



**An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail**
Department of Rural and
Community Development

Corporate Governance Framework

June 2019 (revised October 2023)

Contents

Secretary General's Foreword	4
Introduction	5
1. Department Overview	7
Background	7
Senior Management Structures	7
Values, Behaviour and Culture	7
Strategic Planning	8
Customer Service	9
Communications and Stakeholder Management	9
Organisational Functions of the Department	10
Our Structure	12
2. Senior Management Roles and Responsibilities	13
Minister for Rural and Community Development	13
Minister of State	14
Secretary General and Accounting Officer	14
Assistant Secretary General	17
Principal Officers	19
Special Adviser	20
Governance Role of all Staff	20
3. Management Board and Governance Structures	22
Management Board	22
Ministerial Management Board	24
Senior Management Team	24
Senior Management Review	24
4. Audit, Assurance and Compliance Arrangements	25
Role of Audit Committee	25
Role of Internal Audit Unit	25
Compliance	25
Finance Unit	26
Procurement	27
Human Resources Unit	27
Risk Management	29
Protected Disclosures	30
Information Management	30
Facilities Management, Health and Safety, Energy Efficiency and ICT	31

Information Technology Policies and Governance	32
Internal Governance of EU and International Policy Formulation	35
LEADER Programme	35
Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP)	36
PEACE IV Programme	37
Inspection, Compliance and Business Development	38
5. Bodies under the Aegis of the Department	40
Pobal	40
The Charities Regulatory Authority	40
Water Safety Ireland	40
Western Development Commission	40
Appendix 1: Compliance Framework	42
Appendix 2: Framework of Assignments	49

Secretary General's Foreword

The Department's Governance Framework encapsulates, into a single resource, its operational context, obligations and responsibilities, standards of conduct and accountability mechanisms. All combine to ensure that the Department, the bodies under its aegis and our stakeholders in the sector can achieve the objectives and goals set for us by Government in an appropriate manner conscious of value for money and public interest.

The document also reflects guidance from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's Corporate Governance Standard.

This Department is committed to delivering high quality policy advice to our Ministers and a key priority is to ensure that the programmes we are charged to deliver have a meaningful and positive impact on the lives of citizens and are delivered efficiently. The Department is also committed to having appropriate and proportionate arrangements in place so that resources are directed and utilised where most needed in order to support our mission "*To promote rural and community development and to support vibrant, inclusive and sustainable communities throughout Ireland*".

We recognise that good governance is about delivering priorities, achieving objectives, behaving with integrity and acting in the public interest, and in ways that are consistent with legal, regulatory and Government policy obligations. This Governance Framework seeks to underpin this. Its continued development will be informed and developed on foot of the learning experiences of the Department and its stakeholders.



Mary Hurley
Secretary General

Introduction

WHAT IS CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Governance is concerned with developing and implementing appropriate structures and processes for directing and managing an organisation so that stakeholders can be assured that the organisation is operating effectively and efficiently.

Governance in a Government Department focuses on the legal, regulatory, policy and service obligations and on the sets of relationships between the Minister, Minister of State, Secretary General, the Management Board, senior management, all staff and stakeholders in determining the direction and performance of the organisation. Legislation is often identified as the key driver of governance arrangements in Government Departments but there is also a wide variety of good practice guidelines and authoritative guidance that outline much of the governance obligations for civil and public service organisations.

THE PURPOSE OF THIS FRAMEWORK

Good governance requires all management and staff to work to achieve the priorities of the Department while ensuring compliance with legal, regulatory and government policy obligations.

There are universally accepted governance principles and norms that apply to civil service and public sector organisations and pursuing and achieving good governance requires effective arrangements to be in place to ensure these principles and norms are being implemented. The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform has published its Corporate Governance Standard for the Civil Service 2015, which sets out a summary of good governance principles, and an adaptable governance framework including provisions to be used in documenting each Department's own arrangements.

This Governance Framework outlines how this Department adheres to these principles and norms within our strategic and operational activities, within our work programmes and in how we deliver our mission.

The following table outlines the governance principles which are appropriate to our Department and they form the basis for the governance arrangements as outlined in this Framework. The principles support the fundamental function of good governance which is to ensure we deliver on our mandate and achieve intended outcomes while acting in the public interest at all times.

GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

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| <p>1. Good governance supports a culture and ethos which ensures behaviour with integrity, strong commitment to ethical values, and respect for the rule of law.</p> |
| <p>2. Good governance ensures openness, effective public consultation processes and comprehensive engagement with domestic and international stakeholders.</p> |
| <p>3. Good governance helps to define priorities and outcomes in terms of sustainable economic and societal benefits and to determine the policies and interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of these priorities and outcomes.</p> |
| <p>4. Good governance means developing the Department's capacity, including the capability of the leadership team, management and staff.</p> |
| <p>5. Good governance means managing risks and performance through robust internal control systems and effective performance management practices.</p> |
| <p>6. Good governance means implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, communications, audit and scrutiny to deliver effective accountability.</p> |

REVIEWING THIS FRAMEWORK

This framework is intended to evolve over time as the Department reviews and strengthens its corporate governance practices. These reviews will take place each year and its operation will be formally reviewed by Management Board annually. This document, originally published in 2019, is reviewed and updated on a regular basis, as required. Further updated versions of the document will appear on the Department's pages of the Government of Ireland website, www.gov.ie.

1. Department Overview

Background

The Department of Rural and Community Development was established in July 2017 following a Government Decision, with a mission “*to promote rural and community development and to support vibrant, inclusive and sustainable communities throughout Ireland*”.

Following Government formation in June 2020, responsibility for the offshore islands transferred to the Department, by way of SI 379 of 2020, on 23 September 2020.

Senior Management Structures

The Department’s Management Board consists of the Secretary General, and three Assistant Secretaries, responsible for three divisions: Rural Development and Regional Affairs, Community Development, and Corporate and Strategic Development.

Further details as to the Department’s structure and management is available on www.whodoeswhat.gov.ie. The Department’s staff are based in Dublin, Ballina and other regional locations.

The Department is led by the Minister for Rural and Community Development and assisted by the Minister of State for Community Development and Charities.

The Department has four bodies under its aegis, namely:

- Pobal
- Charities Regulator
- Water Safety Ireland
- Western Development Commission

The Department also has oversight of the Charity Appeals Tribunal.

Values, Behaviour and Culture

The Department of Rural and Community Development seeks to develop and maintain a culture of values and behaviour that best facilitates the Department’s ability to achieve its goals and objectives.

These values include a commitment to collaborative and innovative work practices, both internally and externally in our dealings with stakeholders that assist in the delivery of the Department's programme of supports and initiatives, and investment in the development of our staff through strong internal communication, supporting diversity and inclusion, mobility, training, and performance feedback.

Given the diverse nature of our stakeholders and the equally diverse range of challenges to be met, the Department is committed to:

Respect - Dedicated to fair and equal treatment of our stakeholders, promoting and advancing social justice and diversity. Promoting active participation in communities to identify their needs and achieve positive outcomes. Committed to human rights, equality and anti-discrimination in accordance with the Public Sector Duty obligation of the Human Rights and Equality Commission Act, 2014.

Connectedness - Encouraging collaboration, communication and engagement. Influencing and implementing with colleagues across Government, to deliver policies and initiatives which support our mission and strategic objectives. Engaging with our stakeholders in order to identify and respond to emerging needs.

Innovation - Embracing innovation and fostering continuous improvements of our programmes, policies and procedures. Maximising emerging opportunities in the delivery of our mission. Being open to change, new ideas and new technology.

Integrity - Displaying professionalism, accountability, and transparency in delivering on our mission. Achieving efficiency in approaches and delivering value-for-money. Delivering a high quality customer service to our stakeholders.

Strategic Planning

The Department's high-level goals and objectives are set out in its Statement of Strategy, which is developed at intervals of no more than three years' duration. The Department published a new Statement of Strategy in August 2023, which covers a period of up to three years.

It outlines the key priorities of the Department, in line with Government policy and our statutory obligations, and internally with regard to developing and growing our corporate capacity to deliver our objectives.

Progress on meeting the targets and objectives set out in the Statement of Strategy is detailed in our published Annual Report.

Strategic business planning takes place on a yearly basis cognisant of the Department's Statement of Strategy, Government Policy, and Public and Civil Service reform obligations. Resource management and staff development requirements are also considered as part of the process.

Each Business Unit of the Department prepares a business plan at the beginning of each year, in consultation with their Head of Division. These plans are approved by Management Board and include strategic and operational goals for delivery by the unit. Implementation of these business plans is kept under review by Management Board and Senior Management Team throughout the year.

The remit of the Department includes both economic and social development in all our communities both rural and urban. Many of the Department's funding programmes and schemes seek to address the various and wide ranging challenges communities face.

In addition, co-ordination of responses across Departments to the needs of rural Ireland and local communities and the development of policy designed to further the economic and social advancement of these areas of society is a key function of our Department.

Customer Service

The Department is committed to delivering the highest quality of customer service to all its stakeholders and our obligations in this regard are set out in Customer Charter and Action Plan 2022 – 2025.

