

Department
of Community,
Rural and
Gaeltacht
Affairs
Strategy
Statement
2005-2007

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*An Roinn Gnóthaí Pobail, Tuaithe
agus Gaeltachta*
Department of Community, Rural
and Gaeltacht Affairs

**DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY, RURAL
AND GAELTACHT AFFAIRS**
STRATEGY STATEMENT 2005 - 2007

Mission Statement

To promote and support the sustainable and inclusive development of communities, both urban and rural, including Gaeltacht and island communities, thereby fostering better regional balance and alleviating disadvantage, and to advance the use of the Irish language.

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A Message from the Minister and Minister of State

It is impossible to overstate the importance of community to the good of the individual and society. Vibrant communities can stimulate enterprise, treasure education, nurture personal growth and group achievement, while also helping support weaker members. Until now many of us have taken the communities into which we were born and have grown up for granted. We have assumed that our rich community infrastructure of parish, sports, local networks and voluntary groups would continue intact and unchanged. There is a deepening awareness that this is not inevitably so.

Communities do not stand still. Our changing demographic, ethnic and economic profiles present challenges to supporting and maintaining communities. Indeed, for many, the witness of contemporary life is not supportive of community.

Publication of this Statement of Strategy is timely therefore as it sets out the framework of our objectives and strategies to support communities in urban, rural, Gaeltacht and Island settings over the coming period. Given the pace of change in our society, the preparation of the Statement has been informed by significant review and reform in areas such as Drugs, Rural Development

and the Irish Language. And we are keenly aware that the implementation of this Strategy must take account of further changes over the coming period.

Reflecting the remit of the Department, the Strategy Statement focuses on six main areas:

- Community and Local Development
- Drug Misuse
- Rural Development
- Gaeltacht and Island Development
- Promotion and Maintenance of the Irish Language
- North/South Co-operation.

The breadth and complexity of these areas present the Department with a range of challenges ranging, for example, from preserving a linguistic heritage of one of the oldest written languages in Europe still in use, to tackling the evils of drug misuse, to supporting our Island communities. In pursuit of its goals, the Statement of Strategy also identifies a range of cross cutting issues which must be addressed with other public bodies.

While we acknowledge the scale of challenges facing our communities we warmly welcome this Statement of Strategy. We look forward with the staff of the Department and with all other stakeholders in progressing its implementation in order to support our communities to grow in richness and diversity, while strengthening citizenship to the common good.



Éamon Ó Cuív, T.D.,
Minister for Community, Rural and
Gaeltacht Affairs



Noel Ahern, T.D.,
Minister of State with special
responsibility for Drugs Strategy and
Community Affairs

Foreword from Secretary General

Public service neither begins nor ends with public bodies.

Since its establishment, our Department has been privileged to experience the courage, commitment and achievement by countless communities across the State. The generosity of spirit of individuals and groups who come together, again and again, for the common good, is inspiring. Their focus may vary enormously from challenges such as enhancing the physical environment in their neighbourhoods, to developing community resources, to enhancing employment, to protecting their linguistic heritage. The common thread through all is a deep and sustained commitment to neighbours, parish, community and improving the quality of life for fellow citizens.

The challenge for the Department is to appropriately support such diverse communities while re-shaping wider policies to adapt to change. Communities are among our greatest assets in addressing problems of disadvantage. Our policies must therefore work with the innate strengths of communities, while also aware the many groups active in supporting their own communities never come near a public body looking for cash or support.

This Statement reflects the wide remit of the Department and the challenging agenda over the coming period. It

restates much of the Department's high level goals adopted in our first Statement of Strategy 2003 - 2005 and, reflecting our experience, sets out adjusted strategies to achieve these and indicators by which progress will be assessed. Challenges include addressing Drugs Misuse, deepening supports for communities, promoting volunteering, advancing wider rural development, delivery of draft Charity legislation and implementation of the Acht Teanga. Clearly many of these can only be met in partnership with community interests and other public bodies directly involved.

The coming period will also see the Department implement a major decentralisation programme as we move our headquarters staff to Knock Airport and our Irish Language and Placenames Divisions to Na Forbacha. We will also be supporting bodies within our ambit in implementing their decentralisation mandates. Clearly this agenda presents unprecedented organisational challenges for us in terms of people, knowledge management, risk mitigation and service maintenance.

Our objectives can only be met through the active involvement and support of the staff of the Department and our wider stakeholders. I look forward, along with the staff of the Department, to working with the Minister, Minister of State, the bodies within our ambit, and the wider communities to meeting the challenges and achieving the goals set out in this Statement.



A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Gerry Kearney".

Gerry Kearney,
Secretary General

1. MANDATE AND MISSION OF THE DEPARTMENT

The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs was established by Government in June 2002. When announcing the decision to establish the Department, the Taoiseach stressed the need for Government to address issues of regional and social balance in a more effective way, as well as securing economic development. He explained that the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs was being set up to produce a more co-ordinated engagement by the State with communities around the country, as they pursue their own development.

The Department has responsibility for a wide range of programmes covering community and local development, drugs, volunteering, Gaeltacht, Irish language and rural development. Many of these measures, individually and collectively, focus on *communities*, particularly those that are vulnerable or under threat. Those communities may be in rural or inner city settings, grappling with difficulties caused by a range of factors, including declining populations, unemployment, language issues, social disadvantage or drug misuse. As well as communities that can be defined in terms of geographic location, the Department also supports communities that are defined on the basis of a common focus on a particular issue.

The key principle underlying the Department's activities is the provision of support that enables communities *themselves* to identify and address issues in their own areas. Our purpose is to provide support to communities in the most appropriate way as they work to shape their own futures, address their common goals and achieve their full potential. In order to be effective in this vital work, the Department must seek to provide a co-ordinated approach not only across the range of measures for which it has direct responsibility but also with other Departments and State agencies.

The Department has responsibility for delivering on and co-ordinating a number of the targets in the *Agreed Programme for Government* of June 2002, including:

- regenerating disadvantaged communities;
- tackling drug misuse;
- regulating the charities sector;
- the protection and development of rural communities;
- supporting the Irish language and the development of the Gaeltacht;
- measures to further develop the islands; and
- democratic legitimacy on local boards appointed to implement development programmes.

Other relevant targets in the Programme include supporting the development of social capital, particularly on a local community level; and supporting initiatives in relation to corporate social responsibility. The Department also has responsibility for supporting and strengthening the State's relationship with the community and voluntary sector.

Principles to guide and shape the work of the Department are set out in the Agreed Programme and include:

- the achievement of balanced regional development;
- the development of the social and physical infrastructure of rural Ireland; and
- the achievement of real and sustained social progress.

The Department also has mandates arising from Sustaining Progress, particularly in relation to Special Initiatives and Key Actions to Deliver a Fair and Inclusive Society.

The Department has identified key performance indicators in respect of the work it is carrying out. These are set out in the relevant parts of this Strategy Statement.

While having a wide-ranging mandate, the Department is compact with just under 250 staff currently. It is currently

headquartered at Dún Aímhírgin, Mespil Road, Dublin 4, and also has staff located at Na Forbacha, Co Galway, and at other locations throughout the country. Arising from the Government decision in December 2003 on Decentralisation, the headquarters of the Department will move to Knock Airport, Co Mayo.

A number of State agencies and other bodies, which report to the Department, are charged with specific responsibilities in the community/voluntary, rural, drugs, Irish language, Gaeltacht and islands sectors. Details of those bodies, including two North-South implementation bodies– An Foras Teanga and Waterways Ireland - are set out in Appendix I.

In light of the mandate that has been given to the Department, the following Mission Statement has been adopted:

To promote and support the sustainable and inclusive development of communities, both urban and rural, including Gaeltacht and island communities, thereby fostering better regional balance and alleviating disadvantage, and to advance the use of the Irish language.

2. THE DEPARTMENT'S CUSTOMERS AND CLIENTS

The outcome of the work of the Department will ultimately impact on a wide array of communities and people, ranging from Irish speakers, volunteers, local communities, especially those in Gaeltacht, rural and disadvantaged areas, to drug misusers. The Department's key clients and customer base include:

- Minister and other members of the Government
- Minister of State
- Communities throughout the country
- Applicants and grant recipients under the various schemes administered directly by the Department
- Other Government Departments
- State Agencies
- Local and Regional Authorities
- European Institutions and Organisations
- Social Partners, including the community and voluntary sector
- Charities
- Pobal (formerly known as Area Development Management (ADM) Ltd.)
- Area and Community Partnerships
- RAPID¹ Area Implementation Teams
- LEADER² Groups
- National Advisory Committee on Drugs
- National Drugs Strategy Team
- Drugs Task Forces
- Departments and agencies in Northern Ireland
- North-South Implementation Bodies
- Community Development Projects

¹ RAPID - Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development

² LEADER - Liaisons Entre Actions de Development de l'Economie Rurale – EU programme for the development of the rural economy

3. EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT

A wide range of external influences impact upon the work and goals of the Department. Many operate potentially to its benefit and present opportunities to be exploited, while others may present potentially serious challenges to be addressed. All require the Department to respond speedily and effectively. These include:

- the broad international context within which many of the challenges facing the Department are emerging; and
- a range of economic, social and political developments at international and national levels.

International Perspective

Communities in societies throughout the developed world today are faced with many issues that are common to all, e.g., population drift from rural areas into cities and towns exacerbating problems associated with urban living such as housing and accommodation issues, ghettoisation, drug misuse, pressure on infrastructure, traffic and transport difficulties, and challenges posed for lesser-used local languages by a dynamic global economy and culture.

While growing economic globalisation offers major opportunities to an open economy such as Ireland's, competitiveness in international markets can affect the viability of traditional industries. This, for example, can impact significantly on inner city areas where in the past there was a heavy reliance on traditional manufacturing and on rural areas, where some 40% of Ireland's population live, with farm families accounting for one-third of these.

Population loss from rural to urban areas adds greatly to the difficulties faced by rural communities, particularly as the pattern of loss tends to reveal that for the most part it is the younger members of the community who leave. Population shifts of this nature result in major imbalances in the dependency ratios within communities, both in the urban context (with a disproportionate number of under 25s in the population) and the rural context (with a disproportionate number of over 55s in the population).

These imbalances in turn create problems in terms of the provision of social services, employment, health care, etc.

Continued growth is expected in the Irish economy over the next three years - albeit at a slower rate than the previous decade, assuming, given our very large reliance on trade and foreign investment, that sustained expansion will take place in the major international economies.

Globally, English is fast becoming a *lingua franca* while at the same time bilingualism and indeed multilingualism are the norm throughout the world. However, some experts are predicting the demise of up to 90% of the world's languages by the end of this century. As a result, the Irish language itself, which is the most important community resource in the Gaeltacht, is under greater threat than ever.

The recognition of the global nature of such issues has led to the development of processes and plans for promoting actions by countries aimed at alleviating the problems at international level e.g. within the United Nations (UN) and the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development). These will continue to impact on the work of the Department. These actions have been directed at areas of global concern such as progressing social integration and addressing persistent poverty. They have had an increasing influence on Irish policy developments in recent years. For example, the designation by the UN of the year 2001 as the International Year of the Volunteer was the context for the preparation of a long-term strategy - the White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity and for Developing the Relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary Sector. More recently, the Report of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Arts, Sport, Tourism, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs launched its report entitled *Volunteers and Volunteering* in Ireland, which distilled, focused and prioritised much of the thinking represented in prior documents.

Drugs misuse is another problem of global dimension and the international trade in drugs is worth many billions of euro annually. A 1997 report by the United Nations Drugs Control Programme estimated that the trade in drugs amounted to 8% of total international trade, which is roughly the same as textiles, gas, oil or world tourism.

Despite on-going efforts by Governments around the world to deal with problem drug use, no single universally effective response model has emerged. At a European level, out of a total EU population of about 375 million, an estimated 1 to 1.5 million persons are problem drug users - mainly heroin. Problem drug use tends to be unequally distributed between and within countries and more socially deprived areas tend to have higher prevalence rates.

