.

The remaining balance (about $5.5M) will be allocated by the JISC for standard work that falls within their delegation matrix. This will have to cover continuing transformation work efforts and new ITG requests that fall within their delegated authority.

This assumes sufficient budget will be allocated by the current Legislature.

The allocation portions are to be tracked and reported every quarter with a true-up scheduled twice yearly.

This allocation of funds should begin with the FY 11-13 biennium when the funding levels are finalized for the JIS fund. This also coincides approximately with the one year point of using the governance framework.

JISC Review Discussion

To be scheduled for the next JISC meeting.

Review Process

2. On what cycle does JISC want to review requests – annually, quarterly or as they come in?

3. Does the JISC need to consider smaller change requests on a different cycle from larger strategic investment decisions?

Discussion/ Analysis

These two questions pertain to the review process and are related.

The current process is for the JISC and State Court Administrator/CIO to review requests when received.

The JISC review process is still in the formative stage. Only one request has come to the group as of November 2010. This, however, may not be the best approach from a planning perspective. At this point, only a few requests have made it through the entire governance process. As they arrive at the JISC or the State Court Administrator / CIO, the decision to approve them without knowing what other requests are on the way introduces a risk. Requests may be approved which appear to have a high priority simply because there are no others to compare them against.

The project review cycle can be linked to the size and nature of the request. The objective of doing that is to optimize the amount of work AOC can complete. In the spirit of the 'boulder, pebble, sand, water' analogy, the work should be an appropriate mix that balances the desire to complete large strategic projects against the need to implement routine, customer requested application changes and fixes.

Using the recommendation that projects should be stratified into four sets (JISC Legislative Decision Package Level; JISC Large Strategic; JISC-Other; and State Court Administrator / CIO) helps visualize a way to compare advantages and disadvantages. Different request sizes should be on a different review track.

	Project Size (Delegation Matrix		
Review Cycle	**Decision Package Level**	**JISC Standard Level**	**State Court Administrator/ CIO Level**
When received			
JISC Meeting (six annual meetings)			
Every other JISC Meeting (3X per year)			
Annually			

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JISC Level – Legislative Decision Package
These requests require much extensive planning and long lead times. When the decision is made to fund a request with a legislative decision package, work typically begins a full year before the approving legislature convenes. The funding is part of the JIS fund budget but because of the size of the investment requires a Legislative appropriation.

For these, it makes sense for the JISC to answer the question – is this the most effective strategy to invest in?

This question can be answered with an understanding of the AOC agency plan and portfolio information. The decision package proposal must be persuasive not only within the judiciary but at the broader statewide level. OFM and Legislative involvement requires this for approval.

AOC Recommendation
For these, an **annual cycle** is dictated. A planning cycle process similar to what is in place in larger agencies needs to be adopted. The process in general is:

- Submit requests for IT proposal through IT Governance portal by June
- Draft decision packages turned in to ITG by early July
- Finalize decision packages with IT Analysis by July
- AOC submits decision packages for Budget Committee review by August
- JISC Reviews by late August
- Supreme Court Budget Committee Review September/October
- Supreme Court En Banc approval by November.

See the attachment for timelines associated with this process.

JISC Level Investments (Standard Governance Request)

These requests require thought and planning. Since they are not funded by decision package, there is more flexibility in when and how they can be reviewed and approved. These can be reviewed either on an annual cycle, twice per year, or on a quarterly cycle. It is important to make sure that there are enough gathered together for meaningful review and proper allocation of resources over the near term time horizon. The other advantage of this is that they will complete faster than the others and resources for these will become available near the time they are reviewed.

AOC Recommendation

The JISC is not on a quarterly meeting cycle so that option is not viable

AOC Recommendation

AOC recommends

1) Requests be placed on the agenda for review and discussion as they arrive;
2) **Action** on the requests should be taken **every other JISC meeting or three times per year**. This means that there will be average two month stretch from receipt to review.

The JISC may of course use their discretion to approve or hold the requests over based on other requests, resource forecasts and other identified priorities. They may also change this schedule based on demand.

State Court Administrator / CIO Level

The State Court Administrator / CIO requests are by definition the smallest of the requests and should be reviewed as they arrive and checked to make sure they are within the specific approved allocation levels.

Overall, the objective of this recommendation is to provide the following benefits:

- Balance between requests of different sizes;
- Ensure that not all the small projects get approved to the exclusion of doing larger projects and vice-versa.
- Enables continual improvements throughout the cycle rather than one or a few at substantially longer intervals

There are disadvantage to consider. The disadvantages of this multi-level size based approach are:

- It will require JISC/AOC Time: Fund allocations are estimated and there will likely need to be re-estimates made throughout the year
- It may take several cycles to gain ability to accurately estimate and timing that works best
- There is no comprehensive long term strategy or planning to use as a budget allocation guide

AOC Recommendation Summary

Below is the summary of review cycle periods.