The Department has prepared an Irish Language Scheme as required by the Official Languages Act 2003 which details the services that the Department will provide through the medium of Irish, through the medium of English, and through the medium of both Irish and English. This scheme came into in April 2019 and will remain in place until the new system of language standards comes into force.

Communications and Stakeholder Management

The Department recognises the importance of good communications, both internally and externally, and has published a Communications Strategy 2020-2023. The three priorities identified by the Strategy are: (i) Identify, understand and target our audiences, (ii) Messaging with purpose and clarity, and (iii) Ensure that message delivery is timely and appropriate channels are used. The Communications Unit are responsible for implementing the Strategy and are assisted in this through an internal Communications Network in which each unit is represented. The Communications Unit publishes Press Releases and external documents on the Gov.ie website, and produces an internal newsletter for staff.

The Communications Unit have mapped the external Stakeholders in order to better target and inform the clients of the Department through the most appropriate means for that stakeholder. The Department also runs public information campaigns, and participates in events such as the National Ploughing Championships.

Organisational Functions of the Department

CORPORATE AND STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT

This Division is responsible for leading and growing the Department's strategic policy development capacity, policy co-ordination, research and evaluation, communication functions, HR, finance, inspection and compliance, corporate governance, and other business support functions such as IT and innovation which are key to the Department's ability to deliver its remit.

This Division is also responsible for the administration and delivery of the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, one of the four pillar funds launched under the National Development Plan and Project Ireland 2040.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The goal of the Community Development Division is to promote and support the development of vibrant, sustainable and inclusive communities in both urban and rural areas, through implementing a coherent policy framework and strategy which supports community development, local development and the charity and voluntary sector.

A key objective is to bring about a more co-ordinated approach to publicly-funded local and community development interventions by further developing the role of Local Authorities through their Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs) and the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs). A further objective is to develop civic society by encouraging citizen engagement with Local Authority structures through the Public Participation Networks (PPNs) and to support and encourage volunteering through the implementation of the National Volunteering Strategy.

Other areas of this Division's remit include oversight of the Charities Regulator, Pobal and Water Safety Ireland; Libraries Development; the development of Government's relationship with Philanthropy; administration and oversight of the Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP) and a range of other funding schemes for community & voluntary groups. The Division is also responsible for the development of policy and delivery of programmes and supports relating to the offshore islands.

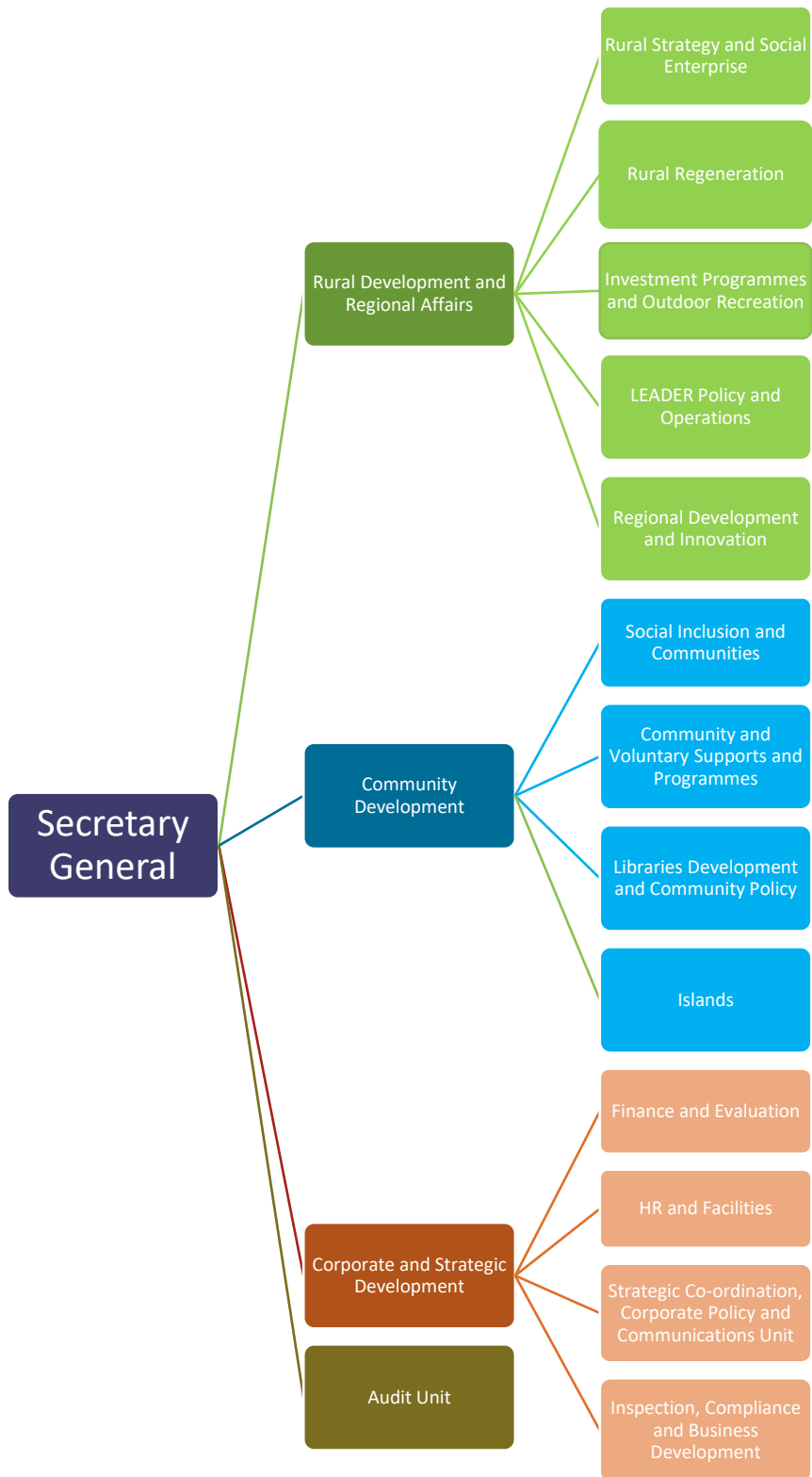
RURAL DEVELOPMENT AND REGIONAL AFFAIRS

The main goal of the Department's Rural Development and Regional Affairs Division is to promote and facilitate long-term sustainable economic and social progress in rural parts of Ireland through a coordinated approach across Government. A key instrument to deliver this objective is the Government's National Rural Development Policy – *Our Rural Future 2021-2025*, which contains a series of measures to unlock the potential of rural communities and enterprises through a framework of supports at national, regional and local level.

Other areas of the Division's activities include the implementation of the LEADER Programme 2014-2020, the delivery of a range of other schemes supporting outdoor recreation, town and village renewal and minor infrastructural works in rural areas, the coordination of the Tidy Towns competition.

The Division is also responsible for implementing Ireland's National Social Enterprise Policy and also plays an important role in regional development, through the development a national network of remote working hubs, supporting the rollout of high-speed broadband and telecommunications infrastructure, including Broadband Connection Points, across rural Ireland and facilitating the development of the Atlantic Economic Corridor concept. The Division has oversight of the Western Development Commission.

Our Structure



2. Senior Management Roles and Responsibilities

This chapter provides an overview of senior management governance roles and responsibilities in the Department, including those relating to the Minister, Minister of State, Secretary General and Accounting Officer, Special Adviser and other relevant staff.

In terms of delegation, the Public Service Management Act 1997 empowers the Secretary General to assign to other officers of the Department responsibility for the performance of his or her functions.

This chapter sets out the senior management roles and responsibilities from the Minister to the level of the Principal Officer or equivalent. The way in which managers conduct their governance and leadership duties is critical to creating a working environment and culture at corporate, divisional and business unit level which facilitates high performance and which fosters commitment, dedication, cooperation and active engagement. The Department is committed to a management and leadership style that is professional, informed and effective which reflects our core values including respect and integrity.

Minister for Rural and Community Development

The principal legislative provisions governing the Minister's powers are the Ministers and Secretaries Acts 1924 to 2017 and the Public Service Management Act 1997 (PSMA). The structures of Government Departments and distribution of its business are regulated by these Acts and of particular significance is the designation of the Minister in charge of each Department as a 'corporation sole', which underpins the doctrine of Ministerial responsibility. As corporation sole the Minister embodies the Department in law and bears the responsibility for its activities. In effect the Minister is the Department and the civil servants have no separate existence. This in turn means that the Minister is the ultimate decider of Departmental policy within the overall context of Government policy. The Minister is also responsible for the oversight of the Charities Regulator. The Minister delegates, by [Statutory Instrument](#), certain functions to the Minister of State, these are described below.

The Department of Rural and Community Development's mission is ***"To promote rural and community development and to support vibrant, inclusive and sustainable communities throughout Ireland."***

To do this we provide impartial, informed, advice to the Minister and, through the Minister, Government on policy and ensure the effective implementation of Government policy as it relates to the Department.

The Department does not formulate policy independently of the Minister. To support the Minister in his or her role as policy maker it is important that we fully utilise opportunities in:

- The development of policy advice at the request of the Minister and/or the Government;
- Initiate consideration of policy advice and undertake requisite research and consultation having regard to the changing environment for the consideration of the Minister or Government; and
- Offer advice to the Minister on Government policies in development by preparing appropriate observations on Government Memoranda.

