

datb – Local Government Platform

Service Definition for G Cloud 15

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1 Service Description

1.1 Overview

datb's Local Government Platform (LGP) is a cloud-hosted platform for the development, deployment, and integration of cloud-hosted, enterprise-scale, applications for use by local government and similar organisations.

Based on the kinodb Enterprise Application Platform, LGP provides a set of components for use in the development of business applications for use by internal users, typically involving public-facing components such as online forms and user home pages. Internal staff and members of the public access the system using mobile or desktop browsers.

LGP enables the implementation of numerous line-of-business applications within a single technical framework, avoiding duplication of information, improving the customer experience, and providing significant savings in terms of application development and management effort and cost.

The components fall into the following categories:

Citizen Model

A central component used to maintain details of individuals interacting with LGP. This provides a single point at which all interactions between citizens and the authority are recorded, enabling visibility of the entire history of the individual's dealings across all areas of the organisation. Citizens may access a home page defined within LGP to request services or view information specific to their account.

Generic Questionnaire Management

This allows administrative users to define questionnaires for use by external users. These might be for permit applications, service requests, fault reports, or any other purpose requiring submission of information by an end-user to the authority.

Questionnaires can also be defined for use by authority staff, such as for inspection recording.

Page Engine

Allows administrator definition of service pages, user home pages, information pages and so on. These can be tailored to include user-specific information (for instance the status of permit applications etc.) as well as general information (how to access services, how to report a fault etc.).

Service Model

Allows the definition of services that the authority provides (for instance nursery services) and the providers of those services (i.e. nurseries). A Service Definition controls the information that will be required when a Service Provider is created for that service – for instance whether it has a physical address, opening hours, an attendance register, the nature of the service provided and so on.

Permit Management

A module used to define permit types, the rules by which these are costed, their validity, the process by which applications are made, supporting information requirements, and all other information required to manage permits issues by the authority. Interfaces to payment systems are included, enabling integration with common payments processing systems. Integrates with Gov.Notify if required for customer contact, or can use email / SMS as required.

When used for parking permit applications, supports use of DVLA Vehicle Enquiry Service (VES).

External interfaces can easily be established, for instance to allow mobile staff to submit a VRN to determine whether a vehicle is legally parked.

Case Management

Used to define workflows to enable the rules-based management of tasks through various statuses, including assignment between teams or individuals, escalation under defined conditions, collection of additional information, status reporting and other features.

Risk Management

A risk register designed for use by local authorities. This is configurable in terms of the types of risk and the ways that these are scored and reported. A full history is maintained throughout the lifetime of a risk in order that responsibilities, mitigating actions, and changes to likelihood and impact can be monitored over time.

Outputs of the risk register include formats suitable for online publication via the public-facing components of the platform, allowing immediate update of approved & published changes without further effort.

These components are easily combined to provide end-to-end coverage of requirements. For instance:

A *Service* is defined, *Citizens* can access their home page (produced by the *Page Engine*) to request access to the service by completing a *Questionnaire*; a *Permit* is issued after payment via a supported payment interface; the permit and the supporting documentation are recorded in the *Citizen Model* for that customer.

1.2 Service provision

LGP is provided in the form of:

- Cloud-hosted, secure and scaleable development, test, training and production environments pre-configured with the database software required.
- Generic modules that can be used as the basis for applications as required by the client.
- Training, support, design, and other activities as required by the buyer to ensure their productive use of the kinodb development and deployment platform.

The LGP platform is based on the use of kinodb – a metadata-driven development and deployment environment enabling the specification of entire suites of applications entirely in data, rather than as code. The kinodb platform handles the technical aspects of the development process, generating the SQL, HTML, and other technical components of the application in real time. As the technological implementation is delivered by the platform, this also means that applications are kept up to date in terms of web standards, database versions and so on by updates to the platform, not by requiring changes to the applications. This also greatly reduces the opportunity for the introduction of security flaws that is inherent in conventional code-based development.

It enables customers to iteratively develop applications in a fraction of the time required using conventional development tools. Management of the movement of development changes from development to test and production environments is under the control of the kinodb framework, enabling close control over change delivery and traceability of individual changes from requirement to implementation.

