

# The Integrated Public Sector Vocabulary

## What is the Integrated Public Sector Vocabulary?

This product will bring together the three main controlled vocabularies available to public sector bodies in one merged vocabulary or taxonomy. The vocabulary can be used to populate Subject Metadata and index and categorise information across the public sector.

The vocabularies that are being merged:

- The Government Category List (GCL) – a high level category list owned by the Cabinet Office E-Government Unit for use across government
- The Local Government Category List (LGCL) – a product of the LAWs National Project for use in the Local Government Community
- The seamlessUK Taxonomy – a product of the seamlessUK Project for use in a broad community information environment.

## Who is behind the merger?

The merger has the support of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), Local e-Government Standards Body (eSB) and the vocabulary owners.

It is funded by the ODPM via the LAWs2 Project from the Roll Out and Dissemination Budget for the National Projects.

## Why merge the vocabularies?

- One vocabulary will reduce the confusion for public sector organisations creating subject metadata schema or indexing other resources.
- The vocabulary supports citizens and customers by offering easier, more efficient access to information
- The vocabulary can be used for categorisation or indexing purposes and subsets may be created to suit individual organisation's needs
- It will provide the mandatory encoding scheme for the e-GMS Subject element.
- It will support the delivery of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Priority Outcome R3 "Community Information"
- It will improve search and retrieval for users of public sector information, both the general public and staff, through:
  - consistent indexing, categorisation and retrieval
  - interoperability across data sets from multiple organisations
  - the ability to offer the same information across a variety of delivery channels
- One vocabulary will reduce the costs and workload required to implement a controlled vocabulary within content management systems, search systems and automatic metadata creation systems.
- Merging the vocabularies brings together a vast range of experience in developing and implementing controlled vocabularies in the public sector which will be used to ensure the highest quality product
- Maintaining the vocabulary nationally with input from the user communities, will ensure it meets user needs, while removing the need and costs of creating local lists
- It will reduce the overheads of maintaining multiple separate vocabularies
- One vocabulary will offer a strategic advantage in linking e-enabled services to the Government's Directgov portal ([www.direct.gov.uk](http://www.direct.gov.uk)).

## What will the Project deliver?

- One merged vocabulary available for the entire UK public sector, built and maintained to recognised quality standards
- A software solution, built to recognised technical standards, that provides outputs in a variety of formats, maintaining compatibility between any subsets or views for different purposes
- A method for maintaining links to other existing vocabularies eg The Local Government Services List
- A method for sustaining the vocabulary and disseminating its outputs
- A governance structure
- Full guidance documentation
- Promotion of the new vocabulary to promote take-up

## Purpose and uses for the Integrated Public Sector Vocabulary

### Future management of the IPSV

A governance structure is being established to support the long term maintenance and hosting of the vocabulary. Issues being addressed include:

- establishing, as far as possible a commitment to, and funding for, the long term sustainability of the IPSV
- establishing a mechanism to ensure the IPSV is maintained in line with existing and emerging taxonomy standards
- ensuring the user community can participate and is fully consulted on proposed changes
- building the vocabulary to reflect the interests and terminology of the citizen
- ensuring the vocabulary is accessible and available free of charge to all public sector organisations by providing suitable hosting arrangements

### What is the primary use for the integrated vocabulary?

- Improved retrieval for citizens and other system users
  - For indexing (tagging) information resources with subject metadata. The terms selected allow each resource to be labelled according to what it is about.
    - Labelling the resources allows them to be found again, in a variety of different ways that depend on the functionality of the search engine offering customers easier, more efficient access to information.
    - Labelling also allows the resources to be channelled to particular agents and people who want them.
    - Subsets or different views of the vocabulary will make indexing easier for staff in a particular organisation.
- Supporting interoperability and joined up government
  - To provide consistent indexing and retrieval across resources from different organisations to aid to joined up government by supporting the sharing information, including the delivery of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Priority Outcome R3 "Community Information"
  - To support efficiency in the public sector by providing a single centrally maintained list which can be used by all public bodies.

### Other uses for the Integrated Public Sector Vocabulary

- Web site navigation and directories
  - The merged vocabulary can support the planning of directories and navigation paths on portals and web sites for particular audiences, though some modifications may be required before the terms are presented to the particular audience.
  - Metadata on indexed resources can still be used to populate the corresponding headings in a directory.

### How should you use / implement the IPSV?

- If you have not started building in the LGCL or haven't got very far, then from 1 April 2005 you may start to implement the IPSV. The ODPM has agreed that the IPSV is a recognized taxonomy for the purposes of meeting the requirements of Local e-Government Priority Outcome R3. Authorities that are currently implementing the LGCL as part of R3 should continue to do so and will be offered further guidance and support around implementation of metadata and migration to the IPSV after December 2005.
- Mappings to IPSV will be provided from LGCL and LGSL
- From Summer 2005, e-GMS will recommend the IPSV as the mandatory encoding scheme for subject metadata in place of GCL.
- You should be prepared to migrate to the new list to enable interoperability across the public sector.
- The date for completion of migration has not yet been fixed.

### What is the timescale?

The merger is underway now and will be completed by March 2005. Some draft sections will be tested by the ENCORE Project ([www.encore.gov.uk](http://www.encore.gov.uk)) and an Editorial Panel has been set up to advise on the editorial policy

### How do you get involved?

There will be opportunities for consultation and discussion about the new vocabulary as it develops, including various workshops and dissemination events and a discussion forum set up jointly between eSB and esd-toolkit. Please log on to the following link:

<http://www.esd-toolkit.org/integratedforums/>