Minister of State

A Minister of State means a person appointed under section 1(1) of the Ministers and Secretaries (Amendment) (No. 2) Act, 1977 attached to one or more Departments of State of the Government and who assists a Minister of the Government. The Minister of State has been delegated a range of functions by the Minister. These include oversight of the Charities Regulator, implementation of the five-year national community and voluntary strategy – *Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities*, delivery of a range of community development programmes, the Dormant Accounts Fund, responsibility for the Voluntary & Community sector including funding programmes and policy development, development of the Public Participation Networks and Citizen Engagement.

Secretary General and Accounting Officer

The Secretary General is the administrative Head of the Department, the Accounting Officer, and has overall management responsibility for the Department and the advice submitted to the Minister on policy. The respective responsibilities are set out below.

Secretary General

The Ministers and Secretaries Act 1924 and Public Service Management Act 1997 outline the statutory responsibility of the Secretary General. Under the 1997 Act, certain duties are assigned to the Secretary General within the Department (sections 4 (1), 9 (1) & 9 (2)), including, but not limited to:

- managing the Department;
- implementing Government policies appropriate to the Department;
- delivering outputs as determined with the Minister;

- providing advice to the Minister and using resources so as to meet the requirements of the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act, 1993 in relation to regularity and propriety as well as to economy, efficiency and effectiveness;
- preparing Statements of Strategy for submission to the Minister;
- providing progress reports to the Minister on the implementation of the Statement of Strategy;
- ensuring proper use of resources and the provision of cost-effective public services;
- making sure arrangements are in place to maximise efficiency in cross Departmental matters;
- preparing an outline of how specific responsibilities are to be assigned so as to ensure that the functions performed on behalf of the Minister are performed by an appropriate officer, or an officer of an appropriate grade or rank down through the Department; and
- managing matters relating to appointments, performance, discipline and dismissal of civil servants below the grade of Principal or its equivalent.

The list of duties specified in the Public Service Management Act 1997 while extensive, are not necessarily exhaustive, and the Secretary General may also be required, under the Act, to carry out other functions on behalf of the Minister. While the Secretary General may delegate responsibility and accountability by way of assignment (where each officer is accountable to the Secretary General), he/she retains ultimate responsibility and accountability for the actions of the Department, irrespective of the delegation of assigned responsibilities.

Accounting Officer

Each Accounting Officer is personally responsible for the safeguarding of public funds and property under his or her control; for the regularity and propriety of all the transactions in each Appropriation Account bearing his or her signature; and for the efficiency and economy of administration in his or her Department. The Civil Service head of the Department/Office administering the Vote is normally appointed Accounting Officer on the premise that he or she alone is in a position to discharge responsibility for the money entrusted to a Department/Office, for the use made of its resources and for control of the assets in its keeping, such as land, buildings, stores, equipment or other property.

In addition to the above and, as Accounting Officer, while the Secretary General can put in place arrangements to assist with the aspects of the following governance obligations,

he/she cannot delegate accountability to subordinate officers. These obligations are as follows:

- Preparation and presentation of Appropriation Accounts;
- Accounting Officer for the Department's Vote;
- Supply a Statement of Internal Financial Control to the Comptroller and Auditor General with the Annual Appropriation Accounts;
- Appearance before Public Accounts Committee;
- Putting in place an Internal Audit Unit;
- Establishing an Audit Committee;
- Monitoring by the Department of bodies under their aegis on behalf of the Minister;
- Approval of the award of major contracts;
- Required to authorise payments above €2 million in the absence of other approved authorisers (Assistant Secretary or the Finance Officer);
- Seek necessary assurances where services are delivered by another Accounting Officer (e.g. NSSO and consistent with necessary service agreements).

Assignment of Functions & Responsibilities of the Senior Management Team

Section 4 (1) and 9 (2) of the Public Service Management Act 1997 empowers the Secretary General to assign to other officers of the Department responsibility for the performance of his or her functions.

These assignments have due regard to the factors which from time to time affect the distribution and discharge of responsibilities across the Department, such as the exigencies of work in a particular area, the alignment of activities spanning or involving more than one area, and the co-ordination of shared or contiguous responsibilities. It also has regard to the assignment of functions in respect of appointments, performance and discipline of personnel under the Civil Service Regulation Acts 1956-2005 which are made from time to time by the Secretary General. The responsibilities assigned are articulated through the Department's system of business plans to reflect the priorities and objectives of the Department, as set out in its Statement of Strategy and are recorded in the Department's Framework of Assignments (see Appendix 2).

The assignment of responsibility for the performance of functions by individual officers, or grade or grades of officer, below Principal Officer level are handled administratively on the basis of the personal (or team) work objectives identified under or associated with the Department's business plans. Assignments will continue to be amended from time to time by the Secretary General and the framework will be deemed to have been updated accordingly.

Assistant Secretary General

Specific responsibilities are assigned to officers at Assistant Secretary General in their function as Heads of Division. These responsibilities sit within the overall management framework for the civil service and the Department. Their role includes the following:

Management of the Department

- Participate on the Management Board, Ministerial Management Board, Senior Management Team and Subcommittees;
- Support the Secretary General to ensure that the Department delivers its goals and objectives;
- Provide policy advice through established structures for the Minister;
- Attendance at Cabinet Committee meetings and Senior Official Group meetings;
- Prepare relevant elements of the Statement of Strategy and progress reports;
- Agree overall business plans for the Department;
- Contribute to the effective management of risk in the Department;
- Deliver the outputs determined by the Minister and the Secretary General;
- Provide status updates on Divisional Business Plans to the Management Board.

Management of Division Resources

- Manage and lead staff and assign specific responsibilities;
- Manage and lead overall performance, including PMDS, HR and operations;
- Ensure learning opportunities and continued development are identified for staff and managers;
- Ensure the proper allocation and use of resources, including:

- effective financial management,
- the provision of cost-effective public services; and
- compliance with all the financial and other obligations relevant to the post.
- Identify opportunities for reform and improvements within Division;
- Sign-off on an annual Internal Control Questionnaire (ICQ).

Management of Policy Advice

- Ensure all advices are evidence based, politically neutral and impartial;
- Ensure the effective management of risk in the policy advice of the Division;
- Contribute to dialogue with other Departments and relevant stakeholders;
- Participate at EU and International level;
- Strategically plan in line with the strategic objectives of the Department;
- Own and sponsor the area's agreed strategic objectives;
- Prepare Business Plans for the Division;
- Ensure effective management of risk in the Division;
- Manage the overall performance of the Division;
- Achieve objectives relevant to the area;
- Implement relevant policy decisions in accordance with Government/Ministerial decisions;
- Deliver the outputs determined by the Minister and the Secretary General.

Given the diversity of the Department's services and its stakeholders, the development of cross functional duties and work patterns will be a heightened feature of senior management duties and will inform the collaborative approach throughout the Department in delivering on the expectations of those we serve.

Principal Officers

Responsibility is assigned to an officer at Principal level or equivalent as Head of Business Unit. These responsibilities sit within the overall management framework for the civil service and the Department. Their role includes the following:

Management of Department/Business Units

- Supporting the wider management team to achieve objectives of the Department/Business Units;
- Participate with and actively contribute to senior management groups;
- Where assigned, monitor bodies under the Department's aegis in line with the Department's oversight framework.

Management of Resources

- Manage, lead and develop staff in the Unit;
- Manage and lead overall performance of Unit, including through PMDS;
- Ensure learning and continued development opportunities are identified for staff and managers;
- Ensure the proper allocation and use of resources, including :
 - effective financial management,
 - the provision of cost-effective public services,
 - compliance with all the financial and other obligations relevant to the post;
 - Identify opportunities for reform and improvements within Unit;
 - Sign annual Internal Control Questionnaire (ICQ).

Management of Unit Business

- Manage the day-to-day business of the Unit;
- Strategically plan in line with the objectives of the Division/Department;
- Own and sponsor the Unit's agreed strategic objectives;

- Maintain appropriate systems and structures to support the work of the section;
- Prepare Business Plans for the Unit;
- Ensure the effective management of risk in the Unit;
- Manage the overall performance of the Unit and achieve objectives.

Management of Policy Advice and Implementation

- Ensure all advices from the Unit are evidence based, politically neutral and impartial;
- Ensure the effective management of risk in the policy advice of the Unit;
- Coordinate the Unit's activities with those of other Units where policy overlaps;
- Contribute to dialogue with other Departments and relevant stakeholders;
- Participate at EU and international fora;
- Provide policy advice through established structures for the Minister; and
- Implement relevant policy decisions in accordance with Government/Ministerial decisions.

Special Adviser

The primary function of special advisers is to secure the achievement of Government objectives and to ensure effective co-ordination in the implementation of the Programme for Government. The role and duties of special advisers are described in section 11 of the Public Service Management Act 1997. In summary, these are to assist the Minister or the Minister of State by (i) providing advice; (ii) monitoring, facilitating and securing the achievement of Government objectives that relate to the Department, as requested; and (iii) performing such other functions as may be directed while being accountable to the Minister or the Minister of State in the performance of those functions. Details in relation to the advisers' roles and responsibilities and consequential reporting arrangement, are contained in Personnel Office Notice 01/2017 – Role of Special Adviser Responsibilities.

