

Agency success stories



February 2005

Table of contents

Introduction	3
The Assets Recovery Agency	4
British Waterways	5
Companies House	8
Criminal Records Bureau	9
United Kingdom Debt Management Office	11
The Forensic Science Service	13
The Forestry Commission	15
Insolvency Service	16
Land Registry	17
The Maritime and Coastguard Agency	19
The National Weights and Measures Laboratory	21
OGCbuying.solutions	23
Ordnance Survey	24
The Planning Inspectorate	28
Scottish Court Service	30
Small Business Service	31
The Valuation Office Agency	32

Introduction

On 24 and 25 November 2004, the United Kingdom Agency Chief Executives' (ACE) conference took place at the Civil Service College at Sunningdale Park. The event brought together Chief Executives of Government Agencies and some NDPBs to share and explore best practice and discuss efficient delivery and common future challenges. It was the first conference of its kind planned by Agency Chief Executives for their colleagues.

Agencies employ approximately 75% of the Civil Service and provide front-line services, often to world-leading standards. The conference identified a common agenda for Agencies and as a result of feedback from the conference a more formal network for Chief Executives is being considered.

This document is a collection of recent success stories drawn from the Agencies. They have been sent in by the Chief Executives and reflect the variety and scope of Agency activity. However, they describe a number of common themes, notably:

- enhancing customer satisfaction
- improving efficiency and value
- building partnerships
- innovating and embracing change

Contact details for each of the Agencies can be found at the beginning of each new section. If you would care to know more about a particular case study the Agencies have all indicated that they would be happy for you to contact them.



Vanessa Lawrence
Director General and Chief Executive, Ordnance Survey
Conference Chair

The Assets Recovery Agency



For further information::

T 020 7029 5700

E enquiries@ara.gsi.gov.uk

W <http://www.assetsrecovery.gov.uk>

The Assets Recovery Agency is a new non-Ministerial department that has been in existence for just over 18 months. Set up to recover the proceeds of crime, the Agency has made a steady start, focusing on the twin ambitions of building a successful, efficient and vibrant organisation committed to delivery, and to taking forward specific cases.

In terms of operational successes in the first 18 months, three examples are given below:

- a) Joint work with London Borough of Waltham Forest to take action against an individual who sold counterfeit mobile phone covers. Previous convictions had led to small-scale fines, and had not changed his behaviour. Criminal confiscation action by the Agency in partnership with London Borough of Waltham Forest led to him receiving £50 fines in respect of four offences, and a confiscation order of £330,000. This case demonstrates our ability to take new legislation and use it in partnership to discourage those you have been making money out of unlawful conduct.
- b) £3.6m civil recovery order made against the assets of three well-known drug dealers and money launderers. Each of them claimed that the money was theirs, but the Agency by working in partnership with HM Customs & Excise and well supported by independent barristers enabled us to achieve the largest civil recovery order to date. It also achieved good coverage in the North West where the individuals had been well known as career criminals who had previously not been touched by the criminal justice system in the UK.
- c) The recovery of over £1.25m worth of assets from James Johnston, a drug dealer and paramilitary in Northern Ireland who was unable to be prosecuted as a result of having been shot by his former colleagues. The Agency obtained a settlement of the full amount of Mr Johnston's recoverable property from his estate, and was able to use this to boost public reassurance, by such things as a public and well-publicised auction of his former matrimonial home.

In terms of governance and establishment of the Agency, the first 18 months have seen:

- full Investors In People accreditation
- quality assurance measures for the Centre of Excellence which trains Financial Investigators and has trained over 2,000 individuals to date
- quality accreditation for the legal function of the Agency
- an unqualified set of resource accounts for our first full year of operation
- successful and continued high levels of interest in recruitment to roles within the Agency, supplemented by building a culture of inclusivity and genuine participation

These are very small beginnings in a very large fight against crime. The challenges for the Agency going forward are to undertake more cases and to increase the outcomes in relation to the inputs of staff time and external costs. Whilst there are still a number of legal challenges awaited, the impact on criminality and on the public reassurance agenda is starting to have an effect, which we hope to build on over the next year.

British Waterways



For further information:

T 01923 201329

E pressoffice@britishwaterways.co.uk

W <http://www.britishwaterways.co.uk>

Waterways Restoration

Background

At the start of the 21st century, after more than 150 years of decline, the UK's waterway network began to expand once again when the biggest ever programme of restorations was completed by British Waterways. The remarkable turnaround owes a great deal to the hard work and determination of volunteers, local authorities, the private sector, development agencies and funding partners. The Millennium Commission and Heritage Lottery Fund have made significant contributions in recent years as has the Government which, in publishing 'Waterways for Tomorrow', demonstrated a commitment and belief in the future of the network.

Achievements

In the last few years, the restoration of six major waterways (Huddersfield Narrow Canal, Rochdale Canal, Kennet & Avon Canal, Chesterfield Canal, Forth & Clyde Canal, and Union Canal) has been completed; a new navigation (Millennium Ribble Link) created; an historic structure (Anderton Boat Lift) has been restored to working order; and the internationally recognised Falkirk Wheel built. 220 miles of navigable waterway have been added to the nation's infrastructure. As part of these projects, British Waterways has also created major tourist attractions: the Anderton Boat Lift Operations Centre and The Falkirk Wheel. The experience gained from the success of these projects is proving a powerful driver for further restoration schemes.

All of these projects have brought social, environmental, heritage and economic benefits to their regions and the communities that they serve, with each restored waterway breathing life back into their neighbourhoods. Projects such as the restoration of the Kennet & Avon Canal and the Forth & Clyde and Union Canals in Scotland have:

- increased visitor spending
- given a significant boost to local employment and the future of local businesses
- acted as a catalyst for regeneration for other developments
- improved the quality of life for local people, as well as protecting listed structures and offering sheltered habitats for endangered wildlife.

The restoration of the Kennet & Avon Canal has supported the creation of 413 new jobs locally and 80% of leisure and tourism businesses have had an increase in turnover over the last three years, with 46% reporting an increase in staff. In addition, 7.7 million trips have been made each year to the Kennet & Avon Canal and spending is up 20% from 1995 to £26 million per annum whilst the target figure of 3.5 million visit each year to the Forth & Clyde and Union Canals has already been achieved and spending from additional visitors is estimated at £1.4 million.

Economic impact studies also estimate that visitors to the re-opened Huddersfield Narrow Canal and Rochdale Canal spend an extra £2.5 million and £4 million respectively in the local areas each year.

Summary

Over the last decade, British Waterways has been involved in £2 billion worth of urban and rural regeneration. The same towns and cities that turned their backs on the waterways in the years of decline have rediscovered historic canals, basins, locks, warehouses and wharves as the focal points of vibrant renaissance.

In simple terms, people want to live, work, socialise and relax by water. Today waterways are an acknowledged regenerative catalyst, delivering tangible economic, social and environmental benefits to the lives of millions across the nation, bringing about inner city and rural renewal throughout the country. Increased visitors and new business activities have led to increased funding and a more secure and sustainable future for the waterways.

British Waterways and Waterscape.com

Background

Waterscape.com, a wholly-owned self-financing subsidiary of British Waterways, is a comprehensive and inspirational online guide to all Britain's rivers, lakes and canals. Launched in July 2003, Waterscape.com is designed to appeal to both existing visitors to the waterways and users of waterside products and services, as well as inspiring new audiences to visit Britain's waterways. The information and resources on the Waterscape.com website are designed to appeal to everyone looking to get the most out of their leisure time.

Waterscape.com generates revenue through advertising and sponsorship on the website, as well as through commissions on sales of holidays and short breaks. All surplus income generated by Waterscape.com will be reinvested by British Waterways to improve its waterways and to protect them for future generations to enjoy.