The platform includes a management console that facilitates the control of multiple environments from a single point.

The platform is suitable for the development and production deployment of almost any web-deployed application. Systems developed using the platform include:

- Asset registers
- Workflow management
- Investment optimisation
- Event management
- Support ticket management

- Learning management
- Content management
- Case management
- HR systems
- Permit application, approvals and issuing
- Risk registers

… and many others.

We can work with customers as required to supply training, design assistance, mentoring and other services to ensure that solutions meet requirements.

The kinodb development technology enables analysts and developers to drive out requirements during the development process, allowing the exploitation of opportunities that become apparent during the design phase and avoiding the costly and time-consuming development of inappropriate functionality.

Systems developed using kinodb are uniquely capable of enhancement and modification to facilitate business change over many years.

The productivity of the environment allows far smaller teams than are required for comparable systems when using conventional tools. With smaller teams, systems are delivered faster and meet requirements better.

Key features:

- Based on standard relational database technology (Oracle, Microsoft SQL Server, MySQL, MariaDB).
- Systems may be hosted on-premise or by a variety of Cloud hosting providers such as Amazon Web Services (AWS) and Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI).
- Management console allows administration of multiple kinodb instances from a single browser, including management of automated backups, application of platform and application updates and so on.
- Full-lifecycle support including automated deployment and change tracking over the lifetime of a system.
- Standard Java application server enabling technology updates without change to the developed applications.
- Developers and Users require only a standard browser
- Applications employ HTML5 and CSS technologies to provide adaptive behaviours and enabling full compatibility with mobile devices with no change to the application.
- In-built reporting functionality to provide fully integrated reporting.
- Sophisticated XML functionality provides the ability to define and access Web Services as client and / or server.
- No client-side installation is required for either developer or end-user access.
- The security model is intrinsic to the design of developed systems, allowing the design and implementation of a single system capable of deployment to the internal organisation, partner organisations and the general public as required.
- Support for the development of multi-lingual applications, with translations being sourced automatically from online services such as Yandex and Google Translate before manual editing / approval prior to publication.
- Regular penetration testing of the platform ensures that systems are inherently secure, and built-in security profile reporting identifies areas of an application that may require particular attention when reviewed.

Systems are maintained not as conventional code, but as complete models of the application, represented as data. Developers do not need to maintain SQL, HTML, CSS and conventional code as everything required to define and operate the application is maintained within this model. This greatly reduces development timescales and removes the problems of maintaining applications – both in terms of their technological platforms and as requirements change – that contribute to the cost of conventional development techniques.

We can also train clients' developers and support staff in all aspects of the system's on-going development, maintenance and enhancement. This provides the fastest route to implementation of a large and complex application whilst removing the reliance of our clients on datb's resources – although of course we remain ready and willing to continue to offer continued services wherever these are required. It can also provide an excellent way of delivering a system to time and budget at the same time as training and familiarising clients' teams with both the application under development and the wider use of kinodb as an immensely productive and effective development and deployment tool.

1.3 Service features

The service provides buyers with access to training, consultancy and mentoring services enabling the full and productive use of the kinodb enterprise application and deployment toolset. Available services include:

- Familiarisation and training in kinodb development and deployment environment
- On-site design and consultancy
- On-site, telephone, mail, on-line support for development activities
- On-site, telephone, mail, on-line support for production systems

These services:

- Ensure that buyers' teams are quickly productive
- Provide assurance that development teams are using the toolset effectively
- Greatly reduce the time required for the implementation of complex systems

We can advise on the best way to perform data take-on to systems implemented within the kinodb enterprise development and deployment environment. We can assist with the cleansing, validation and migration of large volumes of data, whether using local repositories, virtual machines or web-service based approaches. We advise on network and other security configurations required to implement a robust and secure system within the kinodb environment.

We work with customers to ensure that their overall systems design, including data structures, security model, the user interface and machine interfaces such as web services, meets their requirements and can be implemented in a way that best takes advantage of the unique capabilities of the kinodb platform. We also advise on wider architectural security issues such as the use of identity management, SAML and OAuth integrations, and all aspects of the design and implementation of enterprise scale applications within the kinodb ecosystem.

