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Topic (i): IT governance in statistical offices

IT GOVERNANCE

Supporting Paper

Submitted by the Central Statistics Office, Ireland¹

I. INTRODUCTION

1. The CSO is developing a new Data Management System (DMS), an outline of this was presented to MSIS 2003². At an early stage in the development of the DMS it became obvious that the current IT Governance in the Central Statistics Office (CSO) was incapable of properly supporting the DMS. This document sets out the basis for the new IT Governance in the CSO. It also covers the delivery of IT services to customers in the new DMS environment.
2. The document also makes the assumption that VAX will be closed in mid-2006 and that there will not be any requirements for VAX support post DMS implementation, apart from a short period of parallel running.
3. The main business drivers for the new IT Governance are:
 - (a) The inability of the current IT structure to support properly the DMS;
 - (b) To improve internal customer service by providing them with a single point of contact.

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² Future Information Architecture - Ireland - CES.AC.71/2003/24.

II. SERVICE DEFINITIONS

A. Applications and Toolsets

4. The various applications and toolsets in use are categorized into core and non-core, and are given in the following table:

Table 1: Applications and Toolsets Categorization

Term	Definition	Comment
Core Application	DMS CARS CBR	New Data Management System Classification System Central Business Register
Non-Core Applications	BoPFacts	Balance of Payments System
Core User Toolset	DMS Lotus Notes SAS MS Office TPL PC-AXIS	Word, Excel, Powerpoint, excludes Access
Non-Core User Toolset	Macromedia Contribute 3 Corel Ventura	Web Publishing
Strategic Technology	Windows 2000/XP Sybase BEA Weblogic Teleforms Blaise Lotus Notes SAS	Scanning
Non-Strategic Technology	Windows NT Centura Informatica	Used for data migration during DMS project

5. Core applications are those used by the majority of business units in their day-to-day business and will need to have a high level of availability. The IT Department must not only have the technical skills, but also sufficient amount of business knowledge to support effectively the application at all levels of support (i.e. help desk through to complex problem resolution).

6. Applications are used by one (or possibly two) business units and considered non-core. However, they are important to the business unit and must be given the necessary level of support as defined by a Service Level Agreement (SLA).

7. Core end-user tools are those used by the majority of the CSO business units as part of their day-to-day business. The IT Department must have the appropriate level of skills to provide all levels of support (i.e. help desk through to complex problem resolution).

8. Specialized end-user tools that are used in one or several areas are considered non-core and apart from procurement and possible installation, the IT Department will have no other responsibility for these.

B. Technology and Management

9. Strategic technology is the technology being used at a point in time. It is important that it is managed carefully as it may have implications across a system or a number of systems when introducing either an upgrade to an existing technology or a new technology product.

10. Non-strategic technology is typically legacy and there should always be a plan in place to remove any non-strategic technology from the production environment. Keeping non-strategic technology in production will have an additional support overhead, will be expensive to maintain and will probably mean that IT is not providing the level of service demanded by the business.

11. There will be a constant review of strategic decisions, with an updated strategy being formally approved by the CSO Board on an annual basis. This will be the responsibility of the IT Director.

12. When implementing any IT system it is important that a Service Level Agreement (SLA) is agreed between IT and the business. In the case of a corporate system such as the DMS, it is essential that formal SLAs be in place from day one. The IT Department must also ensure that these are backed up with corresponding SLAs between IT and its various suppliers and vendors (both internal and external).

13. It is the responsibility of the Service Delivery Manager to ensure operational service is delivered in accordance with the agreed SLA. When making any changes or enhancements to existing applications or implementing new ones, the impact on the SLA must be taken into account. Any organizational structure must ensure that there is a close working relationship between the Service Delivery Manager and the rest of the organization.

14. The DMS, like any other client server application, is a complex system and a change to one area could impact on other areas of the system. For example, a server operating system update, could impact on the application or database running on it and cause the system to fall over. It is therefore vitally important that any change, however small, is managed carefully, its potential impact across the whole system assessed and implemented in a controlled way by the use of formal Change Management procedures. The number of changes carried out at any one time must also be kept to a minimum and a back-out plan agreed and understood by all parties.

III ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

15. The following roles and responsibilities are deemed to be those necessary to properly deliver IT services.

16. The IT Director is ultimately accountable for all aspects of the IT Department. He is responsible for all financial/budgeting matters and ensuring that the resourcing levels are adequate to meet the agreed SLAs. He is also accountable for developing and maintaining the IT strategy; this he does through consultation with the service delivery and systems development managers.

17. The Corporate Systems Manager is responsible for the ongoing maintenance of all core applications (including some legacy applications). He is also responsible for working with the business to identify opportunities for further enhancements to existing applications and the design and development of new applications. He also has a responsibility to advise the IT Director on application architecture and future direction.

18. The Customer Services Manger is responsible for both the service delivery and client services. Responsibility for business continuity and capacity planning also lies here.

19. The Services Delivery Manager is responsible for all operational service matters concerning the infrastructure (LAN, WAN, database administration, e-mail etc.). He is also responsible for ensuring that the service delivered meets the agreed SLAs. He will also participate in defining IT strategy from a support perspective. While the resolution of application problems falls within the scope of the Corporate Services Manager, the Service Delivery Manager will be held accountable if the agreed SLAs are not met. To ensure that there are no misunderstandings or conflict in priorities there are internal IT SLAs.

20. The Client Services Manager is responsible for the help desk and help desk environment (i.e. client facing services). There is an intelligent Help Desk with the aim of achieving better than the first call resolution level agreed in the appropriate SLA. This is achieved by having skilled technical staff on the help desk, who are regularly rotated between the help desk and second level support. First level support is the help desk; second level support provides desk-side support; and third level support are the senior technical staff who would normally only become involved in complex problems.

21. At all times the Help Desk is responsible for all problem management activities (i.e. reporting back to the client, status reports etc.) irrespective of who owns the problem resolution (be it an internal group or external vendor)