



## FIRST ITEM ON THE AGENDA

**Information Technology Strategy  
(2007–09): Annual report**

1. The updated Information Technology (IT) Strategy for 2007–09 was considered and approved by the Subcommittee at the November 2007 session.<sup>1</sup> At an informal meeting of the Subcommittee during the March 2008 session of the Governing Body, the Office provided a status briefing on the Strategy. This paper presents the first annual report on the progress achieved in the implementation of the Strategy.
2. The Strategy is organized around 12 initiatives grouped in the following three major areas:

Programme execution services	Infrastructure	Governance, support and training
■ Collaborative working	■ Technology watch	■ Governance
■ Electronic Document Management System	■ Infrastructure	■ Support
■ IRIS	■ Connectivity	■ Training
	■ Remote/mobile	
	■ Security	
	■ Staffing	

**I. Collaborative working**

3. The Plone software was selected after an analysis of the available tools on the market. It is a product of the open source community and therefore less costly to acquire and maintain than proprietary commercial products. As of September 2008, some 28 sites had been configured, with a total of 1,622 registered ILO users and 332 external users. Each site is configured according to the needs of the owning department and managed by an ILO official in that department. These sites provide a Web-based environment for discussion forums, collaborative working on documents, chats, and other Internet technologies. The Plone system is a critical element in the Office's Knowledge Sharing Strategy.

<sup>1</sup> GB.300/PFA/ICTS/1.

4. The use of Skype Internet telephony is being encouraged in an effort to reduce communication costs. Secure and tested versions of the software are distributed through the ILO network. Skype is supported by the IT staff, and “Skype names” are included in the email address book of the Office.
5. The use of videoconferencing in the Office is increasing: in the first six months of 2008, more videoconferences were held than during all of 2007. Moreover, new equipment has been procured to allow greater use of Internet connectivity, which is less costly than traditional Integrated Digital Services Network (ISDN) lines leased from phone companies. This new equipment will also extend the scope of videoconferencing to include countries which do not have an ISDN infrastructure.

## **II. Electronic Document Management System (EDMS)**

6. The development and deployment of the ILO Internal Governance Documents System (IGDS) was successfully completed in January 2008. This EDMS application manages the entire process of producing the different types of internal governance documents, from editing through workflow-based approval, translation, and publication. Officials at headquarters and in the regions can now search and access all published IGDS documents through a user-friendly Web interface.
7. The e-registry pilot has integrated into the EDMS most of the official documents created since January 2004 by the Bureau of Information Technology and Communications (ITCOM). However, the development of the application has been slowed by the scarcity of external consultants with sufficient expertise in the Stellent product, now known as the Oracle Universal Content Manager (UCM). This has affected the knowledge transfer needed to build up internal expertise.
8. Integration of the GroupWise email system into the EDMS is expected to be completed before the end of 2008. The vendor product that has been selected will significantly reduce the amount of development needed to customize the integration for the ILO environment.

## **III. Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS)**

9. IRIS has been successfully upgraded to the latest release of the Oracle eBusiness Suite, and a new Travel module has been deployed incorporating several enhancements requested by the user community.
10. Other major enhancements were implemented, including: electronic payslips, performance appraisal reporting, and the calculation of accrued entitlements on separation in order to meet new reporting requirements under the International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS).
11. A detailed progress report on IRIS in the regions will be presented in a separate paper to the Subcommittee.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> GB.303/PFA/ICTS/2.

## **IV. Technology watch**

12. ITCOM specialists continue to monitor and evaluate new technologies to identify new trends which may have practical applicability for the Office. For example, the latest generation of network attached disk storage (NAS) is being tested for possible deployment to the smaller external offices; this will facilitate a reduction in the number of servers which require significant support resources, without taking away any of the current user functionalities.
13. Information sessions are held on a regular basis to ensure that users are always informed of the available IT tools and services.

## **V. Infrastructure**

14. The entire network at headquarters is being updated to replace older hardware that is no longer supported by the vendor. This work is being done gradually to minimize the impact on the work of the Office.
15. A wireless zone has been created in the conference rooms and in the connecting lounge areas. Delegates and guests can now freely connect to the Internet from anywhere on the south side (the R2 and R3 levels) of the headquarters building.

## **VI. Connectivity**

16. Connections to the Internet have been upgraded at headquarters, and in ILO Offices in Abidjan, Kinshasa, and Algiers.
17. A new connection is being established between headquarters and the IRIS hosting site in the Netherlands in order to provide a point-to-point fallback link in the event that the high-speed line experiences a prolonged failure. Connectivity to IRIS through the public Internet, via the secure HTTPS protocol, is always available for remote access and as a second fallback option.
18. Firewalls in all external locations are being gradually replaced with new technology.

## **VII. Remote/mobile**

19. Secure remote access to files stored on the headquarters network has been implemented, so that users can now work more productively when on mission, or from home when authorized. This functionality will be gradually developed in external offices.
20. Mobile access to email through Blackberry-type devices continues to grow at headquarters and in external offices. Standard access security protocols have been established and are being adapted for countries where a reliable mobile telecommunications infrastructure is not yet available.

