

**Briefing Document**  
**on the**  
**Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs**

**March 2011**

## Table of Contents

1.	Background, Mandate and Mission of the Department	
2.	Management Structure & Organisation Chart	
3.	Total Budget of the Department	
4.	<i>Divisional Briefing Documents:</i>	<i>Principal Officer:</i>
	<b><i>Community and Local Development</i></b>	
	Community and Local Development	Clodagh McDonnell
	Community and Voluntary Supports	Don Sexton
	Social Inclusion & Family Policy	Catherine Hazlett
	Dormant Accounts	Terry Dunne
	Charities Regulation Unit	Terry Dunne
	<b><i>Tackling Drugs Misuse</i></b>	
	Office of the Minister for Drugs	Michael Conroy Susan Scally
	<b><i>Rural Development</i></b>	
	National Rural Development Schemes,	Aidan O'Reilly
	Rural Recreation & Waterways Ireland	
	EU Rural Development	Finola Moylette
	<b><i>Equality and Migrant Integration</i></b>	
	Office of the Minister for Migrant Integration	Anne O'Gorman John Hurley
	Diversity & Equality Law Division	Deaglan Ó Briain
	Gender Equality Division	Pauline Moreau
	Disability Policy Division	Linda Grealy
	Traveller Policy Division	
	<b><i>Gaeltacht, Irish Language &amp; Islands</i></b>	
	Gaeltacht Policy & Improvement Schemes	Beirtí Ó hAinmhire
	Islands Division	
	Irish Language Policy & Údarás na Gaeltachta	Séamus Mac Giolla Chomhaill
	Central Translations Unit & Placenames	Tomás Ó Ruairc(Director)
	<b><i>Corporate Services</i></b>	
	Finance & IT	Colm Treanor
	HR, Decentralisation & Corporate Governance	Mary Hurley
	Inspection Services	Paul McGoldrick

## **Background, Mandate & Mission of the Department**

The former Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs was reconfigured in March 2010 and, with effect from 02 June 2010, the name of the Department changed to the Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs. A number of new functions transferred to this Department from the Department of Social Protection and the Department of Justice and Law Reform. On foot of the recent changes, the Department has significantly grown and now has a staff of 369 located in offices in Dublin, Tubbercurry, Na Forbacha, Portlaoise, Roscrea and a number of other smaller regional offices. A key priority for the Department over the coming period will be to create synergies across the range of functions it now holds and to build a coherent and strong new Department, acting in support of the most vulnerable members of society and of those working to make a difference right across our communities.

The range of functions for which the Department has responsibility include:

- Community and Local Development Programmes
- Community and Voluntary Supports
- Active Citizenship and Philanthropy
- Social Inclusion and Family Policy
- Equality, Human Rights and Integration
- Co-ordination of the National Disability Policy
- Co-ordination of the National Women's Strategy
- Co-ordination of the National Drugs Strategy
- Rural Development
- The Irish Language
- The Gaeltacht
- Development of inhabited off-shore islands

The Department retains from its predecessor department a fundamental mandate to support communities as they advance their own development - be they communities in urban or rural settings, island communities, communities affected by drug misuse, Traveller communities, Gaeltacht or other Irish-speaking communities, or communities seeking to deal with poverty and disadvantage. A key principle underlying this approach is that support should be provided in such a way as to enable communities themselves to identify and address issues in their own areas as they work to shape their own futures, achieve their common goals and realize their full potential.

The Department has also been mandated in relation to removing barriers that exclude people from participating fully in the life of their communities. Such barriers may, for example, relate to poverty, to issues of both gender and diversity equality, to areas such as disability or human rights or to the integration of legally resident migrants into Irish society. Much of the Department's work, therefore, is focused on addressing social exclusion issues. While to a large extent, the requisite legislative and structural frameworks are already in place, a significant challenge remains for the Department in making these frameworks more accessible and more effective in overcoming any barriers to full participation within communities.

The Department's work with communities in the promotion of social inclusion is directly linked to a third aspect of its mandate - the promotion of active citizenship and the related areas of volunteering and philanthropy with a view to strengthening community activity and increasing civic engagement across all sectors of society.

In delivering on this broad mandate, the Department works with local communities, with groups working on their behalf and with other relevant stakeholders. It seeks to promote a co-ordinated and coherent approach, not only across the range of measures for which it has direct responsibility, but also with Departments and agencies whose work impacts on communities, community development and other aspects of the Department's remit, such as the advancement of the Irish language. This approach assumes a particular significance not only in the context of Government strategies such as the National Drugs Strategy for which the Department has a lead co-ordinating responsibility but also in those cases where another Department/body has the principal delivery role. The Department also continues to work in the context of co-operation with Northern Ireland, and at EU and international level where responsibilities relevant to its mandate arise.

The Department's overall purpose is to support the creation of vibrant, more inclusive communities throughout the country. In light of the mandate given to the Department in March 2010, the following Mission Statement was proposed in the Department's draft Statement of Strategy 2011-2013:

**To support the development of inclusive communities, to promote equality and to advance the use of the Irish language.**



