



Roinn an Taoisigh
Department of the Taoiseach

Ráiteas Straitéise
Strategy Statement
2008-2010



Department of the Taoiseach

Strategy Statement 2008-2010

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Message from the Taoiseach



Bertie Ahern, TD
Taoiseach



Tom Kitt, TD
Minister of State with special
responsibility as Government
Chief Whip and for the
Knowledge Society



Mr. Dick Roche, TD
Minister of State
with special responsibility
for European Affairs

Ireland has undergone a process of profound economic and social transformation over the past number of years. It has been widely acknowledged that our education system, the social partnership agreements, prudent fiscal management, effective but light regulation, proactive participation at the heart of Europe, and a supportive enterprise environment have played key roles in Ireland's economic miracle. In turn, this has provided a solid platform for social development with regard to employment opportunities and living standards. As well as being a time of prosperity, it has also been a time of peace.

The Department of the Taoiseach's Strategy Statement for the period 2008-2010 clearly identifies the key role the Department will play in continuing to progress national priorities identified in the Programme for Government, including:

- Sustaining a strong knowledge-based economy and ensuring balanced development
- Building a caring society
- Supporting civic life through good government
- Protecting and promoting our interests within the EU and the wider world
- Our overriding priority of securing lasting peace in Ireland.

The period ahead will require that the Department is able to meet future challenges and create new opportunities and responses. I am confident that this Strategy Statement provides a robust foundation for my Department's contribution to meeting the challenges ahead.

I am grateful to everyone working in the Department for their support to me in fulfilling my duties as Taoiseach. I look forward to working with them and other stakeholders to progress the changes that face us.



Bertie Ahern, TD
Taoiseach
Márta 2008



Foreword from the Secretary General



Dermot McCarthy

Secretary General

This Strategy Statement sets a clear direction for the Department's activities over the next three years and is based on a wide consultation process involving the staff of the Department and other key stakeholders.

This is the sixth Strategy Statement prepared by the Department under the Public Services Management Act, 1997. While our overall strategic objectives remain constant - to support the Taoiseach, Ministers of State and Government - we have strengthened our efforts to show that maximum value is achieved from public expenditure in terms of defined outputs and outcomes. Given our policy co-ordination role, especially in relation to cross-cutting issues, the Department faces a unique challenge in seeking to achieve outcomes for which, in many cases, it does not have direct responsibility. Nonetheless, the links between inputs, outputs and outcomes are more clearly identified in this document. They will continue to be developed over the period of this Strategy Statement, and reported on in our Annual Reports.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, which appears to read 'Dermot McCarthy'. The signature is fluid and cursive, written on a white background.

Dermot McCarthy
Secretary General



Mission Statement



To provide the Government, Taoiseach and Ministers of State with the support, policy advice and information necessary for the effective conduct of Government and for the dynamic leadership, co-ordination and strategic direction of Government policy.





Our mandate is to support the Taoiseach in his constitutional and ceremonial role as Head of Government and to assist him in providing effective leadership, co-ordination and guidance across key policy areas. The staff of the Department conscientiously and impartially serve the Taoiseach and the Government of the day, the Ministers of State, the other institutions of State and the general public, always acting with diligence, efficiency and courtesy.

The Department provides three main kinds of support to the Taoiseach:

- **supporting the efficient functioning of Government:** providing a Secretariat to the Government, liaison with the President and Houses of the Oireachtas, provision of Government Press and Information Services, and of Private Office, Corporate Support and Protocol Services to the Taoiseach
- **supporting Government policy direction and co-ordination (focussing on major national priorities):** providing an overview of the key policy priorities of the Government of the day; providing timely and relevant information and advice on issues that arise; and providing a longer-term vision and approach. We support effective policy development and service delivery by fostering a whole-of-government approach, being outward-looking, bringing stakeholders

together and helping them to contribute effectively. Supporting the Cabinet Committee system is central to meeting these objectives

- **providing support services to the Taoiseach, Government Chief Whip and Minister of State for European Affairs,** including drafting speeches and messages, preparing replies for Parliamentary Questions, and responding to Freedom of Information requests and other representations, often working directly with other Agencies and Departments.

A Whole-of-Government Perspective

Operating at the heart of Government requires:

- An understanding of broader agendas and the external environment
- A focus on national policies of key strategic importance
- The ability to co-ordinate, lead and progress key cross-departmental issues.

The Department contributes to the development and implementation of Government policy by:

- Providing advice to the Taoiseach on individual policy matters
- Supporting long-term planning and inter-agency co-operation in policy formulation and implementation

- Leading and participating in cross-Departmental initiatives, including the Cabinet Committee system
 - Recognising the differing, and sometimes competing, interests in public policy and service provision, particularly in relation to social partnership
 - Ensuring that there is consistency and coherence between policies, and that they are delivered effectively
 - Co-ordinating the development of policy across Government Departments and Agencies, and working with stakeholders, to promote and build the capacity necessary to support wider deployment and use of technology (including new media technologies) across Government, Commerce and Society generally
- Close co-operation within the Department, and with outside organisations, is needed in order to carry out the Department's functions effectively.





Our strategic objectives and priorities are framed in the context of the external and internal environment, and of how we anticipate, respond to, and influence changes in Government policy.

Like other sectors, the Government has to operate in an environment of growing complexity and faster change. This Section outlines the social, political, economic and demographic factors which the Department needs to consider in developing policies and programmes.

External Environment:

The Programme for Government launched in July 2007, and the social partnership agreement *Towards 2016*, provide the over-arching context for all of our work and the direction for our strategies. Our strategy must also be heavily influenced by the priorities of the Taoiseach and Government of the day, and developments within the political system will continue to have a significant impact on our work.

The following are some of the other factors which have been taken in account in drawing up our objectives for the next three years.

Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland remains at the top of the Government's agenda and is a key priority of the Department.

Following on from the restoration of devolved government last May, and with the North South Ministerial Council and the British Irish Council operating in the way we had always hoped they would, the opportunity now exists to realise the full potential of the Good Friday Agreement in all its aspects.

North South cooperation is central to the economic well-being of the island, and the all-island economy, is central to all Government economic plans. There have been a number of important initiatives including the all-island dimension of both the National Development Plan and *Towards 2016*; Government investment in joint infrastructure projects with the Northern Ireland Executive; the Single Electricity Market; and the North West Gateway Initiative. Work will continue to develop the island economy and broaden North/South co-operation for mutual benefit.

It will also be important to develop greater links and mutual understanding between the people of the island, from both North and South. Apart from growing economic links and cross-border mobility, there is an important social dimension to these developing relationships. The question of a deepening appreciation of the various traditions, and of our shared heritage and history, is fundamental to developing mutual respect and friendship.

Following agreement on full all-party support for the police service and the rule of law, significant further progress has been made to end all paramilitarism and associated criminal activity. Completion of this process remains an essential part of developing a better future.

Work will continue to complete the transfer of justice and policing powers to the devolved institutions as provided for in the St Andrews Agreement. The other elements of that agreement, including those relating to North/South and East/West issues, will also be addressed.

The Government will remain fully engaged with the British Government, the Northern Ireland Executive, political representatives and civil society in Northern Ireland to ensure that the gains of recent years are consolidated and built upon.

The success of the peace process also opens up a new era in Ireland's broader international relations, especially with Britain and the United States (including Irish America). This will bring new challenges as well as new opportunities.

EU and International

Our membership of the EU remains fundamental to our future economic, social and environmental progress, while also providing us with an effective voice in the international arena. In the coming years the EU will deal with numerous major issues including: combating climate change whilst securing energy supply; how the Union targets its financial resources beyond 2013; developments in international trade; and developing the Union's external relations with its close neighbours in Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean, and with other major partners such as Latin America, Asia, Africa and the United States. We must ensure that EU policies reflect our domestic interests to the greatest extent possible and that, simultaneously, our domestic policies support agreed EU goals.

Managing the challenges and availing of the opportunities of globalisation requires effective engagement with the wider world. Ireland's relationships with countries outside the European Union continue to grow, both through our membership of the Union and on a bilateral basis. We are continuing to develop our trade and investment links with other countries. The *National Climate Change Strategy* sets out our approach to tackling climate change as part of a co-ordinated, international approach. There are many other areas where an international or global approach is warranted. The threat of international terrorism, international trafficking of people or drugs, balanced trade regulation, the peaceful settlement of disputes, poverty, hunger and disease are all examples of reasons why Ireland must continue to play an active role in promoting democracy, development, peace and human rights around the world.

Economic and Social Policy

Given that Ireland is a small open economy, our economic environment is very much shaped and influenced by international forces and particularly by globalisation. Maintaining and promoting our economic competitiveness is a key and ongoing policy priority for Government, and continued investment in physical, economic and social infrastructure through the National Development Plan 2007-2013 is crucial in this regard. While competitiveness is a priority, it must also be underpinned by principles of sustainability. The National Spatial Strategy 2002-2020 provides the framework for achieving a better balance of economic, social and physical development across the country as a whole.



Climate change and energy security are now recognised as significant global challenges which must be met through concerted and immediate action. Ireland is playing its part, both internationally and at EU level, in meeting ambitious targets in the areas of greenhouse gas emissions, renewable energy and energy efficiency. The Energy Policy Framework and the National Climate Change Strategy set out Ireland's policy approach to these issues over the period of this Statement of Strategy.

The fight against poverty and social exclusion is also a significant and ongoing Government priority. This is being addressed through the implementation of the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016, and structured around the Lifecycle approach set out in *Towards 2016*.

A quality regulatory environment also continues to be important in the context of Ireland's continuing competitiveness and economic and social development.

Social Partnership/Social Dialogue

Strengthening and deepening Social Partnership, and ensuring that it continues to facilitate and drive progress in the economic, social and environmental spheres is an important priority. Social Partnership has been a key mechanism in promoting Ireland's social and economic development. It provides a framework for the development of a shared approach to policy challenges through formal and informal dialogue, and allows the agreement of collective, coherent and effective solutions to addressing them.