Governance Role of all Staff

In addition to the specific governance roles discussed above, other staff have a specific role to play in assuring good governance within the Department of Rural and Community Development, in corporate and other functional areas such as Internal Audit, Corporate

Policy, Human Resources, Legal, Risk, Procurement, Data Protection, Health and Safety, Accommodations and ICT, Finance and Evaluation, Freedom of Information, etc. Furthermore all staff members in the Department have an important role to play in collectively committing to the good governance of the Department through the requirements of this framework, Departmental policies, circulars and office notices and adhering to the Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour in the performance of their duties.

The Department's functions entail a significant amount of work and attention to compliance with governance arrangements. Attention is drawn to the Department's Compliance Framework as set out in Appendix 1. The Department will avail of dedicated legal services from the Office of the Attorney General as required.

The Department will also continue to monitor and keep under review the governance arrangements in place for the bodies operating under its aegis and/or on behalf of the Department in administering its various funding programmes and to ensure that these organisations are meeting their obligations under the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016).

3. Management Board and Governance Structures

Whereas the previous chapter concentrated on governance roles and responsibilities, the purpose of this chapter is to set out the management structure and arrangements in place including the Management Board and the senior management team.

Management Board

The Department's Management Board consists of the Secretary General, and three Assistant Secretaries responsible for the Rural Development and Regional Affairs, Community Development, and Corporate and Strategic Development Divisions.

The Secretary General's Private Secretary serves as the secretariat to the Board. As a general principle, Management Board meets on a weekly basis with the exception of the month of August.

The Management Board is responsible for:

- Providing leadership and strategic direction to the Department;
- Providing quality, coordinated and timely advice on strategic matters affecting the Department to the Minister and Ministers of State, through use of its strategic business planning process and management information tools;
- Providing appropriate leadership, judgement, oversight, management and review of the Department's strategy statements and business plans and activities, and where appropriate, of the relevant sector-wide (rural and community) policies and plans;
- Providing oversight of the distribution of the Department's resources, directing resources to where they are most needed, and leading innovation in how the services of the Department are delivered;
- Ensuring that an appropriate Corporate Governance Framework is in place for the Department and, in particular:
 - assisting the Secretary General in discharging Accounting Officer functions
 - seeking to ensure that the Department operates within its defined boundaries to an agreed and acceptable degree of risk and a reasonable assurance that all material financial and regulatory requirements are being met

- ensuring that effective governance and accountability arrangements are in place between the Department and its agencies and bodies; and
- Providing appropriate leadership and development support for all staff.

Management Board decision-making

The following are matters that are dealt with by the Management Board:

- Approval of:
 - Strategy Statements
 - Annual Report
 - Business Planning
 - Corporate policy documents and governance arrangements
- Operational strategies, as appropriate, to best implement Ministerial policies;
- Risk management for the Department;
- Discussion of major strategic challenges confronting the Department and strategies affecting the long term interests of the Department (including IT, financial and Human Resource allocation, Human Resources strategies);
- Ensuring that cross-cutting and longer term issues are fully accounted for in resource planning, policy formulation and advice;
- Budget allocation and performance;
- Ensuring effective communication throughout the organisation including dissemination of information on the role and decisions of the Management Board where appropriate, driving engagement with staff and communication with external stakeholders;
- Considering and debating major policy issues and wider external issues of significance;
- High-level consideration of significant management and investment decisions;
- Ensuring Strategic Human Resources and Organisational Capacity & Capability Reviews are conducted periodically;
- Ensuring that opportunities exist to exploit and embrace technology and innovation to transform how services are delivered.

Ministerial Management Board

Ministerial Management Board meetings are held once a month, with the exception of August. This meeting is chaired by the Minister and centres on the challenges, progress, uncertainties, risk to delivery and communication of performance of results. The Ministerial Management board comprises the Minister, Minister of State and members of the Management Board. Ministerial Advisers and other officials, as appropriate, are also in attendance.

Senior Management Team

Management of the Department is not only confined to the Management Board. The Senior Management Team (the Management Board, Principal Officer and equivalent grades) is central to consistency in governance, leadership and management of the Department.

The Senior Management Team meets as a forum every six weeks. Meetings are chaired by the Secretary General and attendance is mandatory. The meeting is based on an assessment of progress on meeting our objectives and consists of verbal reports on the work of the Management Board and Government meetings, as appropriate. It is a forum for the communication across the organisation of recent developments on the policy and operational work of the Department as well as providing support to the Management Board in consideration of strategic issues arising.

Senior Management Review

Management Board Review Days will generally be held bi-annually, at which Management Board will consider and discuss leadership perspectives and topics and develop and prioritise key Department business objectives for implementation in the context of emerging Government priorities.

4. Audit, Assurance and Compliance Arrangements

This Chapter details the mechanisms through which the Department ensures that risk and performance are adequately managed and that best practice processes, systems and guidelines are utilised.

Role of Audit Committee

The Department is committed to the development and implementation of effective governance and control arrangements. The Audit Committee, which comprises a majority of non-executive members, is a key part of arrangements to provide advice and assurance to the Accounting Officer on such arrangements.

It oversees the Internal Audit function, including its resourcing and competencies, its schedule of work, audit reports, compliance with Internal Audit standards and other matters as appropriate. It provides advice to the Accounting Officer on governance in the Department, including risk management and internal controls.

It liaises as appropriate with the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General, and reviews the Appropriation Account and such other reports by the C&AG as may arise. The Committee is independent in the performance of its functions and shall not exercise any executive or managerial functions.

Role of Internal Audit Unit

The Internal Audit Unit (IAU) assesses areas that are specifically requested by the Accounting Officer and the Audit Committee. The IAU's expertise and independent approach is used to identify and specify issues, assess the current position and evaluate approaches to risk and internal controls in these areas. The IAU service is set up within the Department as a separate independent unit reporting directly to the Secretary General and is overseen by the Audit Committee.

Compliance

The role of the compliance function, as undertaken by each Head of Division and their business units, and overseen and coordinated by Corporate and Strategic Development Division, is to assist the Management Board in identifying, assessing and monitoring the compliance obligations of the Department, with periodic reports being provided to ensure

standards are being maintained. It is also the role of the compliance function to give independent assurance to the Management Board that management are adhering to legal, regulatory and governance obligations and implementing appropriate remediation measures where necessary.

Finance Unit

The Department's Finance Unit is also a key element of the Assurance Framework. Its key functions include managing the annual estimates process for the Department's Vote; completing the Department's annual appropriation account; ongoing monitoring of Departmental expenditure; oversight and development of financial systems and controls; management and administration of daily expenditure process, development of evaluation capacity; and the administration of the Dormant Accounts Fund.

As detailed in the Department Appropriation Account, the Financial Control Environment with the Department includes the following elements:

- financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability;
- reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned;
- there is a framework of administrative procedures, including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability;
- formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action;
- there is an Audit Committee to advise the Accounting Officer in discharging his responsibilities for the internal financial control system; and
- there are systems in place to safeguard the assets of the Department.

The Finance Unit provides regular expenditure updates and finance reports to senior management, Management Board and the Minister. The Unit also works closely with other Units in terms of monitoring and managing the Department's funding allocations, including both programme expenditure and administration expenditure. The Finance Unit also incorporates a recently established evaluation function. The primary objectives of this function are to complete a number of discrete evaluations to inform decision making, and to foster a culture of ongoing monitoring and evaluation within the Department.

Procurement

As part of the Assurance Framework the Department's Finance Unit communicates and monitors procurement policy and procedures across the Department. These policies and procedures in place apply the principles of the OGP Public Procurement Guidelines. As such, they seek to support line units in ensuring that all procurement complies with relevant EU and national requirements.

There is a designated procurement officer within the Finance Unit who supports line units and reports to senior management as appropriate. The procurement officer also liaises with the Office of Government Procurement in terms of ensuring best practice, and learning about and informing emerging developments in the area.

In addition to the above, at the end of each year all Heads of Function complete a questionnaire on internal financial controls, which includes a commitment that all relevant staff are aware of the public procurement guidelines.

Furthermore, on a quarterly basis, the Department publishes on its website the details of payments made for goods and services with a value of, or in excess of €20,000.

Human Resources Unit

The role of HR Unit is fundamental to effective corporate governance in DRCD. The HR function has a key role in ensuring effective corporate governance, given its role in oversight and management of all staffing and people management issues. There is a defined governance structure in place for the HR Unit itself as part of the overall reporting and governance structure of the organisation.

HR Unit has a vital role in ensuring the organisation is equipped and empowered to deliver on its strategic objectives. Through its role as strategic business partner the work of HR underpins the delivery of all of the Department's strategic objectives through HR activity to achieve its own strategic goal of building and developing our organisation.

From the outset, HR has a key role in defining the employer-employee relationship and inducting staff into the values and culture of the organisation, which reflect the wider ethos of the Civil Service. Each member of staff, as a civil servant, operates to a defined set of standards, which are laid out in the Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour (published by the Standards in Public Office Commission).