Achievements

Waterscape.com is a unique partnership between the three leading navigational authorities in Britain: British Waterways, The Environment Agency and The Broads Authority, working with VisitBritain and a number of SMEs. It represents a good example of several public agencies and the private sector working together to a common aim – to promote Britain's inland waterways for tourism and leisure. The partners were recently involved in the production of Waterscape.com's first offline publication - *Enjoy Britain's Waterscape* – which provides, for the first time, extensive information on boating, walking, cycling and angling holidays on all inland waterways in Britain as well as profiling all major waterway destinations around the UK.

Waterscape.com received over one million visits to the website in an 11-month period, from January 2004 to November 2004 and is:

- attracting major organisations to advertise on the website itself;
- drawing in new customers to make visits to the waterside and book waterside holidays;
- creating interest in the media, both press and broadcast;
- securing partners for current and future projects from a large number of waterside businesses and visitor attractions

There is strong support for Waterscape.com within the tourism industry and from Government Ministers:

The Rt. Hon Alun Michael MP, Waterways Minister, helped Waterscape.com launch the inaugural Waterscape.com Business Awards in 2003, commenting: "By recognising the value of excellence in business, the Waterscape.com Business Awards will provide a welcome boost to our waterside economy. This scheme will ensure that Britain's inland waterways are recognised as a valuable leisure destination, helping to raise the profile of one of the country's greatest assets."

The Rt. Hon Richard Caborn MP, Minister for Sport and Tourism, helped Waterscape.com to launch *Enjoy Britain's Waterscape* in November 2004 saying, "Not only will it encourage more people to spend time by Britain's historic and beautiful inland waterways, but it also represents an excellent example of several public agencies and the private sector working together to a common aim – to promote Britain's inland waterways for tourism and leisure."

Tom Wright, Chief Executive of VisitBritain, says, "As a major new tourism marketing project, Waterscape.com represents an important development in the industry."

Summary

Waterscape.com has already established itself as an important online UK travel & leisure destination, helping to push Britain's rivers, lakes and canals to the top of the tourism agenda and attracting new visitors to the waterways.

Property and Regeneration

Background

British Waterways manages a nationwide property estate valued at over £400 million – comprising modern commercial and residential developments and 'brownfield' development land as well as the operational boatyards, docks, historic warehouses, lock cottages, marinas and industrial estates associated with the history of the inland waterways.

Achievements

In 2003/4 British Waterways earned £24million from property, an increase of 26% over the last five years, following a successful programme of property disposals, rent reviews and re-investment into property. Over the same period, British Waterways' returns from its property estate have regularly outperformed the IPD benchmark index. By making effective use of its assets, British Waterways is able to generate significant income to reinvest in the waterways to ensure a long-term, sustainable future for generations to enjoy.

British Waterways undertakes the vast majority of its property development activity through joint ventures with private partners and these have, over the last ten years, produced some striking success stories – including the regenerated waterfronts of Birmingham, Edinburgh, Manchester, Gloucester, Sheffield and Leeds as well as prestigious schemes such as Paddington Basin and Docklands in London. The transformation of once neglected, run-down backwaters, into vibrant, mixed-use developments has been the most visible sign of 'the new canal age' and proved how waterways can act as catalysts for wider regeneration.

With the support of the Government, British Waterways set up the innovative public-private property partnership, ISIS Waterside Regeneration, a joint venture with AMEC Developments and Morley Fund Management's Igloo Regeneration Fund. With eleven initial schemes, including projects in London, Glasgow, Nottingham, Manchester, Leeds, Birmingham and Stourport, ISIS is enhancing British Waterways' ability to bring forward profitable schemes to generate long-term revenue, while continuing the commitment to develop waterway sites for environmental and social benefits.

British Waterways has key property development partnerships in both Edinburgh and London. Our £60million joint venture, Edinburgh Quay, will provide 11,000 sq metres of office space, 3,145 sq metres of leisure space, and 62 residential apartments, and is due for completion in summer 2004. It will provide the only Grade A office accommodation available in the city at present and has already pre-let space.

British Waterways is also in the process of selecting a joint venture development partner to regenerate Wood Wharf in London's Docklands. The eight-hectare (20 acre) site is immediately adjacent to Canary Wharf and is estimated to have an end value of around £2billion.

Summary

The property and land surrounding inland waterways are an important part of maintaining an attractive and vibrant network, offering opportunities for British Waterways to participate in urban and rural regeneration projects and provide a crucial income source to help secure the future of the waterways. British Waterways continues to use its waterway assets to earn income in ways that are relevant for the 21st century and to create much wider public benefit.

Companies House



For further information::

T 029 2038 0929

E enquiries@companies-house.gov.uk

W <http://www.companieshouse.gov.uk>

Electronic Incorporations

Incorporating a company electronically is one of the Government's key services identified by the e-Envoy as having the greatest potential to transform services to the public.

With over 300,000 incorporations every year, the ability to incorporate a company electronically is a key stop towards an electronic operation in Companies House, one of our key strategic objectives.

Our service was geared towards customers who regularly incorporate companies such as company registration agents. They, along with partners from the software development industry, were actively involved during the development stage of the service.

Customers have been keen to reap the many benefits offered by electronic delivery, such as speed of processing, security and quality of the data appearing on the public record. Most electronically filed companies are incorporated within 24 hours of receipt compared to the 5 days it may take those filing on paper. Indeed, one customer has quoted 21 minutes as the record for receiving an incorporation certificate after lodging his application. The data supplied during an electronic incorporation is applied directly to the public record after it has been verified by Companies House's systems.

The service has realised many other benefits for customers. These include reduced rejection rates of around 5% compared to the typical 10% for paper incorporations. Rejected applications are also re-processed more quickly as customers are normally able to re-submit corrected applications within the same working day.

Since the launch of the service in 2001, take-up has been very encouraging. At present the electronic incorporation service accounts for 73% of company incorporations. Although take-up of the service has been rapid since initial launch, growth in take-up continues to the present day as new customers are keen to enjoy the many benefits the service offers.

During 2002-2003 and 2003-2004 Companies House experienced a dramatic growth of over 90% in the number of companies applying for incorporation. The majority of these were processed electronically which meant that Companies House was able to handle this extra demand with no impact on service and little increase in resources.

Criminal Records Bureau



For further information::
 T 0870 90 90 811
 W <http://www.crb.gov.uk>

The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) was established as an Executive Agency on 1 September 2003, providing wider access to criminal record information through its Disclosure service. This service enables organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors to make safer recruitment decisions by identifying candidates who may be unsuitable for certain work, especially that involving children or vulnerable adults.

The CRB delivers the Disclosure service through strategic partnerships with Capita, the police, Department for Education and Skills, Department of Health and Registered Bodies.

