

**GOVERNMENT DECONTAMINATION
SERVICE**

CORPORATE PLAN

2006-07 TO 2008-09

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Foreword from the Chief Executive

Following on from the announcement by Margaret Becket, Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, on 21st July 2005, the Government Decontamination Service (GDS) was formed as an Executive Agency of Defra from 1st October 2005. This was the culmination of work which originally had its roots before March 2004. This foreword to the updated Corporate Plan covers the period 2006 to 2009 and reflects the state of the business and its evolving nature.

The purpose of the GDS is to increase the nation's resilience to the consequences of terrorist or major accidental incidents, involving the release of chemical, biological or radiological materials. The Service will be the United Kingdom's national centre providing access to expertise on dealing with the decontamination of the built and open environment following such incidents, providing services to central Government departments, the Devolved Administrations, local authorities and other responsible bodies.

The Service has three key functions: the provision of advice and guidance to responsible authorities, the assessment of the ability of companies in the private sector to carry out decontamination operations and ensuring responsible authorities have access to those services, and advice to central government on the national decontamination capability.

As Chief Executive, I intend to plan for the Service to maintain appropriate flexibility and continue to enhance our capability following agreed objectives with the aim of producing the required deliverables. I consider it vital to have the flexibility to handle emerging requirements at both a planning stage and in an operational situation. I will expect the Service to adapt to changing demands and challenges as needed.

Setting up the agency in 2005, whilst maintaining the level of resilience, proved challenging but by hard work and dedication, the project team ensured we achieved our objectives. We are now able to give thought to taking the agency forward and further developing the nation's resilience.

Our stakeholders, whether they are part of central or local government, or from the private sector, will be central to our activities. I will strive to maintain this position and will work closely with our partners in the European Union and elsewhere to maintain and enhance our capability, skills and our level of resilience to mutual benefit.

Finally, I would like to record my thanks to all those who worked in the project team, as well as those from elsewhere, in both the public and private sector, and who helped to bring about the GDS as an Executive Agency of Defra.

Robert Bettley-Smith, Chief Executive

Introduction

1. This Corporate Plan of the Government Decontamination Service (GDS) follows from the initial plan produced for the inception of the Service as an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) on 1st October 2005.
2. This Plan (the first annual update) covers the three years from 2006-07 to 2008-09, and follows discussions in the Ownership Board. The annual Business Plan will follow from this overall Corporate or strategic plan and will set out what the Service intends to achieve in the year ahead, including key performance targets. The Corporate Plan builds on the years 2006-08, included in the previous plan and adds the year 2008-09.
3. The Corporate Plan is produced within the context of the GDS Framework Document, which sets out the relationship between the Agency, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, other Government Departments, key stakeholders and its Ministerial Board and Ownership Board.
4. The GDS supports Government's wider resilience and capability targets. It is one component of the UK's package of measures under the Capabilities Programme, and contributes to Defra's overall aim of sustainable development by ensuring that the impact of any incident is minimized and the return to normal work takes place as quickly as possible. The Service's work also helps to deliver Defra's Objective I: *"To protect and improve the rural, urban, marine and global environment and conserve and enhance biodiversity, and to lead integration of these with other policies across Government and internationally"* and Objective IV: *"Protect the public's interest in relation to environmental impacts and health and ensure high standards and animal health and welfare".*]
5. The primary role of the GDS will continue to be to contribute to a cross-government initiative called the Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear (CBRN) Resilience Program, but has a role in the event of a significant HAZMAT incident. The CBRN Resilience Program aims to ensure that fewer lives will be risked or lost in the event of a terrorist (CBRN) incident (but the GDS goes further as it has a role in the event of an accidental HAZMAT incident). The CBRN resilience program does this by:
 - making it harder for terrorists to achieve their ends
 - ensuring the response to a CBRN incident would be quick and effective - resulting in lives being saved and any impact on property or the environment minimized
6. We have completed the Year of Capability – 2005-06 - by putting in place the procedures to deliver advice and guidance in the event of a CBRN or significant HAZMAT incident. A specialist supplier framework has been set up that reflects the UK's current capability needs and we have made extensive progress to develop stakeholders and partners understanding of the role of the GDS. The response capability of the Service is still being developed as further staff are

brought on board but the exercises and incidents that we have been involved with have resulted in favourable feedback on our contribution.

