Ref.: ITSDCC No. 1/2004   **2 February 2004**

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY SERVICES DEPARTMENT
CIRCULAR TO CONTRACTORS NO. 1/2004

Mechanisms to Enhance Data Interoperability

(Note : This circular is published through the ITSD web site
to IT contractors of the Government of the Hong Kong
Special Administrative Region for general reference only)

This Circular serves to remind Government IT contractors about the mechanisms available to enhance data interoperability. These mechanisms include the adoption of the guidelines documented in the XML Schema Design and Management Guide in joined-up project developments, as well as the use and progressive development of common schemas.

XML Schema Design and Management Guide

2.   The XML Schema Design and Management Guide (the XML Guide) contains a set of guidelines pertaining to the HKSARG Interoperability Framework (IF). It provides a methodology for modeling the information exchanged at the interface among cross-departmental systems. It also provides a framework for the development of common schemas which are the information model of those frequently exchanged data elements. The XML Guide is accessible from the IF homepage at http://www.itsd.gov.hk/itsd/english/infra/eif.htm.

3.   Projects are required to adopt the Business Information Modeling (BIM) methodology stipulated in the XML Guide when designing the data exchange interface of joined-up services. This will facilitate the development of more

reusable information models.

Common Schema

4.	In implementing the common schema management framework stipulated in the XML Guide, ITSD is working collaboratively with representatives from project teams and various bureaux and departments (B/Ds) to develop common schemas. All common schemas have been aligned concertedly across B/Ds with their consensus on the definition, structure and format of the concerned data elements. The common schemas are published on a publicly accessible registry (http://www.xml.gov.hk) to facilitate their wider adoption in e-government applications so as to reduce the need to repetitively perform data alignment among projects.

5.	The usage policy governing the use of common schemas is stipulated in Part III of the XML Guide. All joined-up e-government projects are required to adopt matured common schemas (i.e., those at maturity level 2) whenever applicable. In addition, project teams are encouraged to use common schemas at lower maturity levels.

6.	Apart from the common schemas, candidate schemas that may become common schemas are also accessible from the registry. IT contractors are welcome to join us in the development of common schemas. In particular, project teams are requested to identify project-defined data elements that have the potential for reuse in other projects, and submit them to the IF Coordination Group (IFCG) Standing Office for concerted alignment.

Enquiries

7.	If you have any enquiries concerning this circular, please contact the IFCG Standing Office at (852) 3182 6702 or send an email to ifcg@itsd.gov.hk.

(John Wong)
for Director of Information Technology Services