



# The Civil Service Renewal Plan

A Vision and Three Year Action Plan for the Civil Service



October 2014

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# Foreword

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## Government Foreword

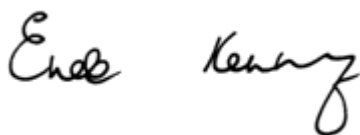
On behalf of the Government, we are pleased to present the Civil Service Renewal Plan which sets out a new direction for the Civil Service. The Plan identifies major but practical actions that will strengthen capacity, capability, accountability and leadership throughout the Civil Service. It is the result of an honest and candid assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of today's Civil Service. We would like to acknowledge the work of Secretaries General, the Civil Service Renewal Taskforce and the Independent Panel on Strengthening Civil Service Accountability and Performance which contributed to the development of this Plan. We would also like to acknowledge the contributions made by more than 2,000 staff and stakeholders who participated in a comprehensive engagement process.

The challenges of managing the economic and fiscal recovery has led to enormous change in recent years. The Renewal Plan is a major contribution to the Government's wider Public Service Reform programme and marks another milestone in our progress driving reform across the Public Service, restoring the public finances and creating sustainable economic growth. The Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform will continue to lead the programme of reform and renewal in the Civil and Public Service on behalf of the Government.

The Civil Service is a critical institution that we rely on each day to deliver public services and support the Government. In an increasingly dynamic global environment, Ireland requires a strong, capable Civil Service that can respond to the pace and complexity of changes both at home and abroad. The Renewal Plan reflects our commitment to developing the capacity and capability required for the future so that the Civil Service can meet the challenges facing the country with confidence.

The Government is committed to working with senior management and supporting the Civil Service in driving this reform agenda. We have no doubt that civil servants will embrace the opportunity that the Renewal Plan presents and we wish them every success.

On behalf of the Government,



**Enda Kenny TD**

Taoiseach



**Brendan Howlin TD**

Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform

## Message from Secretaries General

The Civil Service Renewal Plan sets out a vision for the type of organisation we want to be. It recognises and builds on the strengths of the Civil Service and details the steps we will take to ensure that we have the capacity and capability we need to meet the challenges facing us and to deliver an excellent service to the State.

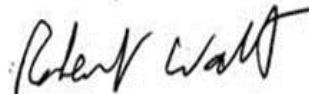
By prioritising shared issues and challenges that are common across all Government Departments and Offices the Renewal Plan will strengthen the performance of the Civil Service as a collective. Our goal is to create 'one Civil Service' that is unified but not uniform, and this requires a fundamental transformation. Making this change will not be easy, but we believe it is critical to achieving the best possible results for Government, a better service for our customers and a better place to work and build a career for staff.

As the leaders of the Civil Service, we will take responsibility to implement the actions set out in this Plan and make sure that renewal becomes a reality. We will start by making sure that everything we do supports the vision for the future and the long-term development of the Civil Service as a whole.

We all share the responsibility to improve the way we work and the services we provide. We invite all staff to participate in this transformation programme. We encourage all stakeholders to recognise the scope and scale of what we are trying to achieve and to work with us to help make it happen.



**Martin Fraser**  
Secretary General to the Government  
Secretary General Department of the Taoiseach



**Robert Watt**  
Secretary General  
Department of Public Expenditure and Reform



**Jim Breslin**  
Secretary General  
Department of Health



**Derek Moran**  
Secretary General  
Department of Finance



**Niall Burgess**  
Secretary General  
Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade



**Tom Moran**  
Secretary General  
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

**Elizabeth Canavan**  
Secretary General (acting)  
Department of Children and Youth Affairs

**John Murphy**  
Secretary General  
Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation

**Padraig Dalton**  
Director General  
Central Statistics Office

**Liam O'Daly**  
Director General  
Office of the Attorney General

**Josephine Feehily**  
Chairman  
Office of the Revenue Commissioners

**Niamh O'Donoghue**  
Secretary General  
Department of Social Protection

**Mark Griffin**  
Secretary General  
Department of Communications, Energy and  
Natural Resources

**Seán Ó Foghlú**  
Secretary General  
Department of Education and Skills

**Joe Hamill**  
Secretary General  
Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

**Tom O'Mahony**  
Secretary General  
Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport

**John McCarthy**  
Secretary General  
Department of Environment, Community and Local  
Government

**Maurice Quinn**  
Secretary General  
Department of Defence

**Clare McGrath**  
Chairman  
Office of Public Works

**Noel Waters**  
Secretary General (acting)  
Department of Justice and Equality

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Why Renew the Vision for the Civil Service?

The Civil Service exists as an independent, impartial body to serve the State and the people of Ireland by carrying out the work of Government and delivering public services efficiently and effectively. Everything we do impacts on Irish society in some way.

We aim to be the best that we can be in everything we do. This means continuously improving, evolving and adapting to respond to social, political, environmental and economic changes in Ireland and internationally. As the pace of change intensifies, the challenge for the Civil Service will be less about keeping up, and more about keeping ahead.

The recent economic and fiscal crisis tested the Civil Service and highlighted strengths and weaknesses in our capability as an organisation. Collectively, we have responded to the combined pressures of reduced expenditure, reduced staffing levels, increased complexity, increased demand for services and strongly critical commentary by driving huge changes in how we work.<sup>1</sup> Our progress to date has been acknowledged both at home and abroad. However, to look to the future with confidence we must reflect on the past, in particular our role before, during and since the economic and financial crisis. This means looking honestly at our performance and learning from both our successes and our failures.

The Renewal Plan aims to build the capability of the Civil Service so that it can meet the needs and expectations of the Government and the public into the future. More than 2,000 staff and stakeholders contributed to its development resulting in a vision that we can all aspire to and a practical plan for how we can achieve it by:

- building on what we do well;
- identifying what we can do better; and
- setting out the actions we will take to renew for the future.

In 2013, the Government established two separate but related streams of work. This Renewal Plan brings together:

- The work of the Independent Panel on Strengthening Civil Service Accountability and Performance;<sup>2</sup> and

**€53billion**

The level of public expenditure managed by the Civil Service in 2013

**34,707**

The number of full-time equivalent civil servants employed nationwide

**<2%**

The size of the Civil Service as a proportion of the total national workforce

- The work of the Civil Service Renewal Taskforce, a group of civil servants from all Departments nominated to lead a process to renew the vision and strategy for the Civil Service.<sup>3</sup>

The outcome is a plan focussed on driving practical change and action in 4 areas:

1. **A Unified Civil Service** - Managing the Civil Service as a single, unified organisation;
2. **A Professional Civil Service** - Maximising the performance and potential of all Civil Service employees and organisations;
3. **A Responsive Civil Service** - Changing our culture, structure and processes so that we become more agile, flexible and responsive; and
4. **An Open and Accountable Civil Service** - Continuously learning and improving by being more open to external ideas, challenge and debate.

The Plan is based on practical and specific actions. In some areas the actions will develop significantly new approaches to how we work. Other actions are about making best practice common practice. All of the actions aim to support a more capable and accountable Civil Service that consistently delivers results for the Government and public it serves.

Making it happen will require a large-scale change programme. We will only succeed if we invest in and sustain change. This will require collective ownership; strong leadership and delivery; and good programme management. Our success will ultimately depend on the involvement and commitment of staff at all levels.

Every day the Civil Service makes a vital contribution to Irish life. By embracing the Renewal Plan we hope to demonstrate our enduring commitment to public service and renew pride and confidence in what we do.

