
DEPARTMENT OF RURAL AND
COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT:

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE
FRAMEWORK



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

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SECRETARY GENERAL'S FOREWORD:

As the Department of Rural and Community Development was established in the summer of 2017, it is a privilege to introduce the Department's first Governance Framework which encapsulates, into a single resource, our operational context, our obligations and responsibilities, our standards of conduct and our accountability mechanisms – all of which are designed to ensure that the Department, the bodies under its aegis and our partners in the sector achieve the objectives and goals set for us by Government.

As a new Department we are committed to delivering high quality policy advice to our Ministers and ensuring that the programmes we are charged to deliver have a meaningful and positive impact on the lives of our fellow citizens.

The Department has a responsibility to ensure that appropriate and proportionate arrangements are in place so that the resources in our care are directed and utilised where most needed in order to support our mission *“To promote rural and community development and to support vibrant, inclusive and sustainable communities throughout Ireland”*.

We recognise that good governance is about delivering priorities, achieving objectives, behaving with integrity and acting in the public interest, and in ways that are consistent with legal, regulatory and Government policy obligations. This Governance Framework seeks to underpin this. Its development is part of an iterative process which will be informed and developed on foot of the learning experiences of the Department's team and those of our clients.

INTRODUCTION – WHAT IS CORPORATE GOVERNANCE?

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

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

The Purpose of this Framework

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

There are universally accepted governance principles and norms that apply to civil service and public sector organisations and pursuing and achieving good governance requires effective arrangements to be in place to ensure these principles and norms are being implemented. This Governance Framework outlines how we adhere to these principles and norms within our strategic and operational activities, within our work programmes and in how we deliver our mission.

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

GOVERNANCE PRINCIPLES

1. Good governance supports a culture and ethos which ensures behaviour with integrity, strong commitment to ethical values, and respect for the rule of law.

2. Good governance ensures openness, effective public consultation processes and comprehensive engagement with domestic and international stakeholders.

3. Good governance helps to define priorities and outcomes in terms of sustainable economic and societal benefits and to determine the policies and interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of these priorities and outcomes.

4. Good governance means developing the Department's capacity, including the capability of the leadership team, management and staff.

5. Good governance means managing risks and performance through robust internal control systems and effective performance management practices.

6. Good governance means implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, communications, audit and scrutiny to deliver effective accountability.

CHAPTER 1 – DEPARTMENT OF RURAL AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

- Background

Department of Rural & Community Development was established following a Government Decision in July 2017.

The Department's mission is to promote rural and community development and to support vibrant, inclusive and sustainable communities throughout Ireland.

- Senior Management Structures

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

Further details as to the Department's structure and management tiers is available on www.whodoeswhat.gov.ie.

- Values, Behaviours & Culture

The remit of the Department includes both economic and social development in all our communities both rural and urban. Many of our programmes seek to address the various and wide ranging challenges communities face. Given the diverse nature of our stakeholders and the equally diverse range of challenges to be met, the Department will ensure that:

- We develop a culture whereby the emphasis is on adopting a collaborative approach to working with our communities and other stakeholders to enable them and the Department to work together to meet our shared challenges.
- We will seek to continually demonstrate the value and commitment of those involved in community initiatives and the charities & volunteering sector.

- We recognise that the Department is best placed to act as an enabler to meeting the challenges ahead.
- We will always seek to clearly demonstrate the value of our working relationships and the positive impact those in the sector bring to our society.

CHAPTER 2 - SENIOR MANAGEMENT ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

The purpose of this chapter is to provide an overview of senior management governance roles and responsibilities, including those relating to the Minister, Minister of State, Secretary General and Accounting Officer, Special Adviser, those who exercise a senior management role within the Department and all other staff.

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

2.1 This chapter sets out the senior management roles and responsibilities from the Minister to the level of the Principal Officer or equivalent. The way in which managers behave and exercise their governance and leadership duties is critical to creating a working environment at corporate, divisional and business unit level which facilitates high performance and which fosters commitment, dedication, cooperation and active engagement. We aim to have a management and leadership style that is professional, informal and open and which reflects our core values including respect and integrity. The style will be appropriate to the circumstances that present themselves and will be direct and decisive as the occasion demands.

