



## **Chapter 2 Introduction and Background**

**Purpose** The purpose of this chapter is to outline the overall project objectives, the nature of the approach undertaken to achieve these objectives and to provide an understanding of the work programme which was involved to develop the e-Cabinet model.

**Introduction** The process of formulating draft memoranda and aides memoire for government meetings is by its nature a collaborative one, involving staff in each of the Government departments and offices, the cabinet secretariat and Ministers. The current process is paper intensive, requiring documents to be printed, copied and circulated manually. In addition, because of the sensitive and confidential nature of the material, strict policies are enforced governing authorisation, circulation, copying and recording of copies.

**Background** The Government initiated the e-Cabinet project in order that they can avail of the benefits of information and communications technologies (ICTs) to deliver efficiencies in the above processes and to facilitate the development of new information resources.

This project was also driven by the desire to lead the way in implementing the recommendations of the Government Action Plan on the Information Society. Specifically the project had the following key areas for investigation:-

- ?? Electronic distribution and management of Cabinet papers
- ?? Use of technologies to improve presentation of complex issues at Cabinet
- ?? Use of technologies in direct support of Cabinet meetings and
- ?? Creation of new information resources.

**Objectives** **The specific objectives of this assignment were stated as follows:-**

- ?? Analyse and understand the existing Cabinet processes;
- ?? Through research and consultation, identify the opportunities for the deployment of workflow, document management, knowledge management and other management systems to support the Cabinet processes;
- ?? Identify the requirements of potential users and provide recommendations for streamlining and improving the Cabinet processes using secure ICT's;
- ?? Recommend the changes necessary to existing procedures and protocols to suit the electronic environment; and
- ?? Identify operational security requirements and specify a security framework necessary to support the recommended ICT's.

The Cabinet processes are very well developed, have been in existence for some time and are laid down in the Cabinet handbook. The purpose of the analysis was not with a view to 'Redesign' the processes but to develop a sufficient understanding of them in order that opportunities for use of technologies to enhance the processes could be identified. The appropriate technologies, once the Cabinet processes were understood, had to be researched to understand what the mix of technologies were and how they could be deployed to support the Cabinet processes. The deployment of the technologies

may result in changes to the existing procedures and protocols for example the layout of the Memorandum is likely to change and these changes have to be outlined in order that the procedures can be rewritten as appropriate.

Finally the technologies recommended will require a security framework in order to secure the e-Cabinet.

**Work Programme**

This project was initiated in November 2000 and comprised the following work programme phases:-

Project Mobilisation

Phase 1 - Analysis and Research

Phase 2 - Completion of Analysis and Key Stakeholder Consultation

Phase 3 - Completion of the Assignment and briefings.

As part of the key stakeholder consultation phase of the project, interviews were conducted with a representative group of Ministers and Secretaries General, so chosen so as to reflect Cabinet and Departmental diversity.

**The objectives of each phase is outlined in further detail below:-**

**Phase 0 – Project Mobilisation**

The purpose of this phase was to plan the project through mutual agreement of contract terms, development of a Project Initiation Document and project plan. In addition this phase achieved agreement on the composition of the Steering Group, estimated dates for steering group meetings and agreement on the approach for the balance of the assignment.

**Phase 1 – Analysis and Research Phase**

The purpose and objective of this phase was to conduct interviews and analysis with key Cabinet Secretariat staff in order to map the Cabinet processes, develop an understanding of the issues and requirements regarding the current processes as well as develop outlines of possible modifications and enhancements which technology might support.

In tandem with this we conducted research of the most relevant and up to date technologies to identify potential tools for the new e-Cabinet. We also surveyed a sample drawn from the top PwC clients to identify the leading technologies in use in the Boardroom Environment.

**Appendix I contains our technology research report.**

**Phase 2 – Completion of Analysis and Key Stakeholder Interviews**

The key objective of this phase was to conduct interviews with a broad selection of Key Stakeholders drawn from Departments and the Cabinet. The principle objective of these interviews was to elicit views on the workability of the emerging model and glean from them

any suggestions for modifications, enhancements or approaches to implementation. This contributed to our understanding of the issues and requirements regarding the current processes as well as generating additional suggestions in relation to the shape of the e-Cabinet vision.

**Phase 3 – Draft and Present Findings**

During this phase we summarised our findings and finalised our recommendations to produce this final report. In addition we briefed Cabinet and Secretaries General on the main findings and recommendations of this study.