## 1 in 8

The number of civil servants employed in the Public Service in Ireland

## 16

The number of Government Departments. Civil servants also work in a range of large and small Offices and Agencies in Ireland and abroad

## 7.6

The size of the Civil Service per 1,000 in the population today, compared to 8.4 per 1,000 in 1994

## 1.2 What Challenges and Opportunities are facing the Civil Service?

As an organisation we have many strengths: our values, the levels of commitment, the depth of professional knowledge and expertise. These strengths have been demonstrated through the personal resilience, commitment and contribution that staff have shown in delivering higher levels of productivity and high quality frontline public services to support the economic recovery.

However, like all organisations, to keep up and keep ahead change must be a normal part of business. Already, the way the Civil Service carries out its work has changed considerably. Reform is not new and multiple change programmes have been initiated within and across Civil Service organisations that have delivered major efficiencies and service delivery improvements for our customers. Currently, there are a number of important reform initiatives planned or underway across a wide range of Departments. Examples that affect all Departments include the introduction of shared services, the transition to alternative models of service delivery and the introduction of whole-of-Government procurement as detailed in the Public Service Reform Plan 2014-16.<sup>4</sup> More recently, the Government has also introduced a National Risk Assessment Framework and the Open Government Partnership National Action Plan which will also deliver reform alongside these measures.<sup>5</sup>

We know that maintaining the status quo is not possible. We also know that there are things we can do much better. For example:

- Our record of implementation is mixed;
- Our structures and processes are often rigid and can discourage joined-up policy making;
- The culture and practice of managing performance and delivery is uneven;
- Investment in professional development varies considerably between different Departments; and
- The composition of the workforce is changing rapidly – for example, 73 per cent of the current workforce is 40 years of age or over.<sup>6</sup>

Looking ahead, we are also facing new challenges ranging from the changing demographics of Irish society to rapid technological advances. Particular strategic challenges facing the Civil Service include:

- Managing ongoing fiscal restraint and cost reduction;
- Managing multiple major reform programmes in parallel;

## 2.1million

The number of applications processed by staff in the Department of Social Protection in 2013

## 1 in 5

The number of civil servants with more than 30 years' experience in serving the State

## >€0.5billion

Collected in non-compliance by staff in the Revenue Commissioners through audits and checks in 2013



- Influencing international policy choices and outcomes in an interdependent global environment;
- Anticipating future challenges and maintaining a long-term strategic view;
- Raising morale and productivity among staff following changes to the terms and conditions of employment and ongoing reductions in staffing levels; and
- Restoring public confidence and trust.

The Renewal Plan presents a major opportunity to lead this change and respond to the challenges and opportunities facing us – to preserve and protect the values and strengths that matter most and tackle the things that we all agree we could do better.

### 1.3 How is the Civil Service viewed?

The Renewal Plan has been informed by extensive research, analysis and face-to-face engagement with almost 2,000 staff and stakeholders, including:

- All Government Ministers;
- Members of both Houses of the Oireachtas;
- All Management Boards;
- All Secretaries General;
- Every Department; and
- Multiple external and international perspectives.

The purpose of this deliberative process was to understand, from a range of perspectives, what the Civil Service does well and where it needs to do better.

Areas commonly recognised as strengths included:

- The ethos of public service;
- The values of honesty and independence;
- The quality and objectivity of policy advice;
- The efficient administration of large volume public services;
- The capacity to respond rapidly and effectively to crises;
- The implementation of high-profile programmes (for example, hosting the EU Presidency); and
- The ability to adapt to changing circumstances and priorities.

**60%**

The proportion of women in the Civil Service

**166,000**

The number of new visa, residence, citizenship and protection applications processed by staff in the Department of Justice and Equality in 2013

**4%**

The proportion of civil servants aged 30 or under

Common areas identified for improvement included the need to:

- Improve the pace of delivery;
- Collaborate, coordinate and join-up Government more effectively;
- Focus on solutions not structures or processes;
- Manage performance consistently and tackle under-performance;
- Actively communicate what the Civil Service does;
- Create better opportunities for staff to develop;
- Match skills and roles more effectively;
- Invest in staff through training and technology; and
- Increase flexibility and mobility into and out of the Civil Service.

In addition, more than 1,500 specific ideas to make the Civil Service more effective were submitted by staff in response to the question: *if you could change one thing to make the Civil Service more effective what would it be?* These submissions have been analysed in full by the Central Statistics Office and are collated in a detailed report.<sup>7</sup> Over the same period, more than 40 submissions were received by the Independent Panel during the public consultation process on Civil Service accountability and performance.<sup>8</sup>

The Renewal Plan addresses these themes and issues. As implementation begins, we will continue to seek and respond to ideas from a range of perspectives.

#### 1.4 What have we concluded needs to change?

Reviewing all of the issues raised over the course of the renewal process and looking candidly at the performance of the Civil Service, we have concluded that:

- A strong public service ethos and the values of honesty, impartiality and independence that underpin it, is critical to how we work and must be maintained and affirmed as part of any renewal process.
- Ministers are ultimately responsible and accountable for the performance of their Department. Senior civil servants have significant roles in policy advice and successful implementation. Special Advisers also have a distinctive role in supporting and advising Government Ministers. We need to ensure there is strong and clear accountability for delivery and results for all levels and roles.

**387,000**

The number of changes made to the land registry by staff in the Property Registration Authority of Ireland in 2013

**73%**

The proportion of civil servants aged 40 or over

**1 in 3**

The proportion of civil servants employed as Clerical Officers, typically providing frontline services to individuals, communities, and business.

- We are not sufficiently joined-up on many important issues or in our approach to making effective use of resources and staff. We should not allow organisational boundaries to limit our ability to develop joined-up policies and provide a high quality, unified service.
- A unified Civil Service needs to be led and managed in a unified way. This does not mean that all Departments must be alike, but that our collective endeavour will be far more successful when managed through a clear, collective leadership and management structure.
- The single biggest resource we have is the staff we employ. Our performance as a collective is determined by the performance of each of us individually. We need to support and continuously develop our staff. We need to challenge and take decisive action to address under-performance. We also need to attract talented people and retain them. This means ensuring that we have the right leaders and managers with the right skills and competencies to encourage and develop excellence.
- The best practice that exists within individual Civil Service organisations should become common practice. Departments need to regularly share experience, adopt best practice and develop the capacity to anticipate and respond to demands and changing circumstances.
- The Civil Service is an active and full participant in Irish society and needs to engage accordingly. Actively communicating what we do and improving how we listen, learn and collaborate is essential.

### 1.5 Where will we start?

We have learned from the experience of previous reform initiatives that to be successful we must act collectively and sustain our efforts. Fundamental cultural change takes time. Even more so when the goal is a continuously learning and improving organisation.

To achieve this, we plan to implement a multi-year programme of renewal that phases, prioritises, and sequences our work, underpinned by a commitment to complete all actions within three years.

To ensure successful implementation and momentum, we will increase our capacity and resource a high-quality Programme Management Office (PMO) to manage implementation. Once the PMO is in place, we will mobilise change immediately, by prioritising and completing the following actions within 6 months. We will:

**630,000**

The number of passports issued by staff in the Passport Office in 2013

**4%**

The proportion of senior managers (Principal and above) in the Civil Service

**2,477**

The number of meetings and events supported by the Civil Service in 6 months during Ireland's Presidency of the European Union in 2013

- Establish an Accountability Board for the Civil Service;
- Create a Civil Service Management Board;
- Establish the first performance review process for Secretaries General;
- Identify available options to strengthen the disciplinary code, in particular to address under-performance;
- Extend open recruitment in key areas to fill skills gaps; and
- Carry-out the first Civil Service wide employee engagement survey.