European Union

EU level initiatives have also had very direct effects on policy development in Ireland and on programmes of action relating to Community, Rural and Gaeltacht affairs. For example:

- The last phase in the reform of Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) direct payments came into operation on January 1st 2005. This reform allowed the EU Commission to focus on its plans to overhaul and re-position rural development programmes throughout the enlarged 27-member Union. To this end, in mid-2004, the Commission published a draft regulation on future rural development policy and programmes for the period 2007 – 2013 which has been recently agreed. This regulation will have a significant direct impact on the future of our rural communities, particularly with regard to access to services and competitiveness.
- EU Member States have been adopting common measures for combating drug misuse since the mid-1980s. The most recent EU Action Plan on Drugs 2000-2004 emphasises the continuing threat to society posed by illicit drugs and outlines the need for a balanced approach between demand and supply reduction. The European Council adopted a new EU Drugs Strategy in December 2004 and a new action plan will be drafted during 2005.
- Specific initiatives to target the misuse of charities for terrorist financing.
- In the language area, the EU places emphasis on the advantages of bilingualism and multilingualism.
- In the area of community and voluntary activity, the EU has identified the voluntary sector's contribution to

the promotion of citizenship and the promotion of democracy. EU initiatives on Corporate Social Responsibility and the tackling of social exclusion are also relevant.

National Context

Against this global and European background, the Department also operates in the context of continuing economic, social and political change within Ireland.

The Population Census figures show an overall population increase from 3,626,087 in 1996 to 3,917,203 persons in 2002, an increase of 291,116 persons or 8% over the six-year period. Central Statistics Office projections to 2021 indicate that the Border, Midlands and Western region (BMW) may see its population share decline to less than 27%, while the Greater Dublin Area may account for almost 41% of the national population. There may also be continued population growth (estimated to increase by almost 42% to 5.0+ million) and significant increases in inward migration including growth in multi-ethnic and multi-national communities, particularly in certain areas over the same period.

Clearly, such trends present significant challenges.

Notwithstanding major improvements in employment levels in recent years, continuing job losses in certain areas and the ongoing difficulties with job creation in rural and Gaeltacht areas will also provide a significant challenge. Similarly, although there has been a decrease in consistent poverty, this area continues to be of major concern, both in socially-deprived urban areas and in rural areas. The number of farms continues to decline from 141,300 in 2000 compared to 136,300 in 2002. This is leading to demand for off-farm employment. The number of full-time farms in 2002 was 78,800. The number of part-time farms in 2002 was 57,500. The percentage of farmers and/or spouses with off-farm job in 2002 was 48.1%. This had increased to 50.2% in 2003.

While much of Ireland has experienced greatly improved living standards in recent years, there continue to be pockets of disadvantage throughout the country. In those areas, economic growth has failed to break the cycle of poverty for those worst affected by it and they continue to experience a range of social and economic problems.

In inner city communities, for example, industrial expansion, alongside technological advances, have repercussions for employment opportunities locally. In addition, the educational profile of many inner city residents does not fit the new job requirements. The decline of many inner city communities has resulted in further division of labour between those with skills to compete for the new jobs coming on stream and those without skills. Thus, within many such communities, there are now groups of people who have experienced long-term unemployment and are living in areas of economic, social and physical decline and growing drug misuse.

With regard to drugs, while the most commonly used drug in Ireland is cannabis, in terms of harm to the individual and the community, heroin has the greatest impact. The early 1980s witnessed a growth in heroin use in inner city areas and other deprived communities in Dublin. While heroin misuse remains largely a Dublin problem, there is evidence to suggest that the problem is extending, particularly to a number of provincial towns throughout the country. The majority of those presenting for treatment for heroin misuse are male, under 30 years of age, unemployed and have left school by the age of 16. The usage of other drugs such as cannabis, ecstasy and cocaine is also increasing.

Although the Gaeltacht has experienced an overall population increase in the last thirty years to its present level of over 89,000 people, it is clear from recent reports that there are still population shifts away from areas where the language is strongest. Also, there are indications that the Irish language is still declining in the Gaeltacht. The creation of community pride, confidence and respect for the language are vital towards the strengthening of Irish as an important community resource in the Gaeltacht. Certain positive recent developments regarding the Irish language (such as the continuing growth of Irish-language schools inside and outside Gaeltacht areas) are helping to create an environment that is supportive of the Department's objective of promoting the wider use of Irish nationwide.

Other factors that will continue to impact on the Department's areas of operation include:

- progress under the National Development Plan 2000-2006;

- North/South co-operation arising from the Good Friday Agreement;
- ever-increasing expectations from the public itself for higher standards of service, including in the context of the Official Languages Act, and more integrated delivery of public services;
- rapid technological change in information and communication technologies, together with the imperative for all Departments to develop and implement e-public service plans, so as to provide information and services electronically; and
- the deepening of the public service modernisation programme, with its emphasis on customer service, performance management, human resources initiatives, partnership, financial management, programme evaluation and regulatory reform.

Agreed Programme for Government

Key principles in the *Agreed Programme for Government* applicable to the Department, together with the specific targets relating to our remit, have already been referred to in the section on the Department's Mandate. These principles and targets are reflected in the goals set for the Department and in our specific strategies for achieving these.

In addition, other actions proposed in the *Agreed Programme for Government* that are pertaining or proximate to our remit will be pursued, either directly by the Department through our annual Business Plans or in supporting other Departments or agencies, as appropriate. The process of implementing the strategies and actions outlined in this Strategy Statement will be set down in our annual Business Plans, together with the time scales for such implementation.

Appendix III sets out a list of actions from the *Agreed Programme for Government* for implementation by the Department, or to which it will be a significant contributor, or have material interest.

Other Government strategies

There are also other Government strategies and policies that will impact directly on the Department's work, or to which the Department will be a significant contributor, including

- the National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS);
- the National Health Strategy;
- the National Children's Strategy;
- Equality Authority reports;
- the strategy for the Integration of Local Government and Local Development Systems;
- the National Spatial Strategy;
- eGovernment Strategy.

With regard to the National Spatial Strategy, many of the issues addressed are of particular concern to the Department, including rural development and infrastructure. The main objective of the Strategy is to achieve more balanced development of the country along with a better quality of life for everyone, vibrant urban and rural areas and a better environment. The Department is committed to providing effective input so as to help ensure the successful implementation of the Strategy.

Sustaining Progress

The Department is committed to supporting relevant measures set down in *Sustaining Progress*. These include key actions in regard to:

- tackling the problem of drug misuse as set out in the National Drugs Strategy;
- reviewing social inclusion programmes and initiatives, taking into account the work and views of the Interdepartmental Task Force on the Integration of the Local Government and Local Development Systems and the County/City Development Board (CDB) process;
- ensuring that actions targeted at disadvantaged areas such as the RAPID³ and CLÁR⁴ programmes operate effectively and, to this end, consulting with the social partners in any major reviews of these programmes;
- working, with other Departments and agencies at national and local level and following consultation with the social partners, to align more closely the schemes and processes across the rural and urban community and local development programmes, including initiatives to deal with the misuse of drugs in disadvantaged areas, in order to maximise the impact, coherence and effectiveness of these programmes;
- continuing, within available resources, to support the Community and Voluntary sector as appropriate as set out in the White Paper *Supporting Voluntary Activity*; and
- continuing, through the National Rural Development Forum, established under the White Paper on Rural Development, to examine rural problems, including issues such as depopulation, and advancing recommendations to address these.

Regular reporting on progress on the Department's Action Plans to the Civil Service Performance Verification Group constitutes a key mechanism to support delivery under Sustaining Progress.

³ RAPID - Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development

⁴ CLAR - Ceantair Laga Ard-Riachtanais – a programme designed to address rural areas of special disadvantage

Conclusions

The environmental analysis carried out in formulating this Strategy Statement makes it clear that the main challenges facing communities in Ireland today are common to developed countries worldwide.

The central issues facing this Department are like two sides of a coin. Rural Ireland is changing in a dramatic way. Most rural people no longer earn the greater part of their income from farming, particularly in areas of poor land. Like urban areas, the pattern of occupation and employment has shifted rapidly. Statistics show that a large number of areas in Ireland have suffered dramatic decreases in population over the last 70 years, and have, as a consequence, urgent need for regeneration and new development. Similarly, there are large areas of Ireland that are rapidly expanding, particularly around our major cities, leading to the problems of social segregation and deprivation often associated with rapid urban agglomeration.

Notwithstanding traditionally strong and energetic communities throughout Ireland, these cannot be taken for granted. The Department has been given a key role by Government in helping to support communities and assisting them in finding the necessary solutions to the challenges facing them. This will involve

- contributing to the creation of a society in which people have an option to live and work in rural, Gaeltacht and island areas;
- supporting people to use the Irish language as a living community language if they wish;
- developing alternative and innovative solutions to assist in dealing with problems associated with urban living and excessive and unbalanced growth of urban areas; and
- leveraging community capability to enhance social cohesion, local services and quality of life.

In addition to these challenges, this Statement sets out in its strategies how it intends to help communities in finding and implementing the necessary solutions. In pursuing these strategies, the Department is particularly aware of:

- a) the need to work with and through agencies and other bodies under the aegis of the Department, and other Departments and agencies, as these issues go

- b) the need to influence policy developments at international and EU level to ensure as far as practicable that these policies support and work with agreed Departmental priorities.

4. ORGANISATIONAL CHALLENGES

The most pressing organisational challenge facing the Department is decentralisation.

This Department is transferring to two locations under the decentralisation programme – its headquarters is decentralising to Knock Airport, Co. Mayo, while a smaller number of staff are transferring to our offices at Na Forbacha, Co Galway.

This involves, in common with other Departments and agencies that are decentralising, making the necessary arrangements regarding staff, accommodation, IT and other services. Given the large scale of the programme, inter-departmental co-operation is essential.

The implementation of decentralisation will take place against a background of seeking to ensure the provision of consistent quality services and guarding against risk to the public good. At the same time, in the context of strategic

management, attention will continue to be paid to organisational development, incorporating factors such as:

- fulfilment of governance obligations in accordance with best practice, including the Mullarkey Report;
- financial management, including deepening the implementation of the Management Information Framework;
- human resources development, including the use of the Performance Management and Development System; and
- provision and maintenance of suitable accommodation and information technology facilities.

In addition, it will be necessary to ensure that the Department's interfaces with other Departments and agencies are appropriate, effective and transparent. This is relevant in relation to both policy-making and operational matters, and requires close co-operation with a range of other bodies, including the Department of Finance, the Office of Public Works, the Public Appointments Commission, local authorities and other Government Departments.

5. OUR GOALS AND STRATEGIES

The Department is involved in a wide range of activities and of service provision. For the purposes of this Strategy Statement, the Department's work has been grouped into six main areas, as set out below. For all of these areas, key policy issues arise, bringing a need for effective consultation, both within and beyond the Department.

The Department's six main sectors, together with the goals identified for each area, are:

- **Community and Local Development**
 - ☛ **Goal 1:** To encourage and facilitate communities, with a special focus on areas of disadvantage, to pursue social and economic progress in their areas.
- **Tackling Drug Misuse**
 - ☛ **Goal 2:** To facilitate a more integrated and co-ordinated response by State agencies to tackle drug misuse with the aim of significantly reducing the harm caused to individuals and society.

- **Rural Development**
 - ☛ **Goal 3:** To promote and maintain living and working populations in rural areas by helping to foster sustainable and culturally vibrant communities.
- **Gaeltacht and Islands Development**
 - ☛ **Goal 4:** To support the maintenance and strengthening of Irish as the principal language of both household and community in the Gaeltacht and to promote the development of the Islands.
- **Promotion and Maintenance of the Irish Language**
 - ☛ **Goal 5:** To increase the use of the Irish language countrywide.
- **North/South Co-operation**
 - ☛ **Goal 6:** To maintain, develop and foster North/South co-operation.

