

## ICA COUNTRY REPORT

### Ireland

#### SECTION 1: CENTRAL GOVERNMENT INITIATIVES

**Department of Finance - Centre for Management and Organisation Development (CMOD):(<http://www.finance.gov.ie/>)**

##### **Note on eGovernment in Ireland**

###### **Short-Term**

The Irish Government carried out a review of its eGovernment programme earlier this year to determine how best to advance it, and, in particular, how to deal with the requirement to develop policy positions on a range of issues. Consequently, it decided that –

- The Reach Agency should immediately proceed to the Best & Final Offer Stage of its public procurement exercise for the Phase 1 Public Services Broker (PSB) concentrating on the development of the customer-facing and access control elements of the PSB. Reach will report regularly on major issues impacting the delivery of this Phase 1 PSB to a sub-group of the Government's eStrategy Group of Secretaries General;
- Resolution of key 'corporate' eGovernment policy issues will be facilitated by a central group that will engage in extensive consultation with Departments and agencies throughout the Irish public service to ensure that policy positions are considered in the widest context possible and are cognisant of the breadth of needs. In addition, the group will, where appropriate engage external experts to help it with this facilitation role and with developing policy positions. It will also engage with other public administrations and private sector companies to ensure that lessons learned elsewhere and identified best practices are incorporated in the deliberations. The group is expected to report on progress to the Government's eStrategy Group of Secretaries General on a monthly basis;
- The central group will initially concentrate on how Departments and agencies interoperate electronically to ensure that the proposed mechanisms for the PSB are compatible with wider needs;
- The group will also begin work on proposed identity management services, i.e., the Public Services Identifier (PSI) for personal identities and the Business Services Identifier (BSI) for business entities, to ensure that they can facilitate all public service identity management requirements;
- The outcomes of this initial work will be taken into account by Reach in progressing the Phase 1 PSB.

### **Progress To Date**

The Reach Agency has begun the Best & Final Offer Stage of the procurement of Phase 1 of the Public Services Broker inviting 4 shortlisted bidders to submit Technical Design Studies. It is scheduled to complete this process and award a contract by Christmas 2003. Completion of the Phase 1 build is expected by May/June 2004.

The central group has commenced its work on interoperability and identity management, having engaged consultants to assist with both. Discussion papers will be produced by early September, following which, extensive consultations will be held with public service bodies with a view to making policy recommendations on both topics to the Government's eStrategy Group of Secretaries General by the end of October 2003.

### **Medium Term**

In the medium term, considerable analysis and public service-wide consultation is needed to determine policy positions on, amongst other things –

- identification of services to be provided on-line by 2005
- client information needs of agencies and departments
- principles of data and information usage and the associated implications for information bases held by individual public bodies that have elements of commonality and may add value to the eGovernment programme through sharing or aggregation mechanisms
- a vision for the public service incorporating issues of process, organisation design and HR in terms of opportunities for and benefits of transformation
- depth of service integration possible and its value/s both to customers in terms of benefits and to agencies in terms of making the public service better
- continuation of work on a possible Public Services Card as set out in Paragraph 5 above
- implications of using multiple delivery channels
- requirement and scope for innovative business arrangements (including outsourcing, corporate/federated shared services, etc.)

### **Development of Central Group**

Consideration is also now being given to the nature of the organizational response needed in terms of the central group's roles, responsibilities, remit and resources required to drive, facilitate and support the medium term policy needs set out above with a view to reverting to the eStrategy Group of Secretaries General with firm proposals later this year.

### **Note on Irish Government VPN Contract**

#### **Introduction**

The Irish Government's Action Plan for the Information Society 1999 assigned to the Department of Finance the task of developing a virtual private network for a range of services to support eGovernment. Following extensive consultations both with the public sector (through an inter-organisational VPN Procurement Group) and with the telecommunications market throughout 1999 and 2000, the Department launched an Open EU Procurement exercise in February 2001 and consequently signed a Master Contract in May 2002 with *eircom*/Vodafone for a range of voice and data telecommunications services. The contract was signed on behalf of the non-commercial public service and available to all bodies therein on a draw-down basis. The services available under the contract are –

- Fixed voice services
- Mobile telephony services
- Teleservices (e.g. 18XX)
- Managed Data Services
- Managed Internet Services
- Managed Access Services (for remote/mobile employees and agents of public bodies)

### **Nature of Contract**

The tariffing structure provided for in the contract represents the best available from the market at the time of contract award for managed services (which in some instances resulted in reductions in the order of 30%-50%). The tariffs must remain competitive over the period of the contract and the Department of Finance continuously monitors the market to ensure this.

The Master Contract is for a period of **three** years in respect of voice services (fixed, mobile and 18XX teleservices). It is extendible, at the Department of Finance's discretion, for a further two years to a maximum of five years.

The Master Contract is for a period of **two** years in respect of data services (Managed Data, Managed Internet and Managed Access). It is extendible, at the Department of Finance's discretion, on a yearly basis, to a maximum of five years. As "always-on" data services (i.e., broadband) are not ubiquitously available in Ireland as of yet, the Master Contract is primarily for the provision of data services to the HQ offices of public service bodies.