On appointment to the Department all new employees are given the following documents to review and sign to confirm understanding:

- Circular 07/98 - Freedom of Information
- Circular 15/79 - Official Secrecy and Integrity and Declaration
- Circular 26/04 - Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour
- Circular 19/16 - Civil Service Disciplinary Code
- Information and Communications Technology Acceptable Usage policy

In addition, the Training Unit provides a comprehensive overview of all policies and procedures during the induction process. This includes presentations on wider issues such as the FOI Act, Data Protection, Official Languages Act, and a detailed overview of all HR policies and procedures that must be complied with such as Dignity at Work, Performance Management, and Probation Guidelines.

HR Strategy

Human Resources and Organisation Development Unit within the Department is a strategic business partner of units within the Department and, with Finance and Evaluation, and Communication teams, is key to successful delivery of Department objectives.

In 2022 the Department published its People Strategy for the Department, covering the period 2022-2025.

Our People Strategy, including our Values, has been developed with guiding principles that are led by our core beliefs and behaviours. These guiding principles have been informed from meeting with staff during engagement workshops and documentation such as the Statement of Strategy and Civil Service Values. These guiding principles include:

- all our staff have the right to be treated with dignity and respect;
- continuous performance improvement must be an objective and a responsibility of all staff;
- DRCD is committed to equality, diversity and inclusion in everything that it does;
- a working environment that promotes the safety, health and wellbeing of all our staff is provided; and
- DRCD adopts a partnership approach to the development of all people policies and procedures.

Key to the effective delivery of Department priorities is to ensure that processes exist to resource units appropriately with the skills and resources required. Monitoring of resource needs takes place within the strategic Workforce Planning (WFP) exercise completed on an

annual basis. The plan focuses on capacity building and identification of critical resource gaps to ensure we have the resources and skills required to deliver on strategic objectives now and into the future. The WFP is drafted by HR Unit with the inputs and engagement of Heads of Business Units.

Strategic decisions on resourcing are ultimately decided at the level of the Management Board. These decisions are made within the staffing budget allocated to the Department under the delegated sanction of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, whereby the Department can recruit or promote staff up to the level of Principal Officer (subject to remaining within its pay ceiling).

HR Unit also has a role in relation to the approval of sanction for posts in agencies under its remit, subject to posts being identified through a WFP process and affordable within pay budget.

Risk Management

The Department of Rural and Community Development risk management framework consists of a Risk Committee and line units' risk management activity. A Risk Management Policy is in place which outlines Departmental procedures regarding the management and reporting of risk.

Full membership of the Risk Committee, which meets quarterly, comprises Management Board members, Finance Officer, and Heads of Units (PO) representing all three Divisions.

The role of the Risk Committee is to aid the Department in embedding risk management and overseeing its risk function, including identification, assessment and mitigation steps, and determining the parameters for escalation of risk/further examination. Corporate and Strategic Development Division provides supports to the Risk Committee by coordinating the preparation and review of Departmental and Unit risk registers. The Risk Committee identifies principal risks and uncertainties for Management Board discussion as required. To formalise the relationship between the Risk Committee and the Audit Committee, the following links are established:

- the Head of the IAU will be notified of meetings of the Risk Committee and he/she having a right to attend those meetings in an observer status;
- the sharing of papers by the Risk Committee, including work plans and reports including the updates to the Risk Register; and
- a right of attendance at the Risk Committee of one of the members of the Audit Committee in his/her capacity as a member of the Audit Committee.

Management of risk at the business unit level remains the responsibility of the business unit in consultation with the relevant Assistant Secretary. This involves:

- identifying risks and ensuring they are included in their unit risk register and, where appropriate, in the Departmental register,
- identifying and taking appropriate mitigating actions
- ongoing monitoring and reporting of development in relation to risks.

Protected Disclosures

The Protected Disclosures Act provides statutory protections for workers that make disclosures related to wrongdoing in the workplace which includes current and former employees, independent contractors, trainees, agency staff, volunteers, board members, shareholders and job candidates. All public bodies are obliged to maintain procedures for making, and dealing with, protected disclosures. The Department has a Protected Disclosures Policy in place that is available to staff and is being updated to reflect changes introduced in the Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Act 2022.

Information Management

Freedom of Information (FOI) / Access to Information on the Environment (AIE)

The Freedom of Information Act 2014 asserts the right 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.

Access to Information on the Environment Regulations 2007 to 2018 gives citizens the right to access information on the environment from public authorities.

Access to information under FOI and AIE is subject to certain exemptions and involves specific procedures and time limits. Information on how to make a request for information is published on the Department's website together with the postal and email address to which these requests should be sent.

Assistant Principal Officers are FOI and AIE decision makers for the Department. Principal Officers will be the decision makers for internal reviews of any appeals received.

Data Protection

The introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) on 25 May 2018 places certain responsibilities on the Department, as a Data Controller, in its processing of personal data.

The Department has put in place a Data Protection Policy and has appointed a Data Protection Officer as required by Article 37 of the GDPR. The DPO is an independent function reporting to the highest levels of management in the Department.

Facilities Management, Health and Safety, Energy Efficiency and ICT

Facilities Management and Energy Efficiency

The Human Resources and Facilities Unit are responsible for Facilities Management, Health and Safety, Energy Efficiency, Innovation and the co-ordination of Information and Communications Technology (ICT) services for the Department. The Department occupies two premises in Trinity Point (Dublin), and Government Buildings in Ballina (Co. Mayo).

They are assisted by the “**GEO**” Committee (Green, Energy and Organisation committee), which is composed of representatives from other units, and acts as the Green Team for the Department. It is responsible for improving Energy Efficiency and reducing Waste internally within the Department, communicating with staff, and for examining other accommodation issues. The Department has published a Resource Efficiency Action Plan (REAP), and participates in the Optimising Power @ Work scheme operated by the Office of Public Works (OPW) and the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI).

Health and Safety

The Department is committed to the Health and Safety of its staff. The Management Board has adopted a Health and Safety Statement, and a COVID-19 Response Plan, which are both updated by the Human Resources and Facilities Unit.

The Department has established a Health and Safety Committee, which is composed of staff involved in implementing health and safety, representatives of management and staff, COVID-19 Lead Worker Representatives, and the Unions. It reports to the Management Board.

Information Technology Policies and Governance

Information Technology (IT) infrastructure is a key enabler for the Department to carry out its objectives. The Department uses the services of the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (“OGCIO”), part of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform for the provision of IT services to the staff of the Department.

The Memorandum of Understanding between this Department and the OGCIO, signed in March 2018, sets out the relationship between the Department and the OGCIO, and the services to be provided by the OGCIO. The OGCIO is responsible for providing the “*Build to Share Suite*”, which includes:

- Computer Network infrastructure, and connection to the Government Network;
- Common Desktop, including commercially available, off-the-shelf software and office suite;
- Common Applications developed for the civil service, including ePQ, eSubmissions, eFOI, ePMDS, and eDocs.

The Memorandum sets out an “Engagement model” approach to the relationship between the OGCIO and this Department, with the IT Service Desk being the first point of contact for all user support and ad hoc queries. The IT Service Desk manages all OGCIO service user engagement, end-to-end, taking responsibility for the tracking and pursuing to resolution of all cases raised.

Any new or additional requirements are channelled through the DRCD Human Resources and Facilities Unit to the OGCIO Business Relationship Management Office. Regular engagement meetings are held between the DRCD Head of Human Resources and Facilities Unit and the OGCIO Business Relationship Management Office.

Any purchases of new equipment or software must be approved by the Department’s Head of Human Resources and Facilities Unit

The Department has IT Liaison officers in both Dublin and Ballina locations to assist the OGCIO with the replacement of local IT equipment. These are part-time roles, undertaken in addition to other duties.

ICT Policies

All of these Policies are provided to new members of staff as they join the Department.

1. Information and Communications Technology Acceptable Usage Policy

This Policy sets out the obligations on staff in relation to access to and use of IT services and facilities in the Department. This is an overarching policy, which includes a number of other IT-related policies as components. The Head of Human Resources is responsible for the enforcement of the Acceptable Usage Policy, in consultation with line managers.

2. Internet Content Access Policy

This Policy defines the categories of Internet-based content considered appropriate for users of the Department's IT services to access, including staff, external contractors, and visitors.

3. Laptop Policy

This Policy sets out the criteria for the provision of laptop computers and the conditions relating to their use.

4. USB Key Policy

This Policy sets out the criteria for the provision of a USB Storage Device, and the conditions relating to their use within the Department.

5. Mobile Phone Policy

This Policy defines the acceptable use and management of official mobile phone devices issues by the OGCIO on behalf of this Department.

6. Password Security Policy

This Policy defines the standards for the creation of passwords, the protection of those passwords, and the minimum amount of time between changes.

7. Social Media Policy

This Policy sets out the type of Social Media to be used by the Department for official purposes.

Security, Resilience and Business Continuity Planning

The OGCIO uses a combination of Government Network infrastructure to ensure the security of the networks. Laptops, hybrids and mobile phones are encrypted to ensure that no data is lost in case of a lost or stolen device.