The following paragraphs set out the strategies and outputs to be adopted in pursuit of these goals, together with relevant performance indicators.

COMMUNITY AND LOCAL DEVELOPMENT

Although very rapid economic and social development has taken place in Ireland over the past number of years, there remain pockets of social deprivation, where communities continue to experience disadvantage and isolation. The Department's work in this sector is concentrated mainly on a number of programmes designed to concentrate resources on such communities and to enable them to identify and address challenges in their own areas. These programmes include the Local Development Social Inclusion Programme, the Community Development Programme, the RAPID programme and a range of once off grants for local and community support. Funding is also provided from the Dormant Accounts Fund. Rural Development measures including programmes such as LEADER and CLÁR are dealt with under Goal 3 of this Strategy Statement.

The approach encapsulated by these programmes will continue to underpin the implementation of the Department's community and local development measures over the coming period. However, further initiatives are also in prospect. The commitment in the agreed Programme for Government to a comprehensive reform of Charities legislation is being addressed through the preparation of draft legislation. This will aim to secure

accountability and protect against abuse of charitable status and fraud. In this way the potential contribution of charities to contribute to local and community development can be unlocked. Also legislation providing for new arrangements for the disbursement of monies from the Dormant Accounts Fund has been enacted. The Department continues to advance the key principles enumerated in the White Paper on supporting community and voluntary activity. In this context, in order to provide structural support for such activity, the Department provides funding to federations and networks of community and voluntary bodies. In order to foster capability among community and voluntary groups the Department provides substantial funding for training purposes. In this context also the package of measures initiated in 2005 to promote volunteering will be built on further. Volunteering activity is a necessary part of building and strengthening communities and of promoting bonds between communities.

In line with the commitment in the Agreed Programme for Government, further measures to encourage philanthropy fall for consideration. In our more affluent society philanthropy has significant potential to assist communities and individuals. As a first step the Department intends to establish a philanthropic forum on which the main philanthropic interests will be represented along with key public bodies to disseminate information and support the development of philanthropy.

Goal 1 – Community and Local Development

To encourage and facilitate local communities, with a special focus on areas of disadvantage, to pursue social and economic progress in their areas.

STRATEGY ☛ Responsibility for delivery	OUTPUTS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
<p>1.1 Improve delivery of Local and Community Development Services across the range of local and community development structures, process and schemes</p> <p>☛ Schemes Review Division ☛ Community and Local Development Division ☛ Other Divisions as required</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review structures, processes and schemes operated by the Department so as to achieve new synergies and address overlaps. • Consultation with relevant interests, including other Departments, public and local bodies involved. • Review of financial and audit requirements of schemes and processes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved cohesion at local and community levels (ongoing). • Improved service delivery on the ground from more integrated services. • Effective decision making and financial control systems in place.
<p>1.2 To assist disadvantaged communities to participate fully in society</p> <p>☛ Community and Voluntary Supports Division ☛ Community and Local Development Division</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support a wide range of community self-help initiatives aimed at tackling social exclusion and facilitating participation in the labour market, training or further education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration of appropriate grant schemes (ongoing on annual basis). • The development of programmes in line with Government priorities (ongoing).
<p>1.3 Develop the State's relationship with the community and voluntary sector.</p> <p>☛ Community and Voluntary Supports Division</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appropriate support and interface mechanisms in place for the Community and Voluntary sector. • Implementation of measures to encourage volunteering. • Measures to encourage philanthropy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of support schemes for the sector (ongoing). • Increased participation in volunteering. • Increased involvement by the corporate sector in supporting communities.
<p>1.4 To facilitate integrated development in areas of disadvantage</p> <p>☛ Community and Local Development Division ☛ Pobal (formerly known as ADM Ltd) ☛ RAPID Liaison Team ☛ Other relevant Departments</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the Community Development and Local development Measures under the Regional Operational Programmes of the National Development Plan. • Encourage the active participation of people in their communities and the development of community leadership skills. • Effective monitoring of the implementation of the RAPID Programme – Strands I and II. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six monthly progress reports to the Regional Operational Programmes Monitoring Committees (ongoing). • Progress reports to the National Monitoring Committee, reviewing performance against targets (ongoing).

STRATEGY ☛ Responsibility for delivery	OUTPUTS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
<p>1.5 To enact a comprehensive reform of the law relating to charities in order to secure accountability and to protect against abuse of charitable status and fraud</p> <p>☛ Charities Regulation Unit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Charities Regulation Bill 2006 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Delivery on the commitment in the Agreed Programme for Government, having regard to Government policy in Regulating Better and the approach agreed under Sustaining Progress, as well as developments at EU level (2006).
<p>1.6 To administer the Dormant Accounts Fund.</p> <p>☛ Dormant Accounts Unit</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Enactment of the Dormant Accounts Bill 2004. The establishment of a new organisational framework and processes to enable disbursement from the Fund. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Bill passed by the Oireachtas and signed into law by the President (2005). New structures/processes in place and operational (2005). Payments made in timely and appropriate manner.

TACKLING DRUG MISUSE

Like many countries throughout the world, problem drug use in Ireland remains a major challenge. As already stated in the chapter on the External Environment, the All-Ireland Drug Prevalence Survey carried out by the National Advisory Committee on Drugs (NACD) in 2002-03 showed that just under one in five (19%) of 15-64 year olds have ever used an illegal drug in their lifetime, with the highest prevalence amongst 25-34 year old age group (27.7%) and the lowest among 55-64 year olds (4.6%). It also showed that cannabis remains the most commonly used illegal drug in Ireland. That said, in terms of harm to the individual and the community, heroin continues to have the greatest impact.

A further study published by the NACD in 2003 estimated that there are 14,452 opiate users in Ireland, of which there are 12,456 in Dublin, which is a drop of approximately 1,000 over the previous estimate from 1996. The study also indicated that the heroin population is aging and, possibly, a lower rate of initiation into heroin use. The research also showed that there has been a significant increase in use outside the capital, particularly in adjoining counties in the midlands and north-east. Currently, there are approximately 7,100 drug misusers receiving methadone maintenance treatment, the majority of whom are in the greater Dublin area.

Tackling the complex issue of drug misuse requires both a multi-dimensional approach and an integrated series of short, medium and long-term actions. These are at the heart of the National Drugs Strategy 2001- 2008, which was launched in 2001. The overall aim of the Strategy is to significantly reduce the harm caused to individuals and society by the misuse of drugs through a concerted focus on supply reduction, prevention, treatment and research. The overall strategic aims of the Strategy are to:

- (i) reduce the availability of illicit drugs,
- (ii) promote throughout society a greater awareness, understanding and clarity of the dangers of drug misuse,
- (iii) enable people with drug problems to access treatment and other supports in order to re-integrate into society, and
- (iv) have valid, timely and comparable data on the extent and nature of drug misuse in Ireland.

The Strategy brings together all elements of the drugs policy in Ireland into a single framework with responsibilities clearly assigned. It contains 100 separate actions across the four pillars of supply reduction, prevention, treatment and research to be carried out by the relevant Departments (e.g. Health and Children; Justice, Equality and Law Reform; and Education and Science) and agencies (e.g. Garda Síochána, Health Boards, Prison Service) up to the end of 2008. Under each of the 4 pillars, a series of objectives and key performance indicators are set. A Critical Implementation Path, showing how Departments and Agencies intend to fulfil the commitments they have made under the Strategy and setting dates for the completion of all actions, was published in 2004.

The Department has overall responsibility for co-ordinating the implementation of the Strategy and reporting on its progress to the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion on a six monthly basis. A mid-term review of the Strategy, involving an extensive public consultation process, was completed in 2005. The review examined the progress made in achieving the overall key strategic goals set out in the Strategy and also examined the relevance of the Strategy in tackling the current nature and extent of drug misuse in Ireland.

The key findings of the mid-term review were that the current aims and objectives of the Strategy are fundamentally sound and that progress is being made across the pillars of the Strategy, although it does vary from action to action. To date, the Strategy has focused the activities of Departments and agencies on identified priorities so as to maximise the impact of their combined actions.

However, the review also found that some adjustments are required in order to re-focus priorities and accelerate the roll-out and implementation of various key actions in the remaining period of the Strategy up to 2008. The implementation of the recommendations set out in the mid-term review report will serve to strengthen the overall shape of the Strategy and actively drive its implementation for the next three years. A number of recommendations are made across each of the pillars and they include - extending Community Policing Fora; increasing the range and availability of treatment options; developing rehabilitation options, developing needle exchange and other harm reduction services and

developing and implementing substance use policies in all schools.

The Department also has overall responsibility for:

- managing the operation and development of the Young Peoples Facilities and Services Fund (YPFSF). The Fund assists in the provision of facilities and services for young people at risk of drug misuse; and
- overseeing the work of the 14 Local Drugs Task Forces (LDTFs) and the 10 Regional Drugs Task Forces. The day-to-day work of the Task Forces is overseen by the National Drugs Strategy Team (NDST) on which the Department is represented.

The Department services and provides the secretariat for the Interdepartmental Group on Drugs, which is chaired by the Minister of State and, in addition, provides the chair and secretariat for the National Assessment Committee of the YPFSF. The Department is also represented on the National Drugs Strategy Team (NDST) and the National Advisory Committee on Drugs (NACD). It also chairs the British-Irish Council Sectoral Group on the Misuse of Drugs⁵ and represents Ireland at the meetings of the EU National Drugs Co-ordinators.

⁵ The British Irish Council (BIC) was created under Strand Three of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 to promote positive, practical relationships among its Members which are the British and Irish Governments, the devolved administrations of N. Ireland, Wales and Scotland and Jersey, Guernsey and the Isle of Man. Since the first BIC Summit meeting in December 1999, the Irish Government has taken the lead in advancing work in relation to the issue of drug misuse. In this regard, the Irish Government, in consultation and co-operation with all BIC administrations, has successfully carried out two work programmes. Both programmes covered a range of issues concerned with drug misuse.

Goal 2 – Tackling Drugs Misuse

To facilitate a more integrated and co-ordinated response by State agencies to tackle drug misuse with the aim of significantly reducing the harm caused to individuals and society.

STRATEGY ☛ Responsibility for delivery	OUTPUTS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
<p>2.1 To co-ordinate an overall strategy to tackle drug misuse in Ireland</p> <p>☛ Drugs Strategy Unit, with input from relevant Departments and Agencies involved in delivering the Strategy</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective co-ordination of the implementation of the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008, including new priorities identified in the mid-term review. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Six monthly progress reports to the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion (CCSI) on the implementation of the Strategy, including review of performance against targets set and new actions agreed in the mid-term review (ongoing). • Publication of Annual Reports on the Strategy (ongoing). • Extent to which Strategy secures outcomes including new priorities identified in mid-term review.
<p>2.2 To target the provision of services and facilities in areas of high drug misuse</p> <p>☛ Drugs Strategy Unit ☛ National Drugs Strategy Team ☛ Relevant Departments and Agencies ☛ National Assessment Committee for the YPFSF ☛ Vocational Educational Committees ☛ Local Authorities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the second round plans of the Local Drugs Task Forces. • Recommendations made to Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion and implementation commenced of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RDTF plans; • Second round of the LDTF Premises Initiative; • LDTF Emerging Needs Fund; • Pilot cocaine pilot projects; • Further allocations under the YPFSF in LDTF areas and other urban areas, and • Recommendations identified in the LDTF Expenditure Review rolled out and put in place. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Individual projects evaluated and decisions made on mainstreaming (end-2005 to early-2006). • Projects implemented during 2005-06 and evaluated, where appropriate, as soon as possible, but no later than end 2006. • New performance indicators put in place to measure impact and effectiveness of the work of the LDTFs.

RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Over 40% of the Irish population, approximately 1.5 million people, live in rural areas. These areas are currently undergoing great change as some experience increased prosperity and an influx of former town dwellers, while others lag behind and experience isolation from the mainstream of the Irish economy and society. Farm numbers are declining and the number of farmers working part-time off-farm is increasing. As in many other occupations, farmers are finding that rising expectations in a prosperous country mean that small-scale traditional operations cannot deliver an income that many young people find attractive. Of course, many people who live in rural areas are not involved directly in farming or farm-related activities.

The rapid changes in rural Ireland have been highlighted in the recent Agri Vision 2015 report which projects that, on current trends, by 2015 farmer numbers will decline from 136,000 to 105,000. Of these, only 30,000 may be viable. In short, it is posited that some 100,000 farmers will either need to find or maintain present off-farm jobs. It is therefore vital to strike the correct balance between financial on-farm support and off-farm economic opportunity.

In the context of the Lisbon Agenda deliberations, it is recognised that the next generation of Structural Funds (including those for rural areas) are being reshaped to focus on creating more and better jobs. Rural development policies will also focus more specifically on the creation of growth and jobs in rural areas.

The decision by Government to place the remit for rural development within a new Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs is a reflection of the need to continue to move forward with an approach that is focused on the communities that live in rural areas and is designed to produce a more co-ordinated engagement by the State with rural communities around the country. The challenge is to vigorously pursue policies that address change in rural communities, support their development and promote better regional balance. At EU level this challenge is reflected by the 2003 Salzburg Conclusions, namely, serving the needs of the broader rural society, contributing to rural cohesion, strengthening rural

communities and promoting the economic development of rural areas. These aims are reflected in the EU Regulation on Rural Development 2007-2013.

At national level the White Paper on Rural Development, published in 1999, sets out a vision and a framework for the development of rural communities. Arising from the White Paper, the Government is committed to ensuring the economic and social wellbeing of rural communities.

The overall purpose is to achieve a rural Ireland in which:

- there are vibrant sustainable communities with the range of age, income and occupational groups essential to adapt to on-going economic, social, cultural and environmental change;
- the maximum number of rural households and family farms are retained;
- there is equity in terms of opportunity both between rural and urban communities, and between communities in rural areas;
- individuals and families have a real choice as to whether to stay in, leave or move to, rural Ireland;
- there are sufficient income and employment opportunities to allow individuals and families to live with dignity and enjoy a good standard of living;
- rural communities enjoy access to education, training and lifelong learning and to an adequate level of social, medical and other services and infrastructures;
- rural communities participate effectively in the structures and decision making processes;
- the cultural identity of rural communities, in particular the language, traditions, heritage and sense of community are valued and retained; and
- the rural environment is respected and development in rural areas takes place in a sustainable manner.

The National Development Plan is the principal vehicle through which the objectives of the White Paper are being achieved. This is underpinned by the commitment in the *Agreed Programme for Government* to give a clear priority to the protection and development of rural communities. This was also stressed by the Taoiseach when announcing the decision to establish this Department, in the context of the need for Government to address issues of regional balance more effectively. Given the continuing changes in Irish rural society since the publication of the White Paper, an early task for the

Department under this Strategy Statement will be a restatement of our rural development priorities. Subject to that, the critical challenge continues to be to ensure the White Paper commitments are addressed across a wide range of Government Departments and public bodies. Effective formalised co-ordination systems need to be maintained and strengthened with the appropriate Departments and agencies. We also need to further develop our own skills and capabilities in this area so as to contribute effectively in support of rural communities.

The implementation of the National Spatial Strategy over its 20-year life span will also have a significant impact on the development of rural communities.

Considerable progress is already being achieved through, for example, the operation of the CLÁR (Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais) programme for disadvantaged rural areas. The Department funds, or co-funds with other Departments, State Agencies and Local Authorities, investment in physical, economic and social infrastructure. Areas in 18 counties, with a population of 362,000, benefit from the wide range of measures implemented under the programme.

Other recent initiatives to address the changing nature of rural Ireland include:

Rural Social Scheme

This Scheme, which provides services to rural communities, was launched in May 2004 and offers an income supplement to small farmers and part-time fishermen. The scheme was introduced on a phased basis initially, and is being implemented throughout the country. Provision has been made under the scheme for 2,500 participants.

Comhairle na Tuaithe

Comhairle na Tuaithe, the Countryside Recreation Council, was established in February 2004 and focuses on the sustainable development of the countryside. Membership of Comhairle na Tuaithe encompasses representatives of all of the main farming organisations and landowners, tourism marketing bodies, the Irish Sports Council, the Heritage Council and representatives of recreational users of the countryside, such as Keep Ireland Open, Waymarked Ways and the Mountaineering Council of Ireland.

Goal 3 – Rural Development

To promote and maintain living and working populations in rural areas by helping to foster sustainable and culturally vibrant communities there.

STRATEGY ☛ Responsibility for delivery	OUTPUTS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
<p>3.1 To co-ordinate the implementation of actions for the development of rural communities arising from both national and EU policies</p> <p>☛ Rural Development Division I ☛ Rural Development Division II</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective co-ordination of commitments in the White Paper on Rural Development across relevant Departments and public bodies especially through the NDP Rural Development Co-ordinating Committee. • Restatement of White Paper priorities, factual updating of material and key challenges. • National LEADER + and LEADER Programme; • Successful outcome of EU negotiations in relation to Rural Development. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular progress reports to the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion and on housing, infrastructure and public/private partnerships (ongoing). • Reports of the NDP Rural Development Co-ordinating Committee on progress in embedding the rural development horizontal principle in NDP programmes. • Effective formalised co-ordination systems in place with the appropriate Departments and agencies (ongoing).
<p>3.2 To implement various measures designed to improve the economic, social, cultural and physical conditions in rural areas</p> <p>☛ Rural Development Divisions I and II ☛ Local Authorities ☛ LEADER groups and other local community organisations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional enterprises, services and jobs in the targeted areas. • New/upgraded infrastructure, roads, piers, water services, educational facilities, telecommunications, recreational facilities, etc., in targeted areas. • Enhancement of appearance of towns and villages in targeted areas. • Increasing competitiveness of small food sector. • Development of a Countryside Recreation Strategy. • Efficient implementation of the Rural Social Scheme. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new enterprises, services and jobs created through local action groups and other local implementing mechanisms. • Specified targets met on the provision of jobs for women and young people through Local Development Strategy implementing mechanism. • Reduction in incidence of consistent poverty in the targeted areas (ongoing). • Number of infrastructural projects completed on time and within budget (ongoing). • Number of town and village renewal projects completed on time and within budget (ongoing). • Increasing number of jobs in small food sector. • Maximum potential for rural tourism realised, with particular emphasis on recreational walking. • All 2,500 places on the Rural Social Scheme filled.

GAELTACHT AND ISLANDS DEVELOPMENT

The Gaeltacht

Irish is a vital part of the State's heritage and the Gaeltacht is the primary source of the living language. A core task of the Department is to promote the maintenance of the Irish language in the Gaeltacht, as its most important community resource and its principal means of communication. It has long been recognised that its transmission from one generation to the next is critical for the survival of the Irish language as the predominant household and community language in the Gaeltacht. It is for this reason that the Department operates a number of schemes and initiatives aimed at the maintenance and strengthening of the language in the Gaeltacht.

In addition, a number of specific measures – based on recommendations from the Commission on the Irish Language in the Gaeltacht - have recently been initiated by the Department and Údarás na Gaeltachta to strengthen the language in the Gaeltacht, including:

- the initiation of a socio-linguistic study on the usage of Irish in the Gaeltacht as a basis for the further strengthening of the linguistic development of the Gaeltacht and for a review of the official Gaeltacht boundaries;
- the implementation of a language awareness campaign “*Ár dTeanga Nádurtha féin*”, which seeks to persuade parents in Gaeltacht areas of the advantages of choosing Irish as the predominant household language;
- the provision of €1.56m over 3 years to implement a new language planning initiative in Gaeltacht areas on a pilot basis;
- the piloting of a home visitors initiative, which will involve the provision of support information and advice on a one-to-one basis to families with young children in the Gaeltacht;
- the provision of additional funding for the implementation of language-centred initiatives in Gaeltacht areas; and
- the provision of additional funding to Údarás na Gaeltachta to enable it to further assist in the area of

pre-schooling and youth services, as well as other support measures for the language in the Gaeltacht.

Other recent initiatives consistent with the Commission's views include:

- the implementation of the Official Languages Act 2003;
- the appointment of An Coimisinéir Teanga; and
- the decision by Government to initiate discussions with other EU Member States and with the European Commission with a view to seeking official and working language status for Irish.

In order to attract modern service based industries to the Gaeltacht and to sustain Gaeltacht populations, critical structural deficiencies also need to be addressed. The Department's ongoing work with regard to the development of strategic Gaeltacht roads and piers, as well as the development of improved housing and leisure facilities, aims to ensure that the Gaeltacht will be a more attractive place in which to live and work.

Údarás na Gaeltachta has, under legislation, a key role to play in creating sustainable employment in the changing Gaeltacht environment, particularly in the context of the Irish language being a major resource for creating high-quality employment. Jobs in areas such as the media, educational services and cultural tourism offer new opportunities for focusing on high-skilled language-based employment. A critical issue to be addressed in relation to Údarás is the carrying out of a comprehensive review of its role and functions and the preparation of appropriate proposals for amending legislation.

Ongoing support by the Department for third-level Irish language outreach centres aims to benefit Gaeltacht communities, not only in educational terms, but also in the context of supporting economic development and employment creation in Gaeltacht areas.

The Offshore Islands

Promoting the sustainable development of the populated offshore islands is also a key task of the Department. Following on the report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Island Development, which set the framework for future island development, the Department has achieved significant progress, particularly in regard to improving island infrastructure and developing access services.

The level of funding available for island development has been increased incrementally over the years to almost €16m in 2005. The number of State-assisted ferry and air services has risen from 7 to 17 in the same period. Funding is also available for other works and schemes from the Department and Údarás na Gaeltachta, as well as other Government Departments and agencies.

While much has been achieved in recent years, further improvements in access, services and infrastructural supports are necessary in order to maintain and enhance islanders' living standards. Key measures either in train or being planned include:

- the implementation of a €65m five year capital programme for the islands over the period 2005-09;
- the full implementation of the Gaeltacht and Islands Harbours Sub-Measure of the National Development Plan 2000 – 2006;

- the implementation of appropriate recommendations of the Report on Island Transport Services (a copy of which is available on the Department's website at www.pobail.ie);
- the introduction of a special fund aimed at assisting commercial enterprise on the non-Gaeltacht islands (the Gaeltacht islands are already served in this regard by Údarás na Gaeltachta);
- the continued co-ordination of the provision of State services to island communities; and
- the provision of funding for social, educational and health facilities, where appropriate and in consultation and full co-operation with other statutory agencies and Departments.

Within this framework, the various measures set out in the *Agreed Programme for Government*, as reflected at Appendix III, will continue to be progressed over the period of this Strategy Statement.

