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# IS/IT Strategy

2008 - 2009



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## **Version 1.0**

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# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Purpose of this document

- 1.1.1 This document provides an overall IS/IT strategy for the Veterinary Laboratories Agency. The document links the Agency's business plans and corporate objectives with the deployment of Information and Communications Technology, thus providing a clear link between IT activity and the business needs. As well as the strategy, this document also highlights key IT systems, critical IT projects, technical standards recognising external influences and factors likely to affect the Agency's use of IT in the next five years.
- 1.1.2 The strategy document is reviewed and updated on an annual basis. Sections are included to provide a "stock-take" in the form of an annual review of previous strategy objectives. The strategy notes key IT developments over the past year, as well as proposing a portfolio of projects (both business focused and infrastructure investment) to form the basis of future workload. The future direction will reflect major external influences likely to impact VLA over the next five or so years and also indicate major IT infrastructure investment to form part of a three year rolling capital investment programme.
- 1.1.3 This strategy is published under the auspices of ITSC as the steering committee for IT in VLA.

## 1.2 VLA Business and e-Business Strategies

- 1.2.1 The VLA's corporate and business plans are articulated in the form of a number of aims and objectives. Although these plans are in the process of being updated through the summer of 2008, previous strategies noted:
- The importance to Defra of "evidence based policy making" and the role VLA plays underpinning delivering scientific evidence.
  - The world-wide recognition of the VLA as a deliverer of leading edge veterinary science.
  - VLA's key role in Defra's animal disease emergency response capability.
  - Through a commercial strategy, greater emphasis on new sources of funding and income through commercial work.
  - Reduction in funding of TSE programmes.
  - Continuing drive for efficiencies and cost-cutting.
- 1.2.2 The new strategy for 2009 through 2014 will include a focus on technology investment and will require the ITU to focus on efficient management and delivery processes to increase capability whilst meeting sustainability demands, where Defra will wish to take the lead on behalf of HMG.
- 1.2.3 Whilst the application of IT to help strategic objectives will be achieved through individual, discrete projects, an IS/IT strategy must also set out a number of higher level "core principles" or aspirations which must influence the "what", "why" and "how" of IT delivery. The principles for the VLA are set out in section 1.3 below.

## 1.3 Core IS/IT principles

### Forward looking and business focus

- 1.3.1 Deployment of IT and IT resources must be aligned with the VLA's business objectives and priorities. In considering allocation of resources, ITSC and ITEC will use the VLA's stated aims and objectives as a key prioritisation criteria.

### Flexibility for changing needs

- 1.3.2 The VLA's Corporate Strategy recognises the fact that "as a Government laboratory, VLA is not entirely a master of its own destiny since its overriding function is to meet Government's changing requirement for veterinary laboratory-based services". Flexibility must be built into systems to enable IT to assist the Agency's ability to react to changing Defra priorities, disease outbreaks and organisational change.

### Reliability

- 1.3.3 Ongoing veterinary surveillance and the IT systems that support these activities must be robust and reliable. Accuracy and turn-around time are noted in the Agency's corporate plan as being critical to UK international trade and many of VLA's core surveillance responsibilities. Resilience must be designed into all IT systems and used as key criteria in the choice of hardware and software components.

### Value for money

- 1.3.4 VLA is a Government body and therefore public accountability demands that we make best use of taxpayer's money. IT systems must be justified and measured through documented, robust business and project management processes. IT services are costed as an overhead to the Agency's core activities, though efficient use of IT funds will minimise the scale of these overheads. Ensuring VFM will also enable VLA to be competitive, thus increasing the opportunity to develop private sector customers and commercial income.

### Safe and secure

- 1.3.5 As a Government body, VLA does not invest or rely upon high-risk or unproven technologies. Only in areas of groundbreaking scientific research will the use of new or unproven technologies be contemplated. Partnerships with sound technology suppliers will be critical in evaluating the value and mitigating the risk associated with such IT investments.

### Follow Defra/HMG strategies and particularly greening and environmental sustainability

- 1.3.6 Although this is a strategy defining the architectures, standards and software to be used internally by VLA, increasingly Defra, UK Government and European standards are emerging in many technical areas. VLA's use of IT will pay due regard and adopt these wider standards where mandated or sensible.
- 1.3.7 HMG has set out a strategy for reducing the environmental impact of our computer systems with two primary aims: to make energy consumption of our ICT systems carbon neutral by 2012, and to make them carbon neutral across their lifetime (including manufacture and disposal) by 2020. The strategy demands immediate action, with simple steps to be implemented immediately.

## **2. IT support for science and surveillance strategies**

### **2.1 Communication and collaboration**

- 2.1.1 The Agency's Science Strategy recommends that: "the VLA should continue to review and expand its collaborative links with research organisations working in related fields". VLA Departments will seek to develop closer associations or partnerships with organisations, such as research institutes and veterinary schools, as a means of strengthening capacity and accessing complementary skills and resources. The primary barrier to efficient external IT based collaboration is VLA's continuing reliance on Defra and GSi IT networks. Whilst IBM/Defra management of network boundaries and security is a major benefit, this barrier continues to inhibit expansion of electronic collaboration with partners and external organisations. Since 2006 the improvement of external IT links has been a focus for IT development and during 2007/8 VLA implemented its own external web hosting environment. Expansion of this environment with the addition of further project collaboration systems will be a key strategic objective for 2008/9.
- 2.1.2 Progress on resolving network limitations and improving resilience of the internal and external IT network services provided by IBM has made little progress due to the core Department "renew Defra" programme being assigned higher priority. Negotiations and a business case for a significant network upgrade to improve capacity and resilience will be progressed during the year.
- 2.1.3 To enhance internal communications across VLA's laboratory network, dedicated Tandberg video conference systems have been piloted at selected sites. These systems offer a flexible, portable, but high quality VC IP service running across DefraNet. Whilst the initial units have proved to be a success, further widespread deployment is dependant on additional network capacity to minimise any performance impact on business critical systems such as LIMS. External gateways/bridges to support conferencing with units outside the VLA/Defra network may be possible in the future as Defra also adopt compatible Tandberg equipment. Further use of flexible IP VC units remains a longer term strategic objective.
- 2.1.4 Use of the IT WAN for advanced scientific applications such as pathology and histology slide viewing via Coolscope systems has enabled effective discussion and 2<sup>nd</sup> opinion for diagnostic work. Further use of VC technology in other similar areas such as post mortem rooms may become feasible in the future as the cost of technologies such as HD video cameras reduces.