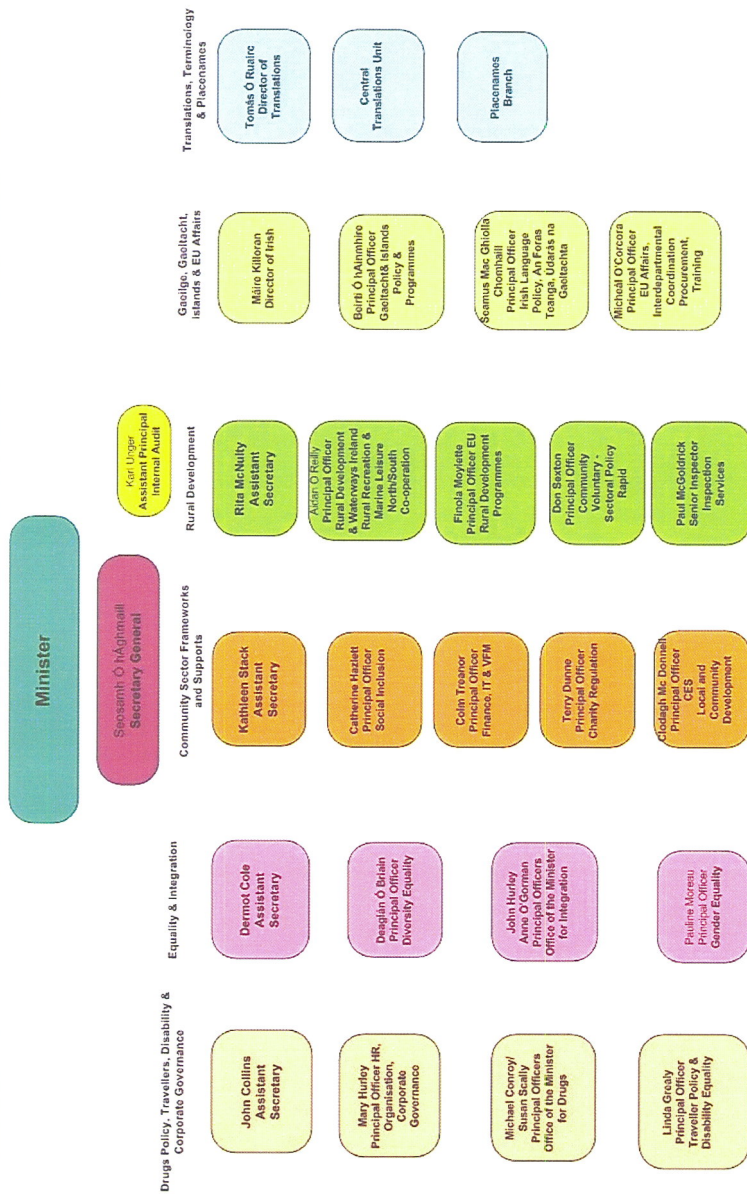
### **Management Advisory Committee**

The Department's Management Advisory Committee (MAC) comprises:

- Seosamh Ó hÁghmaill, Secretary General (ext 3045)
- Kathleen Stack, Assistant Secretary (ext 3016)
- Dermot Cole, Assistant Secretary (ext 3189)
- Rita McNulty, Assistant Secretary (ext 7854)
- John Collins, Assistant Secretary (ext 3008)
- Tomás Ó Ruairc, Director of Translations (ext 3205)
- Máire Killoran, Director of Irish (ext 3781)
- Mary Hurley, Principal Officer (ext 3100)
- Colm Treanor, Principal Officer (ext 6740)

## Organisation Chart

### An Roinn Gnóthaí Pobail, Comhionannais agus Gaeltachtaí/ Department of Community, Equality & Gaeltacht Affairs (Chart 01)



**Departmental Budget**

	2010 FRE Allocation (including Supplementary Estimate €14m) €m	2010 Outturn €m	2011 REV Allocation €m	% Change on Outturn
<b>Net Voted Expenditure</b>	<b>419.559</b>	<b>350.3</b>	<b>308.985</b>	<b>-11.79%</b>
<b>Appropriations-in-Aid</b>	<b>35.305</b>	<b>35.146</b>	<b>43.4</b>	<b>23.49%</b>
<b>Gross Voted Expenditure</b>	<b>454.864</b>	<b>385.412</b>	<b>352.4</b>	<b>-8.57%</b>
<b>Non-Voted (State source)</b>				
<b>Total Gross Expenditure</b>	<b>454.864</b>	<b>385.412</b>	<b>352.4</b>	<b>-8.57%</b>
<i>of which – Gross Exchequer Pay &amp; Pensions</i>		<i>52.796</i>	<i>53.160</i>	<i>1%</i>
<i>Pay related Appropriations- in-Aid</i>		<i>3.244</i>	<i>2.440</i>	<i>-25%</i>
<i>Net Exchequer Pay &amp; Pensions</i>		<i>49.552</i>	<i>50.720</i>	<i>2%</i>
<i>No. of Public Service Employees &amp; Pensioners</i>		<i>1,022</i>	<i>990</i>	<i>-3%</i>

## **Local and Community Development Division**

**Principal Officer:** Clodagh McDonnell (based in Tubbercurry, Co Sligo)

### **Function of the Division and main work items for 2011:**

The role of the Division is to manage and oversee the overall implementation of the Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP), which has a budget in 2011 of over €63m. Pobal manages the day-to-day operation of the LCDP on behalf of the Department. The Division also carries out an overall oversight role in relation to Pobal.

The LCDP, which was launched on 1 January 2010, superseded the Local Development Social Inclusion and the Community Development Programmes. The aim of the LCDP is to tackle poverty and social exclusion through partnership and constructive engagement between Government and its agencies and people in disadvantaged communities. The Programme is underpinned by four high-level goals:

- To promote awareness, knowledge and uptake of a wide range of statutory, voluntary and community services;
- To increase access to formal and informal educational, recreational and cultural development activities and resources;
- To increase peoples' work readiness and employment prospects; and
- To promote engagement with policy, practice and decision making processes on matters affecting local communities.

The 'cohesion process' initiated by the Department some years ago resulted in a significant reduction of local delivery structures for a range of rural and local development programmes. This meant that, during 2009, the number of existing Partnerships and LEADER companies was reduced from 94 to a total of 52 urban partnerships and integrated companies – known as Local Development Companies (LDCs). These now provide full coverage throughout the country. A key difference between the new Programme and its predecessor programmes is that, when it is fully implemented, it will be delivered through an integrated delivery structure in each of the 52 LDC areas.

The latest phase of cohesion involves the integration of the 160 Community Development Projects (CDPs) with the 52 LDCs. While a national model involving full integration was set out by the Department, it was made clear that other options could be considered once they met a range of criteria, including:

- Reduced structures;
- Better integrated delivery of services;
- Supporting efficiencies; and
- Reducing company law compliance requirements for CDPs.

As a result, a number of alternative models have been approved - such as the HSE South, Limerick, the Women's Sector, the Northside Partnership, the Travellers CDPs



and Bray (these involve approx 50 projects between them). A further alternative proposal involving the Islands remains under active consideration.

To date, four CDPs have opted out of the Programme and are no longer being funded through the LCDP in 2011. Overall, the CDP integration process is now well advanced. While a number of issues remain, it is expected that the primary integration process will be largely completed by end-March 2011.

