



# Celebrating new ideas

2008 New Zealand Post Group  
Local Government Excellence Awards

## Project Submission Template

**Name of Project**

**ITC Hosting Services**

**Name of entering council/s**

**Auckland City Council**

**Category**

**Joined Up Local Government**

## 1. The Rationale for the Project and Expected Benefits

The rationale for the initiative is that it would greatly enhance the already existing and highly successful regional shared service initiative being provided by Auckland City Council's ITC group.

The existing shared service customer is eLGAR, a consortium of the libraries of five of the local authorities in the Greater Auckland Region (Auckland City, Manukau, North Shore, Waitakere and Rodney). The eLGAR vision is one of collaboration between members and sharing of resources. The consortium's biggest project has been the installation of shared library management software (LMS) and the associated hardware. The software implemented as part of the project was the Millennium LMS.

The existing application operation and support was provided by a team consisting of members of the consortium. The hosting services consisting of IT infrastructure and network was delivered through a regional hosting solution is provided by Auckland City's ITC group (from this point forward referred to as ITC), who have been successfully providing hosting support services to the eLGAR consortium since its inception in October 2004.

In December 2006, a review was carried out of the team supporting Millennium. The review identified opportunities for service improvement and made a number of recommendations, one of which was that ITC's Hosting Support arrangement be extended to include the Millennium system support function.

Given the existing success of the regional shared service, expectations from a customer perspective were high. The key benefits expected were:

- Efficient use of resources
- Improved service quality to both the member councils as well as their ratepayers
- Leverage off ITC's existing capabilities to create innovative solutions in the future for eLGAR as well as providing strategic guidance for eLGAR
- Enhance the capability of the solution and extend the service portfolio (such as Pay Online, SharePoint, etc)
- Identify opportunities for cost savings to eLGAR

An agreement was subsequently reached between ITC and the eLGAR consortium to initiate a project to extend the existing service offering ITC was providing to eLGAR. ITC would charge the eLGAR consortium for the services provided, but the arrangement would be a cost-neutral one.

## 2. Linkage to Council's Strategic Direction

Auckland City Council has a shared vision with Aucklanders for their city. The ultimate goal of the vision is for Auckland to be the First City of the Pacific. The role that Auckland City Council plays in realising that vision is by working together to provide a great future by delivering valued service and leadership.

There are seven strategies that have been put into place for achieving the vision:

- Economic development – Providing an environment for economic growth to deliver jobs and improve standards of living
- Lifestyle choices – Encouraging and providing diverse arts, culture, sports and events experiences for Aucklanders
- Quality natural environment – Protecting and improving the quality of our unique natural landscape and ecology
- Efficient and capable council – Making our journey from good to great
- Quality built environment – Managing Auckland's growth to ensure high quality urban design and retention of our character and heritage
- Strong and healthy communities – Providing safe communities, places and events for all Aucklanders to have fun and learn
- Transport choices – Working together to provide lasting transport choices for all



Efficiencies and benefits realised as part of the project as well as the extension of capabilities aligns directly with at least three of these strategies.

*Efficient and capable council* – The increased efficiencies in the support offering, as well as the enhanced capabilities implemented, enables the eLGAR member councils to operate more efficiently and capable.

*Economic development* – Enhancements to the system to include online web payments of patron accounts provide economic benefit to the libraries in collecting the revenue, as well as the to the patrons who do not need to visit their library to pay their account.

*Strong and healthy communities* – The ability to provide tagging, rating and reviewing capabilities to patrons of the library online catalogue items (Aquabrowser) involves the community and gives them a voice.

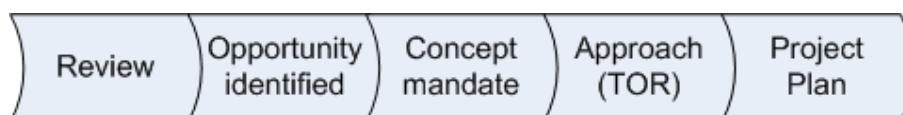
### 3. Project Planning

The review carried out in 2006 of the team supporting Millennium identified opportunities for service improvement should ITC's Hosting Support arrangement be extended to include the Millennium system support function. The opportunity was subsequently considered and a Terms of Reference was created which defined the approach. From this the project plan was developed.

The TOR outlined a number of key stages in the project:

- Hire a new Hosting Service Delivery Manager
- Prepare and agree upon the service levels and contract extensions
- Define and recruit the Millennium System Support Team
- Transition activities to cut over the service to ITC

The project plan was thus developed to define the timeframes and resources required.