Minister for Rural and Community Development

2.2 The principal legislative provisions governing the Minister's powers are the Ministers and Secretaries Acts 1924 to 2011 and the Public Service Management Act 1997 (PSMA). The structures of Government Departments and distribution of its business are regulated by these Acts and of particular significance is the designation of the Minister in charge of each Department as a 'corporation sole', which underpins the doctrine of ministerial responsibility. As corporation sole the Minister embodies the Department in law and bears the responsibility for its activities. In effect the Minister is the Department and the civil servants have no separate existence. This in turn means that the Minister is the ultimate decider of Departmental policy within the overall

context of Government policy. The Minister is also responsible for the oversight of the Charities Regulator.

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

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

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

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

Minister of State

2.6 A Minister of State means a person appointed under section 1(1) of the Ministers and Secretaries (Amendment) (No. 2) Act, 1977 attached to one or more Departments of State of the Government and who assists a Minister of the Government. The Minister of State has been delegated a range of functions by the Minister. These include oversight of the Charities Regulator, the Western Development Commission and the Atlantic Economic Corridor Taskforce, responsibility for the Volunteer & Community sector including funding programmes and policy development, development of the Public Participation Networks and Citizen Engagement.

Secretary General & Accounting Officer

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

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

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

2.9 The list of duties specified in the Public Service Management Act 1997 while extensive, are not necessarily exhaustive and the Secretary General may also be required, under the Act, to carry out other functions on behalf of the

Minister. While the Secretary General may delegate responsibility and accountability by way of assignment (where each officer is accountable to the Secretary General), he/she retains ultimate responsibility and accountability for the actions of the Department, irrespective of the delegation of assigned responsibilities.

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

2.11 In addition to the above and, as Accounting Officer, while the Secretary General can put in place arrangements to assist with the aspects of the following governance obligations, he/she cannot delegate accountability to subordinate officers. These obligations are as follows:

- Preparation and presentation of Appropriation Accounts;
- Accounting Officer for the Department's Vote;
- Supply a Statement of Internal Financial Control to the Comptroller and Auditor General with the Annual Appropriation Accounts;
- Appearance before Public Accounts Committee;
- Putting in place an Internal Audit Unit;
- Establishing an Audit Committee;
- Monitoring by the Department of bodies under their aegis on behalf of the Minister;
- Approval of the award of major contracts;
- Approve all payments greater than €1 million (where no Assistant Secretary is present); and

- Seek necessary assurances where services are delivered by another Accounting Officer (e.g. NSSO and consistent with necessary service agreements).

Functions & Responsibilities of the Senior Management Group

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

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

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

Assistant Secretary General

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

Management of the Department

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

Management of Division Resources

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

Management of Policy Advice

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

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

Principal Officers

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

Management of Department/Business Units

- Supporting the wider management team to achieve objectives of the Department/Business Units;

- Participate with and actively contribute to senior management groups;
- Where assigned, monitor Bodies under the Department's aegis in line with the Department's oversight framework.

Management of Resources

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

Management of Unit Business

- Manage the day-to-day business of the Unit;
- Strategically plan in line with the objectives of the Division/Department;
- Own and sponsor the Unit's agreed strategic objectives;
- Maintain appropriate systems and structures to support the work of the section;
- Prepare Business Plans for the Unit;
- Ensure the effective management of risk in the Unit;
- Manage the overall performance of the Unit and achieve objectives.

Management of Policy Advice and Implementation

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

Special Adviser

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

Governance Role of all Staff

2.18 In addition to the specific governance roles discussed above, other staff have a specific role to play in assuring good governance within the Department of Rural and Community Development in corporate and other functional areas when fully established, such as Internal Audit, Compliance, Corporate Affairs, Human Resources, Legal, Risk, Procurement, Data Protection, Health & Safety, Facilities, Finance & Accounts, Freedom of Information, etc. Furthermore all staff members in the Department have an important role to play in collectively committing to the good governance of the Department through the requirements of this framework, departmental policies, circulars and office notices and adhering to the Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour in the performance of their duties.

2.19 The Department's functions entail a significant amount of work and attention to compliance with governance arrangements. Attention is drawn to the Department's initial compliance framework as set out in Appendix 1.

2.20 The Department is also minded of the need to develop and strengthen its ties with, and oversight of, the governance arrangements in place for the bodies operating under its aegis and/or on behalf of the Department in administering its various funding programmes.

CHAPTER 3 – MANAGEMENT STRUCTURES

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

Management Board

3.1 The Department’s Management Board consists of the Secretary General, and three Assistant Secretaries responsible for the Rural and Community Divisions and the Corporate/Strategic Development Division. The Secretary General’s Private Secretary serves as the secretariat to the Board.

