



Ambitious project centralises records management to drive efficiencies across the Northern Ireland Civil Service

Steria designs, implements and manages the largest document and records management installation in northern Europe for the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS).

“This project is a vital element in the process of helping government departments work closer and more efficiently together to provide an even better service to the public.”

Chris Thompson, former Corporate Services Director in the Department of Finance and Personnel.



Steria and the Northern Ireland Civil Service

In a high profile programme of transformation aimed at creating greater efficiency across the Northern Ireland Civil Service (NICS), Steria deployed an Electronic and Document Records Management (EDRM) system, known as Records NI, enabling 16,000 civil servants to work more efficiently.

Transforming efficiency

The delivery of more efficient, cost effective public services is a common challenge faced across government and the broader public sector. For NICS, the solution to this challenge was a reform programme that included a complete business process re-engineering and change management exercise throughout the organisation. This was designed to change the way that staff worked and create a more efficient and effective administration going forwards.

As part of this, a new approach to document and records management was identified as a potential route to delivering more effective ways of working against a backdrop of:

- A migration from a paper-based regime to an electronic one; in an environment where the users had no prior Electronic and Document Records Management (EDRM) experience and had concerns that the existing paper-based systems would eventually disappear in preference to all documents and records stored on a central EDRM application.
- A complete lack of standardisation (file plan, naming convention, processes etc) across NICS departments.
- An over-reliance on paper and printing resources.
- The remit was simple: to centralise records management across 11 geographically dispersed, culturally diverse departments; each department a separate legal entity, with its own management structure and individual P&L responsibility within the service.

While the remit was simple, however, the solution was complex and Steria was appointed as prime contractor to implement it.

Steria's solution and approach

Steria had both experience and a proven methodology in deploying EDRM solutions. This solution for the largest document and records management installation in northern Europe was designed to provide NICS staff with tailored and quick access to records and documents.

It incorporated a primary and secondary data centre and full end user training for 16,000 staff working in multiple business units based at over 400 governmental buildings. It also included a seven-year managed service,



extendable to 10 years.

Steria carried out a series of Proofs of Concept, design workshops and detailed workshops with the customer and partners to ensure that all the NICS requirements for file plan design were included in the solution.

In partnership

Close partnership working between Steria and NICS was essential in a programme of activity that included:

- **Consultancy:** gathering requirements and defining a single definition that would take 11 departments with their own specific needs forward into an all encompassing corporate implementation; providing support before, during and after departmental implementation.
- **Infrastructure:** provision of all required hardware and configuration and integration across multiple sites.
- **Build:** configuration, installation and migration of software application
- **Training:** development of course materials and training for users, covering five distinct roles.

This latter element was seen as integral to the programme's ultimate success. Steria's complex and large-scale training programme was based on 'just in time' principles to match the departmental roll-outs of Records NI. In 2007, Steria trained 3,000 users a month, with a 94.95% attendance rate. The schedule continued so that over 14,000 staff were trained by December 2007 – an NI training record. Steria implemented an incentive performance management tool to ensure that

its trainers provided high quality and effective training. The success was evidenced by training surveys, which achieved an 88.9% satisfaction rate against an SLA of 70%.

Meeting ambitious targets

The Records NI programme was strategically important to NICS and was given an extremely tight schedule in order to meet the timescales for reform. The project, from start to finish, was completed in just 14 months. This ambitious schedule was viewed as high risk by some within the industry but Steria ensured that the local EDRM team was quickly in place and supported by the key skills of local partners where necessary.

Steria worked closely with key stakeholders from each of the government departments throughout this process and was able to foster a corporate approach by forming an Interdepartmental Working Group made up of information managers from each department. This required Steria to consistently encourage NICS team members to consider their own departmental requirements within the context of the overall service. The result was a programme that was delivered on time and to budget, to the delight of the customer.

This success demonstrates Steria's expertise in handling long-term complex government programmes of this type. Crucial to the success was a strong governance structure that provided independent and effective project evaluation on key project aspects such as financials, risks and audit management from the outset. The Records NI governance board was led by Sir John Semple (former head of NICS) and included John Torrie, Steria UK Chief



Not only is this a UK but a European first and I'm delighted that the Northern Ireland Civil Service has had the vision and commitment to deliver such an ambitious and rewarding project."

Chris Thompson, former Corporate Services Director in the Department of Finance and Personnel.



Executive Officer, as well as senior representatives from other key technology and service partners.

Ensuring business continuity

Today Steria is managing the service in line with NICS information governance policies. These ensure that information is always available to the business while also being secured to the latest information assurance standards.

The service is delivered by security cleared staff from a secure support room within the Steria Belfast office. Steria also helps the customer police user activity with proactive monitoring and customised audit logs and reports. The service provided also includes business continuity planning and testing with capability of near immediate fail over of services.

Steria meets regularly with NICS Departmental Information Management and Senior User Forums to ensure the service continues to be aligned to evolving NICS requirements. The relationship between the parties is based on a true partnership.

Steria's crucial role in the transformation at NICS is clearly recognised. Mike Beare, Records NI Project Manager, said: "Steria have demonstrated their commitment at all levels, from senior management to operational staff. Their expertise, effort and willingness

to work with the NICS has played a major part in producing the successes which the project has experienced to date."



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