



White Paper

Clash of the Cuts

Stop Battling and Start Measuring with Qlik®



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Austerity measures and increased spending alike put federal programs under the microscope. Program managers end up battling for funding in a politically charged but insight-poor environment. Some call this portfolio management. Others, capability and risk assessment. Either way, it's time-consuming, error-prone and, more often than not, no fun.

Save time and ensure optimal program performance through Qlik's powerful and intuitive data discovery platform. Qlik helps government agencies bring actionable information to capability and risk assessment.

Finding (and Funding) the Gems

Whether your mission is protecting national park land, ensuring national security or collecting taxes, deciding how best to allocate agency budget for the best outcomes can be a big deal.

When budget cuts come down, how can you spread out the cuts and still meet your mission? On the other side of the coin, when the economy is thriving and the nation could benefit from richer program investment, where should you invest? What ailing programs should you let drop?

The process that lets you make these tough decisions is often called capability and risk assessment.

Unlike the private sector, government cannot use revenue as a gauge of success and failure. In the public sector, the best measures are efficiency and outcomes. Which programs are well-managed and effective in supporting the mission? Which ultimately benefit citizens the most?

In other words: *What can you accomplish with your program dollars?*

Case study: Defense Capability and Risk Assessment

A defense agency is using Qlik® to mine program data sources and determine the potential effect of reducing budget in each program.

Using MODA (multiple objective decision analysis) as the foundation for capability and risk assessment, the organization first defined its core value proposition. Managers then mapped every agency effort back to that core value. The value map helped them decide which program could handle a 10% cut, which could handle more, and which less.

"Qlik has let us do amazing things with our decision-making," says an agency spokesperson. "Using MODA methodology alongside data discovery from Qlik, we can prioritize the investment, identify game-changing capabilities and ultimately design and develop a high performing organization."

Before Qlik, determining how to allocate budget cuts took over 900 person hours. With the new insight? The agency took it down to a two-hour priority-setting meeting. Talk about fast, effective and empowering.

The Thousand Spreadsheet Question

To answer this question, how is program analysis, capability and risk assessment currently done?

Government employees are familiar with the arduous drill of 1,000 spreadsheets, in which program managers and agency leaders justify their budget needs using Excel and other static reporting tools. Like King Lear's daughters, they battle for funding in a politically charged environment short on rich data insight. And like Lear, this process too often rewards undeserving daughters.

The main problem here is that static reports fail to provide actionable information. Using spreadsheets or canned reports, it's hard to understand the whole program or agency performance story. There is no way to reliably compare performance among programs, or to tie effectiveness to spending. This lack of real insight makes the process vulnerable to political whim, not to mention frustrating and time-consuming.

“Only 7 percent of all government organizations attain the highest innovative level of maturity in their use of analytics.”

– Ventana Research, January 2015

Whether the environment is driving cuts or investment, government's ultimate goal is to provide the most benefit to the greatest number of citizens. While asking “What can you accomplish at what cost?” helps agencies fund the most effective programs and cut the least effective, answering the question can be challenging.

How do leading government agencies answer the question? They:

- Put the most intuitive **data analytics technology** in place
- Determine the best **metrics** to track agency outcomes against spending
- Ensure **processes and people** are headed in the right direction.

Best Practices for Government Data Analytics

Data analytics and visualization software lets agencies uncover the full potential of their data. Leaders in government rely on best practices in two areas—capabilities and process—to help choose an effective solution, use it appropriately and realize the promise of data-driven decisions.

Best System Capabilities

Not all data analytics software is created equal. An analytics solution for capability and risk assessment should let agencies:

- **Bring together disparate data** across the agency in a consistent form, in compliance with the appropriate governance and context
- Allow broad user contribution to and interaction with a system that **guarantees data quality and security**
- **Explore agency-wide as well as detailed program views**, with all levels linked together for intuitive and meaningful exploration
- **Easily communicate findings** through storytelling and broad user distribution.

Best Processes, Skills, Governance and Culture

Agencies also need to ensure people, skills and processes mature to embrace the new performance management culture. Effective people-related capability and risk assessment efforts include:

- **Analytics skill training** at appropriate levels for all employees
- Lean and practical **data and process ownership**
- Fostering a **performance management culture**
- **User-friendly design** and **data quality** assurance
- Executive support and stakeholder engagement
- A clear **vision**, communicated widely

Guided by the experiences of early adopters in government, agencies can steer towards a successful implementation of data analytics and avoid common pitfalls in the process.

The Intuitive Power of Visual Data Analytics from Qlik®

Qlik data discovery and visualization helps governments see and understand their entire portfolio of programs. They can see spending and outcomes across the agency, supporting the tough decisions they must make on a regular basis. More than 1,000 government agencies worldwide use Qlik data analytics and discovery to support their mission.

Qlik empowers agency executives and staff to access vast amounts of information and discover insights in minutes, not weeks or months. You can consolidate and deliver information fast, letting agencies gain the insight needed to plan, implement and manage resources quickly and efficiently. It lets agencies meet their mandate to do more with less.

