



Summary

Technology transformation at The National Lottery Community Fund, delivered in partnership with iomart, helps organisation be on front foot at time of crisis and equips staff to deliver funding swiftly and efficiently.

Benefits:

- Complete technology transformation
- Improved operational efficiency
- Investment in in-house technical skills
- Remote working enabled

Technology transformation meant staff were mobilised and equipped to deliver vital funding

The National Lottery Community Fund (the Fund) is one of the non-departmental public bodies responsible for distributing National Lottery funding to good causes and is the largest funder of communities in the UK.

When the Government announced the first nationwide lockdown, the Fund already had around 850 staff working from home, ensuring funding reached charities and community organisations fast.

A complete technology transformation

Three years ago, iomart's consultancy team (formerly known as SystemsUp) was appointed to work with The National Lottery Community Fund to help transform the way it consumed and delivered technology. The organisation had been using old technologies and wanted to consolidate its infrastructure, moving away from old architectures to a more independent, cloud-based approach that would equip staff with modern technologies to improve effectiveness and experience.



Matthew Green, Director of Technology and Data at the Fund, led the project. “Our focus was on people, place and skills,” he explains. “We wanted to redefine our technology and infrastructure so we could digitally enable everyone in the organisation to deliver funding where it was most needed as quickly as possible.”

The iomart team and the Technology team at the Fund worked together to deliver a complete technology transformation in six phases:

1. Initial strategy, providing the Fund with a blueprint of the transformation phases, an understanding of its service dependencies and associated costs.
2. To move from on premise Exchange to Exchange Online and other Microsoft 365 technologies.
3. To consolidate multiple on-premise infrastructures to a single hyperconverged stack using Nutanix HCI with dynamic scaling and elastic and scalable storage to support flexible working.
4. To move away from costly physical leased lines to a Software Defined Wide Area Network from Silver Peak and physical firewalls courtesy of Barracuda, enabling staff to connect and collaborate securely and quickly from any location.
5. To provide a Microsoft Surface Pro device for each member of staff as part of a Windows 10 refresh programme.
6. To fully train the IT team to manage all the new technologies as the organisation pushes to invest in in-house skills and resources reducing reliance on third party service providers.

Matthew Green says, “iomart’s consultants have been our trusted partner every step of the way, through strategy, planning and delivery. They brought a vital skillset to the table and worked with our technical and frontline colleagues throughout the transformation and helped us to achieve best practice through everything we do.”

Delivering funds to communities

While the benefits of the transformation had already begun to be realised, the value of the investment became acutely apparent as the Covid-19 crisis began. The Fund was more than ready to cope and by the time the Government announced the first lockdown, the Fund’s 850 employees had already been working from home for a week.

Fund colleagues have been able to collaborate online, sending and receiving over 4 million emails and holding almost 1000 calls and meetings using Microsoft Teams every day.

Last year, the Fund awarded over half a billion pounds (£588.2 million) to communities across the UK, supporting over 14,000 projects. Since April 2020, the Fund has made over 14,500 grants, which included the additional responsibility of making sure that £200 million in funding from the Government’s Coronavirus Community Support Fund reached communities.



“The Fund has distributed over £500 million of National Lottery and funding from Government since lockdown began in March 2020, which would have been incredibly challenging to do with our old systems,” Matthew Green explains. “Thanks to the partnership with iomart, we have enabled our colleagues to get vital funds to the communities that need them. Grant-making cannot stop in a crisis and that isn’t just about cash in and out, it is about our people and our systems being able to work in a way that support action but also enhances our learning of work in the field in a fast-changing context.”

Several years ago, the Fund’s staff were predominantly based in physical offices. Today, they are digitally-enabled, and based within the communities they support. Funding staff now have everything they need to work effectively and the Technology team have gained skills, knowledge and experience in modern technologies for the benefit of the Fund and the communities it supports across the UK.

Operational and cost benefits

Irfan Faruki, Deputy Director of Information Technology at The National Lottery Community Fund, says, “By finding the right partner and investing in the right technologies, we’ve completely transformed the organisation’s way of working, and delivered savings from investment. We can now respond to rapidly changing demand and rapidly changing opportunities in the fields that we work.”

Using the HCI platform that the iomart consultants helped to deliver, the Fund is now building on its data ambitions to provide staff with real-time data visualisations to inform decision making and strategic reporting.

“We’re no longer hampered by our technology, we’re enabled by it,” says Matthew Green. “I’m incredibly proud of the members of the Technology and Data team at The National Lottery Community Fund, who are no longer simply the fixers of broken things; they are the strategic technology architects for the organisation.”



About iomart

We provide globally supported managed services.

Customers worldwide trust us to manage their critical infrastructure and work with them to overcome their technology challenges.