



An Roinn Oideachais
Department of Education

Benefits Realisation Report

ESBS ETB Payroll Programme

October 2023

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1 Purpose

This Benefits Realisation Report has been prepared in response to the decision made by the ESBS ETB Payroll Programme OGCI0 Peer Review Group on 26th June 2023 to initiate the project's closure. The purpose of this document is to review how the project has performed against its benefits first defined in the 2014 Business Case and further developed in the Project Initiation Document in 2018. In addition, this document outlines how post project benefits will be monitored post project closure.

Once the Report receives approval from the Peer Review Group, Steering Group, Senior Responsible Officer and Business Owner, the report will be shared through the PMO with existing / future projects to drive continuous improvement in project delivery.

2 Approach to Benefits Realisation

As part of the project initiation phase, a detailed business case was prepared and approved in 2014, to establish payroll shared services for the ETB sector. The Business Case recommended a new shared service centre as the preferred option. The Business Case identified that delivering payroll through shared services would yield substantial benefits in cost and quality of service. A detailed Information Gathering exercise was undertaken within each ETB in 2014 to inform the Business Case which outlined the existing position as a baseline for measuring the project benefits. In 2018, within the Project Initiation Documentation, these benefits were assigned targets and detailed descriptions.

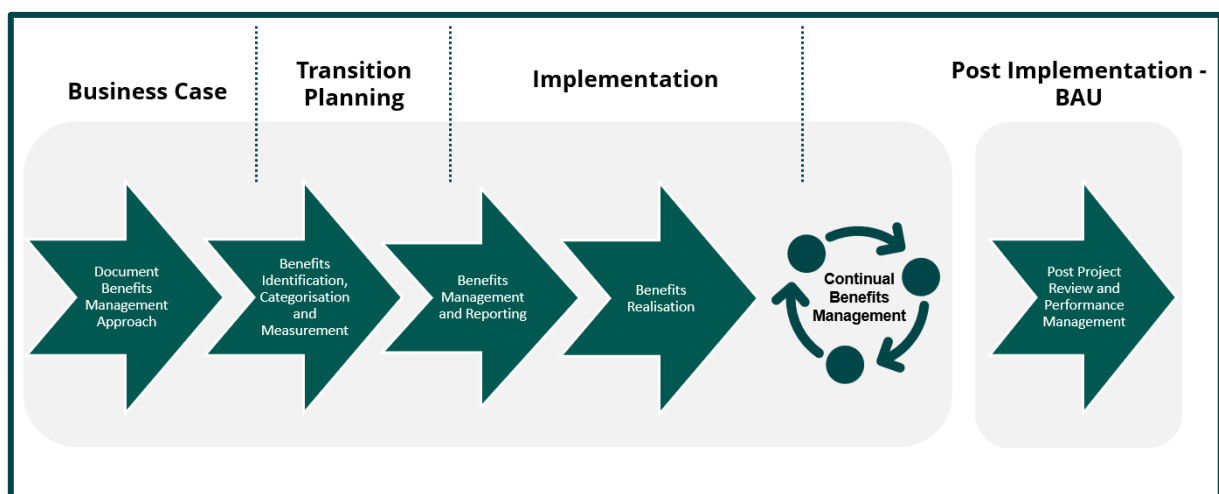
As part of Project Closure, to prepare this Benefits Realisation report, the ETB Payroll Project team participated in an in-person workshop to review the Business Case benefits and document additional unintended benefits arising from the ETB Payroll Project, these are outlined in [section 4](#).

It is important to note that the end of implementation (Donegal go-live, February 2024) is **NOT** the end of the project benefit tracking. The project team may have completed their work, but the tracking of benefit realisation continues according to the Benefit Management plan that specifies:

- A dedicated business owner
- A method for measuring, collecting, and reporting benefits data
- An ongoing process to benchmark against the “planned” benefits at the project and portfolio level.

This Benefit Management approach will allow the Department of Education to maximise the return on investment from the ETB Payroll Project and meet its strategic objectives.