Maintaining Social Partnership and its structures will continue to be key priority for the period 2008-2010. Particular focus will be on ensuring the full implementation of *Towards 2016* and on negotiating and agreeing and implementing the second phase of pay terms under *Towards 2016*.

The Knowledge Society

We will work to build on our achievements under previous action plans. Our strategies will focus on promoting effective and innovative deployment of technology in the public and private sectors, and in society generally, in line with agreed wider European objectives. The aim is to promote inclusivity of access to, and use of, digital media technologies with consequent benefits for all.

Internal Environment

The delivery of our Strategy depends on the following organisational conditions and challenges being met:

- Ensuring that a **quality customer service** ethos pervades the Department
- Retaining the **confidence** of the Government, Oireachtas, the public and the media that our activities are undertaken in a proper manner, on a value for money basis and in the public interest. This requires excellent corporate governance through performance management, financial management and internal audit and controls, as well as enhanced information management systems
- Maintaining and improving the **range and quality** of our services within existing resources
- Constantly evaluating the potential for **electronic service delivery** to provide a more effective and efficient customer experience. The move to a shared financial services platform, based in Killarney, in 2008 offers the opportunity to enhance the delivery of services and the re assignment of staff to other duties
- Utilising the opportunities of the **decentralisation programme** to develop new approaches to knowledge management and dealing with cross-cutting issues
- Meeting and exceeding the increasingly high **expectations of customers** and the changing demands arising from changing external factors, such as demographics



- Ensuring that we meet our **obligations** by anticipating and responding to the increasingly complex legislative and administrative framework
- Developing the **capability and commitment** of everyone who works in the Department, and ensuring that they can give of their best and improve continuously. This is a central tenet of the PMDS (Performance Management and Development System), which underpins the Department's approach to people management and development
- Ensuring that line managers have the **necessary supports** to implement the Department's Human Resource Strategy.
- a wide range of actors from outside the public service, such as the social partners (employers, trade unions, farmers' and community/voluntary groups).

We have links with the academic and research community, with business, with community and voluntary organisations, with the legal and other professions, and with the many individual citizens who interact with the Taoiseach or avail of the Department's services. We value these relationships, and our Customer Charter (see Appendix IV) outlines our commitments to our customers. We carry out ongoing evaluation, including annual customer surveys, to ensure that we respond to our customers' expectations and needs. Feedback from our customer surveys has informed the development of our policies, including this Statement.

Stakeholders

The Department interacts with a broad spectrum of stakeholders including:

- the Taoiseach, the Government Chief Whip and Minister of State for European Affairs, the Government, public representatives and other Government Departments, Offices and agencies
- the institutions and parties in Northern Ireland, other Governments, international institutions

The Department is supported in its leadership role by the National Economic and Social Development Office (NESDO). NESDO's constituent offices - the National Economic and Social Council, (NESCF) the National and Economic and Social Forum (NESF) and the National Centre for Partnership and Performance (NCPP) - form important parts of the framework for developing national economic and social policy, and supporting partnership, at both national and local levels.





Overview

Having undertaken a thorough environmental analysis and review of the areas in which the Department can add value, the Department has identified the following as strategic objectives and priorities.

The Department's key **Overall Strategic Objectives** remain constant:

- 1) Supporting the Government
- 2) Supporting the Taoiseach.

These **Overall Strategic Objectives** will be reflected in our work on the following **Strategic Priorities**:

- A. Northern Ireland
- B. European Union and International Affairs

- C. Economic and Social Policy
- D. Social Partnership
- E. Public Service Modernisation
- F. Knowledge Society

All of our work in these areas is supported by a further priority:

- G. Corporate Support Services.

The key objectives in each area will evolve as circumstances change. The success of the Department's contribution in these areas is dependent on maintaining a close working relationship with other key stakeholders. The current key objectives for each strategic priority are set out overleaf.



Overall Strategic Objective 1 – Supporting the Government

Key Objectives	Actions	Indicators
To provide a comprehensive and effective service to meetings of the Government and Cabinet Committees.	<p>Necessary documents made available in advance of meetings, and meetings of senior officials' teams held, as appropriate.</p> <p>Appropriate follow up in relation to issues arising at meetings.</p> <p>Continued deployment of modern information and communication technologies to support the Cabinet process.</p>	<p>Timely and efficient distribution of Cabinet documents.</p> <p>Provision of real time information to Cabinet members on evolving agenda for Government meetings and other papers generated for, or deriving from, Government meetings.</p>
To inform, advise and support the President in the exercise of her constitutional duties, as appropriate.	Conveying of formal advice of the Government to the President where required by the Constitution or by law.	<p>Appropriate high quality briefings, advice and speeches.</p> <p>Effective and harmonious working relationship between the President and the Government.</p>
To develop a longer-term planning perspective and a closely co-ordinated approach across the Government system	Regular meetings of senior official groups and other formal and informal communications mechanisms in place.	<p>High quality responses developed to meet future/emerging issues.</p> <p>National needs and business needs of Departments met.</p> <p>High level of cooperation with other Government Departments and Agencies.</p>
To support the Government Chief Whip on matters relating to the Government's Legislative Programme	To effectively co-ordinate the Government's legislative programme prior to publication in order to brief the Chief Whip and Committee on progress of legislation	<p>Priorities and timelines established in the legislative programme, which take account of competing priorities, facilitate the optimal deployment of drafting resources by Parliamentary Counsel, and allow for up to date information on Bills in preparation available for Dáil and other uses.</p> <p>Presentation of the Sessional Parliamentary Programmes to Government for approval and publication</p>
To manage relations with the Office of the Attorney General, Chief State Solicitor's Office, Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and the Law Reform Commission	<p>Legal advice sought and presented to the Government and Taoiseach as required</p> <p>Staff and other administrative issues addressed as necessary</p> <p>Periodic updating of the programme for law reform</p>	<p>Requests for advice prepared</p> <p>Appropriate briefings prepared</p> <p>Memoranda submitted to Government in relation to law reform</p> <p>Issues addressed and resolved as they arise</p> <p>Proposals for law reform implemented.</p>



Overall Strategic Objective 1 – Supporting the Government

Key Objectives	Actions	Indicators
To provide a comprehensive information service to the national and international media and to the public, on behalf of the Government, the Taoiseach and his Department. In addition, to promote a co-ordinated approach to media matters across Government Departments.	<p>Daily contact with news desks.</p> <p>24 hour access by media to a Government spokesman</p> <p>Daily briefings to Political Correspondents.</p> <p>Daily liaison and weekly meetings with Departmental Press Officers.</p> <p>User-friendly/ easily accessible website</p>	<p>More open Government – better public awareness of Government policies.</p> <p>More co-ordinated and focused approach in the dissemination of Government information to the media.</p>
To operate the Freedom of Information Acts 1997 and 2003 in relation to the records of the Department	<p>FOI Applications processed</p> <p>Section 25 Certificates reviewed</p>	<p>Number of FOI applications processed</p> <p>FOI applications processed within statutory framework</p> <p>Section 25 Review to be undertaken within statutory timeframe</p> <p>Participation in Civil Service FOI Users Network.</p> <p>Reports of Information Commissioner</p> <p>Outcomes of Reviews and appeals.</p>
Ongoing review of the need for amendment(s) to the Constitution Enrolment of Constitution	<p>Overview of recommendations for changes to the Constitution and liaison with relevant Departments on possibilities for implementing particular recommendations.</p> <p>Monitoring of reports of the All Party Committee on the Constitution (APOCC)</p>	<p>Liaison with Departments on possibilities for implementing particular recommendations.</p> <p>Presentation of reports of APOCC to Government.</p>



Overall Strategic Objective 2 - Supporting the Taoiseach

Key Objectives	Actions	Indicators
To support the Taoiseach in his role as Chair of Cabinet.	Preparation of briefing on issues due to arise at Cabinet. Liaison with Departments in relation to issues arising in advance of Government meetings.	Quality and timeliness of briefs prepared for the Taoiseach. Identification of relevant issues and their resolution in advance of Government meetings.
To effectively progress the policy priorities of the Taoiseach of the day	Quality policies, meeting customer needs, developed and implemented appropriately.	Customer satisfaction as measured annually. National needs met. High level of cooperation with other Government Departments and Agencies.
To support the process of bilateral consultation between the Taoiseach and Ministers	Facilitate and support communications between the Taoiseach and Ministers on policy priorities	Regular meetings held, as required. Appropriate quality briefing prepared/co-ordinated on timely basis.
To provide a service of the highest quality and consistency to the Taoiseach, in order for him to carry out efficiently and effectively his roles, functions and duties, including Government, Dáil and all his domestic and foreign engagements.	Provide the necessary support to the Taoiseach in respect of his Dáil obligations by ensuring that he has the relevant material for Parliamentary Questions, Leader's Questions, Order of Business and Statements. Assist with co-ordination of Taoiseach's diary to ensure his time is used as efficiently and effectively as possible. Provide the necessary speeches, briefing and protocol arrangements to the Taoiseach in respect of all his diary commitments. Organise the Taoiseach's programme of visits, both inward and outward Ensure relevant documentation received on time by Taoiseach Provide effective and appropriate speeches for the Taoiseach.	Taoiseach fully briefed ahead of his Dáil commitments. Taoiseach provided with all relevant documentation in sufficient time before every event. Taoiseach's programme of engagements, both domestic and foreign, planned to his satisfaction and executed as planned. Satisfaction of Taoiseach and stakeholders with the quality of arrangements and speeches.
To provide a protocol service of the highest quality to the Taoiseach, Government Chief Whip and the Minister of State for European Affairs.	The efficient organisation of (a) State ceremonial and other functions (b) official functions involving the Taoiseach or his Department and (c) the involvement of the Taoiseach in events organised by third parties.	Public and stakeholder satisfaction with the standard achieved on State ceremonial occasions. Official functions and events well organised and serviced on the most cost efficient basis. Requests for protocol advice processed.