Since becoming an Agency, the CRB has:

- Improved performance and built a solid foundation on which to develop the Disclosure service to meet the expectations of Government and the general public
- Recovered from the service delivery difficulties of the previous year (before Agency status) and more crucially has met its published service standards for issuing Disclosures since July 2003
- Doubled its capacity to process Disclosure applications from 25,000 to over 50,000 per week
- Increased both system and service capacity to enable the Disclosure service to be extended to around ½ million people working in the care sector, providing greater protection to the elderly
- Extended its Overseas information service to more than 17 countries
- Improved business process to ensure smooth workflow and greater accuracy
- Established single, accountable management arrangements place to oversee the entire management and delivery of end-to-end process
- Established a number of governance committees to oversee key aspects of our development programme and day-to-day operation
- Achieved internal efficiency saving resulting in a 16% reduction in the cost of producing a Disclosure
- Published a 3-year strategic plan to provide direction for the CRB and its staff on how the Agency will develop and mature over the coming years
- Successfully renegotiated its contract with its service delivery partner, Capita. The new contract is a major step forward for the CRB as it now contains:
 - improved performance criteria that will greatly assist further improvements to the service to protect society's most vulnerable members
 - planned efficiency savings, from October 2004, resulting in a reduction in the price paid to Capita for processing each Disclosure application
 - The ability to achieve year-on-year operational cost reductions with further incentives to reduce operational costs over the lifetime of the contact
 - Pricing levels matched to guaranteed volumes, agreed on a bi-annual basis
 - Performance measures that relate to the process used by the service not to one that was changed before the CRB's operational launch
 - Far greater clarity of roles and responsibilities within the partnership.

- Undertaken customer research, that showed our customers recognise the improvements we have made and value of the service provided:
 - 66% of those questioned said that the Disclosure service has improved; and
 - 71% said that Disclosures are useful in making recruitment decisions.

United Kingdom Debt Management Office

United Kingdom Debt Management Office	For further information::
	T 020 7862 6532
	E pressofficer@dmo.gsi.gov.uk
	W http://www.dmo.gov.uk

Dematerialisation of £ Treasury Bill Issuance

In April 2000, the United Kingdom Debt Management Office (DMO), an executive agency of HM Treasury, took over the responsibility for the issuance of short-term £ money market instruments known as Treasury bills from the Bank of England. This function involved the sale of Treasury bills to the DMO's wholesale financial market counterparties; the subsequent settlement - exchanging the bills for cash - with these; the preparation and printing of the physical bills in the required denominations; and the depositing of these with the Bank of England's safekeeping "depository" facilities in the Central Moneymarkets Office ("CMO"). The DMO was charged by the Bank for this service on a cost per bill basis and was also charged when money market participants needed to split the bills into smaller denominations - even though the DMO had no control over this. This meant that there were considerable settlement costs attached to £ Treasury bill issuance.

Although the CMO worked well, it had some drawbacks:

- It was a physical depository for the instruments with transfers of bills needing to be effected manually.
- It was not an "assured payment" system, which meant that settlement monies did not pass across bank accounts until the end of day rather than intra-day thereby exposing the DMO and other participants to risk of intra-day bank failure.
- The physical bills could not easily be transferred between holders for example to pledge as collateral.

During 2000, the responsibility for the Central Gilts Office (CGO) and Central Moneymarkets Office was transferred to CREST - the company responsible for the CREST equity settlements system in the UK. The logical next step was to integrate the CMO system into CREST, but this would be far more difficult as the systems were completely different and would also require legislation to "dematerialise" - transferring the physical bills into an electronic form - money market instruments ("MMIs") including £ Treasury bills.

As the issuer of £ Treasury bills, the DMO had a vested interest in the success of the integration as

- It would have distinct advantages over the then CMO set-up.
- It would reduce settlement costs by virtue of using the same single settlement platform as used for gilts and the elimination of the paper instruments.
- In terms of settlement, it would introduce Delivery Versus Payment thus eliminating intra-day settlement risk
- It would allow greater flexibility in the uses of £ Treasury bills and would facilitate their being pledged as collateral by electronic means.
- It would introduce a greater market profile for £ Treasury bills by virtue of their being available to all CREST participants rather than just the members of CMO.

The DMO therefore worked closely with CREST, Treasury Legal Advisers and the Bank of England, to ensure a smooth transition from paper to electronic bills.

The integration successfully took place in September 2003 with the first £ Treasury bills being issued into CREST on 15th September 2003, with all the outstanding £ Treasury bills from CMO being transferred on 29th September 2003.

Since dematerialisation, the annual cost of £ Treasury bill issuance to the DMO has declined rapidly and now forms around 5% of the pre-dematerialisation cost - which has already provided

and should continue to provide considerable savings to the taxpayer. In addition, as dematerialised £ Treasury bills are now recorded electronically, they are more easily transferable which should aid their liquidity in the wholesale financial markets and thereby reduce the cost of issuance to the Exchequer.

The Forensic Science Service



THE FORENSIC SCIENCE SERVICE®

For further information::

T 0121 329 5295

E Communications@fss.pnn.police.ukW <http://www.forensic.gov.uk>

Timeliness

The Forensic Science Service became an Agency in 1991 and simultaneously introduced full cost recovery through charging for its services. The purpose of the latter was to allow the service to expand/contract to a size that was supported by its customers buying decisions. Our contribution to the CJS over the years has meant that we have grown from £20m to about £170m and our market share is almost 90%.

Our primary role has been to support the Home Office in its aim of reducing crime and securing the detection, prosecution and conviction of those responsible for it. In this respect, the ability of the authorities to act quickly is a key feature. Our focus in recent years has been, therefore, to make improvements in the timeliness of the service we provide to our principal customers, the 43 police forces of England and Wales and HM Customs and Excise. Last year our target of turning round 95% of cases within 42 days required a 50% improvement in performance. This was achieved in the provinces and, including London, an 89% achievement overall was returned. Over the next two years, further improvements are planned together with other service enhancements geared to producing even greater gains for our customers and the Criminal Justice System. This year our target is 95% of cases in 35 days.

Much of the progress we have made has been the result of skilfully targeted investment initiatives in our operational functions and infrastructure under the direction of our corporate change programme. The programme has had a major impact on organisational development by ensuring that investment has been aligned with business requirements and that business development functions have linked closely with operational areas. The initiatives which have had the most significant effect on service provision have involved the further automation of scientific processes, the introduction of 'in house' developed expert systems to aid interpretation and the extension of the operational management system, launched in 2002, to integrate human resources, finance and procurement functions. The principal deployment of automation has been within our DNA processes with the implementation of automated lines for the profiling DNA material. This automation represented yet another world first in forensic science.

e-Procurement

On December 1st 2003, the Forensic Science Service went live with the Phase Futures project to deliver a new enterprise-wide SAP E Business procurement solution, fully integrated with SAP finance & costing and stock inventory management. The project was delivered on time and within budget, with no scope deviations from the initial specification.

The FSS now has over 800 live users who are able to request and authorise goods and services from on-line catalogues and to communicate electronically both internally and with suppliers. The agency has thereby fulfilled the government initiative to be fully electronic in its requisitioning process through to an electronic Purchase Order being received by the supplier. The solution fully supports Home Office governance principles as well as utilising commercial leading-practice.

The Procurement Department will now ensure that best value is both achieved and maintained. The payback period is less than 2 years.

In order to achieve such a demanding scope, the FSS partnered with Cap Gemini Ernst & Young (CGE&Y), one of the world's largest providers of Consulting, Technology and Outsourcing services. We used proprietary acceleration techniques, the combined FSS and CGE&Y project team delivered in only 6 months. It is thought to be one of the first projects to deliver a full SAP E Business procurement system simultaneously with a full SAP back office in either public or private sector.

The main challenges were to ensure that the Project was well defined in its User Requirement/Scope and that the technical specification was maintained and controlled throughout the Project Life Cycle. The dedicated project team was hand picked with experts in their relevant fields from across the FSS. The key success factors were regular team meetings, teamwork, clear / timely communications and long hours as and when needed.

The main issues the Project Team experienced were development of new Business Processes, the definition of new staff functional roles and re-enforcing training instructions. Tailored one-day courses were developed for busy senior managers.

The project was awarded a status of 'Well Managed' in a recent Home Office Internal Audit. We celebrated success of this Quality run Project with the team at the Birmingham Headquarters.

