PROGRESS REPORT

4 September 2004 to 13 December 2004

Project Update

Project plan

Release 5a, which includes several bug fixes for the system, was made live on 10 December 2004.

This release was due to go-live in early September however there were many problems experienced on the test system and it was decided to stop testing whilst these were resolved and assurances obtained from IBM that a more stable test environment would be available.

As part of the transfer of IT work to IBM, the project team has drafted and contributed to a number of documents in order to try and formalise the arrangement. In spite of this arrangements have still not been settled.

For Seed certification we plan to start work on release 1.6, to be made live in spring 2005.

User testing and End to End testing

User testing continues as and when required but has been hampered by poor stability on the test system.

Government Gateway issues

The relationship between Defra, IBM and Government Gateway at a corporate level needs to be improved and responsibilities clearly defined. This issue is being addressed by Steve Morris in the ICF. Further problems have also been experienced because the IBM helpdesk have failed to follow up calls with the Gateway or have prematurely closed calls. This has been followed up with IBM.

Technical Update

The certificate on the Live DIS box held at NIAB expired in September. Even though work started well in advance to renew the certificate there were many problems encountered trying to complete installation. The problem took an unacceptable amount of time to resolve and Steve Morris of the ICF is currently working on putting acceptable support in place for the DIS box.

The stability of the test system is also a serious concern. IBM has set out a number of actions to provide a more stable system but in the meantime problems are still being experienced.
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Progress with CAL, ATS and F4F

ATS are continuing work on producing bulk upload and are currently working on the Cert 2 in conjunction with Ebbage Seeds. Unfortunately this was hampered by log on problems which resulted in some loss of goodwill.

F4F have met with the CAL user group. This group would be happy to use the solution proposed by F4F/Defra. F4F have asked if Defra would fund half of their development costs.

Seed Cert Regulations Project

All forms are under development and a large number have been completed but there are several key areas where development has not yet been finalised and so the mid-November milestone for completion has not been met.

There have been particular problems for cert 10 and cert 7/7 summ for re-entered seed lots and work is being carried out to find a generic solution.

Latest position for the project plan aims for completion of forms by end of January and therefore a revised go-live date of 31 May 2005. This assumes that ESP's demands on developer time are reduced.

The delay from the March go-live date is due to:

- Diversion of development and testing resources from Cosacs to development and testing of ESP certification and development of ESP enforcement.
- Development of additional forms to view data which is now received from ESP enforcement.
- Other IT work delayed by Cosacs and ESP eventually becomes essential and has to be dealt with.

REFLEX

Fran Foster has been continuing analysis for the REFLEX project with the REFLEX User Group and Aki Otsu, system analyst.

The user requirements have been agreed and process diagrams signed off.

Work on screen designs and detailed use cases should be completed before the end of January 2005.

Development work for REFLEX has been suspended whilst the handover to IBM is completed. This has been delayed because of discussions about a review of Reflex, PHSI’s e-Domero system and EHMI’s new system to identify potential synergies.
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There has not yet been a meeting held with industrial partners for this phase of the project. This will be arranged once agreement to go ahead with the project has been reached. Industrial partners have been asked for their payment preferences. 5 responses have been received so far and a mixture of payment options is wanted including cheque, BACS, credit/debit card. Direct debit does not seem to be of great interest (unlike seed certification), companies would prefer BACS.

Some further work has been carried out on the finance interface with ASD. Messages have already been successfully sent but details for invitations to renew need to be agreed as these cannot be treated like invoices. ASD recently ran a demonstration of the Oracle software they have available which can be used to make services available on-line, including on-line payment. This software provides a direct debit facility.

Finance and E-nabling

New arrangements are now in place for control of the budgets. This has meant that financing of some of the bug fixes and maintenance is from outside the budget for ESP. As no transfer has yet been agreed with IBM the arrangements continue to be made through DELTA. A bid process for 2005/06 is currently underway.

Publicity

Further demonstrations for interested companies were carried out on 30 September and 24 November.

A demonstration was carried out on 19 October for NAK who are thinking of setting up a similar system in The Netherlands.

Training and Guidance

Further training has been given to the PHSI. All PHSI have now been registered to use the system and they have been asked to consider how they will use it for record checking purposes.

Fran Foster visited the new IBM rapid Application centre at Guildford to see the facilities that would be available when REFLEX development work starts.

Planned activities for the coming month

i. Progress contacts with 3rd party software suppliers

ii. Carry out further ESP demonstrations as and when required

iii. Continue REFLEX analysis work to complete screen designs and use cases
iv. Agree Work In Progress transition report.

v. Begin Work Package Order to review seed cert and plan Reflex and completion of ESP

vi. Hand over project management role to Dick Staward.

vii. Increase pressure on IBM and ICF to resolve DIS box support issues.