### **2.2 LIMS**

- 2.2.1 Thermo Fisher SampleManager (SMS) is deployed as VLA's LIMS as originally introduced to Laboratory Testing and Virology Departments at Weybridge in 1995. A VLA "LIMS Vision" programme commenced in 2003 and proposed an evolutionarily series of deployment steps agreed at ITEC and ITSC, Early objectives included serology rationalisation at Weybridge and LIMS for Avian Virology. These deployments have gradually extended the Agency's use of LIMS in a coordinated and strategic manner. The latest version of SampleManager (version 9) is of particular interest to VLA as the underlying technology is based on Microsoft dotNET rather than proprietary Thermo software languages. This has significant positive implications and should offer VLA the opportunity to integrate current and planned dotNET systems with the LIMS and increasing

LIMS delivery using internal and SfW dotNET skills.

2.2.2 The LIMS Vision Programme for 2007/8 focused on the delivery of LIMS to Avian Virology. This represented one of the largest development projects undertaken by the ITU in recent year. Apart from the roll-out of “Quick FarmFile”, the introduction of full LIMS across all Regional Laboratories remains a formidable challenge with the limited available resources and frequent emergency response demands.

2.2.3 The strategic objective of a universal sampling registration module to represent the first part of a complete inter and intra-laboratory sample data management system has proved to be unfeasible due to weak business case and doubts over the capability of the IT architecture/infrastructure. However, during 2008/9 progress will focus on writing a business case identifying key areas for automating Regional Laboratory processes.

### **2.3 *LIMS for disease emergency response***

2.3.1 2007/8 saw a particularly busy year for LIMS emergency response work. This included concurrent work on three different disease outbreaks – Foot and Mouth (FMD), Avian Influenza (AI) and Bluetongue Virus (BTV). Wild bird and domestic poultry AI outbreaks demonstrated the wide range of potential outbreak scenarios and the need for a flexible LIMS that can be rapidly adapted for specific testing and reporting needs. SampleManager continues to show its value by supporting the rapid laboratory response to disease outbreaks.

2.3.2 Effective management of disease outbreaks across all Defra family stakeholders remains problematic and the extended timetable of the Animal Health Agency “Business Reform Programme” indicates more robust interim measures may be necessary to improve IT integration and rapid data sharing. This work has been progressed by the FFG led MoSS (Management of Samples System) initiative. VLA will remain closely involved in MoSS and contribute to Defra sponsored plans for outbreak system enhancements both interim and long-term.

2.3.3 IAH have requested assistance as contingency for escalating FMD and BTV testing work. This has led to the further development of FMD and BTV LIMS emergency response systems at Weybridge to provide additional testing capacity. IAH have indicated a desire to adopt VLA’s SampleManager system for Pirbright emergency response work if test volumes exceed their STARS LIMS capability. VLA will continue to provide contingency and backup to IAH where formally agreed between the Agencies.

### **2.4 *LIMS for surveillance and Vladimir***

2.4.1 Vladimir has been extended in 2008 to provide much improved tabulation and graphing facilities for vets and epidemiologists. Our ability to collate surveillance data on a GB basis has improved, through better harmonisation with the Scottish Agricultural Colleges and extended use of the VIDA database. A Scanning Surveillance Portal has been created to bring all the different analyses together.

2.4.2 Microsoft Sharepoint has been introduced, as a collaboration tool to further increase VLA's ability to work together with SAC and other veterinary specialists who are outside the Defra family. In future years the aim is to extend this to cover veterinary practices specialising in livestock and poultry.

### **2.5 *Data Standards and Knowledge Management***

- 2.5.1 IT projects to enhance VLA's knowledge management have included wider use of Opentext Livelink software for Standard Operating Procedures (SOPS) extending the UKAS implementation to include non-scientific Department SOPs. Community Server and Microsoft Sharepoint collaboration software have been adopted for collaboration with further use of Sharepoint for research project collaboration a major objective for 2008/9.
- 2.5.2 Rebranding of VLA's external web site pages was completed as planned in 2007/8. The new style guidelines will be adopted for all new web applications.

## **2.6 *EU-wide Surveillance and collaboration***

- 2.6.1 The introduction of Flu-Lab-Net using Community Server software will re-enforce VLA's position as Avian Influenza Community Reference Laboratory (see below under SEV). The success and value for money offered by the Community Server package has led to its further use for the TSE CRL. This has been progressed under a parallel project – "TSE-Lab-Net". Whilst Community Server offers a cheap and easy solution for external collaboration, future investment will be focused on Microsoft Sharepoint which offers a more comprehensive and adaptable solution for the range of VLA needs.

## **3. Data Systems Support for VLA Programmes**

### **3.1 *Emerging Diseases and Welfare (END)***

- 3.1.1 FarmFile is an integral part of VLA's SampleManager System (SMS) which allows Regional Laboratories (RL) to record all sample submissions on a central database and track the progress of tests carried out at other VLA Regional Laboratories. Surveillance data is recorded for diagnostic submissions allowing extensive epidemiological analysis of the data. There is a continual programme of enhancements which is managed mainly by the FarmFile Development project (ED1001). Recent enhancements include:

- Automated monthly reports on disease trends and for submissions where a diagnosis is not reached.
- Customer specific reports to provide feedback to Veterinary Practices.
- Monthly imports of surveillance data for submissions to the Scottish Agricultural Colleges (SAC).
- Development of a VIDA (Veterinary Investigation Diagnosis Analysis) warehouse to combine submission data from FarmFile, SACs and the historical VIDA database to provide a national dataset of disease trends since 1975.
- Recording of descriptive epidemiological data from on-farm investigations.
- User friendly access to all FarmFile electronically for VLA VSD staff via the "Vladimir" system.

- 3.1.2 Future plans for FarmFile include the use of animal population data from RADAR, investigating the incorporation of interactive mapping, and the feasibility of electronic submission of data by Veterinary Practices.

### **3.2 *Food and Environmental Safety (FES)***

- 3.2.1 The FarmFile system supports the submission of all relevant samples and isolations for this programme, but the major database support is for salmonella isolations. The use of SMS has supported the development of Defra's RADAR project by submitting monthly

downloads of data for import into their warehouse. There is a continual programme of enhancements which is managed mainly by the FZ2000 project. Recent enhancements have included:

- IT support for the direct submission of avian salmonella isolates to the Weybridge and Lasswade labs.
  - Enhanced reporting of antimicrobial resistance data.
  - Implementation of an Early Detection System.
  - Email notification of isolations of particular human and animal health importance.
- 3.2.2 Automated zone readers for antimicrobial sensitivity testing by disc diffusion are in use in Weybridge and Lasswade for all salmonella isolations and *E.coli*. Results are automatically transferred into FarmFile. A tender to purchase automated zone readers for all Regional Laboratories has been completed and the new Protozone readers will be deployed during 2008/9.
- 3.2.3 In addition to FarmFile there are a number of databases developed within CERA to support research projects and for various surveys such as salmonella in pigs and poultry. These are developed as and when needed for new projects. Some of these surveys are to satisfy EU requirements for surveillance and these often involve the incorporation of Northern Ireland data and providing outputs in XML format.
- 3.2.4 The VTEC traceback investigation database was designed to support the retrospective linking of data from visits to animal premises with data relating to human outbreaks from the HPA.
- 3.2.5 LIMS changes went live in Feb 2008 to support the new Salmonella National Control Plans meeting Defra's requirement for estimates of the annual prevalence to be provided early in 2008.
- 3.2.6 The Control of Salmonella in Poultry Order (CSPO) came into force at the end of January 2008 and replaced the Poultry Breeding Flocks & Hatcheries Order; Changes were made to the system to deal with this. Enhancements are still being made as submission forms are changing. There are also plans to amalgamate the Farm Visits with the Salmonella ZO4 forms and database during 2008/9.