The metadata-based approach to application definition allows developers to view all changes contained within a projected release in order to allow the validation of changes. kinodb is ideally suited to highly iterative development methodologies and the ability to review all changes within a release allows close management of quality issues. We can provide external validation of designs and their implementation in order to ensure that solutions developed by clients are suited to their intended purpose.

2 Summary

Characteristic	Description
Lot	2b
Applicability	Local Government and similar organisations requiring large-scale applications, deployed to the Cloud and capable of access across a range of desktop and mobile clients by a range of disparate users.
Contract duration	Flexible
Costs	Services are available on a fixed-price or time and materials basis as required. The platform is subject to runtime licensing costs.

3 About datb

datb has been delivering enterprise applications to a wide range of clients since 2002.

Our development & deployment framework is genuinely unique and enables the developer to focus on the functionality, not the technical implementation. It is ideally suited to deployment in the Cloud and enables applications to be scaled from supporting a workgroup to the enterprise and beyond. It greatly speeds both initial development and later maintenance work as requirements evolve.

Our analysts specialise in 'getting inside' the requirements – understanding the business context, not just the technical details, that will enable delivery of a solution that meets users' requirements and that will deliver real benefit to the organisation.

The ability to support, maintain and enhance an application delivered years in the past as easily as one delivered last week means that, as requirements and regulations change, existing investments in systems development are protected. Our commitment to maintaining the kinodb platform in line with new standards safeguards investment and means that applications delivered 20 years ago remain up to date in terms of web standards, database versions and browsers. This protects investments made in systems development and greatly reduces total cost of ownership.

We have developed a wide range of applications for our clients, from Asset Management suites to HR systems, Organisational Learning, workflow management, meetings administration, time management and work recording, case management, Asset Cost Estimation, Intellectual Property Management and many others.

Delivered systems include ground-up developments, configurations of our off-the-shelf applications and migration of legacy (Notes / Access / Excel) applications to fully web-deployed systems.

datb holds ISO27001, ISO9001 and Cyber Essentials+ accreditations.

4 Technical information

Systems are deployed using Oracle or MariaDB according to client preference and as appropriate to the scale of the application. An application may be developed on one platform and deployed on another, enabling the use of cost-effective development and test platforms if required. Once developed an application – including its data – can be migrated between supported database platforms with no change to functionality.

Applications are delivered by a Java servlet running in a Java servlet container. A single application server is capable of serving many hundreds of concurrent users; multiple servers allow the deployment of systems to thousands of concurrent users. Combined with the inherently scaleable nature of Cloud-based deployments this offers organisations the ability to support virtually any scale of implementation.

Users interact with the system using a standard browser – we support current versions of Chrome, Safari, Firefox and Edge. Applications are accessible using mobile browsers and automatically present information in a format appropriate to the client device – for instance to tailor the presentation of the same application to a desktop or mobile phone.

Applications may send and receive emails and text messages, with rules-based processing of incoming emails enabling their association with application data as required.

The use of standard relational database technology ensures that interfacing to other systems can be accomplished by a variety of means.

The application framework offers strong support for XML data interchange and integration with Google Maps. XML- and JSON-based interfaces can be developed for a variety of services (for instance mapping, geocoding, address lookup, payments processing, translation services, weather and so on) as well as existing corporate systems that support XML / JSON data interchange.

GOV.UK Notify support is provided as a component of the standard platform; other services can easily be integrated.

5 Commercials

LGP is licenced on a per-instance basis, with unlimited user numbers, enabling its use for customer-facing applications without additional licence requirements.

Design, training, mentoring and other work may be performed on either Time & Materials or Fixed Price terms as required by the customer.

The technical design and implementation of systems developed by datb for clients is encapsulated in the metadata model of the application, allowing clients to enhance and maintain applications as required.

Full source code for the kinodb platform can be made available to clients under an 'inner source' agreement. Note that this is not required to enable the development and maintenance of systems using the kinodb platform but to provide assurance of ongoing supportability – please contact us for details.

6 Contact

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