



National Resilience Extranet Implementation Strategy

January 2010 onwards
Version 1.1
Update: 29th March 2010

NATIONAL RESILIENCE EXTRANET



PREPARING FOR EMERGENCIES

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Version Control

No.	Version	Author	Date	Comments
1	Version 0.1	J. Harrison	04.01.2010	First Draft
2	Version 0.2	J. Harrison	25.01.2010	First Version
3	Version 0.3	S. Pelly	26.01.2010	Proof read and minor amendments to punc. and gram.
4	Version 0.4	J. Harrison	29.01.2010	Addition of section "Challenges Ahead"
5	Version 0.5	K. Settle	30.01.2010	Further addition and amendments throughout the document
6	Version 1.0	J. Harrison	31.01.2010	Final amendments and formatting for Version 1 release
7	Version 1.1	J. Harrison	26.03.2010	Updates to all sections to reflect extension of the Pilot phases. New CO corporate formatting used.

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NRE Strategy January 2010 onwards

Background

Following the implementation of Civil Contingencies Act 2004, the Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) of the Cabinet Office and the Department for Communities and Local Government (CLG) identified the need for a secure, web based solution to facilitate the sharing of information by those preparing for, responding to and recovering from emergencies in the UK. To meet the needs of the Category 1 and 2 responders who will be utilising the system, CCS and CLG agreed to procure a National Resilience Extranet (NRE).

The aim of the NRE project was to deliver a browser based system which will allow the efficient and secure (up to and including RESTRICTED level) exchange of information at all times. This would therefore support the strategic collaboration between partners in a given regional or local resilience area, between and across these areas, and with central government and devolved administrations as required. The system would provide access via the GSi (GSE), through the Public Sector Interconnect (PSI) from the PNN, CJX and GCSx and also via the Internet, to a community of up to a maximum of 12,000 users with up to 6,000 using the service concurrently.

After a competitive tendering process, the contract to deliver the NRE was awarded in September 2008 to BT and Ultra Electronics. BT engages regularly with Regional and Local Resilience Forums and, as a result, they have a good understanding of how these Forums operate their obligations, processes, points of contact and priorities. Ultra Electronics has significant expertise in high integrity Secure Information Management Solutions: it has a proven track record for successfully delivering secure, hosted services over the last ten years. Ultra Electronics has become increasingly committed to the UK civil resilience communities after acquiring APL, developers of the Atlas AIMS and OPS applications, in 2007.

The NRE is the portal by which the Atlas suite of applications can be accessed. In the current release to the pilot community, and depending upon what level of subscription is taken out, the following applications can be accessed:

- Atlas Collaborate
- Atlas Incident Management System (AIMS)
- Atlas OPS LT
- Atlas OPS

At the heart of the NRE is the Atlas Collaborate application. This is the Collaborative working tool that CCS commissioned BT and Ultra Electronics to design and build to allow the UK Resilience community to securely share information electronically. It is intended to be used both in the day-to-day planning for incidents, during the response and recovery phases when an emergency occurs.

There are also two optional applications available via the NRE. They are not covered any further in this text because they are pre-existing packages and not developed as

part of the CCS/CLG tender. However, they were included in the offering under the “optional capabilities” section of the Statement of Requirements. Because they are part of the same suite of software applications as Collaborate, they are accessible via the NRE portal. They were therefore included in the Service Provider’s tender and as such are in the contract’s pricing schedule.

Atlas Incident Management System (AIMS) is a software solution meeting the requirements of local authorities, emergency response agencies and Category 2 Responders that have a need to effectively manage and coordinate their response during an emergency or crisis situation.

Atlas OPS LT has been designed specifically for the emergency response community. It is a user friendly, operational map display system which comes without the need for intensive GIS skills needed for alternative, conventional map based systems. Full support is provided for all popular formats of mapping. Complementing the display capabilities of the Atlas OPS LT GIS software are a range of powerful drawing and editing tools, to allow the overlay of emergency information. This includes the creation of routes, cordons, hazard zones and the overlay of any graphic symbols used to represent resources or locations. There is also full support for unlimited layers of information. Atlas OPS includes the Atlas Plan Builder module as well as enhanced capability and functionality for the GIS aspects of the application.

Purpose of this Document

This document is intended to detail to the stakeholder community how the NRE Project Team intends to progress towards achieving Full Operating Capability and “Business as Usual” for the NRE. The dates in this document are not “set in stone” - it is intended that they remain flexible, if necessary, to accommodate any challenges that lie ahead.

The challenges ahead

The NRE is a challenging project to deliver. Nothing has been done like it before and it has brought up a myriad of complex technological, contractual, legal and stakeholder issues that all need to be overcome for the project to be a success. Even though there has been, and will continue to be, detailed planning at every stage, unexpected issues do raise their heads. These issues are added to by the fact that 1,000 stakeholder organisations want to utilise the system; all have their own distinct ways of working and all have their own and varied ICT infrastructures to access the system. There is therefore, no “one-size fits all” and Version 1 of the system may not suit everyone’s needs perfectly. The strength of the NRE lies in the end user community wanting to utilise it and providing constructive feedback to the centre. This will allow for continued improvements to the service to achieve a state where the NRE provides an effective and efficient “backbone” for the sharing of information as envisaged during the procurement process and summarised in the Background section.

