

# **Scottish Government Information Management Strategy**

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# Scottish Government Information Management Strategy

## Foreword

Information is absolutely fundamental to us being able to carry out our business effectively and plays a major role in helping us meet the priorities outlined as part of 'In the service of Scotland – our vision for the Scottish Government'.

Managing, gathering and using our information – while protecting it sufficiently and sharing appropriately with the public and stakeholders - is the responsibility of each and every one of us.

In recent times we have rightly been challenged about our information management and governance, including our ability to respond to formal Inquiries related to a range of matters. And it's right that we should be held to high standards.

To provide a measurement of where things currently stand, a review was commissioned and the Permanent Secretary committed to its publication and release to the Scottish Parliament. The report - 'A Review of Information Management in the Scottish Government' – was published in June 2021 and had a key recommendation to 'Implement a corporate whole-of-government information management strategy.'

This strategy is the response to that commitment and provides a framework through which we can work together to meet our goal of making our management of information as good as it can – and indeed should - be. It sets out our approach to managing our knowledge and information at a local and corporate level, with appropriate checks and balances in place to ensure that this is carried out effectively.

To drive this forward, I have established an Information Governance Board (IGB) which will be chaired by me and draws senior representation from all DG families. This will become an embedded component of our wider corporate governance - reporting to the Executive Team and linking to other groups as appropriate.

However, each and every one of us – across grades and professions - has a role to play in managing our information as robustly and rigorously as we manage other corporate assets. Systems and processes play an important part, but they rely on us all making the cultural and behavioural changes which puts management of information squarely at the heart of the organisation.

**Lesley Fraser,**  
**Director General Corporate and SIRO (Senior Information Risk Owner)**

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## Why have an Information Management Strategy?

Information is the lifeblood of our organisation and how we do business. It is a precious commodity and is crucial to the success of the business of the Scottish Government (SG) and the SG's vision of being open, capable and responsive. This strategy is based around our strategic goals of:

- Creating the right organisational culture
- Improving information management [IM] capability
- Establishing clear and effective information governance and controls
- Ensuring we are compliant at all times

## Who is this strategy for?

This strategy is for all employees of the Scottish Government, permanent and temporary, contractors, consultants and secondees, who all have a responsibility to manage and protect information for, or on behalf of, the organisation.

## What's in it for you?

Improving the way we manage our information brings a number of benefits both to the individual and to the SG. Good information management provides the individual with the following benefits:

- finding the information you need quickly and easily;
- knowing what you need to keep and what you can dispose of – removing duplication and the “I’ll keep it just in case” approach;
- knowing where to keep it and how to save it;
- working more efficiently, making best use of resources – re-using information created by you or others and not re-inventing the wheel;
- working more collaboratively – making best use of skills and knowledge;
- knowing what you can share and with whom;
- knowing what information needs to be protected and what should be made available to the public; and
- providing assurance that risks are reduced and that you and the organisation are complying with information law.

The Knowledge and Information Management (KIM) Branch in iTECS is responsible for developing and supporting this strategy, the corporate approach to knowledge and information management, and works closely with information leads across the SG to achieve this.

## **What's in it for the Scottish Government?**

Good IM provides the SG with the following benefits:

- preserves for the public record decisions being made now which will become our history of the future;
- enables us to provide a more effective service to stakeholders and the public with greater transparency around the information we hold;
- preserves our reputation with the people of Scotland and enables us to meet expectations of how we will manage their information;
- builds trust in the quality of our information both for employees and the people of Scotland;
- supports informed decision and policy making;
- good IM enables employees handling FOI requests to locate and retrieve information easily within the required timescales;
- ensures compliance with legal requirements;
- increases our efficiency by enabling us to get the most out of the information we hold and to re-use it, which prevents us having to start all over again each time;
- reduces levels of information-related risk and ensures that our information is protected and secure;
- provides confidence and assurance to the Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) that we are managing information risk in the SG; and
- through the role of Information Asset Owners (IAOs), ensures that we are aware of our information assets and how to manage them.

The Senior Information Risk Owner (SIRO) leads the Scottish Government's response on information risk and is accountable to the Permanent Secretary.

## **What's in it for the People of Scotland?**

Good IM in the Scottish Government provides the public with the following benefits:

- delivery of more efficient, cost effective services;
- ensures that we make the best use of information;
- increases the transparency of our data, enabling the public to participate in decision making;
- increases understanding of what the Scottish Government does;
- enables the public to engage and collaborate with the Scottish Government in achieving its aims; and
- enables the public to hold the Scottish Government to account.

## **What does good information management look like?**

The goal is that every member of the Scottish Government can say:

- 'I know what information we have and where it's stored';
- 'I collaborate with others to share knowledge and information';
- 'I know how to protect information and manage it appropriately';
- 'I have the skills I need to manage information';
- 'I know why all of this matters because I am part of an organisation which values knowledge and information';
- 'I know what's expected of me when creating and using information'; and
- 'I have the tools that I need to manage information'

## **How do we make it happen?**

The SG will establish an improved corporate information governance model. There will be two tiers, strategic and operational.

The strategic level will see the creation of a dedicated Information Governance Board (IGB), chaired by DG Corporate as the SIRO reporting to ET and linking in with other groups as appropriate such as DG Assurance Groups and Scottish Government Audit & Assurance [SGAAC].

