

Problem Management System and Problem Escalation

Description Information services function management should define and implement a problem management system to ensure that all operational events which are not part of the standard operation (incidents, problems and errors) are recorded, analyzed and resolved in a timely manner. Incident reports should be established in the case of significant problems.

Management should define and implement problem escalation procedures to ensure that identified problems are solved in the most efficient way on a timely basis. These procedures should ensure that these priorities are appropriately set. The procedures should also document the escalation process for the activation of the information technology continuity plan.

Control Notes Whenever a problem is encountered in running of an application module at the user level, it is first reported to DBA of the RCC. In case he is not able to resolve it, the same is escalated for the respective module leaders at NCC who addresses it himself and reverts back to RCC. Whenever necessary, help of TCS is taken through problem report/change request mechanism. DBA of RCC and module leaders at NCC depending upon the severity of the problem, maintain first level record; complete record is maintained once a problem/change request is given to TCS.

There is no rigid procedure for categorization of problems apart from what has been described above. However, all problems are taken up and resolved on their merits so as to keep the application up and running.

Before releasing the application software to the field, rigorous testing is done in the simulated environment at NCC.

RCC has stated that there was no critical problem, which could stop functioning of AST application.

Management Response

The policy paper for categorisation of incidents is being formulated in phase III.

Assessment

The procedure for managing problems in running of the software was found to be generally adequate but ad-hoc. The problems which were addressed and resolved were documented. However instances of unresolved issues indicated weaknesses in the process of managing problems and incidents.

In the absence of a system of categorization and prioritization of problems, there was a risk that problems of critical nature, which could have an impact on the core objectives of the department, may remain unresolved, or may be resolved temporarily without addressing the basis of the problem.

As per the existing procedure the problems were escalated through the channel of RCC and NCC to the software vendor. However, the process of documentation and linking with the change management is formalized only when the problem had to be taken up as a change request with the vendors.

Thus, there remained a possibility that even problems of critical nature, which could be resolved at the level of RCC, would continue to exist in the version of the system running in the other regions. Risk, therefore, existed that even identified and rectified errors in the system in one region, with possible effect on revenue, would continue to persist in the system.

Recommendation

30. The department should formulate a policy of categorization of problems and incidents. The policy should inter-alia lay down the priorities for various categories of problems, the time limits in which they should be redressed and the procedure for escalation.