National Tripartite Protocol

The National Tripartite Protocol draws together the Police, Crown Prosecution Service and the Forensic Science Service (FSS).

The National Protocol sets out a framework for introducing new ways of working and communication between the three agencies at the local level. It also facilitates the introduction of statutory charging arrangements and wider CJS reforms.

More specifically it will enable a more focussed and tailored use of forensic science, which will in turn improve performance and value for money.

Implementation of the protocols will also reduce delays and ultimately contribute to improving public confidence in the CJS.

The National Protocol is signed by:

- Mr Ken McDonald QC, (Director of Public Prosecutions)
- Mr David Coleman (Chief Constable of Derbyshire Constabulary and ACPO lead on forensic science)
- Dr David Werrett, Chief Executive of the Forensic Science Service.

A number of local protocols have subsequently been signed. Many more are being developed across England and Wales.

The process of introducing the Local Protocols is being overseen by a Central Tripartite Steering Group.

This initiative serves as an example of good practice in how to cross inter-agency boundaries and translate National initiatives into effective local action.

The Forestry Commission



For further information::

T 0131 334 0303

E enquiries@forestry.gsi.gov.uk

W <http://www.forestry.gov.uk>

Land Regeneration and Urban Greening

The Forestry Commission is England's largest landowner. Over the last five years, it has created over 1200 hectares of 'community woodland' mainly in and around urban centres, delivering a rich mosaic of greenspace habitats, from formal open grassland to plantation and native woodland. Woodland and other greenspace can provide a wide range of socio-economic, health and environmental benefits, including amenity, recreation and sport, economic regeneration of deprived areas and urban biodiversity. The urban green agenda is increasingly seen as a vital one in urban renaissance, and has been championed vigorously by ODPM, English Partnerships and the Regional Development Agencies amongst others. Forest Research, the research agency of the Forestry Commission, has been pivotal in this process, providing the science basis for the community woodland policy, defining and communicating best practice guidance, helping to provide robust tools so that best practice is taken up, in liaison and partnership with the other important government department and agency players.

Forest Research has been studying how to establish or re-establish quality woodland on sites affected by mining or other industrial activity for several decades, and is the foremost authority in Britain in this area, having provided authoritative guidance to the Forestry Commission, Department of the Environment, ODPM, Environment Agency and English Partnerships amongst others. In recent years, the agency has extended this remit to critically examine how sustainable woodland should be established on brownfield land, including that which is contaminated by organic and inorganic pollutants. In 2003, it began participation as a partner in the EPSRC SUBR:IM (Sustainable Urban Brownfield Regeneration: Integrated Management) research consortium. This brought together eight major research institutions to work on eleven projects linking science and social science disciplines to help tackle brownfield research problems. Forest Research is tasked with developing integrated remediation and greening solutions which are sustainable from an economic, environmental and social perspective. The research is also considering the potential impacts of climate change, an area also supported by recent funding from Defra. Our success in researching brownfield problems has been further financially supported by ODPM and CL:AIRE (Contaminated Land: Applications in Real Environments). Research takes a genuinely holistic standpoint, examining how greening of brownfield land can aid waste recycling and minimisation, atmospheric pollution abatement, control of water quality, as well as providing people with valuable components of the urban landscape. Research methodologies are diverse, from microbial bioengineering through laboratory, nursery and field experimentation to questionnaire survey and biophysical modelling.

Forest Research has made a real difference to the prospect of sustainable woodland on brownfield land in urban areas, for the benefit of society as a whole. By its research, it has demonstrated an appreciation of and sensitivity to the wider aspects of Government urban policy, and an ability to work with a range of partners to produce solutions which satisfy societal and environmental needs. Moreover, its science has been well regarded by peer review, both at home and abroad.

Insolvency Service



For further information::

T 020 7291 6895

W <http://www.insolvency.gov.uk>

The Enterprise Act 2002 – Ensuring that major insolvency reforms really would ‘deliver’ on the ground

Unusually (but not uniquely) the Insolvency Service has the policy lead on all insolvency issues whilst at the same time it has responsibility, through the network of Official Receivers in England and Wales, for delivery of that policy. Official Receivers and their specialist insolvency staff, like authorised insolvency practitioners, act as insolvency office-holders and therefore have a vast store of practical, day-to-day experience of the working of the law. Ensuring that the radical reforms that ministers wanted were put through whilst at the same time ensuring that all the major stakeholders were on board was a task made considerably more achievable by having policy and delivery co-located in the agency. Colleagues responsible for the legislative project were able to deal authoritatively with practitioners and to identify special pleading from stakeholder groups.

The insolvency provisions of the Enterprise Act came into force on two dates - the corporate provisions on 15 September 2003 and the individual, personal bankruptcy provisions on 1 April 2004. Effective media management has led to a general view that the corporate reforms have reinforced the “rescue culture” and that the liberalisation of the personal bankruptcy regime is not a debtor’s charter or in any way a soft option. Other Enterprise Act changes have enabled the Insolvency Service to move to a nil-net, fee-funded regime and therefore to be able to respond to a significant (30%) increase in bankruptcy numbers due to the growth of personal, consumer borrowing. To do this we have introduced a new grade of insolvency specialist to deal with consumer cases thus enabling more experienced investigative staff to concentrate on policing new, civil remedies against dishonest bankrupts. We have also introduced a 24/7 on-line insolvency register to provide information to anyone thinking of advancing credit to an individual and are about to introduce a facility for the on-line completion of individual bankruptcy petitions. Finally, the coming into force of the provisions of five Statutory Instruments on 1 April 2005 completes the package of Enterprise Act reforms.

Despite the substantial increase in new case numbers over the past 12 months, the Service is still recording overall satisfaction scores of some 88% in its User Satisfaction Index and was recently re-awarded the Charter Mark for excellent service delivery. At the same time we are committed to delivering an 8.5% reduction in unit costs over the two years to 1 April 2006 and to increasing our investigative outputs by 40%. We are on target to deliver both and will achieve them by ensuring that everyone in the organisation understands their role and knows exactly what they are looked to deliver; and that every individual and manager is accountable for that delivery.

Land Registry



For further information::
 T 020 7917 8888
 W <http://www.landreg.gov.uk>

Organisational

- Land Registry is a Government Department, Executive Agency and Trading Fund that is required by statute to cover all its costs from fees
- There are 24 regional offices, constantly piloting new systems and processes and benchmarking both internally and externally
- Land Registry operates a two-tier management board structure to focus on strategic and operational issues
- Land Registry has a clearly defined mission and vision, together with a long-term strategy detailed in a regularly updated 10-year strategic plan that can be viewed on our website
- Land Registry is the first government department to publish a policy on Corporate Social Responsibility

Service delivery

- Service delivery targets for speed of processing have been exceeded in each of the last 6 years
- All key Land Registry information services are now available over the Internet
- The Key Performance Target for accuracy has been consistently achieved; in 2003/04 98.79 % of registrations were processed free from any error against a target of 98.5%
- Pilot system for electronic discharges implemented successfully in 2003

Productivity

- Record intakes in 2003/04 of 30.2 million applications matched by record output of 30.5 million. Workload intakes and outputs have increased every year for the past 10 years
- In the last 25 years workload has increased by 800 per cent but stocks of work awaiting processing are at their lowest ever level.

Over the last 10 years our workload has doubled and our staff resources have reduced by 30%

Value for money

- Unit costs have progressively reduced and targets consistently achieved. The cost of processing one unit of casework in 2003/04 was £20.47 against a comparable figure in the base year of 1992/03 of £30.65 (after adjusting for inflation).
- The target return on capital employed has been exceeded in each year since operating as a Trading Fund (1993)
- Fees have been reduced progressively by 53.7% over the same period.