### **3.3 Statutory and Exotic Bacteria (SEB)**

- 3.3.1 There are a number of databases and datasets that support the work of the SEB programme, the majority of which are concerned with bovine tuberculosis (TB). The main source of TB cattle data is Defra's TB in Cattle (TbiC) database derived from data recorded by the Animal Health on their Vetnet system. This database holds details on all cattle herds tested for tuberculosis, and animal details for those testing positive. The data is cleaned, geo-referenced and added to pre-VetNet data to form a "VLA copy". A database for a large case control study of TB herd risk factors (CCS05) was developed in CERA, from which an extensive set of epidemiological data was recently provided to the Independent Science Group (ISG) for an independent statistical analysis.
- 3.3.2 An increasingly important source of data is the Cattle Tracing System (CTS) which is downloaded from RADAR quarterly and transformed into a dataset of paired cattle movements and has recently been used, with the TbiC dataset, to analyse the effects of pre-movement TB testing in cattle.
- 3.3.3 The most recent development has been a database for recording data relating to the trial of a vaccine for badgers. A number of other smaller databases have been developed for,

for example, molecular typing of *M. bovis*, (Spoligotyping database), and surveys of road traffic accidents in badgers.

- 3.3.4 The ground-breaking project TARSIS to estimate the prevalence of Johne's disease in the UK completed successfully. This incorporated a web-based application for external organisations, SAC and DARD, as well as VLA to enter farm level data and test results, and piloted the use of new technology (Dell Axim handheld devices) with external data capture via the internet.

### **3.4 Statutory and Exotic Viruses (SEV)**

- 3.4.1 LIMS for Avian Virology was a major project delivered during 2007/8. The VLA LIMS and FarmFile have also been enhanced and integrated to support both AI wild bird surveillance activities and domestic poultry outbreak diagnostic submissions. Electronic reporting of results to the customer is included as well as automated reports are available via web browser for various stakeholders. A web-based system developed by Defra to support the recording of patrol data in wild bird reserves (Warden Patrol System) has been handed over to CERA and is one of the first external systems to be hosted on VLA's new web hosting environment.
- 3.4.2 Flu-Lab-Net is an EU funded research project for the development of laboratory networks for avian influenza. It provides new opportunities for enhancement and reinforcement of the Community Reference Laboratory and National Reference Laboratory network for AI within the EU. Rapid, interactive communications will be addressed through web-based forums and it will also foster formal links and coordinate with corresponding human, swine and equine influenza networks. The Flu-Lab-Net collaboration environment based on Community Server went live in late-2007 to Programme participants and NRLS in EU member states.
- 3.4.3 Database support to the National Emergency Epidemiology Group (NEEG) has been on an ad hoc basis in previous exotic disease outbreaks. During the AI outbreaks during 2007 a new Microsoft Access system was developed by CERA and integrated Animal Health data from the Local Disease Control Centre with lab testing results and epidemiological data to provide support for serological surveillance and the NEEG.

### **3.5 Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (TSE)**

- 3.5.1 FarmFile and LIMS provide IT systems for the active surveillance programme for scrapie in sheep and goats. Carcasses of fallen stock (sheep and goats) and clinical suspects (cattle, sheep and goats) are received at RLs and registered on the system. Tissue samples from these, and from sheep sampled at abattoirs, are sent to the Shrewsbury Regional Laboratory where they are tested and results entered. All data and test results are then extracted, distributed by email daily, and imported into Defra's TSE Surveillance System (TSESS) overnight.
- 3.5.3 The most recent development resulted from a change to the way the European Commission required the results of TSE surveillance to be reported. A system was developed by SfW (TSE Results database) to import relevant data from four different TSE databases, allow the addition of data for Northern Ireland, and produce monthly reports in XML format for submitting to the EU Web-based reporting system.

### **3.6 Laboratory Testing**

- 3.6.1 Enhancements to VLA's laboratory testing through new technologies such as protozone readers and Luminex instruments.
- 3.6.2 Further LIMS tests such as Koi Herpes Virus will be required to increase LSD's portfolio of tests and develop further business.
- 3.6.3 The LIMS will also need to handle the moving of testing between Weybridge and Regional Laboratories.

### **3.7 Commercial Strategy**

- 3.7.1 IT systems are an increasing focus as VLA expands its commercial exploitation of intellectual property generated by VLA research activities. The Proficiency Testing EQA system developed for Sutton Bonington went live in Spring 2008 and provides a platform for the significant expansion of testing schemes and future commercial income.
- 3.7.2 Further commercial projects are likely in 2008/9 with Cattle Health scheme "Herdsure" , customer contact management and Identibac genotyping kits identified as initial candidates.

## **4. Defra e-Business and IT Strategies**

### **4.1 IBM and e-Nabling Defra**

- 4.1.1 The contractual and working relationship between IBM, Defra/CIOD and the VLA was formalised during 2007. This has resulted in a formal statement of working practice (SWP) and contract changes to provide VLA better access to e-Nabling IBM resources.
- 4.1.2 As well as solving problems experienced with commissioning IBM involvement in a number of VLA IT projects, better engagement will also hopefully improve IBM performance and minimise service problems particularly those relating to network outages.
- 4.1.3 VLA carried out a desktop cost comparison of the current traditional purchase and support arrangements compared with IBM e-Nabling desktop service. The evaluation indicated overall similar costs for in-house and outsourced desktop provision with a number of sensitive factors include desktop refresh and Microsoft software versions. The closeness of the comparison indicates that periodic review of the costs should be undertaken to identify trends and assess the impact of service changes – e.g. change in support hours, loss of Microsoft academic licence status, etc.

### **4.2 Greening Strategy**

- 4.2.1 During spring 2008, Defra/CIOD completed a baseline carbon footprint estimate of Information Communication Technology (ICT) across Defra and the nine executive agencies. The study illustrated that roughly two-thirds of the energy consumption from ICT comes not from the Data Centres but rather from distributed servers, communications equipment and desktop devices. Defra will now work to reduce energy consumption from such sources and encourage use of ICT to offset our carbon footprint in other ways (e.g. from business travel). Defra CIO also acts as Green CIO across government, developing a Green ICT strategy which Defra will lead in implementing.