Ministerial Management Board

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

Senior Management Group

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

3.4 The Secretary General chairs a scheduled progress review meeting with the Senior Management Group, attendance of which is mandatory. The meeting is based on an assessment of progress on meeting our objectives and consists of oral reports on the work of the Management Board and Government meetings, as appropriate. It is a forum for the communication across the organisation of recent developments on the policy and operational work of the Department. The Department will avail of dedicated legal services from the Office of the Attorney General as required.

Senior Management Review

3.5 Senior Management Review Days will generally be held bi-annually. The Senior Management Group will consider and discuss leadership perspectives and topics and develop and prioritise key Department business objectives for implementation.

Role of Audit Committee

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

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

It will liaise as appropriate with the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General, review the Appropriation Account and such other reports by the C&AG as may arise.

The Committee is independent in the performance of its functions and shall not exercise any executive or managerial functions.

Role of Internal Audit Unit

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

Compliance

3.9 The role of the compliance function is to assist the Management Board in identifying, assessing and monitoring the compliance obligations of the Department, with periodic reports being provided to ensure standards are being maintained. It is also the role of the compliance function to give independent assurance to the Management Board that management are adhering to legal, regulatory and governance obligations and implementing appropriate remediation measures where necessary.

Procurement

3.10 A Procurement Officer is in place to ensure that all procurement in the Department is carried out in accordance with public procurement rules and procedures, and that it complies with relevant EU and national legislation and best practice. The role of the Procurement Officer is to monitor and oversee internal procurement processes and procedures and to liaise with the Office of Government Procurement in terms of best practice and emerging development. The Procurement Officer will oversee the Department's procurement policy and support and update staff in relation to procurement generally and will report to senior management as appropriate on procurement matters.

Internal Finance Management Function/Finance Officer/Finance Unit

3.11 The Department's Finance Unit has overall responsibility for accounts, payments, receipts, travel and subsistence, salaries and other allowances. It also has key responsibility for a range of other functions which form an integral part of the Unit's business tasks. These include Multi-Annual Budgets, Estimates, Appropriation Accounts and financial briefing material for the Secretary General and the Minister. The Unit is also responsible, in conjunction with Human Resources and Support Services, for the operational costs associated with the Department's administrative budget.

Risk Management

3.12 The Department of Rural and Community Development risk management framework consists of a Risk Committee, and line Divisions' risk management activity. The DRCD Management Board sits separately, and with an appropriate expanded membership, as the Department's Risk Committee. Full membership of the Risk Committee comprises Management Board members, Finance Officer, Principal Officer Corporate Services and one other Principal Officer nominee from each of the Rural and Community Divisions.

3.13 The role of the Risk Committee is to aid the Department in embedding risk management and overseeing its risk function, including identification, assessment, mitigation steps and determining the parameters for escalation of risk/further examination. The Risk Committee Board prepares the corporate risk register and identifies principal risks and uncertainties for Management Board discussion as required. To formalise the relationship between the Risk Committee and the Audit Committee, the following links are established:

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

3.14 The Corporate Division generates the information to support the overall risk structure. These reports will support the work of the Department in ensuring a better understanding of possible risks, which is complementary to the work of other Divisions.

3.15 Management of risk at the business unit level remains the responsibility of the business unit. This involves identifying risks and ensuring they are included in the risk register, identifying and taking appropriate mitigating

actions and an ongoing monitoring and reporting of development in relation to risks.

Information Management

Freedom of Information (FOI)

3.16 The Freedom of Information Act 2014 asserts the right of members of the public to obtain access to official information to the greatest extent possible consistent with the public interest and the right to privacy of individuals.

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

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

Internal Governance of EU and International Policy Formulation

Leader Programmes

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

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) is accredited by the European Commission as the Paying Agency in Ireland responsible for payment under the Rural Development Programme (RDP) 2014-2020. This delegation must now be formally transferred from that Department following the establishment of the Department of Rural and Community Development's own vote. The accreditation covers a wide range of governance

arrangements including the IT, financial, audit, risk management and human resource systems and processes in place. It also requires that the LEADER Unit, including the supporting corporate functions, are aligned with ISO 27001. Adherence with the delegated accreditation will be considered at quarterly review group meetings chaired by the Secretary General. The Secretary General of the Department responsible for LEADER must also provide a management declaration to the DAFM in January of each year confirming that the necessary governance arrangements are in place.

