
3. SUMMARY OF THE ICT STRATEGY

This ICT Strategy supports existing core public sector goals, set in *Digital Britain, Building Britain's Future, Excellence and fairness*, and the *Operational Efficiency Programme*:

- improving public service delivery
- improving access to public services, and
- increasing the efficiency of public service delivery.

Each department, local authority or other public body also has its own business strategy to deliver specific services and commitments. The ICT Strategy provides a standardised, flexible and efficient ICT infrastructure to enable delivery of these individual business objectives. It provides public servants with the confidence that they can deliver their objectives effectively and securely in a sustainable manner. Above all, it reduces inefficiency, replication of systems and duplication of effort.

The strategy will also transform ICT procurement, giving Accounting Officers the confidence that they can use services available across the public sector which have already met procurement legal requirements and provide value for money to their business. This will be assured through the supply management strand (section 4.13), which covers pan-government procurement of ICT products and solutions.

The governance structure, meanwhile, ensures that information assurance (IA) requirements are incorporated into all strands of the strategy.

This will provide assurance to Senior Information Risk Owners (SIROs) and Departmental Security Officers (DSOs) that solutions meet mandatory public sector information assurance and security requirements.

Most importantly, the strategy will enable delivery of pan-government objectives, while maintaining local control over delivery and personalisation for services that are unique to those organisations.

3.1 Using ICT to respond to existing pressures

The UK public sector is facing significant pressures. In addition to the changing expectations of service outlined in section 2.1 above, the boundaries between public sector, third sector and private sector service provision are becoming increasingly blurred. At the same time, the global economic downturn of 2008/09 will have long-term ramifications for market structures and investment models, leading to greater pressure for efficiency and savings.

The time is now right for the public sector to take a fresh approach to its ICT and to review how it can better exploit ICT services and systems to enable organisations to meet the challenges they face.

This strategy addresses these through focusing on:

- a common infrastructure
- common standards, and
- common capabilities.

3.2 Common infrastructure

At the heart of the ICT Strategy is the creation of a common, secure and flexible infrastructure that is available across the public sector. To achieve this, the strategy sets out the vision for the following:

- **The Public Sector Network:** A single holistic telecommunications infrastructure that will deliver converged voice and data communications. The Public Sector Network will deliver at least **£500 million savings per year**¹⁰ by 2014.
- **The Government Cloud (G-Cloud):** A government cloud infrastructure that enables public bodies to select and host ICT services from a secure, resilient and cost-effective shared environment. Multiple services will be available from multiple suppliers, which will make it quicker and cheaper for public sector bodies to switch suppliers if they face service or delivery issues. The Government Cloud is a **key enabler of the £3.2 billion savings per year** outlined in the *Operational Efficiency Programme* as it provides a single access point for ICT services, applications and assets.
- **Data centre rationalisation:** A programme of data centre consolidation that will deliver large cross-government economies of scale, meet environmental and sustainability targets and provide secure, resilient services. Aligned with development of the Government Cloud, this programme will reduce the number of data centres in use from the current many hundreds to provisionally between 10 and 12 highly resilient, secure data centres. Not only will this reduce cooling and power consumption by up to 75% on current infrastructure, it will also reduce IT infrastructure costs by up to **£300 million per year**.¹¹
- **Government Applications Store (G-AS):** A new gateway to enable sharing and reuse of online business applications, services and components across the public sector. Rather than create bespoke solutions each time a requirement is identified, reuse will become the norm, with anticipated **savings of over £500 million per year**.¹²
- **Shared services:** An ongoing commitment to developing the shared services culture that has been building both within and between departments in recent years for finance, human resources and procurement services. This approach has saved money and headcount: over 80% of civil servants are now supported by a shared service solution. By 2020, shared services will be provided via the Government Applications Store and Government Cloud to further exploit opportunities.
- **Desktop services:** A new set of common designs for desktop services across the public sector. While all public sector bodies need to provide their staff with access to functions such as email, word processing, spreadsheets and internet browsing, historically each public sector organisation has separately specified,

¹⁰ Public Sector Network business case, 2009 – assumes 80% uptake as per section 4.1

¹¹ Strategic Supply Board Study, September 2009

¹² Strategic Supply Board Study, September 2009

built and run its desktop service – creating additional cost and complexity. Instead, there will be a set of common desktop designs which conform to information assurance and sustainability requirements. All suppliers will be required to deliver common designs and shared services at the lowest price available. A £100 saving in operating cost per public sector desktop per year would yield an immediate **saving of £400 million**¹³ per year if all public sector bodies adopted best practice.

