

Seamless Flow Appraisal, Selection and Freedom of Information Project Board

Meeting June 2005

Summary

Revised Project Initiation Document (PID)

A new section 5 had been added to project deliverables, which was to create a macro-appraisal tool to help in benchmarking agencies and Non Departmental Public Bodies so that selection from their records could be streamlined

Progress on Project Initiation Document

The macro-appraisal paper had been written and agreed by the Management Board sub-group on selection and appraisal.

It was agreed to publish the paper on the Records Management forum, because it would be useful for departments to know the broad terms in which we were proposing to tackle appraisal. A consultation process had been undertaken via the sub-group and further public consultation was not appropriate until more detail had been developed.

Initial meeting had taken place on developing requirements for checks on selection and transfer. In discussion on the draft of this it was agreed that a fourth stage be added: inform departments of successful transfer so that final Record Management actions, deleting transferred records from their system, can be undertaken. It was agreed that no further detail need be developed for this area of work for the present

Procedures for appraisal were making progress. Various groups of client managers and the Departmental Records Officer (DRO) working group had looked at Business Classification Schemes (BCS) provided by The National Archives (TNA), Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA), Health and Safety Executive, Fire Service College and Department of Trade and Industry's pre-vision schema. A session was planned for National Weights and Measures and the Highways Agency. A 1 –2 day session would occur in September for Department of Work and Pensions (DWP)

A client manager was now working on procedures for the appraisal of datasets. There would be a macro approach and the State and Citizen Operational Selection Policy might serve as the model. A paper might be ready by June.

There had been no progress on records from an unmanaged environment. It was agreed that, as this was unlikely to form a significant part of our work, we should develop procedures as occasion arose.

The Operational Selection Policy (OSP) programme would start fairly soon.

The whole of government appraisal tool was making some progress with a list of departments and some criteria developed for benchmarking. We would test this at a forthcoming appraisal session for Weights and Measures and Highway Agency

Advice to department on how to structure their BCS. Progress on this would occur as the appraisal work proceeds. However, creating the set of instructions was perhaps joint work between client managers and the e-government unit. The work was not immediate and could await the outcome of the OSPs and appraisal reports

There was much discussion about how departments could ensure that records were transferred to TNA with Freedom of Information (FOI) and Data Protection and any other access issues resolved. The danger that FOI concerns would invalidate macro-appraisal was raised. It was agreed that this was an area which really needed development. A first step will be taken at the DWP appraisal session in September when the afternoon of the second day will be spent considering FOI implications.

Hybrid records will be included in the scope of the PID. A set of procedures will need to be produced

ERMS Appraisal

Draft procedures for the appraisal of the ERMS of a central government department circulated for information

Issues arising from the DRO Appraisal working group

Costs of migration and storage. If a whole part of a file plan is selected (e.g. the policy area of the DCA file plan) what are the storage and migration costs associated with that being replicated across government? Are they great enough to warrant some 'weeding' process to eliminate folders without historical value? It was agreed that some assessment of quantities which are likely to come to TNA was needed and the eventual storage needs. Some follow-up was needed with DCA to see if they could provide an estimate of the quantities which the policy area would produce

Departments should be encouraged to revive and maintain their inventories of electronic records.

Advice to departments on basic records management (RM) actions, e.g. file closure, use of parts for files, use of inventories. There was some discussion on this and it was agreed that some e-RM manual for departments would be very useful. It would not actually be that difficult to compile once time had been carved out. The possibility of using the forthcoming internship was discussed and agreed

Resources

Each new appraisal threw up issues that needed work, e.g. definitions of 'policy' and 'case files', RM issues etc. Nothing was resolved