Goal 4 – Gaeltacht and Islands Development

To support the maintenance and strengthening of Irish as the principal language of both household and community in the Gaeltacht and to promote the development of the Islands

STRATEGY ☛ Responsibility for delivery	OUTPUTS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
<p>4.1 To improve the social and economic life of the Gaeltacht for the purpose of consolidating Irish as its principal community language</p> <p>☛ Rannán Polasaí agus Scéimeanna na Gaeltachta ☛ Rannán Údarás na Gaeltachta</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent infrastructural network serving the Gaeltacht. • Stock of good quality housing • Modern social and sporting facilities widely available in the Gaeltacht. • Implementation of practical costed measures, based on the recommendations of the Commission on the Irish Language in the Gaeltacht. • Supporting Údarás na Gaeltachta in carrying out its activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completion of works programmes for Roads, Piers, Village Renewal, Amenities, etc (annually). • Progress achieved in maintaining Irish in the Gaeltacht (Scéim Labhairt na Gaeilge, Census, research, reports, socio-linguistic study, reviews (ongoing). • Number of new measures implemented (ongoing to end-2006). • Comprehensive review of role and functions of Údarás and appropriate proposals for amending legislation (ongoing in 2005). • Provision of employment in the Gaeltacht, particularly in language-centred projects (ongoing).
<p>4.2 To foster the Irish language and the culture of the Gaeltacht – particularly in terms of passing the language from one generation to the next – and to strengthen the development of the Gaeltacht as a distinctive linguistic region</p> <p>☛ Rannán Polasaí agus Scéimeanna na Gaeltachta ☛ Údarás na Gaeltachta ☛ Other Gaeltacht Community Organisations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewed support for Gaeltacht households. • State system giving preference to Irish as the first language of the Gaeltacht. • Language planning operating in the Gaeltacht. • Network of organisations supporting the preservation of Irish in the Gaeltacht. • Supporting the effective operation of Irish Colleges. • Clearer understanding by Gaeltacht community of importance of Irish. • Educational system giving primacy to Irish within the Gaeltacht. • Support for, and co-operation with, Údarás na Gaeltachta in promoting its activities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increased use of Irish as the normal language of the community in the Gaeltacht (Census). • Higher status for the language in the Gaeltacht (ongoing). • Progress with language plans in the Gaeltacht (pilot phase ongoing 2005-06). • Expansion of cultural activities in the Gaeltacht (ongoing). • Irish stronger as a household and community language in the Gaeltacht (Scéim Labhairt na Gaeilge, Census, research, reports, socio-linguistic study, reviews)(ongoing). • Strengthening of Irish through the pre-school and youth systems in the Gaeltacht (ongoing).

STRATEGY ☛ Responsibility for delivery	OUTPUTS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
<p>4.3 Afford recognition to the distinctive heritage and culture of the Islands through the promotion of social, physical and economic developments</p> <p>☛ Rannán na nOileán</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improved general and access infrastructure through support for pier developments, airports, etc. • Support for access services. • Other long-term needs identified and a development plan prepared. • Dedicated Enterprise Fund provided for islands outside Gaeltacht. • Co-ordination of provision of State services to islands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capital works programme completed satisfactorily. • Number of enterprises established and jobs created (as measured annually at year-end). • Number of projects satisfactorily completed within budget (ongoing). • Number of transport services provided and effectively monitored (ongoing). • Stable population level maintained (Census). • Weaknesses in service provision identified and improvements effected (ongoing).

PROMOTION AND MAINTENANCE OF THE IRISH LANGUAGE

As our national language and the first official language under the Constitution, it has been the policy of successive Governments to provide positive support for the Irish language. Irish is a vital part of our national heritage. This Department has been given a mandate by Government to support the extension of the use of the Irish language countrywide and its maintenance in the Gaeltacht, which is the primary source of the living language.

The signing of the Official Languages Act 2003 into law in July 2003 was a major milestone in the implementation of Government policy in relation to the Irish language. The primary objective of the Act is to ensure that a better availability and a higher standard of public services through Irish is provided, in a coherent, planned and agreed fashion. This aims to enable Irish speakers to access, over time, as many services as possible in their language of choice, in a manner already available to English speakers. The implementation of the Official Languages Act is a long-term project, which poses challenges and involves a profound process of change across the public service. The approach being taken is to achieve a sustained improvement in the delivery of public services through Irish over the lifetime of several successive rounds of schemes. The detail of each individual scheme will be framed in the context of the resources available to the public body concerned and the demand for services through Irish from the general public.

Significant progress has already been made in the implementation of the Act. The bulk of the Act's provisions have been commenced and the remaining provisions will commence by mid-2006 at latest. The Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga was established in 2004. Guidelines to assist public bodies in drafting a scheme have been published, as provided for in section 12 of the Act and the process of agreeing individual schemes with the public bodies covered by the Act has been commenced. At the time of writing, a total of 25 public bodies have been asked to prepare schemes and it is anticipated that a considerable number of public bodies will have commenced this process during the lifetime of this Strategy Statement.

In addition to negotiation of statutory schemes under the Act and bringing forward the range of statutory instruments required to give full effect to the Act, the Department – in conjunction with Foras na Gaeilge and other relevant bodies – is putting in place critical supports for public bodies to assist them in meeting the challenges arising in delivering their services to customers in the official language of the customer's choice. Key current priorities in that regard, being taken forward by Foras na Gaeilge in co-operation with the Department, include:

- provision of a comprehensive list of signage in Irish and English (to be accessible via the internet) and other electronic resources;
- development of specialised training courses for front line staff delivering specific services through Irish;
- putting in place a national system of accreditation for teaching of Irish to adults; and
- development of an accreditation system for private sector translators.

The Department also will facilitate on an ongoing basis a support network for public bodies engaged in drafting schemes under the Act.

A strategic priority for the future of the Irish language is to secure a progressive increase in availability of third-level education through Irish (particularly outside the Gaeltacht and by institutions other than those that have already a tradition in this regard) in association with the Department of Education and Science, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Foras na Gaeilge and the Higher Education Authority.

Supporting Foras na Gaeilge in its task of increasing the use of the Irish language in everyday life throughout the island of Ireland will remain a central concern in taking this work forward.

The Department, through its Placenames Branch, will continue to research and provide authoritative Irish versions of the placenames of Ireland. In this context, we will be assisted by An Coimisiún Logainmneacha in developing and implementing a comprehensive policy in relation to Irish placenames. A total of nine Placenames Orders have been made under the Official Languages Act to date and further Orders are in course of preparation. We will provide a comprehensive collection of the street

names of Ireland in association with the local authorities and Ordnance Survey Ireland during 2005 and 2006.

The recent establishment of Fóram na Gaeilge is also a significant development. Its role is to advise the Minister in relation to:

- the advisability of preparing a 20 year strategic plan with realistic goals for the Irish language in the State;
- the short-term strategic priorities for the preservation and the promotion of the Irish language within the State;
- the priorities regarding the implementation of the Official Languages Act; and

- the best and most practical ways to achieve progress with regard to the implementation of that work.

It is anticipated that Fóram na Gaeilge will assist in bringing a more integrated approach to the work of the various parties engaged in supporting and promoting the Irish language, in both the State and voluntary sectors.

Measures outlined in Goal 4 in relation to the Gaeltacht will operate in a complementary manner to the strategies and outputs set out below regarding Irish language promotion generally.

Goal 5 – Promotion and Maintenance of the Irish Language

To increase the use of the Irish language countrywide

STRATEGY ☛ Responsibility for delivery	OUTPUTS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
<p>5.1 To secure better provision of public services through Irish by implementing the Official Languages Act</p> <p>☛ Rannán Pholasaí Gaeilge ☛ Departments and other public bodies ☛ Foras na Gaeilge ☛ An Coimisinéir Teanga</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agree statutory schemes with each public body scheduled in the Act. • Agree provision by Foras na Gaeilge of supports for public bodies in meeting their obligations under the Act. • The Act to be fully commenced and a system established to assess its impact. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agreed schemes published and implemented for selected bodies (mid-2005) and other bodies (end 2006). • Appropriate supports for Office of An Coimisinéir Teanga (ongoing). • Resources and supports provided, such as electronic supports, accreditation system for translators and a support network (in association with Foras na Gaeilge) (end 2005). • All sections of the Act commenced (mid-2006). • Appropriate arrangements in place for translation of Acts of the Oireachtas (end 2005). • Assessment process agreed in relation to Statutory Instruments - proposals before Government (2005) and resultant planning/action (ongoing). • Development of performance indicators for language planning at national level and a system in place to assess the effect and impact of the legislation (end 2006).
<p>5.2 Improve the status of Irish in Ireland and Europe</p> <p>☛ Rannán Pholasaí Gaeilge ☛ Roinn Oideachais agus Eolaíochta ☛ Ranna eile oiriúnacha ☛ Department of Foreign Affairs ☛ An Coimisiún Logainmneacha ☛ An Brainse Logainmneacha ☛ Rannán Pholasaí Gaeilge</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop policy statement and strategic vision for the future of Irish. • Support the operation of Fóram na Gaeilge. • Achieve official and working language status for Irish in the European Union. • Provide accurate Irish forms of the placenames of Ireland on a more extensive basis for official and public use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The policy and vision approved by Government and published (mid-2005). • Progressive increase in availability of third-level education through Irish (particularly outside the Gaeltacht and by institutions other than those that have already a tradition in this regard) in association with the Department of Education and Science, Údarás na Gaeltachta, Foras na Gaeilge and the Higher Education Authority, as a strategic priority for the future of the Irish language. • Official and working language status agreed with the European Union and European Institutions, as appropriate, in co-operation with the Department of Foreign Affairs (end 2005). • Increased provision of authoritative versions of placenames provided in accordance with the research of An Brainse Logainmneacha (ongoing). • Provision of a comprehensive collection of the street names of Ireland in association with the local authorities and Ordnance Survey Ireland (2005-06).

NORTH/SOUTH CO-OPERATION

The Department is committed in its ongoing North/South role to both co-fund and support the North/South bodies under its remit and to assist them in carrying out their functions as defined in the British-Irish Agreement Acts 1999 and 2002. Both An Foras Teanga and Waterways Ireland are co-sponsored with the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) in Northern Ireland. The Department is also committed to exploring ways of increasing the level of North/South co-operation across the full range of activities for which we have responsibility and to broadening contact with all relevant organisations and groups in Northern Ireland.

An Foras Teanga is the North/South Implementation body set up to promote both the Irish language and the Ulster-Scots language and culture. Under the auspices of this body, Foras na Gaeilge carries out all the designated responsibilities regarding the Irish language. This entails facilitating and promoting the development of the Irish language in the public and private arena. In the South, the context is provided by the constitutional status of the Irish language and in the North by Part III of the European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages. The Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch has responsibility for the development of the Ulster-Scots language. This entails the

promotion of greater awareness and the use of the language and of Ulster-Scots cultural issues, both within Northern Ireland and throughout the island of Ireland. Both Foras na Gaeilge and Tha Boord o Ulstèr Scotch have their own boards, whose members together constitute the board of An Foras Teanga.

Waterways Ireland's role is the management, maintenance, development and restoration of the inland navigable waterway system, principally for recreational purposes. It is responsible for the Shannon, Shannon-erne Waterway, Royal and Grand Canals and Barrow navigation in the South and the River Bann and Lough Erne in the North. It is also charged with assessing the potential restoration and development of the Ulster Canal.

A Steering Committee on Cross-Border Rural Development has been established to promote the maximum co-operation in the implementation of rural development programmes. The Committee comprises representatives of the Department, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in the North, the North/South Ministerial Council Secretariat and the Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB).

The Department is also involved in managing the disbursement of EU funding under INTERREG⁶ and the Programme for Peace and Reconciliation.

⁶ INTERREG - EU initiative for interregional co-operation which assists border regions and promotes joint projects between beneficiaries in different Member States

Goal 6 – North/South Co-operation

To maintain, develop and foster North/South co-operation

STRATEGY ☛ Responsibility for delivery	OUTPUTS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
<p>6.1 To support Waterways Ireland in the maintenance and development of the inland waterways, principally for recreational purposes, as vested in it under the British-Irish Agreement Acts</p> <p>6.2 To support An Foras Teanga (Foras na Gaeilge and Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch) in the promotion of the Irish language and the Ulster-Scots language and culture respectively, as provided for in the British-Irish Agreement Acts</p> <p>6.3 To maximise cross- border co-operation in other areas of the Department’s work</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☛ North/South Co-operation Division ☛ An Foras Teanga ☛ Waterways Ireland ☛ Department of Foreign Affairs ☛ North/South Ministerial Council Secretariat ☛ Department of Finance ☛ Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure in Northern Ireland ☛ Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in Northern Ireland ☛ Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) ☛ Combat Poverty Agency ☛ Pobal (formerly known as ADM Ltd) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administrative support, funding and monitoring of An Foras Teanga (Foras na Gaeilge and Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch) and Waterways Ireland. • Maintenance and development of contact and co-operation with the North/South Implementation Bodies and with the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure (Northern Ireland). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Further progress in ensuring compliance with good corporate governance standards in the Implementation Bodies (ongoing). • Appropriate corporate and staff structures in the Implementation Bodies (continuous). • Progress achieved towards targets in the Corporate and Business Plans of the Implementation Bodies (ongoing on a monthly basis). • Progress issues relating to the relocation of staff of Foras na Gaeilge to Gaoth Dobhair through the North/South Ministerial Council (during 2005). • The delivery of various cross-border funding programmes.

CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES: GOAL AND STRATEGIES

Supporting the operational goals of the Department are corporate services, including:

- Corporate Development
- Information Technology
- Human Resource Management
- Finance
- Internal Audit

An important objective of corporate support services is to facilitate the necessary preparations for decentralisation of the Department to Knock Airport and Na Forbacha. At the same time, in providing ongoing services to underpin the efficient operation of line Divisions, corporate support services seek to:

- strengthen policy capability and impact;
- secure shared objectives, values and practices;
- provide organisational processes that are robust, transparent and fair; and
- ensure probity and value for money.

Goal 7 – Corporate Support Services

To provide corporate support structures to support the line Divisions delivering on the Department’s mission, mandate and services.

STRATEGY ☛ Responsibility for delivery	OUTPUTS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS
<p>7.1 Effectively manage the decentralisation of the Department to its new offices in Na Forbacha and to its headquarters at Knock Airport</p> <p>☛ Corporate Development Division ☛ All Divisions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparation of further decentralisation implementation plan. • Staff in place for move to Na Forbacha and Knock Airport. • Training programme for decentralisation. • Process mapping procedures manuals and job descriptions available to all Divisions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decentralisation plan prepared for submission to the Decentralisation Implementation Group by end-March 2005. • Trained staff in place ready to move to the new locations. • Department HQ fully operational at Knock Airport and appropriate sections transferred to Na Forbacha.
<p>7.2 To advance and facilitate Public Service Modernisation in the Department and in the bodies under its aegis</p> <p>☛ Corporate Development Division ☛ All Divisions</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of all aspects of Public Service Modernisation, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • strategic management, • partnership, • governance, • financial management, • customer service, • freedom of information, • regulatory reform. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Plans and progress on targets in Action plans as reported to the Civil Service Performance Verification Group.
<p>7.3 To build on the Management Information Framework (MIF) to meet the evolving financial and information needs of management</p> <p>☛ Finance Division</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase added value from the new financial management system to enhance the management of the Department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New financial management system (fully operational). • Customised reports available from system and all interfaces with other internal systems completed (1st half 2005). • Costing Framework introduced on pilot basis (March 2006). • Post-Implementation Review of MIF system carried out (March 2006) and acted upon (September 2006).
<p>7.4 To provide a comprehensive accounting service and promote best practice in financial management</p> <p>☛ Finance Division</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure supports in place for the development of best financial management practice in the Department. • Provide an efficient and effective accounting service. • Provide accurate, timely and useful financial data. • Build on the progress made on e-payment, in line with Government policy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Full implementation of the recommendations of the Report of the Working Group of Secretaries General and Accounting Officers (the Mullarkey Report) (mid 2006). • Timeliness of payments (ongoing). • Fulfilment of legal responsibilities in the financial area (ongoing). • 95% of payments made by electronic funds transfer by 2007.

STRATEGY ➔ Responsibility for delivery	OUTPUTS	PERFORMANCE INDICATORS												
7.5 To ensure that quality IT facilities are provided across the Department to support its business objectives, including decentralisation ➔ IT Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provision, maintenance and development of IT infrastructure and systems for the Department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4 year IT Strategy Plan, including e-Government, implemented (by mid-2008). Priority projects implemented (by end-2005). 												
7.6 Effective management of the Human Resources function ➔ Human Resources Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production of Human Resources Strategy. Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) and a comprehensive training programme in place. Compliance with Government policies on gender equality and diversity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategy published (March 2005) and implemented. Training strategies reflect the needs identified by PMDS Role Profiles. Equality and Diversity strategies in place (by end-2005). Achievement of the following targets to achieve increased female representation in senior grades, in accordance with Government policy: <table border="1" data-bbox="1023 904 1437 1021"> <thead> <tr> <th>Grade</th> <th>Jan 2005</th> <th>End 2007</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>HEO/AO</td> <td>37%</td> <td>50%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>AP</td> <td>41%</td> <td>50%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>PO</td> <td>17%</td> <td>25%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> 	Grade	Jan 2005	End 2007	HEO/AO	37%	50%	AP	41%	50%	PO	17%	25%
Grade	Jan 2005	End 2007												
HEO/AO	37%	50%												
AP	41%	50%												
PO	17%	25%												
7.7 To provide a systems-based internal audit function as a service to the Department ➔ Internal Audit Unit ➔ All Divisions, facilitated by Internal Audit Unit	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Timely production of professional standard reports on all systems operated by the Department. The development of a risk-based approach to planning, performing and evaluating the Department's functions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improvement in the effectiveness, efficiency and economy of the Department's service delivery through implementation of audit report recommendations (ongoing). Incorporation of risk as an integral element of business plans (ongoing). 												
7.8 To promote quality procurement management within the Department and in the bodies under its aegis ➔ Finance Division	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop policies, process and practices in support of a streamlined strategic approach to procurement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Produce and implement revised Departmental Procurement Procedures to augment the Department of Finance general guidance (April 2005). 												

6. CROSS-CUTTING ISSUES

The Department fully recognises the need to co-ordinate its service delivery approaches with those of other Departments and bodies. Management of cross-cutting issues is vital to effective performance, because so many key functions are performed in tandem with a wide range of other State agencies. The issues in regard to which this Department is either the lead Department or a significant player are set out in Table 1 below.

TABLE 1: Cross-Cutting Issues

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUE	DEPARTMENTS/BODIES	ACTION REQUIRED BY DCRGA (DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY, RURAL & GAELTACHT AFFAIRS)
<p>Issue I: Promoting and supporting local/community development and rural development</p>	<p>All Government Departments; Local Authorities; Health Boards; Family Support Agency; Vocational Education Committees; FÁS (Foras Áiseanna Saothair); Western Development Commission; Regional Branches of the Health Service Executive; LEADER Groups; Irish LEADER Support Unit; Comhairle na Tuaithe; National Rural Development Forum; Small Food Producers Forum; County Development Boards; Pobal (formerly known as ADM Ltd); Local and Community Development Agencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supporting local self-help and community development initiatives as partners alongside statutory agencies and other local development groups in addressing the needs of communities, particularly those experiencing disadvantage. Leading initiatives and co-ordinating the contributions of other Departments, State agencies and other organisations involved in rural development. Development of the statutory framework to regulate the charities sector. In conjunction with the D/Agriculture & Food, preparation of National Rural Development Plan following adoption of new EU Rural Development Regulation. Delivery of measures under the Local Development Social Inclusion, Community Support, CLÁR and LEADER Programmes, the Rural Development Fund and the Rural Social Scheme. Effective monitoring of the implementation of the RAPID Programme and disbursement of the RAPID leverage fund Regular meetings of programme monitoring committees, interdepartmental committees, National Rural Development Forum and Small Food Producers Forum Regular bilateral meetings with key Departments and agencies to ensure co-ordinated provision of services in rural areas.
<p>Issue II: Promoting greater coherence of structures, funding and services of various local, community, Gaeltacht and rural development measures</p>	<p>D/Environment and Local Government; D/Justice, Equality and Law Reform; D/Education and Science; D/Social and Family Affairs; D/Agriculture & Food; County/City Development Boards; Údarás na Gaeltachta; Local and Community Development Agencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Working with relevant Departments and agencies to achieve better structures, improved co-ordination and delivery of services, stronger corporate governance and greater efficiency and value for money in relation to local, community, Gaeltacht and rural development schemes and programmes, in accordance with Government policy.

TABLE 1: Cross-Cutting Issues (continued)

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUE	DEPARTMENTS/BODIES	ACTION REQUIRED BY DCRGA (DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY, RURAL & GAELTACHT AFFAIRS)
<p>Issue III: Developing the State's relationship with the community and voluntary sector</p>	<p>The community and voluntary sector; Government Departments; NESF; Local Authorities; HSE; Local and Community Development Agencies.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementing as appropriate the recommendations in the <i>White Paper on a Framework for Supporting Voluntary Activity and for Developing the Relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary Sector</i>. • Advancing measures to support Volunteering arising from Oireachtas and other reports in this area.
<p>Issue IV: The effective co-ordination of the implementation of the National Drugs Strategy 2001 – 2008 and the implementation of the plans of the Local & Regional Drugs Task Forces & Young People's Facilities and Services Fund</p>	<p>D/Health and Children; D/Justice, Equality and Law Reform; D/Education and Science; D/Enterprise, Trade and Employment; D/Environment and Local Government; Local Authorities; Health Boards; Garda Síochána; Prison Service.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Input from relevant Departments and agencies to emerging operational issues in implementation of the Strategy. • Six monthly progress reports to the Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion. • Implementation of the LDTF (Local Drugs Task Forces), RDTF (Regional Drugs task Force) and YPFSS (Young Peoples Facilities and Services Fund) plans.
<p>Issue V: To promote the use of the Irish language countrywide and to maintain and strengthen the language in the Gaeltacht</p>	<p>All Departments and State Agencies.</p> <p>Údarás na Gaeltachta; State Agencies; Local Authorities.</p> <p>Foras na Gaeilge; D/Education and Science; HEA (Higher Education Authority) ; Údarás na Gaeltachta; 3rd level institutions.</p> <p>D/Foreign Affairs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Securing agreement with Departments and public bodies on statutory schemes under the Official Languages Act in relation to the delivery of State services through Irish. • Strengthening the Irish language in the Gaeltacht by implementing measures to support vibrant and sustainable Gaeltacht communities. • Supporting Foras na Gaeilge in its task of increasing the use of the Irish language in everyday life throughout the island of Ireland • Supporting the continued development of Gaelscoileanna and of Irish-medium Gaeltacht schools and progressing Irish-medium 3rd level education as a strategic priority for the future of the language. • Advancing official and working language status for the Irish language in the EU and European Institutions, as appropriate, in co-operation with the Department of Foreign Affairs.

TABLE 1: Cross-Cutting Issues (continued)

CROSS-CUTTING ISSUE	DEPARTMENTS/BODIES	ACTION REQUIRED BY DCRGA (DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY, RURAL & GAELTACHT AFFAIRS)
<p>Issue VI: Developing North/South co-operation</p>	<p>D/Foreign Affairs; D/Finance; D/Agriculture and Food; NSMC Joint Secretariat; D/Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL) in Northern Ireland; D/Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) in Northern Ireland; Department for Social Development (DSD) in Northern Ireland; Waterways Ireland; An Foras Teanga; Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB); Combat Poverty Agency; Pobal (formerly known as ADM Ltd)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with other relevant parties, North and South, to underpin and support the work of An Foras Teanga (comprising Foras na Gaeilge and Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch/The Ulster-Scots Agency) and Waterways Ireland. • Maximising cross-border co-operation in community and rural development. • Developing policy and appropriate co-ordination mechanisms to support the Department’s role in relation to North/South issues generally, in line with the overall Governmental approach, including the Good Friday Agreement. • Continuing co-operation in relation to regulation of the charities sector in both jurisdictions. • Participating in various cross-border funding programmes.

The Department will also continue to participate in the ongoing work of interdepartmental committees and engage in bilateral contacts with other Departments and bodies in the furtherance of its sectoral goals and in making a contribution to Government policy for which other Departments or agencies have the lead role.