3.3 Common standards

All products, services and assets contained in the ICT infrastructure will benefit from a suite of common standards for security, interoperability and data standards, which will facilitate data sharing and make it easier to join up public services. The strands of this are:

- **Architecture and standards:** The technical architecture and standards work underpins all elements of the ICT Strategy. This will assure security, interoperability and common data standards, which will facilitate transition of supplier or product, as well as data sharing and the joining up of public services.
- **Open Source, Open Standards, Reuse:** Traditionally, the public sector has relied on commercial off-the-shelf (COTS) software or bespoke developments from global providers. This restricts the ability of the public sector to reuse solutions, reduces flexibility to manage assets efficiently and prevents government

organisations from switching suppliers. The Open Source, Open Standards, Reuse Strategy provides government's approach to open source alternatives that meet public sector requirements. Government already commits to using only open standards for documentation. The ICT Strategy will build capability within the public sector to increase the amount of open source code and software in use and to make it available for reuse elsewhere.

- **Greening Government ICT:** ICT globally emits comparable levels of carbon to the aviation industry, and emissions continue to grow. Recognising this, the Greening Government ICT Strategy set two challenging targets which support delivery of mandatory SOGE (Sustainability on the Government Estate) targets:
 - government ICT will be carbon neutral by 2012, and
 - carbon neutral across its lifecycle by 2020.

The Greening Government ICT Strategy is embedded in all elements of the ICT Strategy and will deliver significant cash savings from smarter working practices as well as reduced energy consumption, alongside lower carbon emissions.

- **Information security and assurance:** Data losses within the public sector have rightly raised the profile of information assurance. However, data sharing is an essential

¹³ Strategic Supply Board Study 2005

element of joining up services and providing personalisation. This means that there must be effective, proportionate management of information risk. The National Information Assurance Strategy cuts across all elements of this ICT Strategy and is embedded within all strands. By developing the secure infrastructure, as outlined above, the ICT Strategy provides a trusted platform that will allow public sector bodies to match their information risk appetite with their information risk exposure: users of the infrastructure will be able to take information assurance for granted without feeling that their effectiveness has been compromised.

3.4 Common capability

The ICT Strategy incorporates building capability as well as capacity in ICT. The strategy can only be delivered through the people who work within public sector ICT, and a cultural change in ICT usage and procurement.

- Professionalising IT-enabled change:** Increasing the capability of our staff will not only improve the performance of our IT, it will also reduce the amount the public sector spends on ICT consultants and contractors by some 50% by 2020. The Government IT Profession provides a focal point for increasing the professionalism of IT delivery within the public sector. The Government IT Profession skills and competency framework is now being used for recruitment, training and
- performance management of IT professionals. The launch of the Technology in Business Fast Stream has been extremely successful and is now the preferred route for graduate recruitment into government IT.
- Reliable project delivery:** Reliable project delivery is a cross-government approach that was introduced in response to perceptions of significant project failure in the public sector. It seeks to provide a clear understanding of issues and to address areas of poor delivery. The Cabinet Office works closely with the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) to identify those major programmes and projects that have a high complexity and associated high delivery risk, and take a more proactive role in managing them and overseeing progress. This more structured approach to skills matching, reporting and management of portfolios will be a key enabler for consistent high delivery of public sector programmes and projects.
- Supply management:** Approximately 65% of government ICT is outsourced to the private sector. While this brings capable resources and efficiency, government has not always managed these relationships effectively. The supply management strand builds on the work already undertaken by the CIO Council, OGC and private sector partners to deliver a step change in the efficiency and effectiveness of outsourced government ICT. This will

incorporate delivery of the ICT procurement strategy for government, which will provide the procurement vehicles to enable implementation of this ICT Strategy.

- **International alignment and coordination:**

ICT does not stop at international borders and the UK public sector operates in over 145 countries. A key element of this strategy, therefore, is to ensure alignment and compliance with EU agreements, decisions and treaties to support international working. The Cabinet Office also regularly interacts with ICT peers from the USA, Australia, Canada and New Zealand to share best practice and help solve common problems. This approach ensures that we continue to exploit technology to its full effect in our efforts to deliver constantly improving services.

3.5 Implementation

This strategy sets out the direction for government ICT through to 2020. However, it will not be delivered by bodies such as the CIO Council, or central departments such as the Cabinet Office or HM Treasury. Instead, implementation will be through individual public sector organisations, exploiting the infrastructure and opportunities it brings to enable delivery of their business plans and objectives.

The CIO Council has agreed an integrated governance structure that combines expertise from central government, local government and the wider public sector as well as both

technical and commercial roles. This will provide all public sector bodies with the opportunity to shape implementation of the ICT Strategy, and ensure that solutions never lose sight of the need for improved public services as well as increased efficiency. It will also mean that local requirements and the need for flexibility are not overtaken by a 'one size fits all' approach that will negatively impact service quality.

In order for the strategy to fully deliver its potential, the Cabinet Office, on behalf of the CIO Council, will work closely with the Department for Communities and Local Government and its partners across central and local government to promote and embed the principles and approaches of the ICT Strategy throughout the wider public sector. This will mean working initially with the Local CIO Council and the Local Government Delivery Council to develop a shared vision of locally delivered digital public services, enabled by ICT, which will help local authorities and their partners to align with the Government's ICT Strategy. The Cabinet Office will also work with devolved administrations to similarly develop a shared vision for their countries that aligns with the Government ICT Strategy.

