

The National Archives announces the future of the ERM Systems Evaluation Programme

Summary

The evaluation scheme for electronic records management (ERM) systems software products has successfully stimulated the software industry to produce products to meet a set of common, generic requirements for the public sector. Given this positive outcome and with the significant rollout of solutions in user organisations planned for 2005/2006, the evaluation scheme will have achieved its main aim of providing excellent value for the public sector.

Therefore the current phase of the evaluation scheme, based on The National Archives' Requirements for ERM Systems (as revised in 2002), will be completed in 2005.

The aim of this communication is to explain the reasons for, and to advise on, the arrangements which are being put in place.

Background

The aims of this programme remain broadly two-fold: to develop the capacity of public sector organisations to deal with electronic records at all stages of their lifecycle; and to encourage the development of more software products capable of meeting the electronic records management needs of public sector bodies.

During 2002, The National Archives updated the Requirements for ERM Systems (originally written in 1999) to reflect developments in international standards, including the EU MoReq model requirements, information legislation, and cross-government initiatives, including the e-Government Interoperability Framework.

There are currently 10 products on the approved list, that is which have met The National Archives 2002 Requirements under test conditions.

Impact of the Programme

The programme has successfully simulated the software market and its results are widely used in the public sector. It has also achieved international recognition for the common, generic Requirements for ERM Systems (The National Archives 2002 requirements).

ERM systems are now significant projects in the portfolio of many public sector organisations. Typically they have long rollout schedules involving culture and business process changes, with on-going benefits realisation and process redesign phases. The indications are that rollout to users is increasing significantly in 2005 and 2006.

The Strategy for the Programme

The programme will cease to evaluate further products after a certain point. Key dates are a cut-off for expressions of interest at the end of March 2005 and a deadline of end of June 2005 for fully worked submissions prior to testing.

The programme will maintain a usefulness by keeping the list of approved products accessible. In addition, the Requirements for ERM Systems (The National Archives 2002 Requirements) will be kept accessible for any public sector organisation to tailor and augment to meet their needs. Indeed a requirements rationale document is under development and this will assist use of the requirements specifications. The published test scripts will remain accessible as a tool for any project to use.

For the software products industry, the programme will cease to evaluate further products but will provide the opportunity for engaged suppliers to enter the evaluation scheme with new expressions of interest being accepted up to the end of March 2005.

Given that the requirements and the scheme would be due for revision in 2005 (as they would then be 3 years old and would merit review), and given that they reflect the standards which were in force in 2002, The National Archives has now reviewed the need to maintain its UK scheme beyond 2005. This was done previously for the earlier 1999 version of the requirements in 2002 but at that time the public sector still needed the support of the scheme. However given the progress of UK implementations since 2003 and the potential for a new requirements phase after 2005 involving European or international initiatives to develop trans-national standards, The National Archives envisages cooperating with such bodies to develop a replacement scheme which would be managed by other organisations. For example, The National Archives is currently participating in the EU DLM (Document Lifecycle Management) Forum where there is a possibility of setting up an EU de facto standard (MoReq2) and an associated compliance testing regime with an appropriate organisation, to take the place of The National Archives scheme. Other options may also be explored where there is potential for other appropriate national or international professional bodies or associations to continue this work beyond 2005 but The National Archives' direct management of the testing scheme will cease.

Further Information

If you would like any further information about this announcement please send your query <mailto:e-records@nationalarchives.gov.uk>

For details of the programme and the evaluation process see <http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/electronicrecords/reqs2002/>