Once this has been achieved, it is proposed that the primary focus of the Division for the remainder of 2011 will be on consolidating and bedding down the Programme to allow the LDCs to roll out their strategic plans across their areas.

#### *LCDP Feasibility Study*

A feasibility study to inform the decision-making in relation to the design of the main stage evaluation of the LCDP is currently underway and is due to be completed in May 2011. The feasibility study is required to clarify the main technical, scientific and practical parameters for the main stage evaluation and to make recommendations for a suitable evaluation design and to gather the information needed to establish how the evaluation can work. The main stage evaluation – which, it is planned, will be tendered for before the end of 2011 – will assess the impact and effectiveness of the Programme on beneficiaries (both individuals and communities) in relation to the national goals and objectives. It will involve the measurement of changes in outcomes for beneficiaries over time.

#### *Centre for Effective Services (CES)*

The Department, along with the Office of the Minister for Children and Youth Affairs and the Atlantic Philanthropies, supports the work of the CES. In 2008, the Centre was asked by the Department to review the Community Development Programme and the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme, which resulted in the launch, in January 2010, of the new integrated LCDP. The Centre has been working closely with the Department on the roll-out of the new Programme and in the design, conduct and implementation of the feasibility study. The CES will also be the Department's adviser in advancing the key work around the main stage evaluation later in 2011.

#### *Budget*

The budget for the LCDP in 2011 is €63.4m. In agreeing the allocations for this year, LDCs were reminded of the need to ensure that the front-line services provided by, or supported through, the Department - especially those focused on the needs of the most disadvantaged communities - are protected and to minimise overheads and ancillary costs.

#### **Main work items for 2011:**

- Complete the primary process of integrating the CDPs into the LDCs and deal with emerging issues arising – end-March 2011;
- Finalise remaining alternative models of LCDP integration – end-March 2011;
- Complete Feasibility Study of LCDP and consider findings in the context of preparing for the main stage national evaluation – May to September 2011;
- Review financial allocations across the 52 LDCs - June to December 2011;

- Review of 14 core-funded Groups of ‘National and Special Innovation’ - May-September 2011
- Develop the specifications and tender for the main stage evaluation of the Programme – late 2011;
- Continue to closely liaise with Pobal on the ongoing roll-out and implementation of the Programme and deal with issues arising; and
- Review of the LDCs in the greater Dublin area to be commenced in late 2011 and a possible replacement structure for the Dublin Inner City Partnership (DICP) to be considered in that context.

**Issues for Ministerial attention:**

- Significant issues regarding CDP integration to be highlighted, including the finalisation of any further alternative models.

## Community & Voluntary Supports Division

**Principal Officer:** Don Sexton (Based in Tubbercurry Office)

**Function of the Division and main work items for 2011:**

**1. RAPID (Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment & Development).**

The Division had responsibility for the overall management and interdepartmental coordination of the RAPID Programme, and management of the RAPID Leverage Schemes.

**2. Community & Voluntary Supports:**

The Division is responsible for the following:

- Implement the review of the Scheme to Support National Organisations and roll out new scheme by end of March 2011. Manage disbursement of €4m in core funding for successful applicants under the scheme (see detail below).
- Manage disbursement of the approved funding allocations of €540,000 in total to the 17 members of C&V Pillar under Social Partnership. The scheme has been refocused, with a greater emphasis on catering for the needs of the disadvantaged and with a clearer emphasis on outputs. Priority has been given to those organisations that are providing analysis and policy input for the sector. Funding to Social Partners has been reduced from €879,000 in 2010 to €540,000 in 2011, reflecting the reduced workload under Social Partnership and also in line with the Department's focus on front-line services.
- Initiate dialogue with the Community & Voluntary Pillar in line with commitments under *Towards 2016*, section 34 (see detail below).
- Continue to implement the Department's policy on Volunteer Centres. Disburse €3.1m to 22 Volunteering Centres and advance other volunteering initiatives, including North/South projects. Ensure successful outcome for the European Year of Volunteering 2011 (EYV2011).
- Provide supports for Forum on Philanthropy and for initiatives on Corporate Social Responsibility.
- Participate in finalisation of work and report on British-Irish Council (BIC) Social Inclusion/C&V strand and service relevant meetings of BIC group. Co-Chair International Fund for Ireland Community Leadership Programme.
- Advance Active Citizenship agenda, as part of EYV2011. Following the closure of the Office for Active Citizenship in 2010 and the transfer of the work of the Taskforce to this Department, a practical approach, which builds on existing infrastructures and the resources now available, has been adopted.



### 3. Seniors Alert Scheme

The new scheme, launched in 2010, is now fully operational. Some 450 groups have been registered and grants payments commenced in September 2010. The 2011 budget for the scheme is €2.35 million

#### **Issues for Ministerial attention:**

- Implement the review of the Scheme to Support National Organisations and approve proposals for allocating the core-funding of €4 million for C&V organisations under the new scheme by end-March 2011.
- The RAPID Programme faces significant challenges, given that the budget for the RAPID Leverage schemes has fallen from an out-turn of €9 million in 2009 to an allocation of €2.5 million in 2011. In order to ensure the continued relevance of RAPID, consideration might be given to changing the policy direction of the programme, with a greater focus, inter alia, on the coordination and local consultation roles of the programme, and enhancing the opportunities for input by residents in disadvantaged areas.
- Proposals to initiate a structured dialogue with the Community & Voluntary sector have been circulated. It is envisaged that the dialogue process might be undertaken initially on a bilateral basis between this Department and representatives from the sector. The Minister may wish to discuss the proposed process of engagement.
- In light of the merger between the two national volunteer development organisations (Volunteering Ireland and Volunteering Centres Ireland), scheduled to take place by end-March 2011, consideration might be given to reviewing and exploring options for streamlining administration of the network of 22 Volunteer Centres in Ireland.