NRE Roll-out

Pilot period and transition into Service

4th January 2010 – 30th April 2010

The NRE was made available to several early implementer organisations from the 14th December 2009. As well as CCS, other organisations that had early access were those involved in various stages of the design and development of the NRE.

On 4th January 2010, the NRE was soft launched allowing those who had expressed an interest in joining the pilot to begin their sign up processes and receive training.

The pilot phase is now scheduled to complete on 30th April 2010. This should give the project team adequate time to analyse the performance of the system and how well the new service is being received by pilot organisations and integrated into their day to day business. It will also give the project team an opportunity to review the quality of training, and how the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) have been interpreted and implemented by organisations subscribing to the NRE.

If the Project Team, in consultation and agreement with the Project Board, feels that the application requires even further time to be developed against the defined specification within the controlled Pilot environment, then this period can be extended. If this is the case, the extension will have a knock on effect to the dates currently outlined in this document.

Throughout this period, the Project Team intend to gradually increase the number of subscriber organisations to see how the system copes with an increase in real users. During the design and testing phases, the system was stress tested with applications that simulate thousands of users simultaneously accessing the system and uploading/downloading files, but the actual proof of capability is when the human element is added and real people use the system.

Initial Operating Capability

3rd May 2010 – 30th July 2010

At the end of the Pilot period, the Project Team will review how NRE and Collaborate are both performing. This is to assess whether the end user community involved in the Pilot is getting the experience they need and require from the functionality and availability of the current system setup. Once the Project Team has recommended to the Project Board that the pilot phase has allowed the NRE to reach a satisfactory level of performance, then from 3rd May (or later if required) the NRE will move into its Initial Operating Capability (IOC).

Once the IOC phase is reached, the NRE will be available for all members of the UK Resilience community to start subscribing to.

Capturing feedback and observation from subscribers

A key element of the Pilot and IOC periods is receiving feedback from users. The NRE was designed and built to the needs and requirements put forward by members of the UK Resilience community and, as such, will continue to be developed in line with this group's needs.

During the first seven months of operation, the project team will, on a monthly basis, be reviewing the feedback received from the user base and prioritising it in terms of its impact on the performance of the system and the time and cost that it will take to resolve. Users will have the opportunity to supply feedback on any aspect of the NRE, whether it is the application itself, the training or SOPs. This can be done either by sending an e-mail to: support@ultra-datel.com at any time or, during office hours, by placing a call to the service desk on 01772 907 600.

All the feedback received will be held in a central database by the service provider, allowing users to track the status of any returns they have made. This will allow issues that are consistently appearing to be easily spotted and any workarounds or resolutions to be quickly implemented. The Project Team actively encourage users to comment on the NRE so the service can be continually improved. However, all

comments, whether positive or negative, should go via the appropriate channels. Whilst it is understood that some users may wish to copy in other users or potential users into their e-mails threads, be aware that feedback on aspects of the implementation may turn out not to be relevant (e.g. down to individual user error) or may have already been picked up and addressed. Messages such as this flowing widely around the resilience community can have a detrimental effect on the reputation and hence the successful delivery of the project.

Further down the line once the Initial Operating Capability (IOC) is complete, the feedback forms will be reviewed on a quarterly basis and development ideas and requests for change will be put to the Change Control Board

Full Operating Capability / Business As Usual

2nd August 2010 onwards

It is anticipated at the time of writing that the NRE will have reached Full Operating Capability after 3 months of live use. This does not mean that the system will be full to capacity: it simply means that the system is fully operational after the trial periods.

The NRE will move out of its project environment and into a managed service environment where it will be “Business As Usual” for UK Resilience organisations to use the NRE as part of their normal business processes.

New releases, versions and patches

At the time of writing, it is anticipated that a new “drop” will arrive on 8th February 2010. This should fix a number of issues encountered at the early visibility test and during User Acceptance Testing (UAT). A second and third “drop” will be in place sometime in March and April 2010 respectively so that issues picked up during the pilot can be fixed. In line with Ultra’s standard software development cycle, a new version of the application should hopefully be launched at the end of September or early October 2010. This version will have captured any issues that could not be fixed by patches earlier on in the year.

Going further forward, and as the contract currently stands with BT supported by Ultra Electronics, substantial new versions will appear annually around the end of September with patches, fixes and other minor updates implemented as and when required throughout the year. These later versions will not affect, delete or overwrite users’ existing content stored within the system.