### **4.3 Service Orientated Architecture and process modelling**

- 4.3.1 Defra and IBM aim to develop a target architecture based on web services to deliver a “services orientated architecture” (SOA), though up to now this had had little impact or relevance to the VLA.
- 4.3.2 In order to provide an effective service to Defra, VLA will continue to ensure that the Agency’s technical strategy fits with that of our parent Department. Discussions with Defra CIOD will continue to ensure web services and the emerging concepts of an “Enterprise Bus” will provide efficient and effective IT systems.

#### **4.4 *RADAR, Profiles and FFG strategy***

- 4.4.1 VLA input into RADAR during 2007/8 has been limited, however the VLA through SfW Ltd delivered the first phase of the Defra disease “Profiles” system. Each ‘profile’ provides a set of information about an animal disease or condition. It concentrates on how we in the UK look for and control each disease. The system puts together information that is not available in one place anywhere else and allows Defra to compare the dangers from different diseases. Profiles helps Government to make decisions about how to deal with different animal diseases or conditions. As the profiles are on the internet, everyone can see the basis on which decisions are made and can comment on it if they wish. Profiles will also be useful to anyone to whom animals and animal health are important. The main users of profiles are likely to be government policy makers, vets, animal owners, diagnostic laboratories, and any commercial industries with an interest in animal health and welfare. VLA will host and support the Profiles infrastructure, including user registration and front-line help desk. SfW will provide Profiles application support.

#### **4.5 *IAH and Pirbright relocation***

- 4.5.1 The redevelopment of IAH Pirbright including the relocation of around 80 VLA Virology staff has been delayed since the FMD outbreak during 2007. However, the ITU continues to participate in the Redevelopment Programme IS workstream where appropriate and contribute to options for closer integration of IAH and VLA activities.

#### **4.6 *Animal Health (SVS) Business Reform Programme***

- 4.6.1 Discussions with Animal Health have commenced to evaluate the implications of their BRP on VLA’s IT strategy and particularly interfaces to LIMS. The long-term vision is for tight integration of Animal Health processes and VLA (and IAH) laboratories. This will require ongoing close collaboration over the coming year.

### **5. Provision and governance of VLA IT services**

#### **5.1 *ITSC and ITEC***

- 5.1.1 The IT Steering Committee (ITSC) and IT Executive Committee (ITEC) provide an overall structure for the governance of VLA’s IT and thus ensure all IT resources are firmly directed and aligned with VLA business need. The ITSC own, support and enforce this IS/IT strategy with recourse to the VLA Strategy Management Group (SMG) as appropriate. ITSC meet quarterly to:
- identify the key business objectives of the VLA and the IT functions needed to support their delivery;
  - review recommendations for inclusions or changes to the strategic plan as proposed by ITEC;

- monitor the adequacy of existing and planned systems against current and emerging business needs.

5.1.2 ITEC continue to provide a bottom-up view of IS/IT requirements and manage requests for variations from and additions to the strategic plan arising from the user community. The committee recommends changes to the IS/IT Strategy to ITSC and communicate the strategy to members of their Department.

5.1.3 The representation and organisation of ITEC will be maintained during 2008/9 and continue to fully represent all Agency Departments as well as ensuring all VLA staff are aware of ITEC's role and purpose. A diagram showing the interaction between the governance bodies including ITSC, ITEC and the ITU is included as Appendix C,

## **5.2 Technical Strategy, governance and enforcement**

5.2.1 IT "governance" in VLA is concerned with accountability and responsibility – how IT policies, standards and processes are specified, carried out and monitored for the common good of the Agency. The key objectives of governance are to:

- ensure that VLA IS/IT is exploited effectively, with due regard to business objectives, corporate interests and value for money;
- improve the quality of service delivery, by the adoption of common, agreed, standards and by ensuring effective checks and controls are in place;
- clarify central IT and business area responsibilities;
- underpin the VLA Accounting Officer's governance responsibilities.

5.2.2 ITSC will enforce the framework with the agreed standards as outlined in Appendix B. This framework will include a number of components both process related and technical. Further discussion of the Technical Strategy components is detailed in Section 7 below.

5.2.3 Each entry in the table in Appendix B notes a policy or standard within the VLA, including future direction or imminent change where applicable. The importance of governance will vary depending on the standard. For some (corporate email for example), strong governance is critical to ensure effective business communications. For others a lighter touch would suffice and mandated standards are unnecessary.

5.2.4 The VLA's technical strategy will need to be maintained and adapted to integrate laboratory equipment procurement processes as the convergence of IT and laboratory continues. Close cooperation with CERA IT colleagues will also continue to ensure VLA technical standards meet the widest Agency needs.

## **5.3 Conformance to standards**

### ISO9001/2000 Quality

5.3.1 In June 2008 the ITU successfully maintained the ISO9001 standard as part of the Agency-wide quality programme. The ITU will continue to sustain progress on the IT QMS and the actions contained therein, evaluating how changes to standard will enable sustained improvements to the management systems, thus delivering better managed products and services to the VLA. Quarterly progress reviews on QSR actions take place within the ITU to monitor the quality system.

- 5.3.2 The ITU continues to review output from the gap analysis against ISO20000/BS15000 IT Service Management carried out in 2007. Formal accreditation remains unlikely to be an objective. However, further improvement of ITU processes is envisaged particularly in the areas of incident/problem management, project estimating and project time recording. The ITU will also evaluate further expansion of the Hornbill Supportworks system to provide better IT service management.
- 5.3.3 Post Implementation Reviews (PIR) will continue to be used as a mechanism to evaluate the success of IT projects, identify issues and possible improvements as part of the ISO9001 quality system. Two PIRs will be scheduled during 2008/9.

#### ISO17799 (formally BS7799) Information security

- 5.3.4 Information security standard remains a target for all government organisations. VLA will continue to review this target and consider plans for accreditation. These plans will need to consider remaining recommendations from the 2003 gap analysis carried out by Insight Consulting.
- 5.3.5 In common with other Government departments, VLA has been mandated (January 2008) by the Cabinet Secretary to ensure unsecured laptops carrying personal information relating to individuals are not taken outside of official premises. This change in policy arose as a result of a number of well publicised and embarrassing data losses. The Cabinet Office has instructed Departments to put appropriate procedures in place to protect information that would be considered sensitive to particular individuals. Whilst the VLA does not tend to deal with personal or sensitive data to the extent detailed in the Cabinet Office's memorandum, it is likely that VLA scientists and administrators may work off-site with disease data referencing farm holdings which could be considered both commercial and personal. A priority project to install Bcrypt encryption software on all VLA laptops was initiated in May 2008 with a target completion date of December 2008.
- 5.3.6 Laptop encryption represents just one of a range of data protection initiatives emerging from UK Government that will enforce and audit enhanced data security. Regular auditing and updates to Defra will be required to demonstrate the VLA conforms to all appropriate data protection measures.
- 5.3.7 The IT Business Continuity Plan (BCP) adopted in March 2005 was last tested during early 2006 with a number of significant issues surrounding the configuration of hardware provided by DR contractor (HP/Synstar). Since that test a new DR contract has now been signed with NDR Ltd. The retest scheduled in 2007 was delayed due to avian influenza emergency response and will now be scheduled for 2008/9. Long-term plans remain to integrate the IT plan into wider Agency BCP work.

