



CASE STUDY

USDA APHIS ITEMS

Customer and Digital Experience
Modernization Solutions

About USDA APHIS

The Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) is a science-based organization whose primary goal is protecting American agriculture. Investigative and Enforcement Services (IES) is a division within APHIS that is integral to protecting the health of plants and animals and providing the nation with safe and affordable food for USDA. The Investigation Tracking and Enforcement Management System (ITEMS) directly supports the APHIS objective to respond to emergencies and emerging issues - response planning, surveillance, quick detection, containment, and eradication.

Challenges

USDA APHIS was seeking maintenance services for its systems in the US Government Azure Cloud, along with ITEMS enhancements. Additionally, APHIS management faced challenges in the efficient operational management of ITEMS. The organization needed assistance with Cognos-based Business Intelligence Analytics reporting to help analyze performance and operation efficiency. Finally, APHIS faced challenges with quick turnaround in identifying and resolving critical software bugs and satisfying customers and users.

Services & Support Provided

vTech Solution provided a wide range of Operations and Maintenance (O&M) and Data Management and Enhancement (DME) services to optimize the performance of their client's systems. As part of their O&M services, the vTech team focused on developing and enhancing Cognos reports, which helped improve operational efficiency and decision-making. This included identified issues, challenges, and bottlenecks allowing for timely intervention and resolution. In addition, vTech took a proactive approach to ensure accessibility compliance, actively recalling non-compliance with 508 accessibility standards for ITEMS and proposing effective solutions to make the system 508 compliant, enabling individuals with disabilities to utilize the system effectively.

The vTech team provided comprehensive resource planning,

acquisition, utilization, maintenance, and release scheduling services. vTech was responsible for managing the continuity of ITEMS, including operations at the disaster recovery site. By effectively managing system resources and scheduling releases, vTech ensured smooth and uninterrupted system performance. In addition, vTech addressed any new vulnerabilities reported for ITEMS applications and environments. Additional activities were performed to ensure the system ran smoothly, including granting access to systems for new accounts, maintaining application system tables, setting up new roles, creating views, and developing application migration plans supporting new software releases. These activities were crucial in maintaining a robust and up-to-date system, allowing clients to leverage the latest advancements in technology and software functionalities.

Results

vTech Solution provided technical and administrative support to maintain USDA APHIS's management system and ITEMS up and running 99.99% time. The application system has been improved and has proven capable of supporting the USDA APHIS objective of responding to emergencies and emerging issues. vTech proactively provided solutions and continuous extra ordination support and services to enhance the mission and vision of APHIS AES in protecting our agriculture by enabling ITEMS users to act faster and efficiently to respond to any violations, disasters, or emergencies endangering plants and animals.

Overall, vTech Solution successfully delivered the necessary support and maintenance services to enhance the performance and reliability of the USDA APHIS Management System.