Purpose

6. The purpose of the Service is to increase the nation's resilience to the consequences of terrorist or major accidental incidents, involving the release of chemical, biological or radiological materials. The Service is to be the United Kingdom's national centre providing access to expertise on dealing with the decontamination of the built and open environment following such incidents.

Vision

7. We, supported by our various stakeholders, see the GDS as a key element of the Government machinery that will help the country prepare for a CBRN or significant HAZMAT incident, and minimise its impact on people, society, the economy and the environment. To ensure the UK has a highly effective decontamination capability, the Service will fulfil three principal functions:
8. Firstly, the Service will provide high quality advice and guidance to responsible authorities during their contingency planning for CBRN, significant HAZMAT incidents and during actual incidents, and regularly help validate and test the arrangements that are in place. We will do this by providing advice and developing guidance to build on that published by various departments in recent years.
9. Secondly, the Service will work hand in hand with specialist suppliers and advisers to rigorously assess the ability of companies in the private sector to carry out decontamination operations, and ensure that responsible authorities have ready access to those services if the need arises. If required, following a CBRN event or HAZMAT incident, the Agency will also help co-ordinate decontamination operations.
10. Finally, the Service will be the Government's eyes and ears on the national capability for the decontamination of buildings, infrastructure, mobile transport assets and the open environment, will be a repository of information, and a source of expertise in the event of CBRN incident or major release of HAZMAT materials. The GDS will regularly review the United Kingdom's capability gaps.
11. The Service's work will be underpinned by scientific support and research pursued in concert with government departments, responsible authorities, specialist suppliers, research organisations and other nations to improve decontamination technologies and capabilities.
12. These key functions will allow Government to centrally brigade the expertise available in a coherent and comprehensive manner, which will allow responsible authorities to function more efficiently rather than procuring the work independently and to gain the benefit of an element of pre-planning.

Values

13. In realising our vision, we have adopted some principal beliefs and ideals in relation to how we deliver our services. It is important that each individual member of the Service can connect with these Values and fully support them. We have outlined our Values to ensure that not only our staff, but also those who we work with and serve, and our other stakeholders are clear about the importance the Service places upon integrity and the organisational culture that we encourage.
14. **Providing the advice and guidance to our stakeholders and partners is the key activity.** We make sure we understand the needs and expectations of our stakeholders and partners and are active in identifying and meeting those needs. We engage with stakeholders and partners to generate ideas and improvements to the service we provide, whilst managing expectations within the resources and expertise available. We communicate with our stakeholders and partners, consulting them and keeping them informed about changes that are likely to affect them.
15. **Partners in progress.** We recognise that positive and effective partnerships with responsible authorities and other stakeholders and specialist suppliers are crucial to the successful delivery of a high-quality service. We work across boundaries within our own organisation and with our partners making sure we deliver excellent performance to our stakeholders and partners. We work as part of a team within Government, and with international colleagues and agencies, to seek new partnerships where this will be of mutual benefit and help us to realise our Vision and enhance the nation's capability and resilience.
16. **Valuing our people** recognises that excellence can only be achieved if we have a motivated, skilled and effective and committed workforce. We value our people for their contribution and we respect each other's individuality and talents. We consider there is strength in diversity. As a small Service we will harness the potential of our people and work closely together to form an effective team and to encourage a successful work/life balance. We will support their training and development and we believe that working together as a team achieves more than is possible individually. We celebrate success and recognise and reward both individual and team achievements.
17. We strive for **continuous improvement.** We recognise that, to continue our excellence journey, we must build a working environment where our people can continuously learn and develop and where everyone is encouraged to seek better ways of working. We encourage creativity and innovation, harnessing the potential that technology offers us. We expect our people to take the initiative, taking personal responsibility for solving problems and progressing ideas.
18. **Efficiency** acknowledges that services should always be delivered by the most efficient and effective methods of working and that we should seek to continually improve our efficiency. We have a duty to provide value for money