#### ISO 14001 Sustainable Development

- 5.3.8 The sustainability agenda is a key focus for Defra and VLA will need to follow the core department closely and ensure the sustainability of all IT investments. Desktop provision uses an average lifespan of 5 years which compares favourably with Defra e-Nabling 3 year asset replacement. Server rationalisation incorporating virtualisation using VMware will substantially reduce the Agency's server population and thus bring environmental benefits in terms of power consumption, space requirements and air conditioning. During 2008 an additional IT "Greening Strategy" appendix will be drafted to be incorporated in

the overall IS/IT Strategy from 2009/10.

### OGC e-GIF, e-GMF and SPRITE

- 5.3.9 The Agency's IT strategy will continue to be driven by external cross-government standards. Technologies and standards for UK Government Departments are mandated by the Government Interoperability Framework (e-GIF) – see <http://www.govtalk.gov.uk>. These standards are being extended to include metadata, XML schemas (via the e-GMF) as well as statements regarding the adoption of Open Source Software (e.g. Linux).
- 5.3.10 Mandated Government standards will be embedded into VLA's governance arrangements as appropriate. ITU staff will represent VLA on relevant bodies where new standards of particular concern are being considered – however in most cases ITU will liaise closely with Defra CIOD and IBM staff leading in each area.

### **5.4 IT provision - the IT Unit (ITU)**

- 5.4.1 The ITU provides and maintains a modern IT infrastructure that supports all VLA's IT requirements, from office applications to LIMS. 29 internal staff supplemented as required by external consultants and contractors form the core Unit resource. Over 100 systems ranging from VLA-wide LIMS to small standalone Microsoft Access applications are supported by the ITU.
- 5.4.2 The IT Unit design, implement and support systems that improve business efficiency and quality of data, provide management information and workload monitoring features, and aid collaboration in VLA's dynamic project structure. IT developments help VLA to minimise bureaucracy, and allow scientists and vets to concentrate on their specialist skills.
- 5.4.3 In support of the above, a key objective for the IT Unit is to maintain an in-depth understanding of all aspects of the VLA's business. Thus the ITU can be as much experts in the work of the VLA, as in the use and delivery of new technology. ITU will always need to plan for and maintain capacity to support Defra's emergency response capability. In general this will involve responding rapidly to requirements for additional surge capacity and new laboratory systems.
- 5.4.4 Service reporting introduced at quarterly ITEC and ITSC meetings demonstrate the ITU are continuing to meet the range of service levels implemented in June 2005. These arrangements are closely aligned to IT industry best practice and follow recognised ITIL standards. As part of ISO9001 process improvements, service levels are now reviewed annually with business representatives to ensure they continue to meet the Agency's needs.
- 5.4.5 For a third year, the majority of significant service level issues reported were due to network problems involving Regional Laboratories and external Internet links reported to IBM for resolution. IBM performance supporting VLA's critical IT network infrastructure will continue to be carefully monitored and measures to provide additional network resilience will be evaluated during 2008/9.

### **5.5 IT provision - CERA**

- 5.5.1 Close cooperation between the ITU and CERA 3 Data Systems has continued to provide an effective and coherent technical strategy. Sharing of development procedures and

knowledge between the ITU and CERA will become increasingly important for the effective and efficient delivery of web based systems within the Defra Service Orientated Architecture. Collaboration on Warden Patrol and Mbovis web-based systems are examples of recent close cooperation in application development.

- 5.5.2 CERA have noted a continuing demand and an increasing focus for electronic data provision, e.g. from the EU. This focus on technologies such as XML and wider data quality aspects will demand continuing focus on data standards and Internet technology training. Greater investment in Business Objects skills and knowledge will become a CERA priority as use of BO as a reporting tool across VLA becomes more widespread.

## **5.6 IT provision - partnerships**

- 5.6.1 The delivery of IT services to VLA will require a wide range of technical and business skills as well as a level of resource not available from in-house staff. Therefore VLA use a range of partnerships to ensure IT can meet future business needs. These partnerships include:

### Defra/IBM

- 5.6.2 IBM continue to be used for provision of IT network (WAN, LAN and network gateways) and external VLA static web site hosting. These services provided via Defra "e-Nabling" contract with IBM. Defra and IBM are encouraging greater use of e-Nabling throughout the Defra family. The benefits and case for e-Nabling will be kept under review although a desktop cost model developed in 2007 identified no savings over the current in-house provision. Contract clauses dictating Defra as the "authority" also constrain VLA's use of e-Nabling, especially in financial aspects where Buy-4-Defra and the core Department financial processes are mandated.

### ThermoElectron

- 5.6.3 Thermo Fisher provide the VLA's strategic LIMS software. The current SampleManager version used across VLA is 2004r2. Use of Thermo's Nautilus LIMS to support Biomics and specifically TB microarray production was withdrawn from live use in early 2008. No further use of Nautilus is planned.
- 5.6.4 The long-term strategy for VLA LIMS is being progressed under the LIMS Vision Programme. The latest version of SampleManager version 9 is of particular interest to VLA as the underlying technology is based on Microsoft dotNET rather than proprietary Thermo software. This has significant positive implications and should offer VLA the opportunity to integrate current and planned dotNET systems with the LIMS and increasing LIMS delivery using internal and partner dotNET skills.

### SfW Ltd

- 5.6.5 For the past six years SfW have provided technical skills to the ITU on an ad hoc basis via standard S-Cat arrangements. Use of SfW resources through 2007/8 has been extensive and included project management, fixed price application development, consultancy and system support contracts. The use of SfW has significantly increased the ITU's capability to meet demand for IT systems.
- 5.6.6 VLA have negotiated an extension to the S-Cat framework 11 service provision by SfW through to 2011. This will provide a firm partnership for the future up to a point where the replacement OGC Catalyst arrangements will be used. Market testing using IBM e-Nabling

or Catalist will ensure continuing value for money from the SfW contract. Price comparisons using the Mbovis redevelopment and Sharepoint collaboration were carried out in 2007/8.

### Fujitsu

5.6.7 Use of Fujitsu Services has included provision of consultancy service to assist with an independent security evaluation of the new external web hosting environment and PC encryption software. Their knowledge of VLA continues to make them an important potential partner for delivery future IT projects via OGC Catalist framework.