**200**

The number of days until the first actions in the Renewal Plan are completed

## 2. The Vision

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### Our Vision

To provide a world-class service to the State and to the people of Ireland.

### Our Mission

- To offer objective and evidence-informed advice to Government, respond to developments, and deliver Government objectives while striving to achieve optimal outcomes in the long-term national interest.
- To serve citizens and stakeholders efficiently, equally and with respect, in a system that is open, transparent and accountable.

### Our Values

- A deep-rooted public service ethos of independence, integrity, impartiality, equality, fairness and respect
- A culture of accountability, efficiency and value for money
- The highest standards of professionalism, leadership and rigour.

### Our Commitments

- We will encourage creative and innovative thinking, constructive problem-solving, openness to change and flexible working methods.
- We will ensure through appropriate merit based recruitment, training, and life-long learning and development, that the Civil Service has the necessary expertise to advise on and implement public policy in a complex and changing world.
- We will maximise the contribution of all staff, by nurturing and rewarding talent and by encouraging civil servants to develop their potential in a workplace committed to equality, diversity, and mutual respect.

## 2.1 How will we put the vision into practice?

The vision cannot be achieved without significant change to how we work. To initiate this, we will prioritise improvements in four main areas:

1. **A Unified Civil Service** - Managing the Civil Service as a single, unified organisation;
2. **A Professional Civil Service** - Maximising the performance and potential of all Civil Service employees and organisations;
3. **A Responsive Civil Service** - Changing our culture, structure and processes so that we become more agile, flexible and responsive; and
4. **An Open and Accountable Civil Service** - Continuously learning and improving by being more open to external ideas, challenge and debate.



The chapters that follow outline the actions we will take to achieve this transformation within a three-year period.

Departments are at different starting points and many are already leading change in these areas. Our ambition is to learn from excellence and success to make the vision a reality for all parts of the Civil Service.

This will require sustained political and administrative leadership, substantial investment, central supports, regular communication and regular and transparent reporting on progress underpinned by technological change and innovation. The vision and actions in this Plan will be subject to periodic review and evaluation.

# 3. A Unified Civil Service

## 3.1. Why do we need to manage the Civil Service as a single, unified organisation?

Supporting the Government to make progress on major cross-cutting policy challenges (such as economic growth, homelessness, climate change, social exclusion) is dependent on our ability to fully join-up different parts of Government. Increasingly, the complexity of the environment we work in and the problems we face requires that we work seamlessly across multiple organisations to achieve results for the public in the most cost efficient and effective way. Joined-up thinking is often challenging for large and diverse organisations but the experience of other sectors and other public administrations shows that there are changes we can make to do this better.

We operate within a legislative framework that sets out the role of Government in directing policy, Ministers in leading their Departments, and the Civil Service in advising on and implementing policy. Maintaining strong, trusting relationships between Ministers and civil servants is critical and this has been a fundamental tenet for the Civil Service since its establishment. We want to further support this with a more cohesive approach to prioritising our work, particularly when it comes to large scale cross-cutting projects. To achieve our vision for the future, we need to consistently adopt a focus on outcomes. This requires a single, unified (although not uniform) approach to managing what we do. This means a major cultural and operational change to embed shared ownership, collective management and common systems.

## 3.2 What needs to change to manage the Civil Service as a single unified organisation?

### Action 1

#### Establish an Accountability Board for the Civil Service

##### Why is this needed?

To strengthen accountability and performance across the Civil Service by introducing greater oversight of delivery.

##### How will it be achieved?

*Staff responses to:  
“If you could change one thing to make the Civil Service more effective what would it be?”*

*“Define the role of the Civil Service in a clear, comprehensive and unambiguous way.”*

*“Start from the top with senior management they must be accountable.”*



We will:

- Establish an Accountability Board as envisaged in the Report of the Independent Panel. This will be chaired by the Taoiseach and balanced with ministerial, Civil Service and external membership.
- Focus the work of the Accountability Board on a limited number of priority items to provide oversight of: (a) the implementation of cross-cutting priorities set by the Government and (b) the capacity and capability of the Civil Service to deliver, including performance management for Secretaries General.
- Publish an annual report on the work of the Accountability Board.

## Action 2

### Create a Civil Service Management Board

#### Why is this needed?

To strengthen the collective leadership of the Civil Service and ensure the Government has the support of a cohesive executive management team to manage the delivery of whole-of-Government priorities and outcomes.

#### How will it be achieved?

We will:

- Establish a Civil Service Management Board chaired by the Secretary General to the Government.
- Assign responsibility to the Board working in groups or as individuals to (a) manage the performance and operation of the Civil Service, including overseeing talent management and performance management systems for senior managers, (b) support the Government on the implementation of policy initiatives that involve multiple Departments, Offices or Agencies, including managing the assignment of staff to these projects, and (c) identify and manage strategic and operational risks on short, medium and long term horizons.
- Assign collective responsibility to the Board to drive the implementation of the Civil Service Renewal Plan under the leadership of the Secretaries General of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Department of the Taoiseach.
- Publish an Annual Report for the Civil Service that details the work of the Board in the past year, key outcomes for the year ahead and a business plan to achieve it.

*Staff responses to:  
“If you could change one thing to make the Civil Service more effective what would it be?”*

*“Organise one body to manage cross organisational thinking.”*

*“More cooperation between Departments. We are all on the same team.”*

*“Joined-up Government, more integration between Departments.”*

### Action 3

#### Set a common governance standard

##### Why is this needed?

To strengthen corporate governance in the Civil Service, in line with international best practice.

##### How will it be achieved?

We will:

- Formalise the role of the Management Board in Departments and support greater ministerial and managerial interaction in jointly and regularly reviewing priorities and performance.
- Introduce a single governance standard for all Management Boards drawing on international best practice in corporate governance.
- Establish an annual assessment for all Management Boards to measure delivery and performance.
- Pilot a process of appointing non-executive external members on three Management Boards to evaluate the potential of this model, ensuring it is underpinned by a robust selection process and clear evaluation criteria.
- Devise a clear policy on the establishment of Agencies and ensure the governance structure of Agencies is consistent with their legislative underpinning.

### Action 4

#### Strengthen strategic planning and business planning processes

##### Why is this change needed?

To improve the quality of strategic planning across the Civil Service and strengthen the balance between planning the delivery of Government objectives, day-to-day business and preparedness for long-term strategic challenges.

##### How will it be achieved?

We will:

- Streamline the Statement of Strategy planning cycle with the Programme for Government so that business planning processes are aligned.
- Mandate the Civil Service Management Board to review and challenge each Statement of Strategy prior to finalisation to ensure that these

*Staff responses to:  
“If you could  
change one thing  
to make the Civil  
Service more  
effective what  
would it be?”*

*“I’d appoint boards,  
with outside  
members to each  
Department and  
make the senior  
management  
responsible to it for  
delivery.”*

*“Improve our  
forward planning  
so we are less  
reactive.”*

*“Longer term  
thinking and  
planning by Civil  
Service  
Management.”*

integrate cross-cutting initiatives and link effectively to Programme for Government commitments.