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

Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) is funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development with co-financing from the European Social Fund in Ireland and is managed locally by Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) with support from local authorities. The programme actions and initiatives are delivered by Programme Implementers (PIs) across 51 Lots.

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

The financial management and control framework for SICAP accords with the Department of Public Expenditure Circular 13/2015 Management and Control Procedures for European Structural and Investment Funds Programme 2014-2020 and the ESF Certifying Authority, Department of Education and Skills

Circular 1/2016 Eligibility Rules for the 2014-2020 European Social Fund and Youth Employment Initiative.

In accordance with the PEIL Communications Strategy 2014-2020, Programme Implementers must ensure that they have specifically informed ESF SICAP beneficiaries that they are receiving financial support with co-funding from the European Social Fund and must adhere to the ESF PEIL Information and Communication Guidelines 2014-2020. Individuals must be made aware that their records and consent forms may be viewed as part of external audits for the purpose of verifying records etc. Verifications or audits may be conducted by EU/ESF auditors, the Local Government Audit Service, or agents of the Funders and the Contracting Authorities.

PEACE IV Programme

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

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

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

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

The SEUPB is responsible for ensuring that adequate risk management and control arrangements – assurance to the Departments via the Quarterly Assurance Statement. The Programme governance and implementation arrangements are governed by Regulation (EU) 1299/2013 with the specific roles and responsibilities of the various bodies detailed in the Cooperation Programme Document.

Department's Inspectorate

The Department has a dedicated Inspectorate (the Inspection Services Unit). Its purpose is to provide the requisite assurances to the Secretary General in relation to the expenditure and management of EU funds under LEADER and Exchequer funds. This is achieved through the design and maintenance of control systems.

Particular reference is drawn to the following:

- Department of Finance Regulations, Circulars, Office Notices and Guidance Material.
- Department of Public Expenditure & Reform's Public Financial Procedures (2012)
- Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (2016) Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (Dublin, Department of Finance).

External Governance and Oversight of Bodies under the Aegis of the Department

POBAL: is a not for profit company, which acts as an intermediary for Government in the delivery and administration of a range of Government and EU funded programmes. In addition to its own internal governance structures, the Department has a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with POBAL which forms the general understanding between both parties in relation to the administration by them of the funding programmes.