This will be supported by an Information Management Practitioner Group (IMPG). This will act as a business design, advisory and assurance function for the IGB and include key information management professionals from across the SG.

### **'I know what information we have and where it's stored'**

eRDM is the Scottish Government corporate Electronic Record and Document Management System [EDRMS]. It must be used to create and store our official records and documents and share information with colleagues.

We must:

- value our information as a precious asset, which underpins our everyday business. We treat it as no less valuable than people, finances and infrastructure;
- proactively improve the information management skills of all staff;
- create business and digital solutions to analyse, transform and streamline the structure and business value of our legacy data;
- ensure the roles and responsibilities for managing our information assets throughout their lifecycle are not just assigned, they drive information management best practice, continuous improvement and quality assurance in our day to day business;
- reduce duplication and rework through better business processes supported by automation and value its creation through the provision of reuse opportunities; and
- ensure wherever possible that our information has a single point of truth.

## **‘I collaborate with others to share knowledge and information’**

In line with the ambition of being “An outward looking government which is more open and accessible to Scotland's people than ever before” we need to share information and knowledge with colleagues, business partners, stakeholders and the public as appropriate – and understand the benefits that this brings.

We must recognise that sharing and protecting are complementary activities, and are not mutually exclusive. Information and knowledge are key corporate assets and we all have a responsibility to share and re-use them to release their value and maximise benefits to the business and the public. Data held by the SG should be open to re-use unless there is a good reason not to. We must make the most of the knowledge and information we already have rather than reinventing the wheel.

We must:

- make information management a strategic priority for the SG and which supports our vision as an open, capable and responsive government;
- ensure the right information is available, to the right person, at the right time, in the right format, at the right place, enabling effective and efficient working, improved business decisions and accountability;
- ensure our information management provides a return on investment through improved and consistent data, information and knowledge sharing and management; and
- ensure we can readily provide, exchange and publish information across the SG and externally when and where appropriate.

## **‘I know how to protect information and manage it appropriately’**

It is vital then that the Scottish Government holds, shares and processes our information assets appropriately at all times, and that we identify and manage any associated risks.

All Scottish Government employees have a part to play in making sure that the information that they work with daily is processed appropriately and securely.

Information Asset Owners (IAOs) have a specific role in protecting the information assets in their care. In recognition of the importance of that responsibility in 2009, the Strategic Board agreed that the IAO role should be held at Deputy Director level. This role has the responsibility of managing the information assets in their business area, to ensure that information is used within the law for the public good, and to report on information risk management through a Statement on Internal Control.

We must:

- have meaningful, appropriate and consistent controls and information governance arrangements in place at all levels of the organisation;
- ensure our information management is managed annually and links to and supports our strategic priorities and objectives;

- ensure we have effective measures in place to evaluate, encourage and drive our performance around information management; and
- meet our own high standards, policies and ethical responsibilities and fully comply with our information management legal and regulatory obligations.

### **‘I have the skills I need to manage information’**

The Scottish Government will continue to strengthen the governance structure to embed a culture of excellent information management practises. As detailed above there will be an Information Governance Board Chaired by SIRO along with an Information Management Practitioners Group.

We will also build information management capability through the Scottish Government via a number of supplementary roles to act as local information management leads within DGs and Directorates. The role of Deputy Information Asset Owner [DIAO] in each division will support and deputise for the IAO assuring the operational responsibilities of robust IM and RM practices.

We will ensure that all employees have the knowledge, skills and support they need to manage information and use it appropriately and proactively improve the information management skills of all employees.

We will provide all roles with particular responsibilities the appropriate focussed training and continued support and guidance.

We will ensure our behaviours around information management are consistent, corporate and aimed at achieving the highest standards.

### **‘I am part of an organisation which values information and knowledge’**

We will develop and maintain an organisational culture, which values information and works to remove barriers to managing information effectively. We will communicate our vision and culture to all employees and stakeholders, resulting in a high level of awareness due to effective messages around information management.

We will:

- ensure that at all levels of the organisation we recognise and promote the importance and priority of good information management; and
- improve effective communication of messages around information management.

## **‘I know what’s expected of me when creating and using information’**

We will ensure that employees know what is expected of them when creating and using information by:

- mandating the use of the SG corporate Electronic Records and Document Management system (eRDM);
- explaining the lifecycle of the information they create;
- raising awareness of the Corporate Records Management Plan;
- raising the awareness of and communicating information management fundamentals; and
- raising awareness of the existing information management policies and guidance at every opportunity.

## **‘I have the ICT tools that I need to manage information’**

eRDM is the Corporate SG solution for managing information in the Scottish Government.

We will ensure that:

- we provide the best available information systems which meet the needs of our work;
- employees know where to find training and guidance;
- can use the technology efficiently and effectively;
- employees know how to use the system from a records management [RM] perspective; and
- continually improve the solution to make it as good as it possibly can be.

## **What we did**

We made investments in information governance in response to Cabinet Office information governance reviews [in 2015 and 2017] with enhanced digital and storage tools along with improved staff training and usage. We have made governance and programme adjustments following the corporate Review of Information Management [2021].

## **Who will make this happen? All of us!**

The Knowledge & Information and Information Assurance & Data Protection branches together with strategic and operational governance bodies will continue to seek increased engagement to ensure everyone is clear of their role and responsibility for the creation, management and recording of information on behalf of the organisation.



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