

Agility in Immigration

Deloitte's Insights from 10 Years
of Agile Delivery at Scale with
the UK Home Office

12 June 2025

On Thursday February 24th 2022,
Russia invaded Ukraine.

On Saturday, we were asked to
create a visa route for Ukrainian
refugees.

It went live on Friday, and was
followed by multiple other routes.

Over 480,000 people have
since applied using the
Ukrainian routes.

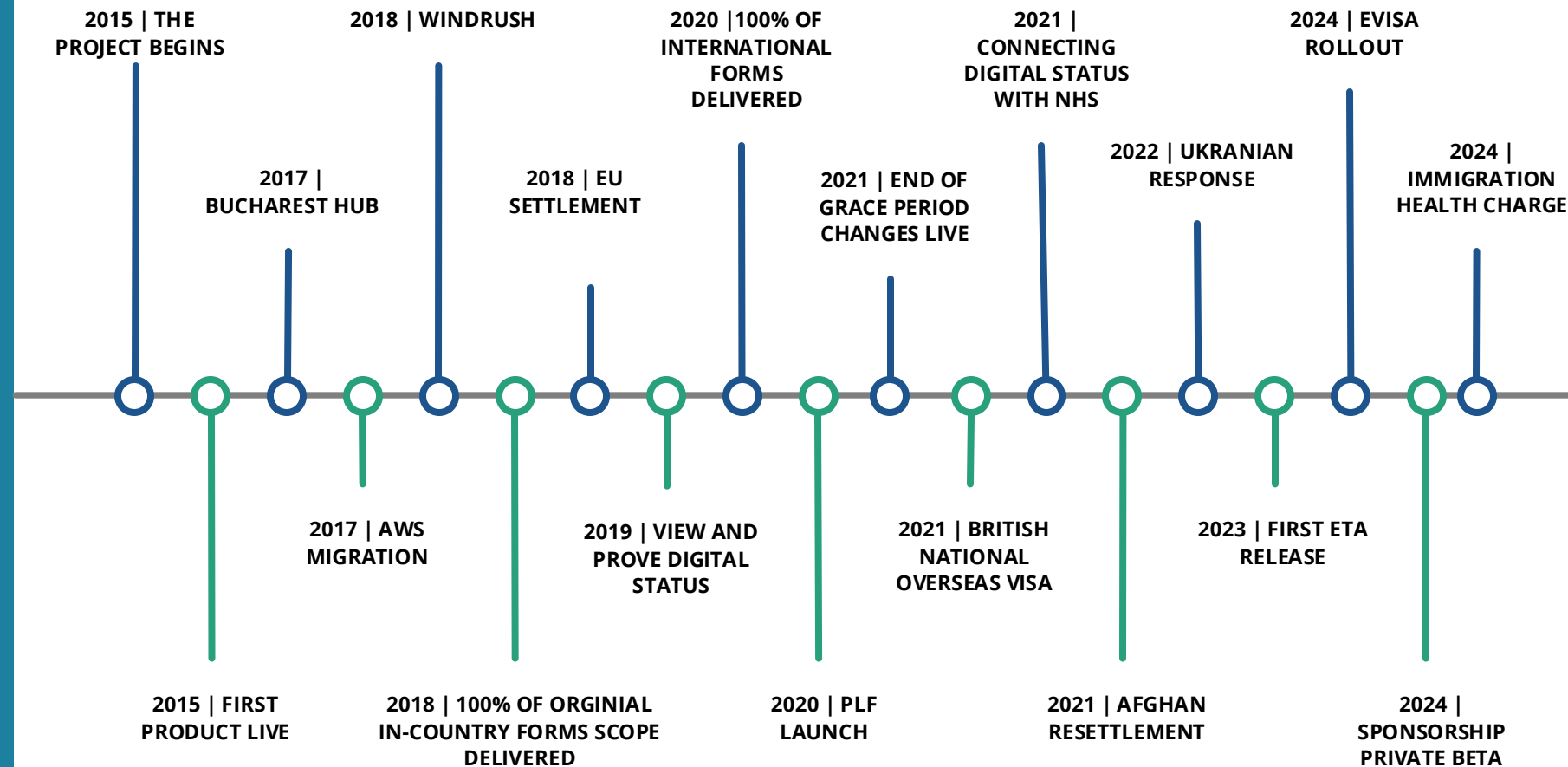


Significant achievements

- Launching nearly 200 digital visa routes and creating a new out-of-country application platform.
- Responding to the “Windrush scandal” (a historic injustice) by urgently building an immigration solution to recognise and protect affected people.
- Providing digital solutions to prove identity and manage immigration status for EU nationals post-Brexit.