### Other IT manpower contracts

5.6.8 Additional resources required by VLA will be procured via standard Government Catalist arrangements or existing VLA contracts, such as Office Angels. External organisations would be expected to have the full range of accreditation, e.g. IIP, BS7799 and ISO9001:2000. The ongoing need for security clearance – CRC and CTC - has dictated that contract staff must be obtained through a small number of employment agencies.

## **6. Business support systems**

### **6.1 Finance and management accounting**

6.1.1 Finance processes are computerised using the Integra system from IB Solutions. Integra provides basic financial ledgers as well as other components such as purchasing and stock/stores. FPS and PACT are used for management accounts. Finance are considering the replacement of FPS and PACT with Integra modules thus consolidating VLA's Finance IT systems.

6.1.2 The VLA e-procurement project has made significant progress rolling out the system to all requisitioners at VLA. This system implements a remote requisition entry for all VLA locations using the Integra Web Basket module and remote Goods Received Note (GRN) entry using the Integra E-Buyer module.

### **6.2 Human Resources (HR) and payroll**

6.2.1 HR IT services based on Oracle e-HR continue to be hosted and supported by Defra. The e-Payfact payroll system is provided via the Treasury framework contract for payroll provision negotiated with CMG/Logica.

6.2.2 The move to a sophisticated e-HR system has provided VLA with the potential to introduce further HR administration improvements, although sharing a system with Defra demands that VLA follows Defra implementation priorities and timetable. The "4 Me" on-line self-service system for competency based appraisals was implemented in 2007/8. The system has experienced some teething problems and upgrades are planned to ensure the system operates successfully in 2008/9.

### **6.3 Office systems and communications**

#### Office systems

6.3.1 The VLA's office systems continue to provide a critical business support tool. The move to Microsoft Active Directory and Exchange 2003 has been completed. Additional

functionality such as Microsoft Communicator (Messenger) has also been rolled out on demand. Active Directory offers a potential infrastructure for further applications and offers an option for the replacement of the Corporate Directory when Defra withdraw the current bespoke system.

- 6.3.2 Desktop refresh continued during 2008/9 with a focus on the replacement of CRT screens with LCD flat panels. An approximate 5 year refresh rate continues to be maintained. Further investment in desktop hardware is planned as part of the new Weybourne building occupation during Summer 2008.

#### Electronic Document Management (EDM), Web based “virtual teams”

- 6.3.3 The VLA continues to use Opentext Livelink EDM to handle UKAS Testing Group procedures, documentation and Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs). Implementation of Phase II covering remaining Agency SOPs to follow the successful UKAS pilot had been completed. An Information Management Steering Board is planned to oversee further use of both Livelink and other information management tools. This board will also review the strategy for collaboration tools and adoption of a coherent approach.

#### Internet and external collaboration

- 6.3.4 Implementation of a VLA managed Internet/web-facing environment was completed during 2007. After successful penetration testing the environment has been deployed for a number of key systems including:

- 2007 Science audit;
- Flu-Lab-Net;
- Warden Patrol
- Proficiency testing; and
- TSE-Lab-Net

- 6.3.5 Fujitsu Services have provided independent security consultancy and NCC Group were commissioned to carry out penetration testing. The environment has been designed in a strategic and secure way to enable connection to DefraNet.

#### IntraVet and external website

- 6.3.6 A rebranding of VLA’s external website took place in early 2008. Application and web page templates have been developed to enable the new intraVet page layout/structure to be reused for new web based systems such as dotNET applications. The intraVet style will provide a standard for all future web based systems developed within the VLA.

#### Flexible working

- 6.3.7 The ITU have continued to work with Defra and IBM on the adoption of VPN technologies. A suitable robust solution providing broadband access is now widely used with around 150 VLA users. Further extension to other VLA staff will continue as required.

- 6.3.8 During 2007 and early 2008, the IT Unit investigated “webmail” options using external gateways provided by IBM. Progress on this project has been slow, however the system appears robust and enables email access via a browser from Internet connected PCs beyond equipment owned and specifically configured by VLA.

### **6.4 EDRM**

- 6.4.1 The Agency developed plans, business case and cost estimates for EDRM back in 2003. Work to develop electronic record inventories, and publication schemes has taken place as preparation for Freedom of Information (FoI) legislation. Development of an Information Asset Register (IAR) has been completed as part of the Data Sciences project. Capture of data of the first top 100 critical assets was completed in 2006/7.
- 6.4.2 Once again, sufficient funding is unlikely to be available during 2008/9 to progress electronic records management.

## 6.5 *New technologies*

- 6.5.1 As new technologies emerge which are of interest to VLA, R&D projects will be defined and submitted to ITEC for consideration. As part of the annual IT/IS strategy review process, key emerging technologies likely to be of interest to the Agency will be identified. VLA will also continue to use IT partnerships with Defra's IT supplier as well as with colleagues in other Defra Agencies to keep up-to-date with new technology.

## 7 **Technical strategy**

### 7.1 *Introduction*

- 7.1.1 VLA's technical strategy is increasingly driven by external standards such as the e-GIF. The e-GIF standards are mandated across government and are based on the principles of:

- Interoperability
- Market Support
- Scalability
- Openness

- 7.1.2 The VLA's **Technical Strategy Statement** contained in Appendix B brings together individual technical components used by Agency and the governance that applies to each. The strategy is structured in four key areas covering:

- Business processes
- Architecture
- Applications
- Infrastructure

- 7.1.3 Governance statements relating to technical components will be agreed by ITEC/ITSC and published on intraVet. In many areas these statements will represent mandated policies for the use of IT in the Agency and be incorporated in the relevant VLA Agency Procedures.

## 8. **IT Cost**

- 8.1 The Agency's corporate IT costs for the last five financial years were as follows:

| Heading                         | 2003/4<br>cost £k | 2004/5<br>cost £k | 2005/6<br>cost £k | 2006/7<br>cost £k | 2007/8<br>cost £k |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| Staff costs – pay +<br>overtime | £873k             | £924k             | £984k             | £1,156k           | £1,164k           |

|   |                |                |                |                |                |
|---|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| Non-pay ITU costs   | £139k          | £99k           | £100k          | £141k          | £111k          |
| Corporate IT hardware Maintenance (Fujitsu)               | £151k          | £156k          | £0             | £0             | £0             |
| Corporate IT maintenance (other)                          | £414k          | £357k          | £561k          | £637k          | £721k          |
| Corporate IT consultancy                                  | £170k          | £565k*         | £471k          | £394k          | £399k          |
| Other costs – fixture, hospitality, professional services | £7k            | -              | £46k           | £21k           | £140k          |
| IT Capital  | £360k          | £360k          | £360k          | £ 223k         | £172k          |
| Defra IT (soft charge)                                    | £357k          | £357k          | £230k          | £133k          | £149k          |
| <b>Total for year</b>                                     | <b>£2,471k</b> | <b>£2,818k</b> | <b>£2,734k</b> | <b>£2,705k</b> | <b>£2,856k</b> |

\*an extra £400k consultancy was allocated during 2004/5 to cover e-HR, Payroll and collaboration projects.