- Develop a single Statement of Strategy for the Civil Service that focusses exclusively on the strategy for delivering cross-cutting initiatives involving multiple Departments, Offices and Agencies.
- Establish the expectation that each Secretary General meets annually with the relevant Oireachtas Committee to discuss progress in delivery of the objectives published in each Department’s Statement of Strategy.
- Initiate regular strategic horizon scans to identify long-term risks, challenges and opportunities for Ireland over the longer term (e.g. 10, 20, 30 years into the future).

## Action 5

### Improve the delivery of shared whole-of-Government projects

#### Why is this needed?

To strengthen the prioritisation, management and accountability of cross-cutting projects that involve multiple Departments, Offices and Agencies and ensure that policies that are not the priority or responsibility of a single body are effectively managed, supported and resourced.

#### How will it be achieved?

We will:

- Mandate the Civil Service Management Board to drive implementation of a small number of cross-cutting priorities set by the Government.
- Assign formal delegated authority, accountability and support to a named Senior Responsible Officer for the delivery of each cross-cutting project.
- Create a multi-disciplinary project pool involving staff with a range of experience and expertise who can tackle specific government projects and priorities or long-term strategic issues as required.
- Pilot a new model for delivering whole-of-Government projects by setting up two pathfinder projects that model new approaches, including pooling budgets and resources.
- Incorporate explicit recognition for cross-cutting work within the performance management process and examine ways to incorporate this into recruitment processes.

#### Staff responses to:

*“If you could change one thing to make the Civil Service more effective what would it be?”*

*“The culture needs to be less risk averse: think big, be brave”*

*“Organise a talent pool in my Department or in the wider Civil Service to allow for skills and talents to be used better.”*

*“Foster a more integrated approach to service delivery, supporting and encouraging cross-departmental working to achieve this.”*

## Action 6

### Expand the model of sharing services and expertise across organisations

#### Why is this needed?

To enable reform, reduce duplication and fully exploit opportunities to increase efficiency by creating unified approaches that enable Departments to focus on their core objectives.

#### How will it be achieved?

We will:

- Create shared resources and professional networks in key areas, (including project management, change management, data management and communications) that can be commissioned to work on projects for set periods so that Departments can more readily access and share the available expertise depending on requirements.
- Continue to develop and expand the programme of sharing corporate services and exploring alternative models of service delivery as outlined in the Government's Public Service Reform Plan 2014-16, for example through the National Shared Services Office, the Office of Government Procurement, and the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer.
- Ensure common processes and systems and shared resources underpin this approach.

*Staff responses to:  
"If you could  
change one thing  
to make the Civil  
Service more  
effective what  
would it be?"*

*"Closer cooperation  
and resource  
sharing at lower  
levels of the Civil  
Service."*

*"Better sharing of  
people, expertise  
and processes  
across  
Departments."*

# 4 A Professional Civil Service

## 4.1 Why do we need to maximise the performance and potential of all employees and organisations?

We work in a dynamic workplace with roles and opportunities spanning policy, diplomacy, operational management, programme management, process improvement and service delivery across national issues as diverse as driving economic growth, responding to climate change, and tackling obesity. We recruit on strict principles of merit and probity, and have traditionally attracted a skilled and professional workforce. We know that the performance of the Civil Service is ultimately dependent on the performance of its leaders, managers and staff. Yet, the feedback strongly suggests we are not making the best use of the talent and expertise we have. We also need to take quick action to prepare for the demographic challenges of an ageing workforce profile.

To achieve the vision for the future, we need to recruit regularly, become an employer of choice and set the highest value on the quality and performance of staff at all levels and in all roles. This needs to be supported by a renewed focus on achieving greater equality of opportunity, diversity, and gender equality across our workforce so that over time we build a Civil Service that more closely reflects the society in which it works. This means significantly changing how we select and develop staff and setting new expectations about the levels of performance we will expect and accept. To be successful we will need to significantly expand our strategic human resource capability and create a step-change in how we lead and manage our HR practices.

## 4.2 What needs to change to maximise the performance and potential of all employees and organisations?

### Action 7

#### Significantly develop Strategic HR capability

##### Why is this needed?

To ensure that all civil servants are supported to fulfil their potential, operate at the highest levels of performance and achieve their objectives.

##### How will it be achieved?

We will:

*Staff responses to:  
“If you could change one thing to make the Civil Service more effective what would it be?”*

*“To have a dynamic workplace where all staff believe they have a valuable contribution to make.”*

*“Make the Civil Service more attractive for people to apply for jobs.”*

- Invest in a new strategic model for HR within the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to develop and lead HR reform across the Civil Service.
- Professionalise HR in the Civil Service by establishing a new HR professional stream.
- Support leaders to manage in a new strategic HR environment by providing active leadership supports to develop HR capabilities and accelerate this transformation in partnership with Departments.
- Simplify central HR policies to enable better and more consistent implementation of HR practices and policies.
- Further develop and coordinate benchmarking and sharing of best practice in people management.

## Action 8

### Open up recruitment and promotion processes at all levels

#### Why is this needed?

To bring in new skills and competencies in critical areas, to actively manage the challenges we face as an ageing workforce, to ensure that each appointment in the Civil Service draws on the widest possible pool of available talent, and to provide more open development opportunities for all staff. Staff mobility is also essential to making best use of the skills across the Civil Service and approaches to strengthen this are set out in Action 15.

#### How will it be achieved?

We will:

- Extend and maintain a continuous process of open competitions in key areas at a range of entry levels. Support this with regular and ongoing recruitment to meet workforce planning needs.
- Maintain the principle of competency based recruitment processes to ensure merit-based selection and appointment at all levels.
- Extend the established policy of open competition for all senior management positions (Assistant Principal and above).
- Implement practical arrangements in line with business needs to move to a model of filling all vacancies through either open competition or a Civil Service wide inter-departmental competition.

**Staff responses to:**  
*“If you could change one thing to make the Civil Service more effective what would it be?”*

*“Increase diversity at senior management level.”*

*“Open recruitment for every position in the Civil Service.”*

*“Make all recruitment and promotion open and competitive and allow mobility to semi-states and private sector for all grades.”*

- Improve gender balance at each level by reviewing supports and policies to ensure these are impactful and measurable.
- Establish a Graduate Programme to attract and retain a regular intake of graduates.
- Review end-to-end recruitment and promotion processes to ensure these are aligned with business needs.

## Action 9

### Establish a new shared model for delivering learning and development

#### Why is this needed?

To enable a high performing workforce by supporting the development of new skills and behaviours, facilitating continuous professional development and ensuring that all staff can access the appropriate mix of training and development opportunities.

#### How will it be achieved?

We will:

- Develop a unified Learning and Development Strategy based on an assessment of future skills requirements in both specialist and generalist areas.
- Establish a new shared model to deliver a suite of common learning and development programmes, underpinned by evaluation to achieve more consistent and effective learning outcomes.
- Undertake a regular Civil Service Skills Audit and introduce a skills register.
- Review the Civil Service Competency Framework periodically to ensure it reflects capability and skills requirements.
- Introduce a 'Core Skills' induction programme for all new and newly promoted staff, with regular opportunities to refresh this over a career.
- Introduce opportunities for Continuous Professional Development and explore the potential of accreditation at key stages for both generalist and specialist roles.