Since becoming a Trading Fund in 1993, Land Registry has contributed a total of £273 million to the Exchequer

Customer service

- Annual customer survey results reveal that 98% of customers are satisfied or well satisfied with our services and 77% rank us better than private sector companies
- CIPFA and PricewaterhouseCoopers Public Reporting and Accountability Award won for the second time in June 2004
- Many other awards including Society of Consumer Affairs Professionals Award for Innovations in Customer Service (Peterborough Office)
- Land Registry has Fair Trader Accreditation from HMSO

Land Registry is one of the very few organisations, either public or private, to have achieved five consecutive Charter Marks

Resources

- Staff levels have fallen by 30% since 1989 and now stand at 8,000 but overall job quality is much higher
- Skills levels are constantly being enhanced through development and encouragement for training to achieve professional qualifications, including the introduction of a qualification in land registration

Operational

- Land Registry has an annual turnover of £400 million (2003/04)
- All 19 million registers and all title plans are capable of electronic delivery
- Land Registry indemnifies £3 trillion of property
- 16.9 million items of business were handled in 2003/04
- In October 2003, biggest legislative change in land registration since 1925 introduced without a hitch.

Opportunities

Land Registry has consistently sought to capitalise on the spirit of change in public sector management thinking, to exploit initiatives and to manufacture opportunity. Over the life of our 10-year Strategic Plan, we will:

- continue to make improvements to the delivery of services to all stakeholders
- deliver timely and effective legislation in relation to land registration
- create a comprehensive land register for England and Wales
- introduce an electronic conveyancing system through which most property transactions will be effected
- make all land registration data electronically accessible to everyone
- develop a broader range of services for property professionals, the public and others

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency



For further information::

T 0870 6006505

W <http://www.mcga.gov.uk>

Improvement In Turnaround Time Of Seafarer Documentation

In June 2002 the Agency introduced a Balanced Scorecard. This is a management tool which highlights selected performance indicators, and uses traffic light colours to bring the Executive board's attention to current performance against desired levels of achievement.

One of the indicators selected to appear on the Scorecard when it was first introduced was "Proportion of Notices of Eligibility issued within 28 days". Notices of Eligibility are documents required by the seafarer to indicate their eligibility to sit an examination, and are important to the seafarer's career.

The Executive Board chose this as an indicator because, due to a number of different factors, including an unprecedented increase in demand as a result of the effects of international legislation, performance in this area was poor.

At the end of June of 2002 the Proportion of Notices of Eligibility issued within 28 days was 64%. Over the following months, with performance being under increased scrutiny, this had increased to 83% by the end of that calendar year, and to 98% by the end of May 2003.

Following this success the indicator "Issue of Seamen's certificates with 10 working days of receipt of valid and fully documented application" was added to the Scorecard in June 2003. This started at 75% and rose to 97% by the end of November 2004.

As we consider seafarer customers to be an important part of our business, we see this as a significant success in service delivery. We have also started to survey seafarer customer satisfaction with the service. Initial results show it is at around the 75% mark and feedback from specific questions is being used to improve our service.

Growth of the UK Shipping Register

The 70s, 80s and early 90s saw a significant decline in the UK merchant fleet. This was due to a number of reasons, which included the "policeman" approach taken by some marine surveyors over many of years, "gold plating" of regulations by UK authorities and lack of financial incentives for companies to register ships in the UK.

In April 1998, the Maritime and Coastguard Agency was formed, and was given the remit of increasing the size of the UK merchant fleet once again, assisted by introduction of the popular Tonnage Tax, which many eligible shipping companies opted into in preference to the traditional system of corporation tax. Tonnage Tax is determined by the available trading capacity of a company's vessels rather than by profit made during the fiscal year. The predictability of this scheme assists with business planning, and is attractive for many companies.

The Agency also appointed Customer Service Managers (CSM) for ship owners and operators registering vessels in the UK. These CSMs act as account managers to provide a responsive approach to industry, ensuring that the Agency caters for all aspects of customers' needs promptly.

Over recent years, the approach to regulation has also changed. A concerted effort has been made by the MCA not to "gold plate" international regulation it has drafted, and to approach safety in a less prescriptive manner, allowing flexibility in the way customers meet the required level of safety, rather than dictating specific arrangements for everything. The Agency now also offers integrated International Safety Management Code, ISO and Environmental audits, minimising the number of audits required and avoiding duplication.

As a result of personal contact made by the Agency's Chief Executive and senior managers coupled with the measures outlined above, tonnage soon started flooding back to the UK flag, and at the end of October 2004, the Register had grown by nearly 300% in tonnage terms compared to 1998.

The revival in the UK Register has been heralded as a resounding success, although we must be careful not to lose quality in favour of quantity.

Complete Quality

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency was formed in April 1998 as a result of a merger between the Marine Safety Agency (MSA) and The Coastguard Agency (TCA).

There were a number of challenges for the newly formed Agency, many revolving around the integration of two very different cultures, but one facet of this was harmonising the Quality systems of the original Agencies. The MSA had an established ISO 9000 Quality Management system, which had been developed to put the Agency on a similar footing to many of the companies which it regulated. Following the merger, one of the first decisions the MCA Executive Board took was to extend the established Total Quality Management System to the whole Agency.

Harmonisation was undertaken in conjunction with the much improved and new ISO 9000:2000 Standard, and using a fast track approach the MCA became one of the first major public bodies to be accredited to it in March 2002. The new standard places customer focus as one of its key principles and the establishment of an internationally recognised quality benchmark contributed to the Agency's success and supported the drive to attract quality shipping to the UK flag.

Not satisfied with this achievement the Agency identified an opportunity to make efficiencies for its customers, and applied to become an ISO 9001:2000 Certifying Authority, so that it could provide shipping companies with a harmonised ISO 9000 accreditation at the same time it carried out statutory International Safety Management Code audits, minimising the number of audits and avoiding duplication. More recently, the Agency has added ISO 14000 (Environmental) Audit to the portfolio it is able to offer.

This integrated approach is widely considered to be a resounding success because it provides efficient service delivery to the customer and is contributing to the continued growth of the UK register.

The National Weights and Measures Laboratory



For further information::

T 020 8943 7272

E info@nwml.gov.uk

W <http://www.nwml.gov.uk>

The National Weights and Measures Laboratory (NWML), an Executive Agency of DTI provides a range of services for industry, particularly for companies whose business involves weighing and measuring equipment. The Laboratory, which is accredited to ISO 9001:2000, prides itself on its high quality of service and its total 'customer focus'. Below are two examples of how NWML endeavours to delight its customers.

NWML Meets with Ishida Approval

Ishida Europe Ltd (a major Japanese manufacturer) was planning to launch its latest weigh price labeller, the WPL 5000, at a prestigious international trade show in the UK and it was particularly important to have everything ready so that when the machine was 'premiered', end users could buy it on the day. This required the prototype to have obtained a 'Europe wide' Type Approval against a very short deadline before it could be sold at the show.

Ishida Europe's first-choice Notified (approval) Body was unable to meet the demanding deadline, so the company had to look elsewhere. They chose NWML.

One of the reasons for choosing NWML was that under the WELMEC Type Approval Agreement, NWML can issue UK and OIML Certificates of Conformity that enable manufacturers to gain approval in other EU countries without requiring any further testing. Ishida considered this to be vitally important as it continued to expand its European customer base with products like the WPL 5000.

Andrew Brown, Senior Quality Assurance Engineer, Ishida Europe Ltd commented, "The WPL-5000 is a product of the close relationship we have with our customers and our parent company Ishida Japan. As with any product, "time to market" is critical to the success and approval is a key stage of product release. After careful consideration, we chose NWML to test the instrument for reasons including cost and location but more importantly because they could achieve our required delivery time".