Strategic Priority A – Northern Ireland

Overall goal: To achieve lasting peace on the island of Ireland

Key Objectives	Actions	Indicators
To secure lasting peace on the island of Ireland through the full implementation of the Good Friday Agreement.	<p>Work closely with the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform to achieve the full implementation of the Agreement.</p> <p>Work closely with the British Government, the Northern Ireland Executive, political representatives, social partners and civil society in Northern Ireland to consolidate and build on progress to date.</p>	<p>Continued stability and effective operation of the Northern Ireland, North/South and East/West institutions.</p> <p>Completion of devolution of justice and policing powers.</p> <p>Full implementation of St Andrews Agreement, including with regard to North/South co-operation, the British-Irish Council, the North South and East West parliamentary framework and the North South Consultative Forum.</p>
To promote lasting partnership, reconciliation and co-operation between the people of this island and between Britain and Ireland.	<p>Support the Taoiseach in his engagements with the British Prime Minister and in the North/South Ministerial Council and British-Irish Council.</p> <p>Work with all Government Departments and the Northern Ireland Executive to develop North/South co-operation.</p> <p>Work with all the member administrations of the British-Irish Council to build relationships and develop East/West co-operation.</p> <p>Support initiatives to help reconciliation and mutual respect between the traditions on the island of Ireland, including through a greater understanding of our shared heritage and history.</p> <p>Contribute to formulation of effective policies relating to dealing with the legacy of the Troubles, including inquiries and victims issues.</p>	<p>Implementation of agreed policies and projects for mutual benefit, including through the work of the NSMC, the BIC and bilateral contacts.</p> <p>Development of North/South co-operation as a key component of mainstream national policy frameworks, eg National Development Plan 2007-2013, <i>Towards 2016</i></p> <p>Successful BIC meetings and development of East/West co-operation.</p> <p>Improved relationships and better mutual understanding within Northern Ireland and on the island of Ireland.</p> <p>Implementation of policies relating to dealing with the legacy of the Troubles, including support for victims.</p>
To strengthen and broaden Ireland's relationships with Britain, the United States and internationally in the new era brought about by the success of the peace process.	<p>Support the Taoiseach in his engagements with the US administration and supporters of Ireland, including in the EU and US.</p>	<p>Strong and developing relationships with Britain, the US and other international supporters of Ireland.</p>



Strategic Priority B – European and International Affairs

Overall goal: To strengthen our role in Europe and the wider world

Key Objectives	Actions	Indicators
Support the Taoiseach in his role as a member of the European Council.	<p>Ensure that the Taoiseach is provided with full policy and other support required to participate effectively in European Council meetings.</p> <p>Agreed Irish positions advanced ahead of Council meetings.</p>	<p>European Council Conclusions that reflect Irish input.</p> <p>Good quality analysis and policy advice and briefing available to Taoiseach ahead of and during European Councils.</p>
Ensure a whole of Government approach to pursuing Ireland's EU policy objectives.	<p>Identify Ireland's key objectives in the EU with relevant Government Departments, and agree strategies for pursuing these objectives.</p> <p>Improve cross Government coordination structures and information exchange.</p> <p>Support the Taoiseach in securing the successful ratification of the EU Reform Treaty and assist, where appropriate, in the embedding of the provisions of the Reform Treaty in EU Policies.</p> <p>Contribute to overall Government communications strategy regarding the role Ireland plays internationally and how Ireland's international relations, particularly membership of the EU, contribute to economic and social wellbeing.</p>	<p>Effective meetings of cross Government groups dealing with EU issues; agreed and timely Government positions on cross-cutting issues.</p> <p>Improved position for Ireland in the internal market scoreboard in relation to transposition of EU Directives.</p> <p>Reduction in the number of infringement cases taken in the European Court of Justice against Ireland for infringement of European law.</p>
Continue to develop and strengthen bilateral relations with Ireland's EU partners at political and official level in order to promote our national objectives and the agreed EU agenda.	<p>Development of a programme of inward visits by European Heads of State/Government and outward bilateral visits by the Taoiseach with fellow Member States.</p> <p>Develop relationships in administrations of other Member States and European Institutions.</p>	<p>Increased contacts at Prime Minister and official level.</p> <p>Improved knowledge and understanding within other Member States of Ireland's positions on EU issues.</p>
Effective representation of Ireland's interests in international bodies and organisations.	<p>Ensure active and effective participation in key international organisations and summits.</p>	<p>Sustain multilateral contact at both political and official level at international fora.</p>



Strategic Priority B – European and International Affairs

Key Objectives	Actions	Indicators
Strengthen bilateral relationships with non-EU States, in particular, in the area of international trade.	Effective use of Taoiseach's bilateral visits and his contacts with political leaders to promote the development of bilateral and trade relations particularly with the rapidly developing Asian economies.	Enhanced bilateral relations with Third Countries. Increase in level of political, cultural and trade exchanges. Progress in implementation of the Government's Asia Strategy 2005-2009.
Review and continue to coordinate Ireland's input into EU economic policy, particularly the Lisbon Agenda, and on sustainable development, energy and climate change issues.	Overseeing developments in the Lisbon Strategy and its external dimension including innovation, energy and climate change	Successful implementation of the National Reform Programme with a renewed focus on global issues.



Strategic Priority C – Economic and Social Policy

Overall goal: Overall Goal: To promote sustainable and inclusive development of Ireland’s economy and society.

Key Objectives	Actions	Indicators
To provide briefing and policy advice on economic, social and environmental issues which is based on a whole-of-government and longer-term perspective	Preparation of policy papers and briefing notes with advice on relevant issues including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review of Government Memoranda • advice and briefing material for meetings etc. • analysis of relevant research and publications 	High quality and timely briefing, speech material and reports Feedback from Taoiseach
To promote a coordinated approach to implementation of the Programme for Government, <i>Towards 2016</i> , the National Development Plan 2007-2013, the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016, the National Climate Change Strategy and other relevant strategic policy frameworks.	Operation of relevant Senior Officials’ and Cross-departmental Groups Leading appropriate cross-departmental initiatives and policy reviews Bilateral engagement with Departments on relevant economic and social issues	Progress towards delivery of targets in Programme for Government and other national strategies – as measured in annual reports and through other reporting mechanisms
To ensure co-ordinated and coherent development and implementation of strategic policy issues through the work of the Cabinet Committees on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social Inclusion, Children and Integration • Health • Housing, Infrastructure and PPPs • Science, Technology and Innovation • Climate Change and Energy Security 	Developing and managing the Work Programmes of the Cabinet Committees, with support and preparatory work through the relevant Senior Officials’ Groups	Strategies in place to address key economic and social issues Work Programmes agreed by Cabinet Committees and implemented Committees’ Annual Progress Reports to Government The timely circulation of relevant and high quality papers. Feedback from the Taoiseach, Ministers and other relevant stakeholders
To ensure that development and implementation of domestic economic, social and environmental policy (i) reflects an all-island dimension and (ii) responds to international developments, in particular at EU level	Promoting and monitoring implementation of the National Reform Programme (Lisbon Agenda), including agreeing a new National Reform Programme 2008-2010 In co-operation with the Northern Ireland Division, identifying and promoting all-island aspects of policy development and implementation	Completion of Annual Progress Report on the National Reform Programme Domestic policy objective met in EU and international policy-making Effective response to policy issues emerging on an all-island or EU level



Strategic Priority C – Economic and Social Policy

Key Objectives	Actions	Indicators
<p>To ensure the continued development and success of the International Financial Services Industry in Ireland, with the support of Government Agencies and the industry, through the mechanism of the Clearing House Group and the various Working Groups and Task Forces, which operate under the aegis of the Department.</p>	<p>Working through the various initiatives outlined in the strategy Building on Success with the purpose of progressing the future development of the industry.</p> <p>Identify future strategies and measures aimed at achieving the continuing success of the industry.</p> <p>Working on the educational agenda to achieve appropriate up-skilling and to address skills gaps within the industry as a key objective going forward.</p>	<p>Progress outlined in Annual report.</p> <p>Follow up to the strategy Building on Success for the international financial services industry.</p> <p>Engagement with the Financial Regulator on all regulatory and legislative matters.</p> <p>Actions taken by the Working Groups and Task Forces to further the key objectives for the industry.</p> <p>Speed of appropriate legislative implementation, increase in the numbers employed in the industry, increase in service providers and investment managers.</p>
<p>To support the development and provision of timely, accurate and relevant statistics and research and promote its application to inform the policy-making process</p>	<p>Support for the work of the National Statistics Board and the Central Statistics Office.</p> <p>Promote timely implementation of the National Statistics Strategy 2003-2008.</p> <p>Development of a follow-up Strategy for Statistics if required.</p> <p>Liaison and engagement with NESDO and other relevant research and advisory bodies.</p> <p>Identify and promote a response to emerging policy issues and trends.</p>	<p>Publication of Data Strategies by all Departments.</p> <p>Positive progress Report on implementation of Statistics Strategies</p> <p>Improvement of quality and range of data sets available to policy-makers.</p> <p>Increased and effective use of statistics and evidence in policy-making.</p> <p>Use of research outputs in the policy-making process.</p>
<p>To effectively progress implementation of the recommendations of the Taskforce on Active Citizenship, and the commitments in the Programme for Government, to encourage greater participation and active engagement by residents of the State in the issues that affect them locally and nationally, and align public policy to this objective.</p>	<p>Establish a Steering Group to oversee the work of the Active Citizenship Office as it develops an Implementation Plan for action on the recommendations, in consultation with Government Departments and other key stakeholders</p> <p>Co-ordinate progress on implementation of actions set out in the Plan</p> <p>Examine and pursue suitable opportunities for raising awareness of the importance of active citizenship and civic participation</p> <p>Provide briefing material for the Taoiseach and other relevant stakeholders on issues relating to active citizenship</p> <p>Provide a Secretariat to the Steering Group</p>	<p>Completion of an agreed Implementation Plan indicating actions phased over a three year period</p> <p>Presentation of Annual Progress Report for consideration at Cabinet Committee level</p> <p>Increased public awareness of the importance of active citizenship and civic engagement</p> <p>Progress achieved in reaching targets set in the Report of the Taskforce on numbers engaging in volunteering activity over a three year period</p>