*Staff responses to:  
"If you could change one thing to make the Civil Service more effective what would it be?"*

*"Increase investment in Learning and Development."*

*"Bring in Continuous Professional Development."*

*"Conduct a skills audit of staff and match staff to jobs and opportunities opening up."*

## Action 10

### Introduce structured and transparent talent management programmes to develop future leaders

#### Why is this needed?

To ensure the Civil Service has a strong culture of leadership, excellence and continuous development by establishing a transparent and structured approach to identifying and supporting future leaders at key career stages.

#### How will it be achieved?

We will:

- Introduce a Development Centre approach for all senior managers, supported by suitably qualified practitioners to provide each manager with an objective assessment of their strengths and areas for development, and to generate reliable data on the quality of leadership and management across the Civil Service so that we can identify and address capacity and capability challenges more effectively.
- Initiate Civil Service wide talent management schemes on a phased basis to other levels so that we develop a pipeline of future leaders.
- Ensure that all talent management processes are transparent and based on selection by merit.

## Action 11

### Strengthen the performance management process

#### Why is this needed?

To create a strong culture of managing performance and accountability for results in the Civil Service by renewing our performance systems and processes to ensure these are fair, motivating for staff and, most importantly, applied consistently and effectively.

#### How will it be achieved?

In addition to commitments to strengthen learning and development opportunities (action 9), improve leadership supports and establish talent management schemes (action 10), all of which will contribute to enhancing levels of performance, we will:

*Staff responses to:  
“If you could change one thing to make the Civil Service more effective what would it be?”*

*“Better identification of each individual’s unique skills.”*

*“Establish a ‘core curriculum’ training plan focussed on future leaders. The Civil Service needs to work harder at attracting and encouraging future leaders.”*

*“Training in modern management practices for all managers with staff.”*



- Replace the current ratings scheme with a new model of performance assessment that is focused on identifying excellent performance, leadership potential, and under-performance; and that encourages regular and constructive feedback.
- Pilot a process of incorporating feedback from a range of perspectives as part of the appraisal process (not just direct line managers) as practiced in other sectors and administrations to strengthen the objectivity and consistency of each assessment.
- Strengthen the disciplinary code to enable managers to take more effective and decisive action as required to tackle under-performance, including exits.
- Introduce stronger pro-active supports for managers, including training and support from HR and legal experts, to assist managers to manage performance effectively and consistently for all performance levels, including tackling under-performance.
- Continue to simplify the performance management process so that it is as easy to use as possible.

## Action 12

### Design and implement a robust performance review process for Secretaries General and Assistant Secretaries

#### Why is this needed?

To ensure that performance is managed consistently throughout the Civil Service irrespective of grade by creating the strongest possible performance management system at senior levels so that this cascades throughout each organisation over time.

#### How will it be achieved?

We will:

- Introduce Performance Agreements for Secretaries General, Assistant Secretaries and equivalents.
- Implement a robust performance review process at these levels that incorporates 360° feedback and assesses the delivery of both Departmental objectives and corporate Civil Service objectives.
- Support the process with the appropriate expertise to manage the appraisal process confidentially and maintain the full confidence of senior managers.

**Staff responses to:**  
**“If you could change one thing to make the Civil Service more effective what would it be?”**

*“More effective management – play a more active role and more people skills.”*

*“Better management of under-performance.”*

*“I think some managers do not manage effectively or fairly. I would like to see this addressed.”*

*“Ensure managers encourage, promote and support innovation and creativity.”*

- Publish performance targets annually.
- Report progress on implementation to the Accountability Board.

### **Action 13**

#### **Publicly recognise staff excellence and innovation**

##### **Why is this needed?**

To incentivise high-performing teams and individuals by recognising their achievements and encouraging a culture where exceptional performance is celebrated.

##### **How will it be achieved?**

We will:

- Introduce an annual Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards to recognise and celebrate success, in particular, innovative and impactful team initiatives.
- Introduce regular competition schemes to ‘crowd source’ ideas from staff on key policy areas, questions or initiatives.
- Continue to seek innovative ideas and views as part of ongoing staff engagement.
- Ensure that award-winning innovations are tested and piloted widely across the Civil Service, supported by an Innovation Lab.

*Staff responses to:  
“If you could  
change one thing  
to make the Civil  
Service more  
effective what  
would it be?”*

*“Encourage  
innovation.”*

*“Foster a sense of  
excellent customer  
service.”*

# 5. A Responsive Civil Service

## 5.1 Why do we need to make our culture, structures and processes more flexible, responsive and agile?

We need to be able to keep pace with and respond to national and global changes. However, we often work through rigid structures or practices that can discourage innovation and flexibility. To achieve the vision for the future, we need to adopt more agile structures and processes. Our goal is to ensure that regardless of organisational or geographic boundaries we always have the right people, with the right skills, in the right jobs at the right time. This means taking a whole system view of our resources and capabilities.

## 5.2 What needs to change to make our culture, structures and processes more flexible, responsive and agile?

### Action 14

#### Strengthen professional expertise within corporate functions

##### Why is this needed?

Core competencies in policy analysis and generalist skills that can be applied to different areas of policy and operations are essential and will always play an important role in the work of the Civil Service. However, this needs to be complemented by professional expertise in key functions. Increasing the diversity of capabilities in the Civil Service and the availability of specialist skills alongside core Civil Service skills will improve our focus on outcomes, strengthen our performance and enhance the delivery of public services.

##### How will it be achieved?

We will:

- Create professional streams in key areas beginning with HR, ICT, and Financial Management.
- Formalise streams in other areas by building on existing models in legal, audit, statistics and economics (IGEES) in the same way.<sup>9</sup>
- Establish a 'Head of Profession' responsible for managing and developing each professional stream as a shared resource.
- Introduce clear career paths within each stream so that staff can advance across the Civil Service within areas of professional expertise.

*Staff responses to:*

*"If you could change one thing to make the Civil Service more effective what would it be?"*

*"Create a joined up Civil Service - look for specialisation across streams – share experiences and resources."*

*"Encourage professional development and innovation, share successful systems."*

## Action 15

### Expand career and mobility opportunities for staff across geographic, organisational and sectoral boundaries

#### Why is this needed?

To improve how the Civil Service matches skills with roles by introducing a practical system to enable greater mobility and flexibility across the workforce. This will mean that managers have better access to available skills and that staff have better opportunities to develop their skills and experience regardless of Department or geographic location.

#### How will it be achieved?

We will:

- Develop the Senior Public Service (SPS) model and expand the policy of managed mobility at the most senior levels to increase the number of career development moves and link this to talent management schemes.
- Advertise all mobility, secondment and transfer opportunities in the Civil Service on a single portal and implement practical arrangements that ensure that Departments can select the most appropriate person for the job drawing from the breadth of internal candidates.
- Speed up mobility by empowering managers to replace staff and by introducing a new policy that staff must be released within one month of selection for promotion or transfer.
- Adopt a policy of active mobility in all Departments and between Departments at all levels so that staff do not serve for excessive periods in the same role and are encouraged to apply for appropriate development opportunities.
- Extend mobility over time to provide additional development opportunities and enable greater mobility across the Public Service.
- Improve and expand schemes to facilitate exchanges and secondments between the Civil Service and other sectors of the Irish and international economy.