Impressed by the level of expertise and prompt service shown, Ishida Europe awarded NWML a subsequent contract to complete the approval of another type of equipment, a multi-head weigher.

Delford Catches up with Regulation of Catchweighers

AEW Delford Systems is one of the leading UK manufacturers of food processing equipment and has been a longstanding NWML customer. The company needed a training session for its personnel on OIML recommendation R51 for design and performance specifications for catchweighers and enlisted NWML to provide it. An off-the-shelf programme for this was not available so NWML developed one specifically for them.

The course took place in December and proved hugely successful. It was a perfect fit for Delford's needs and resulting feedback from the participants gave top marks with no suggestions for improvement.

As a result, Delford are better informed about the international design requirements for their product which should help them win export orders. Already a number of other companies have shown an interest in this course and have requested further details. The R51 Catchweigher training course has now formed part of the new NWML Training Course Programme for 2005.

The National Weights and Measures Laboratory's Success in Facilitating International Trade

The National Weights and Measures Laboratory (NWML), an Executive Agency of DTI, plays a pro-active role in international legal metrology with the purpose of promoting free and fair markets for international trade.

Each year NWML runs a three-week residential training course on legal metrology (weights and measures regulation) for heads and senior officials of national legal metrology institutes. Although potentially most useful for developing countries, there has always been a wide variety of countries represented. This year officials from China, Japan, Montserrat and New Zealand participated. It is not unusual for four or five continents to be represented. All of these delegates have benefited from learning about the technical and legal aspects of the UK system of weights and measures regulation. This has helped the countries concerned to develop their own metrology infrastructures to enable free and fair trade.

The Laboratory has also provided consultancy services and specially designed training courses, sometimes overseas, for other countries. Recent clients have included Malta and Ireland, Nigeria, Poland and Saudi Arabia.

This activity is complementary to and supportive of NWML's role in representing UK interests in OIML (the International Organisation for Legal Metrology). NWML works with UK industry and other branches of government to play a significant role in OIML, developing the technically based International Recommendations which are the basis for the ongoing global harmonisation of metrological legislation. Globally consistent regulation of metrology is an important element in international commodity trade and is critical for trade in measuring instruments.

Through discussions within OIML with Chinese officials, NWML learned of the opportunity to host a secondee, Mrs Bao Yue from the Liaoning Bureau of Quality and Technical Supervision in NE China, to enable her to research western systems of metrology and quality certification.

Mrs Bao, a highly qualified engineer, metrologist and quality management systems auditor, worked with NWML for one year commencing in September 2003. As part of this secondment, she studied the UK legal metrology system and its implementation and liaised with key UK standards and accreditation organisations including BSI and UKAS.

Most importantly, her secondment enabled NWML to develop a very sound working relationship with the General Administration of Quality Supervision, Inspection and Quarantine (AQSIQ) of the People's Republic of China. This led to exchange visits of senior officials and the signing of a memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the two organisations to co-operate in legal metrology. The Laboratory also facilitated contacts between DTI and SAC, the China Standards Organisation, which enabled a broader MoU on cooperation in Metrology to be signed by Lord Sainsbury for DTI and Vice Minister Li for AQSIQ in May this year.

One of the first fruits of the co-operation is an arrangement for NWML to assist in providing training in legal metrology for senior officials in provinces throughout China. NWML and AQSIQ are also discussing a mutual acceptance agreement whereby each country will accept the results of tests on measuring instruments carried out by accredited laboratories in each other's country in support of applications for national type approval of measuring instruments. This will greatly facilitate trade in measuring instruments as well as helping to foster good relations between the two countries.

OGCbuying.solutions



For further information::

T 0870 268 2222

E custcare@ogcbs.gsi.gov.uk

W <http://www.ogcbuyingsolutions.gov.uk>

Operational success stories

1. In 2003/4 OGCbuying.solutions managed the procurement arrangements for more than £1.8 billion of public expenditure and facilitated over £242 million pounds of savings. For 2004/5 OGCbuying.solutions has a target to manage the procurement arrangements for more than £2 billion of public expenditure and facilitate £300 million of savings. The Agency is likely to exceed these targets.
2. In March 2004, OGCbuying.solutions and the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency (NHS PASA) launched a new framework for photocopiers and associated services. The Framework is set to save £50 million over a 4-year period. One of the first NHS Trusts to use the arrangement was the Queen Elizabeth Hospital NHS Trust in East London, one of the largest hospitals in the country. By changing to the new OGCbuying.solutions contract, the trust halved their costs for photocopiers. The savings made by the Trust equates to the cost of employing three new nurses each and every year.
3. OGCbuying.solutions GTM (Government Telecommunications Mobile) contract has been a huge success for the Agency. GTM provides an EU compliant contract through which our customers can purchase high quality mobile telephony services including voice, data and wide area paging. Birmingham City Council is one organisation for which GTM has delivered clearly identified savings. The Council moved to GTM in January 2003 and currently has in excess of 3,000 employees using the services. Birmingham City Council calculates that their move to GTM has realised annual savings of £200,000 of direct costs and £175,000 of indirect costs. The Council highlighted the centrally negotiated tariffs and the move to centralised billing as the key elements in generating these savings.
4. OGCbuying.solutions also manages the Government Procurement Card (GPC) which has been endorsed by the NAO. Using the GPC can make savings of £28 per transaction compared to traditional purchase order invoice processing. Over £1 billion has been spent on GPC since its introduction in 1997 with savings of more than £135 million.

Ordnance Survey



For further information::

T 08456 050505

E customerservices@ordnancesurvey.co.uk

W <http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk>

Re-mastering the Master Map of Great Britain

OS MasterMap[®] was created following feedback from customers in both the public and private sectors on their changing needs in response to rapid technological changes. In the past, Ordnance Survey licensed paper mapping. By 1995, a digital version of the paper map was complete following a 24-year digitising programme. However, advances in technology meant that this digital data did not meet the needs of customers who wished to use it in many ways, including managing their assets and making geographic decisions for their organisations. As a result, Ordnance Survey started to re-master the master map of Great Britain to what was declared by the industry at the start of the project as an unrealistic timetable. It was completed ahead of schedule in only 13 months and also within budget; the result being one of the world's largest geographic databases and the underpinning geographic framework for Great Britain to which partners add value in order to enable users to make decisions more effectively.

OS MasterMap represents a significant evolution from traditional cartography by modelling the real world in great detail within a database environment. The information is maintained as a set of inter-connected layers: Topography, Address, Integrated Transport Network[™] and Imagery. These layers can be used individually or combined to form a sophisticated integrated geographic framework.

OS MasterMap uniquely identifies 440 million real-world features such as houses and even post boxes with inbuilt intelligence that enables customers to interrogate and tailor their information for a wide range of commercial and public service purposes. Each geographic feature is assigned a unique identifier or TOID[®] – a 16-digit reference number that can be shared across different applications and systems. This gives customers an unprecedented level of compatibility with their own data, helping to reduce costs and improve delivery.

OS MasterMap:

- Is continually updated to reflect changes to the British landscape with over 5000 changes made every day.
- Represents 99.8% of significant built features within six months of completion
- Uniquely references around 26 million postal addresses, providing an accurate link between a property address and its actual geographic location
- Incorporates 42,000 address changes every month
- Enables partners to develop value-added applications for a wide range of operations ranging from personal navigation and insurance risk calculation to strategic planning and resource management

Free Maps for 11-year-olds

Ordnance Survey's highly successful 'Free Maps for 11-year-olds' initiative demonstrates Ordnance Survey's continuing commitment to education and to improving access to geographic information. Since its launch in March 2002, over 2½ million children across Britain have received a free OS Explorer Map of their local area as well as a complementary map-reading guide.

