The Civil Service Renewal Plan
Background Data

Consolidating the available quantitative data to profile the Irish Civil Service in 2014

October 2014
A snapshot of the Civil Service in 2014

35,000 full-time equivalent Civil Servants, working in 17 large Departments and Offices and numerous smaller Offices and Agencies, managing over €53bn of public expenditure annually, and serving over 4.6m people.
Over the last six decades, the role of the State in Irish Society has been changing

The composition of public expenditure has changed significantly over time, impacting on the responsibilities of the Civil Service

Government expenditure as a percentage of Gross National Product (GNP), 1950 – 2010

The day-to-day work of the Civil Service is broad, varied and often complex. It includes:

- advising the Government on policy;
- preparing the evidence and analysis required to inform government decisions;
- preparing legislation;
- delivering frontline public services that affect individuals, families, communities and businesses;
- implementing projects and programmes;
- collecting and distributing the revenues of the State;
- regulating and inspecting various sectors and services;
- representing Ireland’s interests in the EU and internationally;
- supporting parliamentary and democratic processes; and
- managing the day-to-day administrative work of the Government.

In 1950, agriculture accounted for more than 25% of total Government expenditure, today it accounts for about 2%.  
In 1950, combined public expenditure on health, social welfare and education was 33% compared to approximately 77% today.

Sources: (1) Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
In the last five years, the size of the Civil Service has reduced significantly

The Civil Service currently employs approximately 35,000 staff

Number of full-time equivalents in the Civil Service, 1980 – 2014

The Civil Service is a small proportion of the Irish Public Service and a smaller proportion of the total labour force

Size of the Civil Service as a proportion of total labour force, 2014

- Nationally, the Civil Service represents less than 2% of the total labour force and approximately 12% of the public service.¹
- By end 2013, the total number of full-time equivalent civil servants was 35,000. This represents a decrease of over 6.3% from a peak of 37,000 in 2008.²
- In the last 20 years, the size of the Civil Service relative to the size of the population declined from 8.4 per 1,000 of the population in 1994 to 7.6 per 1,000 in 2014.³
- The size of the Irish Civil Service is comparable with the United Kingdom. Latest figures show 6.7 civil servants per 1,000 in England, 8.6 in Scotland, 10.3 in Wales and 15.3 Northern Ireland.⁴
- Internationally, the OECD highlights a similar trend in the size of central administrations in EU Member States which have also decreased over this period.⁵

Sources: (1) Data sourced from the CSO and Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, (2) Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, (3) CSO Population Statistics, (4) Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, (5) OECD
Confidence in public administration and effectiveness is also changing

Ireland’s governance effectiveness rating compares to the OECD average and has increased since 2010
World Bank Governance Effectiveness Indicator, 2013

- Ireland’s governance effectiveness rating increased from 1.34 in 2010 to 1.53 in 2012, above the OECD average of 1.29.¹
- In terms of public administration, the quality of Irish public administration is seen as above the European average with Ireland ranking 5th compared to the EU28 in 2013. This represents both an absolute and comparative improvement since 2010.²
- Ireland’s maintenance of traditional Public Service values is also seen as continuing to improve with Ireland ranking well above EU28 average in 2013. Ireland’s score on this indicator has improved in each year since 2010.²

Sources: (1) OECD Governance at a Glance 2013 and World Bank Governance Indicators 2013 (2) IPA Public Sector Trends 2013 Figures 11 and 12.
More than 50% of the Civil Service work outside Dublin, in a range of Departments that vary significantly in size and function

Civil Servants work internationally and nationwide, with the majority employed outside of Dublin

Geographical distribution of Civil Servants, 2014

- The majority of the Civil Service work in large operational organisations, for example, the Department of Social Protection, the Office of the Revenue Commissioners, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.\(^1\)
- Between 2006 and 2013 the proportion of Civil Servants working in Dublin declined from 56% to 46%.\(^1\)
- Approximately 618 civil servants work in 73 diplomatic and consular offices abroad.\(^2\)

Sources: (1) Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, (2) Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade
The age profile in the Civil Service is increasing, and the scale of retirements by 2020 will create both challenges and opportunities.

Almost 73% of the Civil Service are 40 years of age or over

Over the next 6 years, several hundred senior managers age 60 or over will reach 40 years of service

- 1 in 5 Civil Servants has more than 30 years experience in serving the State.¹
- Almost 73% of the current workforce are 40 years of age or over compared to 63% in 2006.¹
- 24% of the current workforce are 55 years of age or over.¹
- Only 4.3% of the workforce are 30 years of age or under, compared to 13.2% in 2006.¹
- In the next 6 years, 12.6% (4,400) of the Civil Service and 31.9% of senior management in the Civil Service (Principal and above) will be over 60 years of age and have served 40 years or more. The rate of retirement during this period is likely to increase significantly.¹

Sources: (1) Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
60% of staff, but only 33% of senior managers in the Civil Service are women

More than 60% of the Civil Service are women
Proportion of women at different grade levels, 2014

- 1 in 3 senior managers (Principal and above) are women and 1 in 4 are employed at Secretary General level.¹
- Internationally, the proportion of senior managers that are women varies, for example, in the UK 28.4% of senior managers are women, 36.5% in Australia, 39.8% in New Zealand, and 39.9% in Canada.²
- Recent recruitment patterns may lead to an improved gender balance at senior levels. At year end 2013, of the 1,600 staff now in the grades of Assistant Principal and Principal recruited since 1995, some 50% are women.¹

Source: (1) Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, (2) OECD 2011, Survey on Gender in Public Employment
Less than 4% of the 35,000 employed in the Civil Service are senior managers.