- Responding to COVID-19 challenges for UK Border Force by making immigration technology more flexible and able to share data with government departments.
- Rapidly establishing and scaling visa application routes for Ukrainian families following the invasion of Ukraine.
- Streamlining the process for employers and educational institutions to sponsor workers or students.

Working as one team – Home Office, Deloitte and other suppliers – across policy, operations, development, and service.

UK Home Office + Deloitte: a decade of delivery, reflection, and continuous improvement



This pace of delivery would not have been possible back in 2015.

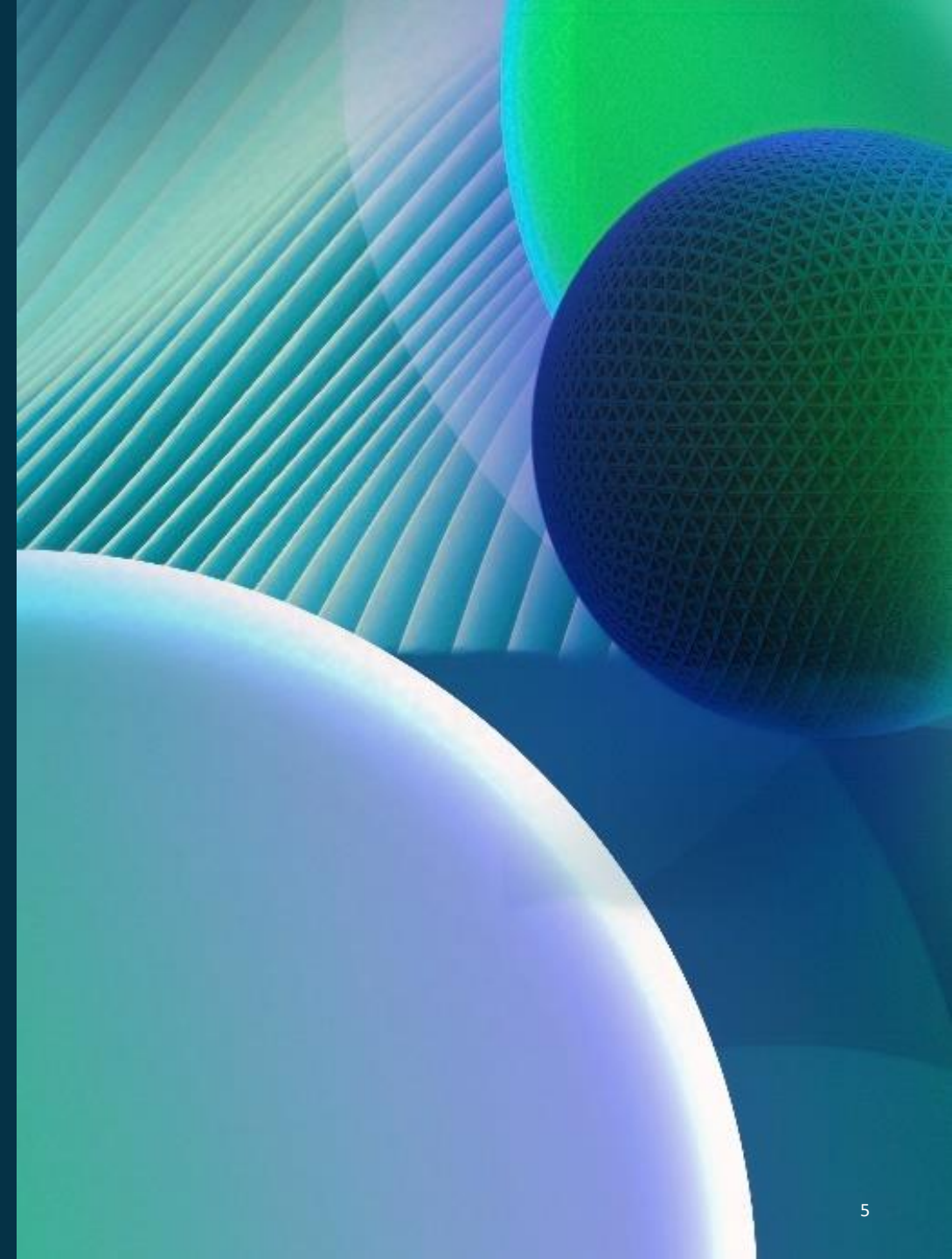
When we first started digitising visa application processes for the UK Home Office, it took nine months to build, test, and release a route.