Strategic Priority D – Social Partnership/Social Dialogue (Industrial Relations and Workplace Change)

Overall goals:

- *To drive economic and social progress through the mechanisms of Social Partnership*
- *To maximise the level of industrial relations peace and stability through the process of pay determination, dispute resolution and workplace partnership, in line with the Government's competitive and social goals*

Key Objectives	Actions	Indicators
To support the process of social partnership through the implementation of <i>Towards 2016</i> and to maintain and develop the structures of social partnership	<p>Drive the implementation of <i>Towards 2016</i> through active engagement with social partners, Government Departments and agencies.</p> <p>Review <i>Towards 2016</i> in 2008 and develop appropriate response to issues arising.</p> <p>Provide an efficient and effective secretariat to support and develop Social Partnership.</p> <p>Ensuring the effective operation of the formal Social Partnership structures including the quarterly plenary meetings, and Steering Group meetings. Actively supporting sectoral Social Partnership mechanisms & Groups.</p> <p>Work with NESDO and its constituent bodies to support and develop Social Partnership nationally and in the workplace.</p> <p>Promote the ongoing deepening of the social partnership model and its structures.</p>	<p>Timely implementation of all commitments and targets in <i>Towards 2016</i>.</p> <p>Completion of review.</p> <p>Implementation of agreed actions.</p> <p>Efficient functioning of Social Partnership Structures.</p> <p>Timely provision of good quality information for all Social Partnership meetings. Effective engagement of Social Partners through formal structures. Level of satisfaction of Social Partners with operation of formal structures.</p> <p>Production by NESDO of timely research, analysis and forums for dialogue in relation to Social Partnership issues. Level of satisfaction of Social Partners with the contribution of NESDO.</p> <p>Stability of the Social Partnership process.</p>
PAY & WORKPLACE CHANGE ISSUES		
To negotiate, agree and monitor the ongoing implementation of a new Pay Agreement under Part 2 of <i>Towards 2016</i> .	Actively engage with Social Partners in order to identify the key elements of a new Pay Agreement having regard to the economic environment (national and international) and competitiveness issues.	Successful negotiation and agreement of a new Pay Agreement under <i>Towards 2016</i> .
To facilitate the negotiation and implementation of agreements between employers and trade unions on workplace change issues through the social partnership process.	Actively engage with Social Partners so as to secure the implementation of commitments on workplace change contained in Part 2 of <i>Towards 2016</i> .	<p>Successful and timely implementation of the commitments contained in Part 2 of <i>Towards 2016</i>.</p> <p>Provision of regular progress reports on implementation.</p> <p>Positive feedback from, and continued support of, employer and trade union bodies for social partnership.</p>



Strategic Priority D – Social Partnership/Social Dialogue (Industrial Relations and Workplace Change)

Key Objectives	Actions	Indicators
	<p>Resolution of relevant issues involving employer and trade union bodies.</p> <p>Progressing the work of the Anti-Inflation Group.</p>	<p>Effectively resolving implementation challenges.</p> <p>Generation of policy options for reduction of inflationary trends.</p>
<p>To engage with the employers and Trade Unions, other Government Departments and external parties on the formulation of a comprehensive approach to future pensions policy.</p>	<p>Progressing the work of the Partnership Pensions Review Group and contributing to development of the post-Green Paper agenda.</p>	<p>Successful implementation of pensions-related commitments contained in <i>Towards 2016</i>.</p>
INDUSTRIAL RELATIONS		
<p>To support dialogue at national level aimed at ensuring industrial relations peace and stability and improved service delivery.</p>	<p>Timely consideration of major disputes by the National Implementation Body.</p> <p>Targeted consideration of issues by the Forum on the Health Sector.</p>	<p>Resolution of major disputes.</p> <p>Low levels of days lost through industrial disputes.</p> <p>An industrial relations climate conducive to investment and employment.</p> <p>Development of a change agenda and generation of policy options to support a stable industrial relations climate in the Health Sector and flexibility of work practices.</p>
EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS		
<p>To promote the development and implementation of the employment rights programme set out in Part 2 of <i>Towards 2016</i>.</p>	<p>Successful interaction with social partners and relevant Government Departments and Agencies, especially through the Group on Labour Market Trends and Employment Standards.</p>	<p>Successful implementation of relevant commitments in <i>Towards 2016</i>, including in relation to the modernisation of employment rights legislation.</p>
<p>To oversee implementation of an agreed process to enhance labour market statistics, involving both survey and dataset matches.</p>	<p>Ongoing monitoring and assessment by the Group on Labour Market Trends and Employment Standards.</p>	<p>A successful outcome to the special QNHS module in Q1 2008 on Agency Employment and Working conditions.</p> <p>Improved availability of statistical information on the labour market through new dataset matches using PPSNs.</p>



Strategic Priority D – Social Partnership/Social Dialogue (Industrial Relations and Workplace Change)

Key Objectives	Actions	Indicators
WORKPLACE PARTNERSHIP		
To modernise and improve performance and service delivery in both the public and private sectors through workplace partnership.	<p>Supporting the implementation of the work programme of the National Centre for Partnership and Performance (NCPP).</p> <p>Raising awareness and securing successful implementation of the National Workplace Strategy.</p>	<p>Contributing to high-performing workplaces in both the public and private sectors (as assessed by special workplace surveys).</p> <p>Successful roll-out by the NCPP of a public awareness campaign.</p> <p>Successful conduct by the NCPP of employer and employee surveys.</p>
SOCIAL DIALOGUE AT EU LEVEL		
To promote social dialogue at EU and International level.	Promoting social dialogue and Ireland's system of social partnership at EU and international level.	Contributing to promoting social dialogue at EU level, in particular with newer Member States and development of partnership as a key theme in European discourse through briefings, delegation meetings and participation at appropriate international bodies.



Strategic Priority E – Public Service Modernisation

Overall Goal: To provide a more efficient and effective service to the Government and to the citizen.

Key Objectives	Actions	Indicators
To formulate and co-ordinate policy on Public Service Modernisation.	<p>Continue to support the Implementation Group of Secretaries General in its leadership and co-ordination role.</p> <p>Develop policy proposals and initiatives following appropriate analysis and consultation, particularly in light of the findings of the OECD Review of the Irish Public Service.</p> <p>Develop policy proposals for a Leadership Development Initiative.</p>	Evidence of improvements to public service effectiveness through external evaluations, including the PVG process under <i>Towards 2016</i> .
To ensure negotiation and implementation of modernisation programmes for the public service as part of social partnership agreements.	Monitor and actively promote implementation of modernisation commitments in <i>Towards 2016</i> and new modernisation initiatives which may be brought forward (e.g. arising from OECD review).	<p>Evidence of improvements to public service effectiveness through external evaluations, including the PVG process under <i>Towards 2016</i>.</p> <p>Robust modernisation agenda maintained.</p>
To support public service organisations in the implementation of their modernisation programmes	<p>Facilitate sharing of good practice and exchange of information through the Change Management Network, the QCS Network, other networks, groups, seminars and training.</p> <p>Recognise and promote an innovative approach to modernisation across the Public Service, in particular through the <i>Taoiseach's Public Service Excellence Awards</i> scheme.</p>	<p>Feedback on operation on the relevant networks, groups, seminar and training.</p> <p>Successful organisation of the <i>Taoiseach's Public Service Excellent Awards</i> and positive feedback on the associated conferences.</p>
To develop and deepen the Quality Customer Service (QCS) Initiative	<p>Strengthen and deepen the Customer Charter Initiative in the Civil Service and Public Service.</p> <p>Develop new policies and initiatives for the development and improvement of customer service.</p>	<p>Implementation of the recommendations of the Evaluation of Customer Charters and the customer service commitments set out in the Programme for Government.</p> <p>Completion of annual surveys of Civil Service customers.</p>



Strategic Priority E – Public Service Modernisation

Key Objectives	Actions	Indicators
To promote effective communication of the Modernisation programme across the Civil Service	<p>Publish LINK magazine on a regular basis.</p> <p>Maintain the Better Government website www.bettergov.ie website.</p> <p>Develop innovative communication activities and strategies for communication of the modernisation programme and the sharing of best practice.</p> <p>Communication of the modernisations programme internationally through attendance at and contributions to programmes and conferences, including at the 5th and 6th EU Quality Conferences.</p>	<p>Feedback and metrics on LINK magazine and the Better Government website.</p> <p>Evidence of the impact of communication activities, including the awareness and implementation of strategies and initiatives.</p> <p>Feedback on Ireland's representation / participation in international fora.</p>
To support the ongoing modernisation of the public service by assisting Government Departments, Offices and, in time, other bodies in assessing their strengths and weaknesses to meet future challenges.	<p>Co-ordinate and promote the Organisational Review Programme to embed a system of ongoing rolling assessments of key Public Service organisations.</p>	<p>A robust and credible review process that facilitates organisations to achieve their business plans and strategy.</p> <p>Practical reports on each organisation that enable it to meet future challenges.</p> <p>The implementation of greater synergies across various functions, programmes and services within and between organisations.</p>
To support further improvements in the quality of regulation, including through implementation of the Government White Paper, <i>Regulating Better</i>	<p>Lead the Review of the Economic Regulatory Environment.</p> <p>Promote and monitor progress in implementing White Paper commitments in partnership with Departments and other stakeholders as appropriate.</p> <p>Continue to contribute to the development of Better Regulation policy at EU level in line with national policy.</p>	<p>Successful implementation of the commitment in the Programme for Government to carry out the Review of the Economic Regulatory Environment.</p> <p>Reports to Government and other Groups, including the Implementation Group of Secretaries General. Views of stakeholders, including those expressed through the Partnership Process and the HLG on Business Regulation.</p> <p>Effective EU Better Regulation Policies that take account of Ireland's position.</p>
To further develop Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA) as a tool for evidence-based policy-making based on the RIA Review	<p>Co-ordinate the implementation of the recommendations of the RIA Review in partnership with the RIA Network.</p>	<p>Reports to Government and other Groups, including the Implementation Group of Secretaries General.</p> <p>Awareness and satisfaction of stakeholders, including the Social Partners with the RIA process.</p>



