IMS Communication and Web Project Update

Background

1. This paper updates OMG on the IMS programme including the web project.

2. The former IMS vision statement and principles were complex. However, they sought to encompass the CSG principles and our new organisational health standards such as data protection, so we have been able to condense them. The key aim of IMS is to ‘add information once, and share it’.

3. IMS governance has also been streamlined. The programme now comprises a project portfolio rather than workstreams, and the current projects are the OR and web projects. The new IMS panel is Bill Thomson as SRO, Alan Balharrie and Henrietta Hales. Project managers of any IMS projects report to the panel as well as to their project SROs, so that the panel can take a strategic overview and planning role and help maximise information sharing.

4. The OR project’s planned completion in October 2009 provides scope to expand the IMS portfolio during this year’s planning and budget cycles. We want offices to suggest and seek budget for projects under the normal project governance arrangements, and therefore to ‘own’ their own projects under the IMS portfolio. Teams in BIT and SPICE are available to help with an ‘IMS assessment’ for any suggested project with a large information element.

5. We want the ‘IMS programme’ to move to business as usual, which will make it an on-going part of project approvals and procurements with an information component, as well as everyday considerations such as work requests.

6. Finally, this paper flags the need to make significant staff time available during phase 2 of the web project and seeks some discussion of this at OMG.

7. Following the 15 May meeting, OMG colleagues will be offered the chance to stay on for a demonstration of what IMS means in practice;

- A practical demonstration of the CAS and OR (to date) projects,
- A brief overview of the recent information assessment undertaken of the Chamber desk and the information management and standards documentation available on SPEIR for internal and external (eg contractors’) use, to ensure compliance with the IMS aim.
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**Timing**

8. Some milestones for the current IMS projects are;

- If phase 2 of the web project is approved within May, then a new website should be launched within the 2009/2010 financial year. It will allow for further development by BIT, so the strategic plan has a deadline of August 2010 to allow the project to be more fully realised.
- The OR project is scheduled to complete by October 2009 (the two projects will run together so that a searchable OR is available on the new website).

9. Teams within BIT and SPICE have already been discussing with some business areas new candidate projects to join the IMS portfolio after the OR project completes. However, we would like all office and group heads to have the chance to suggest candidate projects, and to build these into the 2010/11 budgeting and planning process as well as into the IMS forward plan.

10. The project plan for the web project cannot be fully developed until agreement to proceed with phase 2 is reached. However, we will be asking group heads to make staff available during two phases called ‘wireframing’ and ‘data migration’. The resources section gives further details. An internal user group with staff from all business areas will also be established to advise the web contractors, to exist throughout phase 2.

**Discussion**

11. Under the IMS programme the committee agenda system (CAS) project has been completed, and the OR project has just finished phase 1. OMG will receive a practical demonstration of these at the 15 May meeting. The web project has completed its phase 1 (scoping) phase, to an ambitious timetable. Through doing these projects, capability has been developed and the two current IMS consultants have transferred skills, as the programme intended. Teams within BIT and SPICE have developed expertise in assessing business areas’ information and applications. They have also developed guidance documents such as information standards and the master data register.

12. Despite these successes, the IMS reputation is poor and it remains little-understood. IMS is about ‘the information’ more than about ‘the systems’ this is held on. At the same time these systems need to be able to ‘talk’ to each other and to share information. So IMS requires a joint BIT/SPICE approach. However, it also needs business areas to be involved who understand how our information is generated, what it is used for, and our aspirations.
13. Some colleagues have spoken of ‘being IMSd’. We wish to reverse this so that business areas identify projects they wish to take forward, and use IMS advice to maximise the information-sharing potential of these. If all staff can keep the aim of IMS in mind, to ‘add information once, and share it’, then much else (accuracy and currency of information, efficiency) should follow.

14. IMS will over time improve the quality of the information we hold and the systems it is held on. However, the web project has some specific, one-off and heavy resource demands which arise from the need to tackle a backlog of (in some cases out-of-date) information that has built up on our website. (The web contractors’ phase 1 report and a recent paper to SLT give more details, but essentially, the web site has been seen as an information repository so it contains far too many pages of out-dated information, which directly affects the accessibility of one of our main communication channels.)

Resource Implications

15. There are three main areas where the web project will need OMG support;

- ‘Wireframing’ and reviewing content
- Migrating content
- Internal user group

16. ‘Wireframing’ is producing pages with outline content but without any design applied, to help build the structure of the new website. The web contractors will speak to each business area in turn to see which pages they need and where these should link to. This provides a clear opportunity both to weed unused pages, and to review the content on remaining pages, and those best placed to do that are staff in business areas. Currently this is scheduled to happen during summer 2009, but we realise that this will not be convenient for all business areas, depending on which staff are nominated for this role. On the other hand, some business areas may have staff available who could even help other offices review their content over the summer.

17. A small editorial team from SPICE will work alongside the web contractors to help business areas review their content as they work on the wireframing. This will include advice on ‘writing for the web’ in accessible language.

18. Later on, we will be asking business areas to nominate superusers who can be trained in the new content management system that will replace ‘Contribute’ as a way of publishing to the web. During training and afterwards, we hope that these users can help migrate their own area’s content into the new website, after it is built but before it goes live. This
is currently scheduled to happen around Christmas and into the New Year.

19. Once phase 2 starts we will also ask business areas to nominate a person to join the internal advisory group to advise the contractors on the intranet etc.

Dependencies

20. See above; the web project will require input from all business areas. There are dependencies for IMS also with the projects and best value manager, and implications for BIT and SPICe, as new projects or works requests arise.

Equalities Implications

21. Good information management will improve the accessibility and openness of the parliament’s information and therefore of the parliament itself. It will also help us in our records keeping and obligations under data protection. The web project has a clear objective to improve accessibility of the website.

Publication Scheme

22. This paper can be published.

Next Steps

23. If phase 2 of the web project is approved, OMG is asked to incorporate this into current operational plans, considering particularly summer recess. The web project team (led by Emma Armstrong) will be in touch as soon as possible with the project plan, to identify time slots for discussing content review and migration and decide the level of involvement needed.

24. A review process could however start now on existing content. A draft web ‘archive policy’ has been drawn up to suggest what should (and should not) be kept from 1999, for instance. Group heads should let the web project manager (Emma Armstrong) know if they can start this process now.

25. From now on, we ask all groups and offices proposing projects with a significant information element to seek advice and an information assessment via the IMS panel or directly from teams in BIT/SPICe (Emma MacDonald and Dorothy Sneddon are the key contacts; see the new IMS pages).

26. To aid in this, the new project initiation document template on the project management pages makes information management (IM)
impacts or constraints a mandatory consideration when project approval is being sought.

**Decision**

27. OMG is invited to endorse and to help communicate the clarified aim of the IMS programme, and the approach outlined under ‘next steps’ above.

28. OMG is invited to discuss the resource demands likely to arise from the web project, to consider how we might take a corporate approach to different offices’ availability over the summer recess, for example, and to commit in principle to committing staff time to the web project.

29. If OMG members are unable to stay on after the 15 May meeting for a demo of ‘IMS in practice’, then colleagues may wish to schedule a demonstration for a future meeting, or individually.

Patsy Richards
May 2009