Chapter 8

Feasibility Study

OVERVIEW

In this chapter, we examine the relevance of using a feasibility study as a key component of life cycle management that may be used when embarking on an IDCM project. The feasibility study may be used to conduct a preliminary investigation of requirements and to determine the operational, technical, and financial feasibility of an IDCM project.

As noted in the preface, we observed that many DMS projects, promoted and initiated by proponents of document management, are not developed to reach desired outcomes. Instead, there are results, such as the cancellation of a project midway through its life cycle, or project delays and misadventure due to nonalignment with business objectives, lack of project ownership and executive management resolve, or inability to implement effective change management.

Therefore, enterprises should consider the feasibility study as an essential component of the IS life cycle for an IDCM project. If an enterprise adopts the “rule of thumb” philosophy that a project is 80% planning and 20% implementation, then the feasibility study is a core component of that planning. If an enterprise does not get the preliminary planning and definition correct during the feasibility study, then it is unlikely to get it right at all.
Consequently, the objectives of this chapter are to do as follows:

- Discuss the role of the feasibility study in the overall context of investigating requirements for IDCM.
- Consider the type of methodology that can be applied to conducting a feasibility study for an IDCM project.
- Raise awareness of some of the issues that should be explored when defining the problem and selecting feasibility options.
- Provide a template that may be used for preparation of the feasibility study report.

We provide provisional checklists that may be useful as “starting points” to assist practitioners when investigating the feasibility of an IDCM application.

**ROLE OF THE FEASIBILITY STUDY**

**Purpose**

The purpose of a feasibility study is to determine whether the implementation of an IDCM system supports the mission and objectives of the enterprise. It is an initial assessment of requirements conducted prior to commencing a more detailed requirements analysis investigation (refer to Part 3).

**Objectives**

The objectives of the feasibility study for IDCM are as follows:

- To define the problem for which a document and content management solution is being sought;
- To examine available business and technology options for solutions to the problem;
- To identify and analyze potential costs, and to list potential benefits of solution options;
- To determine a preferred option for recommendation to the Project Board;
- To establish priorities for implementation of an IDCM solution (if that solution is the preferred option);
- To identify an initial set of risks and issues that needs to be managed if the preferred option is adopted; and
- To gather adequate financial estimates to underpin the development of a Business Case (which is explored in Chapter 9).

**Scope**

The feasibility study must have a clearly defined scope. Time and other resources are generally not available to conduct a feasibility study that covers all types of business processes where document and content management opportunities exist. Effectively, documents are the core elements in virtually every business process, and many of these are amenable to “publishing” or making available to a limited extent, so there is a need to scope the feasibility study. As we mentioned in Chapter 6, planning strategies for an