Strategic Priority F – The Knowledge Society

Overall Goal: To build and develop a digitally inclusive society

Key Objectives	Actions	Indicators
To ensure that there is a strategic policy framework including mechanisms for Ireland to further build and develop our digitally inclusive society and in so doing to benefit our citizens, our institutions and our economy.	<p>To engage with all relevant stakeholders, and to have regard to relevant research and policy objectives, in formulating and agreeing strategies to focus on the specific areas of the use of new media technologies</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • in Society • in Government and in the Public Sector • in Commerce 	<p>New strategy document(s) reflecting emerging needs;</p> <p>Annual progress reports.</p> <p>International comparative reports on the development of a digitally inclusive society showing Ireland in an improved position.</p> <p>Agreement on frameworks for the future use of technology in Government</p> <p>Agreement on an action plan for a national e-payments strategy</p>
To support the work of the Minister of State in promoting a more digitally inclusive society in Ireland.	<p>Put in place agreed and or new initiatives to help us to achieve specific agreed goals, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased engagement of older people • Advantages for communities and individuals through greater exploitation of technologies • Greater use of technology in the democratic process 	<p>Public perception of the existence of strong leadership and engagement with the issues to be addressed.</p> <p>Survey data to indicate increased participation/engagement.</p>
Promote greater engagement with and participation in a more digitally inclusive society	<p>To promote stakeholder acceptance of roles and responsibilities in building the knowledge society.</p> <p>To raise awareness of the potential benefits of participation for everyone whether engaged in business, social interaction, or for transactions with government.</p> <p>To encourage the creation of new Digital Content likely to be relevant to citizens and businesses so as to further enhance the attractiveness of engagement and in doing so, to facilitate new innovation and efficiencies</p> <p>To conduct research on specific areas to inform future policy.</p>	<p>Public and sectoral awareness of policies to address the issues.</p> <p>Agreement on an implementation strategy for a national spatial data infrastructure</p> <p>Increased engagement with and participation in the knowledge society as reflected by annual surveys such as the Central Statistics Office's Quarterly National household Survey and ICT Enterprise Survey and others</p>



Strategic Priority G – Corporate Services

Overall goal: To provide corporate support services to the Department

Key Objectives	Actions	Indicators
To manage the Department's human resources so as to contribute to the Department's goals while also promoting the personal development goals of individuals.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide a complete range of HR services to management and staff Develop and implement a new HR Strategy to cover the period of this Strategy Statement Develop and implement appropriate training programmes to meet our business needs and the personal development needs of staff 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Employee alignment/ engagement, as measured through the Employee Opinion Surveys. Amount of staff training received (measured in days). % of payroll spent on training Evaluation of training initiatives and feedback from trainees/ managers
To ensure that the Department continues to meet its corporate legal responsibilities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All necessary actions taken to comply with our corporate legal responsibilities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Full compliance achieved in respect of each legislative measure.
To deliver a financial management service that promotes and contributes to the effective use of the Department's financial resources through the delivery of economy, efficiency, value for money and promptness in all expenditure.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continual monitoring of expenditure trends Programme of VFM Reviews completed annually. Allocation of Resources so as to ensure a balance between Departmental requirements and developments in the public finances. Planned programme of internal audits completed annually. The use of shared service facilities within the Public Sector to provide financial management and payroll systems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No excess on Vote Level of economies and efficiencies achieved, while continuing to deliver high quality outputs. No adverse findings in the C&AG's Report on the Appropriation Account. Audits completed on schedule and approved by Internal Audit Committee. Non-core activity removed to specialist agency so as to enable resources to be dedicated to core activities and adding value to those activities
Provide a reliable and effective information and communications technology service that meets the Department's existing and future needs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop and implement systems which support collaboration between business areas and across Departments and other organisations Provide secure remote access from remote or mobile locations to information systems Enhance security and resilience of all core business systems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Positive feedback in Post Implementation reviews of new systems – more efficiency and effectiveness achieved Staff have access to work remotely within, or out of hours Business continuity assured
<p>To support the provision of a high level of service to the Department's customers, both internal and external.</p> <p>To provide efficient and effective library, registry, archives and other support services.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commitments in Customer Charter met. Ongoing delivery of effective and efficient service from registry, library, etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> External customer satisfaction levels, as measured through annual customer surveys, customer feedback, mystery shopping, interviews and focus groups. Staff satisfaction levels with internal support services, as measured through employee opinion surveys.



Strategic Priority G – Corporate Services

Key Objectives	Actions	Indicators
To ensure that the procurement function formally supports the Department's key business activities and is focused on delivering value for money outcomes through analysis-based purchasing strategies that are consistent with EU and national procurement law .	To improve procurement structures and expertise in the Department on an on-going basis, ensuring that purchasing practices are professional and procurement staff have the necessary capabilities to operate in line with best practise.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Business needs of Divisions met, as indicated in feedback from Employee Opinion Surveys. Economies and efficiencies achieved through new procedures and reduced administration surrounding the procurement function. No adverse findings in C&AG's or Internal Audit Reports Review of Corporate Procurement Plan 2006-2008, showing progress in the achievement of the High Level Goals and Strategies contained in the plan.
To implement a modernisation programme that supports the achievement of the Department's goals and is aligned with the broader Civil Service modernisation programme and models of best practice.	Modernisation Action Plan implemented within set timeframes.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Progress verified externally by CSPVG. External customer satisfaction levels, as measured through annual customer surveys.
To support and develop the partnership process in the Department.	Regular meetings held	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No disputes with staff unions Participation levels by staff, and range of issues agreed through partnership
Ensure the efficiency and effectiveness of the internal control systems within the Department.	Undertake an internal audit programme in consultation with the Department's Audit Committee including, where necessary, with specialist assistance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of audits completed. Quality of reports Effective and prompt implementation of recommendations. Improved internal controls put in place to reduce business risks.





Getting the Organisational Conditions Right

In putting this Strategy into effect, we will have regard to the need:

- for good governance, involving the promotion of ethical values and appropriate guiding principles; and developing strategic management mechanisms and other supports
- to ensure that we have the resources - financial, technological and intellectual - to realise our goals, and the ability to manage these resources
- to deliver on the aims of our modernisation programme
- to keep our customers as a central focus of our work
- to anticipate risks and ensure that corrective action is taken as necessary.

We also need to ensure that progress on implementing the Strategy Statement is measured appropriately and clearly. This aspect is dealt with in Chapter 5.

The sections below provide more information on each of these aspects of translating our strategy into action.

Good Governance

High Standards of Conduct

The Department has high standards of conduct that characterise our service and enable us to carry out our mission. In keeping with the Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour, and other relevant Civil Service and Departmental policies, officers of the Department are expected to behave ethically and to:

- Maintain high standards of service delivery by conscientiously, honestly, fairly and impartially serving the Government, the other institutions of State and the public; always acting within the law; and performing duties with efficiency, diligence and courtesy. The principles of quality customer service inform our work.
- Observe appropriate behaviour at work, including dealing with stakeholders fairly and promptly, treating colleagues with respect, and having proper regard for State resources.
- Maintain the highest standards of probity by acting with integrity at all times.

Internal Management

The internal management of the Department is headed by the Secretary General, assisted by the Management Advisory Committee (MAC) of Assistant Secretaries. Each Assistant Secretary has responsibility for the management of one or more Divisions, as set out in the Organisation Chart at Appendix II. The MAC meets regularly to deal with the ongoing high-level business of the Department. Other mechanisms to improve cross-Divisional understanding include working groups; regular staff presentations on topics of mutual interest; and communications programmes. The Department's Partnership Committee, and its associated sub-groups, provide a forum for involving staff in matters of importance to the Department, and assists in the implementation of our modernisation programme.

All management processes are, of course, designed to be flexible in responding to changed circumstances and the emerging priorities of the Taoiseach and the Government of the day.

Better Regulation

The Department plays a major role in developing and promoting principles of good regulatory policy and better governance across the public service. While we generally do not have significant legislative responsibilities, such as initiating Bills and Statutory Instruments, we are committed to promoting the principles of good regulation internally. Our aim is to ensure that, whenever regulation is justified, it is prepared in a fully transparent way which maximises public participation in its formulation. We also seek to ensure that it:

- is clear
- achieves its objectives
- is not overly burdensome
- is properly enforced
- has no unintended effects
- is reviewed regularly.

Key actions in the future will include, in conjunction with all Divisions, promotion of the use of Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) to

support evidence-based policy making, in particular with regard to cross-cutting issues and the work of relevant policy groups; and keeping legislation under review, in order to identify areas where modernisation and consolidation may be possible.

Business Planning and PMDS

Each of the Department's Divisions prepares an annual business plan which sets out how our strategic objectives will be implemented. All staff are involved in preparing the plans, which are reviewed twice yearly by the Management Advisory Committee. This ensures that progress remains on track, that risks are appropriately assessed and managed, and that corrective actions are taken as necessary.

The business plans contain specific annual targets for each Division, based on the Strategy Statement and other relevant targets e.g. targets under the Customer Charter. Where possible, these targets are benchmarked against comparable organisations. A framework has been agreed for incorporating formal risk management into the business planning process.

These objectives are, in turn, reflected in the personal work objectives and performance targets for each officer through the Performance Management and Development System. (PMDS) contributes to continuous improvement in performance by:

- aligning individual and team performance with the goals of the Department as set out in Business Plans
- providing greater clarity in objective setting and related performance targets for individuals and teams and
- monitoring progress on their achievement.

It is a process for establishing shared understanding about what is to be achieved and how it is to be achieved. Staff are encouraged to work for the highest standards of performance in delivering these goals.

In keeping with the *Public Service Management Act, 1997*, we publish an Annual Report on progress in implementing the Strategy Statement. These reports are available on our website (www.taoiseach.gov.ie) in Irish and English.