*Staff responses to:  
“If you could change one thing to make the Civil Service more effective what would it be?”*

*“Matching skills of individuals with the roles of the organisation”*

*“Staff must be rotated in jobs at least every two years.”*

*“Allow mobility across different Departments.”*

*“Conduct a skills survey and use it to move the right person into the right job.”*

## Action 16

### Re-design organisational and grade structures

#### Why is this needed?

To simplify organisational and grade structures so that all roles and responsibilities are clear. This will support Departments to become more agile and responsive to demands. It will also improve decision making by making sure that grade level never limits opportunities to make decisions, innovate or meet objectives.

#### How will it be achieved?

We will:

- Create a more empowering organisational and grade structure and introduce more multi-disciplinary project working.
- Develop a new, common framework for describing traditional grades and titles to ensure that they accurately reflect the different jobs and roles that staff deliver.

## Action 17

### Improve project management capacity

#### Why is this needed?

To improve the focus on outcomes and ensure more consistent delivery of projects by reducing the variation between projects that are cross-cutting and those that lie within core departmental responsibilities.

#### How will it be achieved?

We will:

- Establish a central Project Management Office in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to advise on and support the delivery of projects across the Civil Service.
- Introduce a standardised project management approach based on the proven models currently in practice.
- Introduce project management training as part of induction and ongoing Continuous Professional Development.

*Staff responses to:  
“If you could change one thing to make the Civil Service more effective what would it be?”*

*“Empower staff at all grades to make decisions – focus on value for money.”*

*“Reduce the number of grades.”*

*“Implement project office approach to staff resources where feasible, assigning staff to blocks of work.”*

## Action 18

### Increase the authority, flexibility, and accountability for managing staff resources by delegating more responsibility to Departments

#### Why is this needed?

To give greater authority and flexibility to managers to enhance public services while reducing costs and increasing efficiencies within centrally determined expenditure limits and pay rates.

#### How will it be achieved?

We will:

- Set binding multi-annual pay allocations centrally, replacing the Employment Control Framework for Departments as the basis for resource management.
- Delegate the scope to determine staffing levels and grade mix to Heads of Departments on a phased basis with the exception of Top Level Appointments Committee (TLAC) posts.
- Strengthen workforce planning processes and requirements to ensure a medium-term strategic view of resource management underpins these changes.
- Initiate a consultation process with senior managers to identify further opportunities to increase local flexibility.

## Action 19

### Expand the ICT capacity of Departments and increase efficiencies by creating common systems and infrastructure

#### Why is this change needed?

To deliver better services to the public, to improve efficiency and innovation and accelerate reform efforts by ensuring that all staff have access to common technologies, have the skills to utilise those technologies effectively and have the autonomy to apply technological solutions to policy and delivery challenges.

#### How will it be achieved?

We will publish and implement a new ICT Strategy. The strategy will:

*Staff responses to:  
“If you could change one thing to make the Civil Service more effective what would it be?”*

*“Let managers manage – less central control.”*

*“Improve use of technology - we are nowhere near up to best practice in making use of IT.”*

*“I would gradually over time try to develop a paperless Civil Service as far as possible. The Civil Service has the hardware, internet etc and highly skilled IT staff to develop this.”*

- Establish common technology standards across all Departments to support closer integration and underpin reform.
- Establish common practices for governance, management and delivery of ICT services.
- Increase efficiencies by sharing common systems and infrastructure.
- Enable better online service delivery by making the top 20 public services (those with the highest volume transactions) digital, supported by new technology trends including mobile, cloud computing, and big data.
- Recognise data as a corporate asset and develop a common data model and coordinated data infrastructure, underpinned by legislation.
- Establish ICT as a professional stream to ensure skills and expertise are available to Departments.

***Staff responses to:  
“If you could  
change one thing  
to make the Civil  
Service more  
effective what  
would it be?”***

***“To create a  
comprehensive IT  
career structure  
within the Civil***

## 6. An Open and Accountable Civil Service

### 6.1 Why do we need to become more open and accountable?

We want to create a Civil Service that constantly learns, evolves and improves. This means being more open to what we can learn from others, inside and outside the Civil Service. To achieve the vision for the future, we need to be active participants in Irish society. We need to communicate what we do, explain and account for our actions and decisions, and invite the insight, experience and expertise available across Ireland and internationally to help us with the challenges we face in delivering excellent public services in a cost constrained environment.

### 6.2 What needs to change to become more open and accountable?

#### Action 20

#### Implement a programme of Organisational Capability Reviews

##### Why is this needed?

To embed a culture of regular and objective assessments of the capacity and capability of each Department to achieve its objectives and take the necessary action to close any gaps. Departments will be supported with expertise to assist them to act on the results.

##### How will it be achieved?

We will:

- Design and implement a light touch, objective review process that is aligned with the strategic planning process. This will, with minimal overhead and maximum expediency, assess the capability of each Department and recommend practical actions to develop and improve this on a phased basis.
- Establish a voluntary panel of peer reviewers external to each Department to participate in each review. Panels will be balanced with a mix of senior civil servants, senior public service managers, and senior managers from international institutions or other sectors of the economy.
- Publish the results of all reviews in full followed by regular updates on implementation.

*Staff responses to:  
“If you could change one thing to make the Civil Service more effective what would it be?”*

*“Have key performance indicators to measure baseline reforms.”*

*“We need objective and accurate metrics to compare the Irish Civil Service with other countries and the private sector.”*



- Coordinate the process centrally drawing in relevant expertise, under the direction of the Civil Service Management Board.

### **Action 21**

#### **Publish the framework for assignment of responsibilities for all Departments**

##### **Why is this needed?**

To improve public accountability by clarifying the responsibilities and accountabilities of senior managers and advisers so that ‘who does what and how they are held accountable’ is clear.

##### **How will this be achieved?**

We will:

- Ensure each Department annually publishes an assignment framework that describes ‘who does what and to whom they are answerable’ for senior managers (Principal and above).
- Link the assignment framework more clearly to Statements of Strategy and Business Plans.
- Develop a standardised approach for managing the efficient reorganisation of Departmental structures or functions when requested by Government.
- Establish an Accountability Code for special advisers and support this with an induction programme.

### **Action 22**

#### **Strengthen policy-making skills and develop more open approaches to policy-making**

##### **Why is this needed?**

To ensure the Civil Service always provides high quality policy advice and to promote a culture of innovation and openness by involving greater external participation and consultation in policy development.

##### **How will it be achieved?**

In addition to implementing the actions set out in Ireland’s Action Plan under the Open Government Partnership, we will:

*Staff responses to:  
“If you could change one thing to make the Civil Service more effective what would it be?”*

*“Improved governance and accountability.”*

*“Acknowledge that culture does need to change and change it – open, inclusive, accountable.”*

*“Bridge the gap between policy making and operational delivery in order to provide better customer service.”*

- Learn from the range of innovative policy methodologies currently in international practice to develop and apply new approaches to policy design, evaluation, consultation and implementation.
- Host regular open policy debates involving networks of practitioners, academics and experts in developing and debating policy options at an early stage.
- Establish strong and joined-up approaches in each policy area so that policy and operational areas work together to understand the impact of policy in practice and build this into policy design.
- Establish the expectation that all policy officials maintain an active network of key stakeholders in front-line service delivery, academia, and international administrations and engage this network regularly, particularly at the early stages of policy development.

### **Action 23**

#### **Nominate a Civil Service Spokesperson to communicate on behalf of the Civil Service**

##### **Why is this needed?**

To improve internal and external engagement in the work of the Civil Service, clearly communicate the role of the Civil Service and ensure that accurate, relevant and timely information about the Civil Service is accessible and available to both staff and stakeholders.