A structured project governance model is in place that includes a cross-sectoral representative Programme Board that will review the contract and its operation when it falls for renewal or any time that the Department of Finance deems that such a review is necessary.

### **Public Sector Organisations' Obligations Under the Contract**

1. Where bodies wish to procure **managed** fixed voice services, they must do so under this Master Contract. Unmanaged fixed voice services and teleservices are discretionary under this Contract, i.e. they may be procured under the Contract or may be procured (following an open procurement exercise) from any licensed telecommunications operator.
2. The mobile telephony services are not mandatory, i.e., their draw-down is at the discretion of individual public service bodies. This is because some organisations may have needs for coverage not available from Vodafone or may, for resilience purposes, require mobile services from multiple carriers. However, in determining their approach, the Department of Finance advises bodies to make value-for-money judgments on the basis of tariff and volume related discounts, integration opportunities with other telecommunications services (both available under the Master Contract) and any associated costs such as migration from one service provider to another etc.. Where the Master Contract is not chosen, bodies must use Open Procurement exercises to procure the services.
3. Where a body is providing eGovernment services, the data transport elements must be procured under this Master Contract (this makes up a very small percentage of the total data traffic of the public service). All other aspects of data services procurement are at the discretion of individual bodies, subject to normal open procurement exercises.
4. Data services within a body's own network may be drawn down from this Master Contract where they provide an economical competitive advantage. Equally, they may be procured (following an open procurement exercise) from any licensed data carrier in Ireland or privately provisioned (subject to compliance with market regulation).

5. The Department of Finance has paid for a central infrastructure to facilitate Internet Web access and e-mail relaying from the VPN. Public Service bodies may migrate their Internet Access to the new VPN-based infrastructure or alternatively avail of other commercial offerings following open procurement. The services themselves will be available free-of-charge to individual public service bodies once they establish a link to the VPN.

#### **Advice & Assistance**

The Department of Finance has established a unit to oversee the operation of the Master Contract and to provide telecommunications architectural advice and assistance to all public service bodies in examining opportunities available both within and outside the Contract. As a result of this, this Department has engaged extensively with numerous bodies and sectors in designing solutions with the services available under this Contract – an exercise that has already resulted in significant savings on public sector telecommunications bills. Equally the unit has advised numerous public bodies to engage in market exercises to ensure best value for money and as a result, a number of telecommunications services have been procured outside of this contract with alternative telecommunications service providers.

#### **Note on Irish Government ICT FORUM**

The Irish Civil Service established an Information & Communications Technology Managers' Forum (ICTMF) in 2002 to provide ICT Managers with a forum to influence the development of ICT, eGovernment and eEurope related policies and initiatives and associated HR issues that are of common interest and application across the Irish civil service.

Specifically, the Forum facilitates the dissemination of information on these matters, the exchange and discussion of experiences, and widespread consultation.

In addition, the Forum sets up Working Groups to examine issues of relevance to the civil service ICT community and to identify & recommend possible courses of action and/or principles for adoption as appropriate.

To date, the Forum has engaged Working Groups on ICT Staff Recruitment & Retention, the Irish Government's Virtual Private Network, XML Toolsets & Associated Standards, Hosting, Common Solutions, Security, and Training.

The conclusions of these groups, once adopted by the Forum, are fed into the strategic planning and operation of Departments & Offices.

## **SECTION 2: DEVELOPMENTS IN INDIVIDUAL DEPARTMENTS**

Revenue Commissioners: ( <a href="http://www.revenue.ie/">http://www.revenue.ie/</a> )
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#### **Revenue Restructuring**

Revenue is completing the most far reaching and ambitious programme of change in its 80 year history. Through the implementation of a new organisational structure, the Office will improve its efficiency and effectiveness both in tackling all forms of non-compliance and in delivering a quality service to compliant customers.

The change programme was first signalled in Revenue's Annual Report for 1999 when the broad shape of the new structure was initially outlined. After that announcement, project teams within the Office were set up to design in detail the role, functions and structure of the Divisions and Branches that make up that structure. The design process is long since completed and agreed with

management, unions and staff and the roll-out of the structure which started in 2002 is scheduled for completion by the end of the year.

From an operational perspective, the new structure is designed around the customer base. Revenue regions will be responsible for cases within their geographical area. Except for large corporates and high net worth individuals (which will be dealt with centrally) each region will be responsible for the customer service, compliance and audit functions for all taxes and duties (including customs and excise) for all customers in its geographical area.

This change had been anticipated by the ICT function and a major redevelopment of the tax applications had been undertaken in advance (See the ITP entry below). This redevelopment enabled Revenue to take a consolidated approach to tax collection so that the Revenue computer systems were well placed to support and facilitate the restructuring of the office rather than impede it, as sometimes happens in large organizations.

#### **Integrated Taxpayer Processing.**

As mentioned above, Revenue takes a consolidated cross-taxhead approach to dealing with the wide range of taxes and duties for which it is responsible. This provides major benefits in improved service to the taxpayer, better compliance and greater yield. It has also enabled Revenue managers to undertake and allocate work in an increasingly efficient and effective manner.