## **Social Inclusion Division**

**Principal:** Catherine Hazlett (based in Dublin)

### **Functions of the Division**

The Social Inclusion Division has a central role in co-ordinating the ongoing development of the Government's National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016. The responsibilities of the Division are to:

- monitor progress in the implementation of the Government's social inclusion strategies;
- analyse the impact and effectiveness of public policy on poverty and social exclusion;
- provide information based on data, research and analysis to inform policy decisions;
- promote poverty impact assessment; and
- develop mechanisms to promote the participation of people experiencing poverty in policy implementation.

The Division also supports the Family Support Agency, which has statutory functions and responsibilities in the provision of family services. The Agency provides a direct, nationwide family mediation service. It also supports, promotes and develops the provision of marriage and relationship counselling and other family supports, and oversees the Family and Community Services Resource Centre Programme. It also has a remit to undertake research and to provide information on family supports.

### **Budget 2011**

The budget for the Division is €175,000 to cover a range of social inclusion and EU (through matching funding) initiatives.

The budget for the Family Support Agency in 2011 is €31.7m. The Family Resource Centre Programme and the Scheme of Counselling Grants account for about 80% of the Agency's overall budget.

### **Main Work items for 2011**

- Family Support Agency – options for future of the Agency and its services to be considered and finalised for submission to Minister.
- Formulate a National Poverty Target for Government decision to meet Europe 2020 strategy commitment and for inclusion in Ireland's National Reform Programme - by April 2011. The Europe 2020 Strategy aims to reduce by 20 million the number of people experiencing poverty and social exclusion across the EU by 2020. The poverty target for Ireland, set out in the draft National Reform Programme, which was forwarded to the EU Commission in mid-December 2010, is based on the existing target in the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016. That proposes a reduction in consistent poverty in the population to between 2 and 4 per cent by 2012 with the aim of eliminating consistent poverty by 2016. In 2009, the rate of consistent poverty in the population was 5.5 per cent.

In EU numerical terms, the target is equivalent to lifting 186,000 people out of consistent poverty.

- Contribute to the analysis of the distributive impact of budgetary policy, promote poverty impact assessment and provide information and evidence to inform government social inclusion policy.
- Prepare a progress report on the National Action Plan for Social Inclusion 2007-2016 covering the period 2009/2010 for the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion.
- Arrange Annual Social Inclusion Forum – autumn 2011.
- Research Programme and data analysis initiatives and events include:
  - Seminar on ‘Financial Inclusion and Over-indebtedness’ - March 2011
  - ‘Social Portrait of People with Disabilities’- for publication early 2011.
  - CSO SILC 2010 findings (poverty trends) – publication in late 2011
  - ‘Managing on a low income in an electronic economy’ – for publication in autumn 2011.
- Code of Practice for engagement between statutory bodies and voluntary organisations/people experiencing poverty in policy implementation – to be published in spring 2011.

**Issues for Ministerial attention:**

- **EU 2020 Strategy**  
Work is continuing on the national poverty target to align it with the Europe 2020 timescale and to identify the population groups for priority action. The national poverty target for Ireland, and the measures to achieve it, will be submitted for Government decision over the next few weeks in order that the revised National Reform Programme can be finalised for submission to the European Commission in April 2011.
- **Family Support Agency**  
Options for the future of the Agency and its services are to be considered and finalised for submission to Minister.

### **Dormant Accounts Division**

**Principal:** Terry Dunne (based in Dublin)

#### ***Function of the Division and main work items for 2011***

The key function of the Division is to oversee and support the disbursement of the Dormant Accounts Fund (DAF) in accordance with the Dormant Accounts Acts 2001 to 2005. Disbursements from the DAF are paid from the Votes of the relevant Departments which, in turn, are reimbursed from the Fund. Expenditure under the Fund is spread across some 10 Departments and Agencies.

Allocations from the DAF are designed to assist three broad categories of persons:

- those who are economically and socially disadvantaged;
- those who are educationally disadvantaged; or
- persons with a disability.

The overall disbursement process is managed through three Inter-Departmental Dormant Accounts Committees, which are chaired by the relevant lead Departments:

- Economic and Social Disadvantage (chaired by this Department);
- Educational Disadvantage (chaired by Department of Education and Skills); and
- Persons with a Disability (chaired by Department of Health and Children).

The key task of these Committees is to report concerning the programmes and measures which meet the objectives of the DA schemes and which should be recommended to Government for funding under the relevant categories. Pobal are contracted to advertise, appraise and administer grants from the DAF.

#### ***Value of the Fund***

Since its establishment in April 2003 to the end of December 2010, the transfers to the DAF have totalled some €588m, which includes interest earned of some €34.9m. Funds reclaimed by account holders in that period total approx. €205.2m.

The value of the DAF at the end of December 2010, net of liabilities, was some €51.6m. This figure excludes €52.2m maintained in a Reserve Account to meet future reclaims by account holders and to cover expenses associated with the operation of the DAF.

#### ***Allocations to date***

To date, approximately €275 million has been allocated from the Fund:

- €63 million by the Dormant Accounts Fund Disbursement Board - in 2003 and 2004;
- €76 million approved by the Government in 2006;
- €22 million approved in 2007;
- €30 million approved in 2008;



- €1.25 million approved in 2009; and
- €18 million approved for an early childhood initiative in partnership with philanthropic sources in 2006 & 2009; and
- €64 million towards the cost of the Rural Social Scheme from 2004 to 2008.

### ***Dormant Accounts Board***

The Division liaises with the Dormant Accounts Board (DAB), whose functions are to provide independent advice in relation to Government decisions in relation to DA funding. The Board has a chairperson and 10 ordinary members, all of whom are appointed by the Minister of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs. The costs of the Board are of the order of €200,000 annually.

In line with the recommendations in the McCarthy Report, a General Scheme of a Bill to, inter alia, dissolve the DAB and to make related provisions to streamline the disbursement process was approved in 2010. The Bill is currently in the final stages of drafting in the Attorney General's Office.

### ***Budget***

Total budget for the area in 2011 is €2.9m. This will be used to cover payments to project beneficiaries under DAF, which are funded through the Department, Pobal's administration fee for managing the Fund and the DAB's expenses.

