# *tScheme* Member Briefing - OCTOBER 2003

## *Government Gateway*

Given recent organisational changes at the government gateway, we followed up at a very constructive meeting with our new contacts. We wanted to confirm our mutual understanding of the scope of *tScheme* approval and how this relates to the government's requirements documents for identity verification, in force since January 2003 [HMGVInd & HMGVOrg].

We confirmed the current position, which is that service providers can ask their chosen assessor to include these documents as part of the assessment of an electronic trust service intending to issue certificates for use on the gateway; and that certified compliance then forms an extension to their grant of approval. As government requirements change, they will need to update the two documents accordingly. Any such changes will then be applied as part of the normal *tScheme* annual assessment 'health-check' process, thus providing a level of continuous assurance to the gateway as relying party.

## *Verified Identity*

Now that the new verified identity service Approval Profile [tSd0108] has been accepted by the *tScheme* Board, our website pages have been updated to provide specific information relating directly to verified identity service approvals. However, the approval process remains the same, with a requirement for all such service assessments to include the Base Profile.

Ideas are now being prepared with the e-envoy project team for possible joint promotional activity - to encourage take-up of this service opportunity among an initial group of potential service providers including Local Authorities, and to promote *tScheme* service approval as the required standard.

## *International markets*

*tScheme* and DTI are continuing to promote the ViTAS initiative - a common interest group seeking to establish a multilateral Code of Practice for international Voluntary Trust service Approval Schemes. This will address the risk of fragmentation of approvals along national boundaries, which is inconsistent with the potential role of electronic signatures in facilitating cross-border transactions.

The second successful ViTAS Workshop event was held on 16th September, following the initial event in December 2002. International representatives were in attendance from USA, Canada, Austria, Spain, Slovakia, Taiwan, Sweden and UK; representatives at the first Workshop and already on the mailing list also include contacts from France, Italy, Germany, and Iceland.

Volunteers are now being sought from these participants to join an Interim Steering Group, to develop an initial set of multilateral mutual recognition objectives.

A delegation from the ViTAS team has been invited to join the AFACT session at the World Summit in Geneva on 9 December, via our members III (Taiwan) who serve as AFACT permanent secretary. Around 50 attendees are currently scheduled to attend this session, which is therefore an opportunity for ViTAS to recruit new international participants.

***tScheme* Strategic Action Plan**

The Business Development team continued their detailed work on the Strategic Action Plan. This is an important document setting out *tScheme* target markets, key objectives and priority actions. The latest draft was presented to the Board on 2nd October for review; and is now in the final stages of editing before final presentation to the Board for formal acceptance in December.

**Members' delegate meetings during October & November**

*Profiles & Processes Committee - 15th October

The Agenda for the next meeting includes a review of Webtrust 'criteria-mapping', to support continuing discussions with Microsoft regarding their potential recognition of *tScheme* as an equivalent independent approval scheme for inclusion of certificates in the browser CTL.
Also included will be a review of the new Verified Identity service Approval Profile, covering enhancements to be included in Issue 2.0.

*PR & Communications Committee - 6th November

This committee is continuing to focus on positioning and communicating *tScheme*'s role as independent regulator, both in its existing focus on electronic trust services and in future on secure identity services. Such future services would include those associated with the proposed introduction of Entitlement/Identity cards. Meanwhile, planning continues for a key event early in the New Year, with the full participation of the DTI minister, both to mark *tScheme*'s success to date and to announce our key new contribution in assuring best practice in emerging secure identity services. A media plan is also in preparation, to reach key influencers with informative *tScheme* material.

*Business Development Committee & Marketing Forum - October date to be announced

Final editing of the Strategic Action Plan will be completed during October and November; prior to presentation of the full Plan for acceptance by the Board in December.

**NB: Full details of all tScheme committee and expert working group terms of reference, including current member participation, can be found in the members' area of the website.*

**New Members**

*tScheme* can only continue to function given the active participation of our members - and by steadily growing our membership base. This will not only reduce our dependency on a smaller number of members, it will also ensure a broad consensus on service best practice, which lies at the heart of *tScheme*'s approval focus. All members therefore share a responsibility to identify potential new members, and to encourage them to consider joining *tScheme* to contribute to our future development.

**Walking the Talk**

*tScheme*'s own use of certificates for signing of confidential emails and attachments, regularly circulated between its various committee members, has still to be pursued. This could serve as a very useful source of 'best practice' ideas from a user perspective; and could also provide useful case study material to help us demonstrate value and stimulate wider take-up of approved services generally.

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**9 October 2003**