## **VIII. Security**

21. The draft IT security policy has been posted on the Intranet and presented to the user community. Internal consultations are proceeding and the final policy is expected to be

published by the end of 2008. The appointment of a dedicated IT security officer in February 2007 has been a key factor in the progress that has been achieved to date.

22. Email spam continues to be increasingly problematic. This problem is especially acute in the regions. Because the complex and costly anti-spam mechanisms installed at headquarters cannot be replicated in all 47 external offices, all email traffic (incoming and outgoing) is gradually being channelled through the headquarters infrastructure. As of September 2008, the email of 37 offices in the regions is being routed through headquarters.
23. The development and testing of the disaster recovery systems hosted at the UN International Computing Centre is progressing. The first stage will provide recovery for headquarters email in the event of a serious and lengthy outage; this is expected to be available in the second quarter of 2009. The development of the Office's Business Continuity Plan will generate additional and urgent needs, such as access to the ILO web site, the EDMS, and other central applications. It should be noted that the IRIS infrastructure is already fully covered by a separate disaster recovery plan based at the outsourcing site in the Netherlands.

## IX. Staffing

24. The staffing of IT posts remains a challenge. Besides competing with the higher-paying private sector, the ILO must also compete with other UN organizations for positions which are in high demand, such as in the field of the Oracle ERP software used in IRIS.
25. As of this date, the estimated total number of full-time equivalent (FTE) IT support workers at headquarters and in the regions is as follows:

Category of IT support work	Professional	General Service/ local/national officer	Total IT workers
Infrastructure (hardware, software, networks)	16	38	54
Application development and maintenance (IRIS, EDMS, Web, databases, etc.)	33	16	49
Total	49	54	103

The total number of network users is currently 3,226. That figure is higher than the 2,665 full-time employed staff last reported to the PFA<sup>3</sup> because it includes short-term staff and part-time employees. The computed IT staffing ratio (number of users supported by each IT worker) is 1:32, which compares favourably with the ratio of 1:33 for government, education, and non-profit organizations as reported in a 2003 survey.<sup>4</sup> It is better than the 1:25 average reported in the same survey for companies with between 500 and 10,000 employees.

<sup>3</sup> GB.301/PFA/13.

<sup>4</sup> "Organizing for Results: IT Structures and Staffing Survey", survey carried out by people3, Inc. (a unit of Gartner, Inc.) with Mercer Human Resource Consulting and the Information Technology Association of America (ITAA), Jan. 2003.

## **X. Governance**

26. The third phase in the establishment of an IT governance framework based on COBIT and ITIL standards is ongoing. The objective is for the maturity index of the 38 applicable IT processes to reach a level of (at least) 2 on a scale of 0 to 5.
27. An Information Technology Application Advisory Board (ITAAB) has been established to oversee the coordination of the development of IT applications and the acquisition of application software throughout the Office, so as to avoid duplication and incompatibilities with established Office-wide applications, such as IRIS and the EDMS. ITAAB's review process ensures a consistency in proposed IT projects with regard to methodology, project management, and subsequent maintenance throughout the application's expected life cycle. ITAAB's membership consists of IT application specialists from the Management and Administration Sector (MAS) and IT specialists from the technical sectors on an "as needed" basis.

## **XI. Support**

28. IT support in the ILO is provided by ITCOM, the central IT unit at headquarters, and by several departmental support units at headquarters and in external offices. Some work units have appointed dedicated full-time support staff while others have part-time staff; there are also several work units that do not have any of their own support and rely on ITCOM. A review of this decentralized approach is being undertaken to ascertain whether this model is yielding a cost-efficient and consistent level of IT support throughout the Office.
29. A client satisfaction survey for all support services was undertaken in 2006 and in 2008. The percentage of respondents who said they were satisfied with the services provided by ITCOM rose from 67 per cent in 2006 to 70 per cent in 2008. In addition, ITCOM carried out its own survey in 2007 among frequent users of its services, which indicated a 71 per cent level of satisfaction. The three surveys revealed areas of strength and weakness; the challenge is to improve the level of satisfaction while remaining within the existing budget envelope.

## **XII. Training**

30. The Oracle User Productivity Kit (UPK) software was acquired and installed on a dedicated server. UPK makes it possible for the training staff in the Human Resources Development Department to produce comprehensive training material to provide Web-based education and training. UPK is being extensively used for IRIS training and for other major applications such as the Internal Governance Documents System (IGDS).

### XIII. Budget

31. The table below summarizes the status of ITCOM's budget:

Source of funding	Allocated 1 January 2008 (US\$)	Available 1 September 2008 (US\$)
Regular budget	22 180 053	5 672 373
Regular budget Part IV	397 777	227 286
IT Systems Fund	301 230	298 194
Technical Cooperation Programme Support Income	368 620	172 444
Total	23 247 680	6 370 297

Geneva, 7 October 2008.

*Submitted for information.*