### ***Key Business Priorities for 2011***

- Subject to Ministerial decision, to
  - progress new Dormant Accounts legislation to dissolve Dormant Accounts Board and to transfer its functions to this Department;
  - review and implement new funding procedures following enactment of new Dormant Accounts legislation; and
  - seek approval for 2011 funding programme and/or initiate new Disbursement Plan under proposed new Dormant Accounts legislation.
- Oversee management of DAF inflows and disbursements.

### **Issues for Ministerial attention:**

- A Ministerial decision is required as to whether the proposed Dormant Accounts Bill, which will provide, inter alia, for the dissolution of the Dormant Accounts Board, should proceed.



## **Charities Regulation Unit**

**Principal:** Terry Dunne (based in Dublin)

### **Function of the Division**

The main function of the Division is to implement the regulatory framework for charities in Ireland, as provided for under the Charities Act 2009.

**Budget:** €0.5m in 2011.

### **Main work items for 2011**

#### ***Implementation of the Charities Act***

The Charities Act 2009 is structured in such a way as to allow for commencement, by Ministerial order, of its individual provisions on different dates over a period of time. However, commencement of the majority of the Act is contingent on a Charities Regulatory Authority being in place.

To date, the follow sections of the Act have been commenced:

- 1 September - section 99 of the Act (Sale of Mass cards).
- 26 June 2010 - sections 4 and 90 of the Act (Power of court to grant relief from liability for breach of trust).

Overall implementation of the Act will entail working towards the establishment of a new Charities Regulatory Authority and the introduction of the first Register of Charities, upon which all charities operating in Ireland must be entered. The Register will be publicly accessible.

In the short-term, the establishment of a dedicated Charities Implementation Team within the Department to drive the introduction of charities regulation has been proposed.

#### ***Public consultation on reporting by charities***

There is a commitment to consult with the charities sector in relation to the type of financial and activity reporting that they will be required to make to the new Regulatory Authority. The early initiation of a public consultation process on this matter is proposed.

#### ***Codes of Practice on charitable fundraising***

Support for the implementation of voluntary Codes of Practice on Charitable Fundraising, in partnership with ICTRL, an umbrella body for the Irish Charities Sector, will continue in 2011.

### ***Information and Knowledge Exchange (INKEx)***

The Department is funding the development of a comprehensive public database and website of all not-for-profit entities operating in Ireland, through INKEx, which is a public benefit non-profit organisation. It was established in 2009 to create a knowledge resource serving the non-profit sector and its stakeholders.

INKEx derives the raw data for its database from regulatory filings that are in the public domain (such as the Companies Registration Office). It adds value to the core regulatory data by publishing them on a free, searchable website, and allowing every listed organisation to supplement their regulatory content with additional voluntary disclosures, making the website more versatile and up-to-date. It is considered that this project has the potential to greatly enhance the public transparency of the Irish non-profit sector.

Next sentence is exempt from release under Section 20 and Section 27 of the FOI Acts.

#### **Issues for Ministerial attention:**

- Establishment of a dedicated Charities Implementation Team within the Department to drive the introduction of regulation;
- Consider and agree the approach to developing the first statutory Register of Charities;
- Approval for early initiation of a public consultation process on financial and activity reporting by charities sector.

## **Office of the Minister for Drugs**

**Principals:** Michael Conroy (Policy - based in Dublin)  
Susan Scally (Programmes - based in Dublin)

### **Function of the Office and main work items for 2011:**

#### **(i) Functions**

To oversee the implementation of the National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016 to tackle problem drug use in Ireland through the five pillars of supply reduction, prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and research.

To develop proposals, with the Department of Health & Children, for a National Substance Misuse Strategy, based on the five pillar approach, to bring greater coherence and co-ordination to alcohol and drugs issues.

#### **(ii) Main Work Items**

##### **(a) Co-ordination of the implementation of the National Drugs Strategy 2009-2016 across statutory, community & voluntary sectors**

The implementation of the National Drugs Strategy (NDS) is being pursued across a range of Departments and agencies and solid progress is being achieved. An Oversight Forum on Drugs (OFD), chaired by the Minister, meets on a quarterly basis to examine the progress being made and to address any operational difficulties and blockages.

Next paragraph in relation to the implementation of the National Drugs Strategy is exempt from release under Section 21 of the FOI Acts.

##### **(b) Develop a National Substance Misuse Strategy in co-operation with Dept H&C**

A Steering Group, jointly chaired by Dept H&C and Dept CEQA, has been working to develop proposals and make recommendations to both Ministers on the alcohol aspects of a National Substance Misuse Strategy. Their work is well advanced and it could be brought to a conclusion quickly. Consideration of the recommendations of the Steering Group by the Ministers, and subsequently by Government, had been envisaged. However, the new Government may wish to review the direction being taken in relation to alcohol and drugs policies.

Issues to be considered:

- particular issues arising in relation to the availability and sale of alcohol, the marketing and advertising of alcohol and alcohol sponsorships;
- the potential areas of synergy between alcohol and illicit drugs and the areas where different approaches may be needed;
- reaching a satisfactory workable agreement on the future role of this Department in implementing any new strategy;
- monitoring and implementation arrangements; and
- developing effective outcome measures.



**(c) Implementation of the Report of the Working Group on Drugs Rehabilitation**

The objective is to endeavour to keep the focus of the sectors on overall inter-agency working, backed up by individual care plans, and to ensure that the broader objectives of the Report beyond treatment/health issues (in areas such as housing, education and employment) are retained and addressed. The HSE hold the lead role for rehabilitation and the recent departure of some key people from that agency is a cause of some concern.

**(d) React effectively to emerging threats**

The objective is to play a part in the response to any emerging threats in the evolving drugs situation on the lines of the impact achieved in dealing with psychoactive substances and headshops in 2010. The number of headshops has dropped from 102 early in 2010 to 12. The issue of internet sales of these substances continues to be tackled.

**(e) International Drugs Issues**

There is now better co-ordination of the Irish effort around drugs at international level, especially through the “International Drugs Issues Group”, which the Department chairs.

- **British-Irish Council:** the 2011 highlight will be a Summit in Ireland towards the end of the year with drugs as a central theme.
- **EU:** the Department will continue to contribute to, and learn from, our EU involvement. An important part of the EU work in 2011 will be to initiate preparations for our likely extensive involvement in drugs issues during the Irish EU Presidency in 2013.
- **UN:** the Department will participate with D/J&LR, D/H&C and D/FA at the Commission on Narcotic Drugs in March.

