



## SECOND ITEM ON THE AGENDA

## Second progress report on the Integrated Resource Information System (IRIS) in the regions

### Introduction

1. In November 2008,<sup>1</sup> the Office informed the Subcommittee that the implementation of an upgraded version of the Oracle software would be required prior to the deployment of IRIS to the regions, so as to minimize the costs associated with staff retraining and change management. As reported, the Office experienced major difficulties with the upgraded Oracle software implemented in August 2008. The Office has been actively engaged with the Oracle Corporation over the last 12 months to resolve these issues, which were linked to problems with the software itself. A considerable investment of ILO staff time was required to achieve full resolution of these difficulties and this has delayed progress on the deployment of IRIS to the regions by almost 12 months.
2. In order to maintain some momentum on the deployment of IRIS to the regions during this period, the pilot implementation in the Subregional Office for Central and Eastern Europe (Budapest Office) was divided into two phases. The first phase was successfully completed in December 2008. As a result, Budapest Office is now using IRIS for processes related to management of human resources, regular budget and regular budget for technical cooperation (RBTC) resources and has the ability to access all information related to technical cooperation projects.
3. Lessons learned from the Budapest Office pilot are now being applied to the roll-out development plans for other regions. A first lesson was that phased implementation allowed greater time to be spent on staff development and training as well as addressing specific topics and administrative processes. This will be important for further roll-out, as many ILO offices have multifunctional staff who may feel overloaded with too much new information. A second lesson was the confirmation that key change management activities were critical to the success of the project. Role-mapping and change engagement established a framework and understanding between the teams at headquarters and the Budapest Office that were valuable in solving issues encountered immediately following the implementation. A third lesson involved gaining a greater understanding of the level

<sup>1</sup> GB.303/PFA/ICTS/2.

and nature of support required by offices. The identification of key users in the Budapest Office team, working with a remote support group at headquarters, ensured continuity of operations in most cases. A follow-up support visit from headquarters helped to stabilize operations.

## Ongoing activities

4. A three-week Conference Room Pilot with a total of 13 participants from regional offices and the Budapest Office started in early October 2009. The Conference Room Pilot is designed to allow field staff to validate processes and procedures in the upgraded version of IRIS. It provides an opportunity to gain exposure to the administrative processes and procedures in the upgraded version of IRIS by simulating their daily operations and identifying any issues that would need to be addressed prior to roll-out. It is a key step in the change management process, which will support further implementation of IRIS in field offices.
5. The second phase of the Budapest Office pilot should be implemented in the first half of 2010 and is on schedule. All the remaining IRIS functions covering financial management, travel and technical cooperation project management will then be fully operational in the Budapest Office.

## Deployment strategy: Next steps

6. The strategy previously reported to the Governing Body<sup>2</sup> called for deployment of IRIS to regional offices first and then to other offices in the regions. This approach was chosen as it presents a manageable risk level, takes account of the resource constraints and facilitates the establishment of a support and servicing structure prior to implementing IRIS in additional offices in the region. The strategy called for completion of roll-out by the end of 2011.
7. Given the difficulties related to the Oracle upgrade referred to in paragraph 1 above, the workplan is behind schedule. Based on the lessons learned from the pilot in Budapest and Jakarta,<sup>3</sup> it has been decided to approach implementation in the regional offices in two phases. The following schedule has been established following consultation with the regions:

Period	Location	Phase
2010	Regional Office for Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok)	Phase 1
	Regional Office for the Arab States (Beirut)	Phase 1
	Subregional Office for Central and Eastern Europe (Budapest)	Phase 2
2011	Regional Office for the Americas (Lima)	Phase 1
	Bangkok Office	Phase 2
	Beirut Office	Phase 2
2012	Regional Office for Africa (Addis Ababa)	Phase 1
	Lima Office	Phase 2
2013	Addis Ababa Office	Phase 2
2013–15	Other offices in the regions	Phases 1 and 2

<sup>2</sup> GB.303/PFA/ICTS/2, paras 18–21.

<sup>3</sup> A full implementation of IRIS was deployed as a pre-pilot for the Jakarta EAST project (Education and skills training for youth employment in Indonesia) in November 2007.

8. As implemented in the Budapest Office pilot, phase 1 is comprised of processes related to management of human resources, regular budget and RBTC resources and the ability to access information related to technical cooperation projects. Phase 2 focuses on financial management, travel and the management of technical cooperation projects.
9. The implementation date of 2013 for phase 2 in the Regional Office for Africa (Addis Ababa Office) reflects a cautious approach taking into account the current infrastructure challenges around connectivity. As the situation is evolving rapidly, connectivity costs could come down and enable a more rapid deployment to this office. In addition, lessons learned from successful implementation in other regional offices during 2010–11, as well as from the implementation of phase 1 in Addis Ababa in 2012, could allow for an earlier implementation of phase 2. The Office will also pursue opportunities for collaboration, with a view to finding common solutions, with other UN system organizations facing similar connectivity challenges.
10. This phased approach lengthens the time to complete the deployment of IRIS in the regions and thereby delays reaping the full benefits of IRIS. But it is solidly based on the lessons learned from the implementation of IRIS at headquarters and in the Budapest Office pilot. It allows the cost to be spread over a longer period, thus permitting completion of the IRIS field roll-out within existing resources, as well as more time for training staff and for completing the change management processes. It also recognizes the substantial difference in the level of effort required for the implementation of the pilot in a subregional office (Budapest), which is geographically close to headquarters, and that required for regional offices which are larger, more complex and geographically dispersed across different timelines.
11. The costs for full implementation in the Regional Offices for the Arab States (Beirut Office) and for Asia and the Pacific (Bangkok Office), and for the implementation of phase 1 in the Regional Office for the Americas (Lima Office) in 2010–11 is estimated as follows:

Cost	US\$
Staff time of the business and IRIS functional and technical support teams	2 963 000
Training and change management (staff development budgets)	1 028 000
Technological infrastructure (primarily for connectivity) *	608 000
Total	4 599 000

\* Cost-sharing arrangements will be necessary with the regions, particularly in relation to costs associated with upgrades of the infrastructure (connectivity).

12. A detailed plan for deployment of IRIS to other offices in the regions will be established in consultation with the regions in 2012. It will cover operational needs, technical infrastructure and support, and training. By 2013, all of the regional offices will have experience in using IRIS and should have the capacity to support IRIS functions. The deployment plan will address infrastructure difficulties, as already foreseen in the operational model<sup>4</sup> and the Information Technology Strategy 2010–15.<sup>5</sup> It will be designed to operate within the constraints of available resources and it will set down a clear timeframe for the deployment of IRIS to other offices in the regions to be completed within the planning period of the Strategic Policy Framework 2010–15.

<sup>4</sup> GB.303/PFA/ICTS/2, paras 11–17.

<sup>5</sup> GB.306/PFA/ICTS/1.

## Governance arrangements

13. A multi-tiered governance structure supports all IRIS initiatives, including its deployment to the regions. The first component is the IRIS Governance Board, chaired by the Executive Director of Management and Administration, which is responsible for approval and prioritization of IRIS activities and overall risk management. The second component is the IRIS Management Task Team, chaired by the Director of the Bureau of Programming and Management, which is responsible for the operational management of projects approved by the Governance Board. Within this two-tier governance framework, a specific project team on the deployment of IRIS to the regions has been established to operationally coordinate project activities and provide feedback to the Management Task Team. This is in line with the governance mechanisms which were established and worked well in support of the implementation of the Budapest Office pilot.

Geneva, 15 October 2009.

*Submitted for information.*