	Project Size (Delegation Matrix

Review Cycle	Decision Package Level	JISC Standard Level	State Court Administrator/ CIO Level
When received			✓
JISC Meeting (six annual meetings)			
Every other JISC Meeting (3X per year)		✓	
Annually	✓		

JISC Review Discussion

To be scheduled for the next JISC meeting.

3. At what point will the JISC choose not to re-prioritize the existing projects priority list for new projects coming in—after work has started on a project?

Discussion/ Analysis

On August 18th, 2010 the JISC adopted the JIS Policy on IT Governance. Within that policy under Section 7) expectations is the following:

j) The JISC will prioritize requests so that AOC may schedule and manage requests, initiatives and projects subject to resource availability and approved budget.

k) The JISC will promote stabilization of governance efforts by carefully considering impacts of reprioritization of projects on current work and resource efforts.

From the AOC perspective, once the JISC has prioritized a request, it is either 'underway' or 'awaiting scheduling'.

Reprioritizing is a major concern when projects are underway and should be avoided.

Using subsection k) as guidance, the reprioritization of projects is to be 'carefully considered' by the JISC. The disruption, loss of momentum, loss of work product, loss of staff time and potential contract implications are just a few items on the list to consider.

Reprioritization of requests not yet started by the AOC can be done by the JISC at any time.

Once a request is underway in a substantial way (charter approved, resources committed, deliverables being work on) the project priority should not change and the project work should be halted only under the most extreme circumstances.

AOC Recommendation

AOC recommends that projects underway not be reprioritized. Requests that have been prioritized by the JISC but not started by AOC can be reprioritized as necessary.

JISC Review Discussion

To be scheduled for the next JISC meeting.

4. Does the JISC want to limit its review to requests that a CLUG ranks medium or low priority?

Discussion/ Analysis

The current practice is to review all requests that are sent to the JISC. There have not been enough requests received to determine the numbers or percentages that would fall into the different priorities.

AOC Recommendation

AOC recommends continuing the current process. With time, enough requests will be received to make a determination of limited the review of some requests. By viewing all requests the JISC also has the benefit of validating the ranking made by the CLUG.

JISC Review Discussion

To be scheduled for the next JISC meeting.

5. What additional information does the JISC need in order to make decisions? Possible information:

    - Potential cost savings as well as cost on each request, and cost savings to whom—state or local?
    - What are the potential non-technology costs—court staff, judges' time
    - Does the request require a change in law, court rule, or an exception to JISC principles or approved Enterprise Architecture?
    - Number of each type of resource available – to prioritize projects accordingly
    - Amount of funds remaining for the year

Discussion/ Analysis

The October 2010 JISC packet contained (behind tab 5) information about IT Governance including the first actual request (ITG Request #31) sent to the JISC. The amount of information included in an actual request placed before the JISC was not known at the time of the tabletop exercise.

The request entitled "Combine True Names and Aliases for Time Pay" was seven pages of material and included the following information:

- Specific description
- Analysis result
- Delegation matrix result
- Request detail
- Business problem or opportunity
- Endorsement detail
- AOC Analysis detail
- IT Governance Request Decision from CLUG

Of the information in the question, here is a summary of what was and was not provided:

Item	Provided	AOC Recommendation
Potential cost savings as well as cost on each request, and cost savings to whom—state or local?	No; however cost savings were not likely to accrue to AOC.	The ITG Intake process should be changed to ask the AOC to document any potential cost savings for the request.
What are the potential non-technology costs—court staff, judges' time	No	The ITG Intake process should be changed to ask the courts to provide a potential costs and cost savings for their request.

Item	Provided	AOC Recommendation
Does the request require a change in law, court rule, or an exception to JISC principles or approved Enterprise Architecture?	Yes	If the request were to require a change in law or court rule or exception to AOC or JISC principles, it would be reported in the AOC analysis.
Number of each type of resource available – to prioritize projects accordingly	No	Resource management is still under development from AOC. It will be available to be used as a planning tool at future JISC meetings.
Amount of funds remaining for the year	No	Budget reviews are on the agenda at each JISC meeting and should continue. In general, there is an understanding of remaining funds for the year. If the JISC adopts the recommended categorizations, the budget tracking will follow that

AOC Recommendation

To meet the request of the JISC members, AOC recommends adding information to the intake request and analysis process as specified above.

JISC Review Discussion

To be scheduled for the next JISC meeting.

Attachment