**(f) Opioid Treatment Protocol:**

The Review of the Methadone Treatment Protocol (*The Introduction of the Opioid Treatment Protocol*) was launched in December 2010. The Review addressed a range of significant issues in relation to opioid treatment and the OMD will pursue its implementation (primarily by the HSE).

**(g) National Advisory Committee on Drugs**

The National Advisory Committee on Drugs (NACD) advises the Government in relation to the prevalence, prevention, treatment and consequences of drug misuse. The Minister, the OMD and the NACD develop and prioritise a research programme on an annual basis and subsequently work towards its implementation.

**(h) Programmes**

A total of €33.7m has been allocated for drugs initiatives in 2011 - €32.7m has been allocated in relation to current funding and €1m in relation to capital funding of premises and facilities. This subhead funds the work of the:

- 14 Local Drugs Task Forces in Dublin, Bray and Cork;
- 10 Regional Drugs Task Forces, covering all areas not included in Local Drugs Task Forces;



- Emerging Needs Fund in Local Drugs Task Forces;
- Fund to address cocaine usage and support rehabilitation;
- Capital facilities for drugs focussed projects; and
- National Advisory Committee on Drugs.

In addition to the above, the allocation provides a grant to the National Documentation Centre of the Health Research Board and funds the Citywide Drugs Crisis Campaign, the Family Support Network, the UCD Co-funded Education Initiative and the *Dial to Stop Drug Dealing* Initiative.

#### **(i) Local and Regional Drugs Task Forces**

A major element of the National Drug Strategy is its focus on tackling the drugs problem at the local level through the Local and Regional Drugs Task Forces. The overall role of the Task Forces is to prepare and implement action plans that identify existing and emerging gaps in services in relation to the five pillars of the National Drugs Strategy. There are currently 488 projects in place through the Drugs Task Forces. The project approach was designed to deliver speedy and relevant services to Drugs Task Force communities in response to needs at a point in time.

Membership of the Task Forces include representatives of all the relevant agencies such as the Health Service Executive, the Gardaí, the Probation and Welfare Service, the Department of Education and Skills/VEC, the Local Authority, the Youth Service and FÁS, as well as elected public representatives and voluntary and community sector representatives.

Funding and accounting for Drugs Task Force projects is channelled through Channels of Funding including HSE, FÁS, Local Authorities and VECs.

#### **(j) Local Drugs Task Forces**

Fourteen Local Drugs Task Forces (LDTFs) have been established in areas experiencing the highest levels of drug misuse, particularly heroin. Thirteen of the fourteen were established in 1997 (12 in Dublin, 1 in Cork), with Bray being set up in 2000. Funding of €20.8m in 2011 will support in the region of 347 projects. This will cover a wide variety of initiatives in the areas of prevention, awareness, treatment, emerging needs, curbing local supply, cocaine use and rehabilitation.

#### **(k) Regional Drugs Task Forces**

Ten Regional Drugs Task Forces (RDTFs) have been established in the areas not covered by Local Drugs Task Forces. Thus all parts of the country are serviced by a Drugs Task Force. The allocation of €9.7m will support a total of 141 projects (including initiatives to tackle cocaine use) and includes dedicated funding of 0.45m through the Mid Western RDTF to address the problems in Limerick City.

#### **(l) Drugs Advisory Group (DAG)**

The primary function of the DAG is to advise the Minister on operational and policy matters relating to the National Drugs Strategy (NDS). The DAG, inter alia, supports and drives the implementation of the NDS – primarily at local and regional levels – and facilitates and supports the engagement of the community and voluntary sector in their roles in the NDS. In addition, the DAG oversees and supports the work of the Local and Regional Drugs Task Forces, ensures that policy is informed by their work

and provides a liaison, reporting and representational role between the Task Forces and the OMD. The DAG which currently meets on a monthly basis comprises representatives of the Department and Agencies involved with the implementation of the NDS and of the community & voluntary sectors. It is intended to work with the statutory representatives during 2011 to strengthen their engagement and contribution to the work of the OMD.

**(m) Review of the Drugs Task Forces – Action 62 of the NDS**

A review of the Drugs Task Forces will be initiated during 2011 in line with Action 62 of the NDS. This action envisages a review of the participation and commitment of members of the Drugs Task Forces, a review of Drugs Task Forces boundaries and an examination of the optimum structures for the employment arrangements of Drugs Task Force Personnel.

**(n) Mainstreaming**

Mainstreaming involves moving projects on to relevant Department/Agencies for longer-term funding as part of the programmes of such Departments/Agencies. Projects funded by the Drugs Task Forces are generally regarded as “interim funded”. It is proposed that a review of projects will be undertaken by the Office in 2011 to assess the potential for mainstreaming and the implication for remaining funds in relation to those projects deemed unsuitable for mainstreaming. This review would also include the governance and accountability arrangements in place in relation to projects.

**(o) 2010 Report of Drugs Task Forces to the OMD**

Drugs Task Forces will report to the OMD on their activities, including their broader strategic and co-ordination work, during 2010 and their action plans for 2011. The DTF reports, together with the report from the Oversight Group on Drugs, which monitors progress at national level, will form the basis for a national review. The reports will also provide a profile of DTF funded projects, including an assessment of the impact of the projects as a group, in addressing the local drugs problem. This information will also assist with the development of an outcome measurement framework, which is currently under consideration.

**Issues for Ministerial attention:**

- **National Substance Misuse Policy:**  
Consideration of the direction being taken in relation to combining the approach to alcohol and drugs in a single strategy. There is a need to confirm the approach now being pursued, or to decide on an alternative approach. This might involve discussions with the Minister for Health & Children and possible referral to Government.
- **Implementation of the National Drugs Strategy (2009-2016):**  
It will be important to seek the commitment of Ministers to the implementation of the National Drugs Strategy from the outset. As part of that process, early meetings with some key Ministers and with the CEO of the HSE would be advisable to emphasise the importance of the drugs issue and to get across the message that impacting on the illicit drugs problem will give rise to direct and

indirect positive effects on other problems and policy areas. Meetings with the community and voluntary sectors are also recommended.