Human Resource Management and Development

As the Department operates at the heart of Government, we have identified the ability to have a whole-of-government perspective as one of our core competencies. In addition, managing and developing people, good decision-making/judgement and teamwork are critical skills and behaviours for our people. The Department's day-to-day activities and its strategic human resource and staff development policies are driven by these key competencies.

The Department depends on the quality of our intellectual capital. Staff who are highly motivated, and equipped with the skills and opportunities to achieve the Department's goals and to further their own career development, are essential in ensuring quality results.

Everyone who works in the Department is asked to take responsibility, to innovate, to challenge themselves and learn. In return, our staff can expect:

- fair pay and conditions
- equitable people management processes
- opportunities for skills development and career progression
- reasonable opportunities for flexible working patterns
- clarity regarding roles and contributions
- a pleasant, safe and supportive working environment
- respectful treatment and dignity at work.

Line managers have a key role in implementing people management policies, in fostering an environment conducive to learning and in managing performance. We will pay particular attention over the course of this Strategy to supporting managers in this role. We will also review our integrated Human Resource Strategy and Staff Development Plan to reflect new developments, and continue to survey staff to measure employee engagement, commitment and satisfaction.

With regard to promotions, we are moving towards 100% competitive promotion processes, and have already reached this goal in relation to the senior and middle management grades.

We have also set ourselves the following objectives, with an indicative time scale of 2010, subject to the over-riding condition of the merit principle:

- increase the proportion of women in the Principal Officer grade from 27% to 40%
- monitor flows from the Higher Executive Officer/Administrative Officer grades to the Assistant Principal grade, in order to maintain overall gender balance, as is the case at present
- seek to promote equality at recruitment level, in discussion with the Public Appointments Service and other relevant agencies.

The Department actively progresses equality and diversity through our HR policies, training programmes and communications with staff. We will continue this process over the lifetime of this Strategy to ensure we value and benefit from everyone's contribution.



Financial

In improving our capacity to work productively with minimum wasted effort and expense, our Corporate Services Division delivers a financial management service that supports the effective use of our financial resources, through the delivery of economy, efficiency, value-for-money and promptness in all expenditure.

At the macro level, resource allocation is a matter for negotiation with the Department of Finance and ultimately for decision by the Government. Save in exceptional circumstances, such as the commencement of a major national project, the Department has operated within the overall limits for expenditure increases set by the Minister for Finance. Although the Department's budget is small in absolute terms, we are conscious of the need to provide a lead in expenditure management.

Within the Department, resources are allocated to individual Divisions and Programmes by senior management, in co-operation with line managers and Corporate Services Division.

Finance Division will continue to support the Secretary General in his role as Accounting Officer over the period of this Strategy Statement. It will ensure that a robust system of internal financial controls is in place and that the Department's financial responsibilities are discharged. The Internal Audit function and Internal Audit Committee also have key roles to play, providing assurance to the Secretary General and line Managers of the adequacy of the internal control system, and helping to develop a risk management framework in the Department.

Now that the Management Information Framework has been implemented, our main focus continues to be the modernisation of financial management processes and control systems. Actions to achieve better value-for-money (without compromising on the quality of service we provide), include:

- The modernisation of management processes in the Finance Unit
- Implementation of a Corporate Procurement Plan and enhanced procurement procedures
- The commitment to having an Internal Audit function within the Department, and the assignment of professional qualified staff to key positions in the Finance function
- The leveraging of improved management processes and information to achieve better value-for-money
- The use of technology to streamline, and where possible replace, manual processes.
- Undertaking a programme of value-for-money reviews
- Closer integration between financial management and the broader strategic management of the Department in the context of Annual Output Statements which link resources to achievement of objectives
- Outsourcing the Department's Oracle financial management and Corepay payroll systems to the Financial Shared Services (FSS) Centre in the Department of Justice in Killarney. This will result in a non-core activity being removed from the Department to an agency that specialises in service provision, so allowing us to concentrate on our core business activities and to direct our financial focus to adding value to those activities.

Future resource allocation will be determined by developments in the public finances. Through improved management and a clear focus on value for money, we intend to continue to provide an excellent service within the resources available to us.

Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

The IT Unit has become more strategically focused over the course of the previous strategy statement, and continues to build on progress made during this time. It will focus on supporting the Department's business through providing secure, flexible and efficient systems. It will also try to identify possible efficiencies through cross-Departmental collaboration; and will continue to provide modern, efficient systems to support decentralisation, mobile and flexible working. Where practical, IT unit will avail of shared service facilities, in order to achieve value for money and to allow for concentration on core competencies. As well as achieving value for money in its systems, IT Unit also aims to deliver more energy efficiency in its hardware and systems.

Statistics/Data Strategy

As part of the ongoing process of delivering a statistics strategy, the Department has recently appointed an officer to the role of Knowledge Manager. Part of the responsibility of this role is to analyse the Department's Knowledge and Information requirements and to develop a strategy and action plan based on this business analysis.

The Department is also in the process of migrating its Financial Management System to a specialist financial shared services platform which will give immediate access to additional statistical and management information which will better inform management decisions in the future.

An informal group drawn from across the Department has been working on a draft data strategy statement. On completion, this draft will form the basis of a wider discussion leading to a comprehensive statement of data strategy needs.

Modernisation

In accordance with the terms of *Towards 2016*, the Department has submitted a Modernisation Action Plans to the independent Civil Service Performance Verification Group and reported on progress three times to date.

The main aims of our modernisation programme are:

- To provide an excellent service to our customers
- To maintain a strategic focus on the Department's role and functions to ensure that we provide leadership and coordination across key areas of Government policy
- To position the Department to meet the ongoing changes in the external environment
- To work in partnership with staff to bring about changes required.

The current Plan – which covers the period from July 2006 to September 2008 – includes a range of actions under the following themes:

- Modernisation, flexibility and change
- Stable industrial relations/Managing Change
- Team/Cross-Functional Working
- New Technology/eGovernment
- Service Delivery/Service Channels/Shared Services
- Attendance patterns
- Redeployment of staff
- Competitive merit-based promotions

The change programme has made a significant impact on the way the Department conducts its business. Progress has been demonstrated in areas such as staff flexibility and improved capacity to respond effectively to changed circumstances and external pressures; more productivity and accountability, with the introduction of expenditure and business plan reviews; and more focused responses to customer needs.

The Department also has an active role in monitoring progress of the National Economic and Social Development Office in achieving its modernisation objectives, including quality customer service.

Overall the impact of the programme has been to improve performance by accelerating change in an environment of industrial peace.

Decentralisation

While this Department itself is not due to be decentralised, the implementation of decentralisation presents both challenges and opportunities. Almost a quarter of our staff have applied to be decentralised, and we have put in place appropriate mechanisms to ensure that this will not impact negatively on the continuity and high quality of service expected by our external and internal customers. We are also addressing how to work with our partners in other Government Departments in the changed environment, for example, through re-engineering business processes. A good example is the eCabinet system, which allows for the transfer of documents in a secure environment.

Delivering a Quality Customer Service

Apart from the popular tours of Government Buildings (the 'Saturday Tours'), our involvement in the delivery of services directly to the general public is limited. However, our Customer Charter (available on our website www.taoiseach.gov.ie) sets out a range of commitments across all the services we provide. The current Charter:

- prioritises our activities and resources by highlighting areas of importance for our customers (e.g. other Departments and Agencies, representative bodies such as the social partners, etc.)

- will lead to an improvement in the services we provide, through clearly setting out the standards customers can expect; as well as arrangements for monitoring and evaluating progress in meeting our targets and training staff.

We have also prepared a Customer Service Action Plan. This is a more detailed document that describes how the Customer Charter commitments will be delivered and evaluated.

Progress under the Charter will be reported on in our Annual Reports. One of the main ways we assess progress is by using annual surveys, which ask customers whether we have met the targets set out in the Charter. We also use customer feedback, mystery shopping, interviews, and focus groups.

To date, surveys have shown that customers consider us to be a high performer in both public and private sector terms. Recent surveys showed an increase in those who noticed an improvement in the quality of service, in areas such as the efficiency and courtesy of our staff, the promptness of email response times, and the layout of the Department's website.

We are committed to producing a new Customer Charter and accompanying Customer Action Plan for the period 2008-2010.

The Quality Customer Service structure within the Department is supported at the highest level. The QCS Sub Group reports to the Partnership Committee, and is a useful platform to discuss, promote and facilitate customer service issues within the Department.

Open Government

The *Freedom of Information Act, 1997*, and the *Freedom of Information (Amendment) Act, 2003*, assert the rights of members of the public to obtain access to official information to the greatest extent possible, consistent with the public interest, and the right to privacy of individuals. Freedom of Information (FOI) requests are co-ordinated by the FOI Officer, Ms. Patricia Williams (email: foi@taoiseach.gov.ie; telephone 6194154).

A manual which provides a guide to the functions, structures and classes of records of the Department to help access information under the FOI Acts is available at www.taoiseach.ie

Environmental Sustainability

Our energy costs are shared with the other occupants of the Government Buildings complex. The Department also works closely with the Office of Public Works to effectively manage our consumption of energy resources and to raise awareness of energy conservation among staff.

The Department continues to seek out and use opportunities to recycle waste; dispose of redundant machinery in compliance with the Waste Management (Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment) Regulations 2005; and, wherever possible, to use recycled paper.





Delivering Better Government set out a vision of a Civil Service focused on results, delivering the highest quality services and responsive to the changing needs of Government and citizens. The framework to achieve this vision includes a more strategic approach to business planning, financial management reforms and a greater focus on outputs and results at individual, team and organisational level, as outlined in Chapter 4.

In addition, specific steps are being taken to ensure that we can measure and report clearly on progress in implementing the objectives set out in this Statement.

Inputs

The Management Information Framework developed over recent years has allowed us to measure and monitor the use of resources in achieving our goals. We will use it to measure the effectiveness of our resource allocation, in the context of each of the high-level objectives in this Strategy Statement, subject to the negotiation of appropriate allocation of resources in the Estimates provisions for 2009 and 2010.

