



# Cabinet Office Circular

CO (02) 12

25 September 2002

---

*This document contains information for the New Zealand Cabinet. It must be treated in confidence and handled in accordance with any security classification, or other endorsement. The information can only be released, including under the Official Information Act 1982, by persons with the appropriate authority.*

---

**Enquiries:**

e-GIF Manager: Colin Jackson

E-government Unit, State Services Commission.

Ph. 04 495 6746

E-mail: [e-gif@ssc.govt.nz](mailto:e-gif@ssc.govt.nz)

URL: [www.e-government.govt.nz/interoperability/index.asp](http://www.e-government.govt.nz/interoperability/index.asp)

All Ministers  
All Chief Executives  
Speaker of the House of Representatives  
Clerk of the House  
General Manager, Parliamentary Service  
Controller and Auditor-General  
Chief Parliamentary Counsel

## **New Zealand e-Government Interoperability Framework (NZ e-GIF): adoption by government agencies**

### **Summary of Key Points**

- **The New Zealand e-Government Interoperability Framework ('the e-GIF') is the Government's policy on how government organisations should achieve electronic "interoperability".**
- **Cabinet has agreed that from 1 July 2002 onwards the e-GIF govern how public sector organisations are to achieve electronic interoperability of their information, technology and business processes.**
- **The Public Service, and other specified agencies, are required to adopt the e-GIF. Agencies of the wider State sector are encouraged to adopt it, and local government is invited to use it.**
- **Cabinet has approved a set of rules to guide adoption of the e-GIF where this is compulsory for agencies. It has also approved a governance regime centred on the State Services Commissioner acting as steward for the e-GIF.**

## Introduction

- 1 The New Zealand e-Government Interoperability Framework (e-GIF) is an important foundation for e-government. It is a collective asset of the public sector, underpinning the future performance and capability of government organisations. As such, it is intended that it be widely used in central and local government, not just by those agencies that have been explicitly directed to adopt it.
- 2 It is also intended that agencies take responsibility for contributing to the maintenance and ongoing development of this asset, so that it remains fit-for-purpose in the fast moving environment it reflects.

## Purpose of the NZ e-GIF

- 3 The e-Government Strategy will increase the integration of government service delivery, and drive overall improvements in public sector efficiency and effectiveness. This depends on there being a standardised way for government agencies to connect their data resources, information technology and business processes together. This capability is called interoperability, and is created by the e-GIF.
- 4 The e-GIF is a set of policies, technical standards, and guidelines covering ways to achieve interoperability of public sector data and information resources, information and communications technology (ICT), and electronic business processes. It creates the ability for any agency to join its information, ICT or business processes with those of any other using a predetermined framework based on 'open' (i.e. non-proprietary) international standards.
- 5 Use of the framework will in no way compromise the privacy of personal information held by government. While the e-GIF enables interoperability, any moves by agencies to share information remain subject to the Privacy Act 1993 where relevant.

## Key points of Cabinet's decision

### *Role of the e-GIF*

- 6 Cabinet has agreed that from 1 July 2002 onwards the e-GIF govern how public sector organisations are to achieve electronic interoperability of their information, technology, and business processes.

### *Public sector adoption of the e-GIF*

- 7 Cabinet agreed that all Public Service departments, the New Zealand Defence Force, the New Zealand Police, the Office of the Clerk, the Parliamentary Service, the Parliamentary Counsel Office, the New Zealand Security Intelligence Service, and the Government Communications Security Bureau are required to adopt the e-GIF. This is to occur on the following basis:

#### Application of e-GIF

- Current information systems, software applications, or electronic data/information resources do not need to immediately comply with the NZ e-GIF.

- Any new information system, software application, or electronic data/information resource (or current instances of these being redeveloped or replaced); or systems for interfacing with the same; must comply with the e-GIF except in instances where:
  - it is certain that interoperability will never be a requirement; or
  - the current version of the e-GIF does not, and could not, include policies, standards or guidelines concerning the technologies the agency needs (not wants) to employ; or
  - an alternative approach to achieving interoperability (e.g. Electronic Data Interchange (EDI)) is justified.

### Exemptions from e-GIF

- Where an agency believes there are grounds for exemption from the e-GIF, it must:
  - conclusively demonstrate, to the satisfaction of the e-GIF Steward, where the current version of the e-GIF cannot meet requirements, or why an alternative approach to achieving interoperability is justified; and
  - where sensible, contribute to the updating of the e-GIF.
- Where an exemption is approved it will only apply to a specific information system, software application, data/information resource or business process, not the entirety of an agency's information and technology environment and/or business processes.

### Special provisions

- Specialist systems employed by, or sponsored by, the security and intelligence agencies are automatically exempted where compliance with the e-GIF is inappropriate.

8 The benefits of the e-GIF are not specific to the Public Service, or central government. Organisations in the wider State sector are encouraged to adopt the e-GIF. Local authorities are invited to also adopt it.

### *Governance of the e-GIF*

9 The State Services Commissioner will be the steward of the e-GIF. The Commissioner will convene an e-GIF Management Committee to oversee the ongoing development and management of the e-GIF. The E-government Unit of the SSC will act as custodian of the e-GIF, with responsibility for day-to-day operation of e-GIF business processes.

### **Function of NZ e-GIF, and key requirements on agencies**

10 The e-GIF can be likened to an 'electronic road code for government'. It saves government agencies the cost of having to make up their own interoperability 'rules', and mitigates the risk that these rules will end up being incompatible.

11 Version 1.0 of the e-GIF covers five areas of e-government activity where the ability of agencies to interoperate is essential. These are:

- Business process interfaces;
- Interconnection (of information systems);

- Information sharing and exchange;
  - Access (to information and systems);
  - Service delivery (inter-agency business protocols).
- 12 It also contains a set of overarching policies that agencies adopting the e-GIF should adhere to. The e-GIF will continue to evolve in line with the changing business requirements it supports, and development of the open international standards environment it reflects.
- 13 Cabinet's decisions impose some clear requirements on agencies, particularly those that have been directed to adopt it. Alongside this is an implicit requirement that, for the e-GIF to deliver the expected benefits, agencies proactively contribute to its ongoing development. This can be achieved in two ways – agreeing to participate in governance of the e-GIF if invited, and also through leading or participating in the working group process that will be central to the ongoing development of the e-GIF.
- 14 Also, those agencies that have been directed to adopt the e-GIF should ensure that the benefits of the e-GIF are not confined to themselves, through ensuring its adoption in every instance where they interoperate with another entity (public or private), unless they are exempted from doing so.

#### **Further Advice and Information**

- 15 On 13 June 2002 Cabinet approved the e-GIF for implementation from 1 July 2002 onwards [CAB Min (02) 18/2C]. The Cabinet committee paper on which these decisions were based is available at [www.e.govt.nz/interoperability/cabinet-paper.asp](http://www.e.govt.nz/interoperability/cabinet-paper.asp). The *New Zealand e-Government Interoperability Framework* is available on the website of the e-government programme at: [www.e-government.govt.nz/interoperability/index.asp](http://www.e-government.govt.nz/interoperability/index.asp).
- 16 If you require further advice or information about the NZ e-GIF please contact:
- E-mail: [e-gif@ssc.govt.nz](mailto:e-gif@ssc.govt.nz)  
URL: [www.e-government.govt.nz/interoperability/index.asp](http://www.e-government.govt.nz/interoperability/index.asp)

Secretary of the Cabinet