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

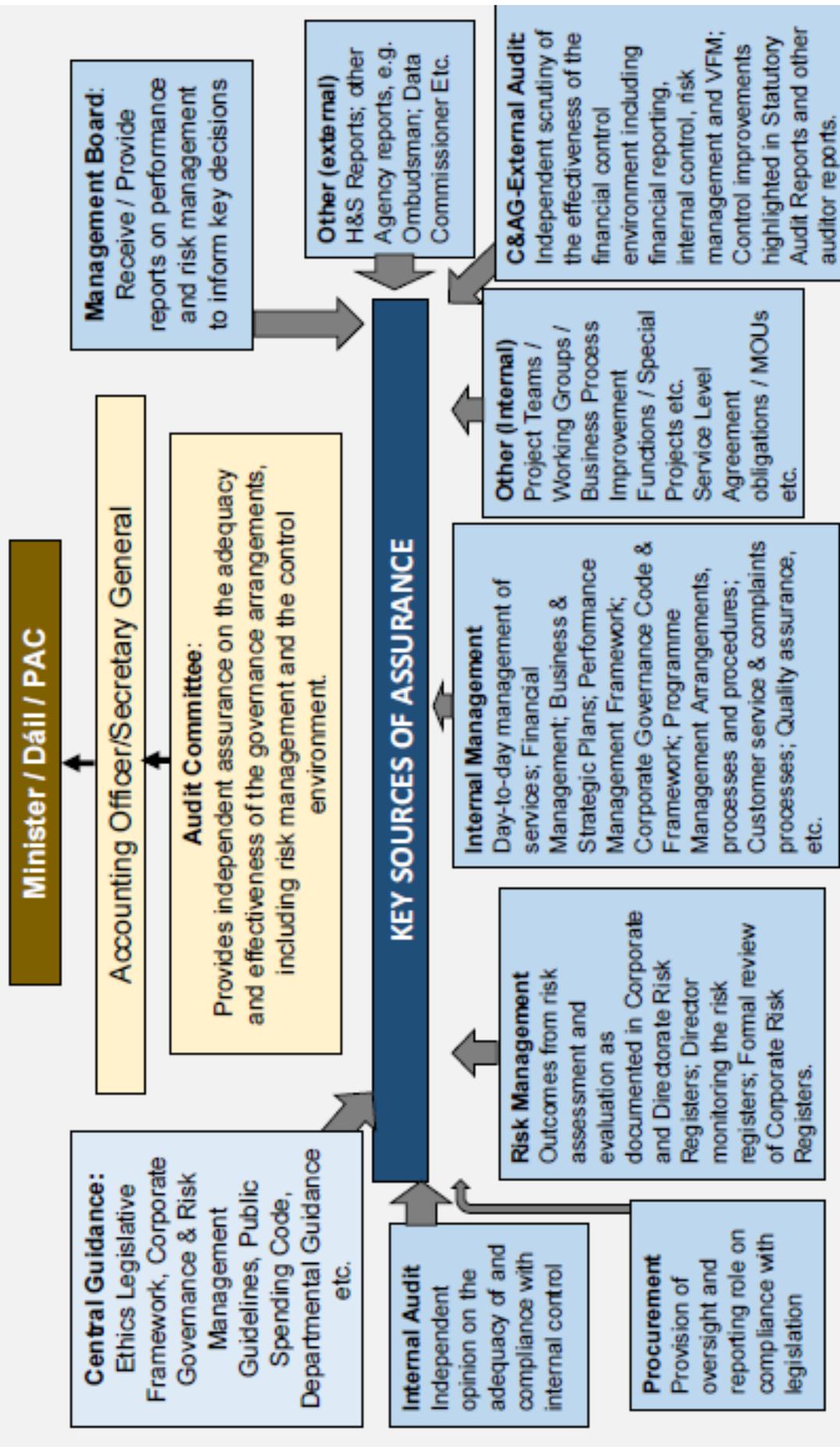
Irish Water Safety Authority: is the statutory body established to promote water safety in Ireland. Its role is to educate and develop public awareness of appropriate attitude and behaviour in order to prevent drownings and water related accidents. The Department will develop agreed protocols with the Authority shortly with a view to strengthening the working relationship with the Department.

Western Development Commission: is a statutory body charged with promoting economic and social development in Counties Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Roscommon, Mayo, Galway and Clare. The Department is in the process of strengthening our oversight arrangements with the Commission, which will include establishing a Service Level Agreement and more regular meetings between senior management of the Department and the Commission.

In addition to the financial controls and consequential assurances (notably the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016)), the Department's external bodies and agencies have compliance requirements, relating to HR practices, use of Irish language, FOI and data protection practices.

The Department also has a strategic relationship with the Local Authorities in the delivery of many of its schemes and programmes.

Assurance Framework



CHAPTER 4 – ORGANISATIONAL FUNCTIONS

The preceding chapters have set out governance roles and responsibilities and management structures. The purpose of this chapter is to set out the organisation of functions within the Department which support the delivery of our objectives. These functions evolve over time in response to changing priorities.

Organisational Functions of the Department

- Corporate and Strategic Development

This Division is responsible for leading and growing the Department's strategic policy development capacity, policy co-ordination, research and evaluation, communication functions, HR, finance and other business support functions.

- Community

The goal of the Community Development Division is to promote and support the development of vibrant, sustainable and inclusive communities in both urban and rural areas, through implementing a coherent policy framework and strategy which supports the community and voluntary sector. A key objective is to bring about a more co-ordinated approach to publicly-funded local and community development interventions by further developing the role of Local Authorities through their Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs) and the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs). A further objective is to encourage citizen engagement with Local Authority structures through the Public Participation Networks (PPNs) and to support and encourage volunteering.

Other areas of this Division's remit include oversight of the Charities Regulator; Libraries Development; the development of Government's relationship with Philanthropy; administration and oversight of the

Social Inclusion & Community Activation Programme (SICAP) and a range of other funding schemes for community & voluntary groups, including RAPID and the Seniors Alert Scheme.

- Rural & Regional Affairs

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

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

The Division is responsible for developing policy on social enterprise and also plays an important role in regional development, in particular through facilitating the development of the Atlantic Economic Corridor concept and supporting the rollout of high-speed broadband and telecommunications infrastructure across rural Ireland. The Division has oversight of the Western Development Commission.