- **Oversight Forum on Drugs (OFD):**

The Oversight Forum on Drugs involves a high-level group, chaired by the Minister, which meets on a quarterly basis. Its main functions are to examine the progress of the National Drugs Strategy and to address any difficulties and blockages to implementation. The next meeting is scheduled for 14 April and it would be advisable to decide on the key issues for that meeting and to then finalise an agenda.



## **Rural Development Division**

**Principal:** Aidan O'Reilly (based in Tubbercurry)

### **Function of the Division and main work items for 2011:**

The function of the Division include implementation of a range of Rural Development actions via national schemes/programmes, Rural Policy, North/South rural development and related issues, and oversight of the Western Development Commission.

#### **1. Rural Recreation**

The Division co-ordinates a range of actions, in co-operation with Comhairle na Tuaithe (the Countryside Council), to improve the infrastructure and availability of rural recreation and to open up the potential of this area. Activity-related tourism is seen as having significant economic/enterprise/jobs potential and is increasing its share of the tourism market, even in an overall decreasing market. The Comhairle has been successful as a cross-sectoral advisory body is getting agreement between diverse interests (e.g. farmers and walkers/ramblers) to improve access to the countryside and agree a Countryside Recreation Strategy. Agreement on access (for walkers) and the implementation of the Walks Scheme (whereby landowners/farmers undertake maintenance work on walking trails for a modest payment) have made a big difference to this area.

For the first time, Fáilte Ireland can now market many of Ireland's key walking trails with confidence, both nationally and internationally. The employment of 12 Rural Recreation Officers through Department-provided funding has been key to making this happen on the ground. Given the current level of funding available, the Division is focussing on other rural recreation actions that can be advanced within the Countryside Recreation Strategy (e.g. mountain biking, water sports, air sports, bird watching) using programme funding (e.g. Fáilte Ireland NDP Funding, LEADER funding). It is also seeking to advance greater engagement from State landowners to avail of their lands for recreation opportunities.

#### **2. Marine Leisure/Tourism**

This portfolio transferred to the Department in January 2011, but no budget or staff resources came with the transfer. Consideration will be given to advancing this area as part of the work in relation to rural recreation, using existing programme funding where possible. Since the function transferred, one project – Roundstone Marina - has been undergoing a review on foot of a request from the project promoters.

#### **3. Rural Development Policy**

In relation to rural development, the Department has been looking at developing a more co-ordinated approach to the research/policy work going on in this area through statutory agencies such as Teagasc (the Rural Economy Research Centre) and the Western Development Commission, as well as 3<sup>rd</sup> level institutions. Subject to Ministerial endorsement, it is planned to have a meeting with the various stakeholders in the near future to examine possible options.



#### **4. Western Development Commission (WDC)**

The WDC continues its work in relation to promoting the western region (the seven counties of Donegal, Leitrim, Sligo, Roscommon, Mayo, Galway and Clare) through regional promotion, research and analysis (including recommendations to Government on various policy areas) and enterprise investment. Having been identified for abolition under the report of the McCarthy Special Group, the last year has been somewhat uncertain for the Commission, given that reductions in Departmental funding mean that it has not been possible to provide exchequer funding in 2011 to the Western Investment Fund (WIF), the WDC's enterprise investment arm. It is proposed to present a paper to the Minister shortly on future options in relation to the WDC.

#### **5. CLÁR Programme**

With the reduced funding available to the Department, this Programme, which was targeted at tackling infrastructure and services deficits in depopulated rural areas, has been wound down. Measures included water infrastructure in co-operation with Local Authorities (Group Water Schemes, sewerage schemes), health facilities with the HSE and piers/harbours (with Local Authorities and other Departments). For 2011 there is €500,000 available to meet commitments - mostly for Sports Capital projects. The Capital Expenditure Review (July 2010) identified that in future infrastructure/services investments should be funded solely by the Government Department with primary sectoral responsibility. In view of this and the reduced capital provision for this Department overall, it is anticipated that it will be necessary to continue to wind down CLÁR commitments.

#### **6. Rural Development Fund**

This is a Fund that arose from the White Paper on Rural Development, to finance collaboration in policy-orientated rural research, evaluation and pilot actions. It formerly supported some 10 projects but, with reduced funding, there are now just two projects being supported: the GAA for its 'Social Initiative' (tackling rural isolation) and the Clones Regeneration Partnership to assist actions to complement the proposed re-opening of the Ulster Canal.

#### **7. North/South**

##### **Waterways Ireland**

This Department and the Northern Ireland Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) are the sponsoring Departments with responsibility for Waterways Ireland. It is the largest of the six North/South Implementation Bodies and is responsible for the management, maintenance, development and restoration of the inland navigable waterway system throughout the island, principally for recreational purposes.

Current expenditure for Waterways Ireland is funded 85% by this State and 15% by Northern Ireland. Capital expenditure is met directly by each jurisdiction. The D/CEGA grant for 2011 is €30.3m. The 2011 budget for WI is the subject of ongoing discussions between the co-sponsoring Departments and will require formal approval by the North/South Ministerial Council in due course. WI's priorities for 2011 include the ongoing re-commissioning of the Royal Canal (which links Dublin with the River Shannon) and progressing work on the re-opening of the Ulster Canal from Upper

Lough Erne to Clones. The section of the Ulster Canal proposed for re-opening is some 13km in length. Preliminary design, land acquisition and the acquiring of planning permission are underway and construction is anticipated to commence in 2011 and to be completed in 2013, subject to resources.

### **PEACE III Programme**

PEACE III (2007-13) is an EU Structural Funds Programme aimed at reinforcing progress towards a peaceful and stable society and promoting reconciliation. The new Programme has a renewed emphasis on reconciliation. This Department manages and disburses EU and National funding under the Programme towards Priority 1, Theme 2 'Acknowledging and dealing with the past'. Under this theme, €50m will be distributed to projects located in Northern Ireland and the six Border Counties. This Department will contribute €18.13m towards this over the life of the programme.