from public funds. We will do this by overseeing, controlling and prioritising financial spending using established accounting and management procedures and processes. Tight controls over public expenditure, and seeking added value through partnership, will ensure that the GDS will continue to look for more efficient ways of delivering its services. We have already done this by harnessing expertise that was available in the private sector and by a blend of economies of size and scale.

GDS Strategic Staircase

19. The first Corporate Plan outlined the challenges faced by the new organization. To an extent these challenges continue and are shown at Annex 1. The plan adopted a three year strategic staircase approach to planning our work. The first period to 31st March 2006 established our capability and set up procedures and resources to deliver advice and guidance on incidents in a more formalized way. For this plan, although some amendments are necessary, the theme is continued with the addition of a year of Development in 2008-09. Set out below, in general terms, is what each year's work is aiming to achieve and continue our journey to our vision.
20. In 2006-07 we will work to ensure we can deliver our work to a consistently high quality, ensuring what we do and produce is fit for purpose. 2007-08 will be a year of delivery and review, with 2008-09 taking the lessons learnt and extended supplier base forward to make further improvements to our capabilities and service.
21. The six sections that follow the high level description of the staircase's objectives highlight the strategic development of each of the six key business areas over the next three years: Specialist Suppliers, Operational, Technical Knowledge and Expertise, People, Stakeholders and Partners and Finance.
22. Full details of the year of quality – 2006-07, resource allocations, and the Key Performance Targets against which the GDS will be measured, are set out in the Business Plan for 2006-07.

2006-07 Year of quality:

23. By 31 March 2007 we will have improved our procedures for responding to a CBRN or significant HAZMAT incident, with the assistance and expertise of key stakeholders and have further developed our relationship with the specialist suppliers that form the backbone of the GDS framework. During 2006-07, the year of quality, we will establish a process for the continual review and improvement of the GDS suppliers' framework and our other work. We will move from being reactive and responding quickly to fill identified gaps to being pro-active and making a more strategic assessment of future requirements.

2007-08 Year of benefits realization:

24. By 31 March 2008 we will have become a stakeholder and partner- focused and effective Service, respected in the UK and worldwide as an organisation able to provide advice and guidance on decontamination and for support in preparing for, and responding to, a CBRN or significant HAZMAT incident. We will be able to demonstrate to Central Government that the Service has played a key role in enhancing the UK's resilience to a CBRN or significant HAZMAT incident.

2008-09 Year of review:

25. By 31 March 2009 we will have reviewed the Service and produced action plans from lessons learnt and agreed any changes to our core and other activities with our stakeholders. We will have in place an enhanced supplier

database to give a greater depth of cover for incidents, particularly with regard to security-related work.

GDS Specialist Suppliers

- 2006-07: We will develop an assessment system, using a series of case studies and exercises to test specialist supplier capabilities in terms of the viability of their decontamination techniques. We will also continually review and test the specialist supplier's responses to incidents and exercises.
- 2007-08: We will begin the second tranche of the procurement process to renew the framework and continue field testing the specialist supplier capabilities. We will add suppliers to the framework as appropriate to enhance resilience and increase the robustness of the arrangements. We will also look at additional areas, such as specialist advice and assessment, where framework arrangements may be beneficial.
- 2008-09: We will bring the new and existing suppliers up to an appropriate state of preparedness and work closely with our stakeholders to ensure that we have the right skills available.