Together with the UK Home Office, we have steadily increased agility for over a decade.

When COVID-19 broke out, the UK Government needed to contact trace international arrivals.

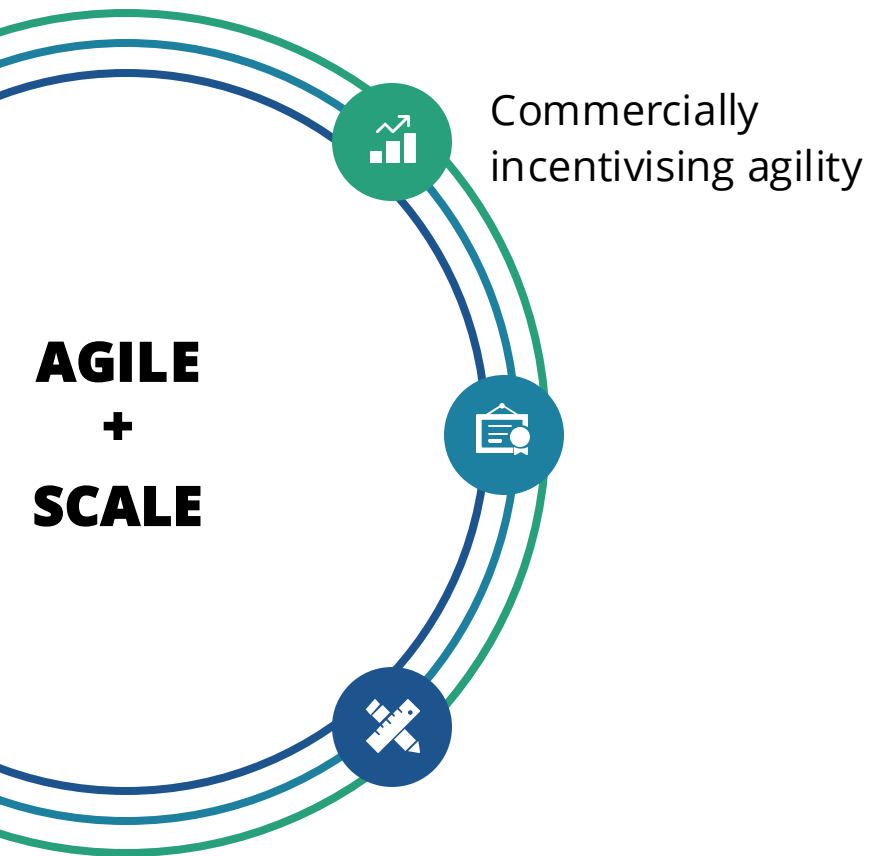
We built the first version of the Passenger Locator Form in two weeks, releasing new versions weekly (sometimes daily) through the pandemic, serving 30m+ users.

Pivoting a mature agile delivery team made it possible.