### **INTERREG IVA**

The INTERREG IV Programme for Northern Ireland, the Border Region of Ireland and Western Scotland (2007-13) is an EU Structural Funds Programme to address the economic and social problems which result from the existence of borders and promote greater territorial cohesion. The addition of Western Scotland is a new dimension to this programming round. This Department manages and disburses EU and National funding under the Programme in relation to the rural development sub-theme of Priority 2 ('Co-operation for a sustainable cross-border region'). Under this theme, €10m is available for projects, €4m of which will be contributed by the Department.

#### **Budget:**

1. Rural Recreation: €2.8m current; €100,000 capital
2. Marine Leisure/Tourism: No budget
3. Rural Development Policy: No budget
4. Western Development Commission: €1.549m current (operating costs of the WDC); nil for Western Investment Fund
5. CLAR Programme: €500,000 capital
6. Rural Development Fund: €135,000 current
7. North/South Co-operation Rural Dev/Agriculture: No budget
8. Waterways Ireland: €24.3m current; €6m capital
9. PEACE III Programme/INTERREG IVA: €2m current; €0.6m capital

#### **Issues for Ministerial attention:**

- **North/South:** The last North-South Plenary Council was 21 January 2011 and the next one is set for 10 June. It is anticipated that a series of North-South Ministerial Councils will be held ahead of the June Plenary. Therefore, it may be anticipated that meetings will be set in relation to Waterways Ireland, the Language Body and Rural Dev/Agriculture.
- **Waterways Ireland:** Next paragraph in relation to Waterways Ireland is exempt from release under Section 20, Section 21 and Section 24(d) of the FOI Acts.
- **Western Development Commission:** It is proposed to present a paper to the Minister shortly on future options in relation to the WDC.



## EU Rural Development Division

**Principal:** Finola Moylette (based in Tubbercurry)

### **Function of the Division and main work items for 2011:**

The function of the EU Rural Development Division is to implement Axes 3 & 4 of the Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 (RDP) using the LEADER approach. Axes 1 & 2 of the RDP is implemented by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food, which is also the managing authority for the Programme overall.

The broad objectives of the LEADER Axes of the Programme are to improve the quality of life in rural areas and to encourage diversification of economic activity in rural areas including supports for non-agricultural activities. The measures under Axis 3 include a range of initiatives that are designed to promote economic activity in rural areas and also stimulate broader community initiatives aimed at improving the overall quality of life for rural dwellers.

The Programme is administered by 36 Local Action Groups (LAGs) throughout the country. The LAGs are responsible for selecting and approving projects in their respective areas in accordance with business plans agreed with the Department. The Department has no function in selecting what projects are funded - its role is to ensure that the LAGs adhere to the Programme regulations and operating rules, and in accounting for expenditure.

The individual measures under the Programme include -

- *Diversification into non-agricultural activities for farm families* - €16.66m – eligible activities include the development of niche tourism and educational services such as arts and crafts, speciality food provision, open farms, &c.
- *Support for business creation and development* - €48.26m – funding can be provided to promoters wishing to start a new business or expand an existing enterprise.
- *Encouragement of tourism activities* - €45.4m – eligible activities include the maintenance of vernacular features in a way that protects the heritage of the features, e.g. disused railway lines and canal towpaths.
- *Basic services for the economy and rural population* - €49.61m – funding is available for the identification and provision of appropriate cultural and leisure facilities to local communities, which would not otherwise be available to them.
- *Village renewal and development* - €54.2m – eligible activities include environmental upgrading of parks, civic areas, river walks, access to facilities and amenities and farmers markets.
- *Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage* - €51.7m – funding is available for actions including alternative or renewable energy actions addressing suitability of new technologies to meet community energy needs, environmental initiatives aimed at waste reduction, actions to protect and restore the amenity value of local watercourses and high value nature areas, &c.
- *Training and information on adapted and new skills* - €29.45m – funding is available for training and the development of training facilities in rural areas (fixed or mobile).

- *Implementing co-operation projects* – €10.7m – provides for trans-national and inter-territorial actions, which would be eligible under the other Programme measures set out above.
- *Skills acquisition and animation* (€34.6m available under the RPD).
- *Administration funding for the LAGs* (€84.83m available under the RPD).

In 2011, the LAGs will continue to provide funding for projects in rural areas that include, but are not limited to the expansion/renovation/upgrading of local rural facilities and amenities; the provision of training; support for festivals and local markets; development and improvement of tourism amenities and conservation of rural heritage.

#### **Budget:**

**€425m** is to be available over the lifetime of Axis 3 and 4 of the programme. This is co-funded at 55% from the EU.

In **2009 €19.5m** was spent on Axes 3 & 4 activities. This increased to **€44.2m in 2010** and a budget of **€62m** budget has been allocated for **2011**. There have been no cutbacks in the level of funding available to local and community projects under the RDP.

#### **Job Creation Opportunities**

While enterprise support/job creation initiatives have always been a significant element of the Rural Development Programme, 2011 will have a particular focus on developing opportunities in this area. Enterprise funding available under the RDP adds value to other supports available as it is specific to rural areas and aims to provide support and reinforce the economic impact of similar economic interventions under other Axes of the RDP and other national programmes. In 2011 the Department will be focussing on the promotion of increased co-operation between LAGs and other agencies either directly or indirectly involved in supporting start up enterprise. The aim will be to ensure that the impact of all of the funding available is maximised and enterprise and job creation opportunities are fully supported in rural areas.

#### **Funding Agri-Food projects under Axis 3**

Next paragraph is exempt from release under Section 20, Section 21 and Section 24(c) of the FOI Acts.

**Availability of Credit:** LAGs continue to inform the Department that project promoters are finding it difficult in the current climate to access matched private funding. The Department is hoping to submit a programme change to the Commission which will facilitate the increase in rates of aid for both private and community promoters so as to mitigate this to a certain extent. However, the availability of credit facilities for project promoters is likely to remain a significant issue for the RDP going forward.

#### **Issues for Ministerial attention:**

- **Rural Development Programme:**

Next paragraph is exempt from release under Section 20 and Section 21 of the FOI Acts.



- **Funding Agri-Food projects under Axis 3**

Next paragraph is exempt from release under Section 20, Section 21 and Section 24(c) of the FOI Acts.