## 8.2 These represent a cost of:

- £2,209 per employee (1293\*) for 2007/8
- £1,983 per employee (1364\*) for 2006/7
- £2,254 per employee (1213) for 2005/6
- £2,171 per employee (1298) for 2004/5
- £1,809 per employee (1366) for 2003/4

\*staff numbers from Personnel Annual Report 2007/8

## 8.3 Project IT costs allocated directly to science programmes and projects are excluded from these figures.

## 9. Strategic plan 2007/08– Look Back

### 9.1 As part of the quality review process for VLA IT and the ITU, the annual strategy review documents a set of objectives to be reviewed in the following year. The table below notes 2007/8 objectives. The Strategy Reference column refers to the 2007/8 IS/IT Strategy document.

| 2007/8 Strategy Reference | Objective  | Timescale | Progress   |
|---------------------------|--|-----------|--|
| Para 2.1.1                | Improve external IT links by evaluating emerging IBM solutions such as “Whale” and “OWA” (Outlook Web Access).                       | 3 year    | <b>Completed.</b> OWA evaluated and pilot successfully completed. Quote for 200 users now confirmed as wider roll-out beyond current pilot (20 user) community will be planned. It has taken £55k and 26 months to reach this point.   |
| Para 2.2.1                | Investigate into the new industry standard (.NET) based version of SampleManager.  | 3 year    | <b>Ongoing.</b> SfW have led the evaluation. Good progress made with available interface methods being evaluated and tested, though SMS documentation is sparse. Focus is now moving on to how a component based dotNET approach integrated with SampleManager can deliver business and IT benefits. Feasibility work continuing into Summer 2008 though limited funding is likely to restrict further progress. |
| Para 2.2.2                | Progress LIMS Vision with focus on Regional Laboratory processes.  | 2007/8    | <b>Not met.</b> Apart from the Quick Farmfile project, emergency response priorities during 2007/8 have hampered progress. Lack of resources and priority work indicate little prospect of significant progress during 2008/9. Further proposals to be submitted to the LIMS Vision Programme Board in Autumn 2008.  |
| Para 2.3.2                | Support electronic links to external laboratories and customers including emailing of test results and capture of surveillance data. | 3 year    | <b>Ongoing.</b> Simple prototype system developed by ITU. Discussions with LSD have indicated likely areas and customers who would be interested. At this point technical feasibility has been proved and much of the underlying network infrastructure is in place. Links can now be delivered if a priority business requirement emerges.  |
| Para 2.4.2                | Introduce internal and external electronic collaboration tools.  | 2007/8    | <b>Completed.</b> Both community server and Microsoft Sharepoint have now been deployed live for a variety of projects including FLU-LAB-NET, TSE-LAB-NET, Species Groups and IAH collaboration.   |
| Para 2.4.3                | Revamp VLA external website.   | 2007/8    | <b>Completed.</b> The revised website branding went live in April 2008.  |
| Para 3.1.2                | Extend surveillance data using RADAR animal population data, interactive mapping and electronic data submission.                     | 3 year    | <b>Ongoing.</b> ED1001 project providing simple VIDA GIS interface within Vladimir is planned during 2008/9.   |
| Para 3.2.2                | Participate in the evaluation and introduction of automated zone readers.  | 3 year    | <b>Ongoing.</b> Initial project work started. Roll-out scheduled for 2008/9.   |
| Para 3.4.2                | CERA take-on and redevelopment of the AI Warden Patrol System.   | 2007/8    | <b>Completed.</b> System is live and hosted on VLA's infrastructure.   |

|                         |  |        |  |
|-------------------------|--|--------|--|
| Para 4.1.2              | Improve IBM service levels in relation to WAN/LAN provision to Weybridge and Regional Laboratories   | 2007/8 | <b>Not met.</b> Discussion with IBM completed. Improved secondary SLAs with Cable & Wireless and BT are not feasible. Business case for second redundant links at Regional Labs will be investigated during 2008/9.                      |
| Para 4.1.3 & Para 5.6.2 | Develop desktop provision cost model to compare IBM e-Nabling and current VLA costs.   | 3 year | <b>Completed.</b> Model indicates current method of IT provision offers excellent VFM. However regular evaluation is necessary as IT market changes.   |
| Para 4.2.2              | Collaborate with Defra CIOD and technical architects to ensure VLA strategy fits with Defra SOA and "Enterprise Bus".                        | 3 year | <b>Ongoing.</b> CARA and Enterprise Bus becoming less relevant for VLA as extensive SOA plans in Defra are reduced due to lack of funding.   |
| Para 4.3.4              | Remain in close contact with Defra technical architects and monitor RADAR, Land, Livestock and Customer developments in the core Department. | 2007/8 | <b>Completed.</b> Though limited progress in Defra during the year.  |
| Para 3.4.2              | Contribute to the IAH Redevelopment Programme.   | 3 year | <b>Ongoing.</b> IS/IT workstream has not met during 2007/8 due to emergency response work. Advice provided regarding IAH location contingencies during FMD outbreak. Further work on IT aspects of the Programme expected during 2008/9. |
| Para 4.5.1              | Review implications of Animal Health (SVS) BRP on VLA's IT and particularly LIMS strategy.   | 3 year | <b>Ongoing.</b> "MoSS" project stalled due emergency response, but reconstituted in Spring 2008. As AH BRP exotics target dates appear to have slipped the new "MoSS" work is likely to attract higher priority.                         |
| Para 5.2.4              | Maintain close collaboration between ITU and CERA staff on technical strategy and standards issues.  | 2007/8 | <b>Completed.</b> Two joint projects commissioned through IBM. CERA supported dotNET application (Warden Patrol) hosted on ITU external infrastructure. Further external project collaboration requirements will be a focus in 2008.     |
| Para 5.2.5              | Carry out two Post Implementation Reviews during the year.   | 2007/8 | <b>Not Met.</b> Due to emergency response priorities. However, one PIR comprising a major analysis of Avian Influenza emergency response was completed. This review more extensive and rigorous than normal PIR scope.                   |
| Para 5.4.5              | Monitor IBM performance on critical IT services – WAN, LAN and external IT gateways.   | 2007/8 | <b>Completed.</b> IBM service monitored as part of routine IT SLA's. Formal service review held with IBM and Defra/CIOD in February 2008.  |
| Para 5.4.6              | Identify areas for reducing corporate IT costs or demonstrate the delivery of wider efficiency savings across the VLA.                       | 2007/8 | <b>Completed.</b> Virtualisation using VMware identified and reviewed with other Defra Agencies. A project to reduce server costs and improve sustainability through lower energy consumption started in Spring 2008.                    |
| Para 5.6.6              | Negotiate and sign S-Cat extension with SfW.   | 2007/8 | <b>Completed.</b> Negotiations complete. SCAT Category 11 extension for maximum of 7 years WEF May 2007.   |

