



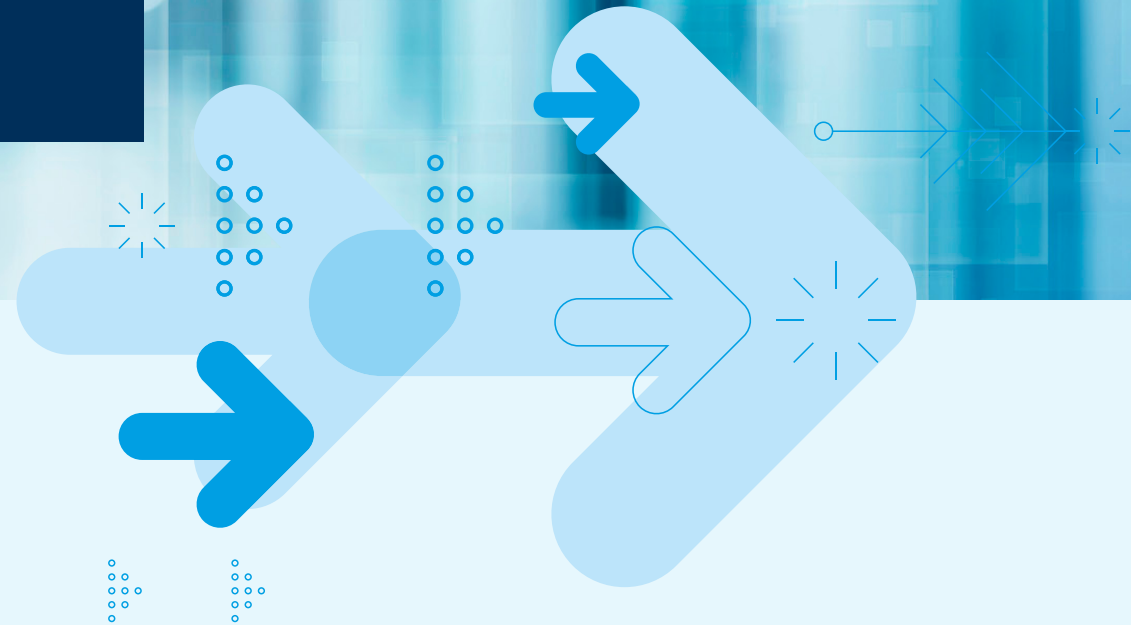
ICS

Innovation &
Consultancy Services

Innovation & Consultancy Services (ICS)

Services Brochure

August 2026

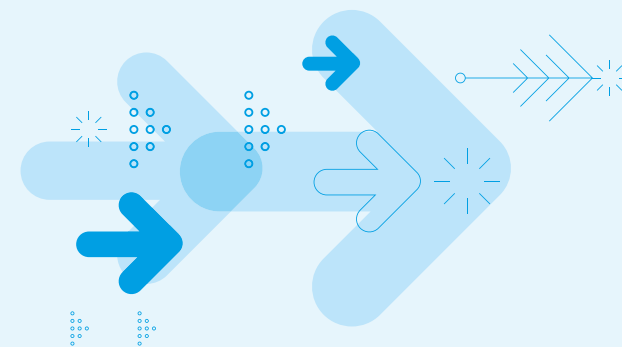


INTRODUCTION



Thomas Byrne

Director of Innovation &
Consultancy Services



The issues we face in the public sector are complex, high-profile and time-pressured. They often involve multiple interests, competing priorities and high expectations around delivery and value for money.

Innovation & Consultancy Services (ICS) supports colleagues at precisely these points.

As a central resource available to all departments and arms-length bodies, **ICS works across organisational and sectoral boundaries to help address both discrete and cross-cutting challenges**, often where no single team or organisation can resolve the issue alone.