This approach is facilitated by common software applications, which address the main business needs including:

- Maintenance of the national tax register and tax agents file
- Cross tax debt management
- Consolidated enforcement of delinquent tax accounts
- Comprehensive management information and budgetary projections
- A common framework for billing and accounting
- Enhanced audit administration support based on risk assessment
- Pay and File capabilities via the internet
- A wide range of information services

These solutions fully support the collection of the bulk of annual Exchequer revenues and will continue to do so.

This fully integrated solution is made up of a number of primary systems. Integrated Taxation Processing (ITP) is the central component. It is a single, shared back-office system for the issuing of returns, the processing of returns and payments and the main collection activities for all the major taxes. ITP also provides the platform for our Internet service whereby tax affairs can be conducted through the Revenue Online Service (ROS) at our website: [www.revenue.ie](http://www.revenue.ie).

Recent developments include:

- Introduction of EU VAT
- Pay and File capabilities for Income Tax and Corporation Tax
- Facilitation of Revenue's organisation restructuring

The next major component will be the inclusion of the PAYE/PRSI Employees business requirements. This development will include a conversion of data from the existing PAYE mainframe systems, building a new common calculation system which will be used by multiple ITS and ROS processes to ensure uniformity in tax calculations e.g. tax credits, and providing the integrated functionality of other taxheads for PAYE staff and customers. This will provide substantial improvements to the user interfaces and greatly enhance the service as staff will have an overall accounting picture of each customer, improved navigation around the system, direct updating of input and retention of full archive of previous correspondence. The new common calculation system will be used by both internal and external facing Revenue applications to ensure uniformity in tax calculations e.g. tax credits, and reduce the maintenance burden going forward. It will be developed to be platform and application independent using XML to transport the data.

### **Revenue OnLine Services**

The Revenue On-Line Service is the method by which Revenue delivers its interactive customer services electronically to the customer. ROS is the central plank in Revenue's strategy in the development of electronic quality customer services. The service, introduced in September 2000, provides Revenue's business customers with a quick, secure and cost efficient method for the electronic filing and payment of most business tax returns.

In November 2001, the Revenue Commissioners received an eGovernment label from the European Commission for this service which was found to be one of the very best practices of its type. This was further re-iterated in July 2003 when ROS was short listed to exhibit at the EU conference in Como, Italy as an example of current best practice in the role of eGovernment in European competitiveness.

The service provides for the electronic filing and payment of:

- Income Tax
- Corporation Tax
- Employers Payroll Taxes : Monthly P30's and Annual P35's and Form P45
- Sales/VAT : Bi-monthly VAT 3's and Annual Return of Trading Details
- A suite of services for Financial
- Environmental Levy Tax
- Vehicle Registration Tax
- Relevant Contracts Tax for the Construction Industry Sector
- On-line services for the new eCommerce VAT Return as per EU Directive
- Traders using the EU wide Transit system can interact with the EU new computerised transit system (NCTS) through ROS

There are now three payment options through ROS:

- Laser Card
- Debit Instruction
- On -Line Banking

In addition to the return and payment options provided for customers, the service also includes:

- a comprehensive information facility which enables ROS customers to obtain full details of their Revenue account, including such details as payments, return and collection details. Tax Agents can also view this data for their clients. We are currently extending the numbers of years with this information.
- a specifically designed access control facility to ensure that tax agents and businesses have total control over who has access to ROS and the various ROS functionality within their own office environments.
- secure access to Revenue outside of the usual office hours (24\*7\*365)
- A ROS Information Desk which is available 8.30 am – 6.30 pm Mon - Fri.
- ROS Liaison Officers who have been appointed in every Tax District and Collection to assist with local enquiries.
- a facility for dual electronic signatures for submissions of returns and payments
- web services for Income Tax with services for Corporation Tax under development

### **Vehicle Registration Tax (VRT)**

In Ireland, a vehicle registration tax is levied on the initial vehicle registration of new and imported vehicles. Revenue is charged with administering this tax for the Department of the Environment. During 2002, the VRT system was added to the ROS portfolio of services. The VRT system has had a significant impact since the start of 2003 and usage has steadily incremented to the current figure of 54%+ of total registrations. In some areas it is as high as 75%. An enhancement was introduced at the end of January to increase to 2,000 the number of vehicle birth certificates, which can be uploaded to ROS in a single transaction. Further enhancements introduced include same day amendments of non-tax specific data and download of AEP statements.

The Society of the Irish Motor Industry (SIMI) and the Distributors welcomed the system and are keen to extend the use of ROS within the dealer networks.

### **Short term plans:**

Plans for the remainder of 2003 include: -

- The introduction of Capital Taxes to ROS with the Gift & Inheritance Tax Return.
- Catering for Intrastat/VIES returns
- Annual returns for relevant contracts tax for the construction industry
- Extended services for ROS employers to give access to Tax Credit Certificate data for all their employees and all subsequent amendments.
- Budget updates and changes to all existing services

### **Longer term plans:**

- REACH – Interaction with the Public Service Broker for authentication and security, business services identifier and other possible services, e.g. tax registrations as appropriate.
- Preliminary work on on-line facilities for PAYE workers in tandem with the PAYE re-design project.

Improved services for Customs and Excise to help streamline exports to facilitate traders with CAP exports: This will be a joint project between Revenue and the Dept. of Agriculture & Food.

Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources: (<http://www.dcmnr.gov.ie/>)

## INFORMATION SOCIETY PROJECTS

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The Business Application Development initiatives underway at the Information Systems Division are part of a three year ICT Development and Implementation Programme aimed at delivering the Department's high priority projects in 2003 and 2004.

The main sectoral applications are Minerals Administration and Programme Support (MAPS), Integrated Forestry (IFORIS), Integrated Fisheries (IFIS), and a Sea Fisheries Portal. A number of software architectures and frameworks such as the Corporate Data Model (CDM), Corporate Mapping Services - Geographical Information Systems, Corporate Interface Design Framework (CIDF) and a suite of Common Components underpin the development of all sectoral applications.

The Division is also working with DCMNR Business managers to define the Information Systems strategy for the next period, post 2004.

### 2 PROJECTS SUMMARY

#### Architecture And Common Frameworks

The **Corporate Data Model (CDM)** aims to provide a repository for all Corporate and sectoral electronic data in the Department. The CDM framework also defines the rules and tools to satisfy the Department's data requirements and establishes the methods for identifying, categorizing, describing and storing the data. The logical data model was developed in 2002 and the physical model is being implemented during 2003 for use by the sectoral business applications. The physical model was implemented for the MAPS project in Q2 2003.

#### Common Component Framework

Sectoral applications can access the CDM via a set of shared software programs known as Common Components. They are a suite of re-useable modules that provide a standard interface between the sectoral applications and the common, corporate data that they share. This implementation avoids the replication of certain programs across different businesses and provides for a more integrated and maintainable system.

Eleven common components have been identified as required initially by the MAPS project. They have been developed and are undergoing user acceptance testing in Q3 2003. The remaining common components will be designed and implemented in Q4 2003. All components will be tested by the sectoral applications in 2004.

#### Corporate Interface Design Framework

The CIDF provides a set of guidelines for producing user interfaces for both internal and web based applications, with a view to reducing development times while promoting consistency in appearance and ease-of-use for all users.

The CIDF also defines guidelines for the management of content, with the aim of ensuring the DCMNR web presence and internal applications are kept up-to-date with a standardized DCMNR

template for the 'look and feel'. CIDF deliverables were completed in Q2 2003 and are being adopted by the build teams in creating sectoral applications.

### **Corporate Mapping Services**

This is a strategic initiative to disseminate Geographical Information Systems (GIS) capability throughout the DCMNR through a centrally managed repository of spatial data.

Corporate Mapping Services will support all business critical processes such as, for example, grant aiding, service delivery and fleet management. The project will incorporate the containment of all scales of national mapping data and third party data sets such as Duchas, Agriculture, EU data and Government statistical data in one physical location.

The spatial repository will be maintained and managed centrally while the sectoral business user will have secure access to their spatial data via desktop or browser based applications that will be standardised for business requirements. The Corporate Mapping Services is already underway and is scheduled for completion in Q4 2003.

### **Sectoral Applications**

#### **Minerals Administration and Programme Support (MAPS) for the Exploration and Mining Division.**

The objective of MAPS is to provide an integrated system with GIS functionality for the management of activities in Exploration and Mining in the State and for the marketing and promotion of inward investment.

MAPS also provides an overall Architecture and Development Environment for ISD on which the other business applications will be designed and implemented.

The MAPS Pilot project (proof of concept and technology verification) and the Development Architecture and environment were completed in Q2 2002. The on line, web presence supporting the application and payment for a prospecting licence went live in December 2002. The live implementation of the PL 'end-to end' processing in EMD is planned for Q3 2003.

#### **Integrated Forestry Information System (IFORIS)**

This sectoral application is being developed to support the business activities undertaken by the Forest Service. The objective is to provide a single database of all relevant forestry information to enable the Forestry Service to take an integrated view of its planning, inventory management and grant and premia processing and inspection activities.

IFORIS will be linked with the Department's Finance System for speedy processing of grants and premia. In addition, it will link to the Department of Agriculture and Food (DAF) Information Systems to ensure EU Cross Compliance obligations are being managed.

The business requirements were captured in 2002 and issued for tender for design and build. The application design and build is due to start in Q3 2003 - for completion in Q3 2004.

#### **Integrated Fisheries Information System (IFIS)**

This sectoral application provides a single centralized database containing all information pertinent to the administration and enforcement of Sea Fisheries. The objective of IFIS is to

provide a single system which will integrate the related business processes of Licencing, Registration and Sea Fisheries Control, facilitate access to information for reporting purposes, enhance the ability of the DCMNR to exchange data with external agencies, and maximize the potential for citizen access.

IFIS users, subject to appropriate authorization and security, and regardless of their location, will access the system via a desktop browser across the Intranet or over the public Internet infrastructure.

The business requirements were captured in 2002 and issued for tender for design and build. The application design and build is due to start in Q3 2003 - for completion in Q3 2004.

### **Commercial Sea Fishing Services Portal**

The Sea Fisheries Portal provides a single on-line presence for access to a directory of public services specifically for the commercial Sea Fishing Sector. The portal was launched in September 2002.