**In an unreliable
world, agility is
a first-order
objective**

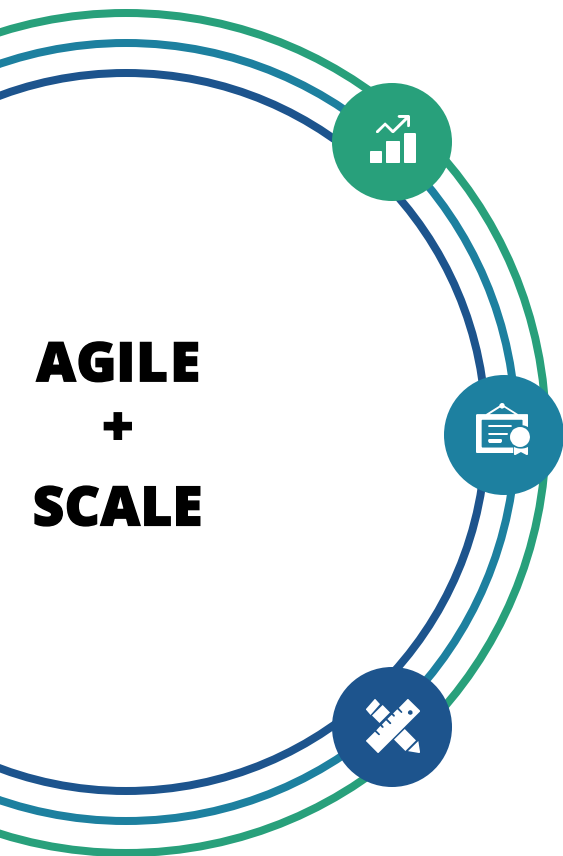




Lessons from Home Office

- Allow suppliers to take ownership over outcomes, not just provide resources
- Contract for throughput and quality, recognising scope will change
- Let overarching framework contracts, with detailed deliverables and costs locked down in shorter (e.g. quarterly) Statements of Work

In an unreliable
world, create
options by
incentivising
agility

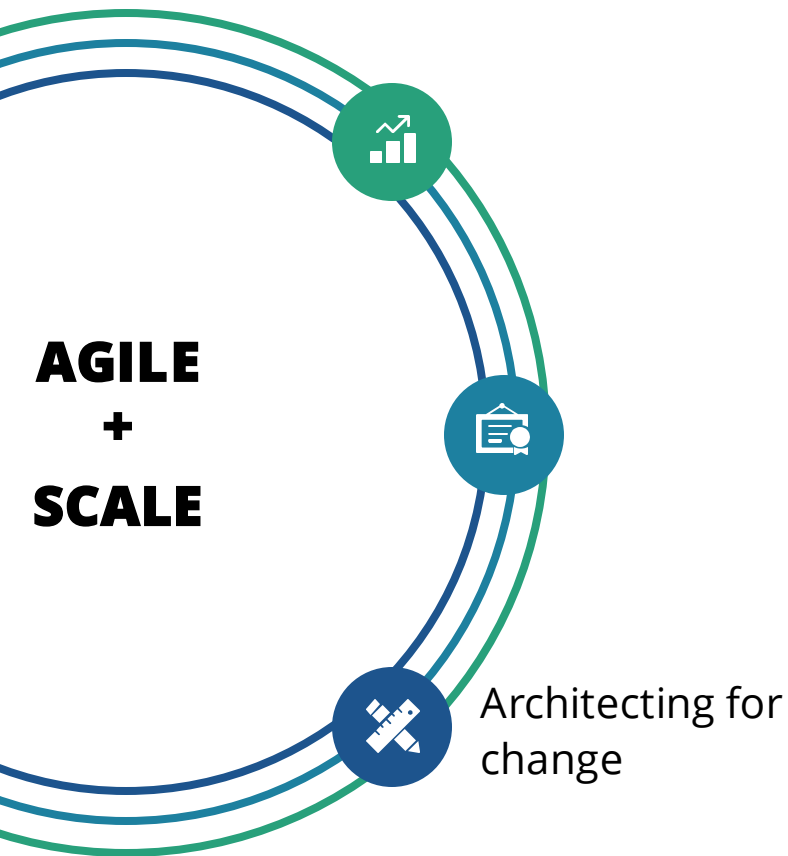


Managing outcomes,
not just deliveries

Lessons from Home Office

- Establish leadership pods comprising project management, architecture, service introduction, etc. aligned to programmes and outcomes
- Focused reporting on the flow of value through the delivery lifecycle and into live
- Focused governance on managing bottlenecks and dependencies to optimise end-to-end flow