7. MONITORING AND REPORTING

The Business Planning process in the Department will help and support progress on the Goals and Strategies set out in this Strategy Statement. It also provides the framework for individual work plans for staff in the context of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS).

Provision is made for periodic reviews at Section, Divisional and Corporate levels so that progress can be monitored and any necessary adjustments made to reflect changes in the Department's operating environment. Provision is also made for twice yearly reviews of progress at Ministerial level.

Reporting on progress in achieving the Goals and Strategies set out in this Strategy Statement will take place mainly within the context of the publication of the Department's Annual Report, incorporating the annual progress report required under the Public Service Management Act 1997. Annual Reports will be presented to Government, laid before the Oireachtas and made available to stakeholders, key customers and clients, and the general public. The Strategy Statement and Annual Reports will also be subject to scrutiny by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Arts, Sport, Tourism, Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs.

APPENDIX 1:

Agencies and other Bodies reporting to, or under the aegis of, the Department

Pobal (formerly known as ADM Ltd) is an intermediary company established by the Irish Government, in agreement with the European Commission, to promote social inclusion, reconciliation and equality and to counter disadvantage through local social and economic development. Pobal supports the work of the Area-Based Partnership Companies, Pobal Community Partnerships and other Partnership structures involved in combating social exclusion. Pobal is also responsible for funding economic and social development projects in the border counties under the Special Programme for Peace and Reconciliation.

Address: Pobal,
Holbrook House,
Holles Street, Dublin 2

Phone: 01-6613611;
Fax: 01-661 0411
E-mail: enquiries@pobal.ie;
Website: www.pobal.ie
Chief Executive: Dr Tony Crooks

Arramara Teo is a semi-state body with the Irish Government holding 82% of company shares. The company was founded in 1947 to utilise the large resource of seaweed along the west coast of Ireland. Arramara initially supplied seaweed meal to the alginate industry, but the increase in demand for seaweed meal in recent years has opened markets in the agriculture, horticulture and cosmetic industries.

Address: Arramara Teo., Kilkieran, Connemara,
Co. Galway

Phone: 095-33404/33417;
Fax: 095-33494
E-Mail: info2@arramara.ie;
Website: www.arramara.ie
Company Secretary: Tony Barrett

An Coimisiún Logainmneacha (The Placenames Commission) advises on the research of the placenames of Ireland and on providing authoritative Irish forms of those names for official and public use.

Address: An Coimisiún Logainmneacha, f/ch An
Brainse Logainmneacha,
43-49 Bóthar Mespil, Baile Átha Cliath 4

Phone: 01-6473000;
Fax: 01-6473270
E-mail: placenames@pobail.ie
Chief Placenames
Officer: Dónall Mac Giolla Easpaig

Bord na Leabhar Gaeilge administers schemes to assist publishers and authors to publish material of interest in the Irish language.

Address: Bord na Leabhar Gaeilge, Ráth Cairn,
Áth Buí, Co. na Mí

Phone: 046-9430419;
Fax: 046-9430420
E-mail: blg@leabhar.ie;
Website: www.leabhar.ie
Director: Gearóid de Grás

The **Board of the Commissioners of Charitable Donations and Bequests for Ireland** is mandated under the Charities Acts 1961 and 1973 to provide services to trustees of charities and to carry out the intentions of persons making donations and bequests to charities.

Address: Office of the Commissioners of
Charitable Donations and Bequests for
Ireland,
12 Clare Street, Dublin 2

Phone: 01-6766095;
Fax: 01-6766001
E-mail: charities@eircom.net
Secretary to the
Board: Orla Barry Murphy

The **Dormant Accounts Fund Disbursements Board** is charged with overseeing a scheme for the disbursement of dormant funds for community and societal benefit from 2003. The Dormant Accounts Act provides for a scheme to disburse unclaimed monies for projects and programmes designed to alleviate poverty and social deprivation. This

scheme will also be applied to programmes to assist people with disabilities or students with learning difficulties.

Address: Dormant Accounts Fund Disbursement Board, 43-49 Mespil Rd., Dublin 4
Phone: 01-6473000;
Lo-Call: 1890 457058
E-mail: info@dormantaccounts.ie
Chair: Conleth Bradley

An Foras Teanga is one of the Cross-Border Implementation Bodies established under the British-Irish Agreement Act 1999. *An Foras Teanga* comprises two agencies - Foras na Gaeilge and Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch (see below). Contact with An Foras Teanga is made through the Agencies which comprise the body.

Foras na Gaeilge has the objective of promoting the Irish language on an all-island basis. As well as taking over the functions of the former Bord na Gaeilge, a wide range of additional functions were given to the agency so as to add to its effectiveness in the promotion of Irish - for example, in the area of education, dictionaries and terminology. The functions of An Gúm in relation to Irish language publications were transferred to Foras na Gaeilge from the Department of Education and Science.

Address: Foras na Gaeilge, 7 Merrion Square, Dublin 2
Phone: 01-639 8400;
Fax: 01-639 8401
E-mail: eolas@forasnagaeilge.ie;
Website: www.forasnagaeilge.ie
Chief Executive: Seosamh Mac Donncha

Tha **Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch** has responsibility for the promotion of greater awareness and the use of Ulster-Scots language and of Ulster-Scots cultural issues, both within Northern Ireland and throughout the island.

Address: Tha Boord o Ulstèr-Scotch Franklin House, 10-12 Brunswick Street, Belfast BT2 7GE
Phone: 028-9023 1113;
Fax: 028-9023 1898
E-mail: info@ulsterscotsagency.org.uk;
Website: www.ulsterscotsagency.com
Chief Executive: George Patton

National Advisory Committee on Drugs (NACD) was established to advise the Government in relation to the prevalence, prevention, treatment and consequences of problem drug use in Ireland based on analysis of research, findings and information available to it. The Committee is overseeing a three-year work programme on the extent, nature, causes and effects of drug use in Ireland.

Address: National Advisory Committee on Drugs, 3rd Floor; Shelbourne House, Shelbourne Road, Ballsbridge, Dublin 4
Phone: 01-667 0760 / 0765;
Fax: 01-667 0828
E-mail: info@nacd.ie;
Website: www.nacd.ie
Director: Ms. Mairead Lyons

National Drugs Strategy Team (NDST)

The NDST is a cross-departmental Team from Departments and Agencies involved in the drugs field. It also includes representatives from the community and voluntary sectors. Its purpose is to oversee the work of the Local and Regional Drugs Task Forces, make recommendations on issues arising, and report on progress in this area.

Address: National Drugs Strategy Team, 4/5 Harcourt Road, Dublin 2
Phone: 01-475 4119/4120;
Fax: 01-475 4045
E-mail: username@ndst.gov.ie (i.e.joe_bloggs@ndst.gov.ie)
Director: Patricia O'Connor

Údarás na Gaeltachta is a regional development agency that combines an economic development role - that of creating sustainable jobs and attracting investment to the Gaeltacht regions - with community, cultural and language-development activities, working in partnership with local communities and organisations. Its objective in working to promote the economic, social and cultural development of the Gaeltacht regions is to ensure the continuation of the Irish language as the spoken language of the community in these regions.

Address: Údarás na Gaeltachta, Na Forbacha,
Gaillimh
Phone: 091-503100;
Fax: 091-50101
E-mail: eolas@udaras.ie
Chief Executive
designate: Pádraig Ó hAoláin

Waterways Ireland is a Cross-Border Implementation Body established under the British-Irish Agreement Act 1999. Waterways Ireland's primary function is the management, maintenance and development, principally for recreation purposes, of the majority of the inland navigable waterway system throughout the island. It is also empowered to engage in promotion, including marketing, and development of the inland waterways.

Address: Waterways Ireland, 20 Darling Street,
Enniskillen, Co. Fermanagh BT74 7EW
Phone: 048-6632 3004;
Fax: 048-6634 6257
E-mail: info@waterwaysireland.org;
Website: www.waterwaysireland.org
Chief Executive: John Martin

The **Western Development Commission (WDC)** is a statutory body promoting economic and social development in the Western Region (defined as the counties of Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon, Mayo, Galway and Clare). Its three principal activities focus on ensuring that economic and social policy effectively meets the development needs of the Western Region, fostering and promoting regional development initiatives, and managing the Western Investment Fund. This Fund provides risk capital by way of equity and loans on a commercial basis to projects and businesses.

Address: Western Development Commission,
Dillon House, Ballaghaderreen, Co.
Roscommon
Phone: 094-9861441;
Fax: 094-9861443
E-mail: info@wdc.ie;
Website: www.wdc.ie
Chief Executive
Officer: Lisa McAllister

APPENDIX II

Agreed Programme for Government

Actions in the *Agreed Programme for Government* for implementation by the Department, or to which it will be a significant contributor or have a material interest, are set out below:

BUILDING PEACE AND JUSTICE

- We will work to consolidate the success of the North-South Ministerial Council, and of the Implementation Bodies. We will also cooperate with the British Government in the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference and bilaterally, on non-devolved matters.
- Within the framework of the British-Irish Council, we will seek to develop strong bilateral relations with Scotland and Wales, as well as with the UK as a whole.

EMPLOYMENT AND ENTERPRISE

- We support the positive role of the Community Employment Scheme to meet the needs of both the long-term unemployed and communities.

RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION

- We will ensure that the full range of options, including wireless technologies, are utilised to expand broadband access in rural areas.

DEVELOPING THE REGIONS & THE ISLANDS

- We will identify proposals to provide a subsidised cargo service to islands in consultation with island communities and ferry operators.
- We will provide a new fixed wing air service to Tory Island, Co. Donegal and Inisbofin, Co. Galway and upgrade the existing infrastructure at Inis Mór, Inis Meáin and Inis Oírr, Co. Galway.
- We will provide Broadband technology to offshore islands.

- We will introduce a home improvement grants, in line with the home improvement grants available to Gaeltacht Communities, to non-Gaeltacht islands, and will increase the level of new house grants on non-Gaeltacht islands to the same level as that available on Gaeltacht Islands.
- We will include transport costs for schoolchildren as a constituent part of the Remote Area Grant.
- We will ensure that healthcare provision on the offshore islands is developed in line with the principles of the Health Strategy, particularly in relation to the expansion of primary care services.
- We will establish Comhairle na nOileán.

AN INTEGRATED TRANSPORT POLICY

Rural Transport

- We will continue to support the Rural Transport Initiative which will run until end 2003.
- We will ensure that every county has a comprehensive rural transport initiative in place.
- We will embark on a new initiative to further develop localised bus services, particularly in rural areas.

AGRICULTURE, FOOD and RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Rural Development

- We will give a clear priority to the protection and development of rural communities.
- We will continue the CLAR* programme, ensuring annual funding and publishing annual reports on progress. When the relevant results of the Census are available we will review the data and consider additional areas for inclusion.
- We will establish a Rural Social Economy Programme which will provide secure, community-related, employment opportunities for persons in families eligible for the Farm Assist scheme.
- We will ensure the implementation of the County Development Strategies in a coordinated way by all agencies, especially in respect to the encouragement of small rural enterprises.
- We will examine the planning guidelines for small rural enterprises and complete the review within twelve months.

*CLAR - Ceantair Laga Ard-Riachtanais – a programme designed to address rural areas of special disadvantage

- We will seek to develop the agriculture colleges as wider rural development resources.
- We will support rural post offices and seek to develop commercial services in rural areas with specific investment being made in developing the Government Services Agency approach to provide additional services.

BUILDING AN INCLUSIVE SOCIETY

- We recognise the need to work hard to include all communities in the benefits of recent progress and will, in particular, ensure that all state agencies prioritise integrated work in areas of significant disadvantage. This will be a priority under the next phase of public sector reform.
- We will continue to support initiatives to expand corporate social responsibility.