Operational

- 2006-07: We will have validated our arrangements using the agreed operational documents and plans, demonstrated their integration with those of our partner organisations and proved their robustness. References to the GDS and its role in response to a CBRN incident will have been agreed with the Regions and Devolved Administrations and reflected in their CBRN Response Plans and Concepts Of Operations. Staff training will continue as our role is further defined.
- 2007-08: We will be a fully integrated element of the UK's Resilience to determined national strategic CBRN risks and be capable of delivering the GDS input to the decontamination targets established in the national "Model Response". We will be able to demonstrate this through stakeholder surveys and performance at exercises.
- 2008-09: We will look to use our skills to develop the capabilities of related organizations and continue to test our own abilities to respond to incidents. We will implement lessons learnt during exercises and as a result of actual events in the UK, and elsewhere.

Technical Knowledge and Expertise

- 2006-07: We will have established an in-house knowledge and information database on decontamination science and technologies and will work with suppliers to verify and improve their capability.
- 2007-08: We will continue to develop the knowledge base and we will have reviewed Strategic National Guidance on decontamination of CBRN and HAZMAT incidents in the open and built environment.
- 2008-09: We will establish an horizon scanning capability to ensure that the specialist supplier base has adequate resources and skills to respond to a potentially changing nature of incidents. We will participate, as

appropriate, in international fora with specific reference to Europe and the Quadrilateral countries.

People

- 2006-07: We will finalize the recruitment of the full team and focus on developing the skills of our people to ensure the mission of the GDS is achieved and a comprehensive training and developmental plan will be established. We will move to a new Headquarters building outside London.
- 2007-08: We will raise benefits for the Service through enhanced skills and by striving for increased performance levels of our people and ensure the baseline for staff satisfaction is firstly met and then improved.
- 2008-09: We will continue to improve all staff skills especially in the area of emergency planning and incident management. We will look to gain reaccreditation of our IIP status and ensure all staff participate in this.

Stakeholders and Partners

- 2006-07: We will work closely with our stakeholders and partners, which will be key to improving and enhancing the quality of the Service.
- 2007-08: The increased benefits and improvements made to the UK's resilience, to prepare for and respond to a CBRN incident, will be recognised by our stakeholders and partners and reflected in improvements to the stakeholder satisfaction baseline.
- 2008-09: We will act to support any additional requirements of our stakeholders and partners, within our remit, and review our performance and advice given.

Finance

- 2006-07: Financial management systems will continue to be embedded in the business. In addition, business planning and budgetary control processes will be added to provide the basis for sound management decisions. We will produce sound analysis of costs for inclusion in the CSR 07 process.
- 2007-08: Sound financial management will be part of the ethos of the agency and will be integral to the achievement of value for money.
- 2008-09: We will review our systems to ensure that they are relevant, robust and fit for purpose.

Delivery of the Strategic Staircase

25. In working to deliver the objectives set out in the previous section, we will adopt the following behaviours and processes.

Specialist Suppliers

26. We will:
- Continually review the existing capability, identify gaps and continually seek enhancement to the services available.
 - Examine technologies and developments and evaluate their application in the decontamination process

- Research new and potential specialist suppliers and their capability, taking into account technological developments and scientific and other evidence.
- Ensure satisfaction and establish and monitor key performance indicators for suppliers on the framework.
- Negotiate effective and competitive contractual arrangements with specialist suppliers and others.
- Continually test and monitor the capability and performance of specialist supplier performance, during exercises or an actual CBRN or HAZMAT event.
- Work with stakeholders and partners to deliver a service that meets their needs.

Operational

27. We will achieve our operational targets by:

- Enhancing the capabilities of our staff through participation in exercises at a range of levels, discussions with stakeholders, and through training and familiarisation.
- Developing a Memoranda of Understanding and Operational Agreements with key stakeholders.
- Developing stakeholders' and partners' understanding of GDS roles and capabilities through presentations and briefing at key events and participation in Regional and Devolved Administration CBRN Forums, Working Groups or their equivalent and national CBRN groups.
- Seeking to understand existing arrangements for CBRN events at a local, regional and national level.