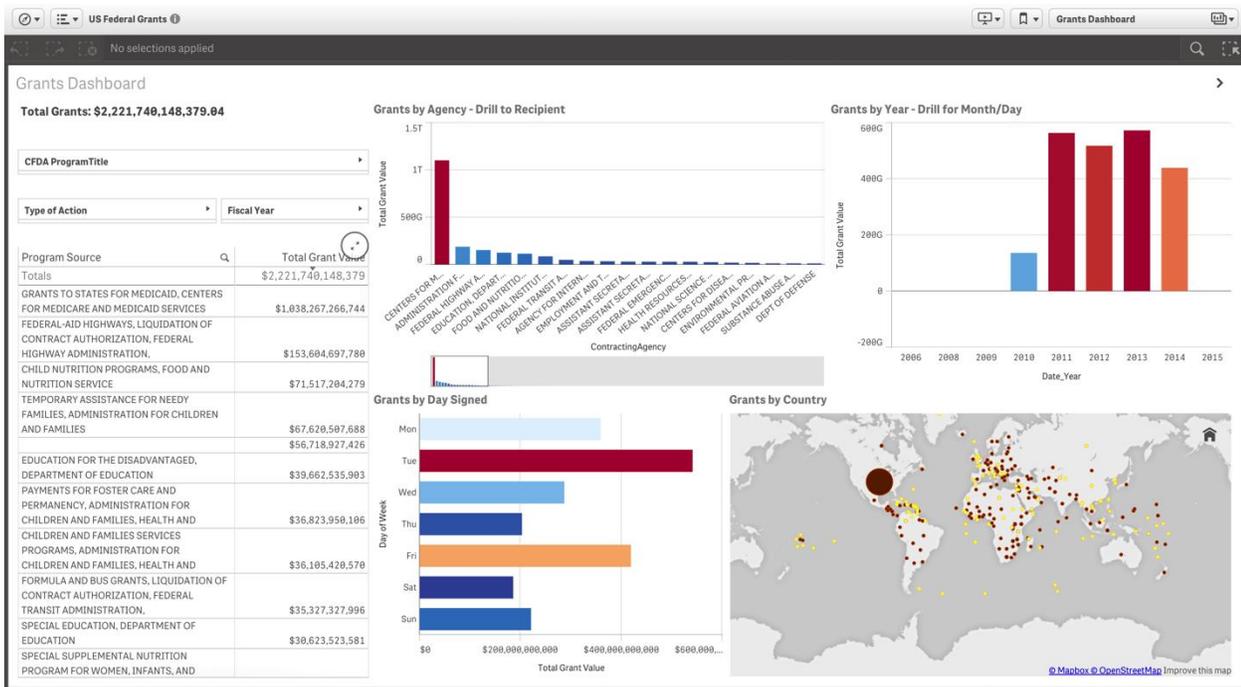


Figure 1: See the big picture on your spending, like this dashboard of grants for international aid.

Simplify the Complex

Qlik aggregates large volumes of data from financial, HR, procurement and program-level sources, including standard databases, flat files and big data sources like Hadoop. Staff can instantly slice and dice, summarize and drill down to actionable insight on programs, clients, costs, spending and more.

Intuitive Visual Discovery

Our intuitive visuals are much more than just pretty pictures. Smart Visualizations combine with Qlik's patented data indexing engine to uncover relationships between data, revealing insights that would otherwise have been hidden.

Search and Explore

Qlik's data exploration is as simple as asking a question or globally searching across the entire data set to see the big picture and make better decisions.

Self-Service

Qlik® lets everyone in the agency—from director to program manager to business analyst—access the information they need, when they need it, whether in the office or on the road. Because the drag-and-drop interface is so easy to use, executives and program managers do not have to rely on analysts or IT to produce reports or answer follow-up questions.

Collaboration and Communication

Program staff can create their own analysis, easily communicate discoveries among colleagues and meet demands for transparency and accountability.

Fast Access to Insight

Get up and running quickly, in a fraction of the time of traditional BI installations.

Stop Arguing and Start Measuring with Qlik

Citizen outcomes must always be the ultimate test of program effectiveness, with cost as a close secondary measure. While these outcomes are thorny to establish and defend, the effort is worth it to keep aspirations high and do well by public funds.

Government agencies have no lack of data on which to base funding decisions. In every mission, whether education, conservation or public safety, agencies are adrift in data, from program and financial management to logistics, from accident statistics to public health measures.

The challenge is being able to explore and make sense of the data. And then act on it.

Leaders are keenly aware of this challenge. More and more federal agencies are hiring Chief Data Officers. The White House has appointed a Chief Data Strategist at the national level. The U.S. is getting serious about applying technology to maximize the use of data to drive effective government.

Without actionable information, government agencies will continue to invest public funds subjectively—which can result in overfunding ailing programs while underinvesting in winners. It's time for every agency to stop arguing and start measuring, exploring and discovering the path to effective federal service.

“Data can be a force multiplier. But people don't want raw data. They want the data in a usable form that helps them do something more creative, be more efficient, have superpowers – something they could never conceive of before.”

– DJ Patil, White House
Chief Data Scientist



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