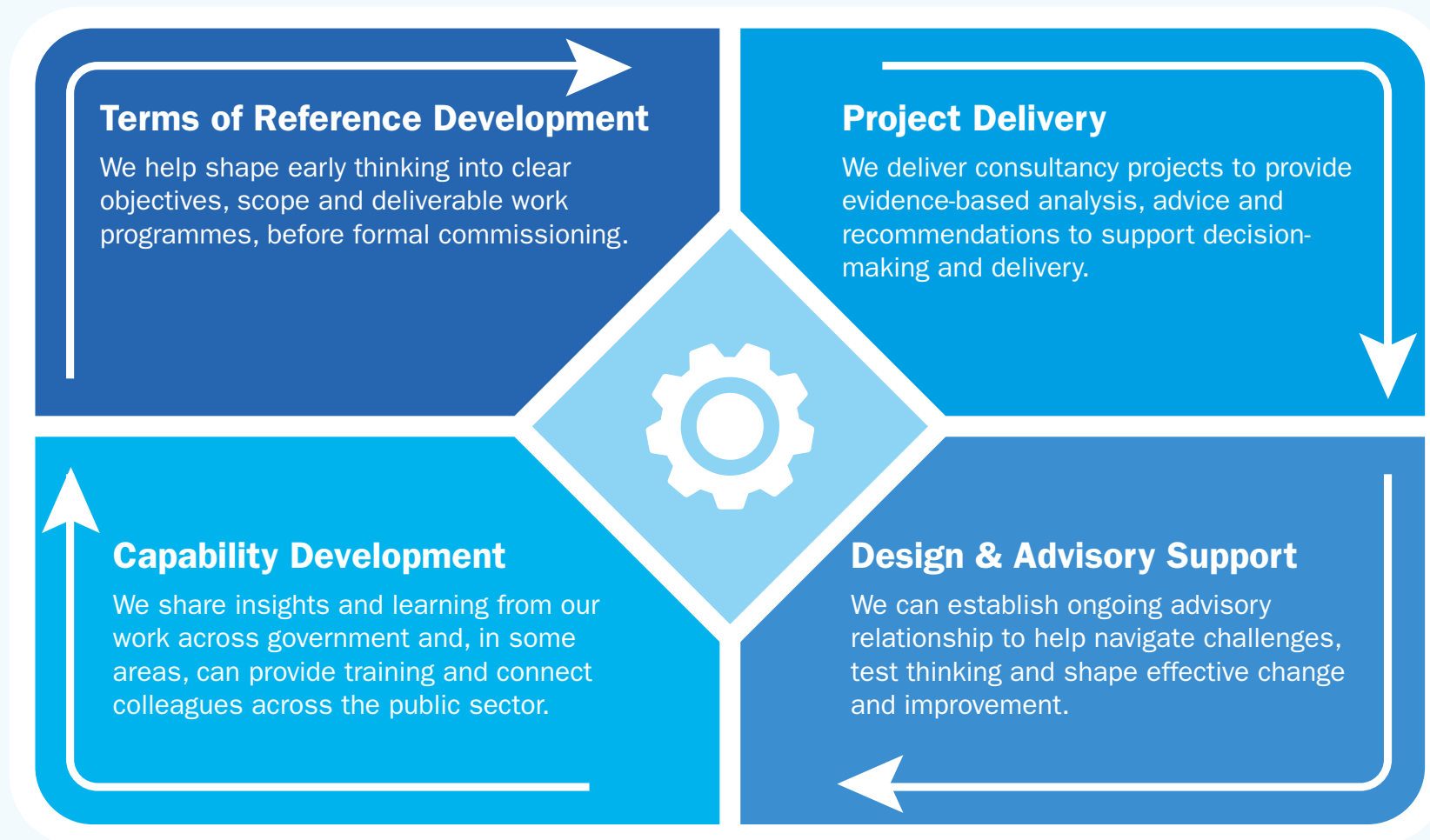
In the two years since ICS was launched, our multi-disciplinary consultancy team has worked on 124 projects that span the remit of all departments. We have therefore built a strong knowledge of the issues the public sector faces, and ways to approach these.

We are often engaged where there is a need to:

- Build **shared understanding, direction and buy-in** on complex or cross-cutting issues.
- **Adapt policies, programmes, services and communications** to deliver better outcomes and meet users' needs.
- Ensure **structures, resources and processes** are used effectively in the face of greater demands.
- Provide **assurance on governance, risks and use of resources** in delivering objectives.

This brochure sets out when and how ICS can support you, including examples of the types of work we have undertaken across the system. I encourage you to engage with us early to discuss your emerging challenges and explore how ICS can help.

WHAT WE DO



OUR WORK IN 2024/25 AND 2025/26



124

projects for public
sector clients



100%

client feedback rating
ICS satisfactory or
highly satisfactory



£3.0m

value of consultancy
work carried out



AREAS ACROSS GOVERNMENT THAT WE HAVE WORKED ON INCLUDE:



Childcare



Lough Neagh



Climate Change



Energy



Exports



Football Fund



Shared Prosperity
Fund



Good Relations



Farming



NICS HR Policies

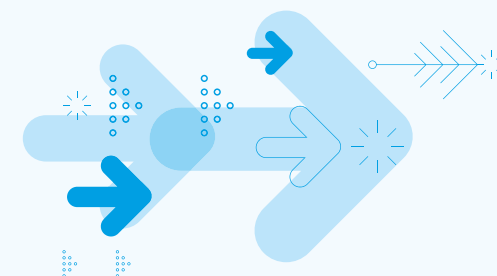


Social Housing



Ethnic Minorities

WHY USE ICS?



