

## Delivering an ICT Project – six steps towards successful implementation

### KEY POINTS



- The value of having a clear ICT vision and strategy
- Why planning an ICT project thoroughly is vital
- Keeping control through an ICT Strategy Governance Group
- Ensuring use of the ICT resources to their full potential
- Follow our SIX steps for a successful project

There are too many examples of failed ICT Delivery projects and for good reason; this is a detailed phase with many variables, delivery elements and stakeholders to manage. There is so much that could go wrong that it takes skill and discipline to get it right.

Here, we share the six essential steps to take so that your ICT Project is successfully delivered.

### 1. ICT Strategy & Governance

#### a) Have a clear ICT Strategy, Vision and Strategic Plan

For ICT to be effective in Education there needs to be a clear link between an organisation's Educational Vision and its ICT Strategy.

Without that clear link and an ICT Vision, ICT spending to meet short term needs can lead to a mix of systems and a wide range of costly long-term problems.

A clear ICT Strategy that supports an educational vision now and in the future is essential to effective and successful use of IT.

The ICT Strategic plan that is developed to deliver the ICT Vision determines your key requirements and costs for the future and recommends the best technology solutions for your MAT or School.

#### b) Create an ICT Strategy Group

An ICT Strategy Governance Group gives you confident control over your ICT Strategy. It ensures that decisions are made from an educational perspective, not 'ICT for the sake of ICT'.

Your ICT Governance Group should:

- govern all strategic decisions regarding ICT across your entire organisation.
- have all the right, senior decisions makers, in the group.
- meet regularly to contribute, discuss, determine and implement strategic ICT decisions.
- be collaborative, effective and inform ICT across your organisation to deliver the desired educational outcomes.

## Planning an ICT Project – six steps towards successful implementation

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### 2. Take the time to plan

This step is fundamental to success and where a significant amount of time should be spent.

This planning phase incorporates the following key aspects:

- Budget and timescales – ICT Projects can only start being implemented if the budget has been approved by the MATs leadership team. Make sure that both the MAT leadership and IT Teams are working to the same timeframe so budget approval is given when expected and the project can be implemented to the agreed timescales.
- Technology planning – identify the equipment required, the appropriate specification and quantity needed. Make sure you have the right experts helping you here so that the right equipment is ordered in the right amounts.
- Procurement process – the scale of the project and your procurement policies will determine the appropriate procurement route e.g. three quotes for smaller projects to full tendering for large scale projects. Make sure each element of the project takes into account and incorporates the selected route into the overall project plan.
- Resources – deploy the right people with the right skillset who are also able to devote time to the project. This may include creating a project team with a balance of internal and external resource.



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#### 3. Arrange for timely delivery

Most ICT Projects have huge implications for their users and other stakeholders, possibly creating a temporary disruption or 'down-time' as the ICT is brought on board and users adapt to using it. With so many people involved and impacted, a timely delivery is crucial.

First, the timing for an ICT Project has to be detailed in the ICT Strategic Plan.

Then, the ICT Strategy Group must ensure that everything is on track and be aware of the implications if it isn't.

This planning and governance allow the ICT Project team to plan for a 'just in time' delivery, so that ICT Projects are delivered when expected (not sooner or later).

However, the planning and governance structures also mean that if a timely delivery isn't going to happen, it is flagged early, and all stakeholders can be updated and prepared to adapt to what this means for them.

#### 4. Incorporate an evaluation phase

Build in an evaluation phase before full purchase and roll out.

This allows you to ensure that your purchase is fit for the purpose as defined in your ICT Strategy. It also potentially saves time and budget further down the line.

Without an evaluation phase, you may purchase IT equipment and digital technologies without fully assessing its suitability and the potential impact on teaching and learning.

#### 5. Frictionless implementation

Following the evaluation phase, any issues should have been reported back to the MAT's leadership. These issues have to then be addressed and dealt with so that the full roll out is smooth.

A difficult roll out can mask the Project's benefits and make it harder for the MAT or School's leadership Team to determine if this ICT Project has had a positive or negative impact and achieved its aims.

#### 6. Empower and engage users

Engaged users who understand what is happening, and why, can be a real asset to any ICT Project. They might not initially like what is happening but if they have been involved, consulted and kept up to date, they will, in our experience, be more accepting of change.

Training, carefully scheduled, for all the users is crucial to achieving maximum benefit from the IT investment. Help them get the benefits through good training and everyone wins.

#### Conclusion

There is no need for ICT Projects to be failures – many ICT Projects are delivered on-time, to budget and give MATs and Schools what they expect and need. It's a learnt skill to do this but it can, and should, be learnt and applied so that your next ICT Project is a success.

#### FIND OUT MORE

If you would like to discuss your next ICT project and how our Consultants could help, please get in touch:

Visit [www.novatia.com](http://www.novatia.com) call **01962 832 632** or email [info@novatia.com](mailto:info@novatia.com)