Office of the Land Registry & Registry of Deeds :(<http://www.landregistry.ie>)

The Land Registry is the State authority responsible for the registration of property transactions in Ireland and currently operates as an office of central Government under the aegis of the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform. The organisation provides a secure and reliable 'title registration' system for recording transactions such as transfers of ownership, mortgages, leases, rights of way and other legal interests in land. In Ireland, the title registration system carries a State guarantee and the land registers are public records open to all, subject to payment of the prescribed fees.

The main developments relating to the Land Registry's information systems over the past twelve months are as follows:

### **Electronic Access Services (EAS)**

The EAS is the public interface to the Land Registry's extensive database of property ownership and related records and is one of the flagship Government-to-Business (G2B) projects mandated under the Government of Ireland's *Information Society Action Plan*. The project, which commenced in 1999, provides an online facility through which customers can locate, view and print land ownership documents, lodge applications for official copy documents, submit applications for registration and track their applications as they progress through their life cycle in the Registry, over the Internet. The EAS continues to be significantly enhanced in order to increase accessibility, extend functionality and improve ease of use for its increasing customer base which comprises firms of solicitors, professional law searching companies, financial service providers, public and private corporations, local authorities and other parties involved in the land use and property administration businesses.

To date, uptake and usage of the service has far exceeded projections. At present, an estimated 70% of the Land Registry's potential customer base are now regularly accessing services through the EAS and for some services, over 75% of applications are now made on-line rather than through the traditional channels. As a result, the number of on-line business transactions conducted through the system is increasing at a rate of over 60% per annum.

The “back office” processes supporting the delivery of on-line services from the Land Registry have also undergone substantial changes, in recognition of the different demands required from internet based services. Future improvements in this system will take account of the emerging developments within the Reach project and the Public Services Broker.

A Customer Needs Survey has been undertaken and this has validated the Land Registry's strategic approach to electronic service delivery and has been instrumental in setting customer priorities in this regard.

### **Document Imaging Project**

This is a major project supported by the Government's Information Society fund which has the express objective of converting some 6.4 million pages of unique paper records into electronic format. The programme of converting these documents commenced in January 2002 and by August 2003 over 3 million pages have already been scanned, indexed and made available to customers over the Web and this is expected to exceed 4 million pages by the end of this year. The data capture work is now in peak production and about 12,000 to 14,000 images per day are created, indexed, checked and published over the Web. The project is scheduled for completion in 2004.

By exponentially increasing the volume of data available online through the EAS, this project will further enable the Land Registry to meet its e-government charter and to fulfil its own internal strategic goals of delivering an increasing amount of key services electronically.

The implementation of this project has also provided an improved technical architecture and disaster recovery capability for the organisation, involving the extensive use of robust document imaging technology twinned with high performance, resilient server, network and storage platforms.

### **Electronic Delivery Strategy for Registry of Deeds**

The Registry of Deeds records transactions relating to property which is not yet registered in the Land Registry. The organisation, which holds some records dating as far back as 1708, has recently prepared a detailed strategy for the on-line delivery of a number of its services. It is intended that the implementation of this blueprint will commence in 2004.

Department of Education and Science: ( <a href="http://www.education.gov.ie/">http://www.education.gov.ie/</a> )
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### **Main ICT initiatives**

The main ICT initiative in the Department of Education & Science at present is the Education Services Interactive (ESI) project.

The purpose of the ESI project is to (a) put in place a portal framework to facilitate schools and education centres in providing information to the Department over the web and (b) to develop specific web based applications – see below for a brief description of the projects being considered for development. The aim is to deliver applications that will have a common ‘look and feel’ that are accessible through a single ‘Department of Education & Science’ portal. Once the framework is in place, any number of applications can be added, the facility can be used to disseminate information to the schools (e.g. bulk issue of circulars) and, in time, ‘self service’

front ends can be developed so that teachers could, for example, update their personal details directly onto the teacher personnel systems.

Four web based applications have been identified, two of which will be progressed initially.

- (i) On Line Claims System  
This system will support the online capture and processing of claims for payment from both primary and post-primary schools in respect of work carried out by substitute and part-time teachers and other part-time employees.
- (ii) Primary Pupil Database  
Primary schools will be provided with an online facility to enable them to meet the Department's information needs with regard to primary school children.
- (iii) Further Education Management Information System  
This system will support the online capture and processing of information on further education programme participants.
- (iv) Adult Learning Opportunities  
  
An online resource of adult learning opportunities.

Department of Agriculture and Food: (<http://www.agriculture.gov.ie/>)

**Internet Mapping and Payments system (iMAP):**

The development of iMAP has been completed. The new system allows the Department to streamline interaction with farmers when processing their EU Area Aid payments and reduces the time required to process claims submitted. It has been rolled out to all local and regional offices.

The system has now been extended to allow registered users access to their Area Aid applications over the Internet. A fully developed registration system, to allow access to electronic services, was a pre-requisite to providing access to iMap and to other available and planned electronic services. One such planned service for release in the very near future will allow farmers to submit their annual Area Aid application by SMS (Short Messaging Service) where there is no change to their previous years details.

**Integrated Financial System (SAP):**

The SAP based accounts system successfully produced valuable management information throughout 2002 and fully satisfied EU accounting and reporting requirements. With the implementation of the new system the facility for payment through direct credits to customers' bank accounts is now available.