Outputs and Outcomes

Our Annual Reports on the Strategy Statement will make clear what benefits are derived from the resources we use, and whether these benefits are contributing to progress. Measuring progress in the public service is often difficult. Customers and stakeholders can be dispersed; outputs are sometimes intangible; timescales for impact are uncertain; outcomes are, by definition, highly contestable and often produced as a joint effort between the public and government. The outputs and outcomes of this Department are often more long term and related to sectoral/national objectives for which, in many cases, we do not have direct responsibility within Government e.g. social inclusion measures.

Considerable work has been done in developing performance indicators, both quantitative and qualitative, that are easily understandable, focused on priority issues and analytically sound. It was also important to ensure coherence across indicators and alignment with Strategic Objectives. The Management Advisory Committee will keep the indicators under review to ensure that they remain relevant throughout the timescale of this Strategy Statement and, where necessary, that corrective action is taken in a timely way. In addition, the performance of Divisions and individuals is monitored on a continuing basis.

Our Annual Reports will also include an Output Statement for the Department. This will provide information not only on the Estimate allocations, but will link these allocations and the associated resources to the actions undertaken to further the Department's high-level objectives, and the relevant outputs and outcomes in relation to each one. The Output Statement provides transparency in relation to the allocation of resources, and the effectiveness of their use. The process of closely linking resources to the achievement of objectives has ensured greater coherence in the planning, management and implementation of our business processes. The detailed outputs and outcomes will lead to an improved understanding of what is being achieved with the money voted by the Dáil, throughout the lifetime of this Strategy.

Next Steps

In terms of next steps, the Department is also:

- further developing our data strategy to meet the Department's priority needs for evidence-based policy making
- working with the Department of Finance to examine all aspects of interoperability (including technical, data exchange and organisational process issues) across the public service i.e. interlinking systems, information and ways of working.

Progress in relation to each of these will be reported in our Annual Reports.

Other Aspects of Accountability Framework

As well as the measurement mechanisms outlined above, the Taoiseach and the Department are accountable for their actions, and their outcomes, via a range of other channels. These include:

- The Oireachtas – through Committees, Parliamentary Questions, etc.
- The media
- The social partnership monitoring framework
- Regulatory and oversight bodies (e.g. the Ombudsman, the Standards in Public Office Commission, the Comptroller and Auditor General)
- The Performance Verification Group (twice-yearly reports)
- Evaluation by academic and other non-governmental institutions, and groups in civil society, trade and industry bodies, commentators etc.
- International institutions such as the IMF, OECD, other governments and the EU
- Progress reports on policy outcomes
- Staff and their representatives
- The Internal Audit Committee and the Internal Audit function
- Customers/citizens through freedom of information and other democratic machinery
- Annual reporting of progress against customer charter targets.

These ensure continuous and close scrutiny of the Department's work at all levels.



Associated Bodies

The following Bodies are under the aegis of the Department of the Taoiseach:

- National Economic and Social Development Office
- National Economic and Social Council
- National Economic and Social Forum
- National Centre for Partnership and Performance

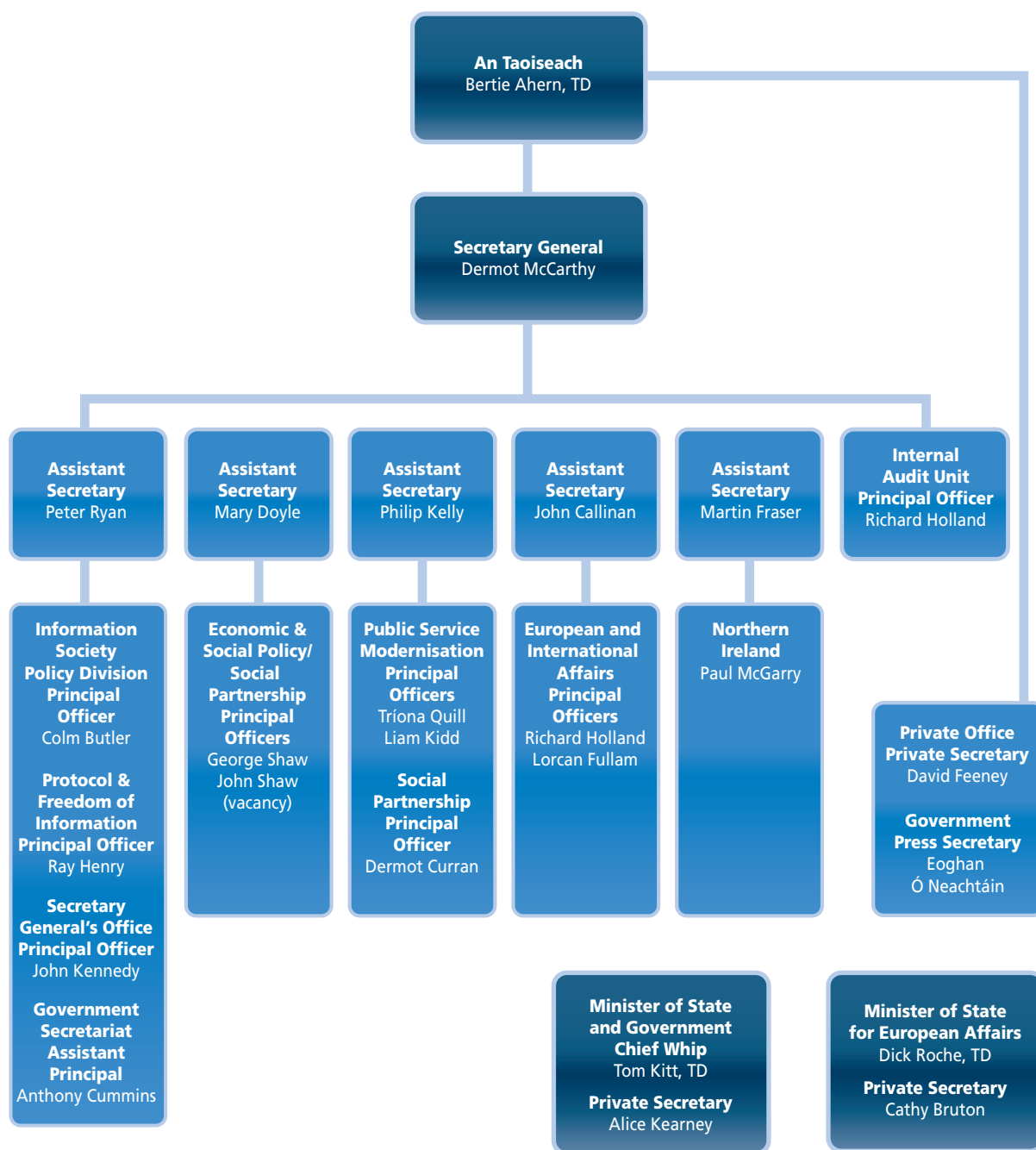
The following offices operate independently but are funded from the Department's Vote:

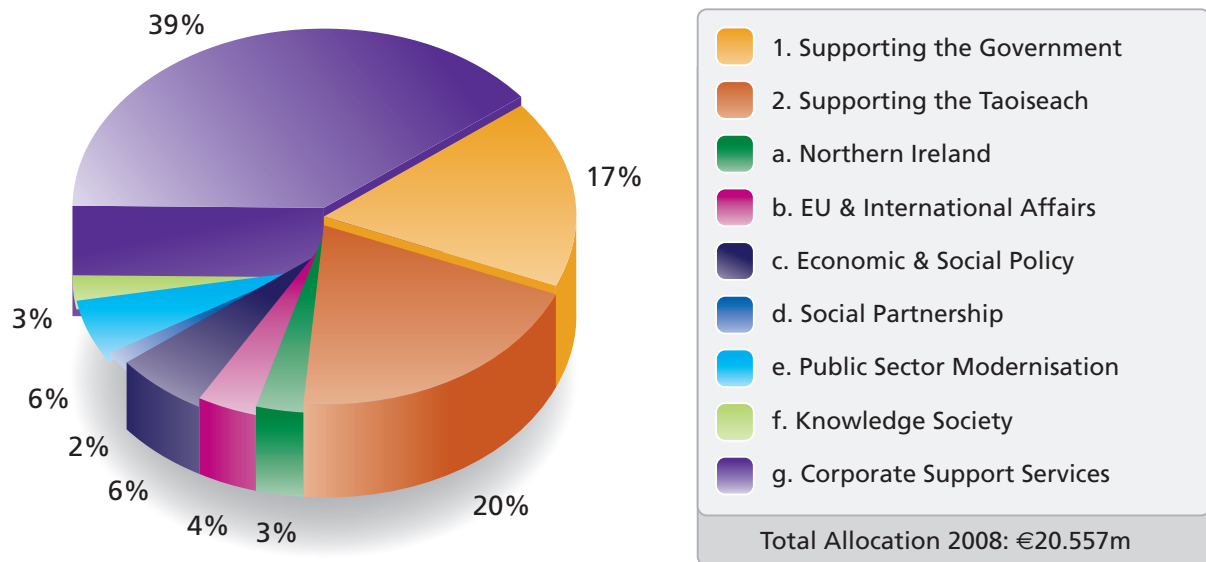
- National Forum on Europe
- The Moriarty Tribunal
- Irish Newfoundland Partnership
- Active Citizenship Office

