



Our Public Service 2020



An Roinn Caiteachais
Phoiblí agus Athchóirithe
Department of Public
Expenditure and Reform



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Development and Innovation

Background to RPA in the Irish Public Service

- Reform Office noted that Robotic Process Automation was becoming a major disruptor in the outsourcing sector
- Noticeable reversal trends in labour arbitrage
- Irish Government's commitment to test alternative models of service delivery in Reform Plans
- Supporting the digital agenda
- Pricing and cost considerations

DPER Invitation to Pilot:

- Invitation to all Civil Service bodies to express an interest in participating in pilot RPA project
- Organisations nominated processes and people
- Four pilot bodies selected on a number of criteria

Initial Pilot Project (Civil Service, 2016):



Sample of other Public Service RPA deployments:



Outcome of RPA Pilot Project

Processes completed

After 12 months of piloting, 24 processes were completed or at final stages of development.

Business Information

Improved in relation to all processes due to auditable nature of RPA tools.

Return on Investment

Achieved. Cost of implementation €110,000.

Processing Times

Huge improvement. Lowest improvement was twice as fast as previous. Best was 25 times as fast as before.

Quality of Processes

Quality of Processes improved significantly (no 'human error').

Exception Rates

(where the robot refers process back to a human)
Ranged from 0.3% (lowest) to 9% (highest)

Staff Trained

13 people were upskilled and trained on how to use RPA tool



Conclusions/ Recommendations from Pilot Project

Conclusions:

- ✓ **Very effective for the right types of process**
- ✓ Well embedded processes make good candidates
- ✓ Upfront investment is required
- ✓ 'Lock-in' processes by using as many Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) as possible
- ✓ Isn't as easy for starters as it claims to be.... but they will get there eventually
- ✓ **People you select to train up need to be logically minded (understand 'if/then' scenarios)**
- ✓ Process execution speed will increase significantly
- ✓ **Ancillary benefits (e.g. audit data, happier staff, less human error and follow-up) as good as cost savings**
- ✓ Ongoing management of processes is minimal



Recommendations:

- Identify enough processes in advance to make your venture worthwhile**
- Bring in IT early if being led by the business
- Baseline with as many SMEs as you can
- Start small, grow slowly. **Build internal capability.**
- Avoid processes where the external input is highly unstructured or liable to regular or unnotified change
- Put in place an RPA framework to take away procurement pain**

Pointers for Public Bodies Considering RPA



Our Public Service 2020

RPA is a stated goal under A.6 of OPS2020. We aim to become self-sufficient in deployment.



Trade unions have been briefed at General Council level



August 2019 – Letter from SG DPER requesting Public Bodies to engage with RPA framework



Not a panacea. Use conventional built/bought solutions if required



Think outside of your own area of expertise – where else in your organisation can use this?



Government Decision
December 2019
Public Bodies must assess their suitability for RPA



Accept that you will have to invest people, time and some money to get this off the ground



Make sure your contractors are reflecting their use of RPA in pricing arrangements. Use gainsharing and innovation clauses



Public Service RPA Network:
Can collaborate on OPS2020.gov.ie innovation forum

Where to Next?

Building the Public Service Network of RPA Specialists

Make Automations Sharable Across the Public Service

COE Development
Across the main sectors of the Public Service and large organisations

Follow up on Government Decision
If your Public Service Body is not using RPA – why not?



**Our Public
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Thank you

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