|            |  |        |   |
|------------|--|--------|---|
| Para 6.4.6 | Link external web systems with internal databases to support external applications such as Proficiency Testing and RADAR profiles. | 2007/8 | <b>Completed.</b> Infrastructure in place. Defra CIOD notified and independent penetration testing carried out by NCC. No major issues identified.  |
| Para 6.4.8 | Continue deployment of broadband access to VLA staff on demand.  | 2007/8 | <b>Completed.</b> Roll-out procedure in place and implemented as requests are received.   |
| Para 6.4.9 | Investigate and pilot Webmail solutions in conjunction with Defra/IBM  | 2007/8 | <b>Completed.</b> Pilot successful and rollout under negotiation in Spring 2008. See also 2.1.1. above.   |
| Para 6.5.1 | Carry out gap analysis on ISO20000/BS15000 and consider formal accreditation.  | 2007/8 | <b>Completed.</b> Gap analysis completed. Consideration of findings delayed due to emergency response priorities. Review of identified gaps will take during 2008/9 although formal accreditation is not anticipated. |
| Para 6.5.2 | Maintain conformance to BS7799 Information Security although formal accreditation is not a target this year .                      | 2007/8 | <b>Completed.</b> Clear desk policy area only remaining recommendation carried forward from previous years.   |
| Para 6.5.3 | Retest IT BCP and integrate plan in wider VLA continuity planning activities.  | 2007/8 | <b>No met.</b> Objective delayed due to emergency response priorities. LIMS DR test will be scheduled during 2008.  |

## 10. Business plan 2008/09 – Look forward and objectives

10.1 As in previous years, IT project demands continues to outstrip resources and available funding. Prioritisation by ITEC and ITSC will be critical to ensure the most effective use of the limited resources.

10.2 Funding allocations for the ITU and corporate IT for 2008/9 are as follows:

|                                       |                   |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|
| <b>IT Unit (Cost Centre 625)</b>      |                   |
| - Pay                                 | £1,201,016        |
| - Non-pay                             | £119,900          |
| Total                                 | £1,320,916        |
|                                       |                   |
| <b>Corporate IT (Cost Centre 704)</b> |                   |
| - IT Consultancy                      | £300,000          |
| - IT equipment/maintenance            | £500,000          |
| Total                                 | £800,000          |
| <b>Corporate IT total</b>             | <b>£2,120,916</b> |

A complete portfolio of IT projects and workload agreed for by ITEC/ITSC for 2008/9 is contained in Appendix E.

### 10.3 Summary of 2008/9 objectives

10.3.1 The table below summarises the objectives included in the strategy text in addition to discrete projects identified in the 2008/9 projects portfolio. The objectives below will be used as a basis for the review of the year to be included in next years strategy.

| <b>2008/9<br/>Strategy<br/>Reference</b> | <b>Objective</b>  | <b>Timescale</b> |
|--|---|------------------|
| Para 1.3.7                               | Implement HMG simple steps to meet sustainability/greening targets.   | 2008/9           |
| Para 2.1.1                               | Rollout low-cost web collaboration environment to 10 research projects  | 1 year           |
| Para 2.1.2                               | Review and negotiate network upgrades and develop a business case with IBM in order to improve IT resilience.                                   | 3 year           |
| Para 2.1.3                               | Deploy further IP based portable VC equipment.  | 3 year           |
| Para 2.2.1                               | Investigate into the new industry standard (dotNET) based version of SampleManager and potential integration of dotNET code with SampleManager. | 3 year           |
| Para 2.2.2                               | Progress LIMS Vision with focus on evaluating a business case for automating key Regional Laboratory processes.                                 | 2008/9           |
| Para 2.3.2                               | Maintain involvement in MoSS and interim emergency response solutions   | 2008/9           |
| Para 2.3.3                               | Continue to provide contingency and backup to IAH for emergency response where formally agreed between the Agencies.                            | 2008/9           |
| Para 2.4.2                               | Extend Sharepoint collaboration portal to cover veterinary practices  | 3 year           |
| Para 2.5.1                               | Extend Sharepoint for research project collaboration  | 2008/9           |
| Para 3.1.2                               | Extend surveillance data using RADAR animal population data, interactive mapping and electronic data submission.                                | 3 year           |
| Para 3.2.2                               | Complete installation of new Protozone readers  | 2008/9           |
| Para 3.6.2                               | Provide IT solutions to assist development of VLA's commercial strategy and increase in commercial income.                                      | 5 year           |
| Para 4.3.2                               | Collaborate with Defra CIOD and technical architects to ensure VLA strategy fits with Defra SOA and "Enterprise Bus".                           | 3 year           |
| Para 4.5.1                               | Contribute to the IAH Pirbright Redevelopment Programme   | 3 year           |

|            |  |        |
|------------|--|--------|
| Para 4.6.2 | Review implications of Animal Health (SVS) Business Reform Programme on VLA's IT and particularly LIMS strategy.                         | 3 year |
| Para 5.3.1 | Carry out quarterly progress reviews on the annual ITU Quality System Review (QSR) actions   | 2008/9 |
| Para 5.3.2 | Evaluate Hornbill Supportworks capability to assist with IT service management and particularly problem, incident and change management. | 2008/9 |
| Para 5.3.3 | Carry out two Post Implementation Reviews during the year.   | 2007/8 |
| Para 5.3.6 | Draft a new IT "Greening Strategy" defining VLA's approach to sustainable IT   | 2008/9 |
| Para 5.4.4 | Carry out annual reviews of service level measures   | 2008/9 |
| Para 5.4.5 | Monitor IBM support of VLA's network infrastructure and evaluate measures to provide additional resilience.                              | 2008/9 |
| Para 5.5.1 | Maintain close collaboration between ITU and CERA staff on technical strategy and standards issues.                                      | 2008/9 |
| Para 6.2.2 | Resolve 4Me system issues to successfully embed use of the system across VLA   | 2008/9 |
| Para 6.3.1 | Consider use of Microsoft Active Directory as a replacement for Defra provided Corporate Directory                                       | 3 year |
| Para 6.3.2 | Install new IT equipment in line with Weybourne occupation plans   | 2008/9 |
| Para 6.3.3 | Introduce an Information Management Steering Board to oversee further use of Livelink and other information management tools.            | 2008/9 |

**Appendix A - Glossary of terms**

**Appendix B –Technical strategy and Corporate Governance Framework**

**Appendix C – ITSC/ITEC governance relationship**

**Appendix D - References**

**Appendix E1 – 2008/9 projects portfolio – Work In Progress (WIP)**

**Appendix E2 – 2008/9 projects portfolio – To Be Done (TBD)**