##### **How will it be achieved?**

We will:

- Develop a single Civil Service Communications Strategy.
- Designate the Secretary General of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, as a member of the Civil Service Management Board, to act publicly as a spokesperson and ambassador for the Civil Service.
- Establish a Civil Service Communications Unit to support this role, working closely with the Government Information Service, to improve how the Civil Service engages with its staff and stakeholders and disseminates accurate and timely information on its performance and operation.
- Run regular surveys of Civil Service customers to more fully understand user experiences, expectations and requirements.

*Staff responses to:  
“If you could change one thing to make the Civil Service more effective what would it be?”*

*“Acknowledge success.”*

*“Have an internal communication section or Department.”*

*“Ban the use of jargon in reports, reviews, websites, forms etc. Use plain English or Irish and cut to the chase.”*

*“Encourage managers to talk and communicate directly to staff and to listen to*

## Action 24

### Improve how data is collected, managed and shared

#### Why is this needed?

To increase efficiency, reduce fraud and improve use of data in management and the delivery of services so that we have a stronger basis for longer-term thinking and strategic decision making.

#### How will it be achieved?

We will:

- Recognise data as a corporate asset and develop a coordinated approach to data sharing and infrastructure as part of the forthcoming ICT Strategy.
- Develop opportunities to enhance open data and transparency in line with the Action Plan under the Open Government Partnership.
- Build on *Ireland Stat* to publish outcome metrics for all services.
- Identify management information gaps and improve the quality of corporate data in the Civil Service.

## Action 25

### Introduce an annual Employee Engagement Survey to involve staff at all levels in ongoing organisational improvement

#### Why is this needed?

To measure drivers of leadership and engagement across the Civil Service, to provide a benchmark to measure and compare different organisations, and to maintain an accurate baseline of the performance and operation of the Civil Service to inform strategic management decisions and the delivery of the Renewal Plan.

#### How will it be achieved?

We will:

- Introduce a short, annual, standard engagement survey across the Civil Service to create a regular and consistent channel to track levels of staff engagement and to receive staff feedback.
- Coordinate the process centrally through a team with the relevant statistical expertise to ensure robustness of the process and results.
- Publish the results of the survey annually.

*Staff responses to:  
“If you could change one thing to make the Civil Service more effective what would it be?”*

*“Unified departmental system to share information.”*

*“Listen to the views of those at the bottom. Most decisions come from the top down.”*

*“A more joined up service where staff are more engaged and feel valued and that their contribution counts.”*

- Use the results to inform the delivery of the Renewal Plan and organisational reviews so that senior managers and leaders are held to account for taking action in response to the results for their organisation.

# 7 Implementation

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## 7.1 What actions will drive progress?

The Renewal Plan provides an ambitious programme of change that will shape the future of the Civil Service. All of the actions identified will make the Civil Service more effective. However, several of the actions set out will define and drive reform. They include:

- Strengthening oversight of delivery of results by establishing an Accountability Board chaired by the Taoiseach and with external members.
- Establishing collective leadership and ownership of critical whole-of-Government issues through a Civil Service Management Board.
- Implementing joined-up approaches to working on critical whole-of-Government issues.
- Strengthening the performance management process at all levels, including implementing annual assessments for all Secretaries General and Assistant Secretaries.
- Strengthening organisational performance through objective reviews of the capacity and capability of each Department.
- Investing in excellence by establishing a new model for delivering learning and development in the Civil Service.

The actions in this plan are for the Civil Service but the key principles underpinning them should also be reflected in other sectors of the Public Service, as they undertake their own significant programmes of reform as outlined in the Public Service Reform Plan 2014-16.

## 7.2 What structures will support delivery?

After many Civil Service reform initiatives, we have learned that there are a number of important elements required to deliver change: strong collective leadership, shared ownership and sustained investment and commitment. We will establish strong governance and delivery mechanisms to manage the change programme effectively so that the ambitions of reform are underpinned by action. Delivering transformation at this level of ambition will not be easy, nor will it happen immediately. We will:

1. Assign collective responsibility and accountability to the Civil Service Management Board and its members for implementing the Civil Service Renewal Plan. The Secretaries General of the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will provide central supports and leadership to enable this and will report progress to the Taoiseach and the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform regularly.
2. Allocate responsibility for the delivery of each action to a named Secretary General, or group of Secretaries General, with the remit to manage the implementation of changes across the Civil Service.

Each Secretary General will appoint a dedicated Project Manager to drive their action and this person will work centrally with all other Project Managers under the direction and coordination of a central PMO located in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.

3. Coordinate and drive implementation through a central PMO which will have expertise in relevant areas and be staffed from a number of Departments and external sources, as required. The Office will be managed by the Public Service Reform Programme Director in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. This will facilitate an integrated approach to implementation that aligns the reforms set out in the Renewal Plan with the reform initiatives already underway in the Civil Service, in particular HR and ICT reforms.
4. Develop a Strategic Implementation Plan for each thematic area to outline in practical terms how changes will be implemented and resourced. The plans will be prepared by the Programme Management Office working with the relevant Secretaries General and their Project Managers, drawing on internal and external expertise to:
  - prioritise and sequence actions based on a robust assessment of feasibility, impact and cost; and
  - outline the appropriate process to monitor and manage the risks, issues and challenges associated with large scale transformation.

### 7.3 What will enable success?

Delivering the renewal agenda will be challenging. Senior managers will carry much of the responsibility for implementing change. However, all of us share the opportunity and responsibility to make the Civil Service Renewal Plan a reality where we work. A strong governance structure will be essential. We will also need to put in place the right supports so that we build a strong platform for continuous change and improvement that can secure the ownership and confidence of both staff and stakeholders. To achieve this we will need to:

1. **Sustain political and administrative leadership for the duration of the Renewal Plan.**

To work, renewal needs the commitment and sponsorship of leaders within the administrative and political system. Staff will need to see their leaders visibly championing and taking responsibility for the changes. Building on the model of the Senior Public Service, we will develop networks of leaders at all levels to champion renewal within Departments. Meaningful engagement with the Accountability Board, Cabinet Committees and Oireachtas Committees will be important and will go a long way to bolstering the success of the Renewal Plan.

2. **Invest in and resource these changes effectively.**

This is a major change programme. We will not succeed without the commitment of additional financial investment and appropriate resources. In particular, we will need to support reform with

dedicated expertise in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in key areas: Programme Management; Strategic HR Management; and Change Management.

The PMO will use robust project management tools to track and evaluate progress and to ensure that the actions in the Renewal Plan are implemented and deliver the outcomes expected. We will support the delivery of major actions with a dedicated project manager. We will draw on the experience and expertise at the centre and in line departments to achieve this.

### **3. Provide the right central supports.**

Renewal cannot be delivered by any one Department but must be delivered collectively. All Civil Service organisations share the responsibility for implementing the renewal actions. The role of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and the Department of the Taoiseach will be critical as strong sponsors and leaders of change. In addition to coordinating reforms and maintaining a whole-of-Government view, these two Departments, working closely with the Civil Service Management Board, will need to:

- prioritise actions and set the pace of implementation; and
- build and share the capability and expertise to drive and sustain change.

