

Savan Touchpoint: Best practices to comply with Executive Order 13781, Comprehensive Plan for Reorganizing the Executive Branch



(Photo: NICHOLAS KAMM/AFP/Getty Images)

On March 13, 2017, the Trump Administration issued Executive Order (EO) 13781, *Comprehensive Plan for Reorganizing the Executive Branch*, to make the executive branch, including federal agencies, more efficient. In signing the order, President Trump commented, *"This executive order is another major step toward making the federal government efficient, effective and accountable to the people."* Although scandals, political maneuvering, and ongoing investigations have overshadowed much of what the Administration is attempting to do from an operations standpoint, it is important to recognize the effect this specific EO will have on agencies across the federal government.

➤ Will this Executive Order have a major impact on Agencies?

Yes. The Order requires each agency to submit a proposal to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability within 180 days. Office of Management and Budget (OMB) Director Mick Mulvaney will then invite comments from the public for improving the plans. One hundred and eighty days after the comment period, Mulvaney will submit a proposal with recommendations to eliminate unnecessary agencies and programs along with a list of the required legislative or administrative measures.

The most successful policy implementation efforts are a result of highly engaged and forward-leaning Federal leaders and stakeholders, deliberate attention given to the change management effort required to affect sustainable change (e.g., training, targeted communications), and a smart, focused approach to evaluating the business processes and technologies that are impacted.

➤ Has something like this ever been done before?

Yes. This is not the first time a President has attempted to reorganize the federal government. Almost a century ago, President Taft formed the *Commission on Economy and Efficiency* to examine some of these same problems. Following administrations have also undertaken efforts streamline government operations with varying degrees of success. For example, in April 2011, President Obama issued Executive Order 13571–*Streamlining Service Delivery and Improving Customer Service* requiring agencies providing services to the public to identify and survey their customers, establish service standards and track performance against those standards, and benchmark customer service performance against the best in business.

➤ Is this Executive Order warranted?

Perhaps. From 2011 to 2015, the Government Accountability Office (GAO), an independent, nonpartisan agency that works for Congress and is often called a "congressional watchdog," presented more than 200 areas and 544 actions to reduce redundancy and improve efficiency across the federal government, from Department of Defense to highly visible civilian agencies such as the Internal Revenue Service. Only 41 percent

of the actions recommended by GAO have been “fully addressed.”

➤ **Will this Executive Order work?**

Hard to say. Every agency has areas that it could improve, but the process used to do so is the most important factor.

➤ **How can Savan Group help?**

Over the last 10 years, Savan Group has been at the forefront of helping agencies improve their overall operational efficiency and service delivery through the application of a proven framework that focuses on the three foundational elements of almost every organization – **people, process, technology (PPT)**. Now, more than ever, agencies are under tremendous pressure to: (1) do more with less, (2) comply with strict mandates, and (3) prepare for the impending loss of institutional knowledge and understanding due to a wave of retirements.

Specifically, our phased approach allows agencies to fully assess the interoperability and interdependencies of the critical functions of almost every aspect of government operations down to the programmatic levels through a phased approach, thereby reducing overall risk to the effort. A summary of our three phases is presented below:

Phase I: Baseline Assessment

Phase I activities include a baseline assessment to effectively evaluate and measure the current operations, including key deficiencies across the PPT framework.

Phase II: Gap Analysis

Phase II activities include the development of a comprehensive gap analysis that identifies the gap between the current and desired capabilities and operations of the targeted office or program as it pertains to its mission or goal.

Phase III: Recommendations

Based upon the data and information collected as part of Phase I and II activities, Savan Group will prepare a detailed recommendations report that provides a set of pragmatic solutions to reorganize and streamline operations, thus improving efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability as required by the Executive Order.

Conclusion

Savan Group’s phased approach has been deployed across several agencies to date with successful results. The most successful policy implementation efforts have been effective because of highly engaged and forward-leaning Federal leaders and stakeholders, deliberate attention given to the change management effort required to affect sustainable change (e.g., training, targeted communications), and using a smart, focused approach to evaluating the business processes and technologies that are impacted. Achieving streamlined operations to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability, as required by the Executive Order, is not just a policy goal, but a future reality of Government organizations that employ the PPT framework and a systematic drive to compliance.

About Savan Group

Savan Group, LLC is a leading consulting firm specializing in Strategy and Operations, Information Technology, Records and Information Management, and Policy and Research. Savan Group’s mission is to be a premier and trusted consulting firm that helps clients achieve sustainable success by solving their most critical management, organizational, technical, and operational challenges. Savan Group is a SBA certified small business and GSA MOBIS schedule-holder headquartered in McLean, Virginia. For more information, visit www.savangroup.com or contact Brandi Greygor at bgreygor@savangroup.com