Updates installed and projected as at 26th March 2010

Release	Type	Date
V1.0.02	Patch	5 th March
V1.0.03	Patch	12 th April
V1.1.00	Minor Release	29 th April
V1.1.xx	Patches	As required
V1.2.00	Minor Release	Tbc
V2.0.00	Major Release	Tbc

Information about what is contained in the two patches and the minor release can be found in the NRE newsletters. The first newsletter was issued by the CCS Resilience Gateway on 8th March and is also available to view in the “National Group” on the NRE. Further newsletters will follow on a monthly basis.

Governance

Project Board and Steering Group

Currently, the NRE Project Board is made up of senior directors and management from within CCS, the responder community, and the service provider. The Board is responsible for the overall direction and management of the project and facilitating good working relationships between the contractual parties.

Once the NRE Project enters the “Business as Usual” phase, then the Board will become the NRE Steering Group. Membership will be reviewed to ensure that the make-up of the group provides adequate representation to the stakeholder community. Its purpose will be to continue to provide the NRE with strategic direction so that the overarching needs of the responder community are met and that any new risks or issues affecting the operation of the NRE are brought to the Project Team’s attention. It will also continue to make decisions regarding the financing for, reporting on, and resourcing, of the NRE as a service.

Working Group and Change Advisory Board

Currently, the NRE Working Group consists of a wide cross section of representatives at the practitioner level from the resilience community including local, regional, national levels, devolved administrations and the voluntary sector. They have provided hands-on input to the development of the system and act as communication champions for the NRE.

As the NRE service goes live and transitions into Full Operational Capability (FOC), the Working Group will become the Change Advisory Board (CAB). Membership of the CAB will be reviewed to ensure that all changes within scope of the CAB are adequately assessed by both practitioner and technical representatives who have a clear understanding of the Stakeholder needs. Any recommendations made by the

CAB will be put before the Steering Group for authorisation and validation prior to implementation.

Stakeholder Engagement

National User Group

Membership will be made up of anyone who subscribes or intends to subscribe to the system and feels that they can best represent their organisation or community of users' views on current use and ongoing development of the NRE Portal and Collaborate application at a national level. It will also include appropriate representation from the Service provider.

The objectives of this group are to work in partnership with the service provider (currently BT) to develop the NRE Portal and Collaborate application to further improve the functionality for subscribers within the UK Resilience and associated communities.

The group is also in place to develop and share best practice within the user group. Currently, there is a set of national Standard Operating Procedures; these will develop in parallel with the software applications so that all users will have national guidance from which they can develop their own local operating procedures to fit in with their own organisation's work patterns.

The group will have a chair and a vice-chair who will represent the User Group on the NRE Change Control Board.

Forthcoming dates

The dates highlighted in this document and dates for forthcoming meeting are highlighted in Annex A.

Further Information

For further information visit the UK Resilience web site at:

www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/NRE

or contact the NRE Project Manager at:

NREenquiries@cabinet-office.x.gsi.gov.uk

Ultra Electronics website contains specimen copies of the Connection Agreement, End User Security Agreement and Service Specification.

www.resilience-extranet.co.uk

or they can be contacted directly on 01772 907 500

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Annexes

Annex A – Forthcoming Dates

Phase	Dates		Event	Location	
	From	To			
Pilot phase 04/01/2010 - 30/04/2010	04/01/2010	-	Soft Launch	n/a	
	08/02/2010		NRE V1.0.01 Released	n/a	
	12/02/2010	-	Project Board	London	
	19/02/2010	-	Stakeholder WG meeting	London	
	22/02/2010	24/02/2010	CCS Led NRE test	London & various	
	05/03/2010		NRE V1.0.02	n/a	
	24/03/2010	-	Project Board	London	
	25/03/2010	-	TSG Chairs (+1) workshop	London	
	12/04/2010	-	NRE V1.0.03	n/a	
	22/04/2010	23/04/2010	Cumbria LRF led NRE exercise	Barrow-in-Furness	
	29/04/2010	-	NRE V1.1.00	n/a	
	29/04/2010	-	SOPs review workshop	London	
	30/04/2010	-	Stakeholder Working Group meeting	London (Admiralty Arch)	
	Initial Operating Capability 03/05/2010 - 31/07/2010	30/06/2010 (tbc)	-	Final Project Board (becomes Steering Group)	London
		06/07/2010	-	SOPs review workshop	tbc (London?)
07/07/2010		-	First National User Group Mtg	Venue (tbc)	
08/07/2010		-	Change Advisory Board Mtg 1	London	
Business as Usual 01/08/2010 -->	30/09/2010	-	Steering Group Mtg 1	London	
	02/10/2010	-	Change Advisory Board Mtg 2	tbc (London?)	
	04/10/2010 (tbc)	-	NRE V1.2.00 released	n/a	
	05/10/2010	-	National User Group Mtg 2	tbc (London?)	
	12/10/2010	-	SOPs review workshop	London	
	10/12/2010	-	Steering Group Mtg 2	London	
	15/12/2010	-	National User Group mtg 3	tbc (London?)	

N.B. dates could be subject to change. Advance warning will be given for any changes to meetings or locations.