

FAME – the Project

DCLG's [FAME National Project](#) invested several £8 millions on developing a framework for building successful multi-agency partnerships. FAME (the FrAmework for Multi-agency Environments) established a methodology with the potential to transform the outcomes, delivery and sustainability of complex multi-agency services. The Framework is freely available to public sector, voluntary sector and private sector partners, and its Web site contains exemplars from several projects with the findings, information sharing protocols and a toolkit.

The function of the [FAME Generic Framework](#) is to provide a comprehensive view of the range of issues, and a language for managing multi-agency partnerships by those with responsibility for:

- Developing practice, particularly information sharing practice.
- Developing governance arrangements for multi-agency partnerships including information governance.
- Acquiring and implementing ICT that supports information sharing across agency, partnership and geographical boundaries.

It's nine Building Blocks are essential to effective multi-agency working..



A full description of each building block is best obtained by reference to the [Web site](http://www.fame-uk.org/) (<http://www.fame-uk.org/>).

The take up of the FAME has been disappointing. One reason is that many people who started to use the full Framework found it too daunting to take on board quickly. It is evidentially correct, but hard to read. This hindered use during the initial partnership formation stage when the concepts and common vocabulary are potentially most useful. Time is at a premium; senior agency managers simply do not have the time to read and comprehend 125 pages of guidance; neither can they be expected to undergo training simultaneously. People feel “thrown in at the deep end” without the presence of life guards. Rather than using the FAME Readiness Assessment Tool, managers lose the potential benefits of following the Framework. Miscommunication during the early stages of partnership formation can easily cause confusion over the scope of services. The lack of a common terminology increases development cost and time, but more importantly it eventually impacts service delivery practitioners and their ability to improve citizen outcomes.

The solution was to develop a more pragmatic approach to the introduction of FAME concepts. It had to be simple, visual and capable of achieving results within hours rather than days with the right level of leadership. Though this dilutes some of the key messages in the Generic Framework, it is seen as an essential first step on a journey to more complete understanding. The final phase of FAME developed a [Roadmap](#) process that met the reduced criteria. It was tested with positive results on two multi-agency projects in the North East Region. The FAME Roadmap has been further refined and branded as FAME Lite.

FAME Lite - a Practical Model

FAME Lite modifies partnership culture and language more gently, with an aspiration to use full FAME Generic Framework at a later stage. It introduces broader concepts and terminology that are more suited to the development of strategy. Mentored use of FAME Lite requires no prior knowledge of FAME, nor any pre-reading. Value can be obtained with as little as one hour to explain the process and even contribute to the critical first step. Hence, the FAME Lite process can be initiated during a meeting of all senior stakeholders. Their initial work can be cascaded through their organisations, in order to influence the strategy and development plans.

FAME Lite originated in a joint EURIM exercise with SOCITM. The original objective was to study exemplar information sharing protocols, analyse the common features and produce a generic protocol that could be used in a wide range of multi-agency partnerships. Given the wide range of contexts required, this was deemed impractical. The generic protocol initiative stalled until a framework approach was suggested.

Although there are already a number of frameworks in different agencies, only FAME claimed independence from any public sector agency or voluntary sector agency. EURIM decided to support the Kent Connects KUDOS project in the application of FAME, commencing with a brief introduction of FAME Lite. Funding is currently being sought for KUDOS; real-time information sharing of anti-social behaviour incidents between Kent Police, Kent County Council, Kent districts and Medway. EURIM supports an element of FAME consultancy to find more evidence of the value of FAME and FAME Lite.

FAME Lite Steps to Success

FAME Lite is designed to help any multi-agency partnership during a strategy development and formation phase. The concept is simple; all the issues are analysed with reference to matrix that reviews a service from two perspectives:

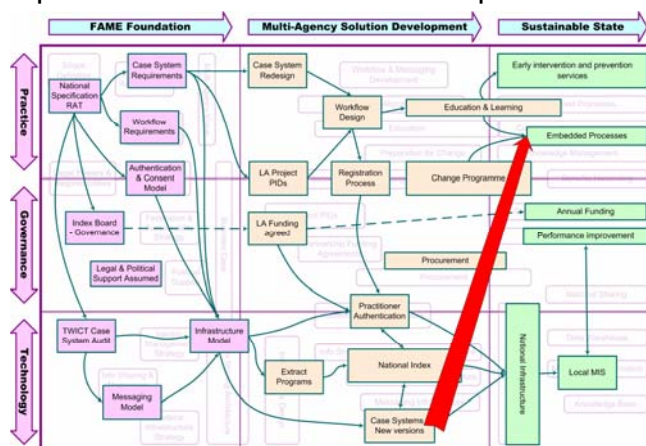
- Partnership domains; Practice, Governance and Technology
- Partnership phases; Strategy, Development and Delivery

	Strategy	Development	Delivery
Practice			Outcomes
Governance			
Technology			

Senior stakeholders are guided through the FAME Lite process by a FAME experienced facilitator. This ensures that the process is followed using FAME's common partnership development vocabulary. Using common terminology prepares the ground for more detailed discussions in later phases.

The steps of FAME Lite are:

1. Stakeholders start by discussing desired outcomes and agreeing a service vision.
2. Critical success factors (CSFs) are identified and discussed in relation to Practice, Governance and Technology stakeholder interest groups.
3. Risks are identified to avoid major threats to success.
4. A high level roadmap is drawn which shows critical products and dependencies that provide a framework for subsequent detailed planning.



Note that FAME Lite initially focuses on the outcomes before considering methods of achieving them. This is important and the facilitator should proceed only when all agency partners are comfortable with the resultant vision statement. The stakeholders are provided with outputs from steps 2, 3 and 4 and are expected to communicate them to their own organisations. The desired outcomes, critical success factors, risks and roadmap can all contribute to business cases or Prince2 Mandates. They help to define the scope, stakeholder map, governance structure, critical dependencies and high level risks. The cost build up for funding is easier to achieve because all possible requirements should be raised as part of the process. FAME Lite is thus a useful tool for the strategy of complex multi-agency development programmes.

One key tenet runs through FAME Lite; Practice and Governance must be supported by Technology, not driven by Technology. Due respect must be given to each agency, which has its own professional practices to follow. Interfacing with others is complex. No one agency or internal department should dominate or override the sensitivities of another. For example, children with disabilities and their families may be faced with having to obtain services from twenty or more agencies, each with their own established practices.

Finally, FAME Lite should be valued as the first step in a long journey. Full FAME has more to offer when practitioners' specialist skills come into play. If all multi-agency programmes start sharing the FAME vocabulary and guidance, then it will facilitate the wider development of shared services with a more professional approach for improving outcomes for citizens.