The diagram below sets out how the approach to benefit management will be structured as the Project moves through its lifecycle:



3 Review of Project Benefits

The Business Case highlights nine quantifiable Benefits. As noted, for benefits that will be realised after the project's completion, ESBS will undertake periodic reviews of these benefits after the successful rollout to all ETBs as documented. This is in order to provide a complete benefit realisation analysis. A summary of the position of the nine quantifiable benefits is outlined in the table below.

Benefit Position	#	%
Achieved	5	56%
In Progress	3	33%
Not Started	1	11%
Total	9	100%

Benefit name	Description	Benefit realisation status	Remaining actions to confirm benefit realisation	Expected benefit realisation date	Business Owner
Reduced cost, efficient & effective utilisation of resources.	Consolidation of the future ESBS common code which will see the establishment of a single common code for Payscale, Allowances, Deductions, Absence Codes, Reference Data, and Expenses. This will see the standardisation of all existing paycales, allowances, deductions, Absence Codes, Reference Data, and Expenses across all sixteen ETBs and the elimination of all duplication. This will reduce the set-up time for new payees on the system, eliminate a significant number of deductions and consequently significantly reduce the number of Payovers to Deduction Agencies currently transacted by ETBs.	Achieved	Note: While this has been achieved per the business case targets, continuous improvement remains a core aim for the Shared Service with value-add opportunities being identified and progressed.	N/A	N/A
Technology-Enabled Solutions to manage various pay related workflows.	Employee self-service and web-based communication will resolve routine standard queries.	Achieved	N/A	N/A	N/A

Benefit name	Description	Benefit realisation status	Remaining actions to confirm benefit realisation	Expected benefit realisation date	Business Owner
Data Security and GDPR Compliance.	<p>Safe Storage of Data. All access to the Servers will be controlled by the protocols put in place by DES ICT Unit.</p> <p>ESBS-ETB Payroll will adhere to all GDPR guidelines issued by DES DPO.</p>	Achieved	N/A	N/A	N/A
Standardisation of processes across all ETBs and in ESBS.	Standardised operating procedures implemented across all sixteen ETBs with accountability underpinned by a robust Service Management Agreement.	Achieved	N/A	N/A	N/A
Business Continuity.	Implement ESBS-ETB Payroll ICT Strategy including a robust Business Continuity plan (BCP) and a comprehensive Disaster Recovery Plan (DRP).	Achieved	N/A	N/A	N/A

Benefit name	Description	Benefit realisation status	Remaining actions to confirm benefit realisation	Expected benefit realisation date	Business Owner
Enabling Payroll Value Add.	<p>Timely and accurate management information supporting Informed Decision Making to support ETBs in budget management and reporting.</p> <p>A standardised structure for Payroll management data will enable faster and easier response to audit, PAC, FOI, and PQ requests.</p>	In progress	<p>This benefit remains on track to be fully achieved following the migration of the last remaining ETB (Donegal ETB) to the Shared Service, planned for February 2024.</p> <p>Note: The Project enabled ETBs to have standardised information available to them. Due to the retirement of BI Reporting in Q3 2023, the Data Analytics project created standardised Power BI reports for ETBs with training provided to ETBs to enable them to write their own ad hoc reports as necessary.</p> <p>Note: It is at the discretion of ETBs how they realise this benefit and FOI requests are handled by ETBs.</p>	Q1 2024	S. Darcy

Benefit name	Description	Benefit realisation status	Remaining actions to confirm benefit realisation	Expected benefit realisation date	Business Owner
Enabling Payroll Value Add.	A shift of focus for the Senior Leadership team in each ETBs from administration of payroll management to other increased ETB value add activities and additional information on Payroll to support improved decision making.	In progress	Change management ongoing with the remaining ETBs with the expectation that this benefit will be achieved following the migration of Donegal ETB to the shared service in February 2024.	Q2 2024	M.Lenihan
Reduced cost, efficient & effective utilisation of resources.	25% Reduction in FTE numbers due to economies of scale in the Shared Services Centre.	In progress	The ETB payroll shared services business case estimated a reduced running costs from €6.6m to €4.8m per annum, an annual saving of 27%, with a reduction of FTE of 28. Based on current staffing numbers and projections it is anticipated that these savings will be achieved. A full analysis will be conducted following the rollout to the remaining ETBs.	Q2 2024	M.Lenihan
Reduced cost, efficient & effective utilisation of resources.	Additional cost savings to be targeted through continuous improvement and efficiency measures.	Not started	Full analysis of cost savings will be assessed on an annual basis following go live of all 16 ETBs.	Q1 2025	M.Lenihan

Further detail on these nine benefits can be found in [Appendix 2](#).

