PROGRESS REPORT (Summary)

21 January 2003 to 14 March 2003

Project Update

Project Plan
The team is continuing to work to a "go live" date of 1 August 2003 for Phase One of Seed Certification. The documentation for Seed Certification has been completed and distributed to the Project Board for official sign off. The Business/Validations for Enforcement have also been completed and require signing off. Development has started on the Seed Certification, however, progress has been a little slower than anticipated. Extra resource is being brought in to assist and considerable strides should be made in the coming months. The ESP project is being used as a model for future projects within Defra and, therefore, care is being taken that a robust transferable system is built.

Detailed interface specification has been provided to the analyst who is still considering with the PBR/NL Team leader.

The documentation detailing the fundamentals of the PBR/NL system should be complete by end of March although there may be some outstanding particulars to be finalised, for example, surrounding finance functions. These should be completed by April. Once the specification has been fully completed the Project Team at Guildford will be in a position to make a far more realistic estimate of the development time required to make the system. On current estimations, the development of the PBR/NL system should take around 5-6 months. Thus, testing is unlikely to be undertaken until September at the earliest. The "go live" for Phase One of the PBR/NL part of the system is likely to be around October, November 2003. The switch to the new PBR/NL database for all staff is unlikely to take place until February/March 2004.

IT Contract with NIAB
A final contract for IT services has been issued to NIAB along with a contract letter on 5 March 2003.

Payment Engine of the Government Gateway
A number of queries about how the payment engine will work have been raised over the last month or so, including the charges that will be applied, whether applications will be invoiced individually and/or whether transactions would be bulked and companies notified on a monthly basis. A meeting with the Office of the e-Envoy (OeE) has been arranged for Thursday 20 March 2003 to discuss these issues.

Technical IT meetings on 11 February 2003
A Technical Meeting to discuss the Government Gateway and XML schemas
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was held at NIAB on 11 February 2003. It was well attended by the Industry and provided a useful forum to exchange ideas. It also facilitated the identification of the issues and requirements of the Industry in terms of a data exchange system. Feedback was generally positive.

First 4 Farming
A meeting was held with technical representatives of F4F to clarify the areas that need to addressed for F4F customers to use Defra's electronic services. The following issues were highlighted in particular:

- F4F digital certificates are only recognised within the F4F community to enable secure communication between servers, they do not "digitally sign" an XML document;
- F4F links are currently with databases which do not always hold Seed Cert data;
- Procedures for on-line payment through the e-hub.

F4F have recently sent us a proposal to address these issues which we shall be considering before arranging another meeting with them in the next week or two.

User Testing training
Two members of PVS staff went down to Brooklands e-iacs team to see how testing was organised for e-iacs. They were reassured in that the approach that had been previously adopted at PVS was similar to that carried out at RPA. Desk instructions and a few hints and tips on tracking problems were obtained.

Digital certificate providers
I am in the process of contacting digital certificate providers to discuss how we may supply certificates to our customers in as seamless fashion as possible.

Hardware procurement
The two DIS Lites have arrived at Guildford and Defra are talking to the OeE to arrange for the servers to be built. This will not take place until the end of April as the latest version of the Gateway software will not be available until then. The OeE are aware of the urgency of building these servers. Some of the architecture i.e. PIX 515E Firewall has been installed at NIAB.

Gateway Reviews
Gateway reviewers examined the project on 10/11 March 2003 as part of a Gateway 3 assessment. Overall, their report was favourable with the project being given a Green light to proceed to the next stage providing a comprehensive Benefits Realisation Plan was completed shortly.

Kay Williams Project Manager