



Getting Started

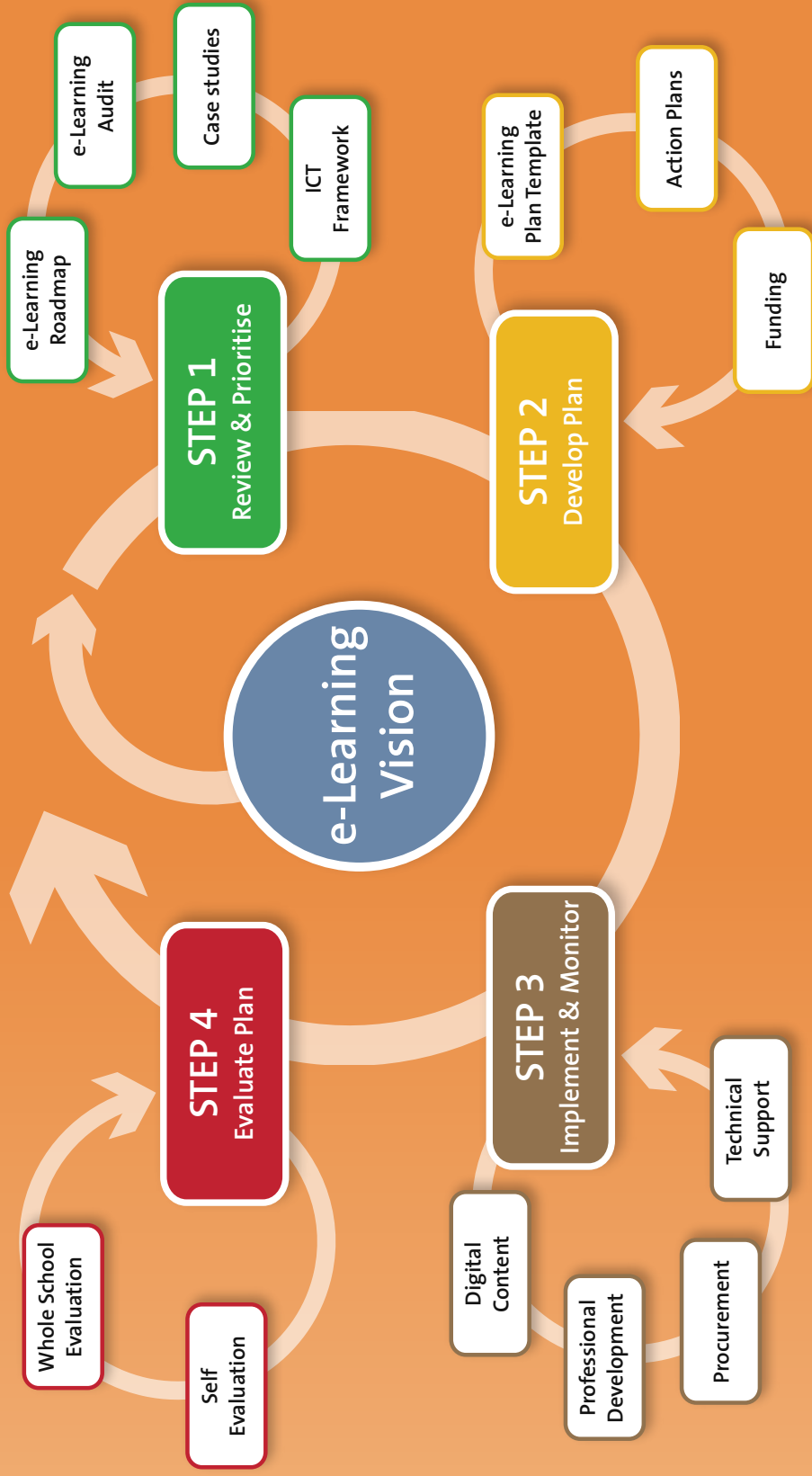
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Agreeing a strong vision and plan which has been developed by a defined planning team is the key starting point. Review and the further development of the plan is an important part of the process.

The e-Learning Planning Cycle





The e-Learning planning cycle

The purpose of an e-Learning Plan is to produce continuous action that creates and maintains an ICT-rich educational environment. This continuous action is called the **e-Learning planning cycle**.

This cycle is an iterative one, encompassing **four** key steps:

- Step 1: Review and prioritise
- Step 2: Develop the e-Learning Plan
- Step 3: Implement and monitor the e-Learning Plan
- Step 4: Evaluate the e-Learning Plan

“The school plan is a statement of the educational philosophy of the school, its aims and how it proposes to achieve them. It deals with the total curriculum and with the organisation of the school’s resources.”