Phase 2 of the project was implemented in August 2003. This further enhanced the management information capabilities of our SAP/R3 system and also delivered new functionality for purchasing, asset tracking and accounts receivable

**Computerised Intervention/Aids to Private Storage:**

In 2002 the Department undertook the further development of its existing enterprise resource-planning software solution (SAP R/3) to computerise the Intervention and Aids to Private Storage (APS) Market Support Schemes. The focus of the project is on dairy and cereals in the first instance. The system went live in August 2003.

**Corporate Customer System (CCS):**

The Department's Corporate Customer system provides a single comprehensive view of the Department's customers and allows for easier maintenance of accurate customer information. The system is being developed in phases. The facility to enquire on customer information was implemented in September 2002. The system is currently being developed to allow Local Offices to update details for their customers and the rollout of this phase is scheduled to commence towards the end of 2003.

**Department's Website ([www.agriculture.gov.ie](http://www.agriculture.gov.ie)):**

The Department's new Website was launched in June 2003. The redeveloped site has a range of new features and facilitates easier navigation of the site. It has the facility for users to register for relevant updates from the Department. When such content is published to the website, e-mail/SMS messages are issued to those individuals who have registered, informing them that the site has been updated. All new content adheres to the highest international accessibility standards, to facilitate ease of use of the website by disabled users.

Many of the Department's application forms are available for printing from the redeveloped site. All information in the redeveloped site is in XML, thus facilitating its transfer and re-use by other Government agencies.

**Short Messaging Service:**

The short messaging service (SMS) also known as text messaging, which is available from GSM mobile phones, is being used by the Department to further enhance communications with its clients. Two pilot initiatives are underway using this technology, slaughter premium and livestock inspections. It is also planned to allow farmers to use SMS for applications for Area Aid.

**Import Notification System:**

A new system is being developed to allow importers to notify the Department, via the internet, of their intention to import animal by-products. This will replace a number of small Microsoft Access systems, reduce paper work and will improve veterinary/food safety controls.

**Animal Health Computer System (AHCS):**

Testing of the Department's newly developed Animal Health Computer System is currently underway with rollout of the system scheduled to commence at the end of the year. The primary focus of this phase of the system is the replacement and enhancement of the Cattle Disease Testing System currently in use in the Department's District Veterinary Offices. The new system will augment other computer systems developed by the Department in recent years, particularly those relating to cattle traceability. Private veterinary practitioners will be able to interact with the Department's computer system and to input data directly onto its database across the Internet. Provision is being made for testing data to be recorded in the field by veterinary practitioners using hand-held devices and for the upload of this data to the Department's database

**Animal Movement System (AMS):**

A project to redevelop the existing animal movement computer systems commenced in 2002. It is proposed to replace the current Animal Tagging, Registration and Movement systems over the coming years.

**Electronic declaration system for CAP exports (e-SAD):**

It is proposed to develop an electronic declaration system to cater for the submissions of common agricultural product (CAP) export declarations. Under the proposed system, the trader would have the ability to electronically complete and submit the required Customs declarations to the Customs Service. On completion of all Customs formalities, in accordance with the EU regulations, the required information would then also be electronically validated and transmitted to this Department to allow the export refund claim to be processed.

**Electronic Herd Profiles:**

The Department has recently developed a facility to provide farmers with an electronic version of their cattle movement monitoring system (CMMS) data. Herdowners can apply to receive an electronic herd profile, which will contain details of all animals currently held on the system for their herd. The profile data is sent via e-mail.

**IT Security:**

The Department has adopted the ISO17799/BS7799 standard for its IT security. An initial Gap Analysis was undertaken in late 2002 and the analysis has contributed to the work programme for the Department's IT Security Unit in 2003. There will be further work on the Gap Analysis during 2004.

Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government: (<http://www.environ.ie/>)

**Main ICT Developments**

1. E-Government.  
The Department expect to complete the development of a system to allow the payment of Motor Tax online using Laser and Credit cards.  
This system which will be completed by the end of September and will go into live production in mid October to facilitate renewals for November. The Department hope that within 12-18 months up to 10% (worth €50 million) of business will transacted over the internet or through call centres using the internet technology.
2. The Penalty points system has been developed and is currently in operation for three offences (seat belts, speeding and insurance). Over the next 6-9 months depending on the progress of the Garda and court systems up to sixty additional offences will be included and the whole process will be automated which will dramatically improve the efficiency of the system.
3. The Department will implement a new financial management system using Oracle Financials from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2004. The new system as well as consolidating three existing systems (order entry, asset management and payments) will remove a large number of paper transactions from the financial process through the use of electronic signatures. Accrual account will also be implemented within the Department

#### 4. Housing statistics

A new system will enable the collection and assessment of data relating to the purchase of houses each month. This data which will be provided electronically by the major financial institutions will enable the Department to publish a more comprehensive and up to date assessment of house prices and trends in the demand and provision of housing and supporting infrastructure.

Department of Social and Family Affairs: (<http://www.welfare.ie>)

DSFA has an important central role to play in the implementation of eGovernment as it is responsible for the Reach initiative, a joint Project with the Dept of Health & Children to modernise the General Register Office and has legal custody of the Public Service Identity and Public Service Card.

