NIEM Strategy

# Introduction

This document has been approved by the National Information Exchange Model (NIEM) Executive Steering Council (ESC) to communicate the NIEM program Fiscal Year 2011 – 2013 strategy. Inputs into this strategy document were gathered from each of three NIEM committees, the State of NIEM report, the 2010 NIEM program plan, as well as open dialogue over the past year with the broader NIEM community to include, but not limited to, the February 2010 NIEM Town Hall, 2009 NIEM Training Event, and social media outlets such as LinkedIn, Twitter and GovLoop. The audience includes current NIEM community members from all levels of government including federal, state, local and tribal partners as well as private industry and potential adopters. As NIEM continues to evolves, this document is subject to change.

# NIEM Tenets

* NIEM provides a common vocabulary and standardized model for organizing and exchanging data.
* NIEM is a data layer standard and intentionally does not address all of the necessary technologies needed for information sharing.
* NIEM defines national data exchange standards for information that is commonly shared across many communities of interest.
* NIEM provides a way to create a linkage with existing standards, not to replace them, and a process by which data harmonization can occur.
* NIEM provides a mature lifecycle that is a repeatable, reusable process for business users to document information exchange requirements.
* NIEM is a grass roots effort with broad representation from all levels of government including federal, state, local, and tribal as well as private industry.
* NIEM strives to articulate the business, mission, and technical value, to measure value and to deliver value at all levels of an organization.
* NIEM seeks to engage existing and potential community stakeholders through use of governance committees, open forums, web technologies and other means to maintain growth and ensure all have a voice in the evolution of the program.

# Strategic Goals

Three strategic goals have been established to guide the NIEM program:

### Make NIEM more accessible

Special emphasis is placed on reducing barriers to NIEM adoption. This includes ensuring NIEM is accessible and understood across the domains at all levels of government and vertically within each domain to include executive and budget decision makers as well as implementers and industry partners. This also includes making it easier to engage or ‘on-board’ with NIEM for new customers.

### Promote the enterprise view of information exchange

NIEM is an implementable framework consisting of mature, repeatable, reusable processes and tools that align to an organization’s enterprise architecture. Through the use of NIEM elements contained within the core and applicable domains, architects are able to construct business concept models, thus enabling consistency and common language across the enterprise. NIEM provides a way to create a linkage with existing standards, not to replace them, and a process by which data harmonization can occur. As new technologies emerge, it is imperative for NIEM to seek alignment with external standards to ensure enterprise business requirements are met.

The NIEM program strives to bridge the gap between business and technical stakeholders.

### Build strong communities

Picture a community that spans all 50 states. Imagine gaining consensus at all levels of government as well as with the private sector. This is the foundation on which NIEM is built. From its inception, NIEM was designed to help government and industry build bridges that span the wide array of IT systems operating in various organizations for the purpose of sharing information to improve the effectiveness and efficiency operations and deliver the best service to citizens. The NIEM program seeks to enable cross-domain and intra-domain exchanges. This includes enhancing domain independence by enabling self-reliance, autonomy. This includes the creation of communities, including virtual, around common problems and challenges, elevating best practices, contributing to the definition and implementation of reference information exchange package documents (IEPDs), promoting governance, fostering good NIEM citizenship. This includes partnering with our international partners, as for many of us, information sharing reaches beyond US boundaries.

**Strategic Actions**

With the significant accomplishments that have led to the release of NIEM 2.1 and the many challenges that lay ahead with the continued adoption and use of NIEM, the goals of the NIEM program will be driven by actions, including but not limited to:

1. Educate the community
	* Ensuring consistent and clear messaging of the definition of NIEM
	* Ensuring understanding of information sharing and the role of NIEM in an information exchange and overall enterprise information architecture
	* Continually improving the effectiveness of NIEM training offerings
	* Developing a NIEM engagement model to communicate opportunities for involvement
	* Providing increased communications and outreach to the broader user base including our International Partners
2. Bridge the gap between business users and information technology
	* Enabling improved decision making
	* Maturing the data layer into the information layer of an enterprise architecture framework
	* Continued refinement of specifications, tools, and processes
	* Enhancement of NIEM to provide security and privacy frameworks
3. Foster domain leadership
	* Establish clear domain goals and responsibilities
	* Promote domain accountability
	* Encourage open communication and transparency throughout the NIEM community
	* Provide mechanisms for the community collaboration
4. Continually seek to improve the NIEM value proposition
	* Elevate and reward success stories through the Best of NIEM award nomination process
	* Advance the use of the NIEM cost model
	* Develop performance metrics organizations can utilize to track cost avoidance and impacts to mission
	* Assemble and provide ‘hard’ success stories to demonstrate value and accomplishments
	* Develop and publish new, updated outreach material for community members to inform decision-makers in their organization about the benefits and use of NIEM, the value NIEM-conformance brings, and the justification on why to fund and implement NIEM

In order to track progress and define success in each of these areas defined above, the NIEM program maintains a detailed program plan to track measurable results that is revised on an annual basis for the upcoming fiscal year, with updates performed as needed.

## Conclusion

This document is part of the NIEM program’s effort to promote transparency to all stakeholders and foster collaborative solutions. As such, it is being published as a public document. We welcome your inputs, suggestions, and ideas on how the NIEM program can evolve and better meet the needs of our community members. If you have any comments, please send them to the NIEM Program Management Office at NIEMPMO@niem.gov.