The OGCIO are responsible for providing a resilient and robust infrastructure for the “Build to Share Suite”, which is designed to be highly available and secure with no single point of failure as standard.

Business Continuity Planning is a business-led activity, and therefore the responsibility of this Department. However, the OGCIO contributes to this by documenting Incident Management, Response and Recovery Plans. As a Business Continuity measure during the COVID-19 Pandemic, the Department has implemented a Working From Home policy for all staff, and new ICT equipment was provided in 2020 to implement this in conjunction with the OGCIO.

Internal Governance of EU and International Policy Formulation

LEADER Programme

In addition to the Department's usual compliance obligations in respect of Exchequer expenditure, the Department must also receive specific accreditation to make EU co-funded LEADER payments.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) is accredited by the European Commission as the Paying Agency in Ireland responsible for payments under the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020. This delegation has been formally transferred from that Department to the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) in respect of the LEADER component of the RDP. A Memorandum of Understanding is in place between both Departments.

The accreditation covers a wide range of governance arrangements including the IT, financial, audit, risk management and human resource systems and processes in place. It also requires that the LEADER Unit, including the supporting corporate functions, are aligned with ISO 27001. Adherence with the delegated accreditation is considered at quarterly review group meetings chaired by the Secretary General of DAFM.

The Secretary General of DRCD must provide a management declaration to the DAFM in November of each year confirming that the necessary governance arrangements are in place in respect of the LEADER Programme.

Compliance with the delegated accreditation and general LEADER programme requirements are also subject to annual review by the EU approved certifying body for the RDP in Ireland (currently Ernst and Young) together with periodic audit by the European Commission and the European Court of Auditors.

Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) is co-funded by the Irish Government, through the Department of Rural and Community Development, and the European Social Fund Plus under the Employment, Inclusion, Skills and Training (EIST) Programme 2021-2027. The programme is managed locally by Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) with support from Local Authorities and programme actions and initiatives are delivered by Programme Implementers (PIs) across 51 Lots.

The Programme Implementers are obliged to be fully compliant with their statutory and regulatory obligations and those that result from their contractual arrangement with the LCDC/Local Authority. They also manage the financial risks associated with applying the eligibility rules for ESF+ co-funding and must retain the required documentation.

The financial management and control framework for SICAP accords with Circular 09/2023 - The Management and Control Procedures for the Cohesion Policy Funds (CPF) encompassed by the European Union Common Provision Regulation Programmes 2021-27 issued by the Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform (DPENDPDR) and the ESF Certifying Authority, Department of Further and Higher Education, research, Innovation and Science circular 003/2023 eligibility rules for the 2021-2027 European Social Fund Plus.

In accordance with the Employment, Inclusion, Skills and Training (EIST) Programme 2021-27, Programme Implementers must ensure that they have specifically informed ESF+ SICAP beneficiaries that they are receiving financial support with co-funding from the European Social Fund Plus and must adhere to the Communication Guidelines.

Individuals must be made aware that their records and consent forms may be viewed as part of external audits for the purpose of verifying records etc. Verifications or audits may be conducted by EU/ESF auditors, the Local Government Audit Service, or agents of the Funders and the Contracting Authorities.

PEACE IV Programme

The Department is a designated **Accountable Department** for six measures under the PEACE IV Programme. The Department's responsibilities include:

- providing funding to the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) for onward payment to PEACE Programme beneficiaries – these payments are made in advance on the basis of quarterly requests submitted to the Department by the SEUPB at the beginning of every quarter;
- participating in an advisor capacity on the Programme Monitoring Committee which monitors the effectiveness and quality of the programme, for example approving project selection criteria, reviewing progress towards targets and evaluating impact of actions; and
- participating on the Programme Steering Committee, which selects projects for support under the Programme.

The Programme is managed by the SEUPB on behalf of the Irish and UK Governments. The relationship between the DRCD and the SEUPB is governed by a Service Level Agreement.

The SEUPB carries out the following functions:

- as **Managing Authority** it has overall responsibility for the management, monitoring and evaluation of the Programme, chairing and providing overall administrative support for the Monitoring Committee;
- as **Certifying Authority** it submits statements of expenditure, annual accounts and payment claims to the European Commission as well as controlling the cash flow and making payments to project beneficiaries;
- through the **Joint Secretariat** it prepares project assessments for the Steering Committee and assists programme beneficiaries with project implementation; and
- through the **Financial Control Unit** it verifies the legality and regularity of all expenditure incurred, conducting pre-contract checks on beneficiaries and administrative verifications of claims by project beneficiaries.

The SEUPB is responsible for ensuring that adequate risk management and control arrangements are in place and for providing assurance to the Departments via the Quarterly Assurance Statement. The Programme governance and implementation arrangements are

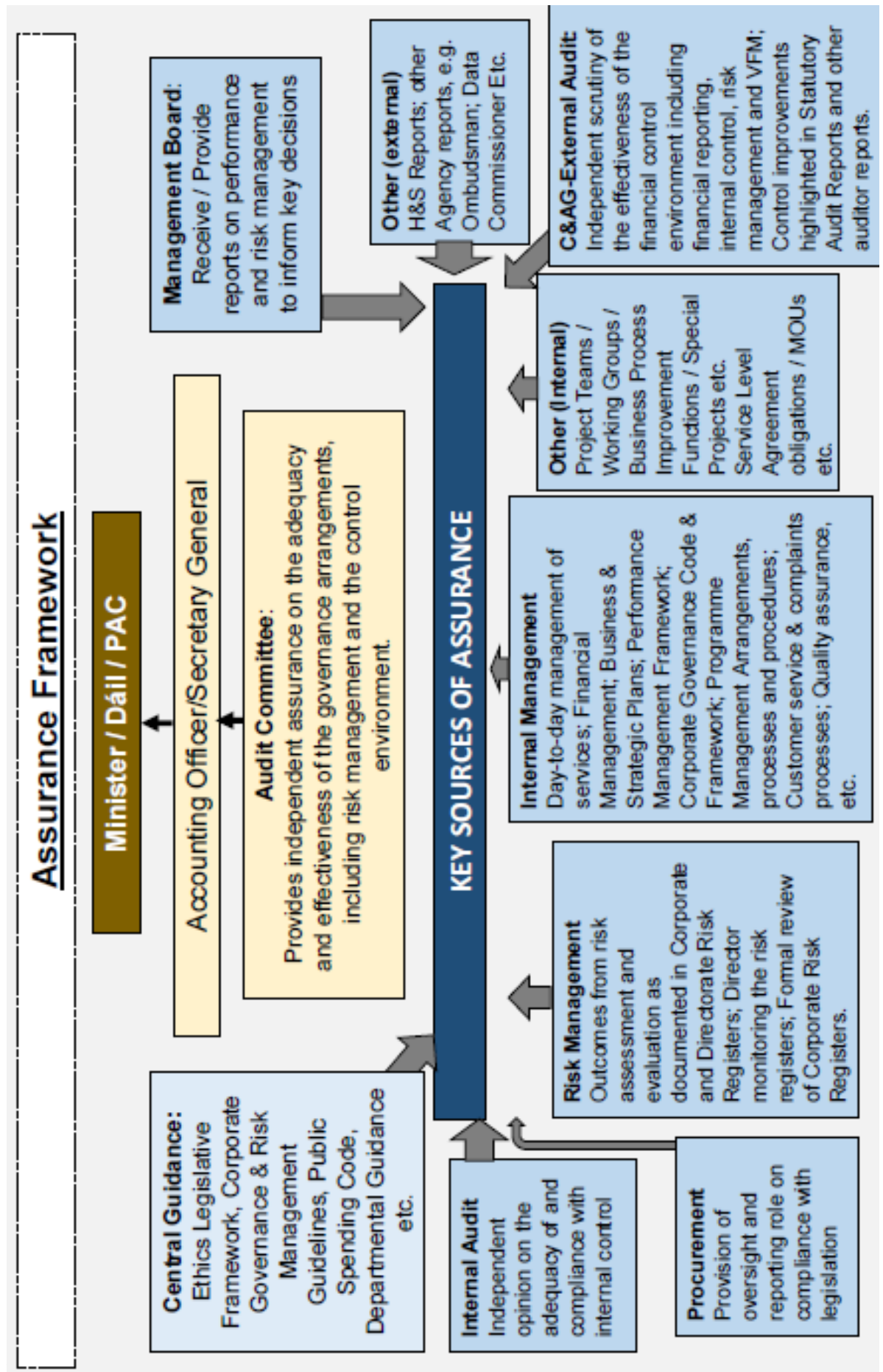
governed by Regulation (EU) 1299/2013 with the specific roles and responsibilities of the various bodies detailed in the Cooperation Programme Document.

Inspection, Compliance and Business Development

The *Inspection, Compliance and Business Development Unit* implements an annual control and inspection programme for the Department's public-funded programmes, including an accredited control system for the EU co-funded LEADER programmes. The control and inspection programme, underpinned by a mix of random and risk-based activity sampling, provides assurance to the Management Board that funding provided through the broad range of Department schemes is managed appropriately by grant recipients and relevant intermediary bodies.

The control and inspection programme is complemented by an expert compliance function which provides policy and compliance advice and technical supports to programme managers on all aspects of scheme management.

