

GROUNDBREAKING NEW PROJECT TO DELIVER SECURE INTERNET TRANSACTIONS

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UK online campaign stepped up as new online services launched

A host of new online services from Government will be delivered by a new service enabling secure transactions, announced Cabinet Office Minister Ian McCartney today.

VAT returns from HM Customs & Excise, IACS Area Aid Applications (part of the Common Agricultural Policy) from the Ministry of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food and PAYE year end returns from Inland Revenue, will be the first transactions to be delivered online through the Government Gateway.

Registration and enrolment services have been available for Customs & Excise and MAFF since 25 January. Inland Revenue registration and enrolment will be available later this month. This will allow potential users to register online in order to be able to use the online transactional services that will go live after mid-March.

Cabinet Office Minister Ian McCartney said:

"This is a key step to meeting the Prime Minister's target to get all Government services online by 2005, as part of UK online. By enabling secure transactions for a wide range of portals and commercial applications, the Gateway will break down our primary obstacle.

"Real progress is being made to modernise our public services using new technology, with more than 40 per cent of services now online. More than #1billion of investment in the next three years will step up this drive.

"There is much work still to be done, and this is just the first stage of a developing and evolving service. But new technology is already playing a key part in making Government services more accessible and convenient for the citizen."

The Government Gateway provides a single route to many legacy systems across departments and is believed to be the first global service offering full digital signing of XML. It will offer citizens and businesses a single authentication service for all government transactions, such as sending in tax forms. Once a user has successfully registered, they will be able to access services from different Departments using a common user ID or digital certificate.

The Gateway is designed to provide high levels of security and resilience, twenty-four hours a day, 365 days a year through many points of access, such as the UK online citizen portal, Government web sites, commercial portals and applications.

The first stage has been implemented under tight deadlines, with further phases planned throughout the year to provide support for additional transactions and services. A team of experienced project managers from the Cabinet Office is running the project. Microsoft is taking the leading role in

enabling the overall solution, with Sema responsible for live support. The hardware platform is provided by Dell and is hosted by Cable and Wireless. Halcyon Business Solutions will operate a secure printing facility. Viacode, a subsidiary of Royal Mail, provides digital certificates through the British Chambers of Commerce.

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. The project is being internally managed by a team of experienced project managers from the Cabinet Office. The following companies are providing the components of the project:

* Microsoft are providing design, integration and build services and are taking the leading role in enabling the overall solution, including design of the architecture and by providing the lead development resources.

* SEMA are responsible for live support and enhancement of the service over the next 12 months.

* Viacode, a subsidiary of Royal Mail, will be the first supported provider of digital certificates. Certificates will be distributed by the British Chamber of Commerce, under the brand name "ChamberSign".

* Cable & Wireless will host the operational service using Dell hardware.

* Halcyon are providing secure printing services.

2. Discussions are ongoing regarding future transactions with these three departments and with other organisations in central and local government. The list of potential stakeholders is growing quickly and includes:

* Department of Social Security; * Small Business Service from the DTI; * Northern Ireland/Scotland Executives; Welsh Assembly; * Radio Communications Agency; and * Office of National Statistics.

3. A guide to what you can do online with Government is available at: www.e-envoy.gov.uk/online_now.htm

4. Government departments and agencies have more than 1,000 sites. They receive in excess of 20 million requests a week. Recent research by National Statistics revealed nearly one in five adults who use the Internet do so to access Government services or official information.

5. The Prime Minister launched Britain's UK online campaign in September. The threefold aim is to ensure everyone who wants it has access to the internet by 2005, that all Government services are online by that date and to make Britain one of the world's leading knowledge economies.

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