The Civil Service manages through a pyramid structure similar to other large organisations.

Numbers employed at each grade, 2014

- **264** Secretaries General + Assistant Secretaries
- **1189** Principals
- **3424** Assistant Principals
- **6217** Administrative + Higher Executive Officers
- **5769** Executive Officers
- **1552** Staff Officers
- **11632** Clerical Officers
- **5385** Other Grades

The size of senior management groups varies across organisations.

Senior management as a proportion of all staff in each Department, 2006 - 2014

- 96% of the Civil Service is made up of staff managing the day-to-day operations of the Civil Service.¹
- In total, senior managers make up only 4% of the Civil Service.¹
- Within Departments, the size of senior management groups varies depending on the size and function of the organisation.¹

Sources: (1) Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
The average investment in L&D varies between grade cohorts
Average spend on post-second level for staff and senior managers, 2012

At the Civil Service level, investment in L&D per head varies considerably across organisations
Variation in investment per capita, 2013

- In 2012, the Civil Service invested €22 million in Learning and Development across Departments and Offices.¹
- 60% of all Learning and Development investment was evaluated in 2012.¹
- 12 Departments completed a skills audit within the last 4 years.²
- 97% of survey respondents placed L&D provision in the ‘important’ or ‘very important’ category
- Functional categories (Legal, IT, Accounting, Finance, HR, Procurement) account for 36% of all funded courses

Sources: (1) Learning and Development Baseline Report prepared for DPER (2013), (2) Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
PLEASE NOTE:

• This analysis has been prepared by staff in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform with the support of the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service.

• It is the first time cross-organisational, Civil Service wide data of this kind has been consolidated. In the process, a series of gaps and limitations (Annex B) were identified. These gaps will be reduced over time to improve the available data and analysis for the Civil Service (Action 24, Civil Service Renewal Plan).

• No person should place reliance on the accuracy of the data and should not act solely on the basis of the presentation itself.

• All estimates of Civil Service numbers are calculated using full-time equivalents (FTE) unless otherwise indicated.

• To control for missing data the Civil Service numbers estimates are indicative based on a 90% subset of the total number of FTE Civil Service.

• The definition of the Civil Service and any estimates of total size include general Civil Service grades only and do not include industrial grades.

• All data has been rounded for ease of analysis.

• Senior management refers to all grades at Principal and above.
ANNEX B: Developing a complete baseline of the Civil Service

The research for the evidence base revealed data limitations and management information gaps in sourcing complete data for the Civil Service in the following areas:

• Profile data, including grades, gender, length of service, age and location;

• Skills profiles;

• Diversity metrics;

• Performance information for Assistant Secretaries and above;

• Mobility and promotions data;

• Dismissals and disciplinary procedures;

• Attitudes and morale levels;

• Roles and activities of Civil Servants;

• End-user attitudinal and client outcome data; and

• Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) for organisational performance.
## ANNEX C: Classifications

### Grading Structure
To ensure ease of comparability, the grades under analysis have been characterized as follows (unless otherwise stated):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SG</td>
<td>Secretaries General, Second Secretaries and Deputy Secretaries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASec</td>
<td>Assistant Secretaries and equivalents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO</td>
<td>Principals and equivalents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AP</td>
<td>Assistant Principals and equivalents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AO/HEO</td>
<td>Administrative Officers, Higher Executive Officers, Third Secretaries and equivalents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EO</td>
<td>Executive Officers and equivalents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SO</td>
<td>Staff Officers and equivalents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CO</td>
<td>Clerical Officers and equivalents</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>All other grades</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Organisation Structure
For the purposes of analysis, this document is based on 17 Departments and Offices (unless otherwise stated):

- **DAFM** Dept. Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- **DAHG** Dept. Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
- **DCYA** Dept. Children and Youth Affairs
- **DCENR** Dept. Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
- **DDEF** Dept. Defence
- **DES** Dept. Education and Skills
- **DECLG** Dept. Environment, Community and Local Government
- **DFAT** Dept. Foreign Affairs and Trade
- **DFIN** Dept. Finance
- **DOH** Dept. Health
- **DJEI** Dept. Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
- **DJE** Dept. Justice and Equality
- **DPER** Dept. Public Expenditure and Reform
- **DSP** Dept. Social Protection
- **DOT** Dept. Taoiseach
- **DTTS** Dept. Transport, Tourism and Sport
- **REV** Office of the Revenue Commissioners