CRIME

- We will extend the use of CCTV cameras and also grant aid local communities to provide them.

EQUALITY & LAW REFORM

- A comprehensive reform of the law relating to charities will be enacted to ensure accountability and to protect against abuse of charitable status and fraud.

TACKLING DRUG ABUSE

- We will ensure that an early-warning system, involving all key agencies, is in place to track the potential spread of heroin into new areas.
- We will publish annual reports of activity and progress towards the achievement of specific prevention, supply reduction and treatment targets.
- We will ensure that regional drugs task forces operate efficiently to ensure that prevention programmes are active in all areas of the country.

REGENERATING DISADVANTAGED COMMUNITIES

- We will develop the RAPID* initiative in our most disadvantaged communities as a priority programme. When the small areas data is made available from the

latest census we will review the areas covered and consider additional areas for inclusion.

- We will continue the Young People's Facilities and Services Fund.
- Each relevant Government Department will allocate specific staff whose principal duty will be to ensure that the Department is effectively engaged with the RAPID communities along the lines of the final report of the Integrated Services Process.
- Each Department will publish, as part of its annual report, a statement of the work undertaken to support Integrated Services work in these areas.
- We will ensure democratic legitimacy on local boards appointed to implement development programmes.

BETTER FACILITIES FOR SPORT & RECREATION

- We will create, under the Local Government Fund, a new Community Facilities Fund which will support the development of community facilities not covered by existing schemes.

THE IRISH LANGUAGE AND THE GAELTACHT

- We will use the report of the Gaeltacht Commission – An Comisiún faoin nGaeilge sa Ghaeltacht - as the basis for future policy.
- A West Coast Digital Corridor will be developed to provide high-quality broadband telecommunications facilities for both Gaeltacht and non-Gaeltacht communities from Donegal to Cork. Údarás na Gaeltachta will be charged with facilitating the provision of similar facilities in any Gaeltacht areas not covered by the Corridor, where demand exists, including offshore islands.
- We will enact the Official Languages Equality Bill.
- Scéim Labhairt na Gaeilge will be fully reviewed in the context of modern day needs, and ways to promote the Irish language among young people will be examined.
- Youth and sports funding schemes will be reviewed in the context of their impact in the Gaeltacht and Islands.

* RAPID - Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development

- An Foras will be requested to develop materials specifically for families who wish to raise their children through the medium of Irish.
- The major works programme for Gaeltacht infrastructure under the National Development Plan will be completed.
- A comprehensive study of the current status of the language in the Irish media will be undertaken.
- The Language Assistant scheme in Gaeltacht schools will be strengthened and expanded to include cooperation with parents in the home.
- A comprehensive review of the needs of all Gaelscoileanna and Gaeltacht schools will be undertaken. As part of the work of the Department of Education & Science, the physical condition of all buildings used by these schools will be reviewed and a programme put in place to ensure that they meet required standards.
- The development of the Gaeltacht infrastructure will continue through the schemes operated by the

Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands and Údarás na Gaeltachta.

- The improvements carried out under the strategic roads scheme will continue, to ensure that the road infrastructure in remoter areas of the Gaeltacht will be improved and that there is at least one good road into every Gaeltacht area.
- The relevant national schemes will be reviewed to ensure that appropriate supports are in place for the Irish language childcare sector throughout the country.
- A strategic review will be completed in relation to the employment support work of Údarás na Gaeltachta with a view to identifying new strands of employment creation in Gaeltacht areas.
- We will support the development of Irish medium 3rd level education and research activities on campus and, where appropriate and sustainable, in Gaeltacht education centres.

APPENDIX III

Glossary of Terms

AITs	Area Implementation Teams
BMW	Border, Midland and Western Regions
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CCSI	Cabinet Committee on Social Inclusion
CDP	Community Development Programme
CLÁR	Ceantair Laga Ard-Riachtanais – a programme designed to address rural areas of special disadvantage
CSO	Central Statistics Office
DCRGA	Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs
ESPAD	European School Survey Project on Alcohol and other Drugs
EU	European Union
FÁS	Foras Áiseanna Saothair
FOI	Freedom of Information
HEA	Higher Education Authority
HRM	Human Resource Management
HSE	Health Services Executive
INTERREG	EU initiative for interregional co-operation which assists border regions and promotes joint projects between beneficiaries in different Member States
IT	Information Technology
LDTF	Local Drugs Task Forces
LEADER	Liaisons Entre Actions de Development de l’Economie Rurale – EU programme for the development of the rural economy
MIF	Management Information Framework
NACD	National Advisory Committee on Drugs
NAPS	National Anti-Poverty Strategy
NCV	National Committee on Volunteering
NDP	National Development Plan
NDST	National Drugs Strategy Team
NESF	National Economic & Social Forum
OECD	Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development
PEACE II	EU Funding Programme to reinforce progress towards a peaceful stable environment and to promote reconciliation
PMDS	Performance Management and Development System
Pobal	Formerly known as Area Development Management Ltd
QCS	Quality Customer Service
RAPID	Revitalising Areas by Planning, Investment and Development
RDTF	Regional Drugs Task Force
UN	United Nations
WDC	Western Development Commission
WTO	World Trade Organisation
YPFSF	Young Peoples Facilities and Services Fund
AO	Administrative Officer
HEO	Higher Executive Officer
AP	Assistant Principal Officer
PO	Principal Officer

ANNEX IV

Development of Outcome Indicators

The Department has identified key performance indicators in respect of its work and these are reflected across relevant parts of this Strategy Statement. However, in common with most other public bodies, these are significantly output based. A focus on longer term outcomes is also appropriate. Work is underway, with external support, in identifying such outcomes and associated measures. This work will continue. Indicators are being developed in respect of:

- Community and Local Development
- National Drugs Strategy
- Rural Development
- Gaeltacht and Islands
- Irish Language
- North/South Co-operation

The following material reflects our current thinking on outcomes and related measures. This is likely to be further developed and focused as experience and competence deepens.

Community and Local Development

■ Disadvantaged communities participate more fully in society

Indicators:

- ☛ Level of involvement of Programme Target Groups in local decision making processes via the following structures:-
 - Area & Community Partnership boards
 - Community Development Projects
 - RAPID Area Implementation Teams (AITs), task groups and community consultative fora
 - Social Inclusion Measures Committees (SIMS) of County/City Development Boards
- ☛ Level of participation of Programme Target Groups in employment and training:-
 - Percentage of adults in target groups supported into taking up employment by Area & Community Partnerships

- Percentage of adults in target groups supported into business start ups by Area & Community Partnerships

■ Better targeting of resources to disadvantaged areas

Indicator:

- ☛ Improved funding levels and prioritisation across Government programmes.
- Improvements in services and infrastructure
- Better integration in the delivery of social inclusion measures in disadvantaged areas
- ☛ Level of coverage of social inclusion measures
- ☛ Reduction in duplication of social inclusion measures

National Drugs Strategy

Co-ordination

■ More integrated and co-ordinated response by state agencies to tackling drug misuse

Indicator:

- ☛ Mechanisms to enable stakeholders to reflect on the effectiveness of their collaboration to be developed, taking into account the ongoing work of the Inter-Departmental Group on Drugs.

- Reduce the availability of illicit drugs

Indicator:

- ☛ Level of seizures of drugs, by type, in line with the indicators as set out in the Mid-term Review of the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008.

- Promote throughout society a greater awareness, understanding and clarity of the dangers of drug misuse

Indicator:

- ☛ Periodic survey showing level of understanding and clarity of the dangers of drug misuse among the general population, in line with the indicators as set out in the Mid-term Review of the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008.

- Stabilisation and reduction in the level of drug usage

Indicator:

- ☛ Periodic qualitative assessment of the level of drug usage, in line with the indicators as set out in the Mid-term Review of the National Drugs Strategy 2001-2008.

National Advisory Committee on Drugs

■ Have valid, timely and comparable data on the extent and nature of drug misuse in Ireland

Indicator:

Qualitative assessment of validity and timeliness of data

Regional and Local Drugs Task Forces

■ Enable people with drug problems to reduce dependency and improve overall health and social well-being, and re-integrate into society, through the targeted provision of services in areas of high drug misuse

Indicators:

- ☞ number of drug related offences
- ☞ number of persons prosecuted for drug related offences
- ☞ proportion of people in LDTF areas reporting use of an illegal drug in the last month
- ☞ proportion of people in LDTF areas reporting that their quality of life was negatively impacted by drug related problems in the last month

Young Peoples Facilities and Services Fund (YPFSS)

■ Young people in target areas and other vulnerable groups make more informed choices about their health, personal lives and social development through the targeted provision of services and facilities in these areas

Indicators:

- ☞ level of drug misuse by school-goers versus EU average
- ☞ level of substance misuse reported to ESPAD by school goers
- ☞ levels of engagement by target group with YPFSS services and facilities

Rural Development

■ Improved services, infrastructure and employment opportunities for rural communities

Indicators:

- ☞ number of new jobs created
- ☞ number of jobs maintained
- Sustaining of the rural population

Indicator:

- ☞ Rural population changes as measured in Census returns

- Improved economic environment, including new FTE jobs (full-time equivalent) established in rural areas

Indicator:

- ☞ Number of new FTE jobs established in rural areas

- Enhanced natural and cultural heritage

Indicator:

- ☞ Share of projects with positive environmental impacts

- Increased competitiveness of the small food sector

Indicator:

- ☞ Sustainability and growth of this sector

Gaeltacht and Islands

■ Increasing use and maintenance of the language in Gaeltacht areas

Indicators:

- ☞ level of use of Irish in Gaeltacht as measured in Census returns;
- ☞ statistics from Scéim Labhairt na Gaeilge;
- ☞ appropriate research, analysis, reviews and reports on the Irish language in the Gaeltacht

- Promotion and maintenance of living and working Irish-speaking populations in Gaeltacht areas

Indicators:

- ☞ Census data
- ☞ number of established companies assisted under sustainability/competitiveness measures
- ☞ level of job losses
- ☞ number of gross new jobs created

- Maintenance of living and working population on the islands

Indicator:

- ☞ Changes in living and working population as measured in Census returns

- Maintained or enhanced living standards for islanders

Indicators:

- ☞ number of tourists
- ☞ average tourist spend
- ☞ FTE jobs supported by tourism expenditure
- ☞ Full time and part-time/seasonal employment in projects supported by Udárás na Gaeltachta County Enterprise Boards and LEADER Programme

- Sustainable and culturally vibrant communities

Indicator:

- ☞ number and type of services provided through social economy supports and youth work supports
- ☞ future indicators to be developed for this objective using selected socio-economic and socio-linguistic indicators as suggested in the Review of Certain Subsidised Ferry Services to the Islands.

Irish Language

■ Increasing use of the Irish language in everyday life throughout the island of Ireland

Indicator:

- ☞ level of use of Irish as measured in Census returns
- ☞ statistics from appropriate research, analysis, reviews and reports on the Irish language

North/South Cooperation

■ Maximising cross-border co-operation in community and rural development

Indicators:

- ☞ number of new/continuing cross-community and cross-border resources or facilities
- ☞ attitudinal changes over time

■ Legacy of conflict and reconciliation issues addressed

Indicators:

- ☞ building of positive relationships within and between communities
- ☞ cultural and attitudinal changes among participants at all levels of society
- ☞ numbers from disadvantaged areas entering or progressing towards employment
- ☞ numbers reporting a reduction in social isolation and exclusion

■ Economic and social development in rural and disadvantaged areas

Indicators:

- ☞ number of assisted enterprises still in operation after 2 years
- ☞ number of community groups in targeted areas participating in the decision-making process
- ☞ number of community groups participating in enterprise/economic activities

■ Cross-community acceptance of An Foras Teanga and Waterways Ireland as integral components of North-South co-operation process

Indicators:

- ☞ increased community participation in support programmes and activities of Bodies.
- ☞ level of consultation, co-operation and joint actions on matters of mutual benefit.