### 4. Project Management

A project is defined as a temporary organisation that is needed to produce a unique and predefined outcome or result at a specified time using predetermined resources.

The project had the following characteristics:

- The TOR described the products or outcomes in terms of the service that the project would deliver
- The plan detailed the approach that was set out in the brief that was required to achieve the outcomes
- The resources for the project were defined
- Responsibility for managing the project in its entirety was assigned
- The life-cycle of the project was managed against the project plan

Against these characteristics, the project would deliver the following:

- **People** – Designing and recruiting a qualified support team and creating an environment for them to work in
- **Partnerships** – Establishing the necessary relationships between customer and service provider, as well as all other parties involved
- **Process** – Ensuring all the required processes are in place to carry out the services provided (such as incident management, change management, service level management, etc)
- **Technology** – Providing the infrastructure and tools to the team to be able to carry out the services provided

The project was given an aggressive timeframe to meet. It was to begin in February 2007 and complete by September 2007. The service went live on 24 September 2007.

## 5. Relationship Management and Communication with Stakeholders

A strong partnership already existed between the eLGAR Board (the governing body of the consortium) and Auckland City Council's ITC group who were providing the hosting services. A key component of the project was to build on this already successful partnership and create a relationship that would be sustainable in the long run as well as mutually beneficial to all parties concerned.

The philosophy of the eLGAR consortium is one of collaboration and mutual respect among the members. A strong relationship already existed within the libraries of the consortium, and these values were extended to include ITC as the partner into the group. To this end, ITC introduced technology innovation to enhance the capabilities of the consortium whilst also delivering efficiencies in service delivery, cost and resource to both the consortium as well as their ratepayers.

As mentioned, the project incorporated some changes to the relationship within the eLGAR structure. The Board would be providing the strategic leadership and decision making function. Acting on behalf of the Board and carrying out the programmes sanctioned by them, would be the eLGAR Programme Office.

The technology component of the solution was provided by CITAG (Communications and IT Advisory Group - the IT managers of each of the five Councils). Since inception, Auckland City's ITC group have been successfully providing hosting support services on behalf of CITAG to the eLGAR consortium. Their service portfolio was to be extended as part of the project.

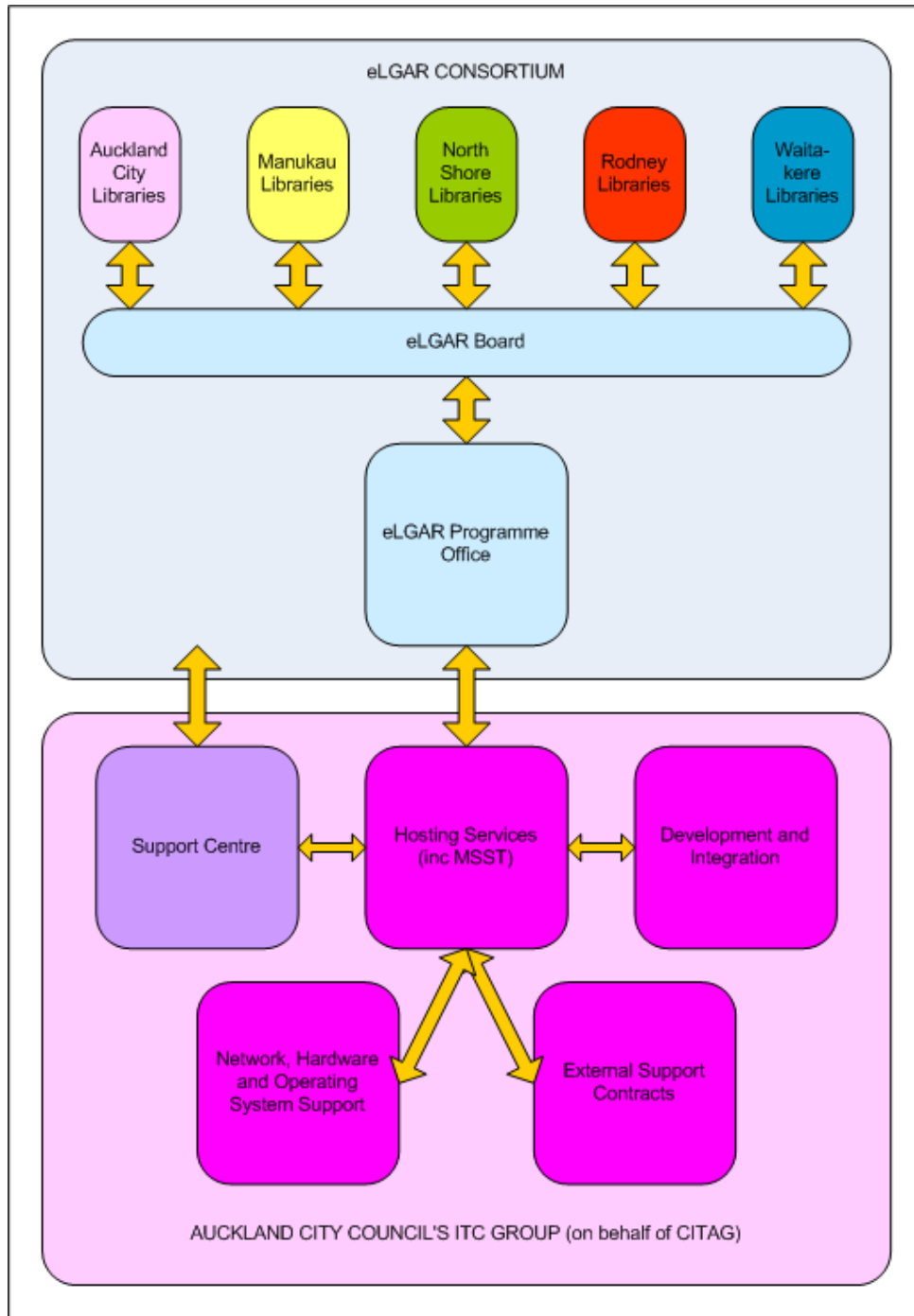
A strong relationship had to be established between the eLGAR Programme Office and ITC's Hosting Services as the technology service and solution provider. Due to the high level of collaboration between these two groups, they share the same office space and consider themselves one team with mutual goals.

