Digital Strategy and Roadmapping for the Scottish Government

Context and scope of contract

The Scotland Act 2016 devolved control over some aspects of social security to Scottish Ministers. As such, Scottish Ministers have set out a new vision for social security in Scotland, and the principles which underpin that vision.

To support this vision and to establish a portfolio of national programmes of digital transformation, the Scottish Government engaged Methods as their Digital Transformation partner. Given the scale and priority of the social security programme, one of the first areas of work within the digital transformation programme was a full Discovery of the social security work stream within this programme.

Methods' role

Methods undertook a comprehensive technology strategy/service design programme for the Scottish Government (delivered 2016) fulfilling a Digital Transformation partner role. We used Agile methodologies to iteratively develop the technology strategy but supported/guided parts of the organisation more familiar with classic (waterfall) approaches via upskilling and knowledge transfer. Methods' approach was to create a multi-disciplinary, co-located team working directly with key stakeholders within Scottish Government (e.g. Directorates as well as DWP) in a truly collaborative fashion. This generated a high level of engagement across all teams, enabling the sharing of ideas and collaborative problem-solving in an open and transparent way.

Early in Discovery, we assessed service life expectancy and risk appetite based on a clear understanding of the scale, importance and high profile nature of the social security programme.
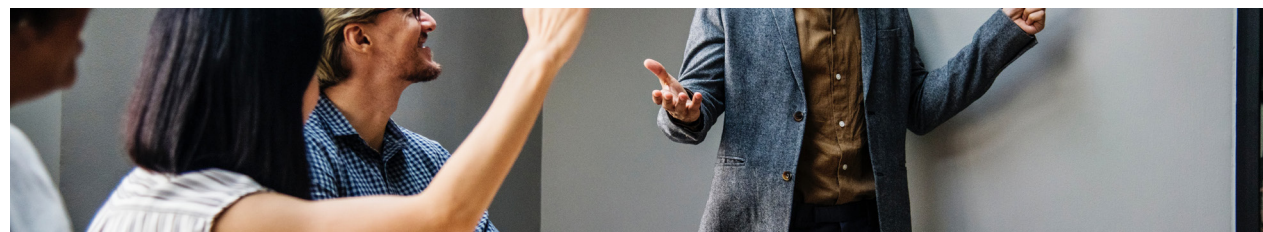
This was factored into the strategic vision by agreeing clear outcomes and success criteria for the strategy with the senior stakeholders.

We undertook the following activities:

Worked with Scottish Government Digital staff to identify and run collaboratively several full Discoveries. These directly informed the strategy development: developing a deep understanding of user needs, the existing technology landscape and candidates for potential alpha development to validate the emerging technical strategy.

Capability analysis (e.g. using Wardley value-chain mapping) to identify cross-cutting technology and business capabilities.

Business modelling to establish the effectiveness of 'as-is' service delivery

Architecture modelling to support the 'to-be' requirements. This led us to identify a mechanism to support the sharing and reuse of digital components to deliver common business capability across the Scottish public sector, creating a 'digital ecosystem.'

Throughout, we used iterative Agile methods (e.g. stand-ups, show-and-tells, ongoing user research) to deliver maximum value and retain flexibility. This allowed the technology strategy and service designs to evolve as user/stakeholder needs became clearer.

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Key outcomes and benefits:

Service Patterns – we carried out a compare-and-contrast benchmark exercise with 'to-be'

Indicative Target Architecture – identifying 'to-be' architecture platforms supporting the alignment of service patterns, the service map and the technologies needed at each stage of the service, centred on framework of common, open standards.

Capabilities vs. Technology Map: a series of workshops developed the understanding of the technologies which will support delivery capabilities for Social Security services in Scotland.

Service Landscape Map - showing 6 key functional areas with sub-categories for the provision of benefits to claimants. Continual user research validated user needs and formed the basis to test the service pattern and capabilities.

Value Chains: mapped 30+ value chains across external user needs, internal user needs, and specific technology (such as telephony). This showed the interplay of the required capabilities across the 11 devolved benefits.

Capabilities Map - identified a total of 58 capabilities across 9 themes underpinning the service map. This was a key driver for the technology strategy required to support the 'to be' service delivery.

Benefits realisation and value-for-money assessments were aligned to the key layers of the technology strategy and prioritised according to the road map.

Road-mapping – we developed a shared, commoditised approach to service delivery (based on a public cloud platform), defining the technology roadmap to coordinate role-out of future services under the programme.

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