### **4. Regularly communicate and engage with staff and stakeholders.**

We will only maintain momentum if we regularly communicate the goals and impacts of the changes we are making. We are heartened by the commitment shown to date by a wide range of staff and we remain committed to communicating the need for change and ensuring that staff affected are fully involved in implementation in a meaningful way. As a first step, we will develop a single overarching communications strategy. In addition, we plan to embed the flexibility to respond to new ideas and challenges by taking action to:

- Develop a single online portal to provide timely information on progress, showcase implementation successes and facilitate ongoing engagement with staff, their representative organisations, the public and the media;
- Build on the success of the Town Hall meetings by running regular, regional meetings open to all staff to discuss the issues and ideas coming through during implementation;
- Meet with all senior managers annually to review progress and address common issues, risks or challenges;
- Analyse the results of the annual engagement survey to understand the extent to which renewal is supporting greater engagement; and
- Roll-out regular customer surveys to measure the public's view of change.

## 5. Evaluate and report progress against each action regularly and transparently.

Progress against each action will be reviewed and published regularly. We will work to minimise the reporting burden for individual Departments by streamlining the various reform processes.

## 6. Accelerate technological change and innovation.

Lasting transformations are underpinned by technological change and innovation. The Government is preparing an ICT Strategy for publication later this year. As part of this programme, the Government's Chief Information Officer will bring forward proposals to support and underpin the Renewal programme through ICT reforms.

## 7. Lead change at every level

Change is a normal part of our business. All civil servants share the responsibility to ensure that renewal, and the actions to achieve it, are implemented. We expect all leaders and managers to champion renewal by engaging with their staff, mobilising their Department in key areas to deliver renewal and by sponsoring particular actions and initiatives. We expect all staff and their representative organisations to get involved, be engaged in initiatives and innovations and provide regular feedback so that we know what's working and what's not as we move ahead and implement.

### 7.4 What will success look like?

We will know we have succeeded when we have:

- made measurable improvements for the Government and the public;
- established clear accountability for delivery at every level;
- removed the barriers to working seamlessly as one Civil Service;
- created a working environment that develops and supports excellence at all levels; and
- addressed persistent under-performance and set new expectations for the levels of performance we will expect and accept.

We are confident that achieving this level of transformation will create a better and more motivating environment for staff, better services for the public, and greater confidence and trust in the Civil Service throughout the country.

If we all work together, we will achieve our vision to provide a world-class service to the State and the people of Ireland.



# Annex A: Table of Actions

|                      | Action |  |
|----------------------|--------|--|
| Unified              | 1      | Establish an Accountability Board for the Civil Service  |
|                      | 2      | Create a Civil Service Management Board  |
|                      | 3      | Set a common governance standard   |
|                      | 4      | Strengthen strategic planning and business planning processes  |
|                      | 5      | Improve the delivery of shared whole-of-Government projects  |
|                      | 6      | Expand the model of sharing services and expertise across organisations  |
| Professional         | 7      | Significantly develop strategic HR capability  |
|                      | 8      | Open up recruitment and promotion processes at all levels  |
|                      | 9      | Establish a new shared model for delivering learning and development   |
|                      | 10     | Introduce structured and transparent talent management programmes to develop future leaders  |
|                      | 11     | Strengthen the performance management process  |
|                      | 12     | Design and implement a robust performance review process for Secretaries General and Assistant Secretaries                           |
|                      | 13     | Publicly recognise staff excellence and innovation   |
| Responsive           | 14     | Strengthen professional expertise within corporate functions   |
|                      | 15     | Expand career and mobility opportunities for staff across geographic, organisational and sectoral boundaries                         |
|                      | 16     | Re-design organisational and grade structures  |
|                      | 17     | Improve project management capacity  |
|                      | 18     | Increase the authority, flexibility and accountability for managing staff resources by delegating more responsibility to Departments |
|                      | 19     | Extend the ICT capacity of Departments and increase efficiencies by creating common systems and infrastructure                       |
| Open and Accountable | 20     | Implement a programme of Organisational Capability Reviews   |
|                      | 21     | Publish the framework for assignment of responsibilities for all Departments   |
|                      | 22     | Strengthen policy-making skills and develop more open approaches to policy-making  |
|                      | 23     | Nominate a Civil Service Spokesperson to communicate on behalf of the Civil Service  |
|                      | 24     | Improve how data is collected, managed and shared  |
|                      | 25     | Introduce an annual Employee Engagement Survey to involve staff at all levels in ongoing organisational improvement                  |

# Annex B: The Independent Panel

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## Independent Panel on Strengthening Civil Service Accountability and Performance

|                     |   |
|---------------------|---|
| Kevin Rafter, Chair | Dublin City University                                |
| Dorothea Dowling    | Personal Injuries Assessment Board                    |
| Michael Howard      | Former Secretary General of the Department of Defence |

# Annex C: The Civil Service Renewal Taskforce

## Secretary General Sponsors

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Martin Fraser | Department of the Taoiseach                 |
| Robert Watt   | Department of Public Expenditure and Reform |

## Taskforce Members

|                                    |  |
|------------------------------------|--|
| Orlaigh Quinn, Chair <sup>10</sup> | Department of Public Expenditure and Reform                |
| Anne Barrington                    | Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade                    |
| William Beausang                   | Department of Public Expenditure and Reform                |
| Breffini Carpenter                 | Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine             |
| Ger Deering                        | Department of Environment, Community and Local Government  |
| Helen Dixon                        | Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation              |
| Des Dowling                        | Department of Defence                                      |
| Gerry Harrahill                    | Office of the Revenue Commissioners                        |
| Rónán Hession                      | Department of Finance                                      |
| Gerard Hughes                      | Department of Children and Youth Affairs                   |
| Jean Kelly                         | Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport                 |
| Fergal Lynch                       | Department of Health                                       |
| Steve MacFeely                     | Central Statistics Office                                  |
| Eilis O'Connell                    | Office of Public Works                                     |
| Deirdre O'Keeffe                   | Department of Justice and Equality                         |
| Gavan O'Leary                      | Department of Education and Skills                         |
| Brian O'Raghallaigh                | Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht             |
| Orlaigh Quinn                      | Department of Social Protection                            |
| John Shaw                          | Department of the Taoiseach                                |
| Ken Spratt                         | Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources |
| Fiona Tierney                      | Public Appointments Service                                |

### ENDNOTES:

<sup>1</sup> The Public Service Reform Plan 2014-16 (January 2014) and Progress Report (January 2014) can be found [here](#)

<sup>2</sup> The Report of the Independent Panel (June 2014) can be found [here](#)

<sup>3</sup> The term 'Department' is used throughout this report to refer to Government Departments and Offices

<sup>4</sup> Details of these initiatives can be found in the 2011 and 2014 Public Service Reform Plans published [here](#)

<sup>5</sup> The National Risk Framework can be found [here](#)

<sup>6</sup> Background data on the Civil Service in 2014 is published [here](#). Data in this report refers to end 2013 unless otherwise stated.

<sup>7</sup> A report of the feedback from staff can be found [here](#). An illustrative selection of the submissions received are highlighted anonymously in Chapters 3-6.

<sup>8</sup> The consultation paper on strengthening Civil Service accountability and responses can be found [here](#)

<sup>9</sup> The acronym 'IGEES' refers to the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service

<sup>10</sup> Paul Reid chaired the Taskforce between June 2013 and March 2014. Orlaigh Quinn was the Department of Social Protection nominee on the Taskforce during this time.

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