In an unreliable
world, focus
governance on
cross-cutting
outcomes



Lessons from Home Office

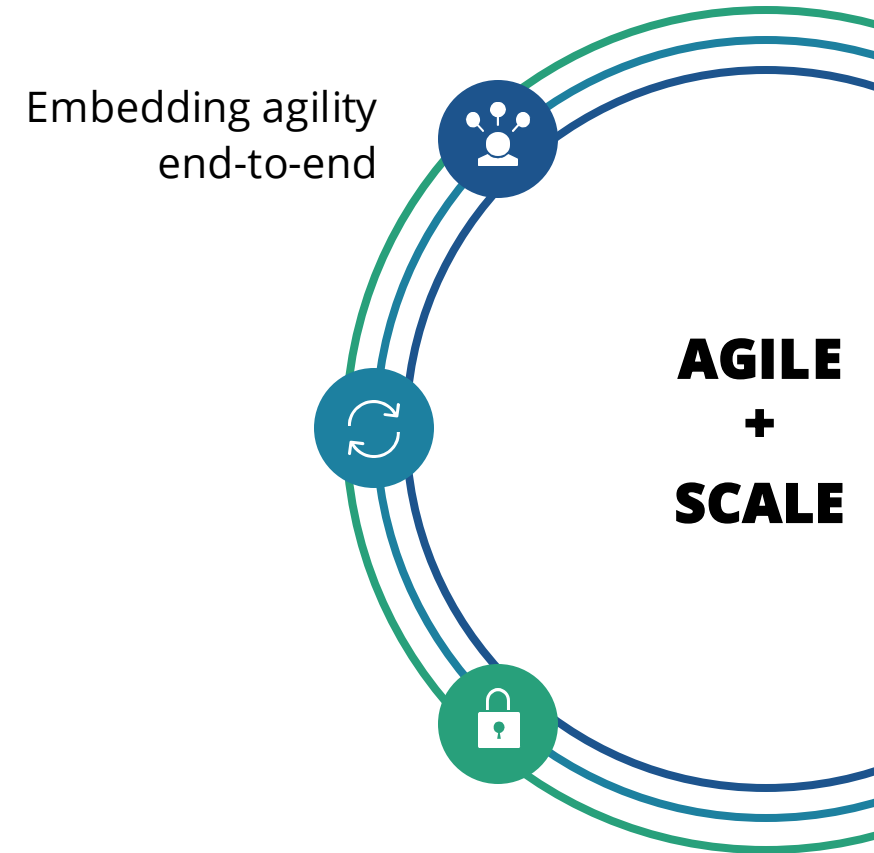
- Open standards and patterns can provide more options and greater flexibility
- Recognise the tension between strategic products vs. rapid delivery of outcomes, which can suggest tactical solutions
- Managing and continuously addressing technical debt is critical and needs dedicated and protected capacity

