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**INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
CIRCULAR TO CONTRACTORS NO. 2/2003**

The HKSARG Interoperability Framework

(Note : This circular is published through the ITSD web site
to IT contractors of the Government of the Hong Kong
Special Administrative Region for general reference only)

This Circular serves to remind Government IT contractors the requirement to adopt the Interoperability Framework (IF) in providing their solutions to Government Bureaux and Departments (B/Ds). Please visit <http://www.itsd.gov.hk/itsd/english/infra/eif.htm> to understand the IF document.

Purpose of the IF

2. A key business objective of our e-Government initiatives is to provide client-centric joined-up government services to the public. However, government services are diverse and offered by different B/Ds. In order to provide client-centric and comprehensive services, Government must be able to present its services in the form of a unified interface to the public users. To meet this objective, it is essential that we standardise the interfaces between systems to enable the seamless flow of information, within legal bounds, across B/Ds.

3. The IF is designed to meet this objective. The IF is a collection of technical and data specifications that define the interface between interacting applications. Data specifications for the interfaces among systems will be defined in eXtensible Markup Language (XML).

4. The adoption of the IF will obviate the need to negotiate on the interface mechanism and standards case-by-case. Thus, project owners can focus their efforts on the business issues and derive more value from the service chain while

system designers can ensure interoperability between systems as well as enjoy the flexibility to select different hardware and software to implement solutions. Since the IF will be kept in pace with industry and market trends, the adoption of the IF will not incur additional cost to E-government projects. By adopting the IF and enabling systems to interact with each other, B/Ds can more readily extend the functionality of their systems, and hence lower the implementation costs and shorten the time for the introduction of new joined-up services.

Compliance Policy

5. With effect from 2 January 2003, all B/Ds are required to adopt the IF when developing new system interfaces that interact with systems of other B/Ds or external parties. We have established an IF compliance policy and the compliance facilitation mechanisms. The details are provided in the IF document.

6. Government IT suppliers including technology, consultancy and outsourcing service providers need to thoroughly understand the IF to ensure that solutions provided to the Government would comply with the IF requirements. Government application developers need to adopt the relevant specifications as directed during system design and development.

Future Development

7. The development of the IF is a long-term, on-going strategic effort in support of E-government and e-commerce in the HKSAR. To accommodate new business requirements and keep in pace with technological advancements, the IF will be reviewed every six to twelve months. Government's IT suppliers should make reference to the latest release of the IF document.

Enquiries

8. The IF is managed by the Interoperability Framework Co-ordination Group (IFCG) set up by ITSD with members from some B/Ds. If you have any enquiries concerning this circular, please contact the IFCG Standing Office at (852) 2575 1347 or send an email to ifcg@itsd.gov.hk.



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