

CENTRAL GOVERNMENT

CJS IT SR2004/08 Portfolio Review

£2.24 billion was allocated by the government to the Criminal Justice System IT Programme for 2007/08. The objective of this funding was to provide the IT infrastructure for a joined up Criminal Justice System that would support the transfer of information/data between the associated agencies and departments. This included the Police Service, Prison Service, Youth Justice System, Courts, CPS & Probation Service

Given the scale, duration and cost of this programme it was decided by the management board that an independent, objective and transparent method of funding allocation was needed, based on best practice principles. The process should support a 'living' portfolio and allow new initiatives to bid for inclusion in the programme based on their assessed performance against an agreed set of investment criteria.

The Proving Process and Toolkit was adopted to support the CJIT Portfolio Prioritisation activities.

Proving Services started work on the SR2004/05 Portfolio Prioritisation exercise early in October 2004. In total, a comprehensive assessment was performed on 35 projects submitted by six agencies, bidding for CJS IT ring-fenced funding. The projects were at varying degrees in their respective lifecycle; Outline Business Case (OBC), Business Case (FBC), On-going project development and implementation.

The assessments were performed through a combination of document review and interview. The initial project and portfolio assessments were completed within two months. 15 projects required a degree of rework before confidence could be established that they would meet the agreed performance criteria for attractiveness and achievability. The re-assessments were completed within three weeks.

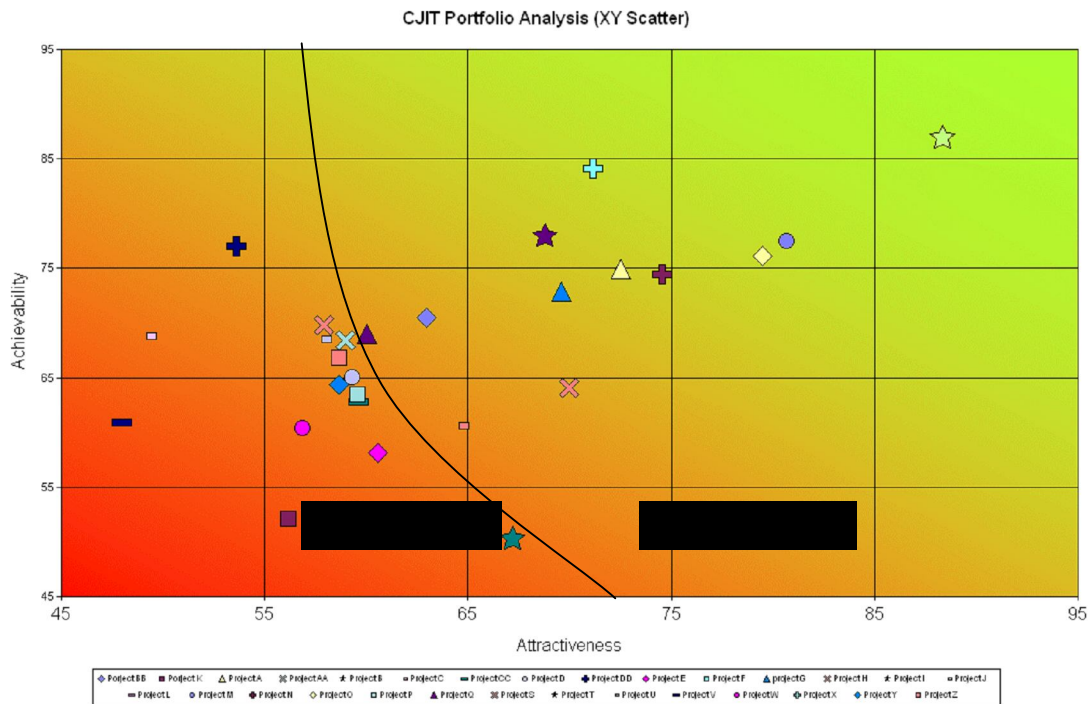
The following deliverables were submitted to CJIT and the respective agency;

- Individual Project Reports
 - Individual Project Assessment Summary
 - Assessor Commentary Report discussing key issues and concerns together with recommendations for improvement
- Portfolio Conclusions
 - Management Summary highlighting critical portfolio findings together with suggested actions for improvement
 - Tailored Portfolio Reports

CJS IT Portfolio Conclusions

The following graph provides an illustration of the summary portfolio aggregated from individual project assessments¹.

¹ This graph and other related output from the CJIT Portfolio Prioritisation exercise were intended to be decision aids and not prescriptive recommendations.



The thresholds were based on industry average thresholds that had been used by other major organisations and government departments when adopting the Proving Process.

All projects that failed to meet the defined Attractiveness and Achievability criteria of the 'commit' zone had a period of 6 weeks to improve their business case and submit for re-assessment. Following this re-assessment, only those projects in the commit zone were allocated CJS IT ring-fenced funding.

A portfolio refresh process was created by which new proposals can be considered for inclusion within the portfolio, based on the decision criteria outlined above and the availability of sufficient funds. This gives those projects refused funding, the opportunity to resubmit an improved investment case at regular intervals.

Benefits of the Proving Process for CJIT

1. All CJS organisations seeking funding through the CJIT ring fenced funding perceived the process as independent and objective and actively co-operated with the portfolio review.
2. Each project/programme review was perceived as fair and accurate assessment of its relative Attractiveness and Achievability.
3. The Director General of CJIT (John Suffolk, currently Cabinet Office CIO) was able to use the analysis to make confident and informed decisions regarding which projects should receive funding. This was supplemented with a valuable diagnostic for project improvement.

4. The funding decisions were accepted by the CJIT stakeholders.

Implementation of the Proving Process within CJIT

CJIT implemented and embedded the Proving Process and Toolkit within their Portfolio and Benefits Management activities.

Proving Services provided an on-going Quality Assurance role and support in undertaking contentious or complex project reviews.