School Development Planning Circular, M20/99,
Department of Education and Science

The key to developing an effective e-Learning Plan is to make sure it is aligned to the overall school vision. The e-Learning Plan should not be an isolated strategy, but a component of the overall school plan. Like everything else that happens in the school, the e-Learning Plan outlines a process for improving learning and teaching and improving student achievement through the integration of ICT use.

Before commencing the development of the plan the school should establish an **e-Learning team** and develop the **e-Learning vision** of the school.

The e-Learning team

Working with a strong planning team is the most effective way of developing a school e-Learning Plan. In choosing the team, it is important to consider the extent to which staff members have the ability and willingness to participate in the team. Consideration might also be given to including other stakeholders on the team, such as parents, school management and student areas. It is vital that the e-Learning team liaises with the staff throughout the planning process.

In large schools, it is advisable to have a number of teachers on the e-Learning team. At post-primary, it is important that there is a mix of teachers from across a wide range of subject areas, such as Humanities, Sciences and the practical subjects. Each subject department will be expected to have input into the e-Learning Plan in terms of setting ICT Integration targets and tasks for their own department. Throughout the process, each teacher will need to consider how they are going to integrate ICT into their class teaching.

The e-Learning vision

The e-Learning team first reviews the existing Whole School Plan with a view to creating an **e-Learning vision statement**. The e-Learning vision will support and enhance the school's overall aims in terms of learning, teaching, management and administration and will sit well with the school's ethos, beliefs and values.

“Schools should form a school ICT committee which will plan and guide ICT integration and work collaboratively across the school to develop a whole school shared vision.”

Investing Effectively in Information and Communications Technology in Schools, 2008-2013
- The Report of the Minister's Strategy Group

“However noble, sophisticated or enlightened proposals for change and improvement might be, they come to nothing if teachers don't adopt them in their own classrooms and if they don't translate them into effective classroom practices.”

What's Worth Fighting For? – Working For Your School? Michael Fullan and Andy Hargreaves 1996

“A whole school shared vision recognises the capacity of ICT to motivate and inspire students and to build a co-operative and interactive learning environment in the school. It appreciates, and strives to include, emerging technologies that are relevant to 21st century learning, particularly those that can provide students with appropriate life-long learning skills.”

Investing Effectively in Information and Communications Technology in Schools, 2008-2013
- The Report of the Minister's Strategy Group

Questions that may be asked in developing your e-Learning vision:

- How does the school view ICT?
- What role do you envisage for teachers in your school in using ICT?
- How do you envisage teachers preparing curriculum materials in your school?
 - Will teachers have access to ICT to prepare resources?
 - Will teachers have access to ICT in their classrooms?
- How will teachers and students work together?
- How can ICT be used to enhance the learning environment of students with special educational needs?
- How will ICT impact on student assessment?
 - Will the school accept digital homework, i.e., word processed documents, digital project work, digital audio files, etc.?
 - Will the school have a Virtual Learning Environment (VLE) where student assignments and feedback are stored?
- How will the school link with the home?
 - Will ICT play a part in linking home and school?
- What ICT do you envisage students bringing to the school?
 - Will students have their own personalised learning devices?
 - How will ethical and responsible use of ICT (personal or school-based) be communicated to students?
- How will the ethical and responsible use of ICT be integrated across all subjects?
- How do the answers to the above questions dovetail with the school's vision and the objectives of the Whole School Plan?

This list of questions is not exhaustive and is designed to prompt discussion on how ICT can fast-track and support targets and tasks that are already contained in the Whole School Plan.

The e-Learning vision statement looks to the future and is written in broad terms. In preparing the vision statement, sufficient time, support, commitment, teamwork and flexibility are required in order to convey a positive attitude toward the use of ICT. This will form the basis of the e-Learning Plan and, thus, needs to be thought out carefully.

While the e-Learning vision will be a relatively permanent school perspective, it must be revisited over time to ensure it remains relevant and appropriate.

A strong school vision for ICT, agreed by the principal (see page 22 for the supports to assist in developing the school's vision) along with the principal's full support for the development of the e-Learning Plan are the most important contributing factors to the success of a school's e-Learning Plan.

Tools to assist in developing the e-Learning vision

e-Learning Roadmap

- This document provides ideas and a progression roadmap for schools (covered in Step 1: Review & Prioritise).

e-Learning case studies and video exemplars

- These case studies and video exemplars are designed to give examples of how schools are integrating ICT into learning and teaching.

NCCA ICT Framework

- The NCCA ICT Framework is covered on page 29. The Action Website will help identify ideas to create a vision for e-Learning www.ncca.ie

School planning support

- Primary Professional Development Service (PPDS) www.ppps.ie
- School Development Planning Initiative www.sdpi.ie and www.slss.ie

NCTE website

- www.ncte.ie/elearningplan
- www.webwise.ie

Summary

At this stage, the school will have:

- Considered ICT in the context of the Whole School Plan.
- Established an e-Learning team.
- Developed an e-Learning vision for the school.