Technical Knowledge and Expertise

28. We will achieve our technical targets by:

- Working closely with UK and international partners and organisations in the pursuit of new technologies and best work practices.
- Working with specialists in academia, Government, industry and other appropriate bodies, to improve scientific understanding of decontamination processes when applied to different materials.
- Enhancing the capability of our staff through participation in conferences, workshops and exercises (both nationally and internationally).
- We will exchange information and participate in activities with international partners and organizations under memoranda of understanding.

People

29. We will deliver our strategy for our people by :

- Working to a common GDS identity whilst adopting Defra (employment) terms and conditions, standards, practices and procedures.
- We will pay due regard to the Defra Big 5 Leadership Behaviours (Taking Personal Responsibility; Making Things Happen Through Others; Shaping & Communicating a Vision for the Future; Putting Diversity into Practice and Facing Up to Hard Choices).

- Developing an open communication strategy across the organisation.
- Maintaining high standards of open and visible leadership. We will strive towards achieving and living up to Investors in People (IiP) status, as part of the wider Defra initiative in this area, and ensure that a good work/life balance is encouraged.
- Introducing an effective staff survey that allows the agreed baseline of staff satisfaction to be achieved by March 2006 and put in place plans to build on and improve this in future years.
- Developing and expanding the skills of staff to undertake the business we need through exercises, training and regular constructive feedback.
- We will encourage diversity within the team and in approaches to work and flexible working patterns.

Stakeholders and Partners

30. We will work to serve our stakeholders and partners well and ensure that we are effective at all times in delivering the service we provide and they need. We will achieve this by:
- Measuring the satisfaction of our stakeholders and partners and using the responses to develop and implement improvements in our service.
 - The GDS will regularly seek feedback from stakeholders and partners and update them on the latest developments in both techniques and practice.

Finance

31. Within the business planning arrangements, we will deliver our financial strategies by:
- Continually improving the value for money of the services we provide by making use of Defra's financial services, under Gershon principles, including continuing with Defra's e-business achievements and initiatives.
 - Improving business processes and data quality within the GDS.
 - Ensuring that we improve value for money across all business areas with the production of an Efficiency Delivery Plan.
 - Securing agreement for GDS objectives through the CSR 07 and Defra Spending Review and annual business plans based upon the rigorous assessment of needs.
 - Using established and robust project management tools.
 - Ensuring that an adequate audit trail is in place.
 - Adhering to Government and Defra financial rules, regulations and best practice.
32. The GDS will work within the financial resources, agreed by Government Departments, as set out in Annex 2.

Risk Management

33. In addition to the activities and behaviours set out in the preceding section, the GDS operates within a framework of governance that has been agreed and approved by the GDS Ministerial and Ownership Boards. The primary purpose of the GDS is the management and mitigation of risk relating to CBRN and significant HAZMAT events. The Service therefore needs to become expert in managing risk, and will set up a risk management structure, building upon the interim arrangements, as a priority to ensure that risk is managed as an integral part of project management across the GDS.
34. The GDS will remain a component and important part of the risk management approach followed by Defra.
35. We have established an Audit & Risk Committee, reporting to the Chief Executive and Management Board, and this is starting to develop its understanding of the strategic and tactical risks to the GDS's core business areas. Through the identification of risks, the GDS will be able to ensure counter measures are put in place to plan for and to manage our risks. It is intended that the GDS will develop into a centre of expertise in CBRN decontamination advice and guidance and the introduction of a formal approach to risk management will help us to achieve this objective. We will record clearly our assessment of the risks we face and the action we take to manage those risks.

Working with stakeholders and partners

GDS Stakeholders

36. The GDS team will work very closely with all key stakeholders to ensure their ideas and feedback are carefully considered including our specialist suppliers. The GDS is a delivery organisation and will be responsible for promoting the production of robust plans in the event of a CBRN or HAZMAT incident. We will support the development and implementation of relevant policies in the United Kingdom. We will work very closely with key teams within core Defra, other Government Departments, including the Home Office, Cabinet Office and others, the Devolved Administrations, and those involved in emergency planning, for example Local Authorities and Regional Resilience Teams.