Teachers register online to take part in the scheme and, although the maps are distributed via schools, they belong to the individual child and can be taken home to be shared with their families.

As well as developing the concepts of distance, direction and scale in geography, the maps can help with literacy and numeracy skills, and give children confidence in subjects such as maths, history, citizenship, and even computer studies.

This initiative has:

- Delivered over 2½ million maps to Year 7 pupils in England and Wales and Primary 7 pupils in Scotland
- Provided maps with a shop value of more than £5 million to schools during 2004 alone
- Improved children's understanding and enjoyment of using maps
- Helped schools provide up-to-date resources that were previously in short supply
- Supplied maps as classroom aids for teachers on a ratio of 1 per 25 children
- Encouraged children to spend more leisure time with their families and to improve their health and fitness by walking and exploring
- Won the backing of leading educational and political figures
- Been complemented by online resources and activities available at Ordnance Survey's educational web portals MapZone and GISZone (www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk/mapzone)

Access Land

Ordnance Survey is collaborating with the Countryside Agency and the Countryside Council for Wales to support the rollout of access land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. OS MasterMap was used to identify and precisely define areas of mountain, heath, moor and registered common land to be mapped as open country. Its highly detailed, accurate data contains unique identifiers for every land area in the country to easily reference and record information.

England and Wales were split into eight areas to manage the rollout of access rights. Once identified, the access land data was added to OS Explorer Maps, chosen because 1:25 000 is the most popular scale of mapping for outdoor activities, showing every hamlet, village and town along with tracks, paths, field walls and hill contours. Ordnance Survey is revising its maps as the information for each area is supplied, dramatically compressing its regular production timetables to reflect the precise launch schedule. The first three areas covering the north west, south east and south of England were available for purchase from the launch dates and were delivered to budget.

In response to The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, Ordnance Survey has:

- Revised and published the 32 OS Explorer Maps showing new access land in the north west and south east of England (Areas One and Two) and the 26 OS Explorer maps for central southern England (Area Three)
- Merged new information from the Countryside Agency with existing access areas owned by landowners, including The National Trust®, Forestry Commission and Woodland Trust
- Educated ramblers and walkers about the importance of map-reading skills to help them judge the suitability of new land for walking
- Changed the way that National Park boundaries are shown on OS Explorer Maps from the existing yellow band to a series of magenta-coloured dashes to avoid confusion with the access land yellow tint
- Made the revised access mapping available in electronic form for use on pocket navigation equipment and websites as well as for the OS Select™ site-centred mapping service

Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland



For further information::

T 028 9025 5755

E osni@osni.gov.uk

W <http://www.osni.gov.uk>

Mapping out a Business Strategy

Ordnance Survey of Northern Ireland (OSNI) is a government agency where income growth has averaged 14% per year for the last 8 years, and increased by 20% in 2002/03 alone. It has capitalized on a unique government information resource, exploiting exciting developments in information technology, satellite and digital systems. It has achieved this by developing a clear vision for the future, underpinned by measures of success, backed up by an organization designed to deliver, with regular review and monitoring, and reward and recognition aligned to its strategy, whilst not forgetting its public service role and values.

In 2000, OSNI was poised to enter the new millennium with a full digital map of the landscape of Northern Ireland, of a quality and standard rarely equalled globally. It had just completed a major digitisation programme, and required a clear plan as to how to begin to exploit this fantastic information resource.

The first step was to re-establish a sense of purpose and direction. Extensive consultations with key stakeholders, including the newly devolved Minister for OSNI, led to the clarification of its role, development of a vision for the future with strategic goals and objectives, and implementation plans required to enable the business to develop, grow and meet its full potential. This vision identified the need to deliver good business results that were sustainable in the long term. These results implied efficiency and a focus on customer needs, building on the evident strengths the organisation already had – notably its people, its long history, reputation for quality and innovation in a rapidly moving and developing specialist technology area. Allied to the business potential was the importance to Northern Ireland's economy and society of the mapping database, supporting Land Registration, land management, the delivery of Emergency Services, and a wide range of government and business activities.

The vision and the demands of challenging strategic goals required a realignment of the organisation from a technical and production oriented approach, to one that is business oriented and customer focused. Immediate changes were required, and following a review of the management structure, the senior levels were reorganized and reformed around the key strategic goals. Corporate Services focused on HR, common IT systems and Management Information; Operations developed the technical focus of the Agency; an interim manager helped develop and confirm our expectation of the market potential. The later appointment of an external Business Development Director brought professional marketing and commercial negotiation expertise to the Agency. A Business Development Division is now fully in place, with Key Account Managers, Sales office, Product Management, Marketing & Training, R&D and IPR teams all appointed and developed from within the organisation's existing enthusiastic, and committed staff.

Ensuring that the whole Agency knew what was expected from everyone required clear goals, measures and targets, and that these were balanced around the key aspects of the Agency: if too much priority was given to production, our customer might suffer; if too much emphasis on the finances our future growth could suffer. The Agency adopted the Balanced Scorecard in 2000/01 and this approach has proved very successful, not only in ensuring that the organisation remains focused on what needs to be done, but in clearly linking individual performance, through team and Divisional scorecards, to the Corporate Objectives.

The restructuring and refocusing of the Agency was underpinned by an ambitious ICT strategy, aimed at thoroughly modernizing the Agency's technology to ensure it stays at the leading edge, and can reap maximum benefit from productivity gains, to remain effective, efficient and competitive in a high tech industry. One result of these changes was that fewer technical staff

were required; however, many more opportunities for more professional and business oriented skills have developed.

In the 2003/04 financial year OSNI recovered 76% of the total costs of running the Agency. This unprecedented level of income bodes well for the future success of the Agency: it has now set itself the key strategic target of financial self-sustainability within 2 years. OSNI is now on the path to become a leading public service organisation - one with a business oriented approach, and one, which at its heart, remains there to provide the mapping information for Northern Ireland, in support of the public good.

The Planning Inspectorate



For further information::

T 0117 372 8000

W <http://www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk>

The Planning Inspectorate – success story

Fulfilling a 1997 Manifesto commitment, the Government sponsored the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 which introduced measures to permit access by the public on foot to mountain, moor, heath and down and registered common land. Reflecting the need to balance the wishes of ramblers with the needs of landowners and land managers, Part I of the Act included three new types of appeal which may be made by people with a legal interest in land mapped for access.

This was a totally new work: no comparable legislation existed anywhere else in the world on which preparations could be based. So, in conjunction with our statutory partners, the Planning Inspectorate worked up baseline assumptions on the numbers, timing and complexity of the three types of appeal in parallel with developing casework procedures and criteria against which appeals should be determined. Because of the Government's commitment to have the right of access fully implemented across England and Wales by the end of 2005, PINS needed to develop a novel approach to processing appeals. Consequently, we introduced a high level of electronic working using e-mail and, latterly, the Planning Portal. We also developed the novel concept of "district wide hearings" where appeals in geographical proximity could be dealt with by a team of Inspectors, thus ensuring rapid turnaround of a large number of cases whilst ensuring consistency between decisions. This technique has proved so successful that it is being considered for use in other types of appeals handled by the Inspectorate. Our arrangements appear to have been successful with, so far, a remarkably low number of complaints and only one (as yet undecided) court challenge.