KEY METHODS WE USE



FACILITATION

We use structured facilitation to bring the right people together, enable different perspectives and support shared understanding and consensus.



DATA INSIGHTS

We use data, analysis, economics and statistics to identify trends, benchmark performance and support robust, evidence-led decision-making.



STAKEHOLDER INSIGHTS

We engage stakeholders to ensure that people with relevant experience, expertise and knowledge can inform thinking and shape decisions.



BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS

We apply behavioural science to understand how people make decisions and respond to policies, services and communications in practice.



DESIGN THINKING

We use design thinking to understand users' needs and experiences, clarify complex problems, and develop practical solutions.



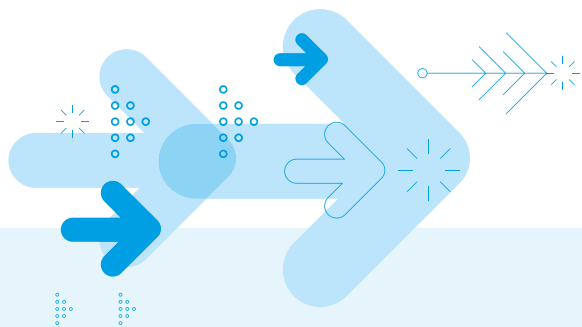
SYSTEMS THINKING

We use systems thinking to understand interdependencies and unintended consequences within complex public sector systems.



VISUALISATION

Across our work, we use maps, models, personas, journeys and dashboards to help make sense of complex information.



ICS SERVICES: STRATEGY & STAKEHOLDER ALIGNMENT

ICS helps organisations to set collective strategic direction with stakeholders by:

- **Bringing together a wide range of diverse stakeholders through Strategic Insight Labs** to generate ideas, reach consensus, set direction and co-design solutions to complex problems.
- **Working with senior leaders and stakeholders on strategic planning** to agree strategic direction, key priorities and success measures, ensuring collective ownership on the direction of travel.
- **Helping stakeholders to identify and plan for potential risks** to the delivery of key objectives.
- **Facilitating structured discussions and workshops** to support decision-making at key points.



CASE STUDY: DAERA

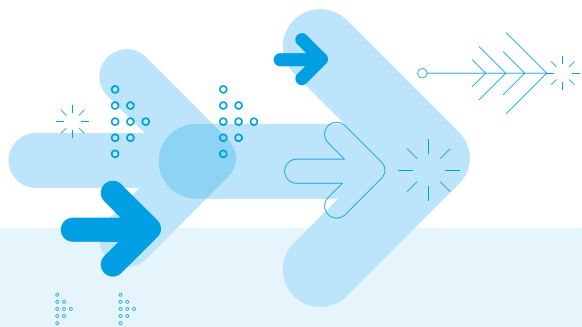


Department of
**Agriculture, Environment
and Rural Affairs**
www.daera-ni.gov.uk

Lough Neagh Strategic Insight Lab

ICS brought together a range of individuals and stakeholder groups to help shape the long-term vision for Lough Neagh – a key Programme for Government objective. The lab event resulted in 26 strategic recommendations which are currently being implemented.

“The ICS team were proactive in progressing plans. The team were very experienced which came through at various points in the planning and delivery, helping us to get to a quality product. Completing the lab, which is one of the actions within the Lough Neagh Report and Action Plan, has been a significant achievement in overall delivery of the action plan.”



ICS SERVICES: POLICY & SERVICE IMPROVEMENT

ICS helps organisations to understand what works and what needs to change by:

- **Reviewing policies and operational delivery** to ensure policy is working effectively, reduce duplication in delivery and learn from best practice elsewhere.
- **Evaluating how policies, programmes or services are achieving their objectives**, using evidence, research and benchmarking to identify improvements.
- **Providing insights about service users** to understand their experiences, identify current and future needs, tackle pain points and design solutions.
- **Applying behavioural insights to deliver more effective policies, services and communications**, improving uptake, engagement and impact in practice.



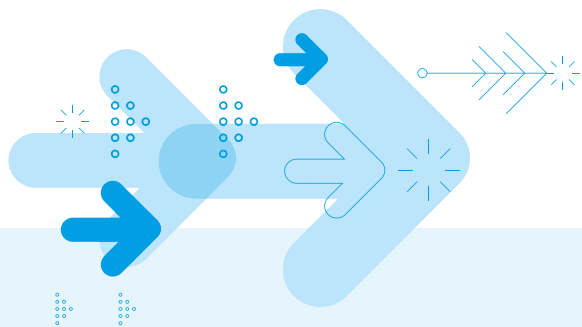
CASE STUDY: DFE



Mapping the Export Promotion Ecosystem

ICS helped the Export Forum, made up of government bodies providing export support to businesses, to understanding the complex export support ecosystem for businesses. The work involved surveys, user research, journey mapping, system mapping, a best practice review and data analysis. Recommendations were made for a streamlined future support model.