Partners

37. We will seek to develop and strengthen links with new and existing partner organisations by working very closely with them, sharing knowledge and providing an insight into the aims and objectives of the GDS. The Service's partners will be official bodies such as local and central government or their agencies such as the Police and the Environment Agency. Secondment opportunities with partner organisations both nationally and internationally will be developed further during the GDS' first year. We will engage in a wide variety of exercises with partners both in the UK and internationally. A partner generally includes GDS advice and guidance in their operational and planning

documents for dealing with incidents. This relationship will may be covered by a formal Memorandum of Understanding.

38. Stakeholders and partners will be consulted on the way they can access the information we hold on specialist suppliers to ensure that it is readily accessible and accurate and we will implement a communications strategy taking due account of these ideas. We are committed to regular service improvements and exceeding the GDS stakeholder and partner satisfaction baseline.
39. In addition there are indirect partners who will derive a benefit from our services even though they have no direct relationship with the GDS, for example the general public or the owners of small businesses.

Complaints

40. GDS will listen to all stakeholders and partners and will be responsive to all complaints and feedback we receive. We will develop a system for handling complaints that is transparent and unbiased. Feedback from stakeholders and partners will be used to continually improve and build upon the service we provide and the level of excellence we strive for.

Providing authoritative and accessible information

41. To fulfil its objective to become a source of authoritative and accessible information on decontamination of the built and natural environment the Agency will need to develop further its communication with key stakeholders and responsible authorities and other organisations and promulgate advice and guidance as appropriate.

The Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations

42. The Freedom of Information Act came into force on 1 January 2005. The Agency is committed to open government and the release of as much information to the public as is consistent with the guidelines for the Act and the objectives of the Agency and the requirements of national security. We will:
 - Respond helpfully and positively to all requests made under the Freedom of Information Act and Environmental Information Regulations; and
 - Maintain and improve the Agency's Publication Scheme as required under the Act.
 - Develop a user-friendly GDS website that reflects the needs and requirements of stakeholders, customers and partners, whilst recognising that national security must not be compromised.

Service to Ministers

43. As an executive agency of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs we have an obligation to provide timely and accurate advice to Ministers, including responses to correspondence received regarding the Government Decontamination Service. We will:
 - Aim to meet Minister's targets for speed of response to correspondence; and

- Provide high quality briefing and contributions to relevant ministerial business.

Glossary

- CBRN:** Chemical, biological, radiological or nuclear. By definition, a CBRN event is treated as a deliberate (terrorist) event.
- HAZMAT:** A HAZMAT event is an accidental release of hazardous material(s). The materials include those which might be used for terrorist purposes, but also the vast array of other substances used in industrial, agricultural and household processes. Contingency plans are already required for those who store and use such materials (particularly chemicals), so the GDS would not normally expect to be involved in decontamination after their release unless the event exceeded the available capability.
- Partners:** Largely other parts of government, including advisers or experts. A partner is generally an organisation who includes GDS advice and guidance in their operational and planning documents for dealing with CBRN and major HAZMAT incidents. This relationship will generally be covered by a formal Memorandum of Understanding. Partners are generally stakeholders.
- Responsible authority:** Responsible authorities may be specified by statute or, in the case of a private body or company, may be the owner of a building, location or asset affected by a CBRN or HAZMAT incident. Responsible authorities are stakeholders.
- Stakeholder:** A stakeholder is an individual, group or organisation who can influence or be influenced by the decisions and actions of a programme or project and have a stake in the implementation and outcome.

Annex 1

External Challenges Facing the Service over the Next Three years

We face significant challenges, particularly in the first year of the GDS, to ensure we deliver a robust capability and service, in preparing for and in the event of a CBRN incident whilst continuing to develop the agency. The dependencies that exist between the GDS, Defra and a wide range of other Government Departments, mean that we face not only challenges in attaining excellence in what we do as a Service, but also in the way we involve and engage with our stakeholders. Outlined below are the key challenges that we face.