From an ITC perspective, the Hosting Services had to be set up to co-ordinate the different teams within ITC in order to leverage off their experience and capability and provide eLGAR with the best possible support and innovation. ITC's Support Centre would be utilised as the central point of contact for support calls by providing help desk functionality, which would ensure the same standard of service across all eLGAR members. The specialised infrastructure teams would provide support for the hardware and network of the solutions. From a perspective of new solutions, ITC would provide the technical design and integration expertise to create capable and efficient technical solutions for eLGAR. A number of external contracts would also be managed on behalf of eLGAR by ITC.

As part of the project, this extended service model was designed and implemented collaboratively between the stakeholders of eLGAR and the service providers of ITC. Communication throughout the project was delivered through regular meetings and progress reports between the project team and the eLGAR Board.

The communications aspect of the service post go-live was also delivered as part of the project. A monthly Hosting Performance report was designed to measure achieved service metrics against agreed service levels and report on the services in general. A bi-annual capacity report was developed to be produced to the eLGAR

Board which would make recommendations on hardware requirements. On a bi-annual basis, the services are to be reviewed by all parties involved to identify and act on changes in the requirements.



## 6. Innovation and Originality

The degree and success of the collaboration that was achieved with different local government bodies as a result of the project was not only a first for Auckland City Council but for the whole of New Zealand. No other shared service of this size and complexity has been realised.

In addition to that, and to illustrate the point, a number of innovative initiatives have been implemented by the Hosting Services team. The majority of these initiatives are extensions to the existing Millennium system to provide additional functionality. Others, such as the SharePoint implementation, are completely separate from the Millennium application. The following are some examples of such initiatives.

*AquaBrowser* – AquaBrowser is an innovative search and discovery product. It utilises Web 2.0 technologies for libraries to enrich the contents of their catalogue and tailor the search results for each of their patrons. Previously when library patrons wanted to search the online catalogue, they entered a 'keyword' that returned limited results. With AquaBrowser, the search returns a cluster of related results that allows patrons to explore the library's contents dynamically. It opens up new paths of knowledge discovery that previously were unavailable. The AquaBrowser interface allows patrons to tag, review and rate library content which provides benefits to the library in return to the enhanced benefits to the patron.

*Airpac* – Airpac is a mobile phone service that allows library patrons to access the online catalogue using cell phones. The Airpac service has the same features as the Online Public Access Catalogue, so patrons can search the catalogue, place requests, check their holds list and view account details. Airpac has provided libraries with an innovative solution to their goal of open and equal access to all by providing patrons choice as to how they can access and interact with their library.