In an unreliable
world, design
technology
solutions resilient
to change

In an unreliable
world, bring all
perspectives
together

Lessons from Home Office

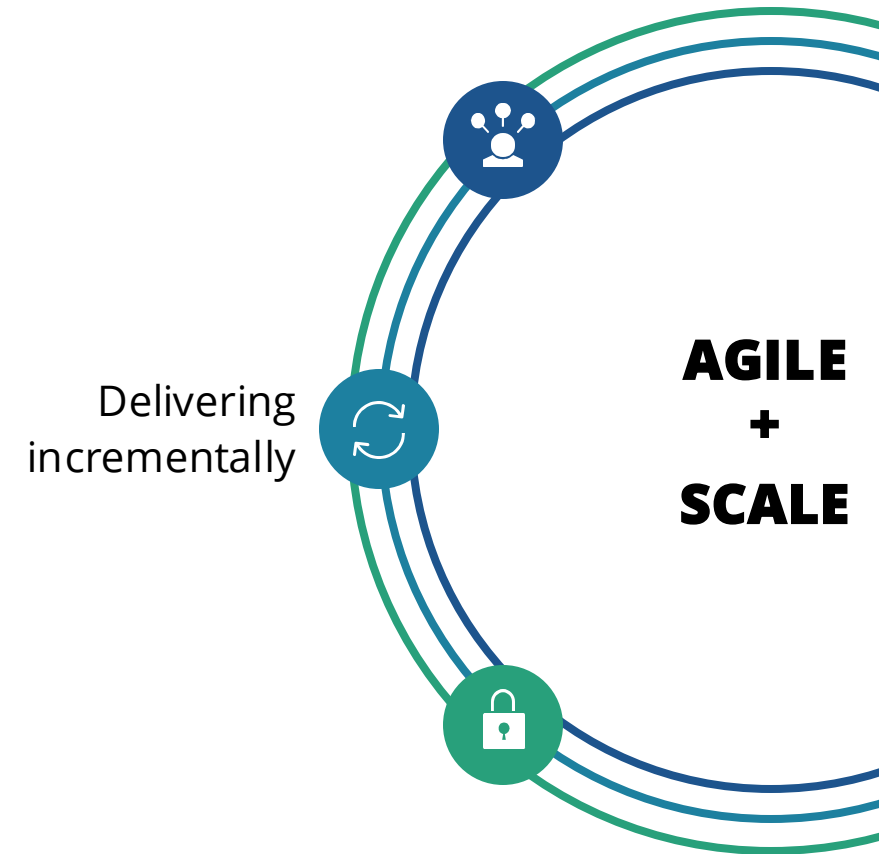
- Look left and right: when Policy, Operations, Strategy & Change, and IT are all in the same room, magic can happen
- Capture agile metrics (cycle time, throughput, work-in-progress) across the whole lifecycle, not just development
- Doing fewer things in parallel is usually faster and safer



In an unreliable world, release value early and often

Lessons from Home Office

- Learn to love the MVP: what can we release now and use to learn and improve?
- Put effort into finding cohorts and slices of scope that can be released incrementally
- Prioritise the high-volume, high-impact services (and be open to lower-fidelity solutions for lower volume services)