**Reach:** Reach is engaged in final discussions with its four shortlisted suppliers (Accenture, Bearing Point, HP and Siemens) to produce the Public Sector Broker. It is planned to award a contract this year and to implement the first phases of the PSB by the end of H104. The current focus is on producing a production strength messaging hub based on experiences with the Inter-Agency Messaging Service (IAMS).

**GRO:** the GRO programme was a set of parallel projects on organisation, legal underpinnings, technology platform and historical data. All have been delivered at this stage and the system is now at the start of a nationwide rollout. The system is based on 'Internet Technologies' and will provide public on-line facilities in a future phase. It currently uses the IAMS (above) to deliver information electronically to DSFA (and CSO) on Births, Deaths and Marriages. The Department checks the birth data, assigns a Personal Public Services number to the child and returns this PPS number to the GRO.

**Public Service Card:** a consultation process with most of the major public service stakeholders was undertaken. A draft strategy was submitted to and approved by the inter-Departmental group of Secretaries General. Further work is being done on some of the implementation issues with a view to producing a memo for Government in the next couple of months. The basic strategy being advocated is to produce a base card (EMV compliant) for identity, access and payment purposes with 'higher function' cards being produced for particular groups (e.g. driving licence or passport) which would also provide the standard card functions. Emphasis is on the card as key rather than repository of information.

**Public Service Identity:** the Department has the equivalent of a population database in its Central Records systems. One function of its CRS is to support identity processing. The Department has prepared an RFT for building a set of Web Services providing basic identity storage and retrieval to other public service agencies. This PSI service is one of the underpinnings of the PSB being built by Reach. It is hoped to issue the RFT in the near future.

**Internal Broker:** in order to interoperate with the IAMS and the PSB when built, the Department has built a first implementation of an internal messaging broker. The current implementation interacts with IAMS to receive messages from the GRO and pass back responses. It also routes information on new births to the Departments Child Benefit system, which is the first implementation of the Departments Business Object Model (see below). The Child Benefit system adds second and subsequent children to existing claims and notifies the parent of the new payment rates automatically.

**Service Delivery Modernisation:** the Department's scheme systems are internally facing transaction processing systems built on HP's Alpha computers. While these systems will be retained and developed for some time, it plans to develop newer production systems based on an internal Business Object Model (BOM). The BOM is largely being implemented on a Microsoft platform (as a result of open procurement) and it uses the Naked Objects approach to systems development. The first phase of the BOM, which implemented the Child Benefit system, went live late last year and a project to convert it to the .NET platform has now commenced. An RFT for a second phase of implementation is now ready for issue. This phase will further refine the existing objects (e.g. adding functionality to the Customer Object) and will develop new objects to implement some of the Departments pension schemes.

**Future eServices:** the Department will use the basic architecture described above to provide eServices – this involves using Reach IAMS/PSB to deliver requests to its internal broker which will then distribute these to the appropriate elements of the BOM and/or interface mechanisms of its older systems. Implementation of the BOM is a major, multi-phased and multi-year programme of work.

Department of Foreign Affairs: (<http://www.gov.ie/iveagh/>)

#### **European Union Presidency 2004**

The principal focus for ICT development in the Department of Foreign Affairs in 2003 relates to the availability to support Ireland's Presidency of the European Union in 2004. The Department has taken on major projects relating to improvements to the ICT infrastructure present specifically a Windows 2000 active directory design to support our offices worldwide initially focussed on offices on our WAN i.e. HQ, London and the offices of Ireland's Permanent Representation to the European. In conjunction with this design has been the rollout of a new email service built on MS Exchange to replace an existing legacy email system. This development has also necessitated an upgrade to the Department's perimeter defence solutions including related web content virus protection and email screening systems.

In 2003 the Department awarded the contract for the development of the Irish Presidency website. Work on the website is underway and the website will be publicly available in January 2004, although some Press accreditation services will be available from the website in November 2003. The site will be the main vehicle for the publication of documents and news relating to Ireland presidency with material available in English French and the Irish language. Webcast services will be available and it is anticipated that a number of web broadcasts of press conferences will take place over the duration of the Presidency. The Department also envisages the use of SMS services as additional facilities for visiting press and delegates.

The availability of ICT services at Presidency events around Ireland has also necessitated considerable effort from the Departments ICT Unit. The Department will shortly award a contract for the delivery and management of certain services at these events.

#### **Passport Application System**

In addition to immediate Presidency requirements the Department is currently developing a new Passport Application system. The system will deliver more secure passports to customers based on a data card page model. In addition the Department has recently sought proposals for the

development of a new Visa tracking system and a new Financial Management Information system.

Local Government Computer Services Board (LGCSB):(<http://www.lgcsb.ie/>)

### **Local Government**

A number of significant projects have been advanced in the local government sector.

### **Broadband infrastructure**

Local authorities are working in partnership with the DCMNR to build the 19 town MANs, where considerable progress has been made, and are on target to complete these projects by mid-2004.