“ICS navigated a very tricky research area admirably. The breadth and depth of the research methods you applied gave us robust findings and evidence-based recommendations that are also practical. It gives us a direction of travel for the medium to long term, both in terms of how we present our services and in the longer term development of an export strategy.”



ICS SERVICES: ORGANISATIONAL DESIGN & PERFORMANCE

ICS helps organisations to understand what works and what needs to change by:

- **Enabling leadership teams to set and shape organisational direction**, priorities and delivery approach through corporate & business planning.
- **Reviewing organisational structures, roles and resource allocations** to ensure operating models are aligned with the delivery of corporate objectives.
- **Assessing how services and processes are operating in practice**, identifying inefficiencies, duplication and opportunities for improvement.
- **Engaging staff and stakeholders** to shape change and ensure it is understood and supported.



CASE STUDY: DOF



Department of

Finance

www.finance-ni.gov.uk

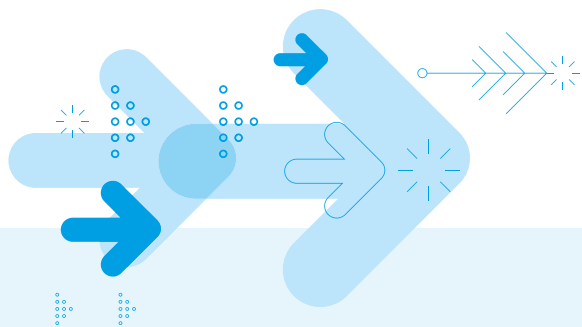
An Roinn

Airgeadais

NICS HR Process Improvement

ICS supported NICS HR to review their processes and operations across a range of delivery areas. In addition to providing recommendations to enhance processes, ICS delivered coaching and mentoring to task & finish groups of NICS HR staff members to transfer knowledge and embed the improvements.

“Excellent delivery of awareness sessions to a range of staff, high level of expertise and professional approach demonstrated through-out the project delivery stages. The impact of the deliverables from the ICS support through-out this project has been significant on several fronts, including staff awareness / up-skilling; insights to service delivery failures and processes / actions for improvements and overall enabling NICS HR staff to fully embrace service improvement activities.”



ICS SERVICES: GOVERNANCE & ASSURANCE

ICS helps organisations to strengthen oversight and decision-making by:

- **Carrying out independent reviews of public bodies and arms-length bodies**, assessing governance, effectiveness and delivery performance, and identifying areas for improvement.
- **Enabling governing bodies and boards to operate more effectively** through structured reviews which bring an external perspective.
- **Supporting the development of robust, evidence-based business cases**, informing need, options and value for money to support decision-making.
- **Designing and running business continuity exercises to test plans in practice**, identifying gaps and strengthening preparedness.



CASE STUDY: DFI



Department for

Infrastructure

An Roinn

Bonneagair

Departmēt fur

Infrastruktur

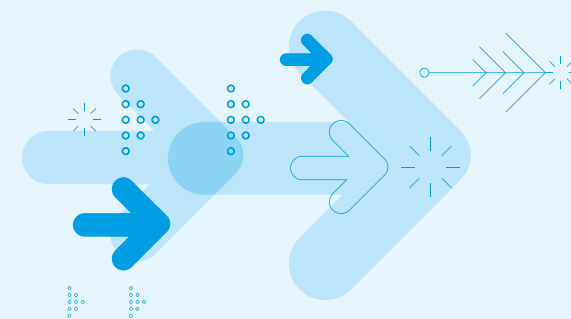
Departmental Board Effectiveness Review

ICS supported the DfI Departmental Board to consider how effective it operates and identify areas for improvement. The work included consultations, member questionnaire, document review and synthesis of findings. A range of observations, considerations and recommendations were made.

“Easy to work with and good comms throughout the process. The Recommendations and Considerations made in the Report will be used to strengthen and improve the Board’s processes. Of particular importance are the recommendations around a more strategic focus and providing greater challenge.”

WHO WE ARE

ICS has a team of professional consultants with expertise across a range of disciplines including business improvement, facilitation, economics, statistics, service design and behavioural science. Information on our management team can be found below.



