NiTEWORKS

Technical Solutions to Deliver the NRE: Market Survey and Options Assessment. Executive Summary

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction & Context

The National Resilience Extranet (NRE) provides the UK's emergency responder community with the sole mechanism for many responder organisations to communicate at a RESTRICTED level (IL3) both inside their organisation and to other agencies. It is designed to facilitate information sharing to improve the emergency planning process, in order to better prepare the UK against civil contingency events. The current contract for the NRE service will expire in September 2013; and therefore an approach is required to continue to provide the emergency responder community with a collaborative working environment that allows multiagency working and information sharing as advised by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004.

The expiration of the current contract allows the Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat (CCS) the opportunity to investigate the options for a Next Generation NRE (NG-NRE).

Task one of the Niteworks Study involves an assessment of the potential technical approaches to deliver the NG-NRE. This document contains the Executive Summary of the task one. The findings and analysis are detailed in the accompanying slide pack.

Approach

In order to assess the technology options for the future capability, a market survey was designed and conducted. The approach to the market survey consisted of the following key tasks:

- Assessment of the current NRE, the Concept of Operations, Concept of Use and all available documentation in order to scope limitations of the current system and identification of trends and issues as highlighted by the CCS and user community.

- Examination of the user requirements and constraints for the NG-NRE; engage with the stakeholder community and customer to identify key issues and consolidate findings.

- Convening of an industry workshop where the findings were presented to industry in order to gain feedback as to best practice and proposed technical architecture solutions for the NG-NRE.

- Analysis and synthesis of all evidence gained to produce a report (slide pack and this executive summary) for the CCS in the form of recommendations as to proposed technical architecture solutions.

Assessment

During the market survey process, industry made a number of high-level points and principles for the procurement of the NG-NRE. These included:

- The requirement for the NG-NRE should be specified in terms of desired outcomes;

- There should be a definition of how the NG-NRE will be used;

- The requirement for information workflows should be specified;

- Early stakeholder buy-in should be encouraged in order to ensure co-operation for the delivery of a successful system.

Further points and principles are included in the supporting slide pack.

Findings

The investigation identified four principal technical solutions for the NG-NRE:

- Option 1: Continue with current NRE as delivered by the incumbent. This is a low-risk route that provides more time to specify and procure the NG-NRE.

- Option 2: Augment functionality of current NRE. This could use the latest version 3 from the incumbent with added functionality and an improved graphical user interface. This is a fairly low risk means to deliver an enhanced NRE, while preparing to specify and procure the NG-NRE. The refresh could also encompass a change to the billing regime.

- Option 3: Procure a new industry-provided solution to deliver NG-NRE capability. This could be delivered through open competition. This provides a rapid route to delivery of a NG-NRE, which carries significant risk of cost, delay and shortcomings in performance.

- Option 4: Government cloud-based solution. This would be a new NG-NRE created from a new design, using the latest technology, following the Government ICT strategy, moving on to the Public Services Network. This would see the NG-NRE community as the government innovators employing the latest concepts and technologies to deliver capability. This is a fairly high risk strategy at present due to compressed delivery times, maturity of the PSN, supplier's accreditation on the Cloudstore and the infancy of the overall concept. This small-scale, complex and innovative project would carry risk as an early adopter of this technical architecture solution.

Options 1 and 2 are "Continuity Options", while Options 3 and 4 are "Change Options".

Option 4 follows the Government ICT strategy most closely. On the other hand, Option 3 may be very close to following Government ICT strategy, depending upon how the infrastructure is sourced for Option 3.

Conclusions

All four candidate technical solutions meet the minimum NRE requirement. There are advantages to all four. A decision between the four cannot be made on technical grounds alone: issues of budget, timescales, functionality, procurement strategy and risk all need to be taken into consideration. These are investigated further in Part 2: *"NRE Procurement Strategy: Risks & De-Risking"*.

There is a need for:

- A clear definition of user requirements: what the system must do, should do and could do;

- A clear model of governance across the NRE;

- A concept of operations and/or concept of use;

- A more detailed review of the feasibility of hosting NG-NRE on the PSN/G-Cloud.

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