### **Planning systems**

The internal applications to support future online access to planning information in local authorities are now in place in the vast majority of local authorities. This includes access to all aspects of the administration of planning applications, the enforcements process and unauthorised development. Online access to the planning administration database is running successfully in Westmeath County Council ([www.westmeathcoco.ie](http://www.westmeathcoco.ie)), and a roll-out plan for the rest of the relevant local authorities is being drawn up. A Working Group composed of DOEHLG, LGCSB, An Bord Pleanala and local authorities is carrying out a review of the entire sectoral business processes for the planning function, to agree a road-map for further development of the ICT systems for planning in the future. Other interested parties will also be consulted as part of this process. The next version of the system will enable the online input of Planning Submissions on live Planning applications.

### **E-Democracy**

#### **1. Planning services**

Applications to enable on-line access to Draft Development Plans, using geographic information systems technologies are now on pilot in three counties (Laois, Westmeath and South Tipperary). Following feedback from the pilot sites, the underlying application is being modified and will then be made available to all local authorities. The facilities currently available include the online submission of comments on the Draft Development Plan, the ability to link an area on the map with the planning objectives for that area and displaying on the map all aspects of the Draft Development Plan.

#### **2. Electoral Register**

All local authorities are now running the LGCSB-developed Intranet electoral register system. The functionality is now available to enable any voter to check if they are on their local register. This cannot be implemented without Phase 1 of the PSB to ensure Data Protection concerns can be taken onboard. It can be made available as a launch service for the PSB.

#### **3. Electronic Voting**

LGCSB is assisting the DOEHLG and local authorities to implement the new Electronic Voting system in all Polling Centres for the local elections in 2004

**E-Inclusion measures**

LGCSB and South Dublin County Council have developed a proof-of-concept website called Mobhaile which creates a platform for all local authority held spatial information to be displayed, with facilities to enable businesses, community groups and public sector organisations to display their services across the three dimensions of Function, Location and Time. Utilising these simple principles allows complex information to be presented in an easy to understand format, using categories, maps and activity times. The prototype website also utilises multimedia concepts to add an extra dimension to the site, and aims to pull together the online presences of all entities in a town/community, thus stimulating the demand for further online activity. The ISF has agreed to fund the further development of the prototype and it is intended to work with a small number of pilot local authority sites (working closely with the County/City Development Board structures) during 2004 to progress this initiative.

**Hosting Services**

As an example of sharing infrastructure and resources, LGCSB, with the assistance of the ISF has set up a hosting centre for public sector users. The services offered include web-site hosting on a 24 x 7 basis, fire-walling, security, resilience and expert consultancy. The service also supports a significant level of R&D work being carried out by LGCSB to assess the suitability of emerging technologies for use by the public sector. Examples of web-sites currently hosted in the LGCSB include a significant number of local authorities, the e-tenders website, reachservices.ie, gov.ie among others. As part of the Reachservices.ie portal, a further e-Receipts facility has been put in place. This enables any reachservices agency to set up forms and associate an online payment with the form. The e-receipts service is available to any government Department or agency. LGCSB is working with Dublin City Council to enable online payment for commercial rates, with a target date of year-end for the system to be live.

**Enabling E-Commerce/E-procurement**

All local authorities are now running with accrual-based financial systems, supporting all key financial functions relating to both income and expenditure. These systems form the platform on which future e-procurement and e-commerce facilities will be enabled. Pilot e-procurement projects are underway, and electronic exchange of invoices using XML is operational between LGCSB and pilot local authorities.

**E-Government Readiness project** (Applying the Security policy and Architecture standards in local authorities)

LGCSB is working with local authorities to carry out a full security and network audit of their local ICT infrastructure. The project then upgrades and standardises local authorities infrastructure, thus ensuring that all local authorities will be confident in their abilities to deliver electronic services across their entire networks in a reliable and safe manner. Considerable progress has been achieved with this project, and it is on target for completion by early 2004.

The Health Boards Executive: (<http://www.hebe.ie/>)

**Information and Communications Technology in the Irish Health Sector**

I.C.T. developments are taking place against the background of the strategic development of the Irish health system, laid out in the Health Strategy, 2001 entitled "Quality and Fairness – A Health System for You" and the recently announced reform programme that represents the most significant structural and organisational reform of the health system since the early 1970s.

Many ICT developments are under way within the health system. The current policy is to invest in systems that can serve the needs of all parts of the public health services.

The principal ongoing nationally focussed strategic initiatives include:

- A strategic I.C.T. /eHealth framework that incorporates a vision, strategy, action plan and policies / standards framework is being prepared for the entire Irish health system. The ICT Strategy visualises key developments leading to an ICT enabled world- class health service in Ireland.
- A state of the art Hospital Information System (H.I.S.) for implementation in all publicly-funded hospitals in the State has been selected. This will be further supported by a separate procurement of an appropriate Laboratory management and information suite that has just commenced.
- The S.A.P. Human Resources, Financial and Materials modules are being implemented throughout the public care system.
- The health sector is well advanced in developing eProcurement as part of the Government's eProcurement Programme.
- eGovernment components are being developed in the areas of:
  - A national health services portal;
  - Linkages with, and development of, national authentication, authorisation and messaging infrastructures that are designed to promote and facilitate integrated citizen focused government services;
  - Cross- sectoral interoperability frameworks.

For more complete details on the above see the 2002 Annual Report of the Health Boards Executive at <http://www.hebe.ie/Publications/>