PINS also needed to identify the skills and experience necessary for Inspectors to determine appeals, then recruit and train Inspectors and administrative staff. Because of the uncertainty over the number of appeals which would be made, we built in the maximum amount of flexibility in the employment and deployment of Inspectors and staff. This proved vital when appeals were delayed by problems in one of our statutory partners and has also been required to respond to the number of cases which has varied widely between mapping regions.

Since October 2002, 4,066 appeals against mapping of land for access were received (3,540 in England and 526 in Wales) and 2,845 decisions have been issued (2,424 in England and 421 in Wales) – all in time to meet targets set as milestones on the way to full commencement. Access has now commenced in three of the eight mapping regions in England. We are on target for commencement to be rolled out in the remaining regions during 2005. We have received nine appeals against refusal to grant restrictions on public access, and have made ready from the beginning of 2005 to deal with appeals in respect of securing means of access to Access land.

PCS success story

In November 2004, the Planning Inspectorate introduced the Planning Casework Service (PCS), a new online service which gives the people of England and Wales wider and easier access to the planning system.

PCS is one of the key services offered by the Planning Portal (www.planningportal.gov.uk), a Web site that offers a broad array of services on planning. The Planning Portal, which was developed and launched by the Planning Inspectorate in 2002 and now operated by ODPM, is the first point of call for anyone who wants to find out about the planning system in England and Wales.

Using the Planning Portal and PCS people can make and track appeals online. They can see appeals locally and nationally, view them on a map, make comments online, track progress in real

time and view decisions. Throughout 2005 the Planning Inspectorate will extend the PCS to cover the full range of casework, including planning appeals.

PCS is not simply an IT system; it is an enabler of change and improvement of the Planning Inspectorate's and its customers' business processes and the planning system of England and Wales. It is helping all users to reshape and refine their procedures to deliver a quicker, more accessible and transparent appeal process.

The PCS enables the Planning Inspectorate to meet that challenge of the Freedom of Information Act by providing access to information about the casework that it handles and decisions that are being made. That will mean that the public will be better informed about the process and decisions and therefore better able to hold decision makers to account.

Scottish Court Service



For further information::

T 0131 229 9200

E enquiries@scotcourts.gov.uk

W <http://www.scotcourts.gov.uk>

One of the key benefits of Agency status to the Scottish Court Service has been the ability to tailor terms and conditions of employment to the requirements of the organisation. There are three specific examples:

1. Developing Out of Hours Allowances

This has increased the flexibility of the operational resource to allow the Agency to meet business pressures arising from new Child Protection legislation that requires specific types of court work to be undertaken at weekends and outside normal working hours.

2. Childcare Vouchers

In response to the need to retain working mothers (58% of SCS staff are female) the Agency has introduced childcare vouchers and a range of advice and support systems to help parents. This has improved operational flexibility. This innovation helped the Agency to become the Scottish Employer of the Year in 2001.

3. Carer Support

The SCS has a mature workforce with an average age of 43. Many staff have caring responsibilities. The Agency has introduced a comprehensive package of support. This will help keep staff at work that might otherwise have to give up fulltime work. This initiative was recognised by the SCS being a finalist in the UK Carers in Employment Award 2004.

Innovation is also a key benefit of Agency status. This is best reflected in the SCS initiative to introduce a fully electronic performance management system known as Individual Performance Review. This means that performance appraisals are carried out in such a way that it is a paperless system saving resource and encouraging managers to use the system as a day-to-day tool for managing staff rather than something carried out once a year.

4. Operations and Services

Agency status has given SCS a much clearer sense of its own identity and the resulting self-confidence has supported innovation with positive results.

On operations and services, key outcomes are the design of a systems management approach, now applied to support our local criminal justice boards, and Charter mark accreditation for four of our courts. Other examples include the design and development our 'video for schools' and 'mock trials for schools'. We have received very positive feedback on the value these add to the school curriculum.

Small Business Service



For further information::

T 020 7215 5000

E gatewayenquiries@sbs.gsi.gov.uk

W <http://www.sbs.gov.uk>

Theme

The turnaround of Business Link - the access point for businesses to find the information, advice and referrals they need - face-to-face, by telephone and online.

The local story

As a result of the performance management framework which the Small Business Service and the 45 Business Link operators in England have put in place:

- the number of businesses helped has nearly doubled in three years
- customer satisfaction has risen from 74% to nearly 90%
- help to pre-start businesses is running at 160,000 a year
- 'would you use again?' ratings have grown to nearly 92% with nearly 96% of customers happy to recommend Business Link to others.

As regional and local management moves to the Regional Development Agencies, the Small Business Service is working with them to build on these public service performance achievements.

The national story

In just over a year, the new award-winning web portal, www.businesslink.gov.uk has:

- attracted five million visits (currently running at half a million a month)
- introduced major innovations which mean real savings for business (e.g. key date reminders, licence and permit checklists, and help for employers to create a written statement of employment)
- brought together over 40 departments and agencies, involving more than 500 people across government in a single venture.

The Valuation Office Agency



For further information::

T 020 7506 1700

E customerservice@voa.gov.uk

W <http://www.voa.gov.uk>

Delivering new Openness and Transparency to Business Ratepayers

The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) has taken a major step forward in transparency and in e-government by publishing 1.5 million valuations for business rates on the internet and joining with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to produce a new website giving clear and simple information about all aspects of business rates in one place.

In addition to publication of these “summary” valuations on the internet, hard copies were sent to most business ratepayers, for the first time, in October 2004. These valuations provide a detailed breakdown of how the rateable value is arrived at, based on the value-significant characteristics of the property. So, for a High St shop, the summary valuation might show, for example, the area of prime retail space, the area of additional retail space, and the area of storage space, with the assessed rental value of each area clearly shown in terms of £ per square metre. The ratepayer can then easily check that the measurements are correct and the VOA has been encouraging them to do so by running a “check it” campaign. Because the information is accessible on the VOA website, ratepayers can compare their valuation with similar properties in their area so they can see whether their new assessment is not only based on correct facts, but is fair in comparison with their competitors.

We are also offering the opportunity to deal with queries and correct any factual errors before the new assessments come into effect on 1 April 2005. A dedicated helpdesk has been set up specifically to handle enquiries flowing from the publication of the new valuations; so far over 90,000 enquiries have been handled which means, potentially, 90,000 fewer appeals after April 2005.

October 2004 also saw the launch of a new website, created in partnership between the VOA and ODPM, www.mybusinessrates.gov.uk. This is a “one stop” information service covering how the rating system works, how the rateable value of property is assessed, and how rates bills are calculated. It also offers a rates liability indicator to give ratepayers an indication of what their 2005/06 rates bill will be.

These initiatives have been worked up in consultation with ratepayers. New ratepayer forums have been introduced to exchange information and debate issues. The National Ratepayers Valuation Forum (NRVF) enables us to meet quarterly with representatives from over 40 national business organisations. Local Ratepayer Valuation Forums build up our knowledge of local issues and, in return, we can improve understanding of the rating system.

The forums have given us valuable insight to ratepayer opinion, and helped us gauge likely reaction to our revaluation activity and communications support work. For example, all the proposed publicity material surrounding the new valuations – the summary valuation itself, covering letter and explanatory leaflet – was tested with members of the Forum prior to issue. A thorough usability test allowed us to refine the structure and content of the website to ensure it really meets ratepayer needs.

There have been over 3 million “hits” on the new rating lists on the VOA’s website so far and a number of leading private sector rating practitioners have praised the amount of information now available and the ease of access.

For the 2005 non-domestic revaluation, the VOA made a commitment to making the rating system and revaluation process more transparent to ratepayers. We are now providing them with unprecedented levels of information on how we have arrived at their rateable value to improve their understanding, and acceptance, of the new assessments.