The unit also provides other critical business development and governance supports, including overseeing and coordinating the Department's Organisational Capability Review process and developing the Department's strategic IT and data capabilities (i.e. IT and data strategy and policy, digital solution development to support policy and programme delivery).



5. Bodies under the Aegis of the Department

Pobal is a not for profit company, which acts as an intermediary for Government in the delivery and administration of a range of Government and EU-funded programmes. In addition to Pobal's own internal governance structures, the Department has an Oversight Agreement with Pobal which covers the terms of the relationship between both parties in relation to the administration by them of funding programmes on behalf of the Department.

The Charities Regulatory Authority is an independent Authority established on a statutory basis under the Charities Act 2009. The Authority has a number of functions operating under the principle of increasing public trust and confidence in the management and administration of charitable trusts and charitable organisations. The Department has an Oversight Agreement with the Authority which sets out, inter alia, the corporate governance responsibilities of the Authority.

Water Safety Ireland is the statutory body established to promote water safety in Ireland. Its role is to educate and develop public awareness of appropriate attitude and behaviour in order to prevent drownings and water related accidents. The Department has finalised an Oversight Agreement with the Authority with a view to strengthening the working relationship with the Department.

Western Development Commission is a statutory body established under the WDC Act, 1998. It is charged with promoting economic and social development in Counties Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon, Mayo, Galway and Clare. The Department and the WDC have a Service Level Agreement, with regular governance meetings taking place between the two organisations.

Governance arrangements in bodies under the aegis of the Department are overseen by an assigned business unit, with each organisation also providing annual assurances as to corporate compliance in the form of a checklist covering the obligations set out in the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (206).

In addition to the financial controls and consequential assurances under the Code of Practice, the Department's external bodies and agencies have compliance requirements, relating to HR practices, use of Irish language, FOI and data protection practices.

Appendix 1: Compliance Framework

Measure	Responsible Officer/Section	Timeframe/Frequency	Status/Comment
PROGRAMMES			
Departmental Programme for Government Commitments	Head of Strategic Co-ordination, Corporate Policy and Communications Unit (SCCPC)	Regular Reports to Government	
Departmental Climate Action Plan commitments	Head SCCPC Unit	Quarterly reports to Dept of the Taoiseach	
National Rural Development Policy, <i>Our Rural Future</i>	Head of Rural Strategy and Social Enterprise Unit	Biannual reports to Government	Published March 2021
LEADER Programme: Accreditation to make payments and provision of Management Declaration to D/Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Head of LEADER Policy & Operations Unit	Ongoing	
OPERATIONS			
Publish Statement of Strategy	Head of SCCPC Unit	Published February 2021	Thereafter every 3 years or shortly following the appointment of a new Minister
Publish Annual Report	Head of SCCPC Unit	Annual – Q2	
PMDS Annual Reviews and Role Profiles	Head of Human Resources and Facilities Unit	Annual – Q1/Q2	
Publish Framework of Assignments	Secretary General	Ongoing	
Risk Management Policy & Register	Head of SCCPC Unit	Ongoing	

Protected Disclosures			
(1) Departmental Policy	Head of Inspection, Compliance and Business Development	Ongoing	Review by Audit Committee/ Management Board
(2) Annual Reporting		Annual	
Board Appointments	Relevant Heads of Units/Head Human Resources and Facilities Unit	Ongoing	
Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies	Relevant Heads of Unit / Head of SCCPC Unit	Ongoing	SCCPC Unit coordinates completion of checklists by units/agencies
Significant Legal Proceedings Report to Government	Head of SCCPC Unit	Biannual	
CPSA Codes of Practice	Head of Human Resources and Facilities Unit	Ongoing	
Disability Legislation (3% of employees)	Head of Human Resources and Facilities Unit	March	
Health and Safety Legislation	Head of Human Resources and Facilities Unit	Ongoing	
Employment Law and Circulars	Head of Human Resources and Facilities Unit	Ongoing	
Integrated Reform Delivery Plan and Reports	Head of Human Resources and Facilities Unit	Biannual	
National Archives Act	Head of SCCPC Unit	Annual	SCCPC Unit is responsible for raising awareness of the requirements of the National

			<p>Archives Act. Principal Officers as Heads of Units are certified officers under the Act are responsible for disposal/ transfer of records relevant to their unit in consultation with the National Archives office.</p>
Records Management	Head of SCCPC Unit/Relevant Heads of Units	Ongoing	<p>SCCPC Unit is responsible for developing DRCD's Record Management Policy and promoting records management best practice through ongoing engagement with Unit Record Coordinators in relation to records management matters.</p> <p>Records management is a responsibility of all staff - each business unit has a nominated Records Coordinator and Heads of Business Units are responsible for</p>

			ensuring ongoing effective records management in their respective units.
Quality Customer Service / Customer Charter	Head of SCCPC Unit	Ongoing	Department's first Customer Charter published in June 2019
Official Language Act – preparation of Irish Language Scheme	Head of SCCPC Unit		The Department's first Language Scheme was approved by Minister for the Gaeltacht and came into operation on 8 April 2019
Review of Governance Framework	Management Board	Biannual	
ACCOUNTING & FINANCIAL AFFAIRS			
Appropriation Account	Finance Officer	Annual – Q1	Signed and submitted by the Secretary General
Departmental Statement of Internal Financial Control	Secretary General	Annual – Q1	Signed and submitted by the Secretary General
Internal Audit Reports	Head of Internal Audit	Ongoing	
Audit Committee Charter Review	Secretary General	Annual	
Departmental Estimates Preparation/ Submission	Finance Officer	Annual - Q3 & Q4	
Procurement Procedures	Finance Officer	Ongoing	
Report on contracts (exceeding €25,000 ex. VAT) awarded without a competitive tendering process	Finance Officer	Annual – by 31 March	

Prompt Payments	Finance Officer & Heads of Unit	Quarterly	
Publication of Purchase Orders exceeding €20,000	Finance Officer	Quarterly	
Assets Register	Head of Human Resources and Facilities Unit	Ongoing	
OIREACHTAS & PUBLIC AFFAIRS			
Parliamentary Questions, Topical Issues Briefing for Dáil Committee of Public Accounts and other Oireachtas Committees. Legislative Programme	Oversight by Secretary General's Office Co-ordination for Committees by: Finance Officer in the case of PAC and consideration of Estimates Head of SCCPC Unit / Relevant Heads of Units for all other Committees (dependant on subject matter)	Ongoing	
Leaders' Questions Material for D/Taoiseach	Minister's Office	Ongoing	Material prepared at Unit level either on foot of requests from Minister's Advisers or on the Unit's initiative.
Freedom of Information: (i) Requests / Appeals	Deciding Officers - APO level / Reviewers – PO level	Ongoing	

(ii) Publication Scheme	FOI Officer	3 yearly review	Scheme was published in September 2018
(iii) Section 34 Certification	FOI Officer	Annual	
Ethics / Standards in Public Office Regulations – Annual Returns	Head of Human Resources and Facilities Unit	January	
Regulation of Lobbying Act – Publish List of Designated Public Officials	Head of SCCPC Unit	Published on Gov.ie	Updated as required
BODIES UNDER THE AEGIS OF THE DEPARTMENT OF RURAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT			
Lay the audited accounts or financial statements of the following bodies under the aegis of the Department of Rural and Community Development before the Houses of the Oireachtas: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pobal ▪ The Charities Regulatory ▪ Water Safety Ireland ▪ Western Development Commission 	Relevant DRCD Units (Agency Liaison Units)	Annual	
Ensure State Bodies under the Aegis of DRCD are compliant with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.	Annual checklist completed and submitted to DRCD by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Pobal ▪ The Charities Regulatory ▪ Water Safety Ireland 	Annual	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Western Development Commission		
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Appendix 2: Framework of Assignments

The Secretary General has agreed the following assignments at Assistant Secretary and Principal Officer level:

Bairbre Nic Aongusa

Division: Community Development

Grade: Assistant Secretary

Responsibilities

Bairbre Nic Aongusa is responsible at Assistant Secretary level for Local & Community Development Policy; Libraries Development; Programme for Peace & Reconciliation; Community Services Programme; Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) and Local Economic & Community Plans (LECPs); the Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP); Community Enhancement Programme; Supports for disadvantaged communities (including Dublin North East Inner City); Policy on Dog Control and Dog Breeding Establishments; Policy oversight of local authority functions regarding burial grounds; Pobal (governance oversight); Supports for Community and Voluntary Groups; Supports for Volunteering; Public Participation Networks; Government's relationship with Philanthropy; Irish Water Safety; Charities Regulator; and policy and supports for the offshore islands.

Fintan O'Brien

Division: Rural Development and Regional Affairs

Grade: Assistant Secretary

Responsibilities

Fintan O'Brien is responsible at Assistant Secretary level for policies and programmes to advance the economic and social development of rural Ireland, including through Rural Development policy. He is also responsible for the delivery of a range of regional development objectives, including the Atlantic Economic Corridor initiative and facilitating Local Authorities in their preparations for the roll-out of high-speed broadband. The division also oversees the development and implementation of policies and programmes relating to Social Enterprise.

