



Technology and NDP Lessons from Wembley

The Wembley Stadium overrun has major lessons for the implementation of Ireland's National Development Programme and avoiding IT disasters such as PPARS, a project management expert told a recent meeting of the MBA Association of Ireland.

Terence O'Donnell, Director of the Project Management office at Irish owned I.T. Alliance, said that many of the problems with beset the Wembley Stadium project could have been avoided. The project which was due to be completed in August 2005 was budgeted at stg 475m and eventually came in at approximately stg 800m.

"While delivery in this country has improved, Ireland does not have a happy record either of delivering major IT or capital projects on budget and on time," commented Terence O'Donnell. "There are lessons we can learn from the Wembley fiasco."

He said that any major project needed to be based on a solid business case and agreement by all stakeholders on the plan. "The project was not helped by the fact that the FA continually changed plans for the stadium," said O'Donnell. The second lesson was the importance of having in place proper governance. "Public backed projects must have transparency in all decision making," he added.

The third lesson is to plan for things going wrong whether

that was bad weather or other obstacles. "An effective change management process is essential. And risk management is a priority."

O'Donnell said that injury time on projects needed to be built in. "It will invariably happen and contingency and reserves will be required in even the best laid and implemented plans."

The fourth lesson was that choosing the right form of contract is essential. "The contractor Multiplex ended up losing stg 147m on a fixed price project and the client ended up paying over £30m for the design changes coupled with the fact the project came in 18 months late and was a PR disaster for all parties.

The final lesson he argued is that Governments should not get involved in the entertainment business. "If Wembley was commercially viable then private concerns would make a return. If not, then at least the taxpayer would not end up footing the bill." He said that Public Private Partnerships should be reserved for priority services.



Terence O'Donnell, Director of the Project Management office at Irish owned I.T. Alliance