

BUSINESS INFORMATION IN GOVERNMENT

A Research Study



Companies House
— for the record —



dti

Department of Trade and Industry



HM Customs and Excise

*to improve the way business and
government communicate*

Business World



Choice of Service

Telephone • Web Page
Call-centre • Set-top box
Community • Access Point
Professional service

Type of Transaction

1 or 2 way • E-commerce
information • Notifications
Registration



Security Controls

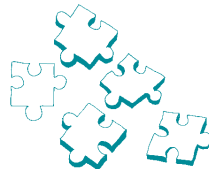
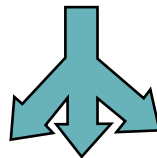


Joined -up Services

Simplified - identification
Answer-Once Forms



Background Departments



PUTTING IT IN CONTEXT

The UK government is committed to reducing the burden on business often found in administration and regulatory activities. As part of that commitment the government is sponsoring a study to identify ways for more efficient exchanges of information and the simplification of complex transactions between government and business (transactions involving more than one government office). The work supports the recently launched programme of improvement referred to in the publication 'Modernising Government' published in March 1999.

The study will take a pragmatic line and invite views from both business and public servants on the demand for information and how this may be reduced, specifically duplication. Small businesses are hit hardest by such burdens and the study is being conducted on a 'Think small first' basis. Though not only dealing with small businesses, this study is part of a range of new measures being introduced by the Government to help small businesses cope with regulation. These measures include the setting up of the new Small Business Service which will pull together Government's support for small business.






Even minor changes can make a difference and in ways other than simply reducing burden. An improved understanding of the organisations operating within the UK will improve the targeting of information, advice and funding or how you deliver information to government.

MAKING IT HAPPEN

The overriding purpose of the study is to understand what business and government alike need. In providing options for these needs the study must also explore what changes in law, working practices and technology would be required.

In a fast changing world it is important that any view is taken quickly and acted upon. For this reason it is not practicable to study every public service in detail and so a representative selection has come together to provide a lead on the range of issues that will arise from the research.

They are:

-  Companies House
-  Office for National Statistics
-  Department of Trade and Industry
-  Inland Revenue
-  HM Customs and Excise

The project has a number of stages but the most important is the consultation stage where the views and opinions of businesses are being sought and considered alongside those of government departments. This consultation phase will run throughout spring and summer 1999. A questionnaire will be issued to a cross section of businesses and business representative groups. A small sample will also be invited to discuss the qualitative issues as they will be for their own business or membership. In addition, there is a public Web site which will grow throughout the project with details about the project and provide an opportunity for everyone to participate.

There is an open question running through the heart of the study and this is 'What needs to be done?'

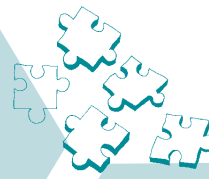
BRINGING BENEFITS

Since the first announcement of the study there has been a range of suggestions as to what solutions could be put in place and why. It is important to keep an open mind during the research and consultation stage but some of those suggestions are listed below.

- A comprehensive register of businesses in the UK that can act as a signpost for international customers
- A single point of registration for public administration
- Information at hand for one-stop call-centres
- Targeted notifications of national or international news
- Simplification of multi-departmental transactions
- On-line applications or approvals for a range of services
- Electronic transfer of information from your chosen business software
- On-line guidance and knowledge systems that respond to a personalised business structure.

A fair list but change must bring benefits and not add a further layer of burden. Part of the consultation will be to consider the priorities and the best way to deliver these requirements in the short and long term.

Background Departments



Joined up Services



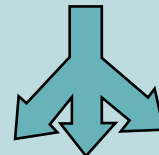
Business focus Service

Security Controls



Services

On-line forms
News and information
International news



Preferred Delivery Mechanisms

- Telephone • Web Page • EDI
- Call-Centre • Fax • E-Mail
- Paper-Letter



Business World

KEEPING THINGS SAFE

All of the above, and your new ideas, will require a number of changes to bring them about. These changes will be in processes, policy and technology. It is most important that a change will not undermine the existing duty of care practised by Government when dealing with business information. For this reason the study programme will work with legal and advisory authorities responsible for privacy and the many issues related to redesigning the service delivery process and data protection. These matters will be fully considered before any change is taken and will be one of the critical influences on the resulting programme schedule.

WHAT IT CAN LOOK LIKE

Simplifying the process of government administration and improving the management of information can mean the burden on business is greatly reduced. The new age of information technology opens up many opportunities for how this may be achieved.

The electronic solutions may not all depend upon the ubiquitous Internet as different businesses will have different needs and electronic capability. The study will look to see how each technology or service channel can be used. Some examples are shown in this leaflet.

STUDY SCHEDULE

The Study will be flexible and responsive to feedback. There may be a number of findings and triggers for action along the way and where possible these will be reflected as 'demonstrators' or 'examples' on the Web site. However, it is important to give full consideration to any new ideas to ensure that the benefits are fully realised.

The key milestones for the project are as listed below:

Study Initiated:	May 1999
Business Consultation:	Spring/Summer 1999
Legal and Technology Review:	Autumn 1999
Full Analysis and Report:	December 1999

TAKING PART

The study will be open throughout for comments and feedback by providing a project Web site and telephone support line. The web site will provide the following services:

- On-line consultation
- On-line feedback and comment services
- Idea demonstrators
- Updates and project news
- Other business interest information as it becomes available

To take part or to find out more about the project as it progresses please make contact via the following:

Study Web site:

<http://www.business-info.gov.uk>

E-mail:

sbr@ons.gov.uk

General enquiries:

01633 813229