4 Additional Benefits

During the Benefits Review Workshop, the Project Team identified several additional benefits beyond those identified during initiation that will have a lasting and transformative impact on the ETB Sector. Although these benefits are largely intangible, their significance in driving positive change within the sector cannot be understated.

Benefit name	Description
Streamlined Implementation of Circulars and Interaction with Regulatory Bodies.	<p>The Project has facilitated the sector such that ESBS acts as a conduit and central point of contact between ETBs and Government Departments (e.g., Revenue, NSSO, SOLAS) which ensures there is uniform interpretation and clear guidance for ETBs in applying circulars and other regulatory requirements.</p> <p>ESBS also raises items with Government Departments to progress items on behalf of ETBs which reduces administrative workload for ETBs.</p> <p>Risks and issues flagged in audits are addressed through the implementation of centralised systems and processes.</p>
Aiding Pensions Improvement.	<p>A key learning from the initial stages of the Project is that Payroll cannot be viewed in isolation. The broader impacts of Payroll changes must be considered within the context of an end-to-end process, encompassing pensions. This integrated approach aided collaboration and knowledge transfer leading to significant improvements in Pension management within the ETB sector. This led to additional unintended benefits in aiding the SPS remediation project and enhancement of the Pensions module in that, Pension contribution is now calculated correctly which was not previously the case.</p>
Facilitation of Collaboration and Knowledge Transfer across the sector.	<p>Prior to the ETB Payroll Project, ETBs operated in isolation, with limited knowledge sharing and distinct terminology in use preventing effective collaboration. To improve the expertise on the Project Team, individuals within ETBs with expertise and in-depth knowledge of the sectoral needs were identified to support the project. Their diverse expertise and establishment of a common language improved communication and cross collaboration between ETBs ultimately benefiting the entire ETB sector by fostering knowledge exchange and cohesion.</p>
Standardisation of Payroll across the Department of Education.	<p>The standardisation and centralisation of ETB Payroll not only improved efficiency for ETBs but also facilitated alignment to Athlone Schools Employees Payroll contributing to the standardisation of Payroll processes across the DOE.</p>
ETB Data Cleansing.	<p>The migration of ETB Payroll from their legacy system to the shared service provided an opportunity to ETBs to cleanse their data. The benefits of the data cleansing exercise for ETBs includes enhanced data quality, accuracy and compliance with data regulations as well as forming the basis for the availability of improved management information.</p>

<p>Gold Standard for Future Standardisation and Centralisation Projects.</p>	<p>It is important to mention that the overarching benefit of the Payroll Project and its successful implementation is that it serves as gold standard for future centralisation and standardisation projects in the sector.</p>
<p>Additional Services provided by the Shared Service.</p>	<p>ESBS provides additional services to ETBs including vendor management, contract management, release management.</p>
<p>Continuous Improvement.</p>	<p>Continuous improvement and value-add opportunities being progressed which includes process improvement, new reports, data analytics and managing relationships with the likes of NSSO, Revenue, D/PER and Pensions Authority.</p>

5 Conclusion

In conclusion, this report illustrates that the ETB Payroll Project has successfully achieved many of its intended benefits, with the remaining benefits on track to be realised post-project closure. Notably, the Project has made a substantial impact on the ETB Sector, both in terms of financial and non-financial return on investment. The project's ability to deliver substantial value to the Department of Education and its stakeholders is testament to the careful planning, execution, and diligent oversight throughout its lifecycle and will form the basis for future centralisation projects in the Department.

It is recommended that ESBS undertake periodic reviews of these benefits, particularly post-project benefits after the successful rollout to all ETBs to provide a complete benefit realisation analysis. This Benefit Management approach will allow the Department of Education to maximise the return on investment and meet strategic objectives.