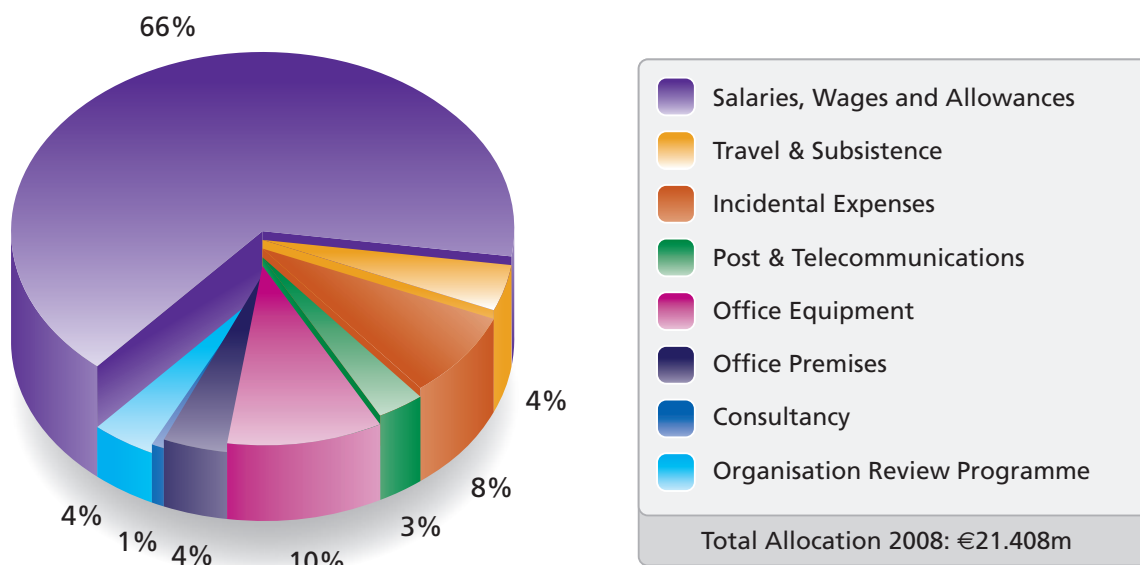
In addition, the Taoiseach and/or Ministers of State have ministerial responsibility for certain administrative matters in the following independent Offices:

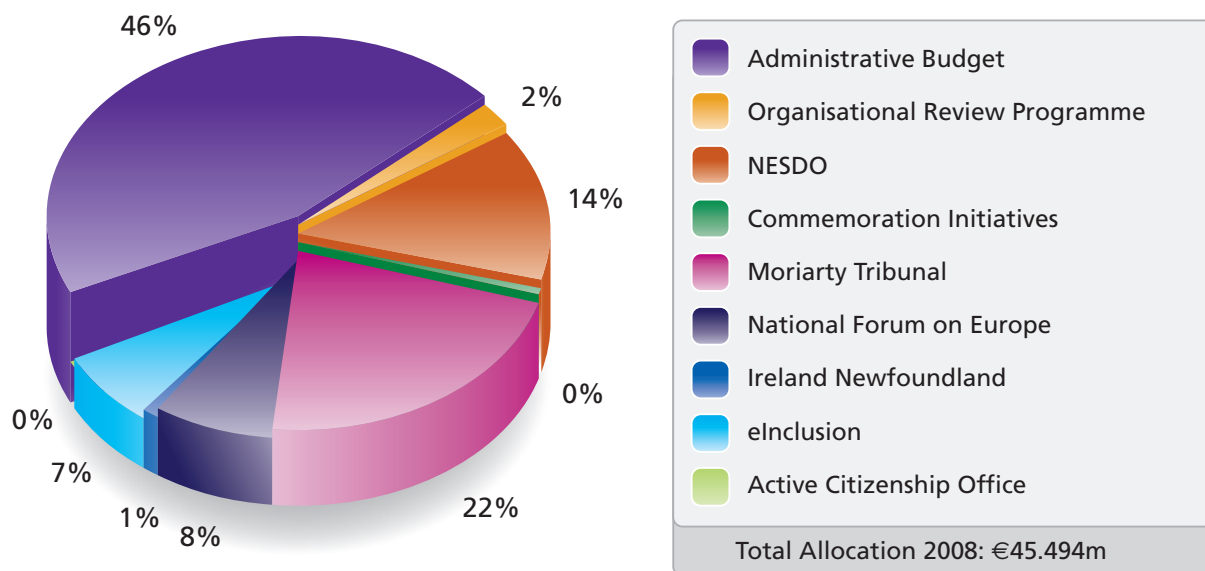
- Central Statistics Office
- Office of the Attorney General
- Office of the Chief State Solicitor
- Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
- Law Reform Commission

Organisation Chart









Resource Allocation by Strategic Objective

Strategic Objectives/Priorities	Revised Estimates 2008		
	Administrative	Programme	Total
	€000	€000	€000
Supporting the Government	3,582		
Subhead A8: Information Society – eCabinet and other Initiatives	1		3,583
Supporting the Taoiseach	4,137		4,137
Northern Ireland	678		
Subhead C: Forum for Peace and Reconciliation		5	
Subhead D: Commemoration Initiatives		200	
Subhead H: Newfoundland and Labrador Business Partnerships		354	
Subhead J: Commission of Investigation		1	1,238
European and International Affairs	729		
Subhead G: National Forum on Europe		3,809	4,538
Economic and Social Policy	1,235		
Subhead A9: Value for Money and Policy Reviews	27		
Subhead B1: National Economic and Social Development Office		4,617	
Subhead B2: National Economic and Social Council		240	
Subhead B4: National Economic and Social Forum		525	
Subhead K: Task Force on Active Citizenship		200	6,844
Social Partnership	361		
Subhead B3: National Centre for Partnership and Performance		1,118	1,479
Public Service Modernisation	1,307		
Subhead A10: Organisational Review Programme		750	2,057
Knowledge Society and e-Government	662		
Subhead I: Information Society and eInclusion		3,000	3,662
Corporate Support Services	7,939		
Appropriations in Aid	-100		7,839
Other Bodies and Initiatives funded from the Department's Vote			
Subhead E: Tribunal of Inquiry (Dunnes Payments)		1	
Subhead F: Tribunal of Inquiry (Payments to Haughey/Lowry)		10,016	10,017
Total 2008 Revised Estimate	20,558	24,836	45,394

Grade	No. of Staff	Male	Female	% of Women in Each Grade
Secretary General	1	1	0	0
Assistant Secretary	5	4	1	20
Principal Officer – PO	15	12	3	20
Assistant Principal – AP	32	10	22	69
Higher Executive Officer – HEO	29	8	21	72
Administrative Officer – AO	11	6	5	45
Executive Officer – EO	25	6	19	76
Staff Officer – SO	13	3	10	77
Clerical Officer – CO	45	10	35	78
Service Officers/Service Attendants	13	13	0	0
Cleaners	9	0	9	100
Total	198	73	125	63

Note: Work sharers are counted as one person. People seconded out or on contract to this Department, or who are currently on career break and maternity leave, are not included. Figures reflect the position as at 30 November 2007.



The Department of the Taoiseach is committed to providing a professional, efficient and courteous service to all our customers.

Our mandate is to support the Taoiseach in his constitutional and ceremonial role as Head of Government and to assist him in providing effective leadership, co-ordination and guidance across key policy areas. The staff of the Department conscientiously and impartially serve the Taoiseach and Government of the day, the Ministers of State, the other institutions of State and the general public, always acting with diligence, efficiency and courtesy.

Our Commitments to our customers

We aim to provide an excellent service that reflects your needs and expectations. To achieve this, we make the following commitments:

Policy Development and Implementation

We will aim to ensure that our contribution to the development and implementation of Government policy adds value to the achievement of our national and international goals.

Contacting the Department

We will provide details of the role/function of staff in relevant publications and on the websites and specific contact information in all correspondence.

Responding to You

You will receive clear, timely and concise replies to all correspondence, including e-mails. If your correspondence relates to a matter that comes within the remit of another public body, we will direct the correspondence to that body and inform you accordingly. If you contact us by telephone, courteous and helpful staff will deal with your query without delay or, if they are unable to respond to the query, arrange for someone to do so.

Meetings

Meetings will be organised and conducted efficiently and effectively. You can expect excellent meeting facilities, timely notification and advance circulation of clear and concise documentation for each meeting.

Visitors to the Department

All visitors to the Department will be treated in a courteous manner and directed to their correct destination quickly. High quality reception facilities will be provided, including appropriate provision for people with disabilities.



Media Services

We will provide members of the media with comprehensive and timely briefings on Government policies and activities. Appropriate staff will also be available to ensure that you receive a prompt and satisfactory response to your queries.

The Irish Language

We will ensure that customers who wish to conduct their business through Irish can do so.

Websites and Publications

We will provide accessible, informative and usable websites. We will ensure that our publications are clear and concise, address user needs and are available on our websites.

Tours of Government Buildings

We will provide informative tours of Government Buildings conducted by qualified guides, to make your visit a positive experience.

Diversity and Equality

We will respect the principles of equality and the diversity of our customers in the delivery of all services.

Suppliers

We will operate clear, impartial and transparent tendering / purchasing procedures.

Evaluation and reporting

This Charter has been developed following consultation with a wide range of our customers. We have defined criteria by which we will assess our performance against each of our commitments and will regularly survey our customers on the quality of the services we provide. We will report on our performance against each of these criteria in our Annual Report.

We welcome your comments and suggestions on this Charter, or on any of the services we provide. We also have a procedure for responding to any complaints you may have.

In return, we expect our staff to be treated with courtesy and respect.



AO	Administrative Officer	MAC	Management Advisory Committee
AP	Assistant Principal	MIF	Management Information Framework
APOCC	All Party Committee on the Constitution	NAPS	National Anti-Poverty Strategy
BIC	British Irish Council	NCPP	National Centre for Partnership and Performance
C&AG	Comptroller and Auditor General	NESC	National Economic and Social Council
CO	Clerical Officer	NESDO	National Economic and Social Development Office
CSO	Central Statistics Office	NESF	National Economic and Social Forum
CSPVG	Civil Service Performance Verification Group	NSMC	North South Ministerial Council
EO	Executive Officer	OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
ESRI	Economic and Social Research Institute	OPW	Office of Public Works
EU	European Union	PMDS	Performance Management and Development System
FOI	Freedom of Information	PO	Principal Officer
FSS	Financial Shared Services	PPPs	Public Private Partnerships
GDP	Gross Domestic Product	QCS	Quality Customer Service
GNP	Gross National Product	RIA	Regulatory Impact Assessment
HEO	Higher Executive Officer	UK	United Kingdom
HR	Human Resource	UN	United Nations
HRM	Human Resource Management	US	United States
ICT	Information and Communications Technology		
IT	Information Technology		
IR	Industrial Relations		
IMF	International Monetary Fund		