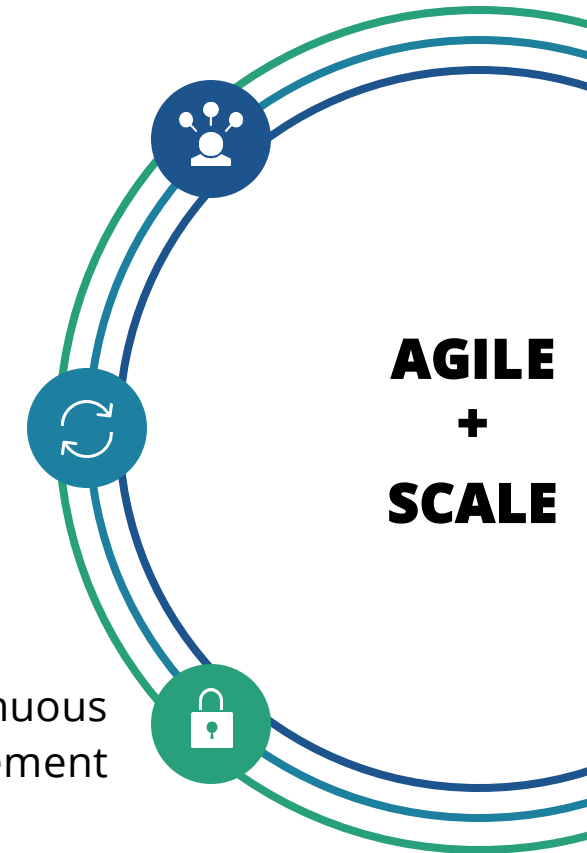


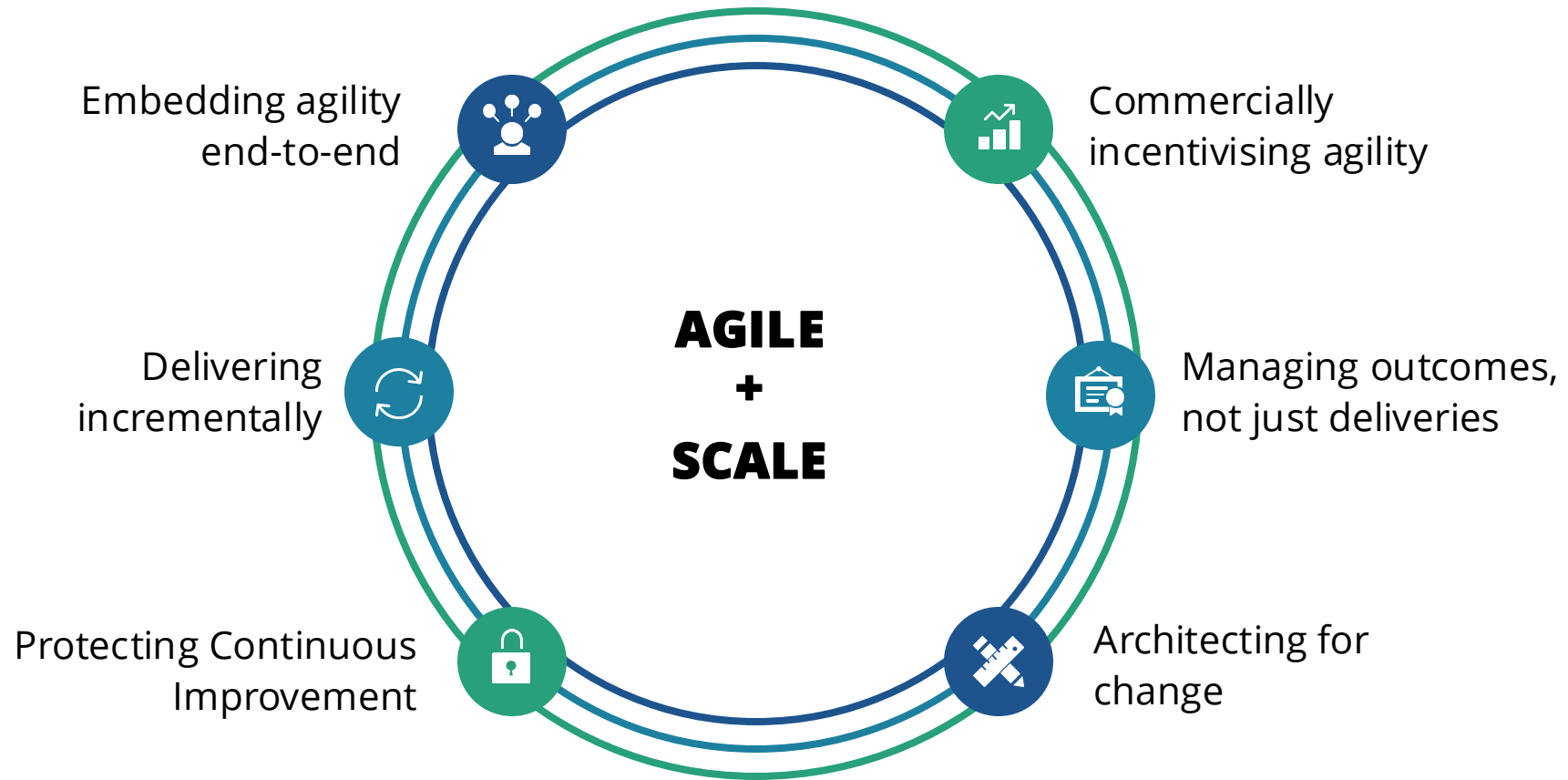
In an unreliable world, stay the course (and prove it)

Lessons from Home Office

- Dedicated CI teams can work through improvements over time
- Respond to feedback from real-world uses, analytics, etc.
- Use CI as a shock-absorber for work driven by policy change or urgent, unplanned priorities

Protecting Continuous Improvement







Questions?

About the speaker

Martin Aspeli is Deloitte UK Head of Engineering and has led significant scaled agile deliveries for the UK Home Office's Migration and Borders Technology Portfolio



- Over two decades in technology consulting, Martin has delivered complex technology programmes across Retail, Banking, and the Public Sector.
- He is an expert on topics including agile delivery at scale, software engineering, technology disruption, and developing public sector capability.
- Internally in Deloitte, Martin is responsible for Engineering Excellence, overseeing 1,000+ engineers working across multiple industries.
- A contributor to several open-source projects, he has written two technical books.