*Overdrive* – Overdrive is an online digital library service that allows patrons to download audio books and e-books. This service is a move away from the traditional bricks and mortar view of libraries and provides a purely digital service. Whereas e-books have been available in the past, they could only be viewed on a computer online. This provides the capability to download the items to your own computer. It is a unique concept in library services as typically libraries have vast amounts of items hidden in their basements that are not catalogued and therefore inaccessible to their patrons. With Overdrive, there are no longer physical constraints on what you can fit on the shelves. If a patron has the rights to view the item, they have access to it.

*Pay Online* – Pay Online is a secure web based credit card payment system which allows library patrons to pay their library accounts online 24/7 without having to visit their library. This promotes the library's ethos of providing choice and open access to all library services. ITC have ensured that the service complies with the latest PCI standards for online security.

*SharePoint* – SharePoint is an innovative online collaboration service eLGAR is providing to the member councils of the eLGAR consortium. The idea behind this service is for a single, secure site where groups within eLGAR can come together and share expertise and knowledge. This is a unique service that allows councils to leverage the combined experience and expertise of five councils to find solutions to common problems.

## 7. Evaluation Framework

At the outset of the project, it was decided that the service offering would be evaluated after it had been live for a period of six months. The review would be focussing on the benefits realised to eLGAR. The review report was presented to the eLGAR board and was received very favourably.

The following highlights the benefits realised during the project.

### *Service level agreement achievements*

The support that the Millennium team itself provides to eLGAR is strongly driven by the SLA's that have been negotiated when the service was being set up. The system has been available on average 99.98% of the time since the service went into place, well above the SLA of 98%.

Over the six months, 98% of all newly logged incidents have been resolved within the SLA timeframe, and individual investigation is being done into every breach that has occurred. Improved metrics and testing procedures have been developed to measure the service and these are being reported on a weekly basis.

### *Process improvement*

ITC provides support services against the best practices as defined by the ITIL (IT Infrastructure Library) service delivery framework and has based all its processes on these standards. The Millennium team has adopted these processes and shaped them to support the specific requirements of the library as a business whilst maintaining the integrity of the framework.

### *Closing backlog of calls*

The team has increased the rate at which calls are closed significantly. When ITC took on the support service there was a significant number of aged cases. The vast backlog (over 80%) of calls had been cleared at the time of the review, and any new calls that have come in have been resolved and reported against the SLA's. By using ITC's Support Centre as the point where all telephone calls are being routed through, ITC ensures that all calls are received and logged within their industry standards, and followed up by actions of the MSST.

### *Continuous service improvement*

An important aspect of the value ITC brings to eLGAR is the ongoing efforts to improve the service offering. This is done through internal service improvement reviews every six months. Each review identifies areas of improvement and puts in place activities or processes to rectify these before they become an issue.

#### *Customer satisfaction survey*

The feedback of the eLGAR library staff was taken into account during the performance review by using a customer satisfaction survey. The results of this survey indicated a very good customer experience.

#### *Cost saving proposal*

As part of the review, ITC have identified an opportunity to reduce the support costs for eLGAR without compromising the service quality or its future improvement processes.

Taking into account current workload, call volumes, changes to the original service offering and the current and future projects, ITC have proposed to reduce the support team from five to four members. This represented a saving of over 20% to the eLGAR consortium with no negative impacts on the service delivery.

## **8. Category Specific Criteria**

The hosting and support service that ITC is providing to the eLGAR consortium of libraries is a cost-effective way of providing a centralised support service to the councils. It utilises the experience and infrastructure of a local government group and makes this expertise available to other councils.

The way in which the service was designed was to use existing ITC structures to perform parts of the service. By leveraging off the existing ITC Support Centre, which provides help desk capability, means that the same level of service is experienced by all the members of the consortium. The same can be said for the rest of the support services which forms a core part of the capability that ITC has developed over the years, and they can provide a better service for less cost.

From a development perspective, eLGAR benefits from ITC's experience in designing, building and implementing new technology solutions without having to bring in expensive external resources. The service is provided at a cost effective time-and-materials basis and is incorporated into the service portfolio associated with the Hosted Services.

The enthusiasm with which the eLGAR Board received the performance review points to the fact that they are well aware of the benefits of having the support service provided by ITC. At the same time, and from a user's perspective, the customer satisfaction survey that was conducted indicated a very good customer experience, which is in line with ITC's customer service ethic. All of this was delivered whilst proposing a 20% cost saving to the eLGAR consortium members without affecting the quality of service.

At the same time of the eLGAR members enjoying these benefits through collaboration, it also provides ITC, and subsequently Auckland City Council, the opportunity to work closely with other local government organisations in terms of achieving a common goal.

The success of this project clearly points to a great future in which shared services across government agencies could play an increasingly large role.