Introduction of a new service

The GDS has been created after Ministers identified a need to improve our CBRN decontamination expertise and capability within the United Kingdom. Creating a fully integrated and effective Service is a key priority for year one of the Corporate Plan. The key challenge facing the GDS in its first year of operation will be the establishment of the new Service and the associated development and implementation of new procedures and the increasing of UK resilience to carry out effective decontamination following a CBRN incident, whilst maintaining an adequate level of resilience. It will be essential to increase the profile of the Service to interested stakeholders and partners and ensure expectations are managed effectively. We need to face the challenges ahead in a proactive, honest and approachable manner to ensure stakeholders and partners are aware of the functions to be provided by the new Service and the role they can play in the future development and direction of the Service.

Delivering the supplier framework

The establishment of the specialist supplier framework is integral to the success of the Service. The framework will now need to be communicated effectively to ensure the details are accessible to all potential stakeholders and partners. Ensuring the framework is robust, as well as the reliability of the specialist suppliers, will be a key challenge facing the GDS in its first three years of operation.

Ensure research, and review of new emerging technology and suppliers, is up to date

Advancements in the scientific field occur rapidly, particularly in a developing area such as CBRN, where new needs have been identified, and a key challenge facing the Service in its early years of existence will be to keep abreast of, and promote, scientific and technical developments and advancements so that the science can be harnessed to improve CBRN decontamination capability. Within the GDS a scientific and technical workstream, headed by a senior manager at Grade 7 level, will be established to ensure that developments are captured and new technologies are assessed accurately and implemented if they are shown to be more effective and scientifically sound and have the potential to offer better value for money than the current arrangements.

Changes in the threat assessment

To ensure that we have effective arrangements and plans in place for the decontamination of the natural and built environment following a CBRN incident, we will need to have regular and accurate updates on the United Kingdom's threat assessment. The direction of the GDS' work will be formed and shaped by the regular updates we receive and will ensure the Agency directs funds to both established as well as newly emerging areas.

CBRN incident

Our most significant external challenge would be the occurrence of a CBRN or major HAZMAT incident within the UK as that would test the robustness of the arrangements put in place by the GDS. A potential CBRN incident could be on an unprecedented scale and could overwhelm the UK's established contingency plans of which the GDS forms a part. To minimise the risk of an inadequate response the Service will work closely with threat assessment departments and teams and participate in regularly held CBRN exercises, both in the UK and internationally, to ensure a timely and positive response in the event of an incident.

GDS future funding

Funding for the year's 2005-06 and 2006-07 has been agreed. We must secure funding thereafter for the GDS via Defra through the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 and also seek to ensure a cost effective service is established. By improving the breadth of the specialist supplier framework, and the terms and conditions of the negotiated contracts, we expect to achieve good value for money.

Annex 2

GDS Financial Resources

Cabinet Office to provide funding from the Centre for start-up costs in full (£5.22 million) for the GDS in 2005/06, making use of end year flexibility or money set aside for counter terrorism work, on the basis that the Agency's funding for the future is on a sound footing.

Defra, ODPM and the Home Office will share the cost of 2006/07 (at a maximum cost to each department of £823,000), with contributions from the Scottish Executive, and the Northern Ireland Executive. Departments, including the Department for Transport and the Welsh Assembly Government, will also be approached to secure their commitment.

Defra will bid in CSR07 for full funding for the GDS from 2007/08 onwards, with the intention of taking on responsibility at that point and with a view to getting funding from the first year of the spending review. However, to guard against the eventuality that CSR07 does not provide for 2007/08, the departments (Defra, ODPM and Home Office) have agreed in principle to share the costs equally as for year two if that becomes necessary.

From 2008/09, Defra, using the funding for the GDS obtained in CSR07 will be responsible for funding and will fund the GDS in full.