Kenneth Jordan

Division: Corporate and Strategic Development

Grade: Assistant Secretary

Responsibilities

Kenneth Jordan is responsible at Assistant Secretary level for the Department's corporate functions including: strategic policy development, organisational development, human resources, corporate co-ordination, finance and evaluation, accommodation, communications and ICT strategy and delivery, and corporate governance including programme inspection and compliance supports.

The division is also responsible for oversight and coordination of the Department's work on cross-Government strategic matters such as Climate Action, Sustainable Development Goals, North South Cooperation, and Brexit.

Kieran Moylan

Unit: Libraries Development and Community Policy

Grade: Principal Officer

Responsibilities

Kieran Moylan is the Principal Officer assigned to the Libraries Development and Community Policy Unit. He is responsible for supporting and developing the administrative, operational and strategic capacity of Local Community Development committees (LCDCs) and supporting LCDCs and local authorities to develop and implement Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs); promoting cross-government approaches to local development and community development through the Government's Framework Policy on Local and Community Development and leading the Cross-Sectoral Group on Local and Community Development; supporting and developing strategic and operational capacity of the Public Library Service, including Our Public Libraries 2022 the public library strategy, and developing policy and funding frameworks to underpin delivery of library services by local authorities.

The Unit manages the Department's role as an Accountable Department in Ireland for measures under the PEACE IV Programme and is also responsible for contributing to the policy focus, development and roll-out of the successor PEACE PLUS 2021-2027 Programme, under which the Department will also be an Accountable Department. It also manages the Community Services Programme, which involves the ongoing management of

the current programme to support delivery of community services through the programme, in addition to managing the redesign and implementation of the new CSP Programme.

Deirdre Kelly

Unit: Social Inclusion and Communities

Grade: Principal Officer

Responsibilities

Deirdre Kelly is the Principal Officer for the Social Inclusion and Communities Unit. Her duties include policy and oversight for a range of measures which support families and communities including the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP), the Community Enhancement Programme (CEP), management of the control of dogs agenda, and policy oversight of local authority functions regarding burial grounds. Deirdre is also responsible for managing the contract with Pobal.

Ciara Bates

Unit: Community and Voluntary Supports and Programmes

Grade: Principal Officer

Responsibilities

Ciara Bates is the Principal Officer assigned to the Voluntary and Community Supports Unit. She is responsible for the management and delivery of a number of funding programmes, aimed at supporting and developing local communities. Funding Programmes include the Seniors Alert Scheme, the Scheme to Support National Organisations, funding and development of the Volunteering infrastructure and the management of the Social Innovation Fund of Ireland. Ciara is also charged with developing policy on promoting and achieving greater levels of active citizen participation through the Public Participation Networks as well as developing policy on volunteering and philanthropy. The Section also supports the work of the Community and Voluntary Pillar and is responsible for a number of Departmental initiatives under the Dormant Accounts Fund. The Section has responsibility for corporate governance oversight of the Charities Regulatory Authority and Water Safety Ireland and the development of these sectors in line with current governance requirements, including the delivery of statutory legislation to support the work of these organisations.

Andrew Forde

Unit: Rural Regeneration Unit

Grade: Principal Officer

Responsibilities

Andrew Forde is responsible at Principal Officer level for the Rural Regeneration Unit. The Rural Regeneration Unit has a shared lead with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in implementing the Town Centre First policy. The Unit also delivers the Town & Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS), the TVRS Building Acquisition Measure and the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS); manages the Tidy Towns and related competitions; and undertakes other initiatives aimed at supporting rural renewal.

The Unit also is responsible for the implementation and management of the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF).

Brendan Whelan

Unit: Regional Development and Innovation Unit

Grade: Principal Officer

Responsibilities

The Unit is responsible for supporting digital and telecommunications initiatives across rural Ireland, including the Broadband Connection Point initiative of the National Broadband Plan, developing remote working as a facilitator of balanced regional development and promoting the Atlantic Economic Corridor concept. The Unit is also responsible for the governance of the Western Development Commission.

JP Mulherin / Deirdre Maloney

Unit: Investment Programmes and Outdoor Recreation Unit

Grade: Principal Officer

Responsibilities

JP Mulherin / Deirdre Maloney have responsibility at Principal Officer level for a range of policy initiatives and programmes which support the development of rural areas. The Investment Programmes and Outdoor Recreation Unit (IPOR) leads on implementing

Embracing Ireland's Outdoors - National Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2023 - 2027. It also supports the work of Comhairle na Tuaithe (Countryside Council), including through the implementation of the advancement of a national indemnity scheme or comparable initiative for upland areas; strategic collaborations with State Agencies such as Coillte and Bord na Móna; and the expansion of the Mountain Access Project.

The Unit also delivers a number of Schemes including the Walks Scheme, Community Recognition Fund (CRF), Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS), Community Centre Investment Fund (CCIF), the CLÁR Programme, and the Community Enhancement Fund (H2 2023).

Dympna Harney

Unit: LEADER Policy and Operations

Grade: Principal Officer

Responsibilities

Dympna Harney has responsibility at Principal Officer level for the management and implementation of both the LEADER 2014-2020 and Transitional Programmes. LEADER is co-funded by the EU and the Exchequer. It has been in operation since 1991 and has supported thousands of projects from local community groups and businesses, which, amongst other objectives, promote economic development, social inclusion, and the protection of the rural environment. The Transitional Programme will cover the period 2021-2022. The next EU LEADER programme will commence in 2023 with the LEADER Unit having responsibility for the design of same

Robert Nicholson

Unit: Rural Strategy and Social Enterprise Unit

Grade: Principal Officer

Responsibilities

Robert Nicholson has responsibility at Principal Officer level for promoting and facilitating long-term sustainable economic and social development of both rural and urban areas, in line with DRCD's Statement of Strategy. The unit is specifically responsible for two principal strands of work: 1) Rural Development, and 2) Social Enterprise.

The Unit oversees the implementation of Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025 the Government's overarching blueprint for sustainable rural development, by working across Government, and with external stakeholder groups, to ensure a series of measures are delivered for the benefit of people who live in, work in and enjoy rural areas.

The Social Enterprise strand of work is currently guided by the National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019-2022, which provides a framework to support and cultivate the development of a strong, vibrant and impactful Social Enterprise sector in Ireland. A successor policy will be developed and published in 2023.

Aodán Mac an Mhíle

Unit: Islands Unit

Grade: Principal Officer

Responsibilities

Aodán has responsibility at Principal Officer level for initiatives and measures aimed at supporting the social, cultural and economic development of the populated offshore islands. Aodán duties include the procurement and oversight of island transport services and investment in essential infrastructure. The unit is also responsible for the development of a new Cross Government Islands Policy and Action Plan.

Clodagh McDonnell

Unit: Inspection, Compliance and Business Development

Grade: Principal Officer

Responsibilities

Clodagh McDonnell leads the Department's Inspection, Compliance and Business Development Unit. The unit manages and implements annual inspection and control programmes for the Department's Exchequer and EU co-funded schemes. It also provides policy, governance and compliance supports to scheme managers. Together, the inspection programmes and governance and compliance supports help provide assurance that public funding is invested as it should be.

The unit is also responsible for a number of business development functions, including managing the Department's *Organisational Capability Review* process, and developing and managing the Department's strategic IT and data capability.

John Orme

Division: Finance and Evaluation Unit

Grade: Principal Officer (acting)

Responsibilities

John Orme has responsibility at Principal Officer level for the Finance and Evaluation Unit. The Unit is responsible for; annual estimates for the Department's Vote, management and administration of payment processes, monitoring of Departmental expenditure, production of the Appropriation Account, oversight and development of financial systems and internal controls, development of evaluation capacity, and the administration of the Dormant Accounts Fund.

Paul Geraghty

Unit: HR and Facilities Unit

Grade: Principal Officer

Responsibilities

Paul Geraghty is responsible for all functions relating to Human Resources, including public sector reform implementation and policy.

The Unit is also responsible for the management of all facilities services for the Department in our offices in Ballina and Dublin, including maintenance of the asset register and the acquisition and management of all office utilities and supplies, implementation of Health and Safety policy and procedures for the Department, the management and co-ordination of ICT services and assets, and liaison with the Department's ICT service provider, the OGCI and implementation of the Green Government Initiative through Energy Efficiency and Waste Recycling.

Jake Ryan

Unit: Strategic Co-ordination, Corporate Policy and Communications Unit

Grade: Principal Officer

Responsibilities

The Unit has responsibility for the management of all communications functions, including the implementation of the Department's Communications Strategy, oversight of information and awareness campaigns initiated by the Department and high level engagement with the Government Information Service, the Government Communications Network and other key stakeholders.

The Unit is responsible for overseeing the execution of a number of the Department's corporate governance functions, including FOI, Data Protection and Risk Management. In addition, the Unit is responsible for the production of a range of corporate policies, the central coordination of Departmental-wide responses, and contributing to climate and other cross-Government strategic policy matters, such as Sustainable Development Goals, Brexit, EU/international engagement, and North South Cooperation.

The Unit also has responsibility for Programme Delivery and Alignment. This work supports the delivery of DRCD-funded capital projects and enhanced policy and scheme alignment.