APPENDIX 1

(Initial)Compliance Framework for the Department of Rural and Community Development

Measure	Responsible Officer/Section	Timeframe/Frequency	Status/Comment
PROGRAMMES			
Departmental Programme for Government Commitments	Head of Corporate Support & Management Services (CSMS)	Regular Reports to Government	
Action Plan for Rural Development - Reports	A/Secretary, Rural Division	Biannual	
LEADER Programme: Accreditation to make payments and provision of Management Declaration to D/Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Head of Leader Programme Unit		
Pursuant to the Charities Act 2009, laying Strategy Statement (s. 29), Audited Accounts (s. 30) and Annual Report (s. 31) before the Houses of the Oireachtas	Head of Unit	Various dates	Strategy Statement at 3 yearly intervals; Accounts to be with Department by 1 st April and Annual Report by 30 June
OPERATIONS			
Publish Statement of Strategy	Head of CSMS	December 2017	Thereafter every 3 years or shortly following the appointment of a new Minister
Publish Annual Report	Head of CSMS	Annual – Q1	
PMDS Annual Reviews and Role Profiles	Head of CSMS	Annual – Q1	
Publish Framework of Assignments	Secretary General	Ongoing	
Risk Management Policy & Register	Head of CSMS	Ongoing	

Protected Disclosures			
(1) Departmental Policy	Head of CSMS	Ongoing	Review by Audit Committee/Management Board
(2) Annual Reporting	A/Sec - CSMS	Annual	
Board Appointments	Head CSMS	Ongoing	In consultation, as applicable, with relevant Head of Unit for Charities Regulatory Authority, Western Development Commission and Irish Water Safety
Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies	Relevant Heads of Unit	Ongoing	
Significant Legal Proceedings Report to Government	Head of CMCS	Biannual	
CPSA Codes of Practice	Head of CSMS	Ongoing	
Disability Legislation (3%)	Head of CSMS	March	
Health and Safety Legislation	Head of CSMS	Ongoing	
Employment Law and Circulars	Head of CSMS	Ongoing	
Integrated Reform Delivery Plan and Reports	Head of CSMS	Biannual	
National Archives Act	Head of CSMS	Annual	
Records Management	Head of CSMS	Ongoing	
Quality Customer Service / Customer Charter	Head of CSMS	Ongoing	
Official Language Act – preparation of draft scheme	Head of CSMS		A draft scheme is to be presented not more than six months after the date that a notice for same is issued to the head of a public body by the Minister for the Gaeltacht
Review of Governance Framework	Management Board	Biannual	
ACCOUNTING & FINANCIAL AFFAIRS			
Appropriation Account	Finance Officer	Annual – Q1	Signed and submitted by the Secretary General
Departmental Statement of Internal Financial Control	Secretary General	Annual – Q1	Signed and submitted by the Secretary General
Internal Audit Reports	Head of Internal Audit	Ongoing	

Audit Committee Charter - Review	Finance Officer	Annual	
Departmental Estimates Preparation/Submission	Head of Finance	Annual - Q3 & Q4	
Procurement Procedures	Head of CSMS	Ongoing	
Report on contracts (exceeding €25,000 ex. VAT) awarded without a competitive tendering process	Head of CSMS	Annual – by 31st March	
Prompt Payments	Finance Officer & Heads of Unit	Ongoing	
Publication of Purchase Orders exceeding €20,000	Finance Officer	Quarterly	
Assets Register	Head of CSMS	Ongoing	
OIREACHTAS & PUBLIC AFFAIRS			
Parliamentary Questions, Topical Issues	Oversight by Secretary General's Office	Ongoing	
Briefing for Dáil Committee of Public Accounts and other Oireachtas Committees.	Co-ordination for Committees by: Finance Officer in the case of PAC and consideration of Estimates Head of CSMS for all other Committees		
Legislative Programme	Head of CSMS		
Leaders' Questions Material for D/Taoiseach	Minister's Office	Ongoing	Material prepared at Unit level either on foot of requests from Minister's Advisers or on the Unit's initiative.
Freedom of Information: (i) Requests / Appeals	Deciding Officers -APO level /	Ongoing	

(ii) Publication Scheme	Reviewers – PO level	3 yearly review	
(iii) Section 34 Certification	FOI Officer FOI Officer	Annual	
Ethics / Standards in Public Office Regulations – Annual Returns	Head of CSMS	January	
Regulation of Lobbying Act – Publish List of Designated Public Officials	Head of CSMS	Ongoing	