Thomas Byrne | Director
Thomas.byrne@finance-ni.gov.uk

Thomas ran DETI and DfE's research programme and strategy/policy advisory services for over a decade, before leading on the development of the Executive's Energy Strategy. He is a Fulbright Scholar and has a Masters degree in Economics. He specialises in economic policy, energy/climate policy and public finances.



Conor Bell | Deputy Director
Conor.bell@finance-ni.gov.uk

Conor brings extensive experience from both private and public sector consultancy. He is also a qualified economist, with professional consultancy postgraduate qualifications, who has worked in BDO NI, Invest NI, managed the NICS Economist Profession and ran DoF briefing and analysis services, before becoming ICS Deputy Director.



Ian McKay | Principal Consultant
ian.mckay@finance-ni.gov.uk

Ian has over 25 years experience as a consultant in both public and private sectors. He holds a MSc in Business Development and Innovation and is a Certified Management Consultant with the Institute of Consulting. His areas of expertise include organisational design, innovative business models and facilitation.



Jonathan McKenna | Principal Consultant
Jonathan.mckenna@finance-ni.gov.uk

Jonathan brings over 10 years of consultancy experience and has worked extensively with public sector clients throughout the UK, driving improvement and delivering measurable results. Jonathan holds a degree in Business Management and specialises in evaluation, process improvement, and data analytics.



Neil Robinson | Principal Consultant
Neil.robinson@finance-ni.gov.uk

Neil is a former NISRA statistician who worked in the Innovation Lab for over 5 years helping clients to apply innovative approaches to problem solving. He has a degree in Environmental Biology and significant experience in service design and behavioural insights.



Sue Barclay | Principal Consultant
Suzanne.barclay@finance-ni.gov.uk

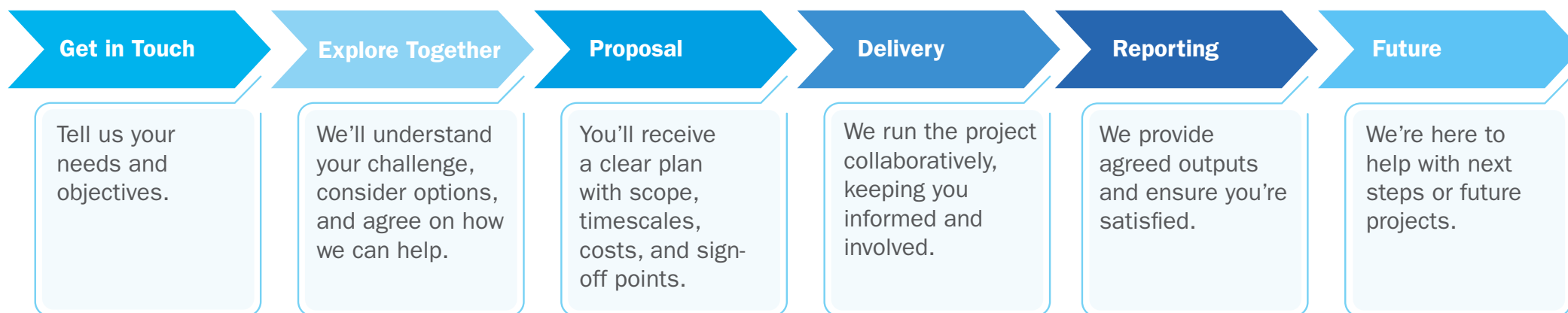
Sue has worked as a consultant, facilitator and trainer in both the private sector and in NICS. She has particular expertise in facilitation, stakeholder engagement, collaboration, strategic and business planning and Innovation Labs.



Cheryl Robinson | Principal Consultant
Cheryl.robinson@finance-ni.gov.uk

Cheryl has over 20 years experience as a consultant in both the public and private sectors. She has a Masters degree in Consultancy and holds a wide range of relevant qualifications. Her areas of expertise include strategic planning, process improvement and corporate governance.

WORKING WITH ICS



Contact us on ics@finance-ni.gov.uk | Find out more information by clicking [here](#)

OUR RATES

ICS operates on a full cost recovery basis. Before initiating any work, we will provide you with a proposal which clearly sets out the anticipated costs for the project.

We offer competitive daily rates as set out below:

Title	Typical Role	Daily Rate
Consultant (S0)	Carries out research, analysis and drafting.	£ 600
Senior Consultant (DP)	Lead and manages client projects and deliverables.	£ 750
Principal Consultant (G7)	Provides project assurance and oversight to project teams.	£ 900
Deputy Director (G6)	Quality assures all proposals and reporting outputs.	£ 1,000
Director (G5)	Provides strategic input on selected high-profile projects.	£ 1,200



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