

Decentralisation Implementation Group

Report

to

Minister for Finance

**Selection of organisations/locations for inclusion in
the first phase of moves**

19 November 2004

Introduction

1.1 In our report of 30 July 2004, we said we would report in the autumn outlining our views on sequencing and timing. We indicated that a big bang approach with all organisations moving at the same time is neither desirable nor feasible. This is clear from our terms of reference, which refer to the need for the implementation plan to address the sequencing of the various moves. We indicated that the selection of organisations and locations for inclusion in the first phase of moves would have particular regard to the figures emerging from the Central Applications Facility (CAF) and relevant property and business issues.

1.2 The intention is that this group of organisations would receive initial priority attention in terms of staff transfers and property procurement while still ensuring progress for all the remaining organisations.

1.3 We will report to you again in the spring of 2005 about progress in relation to implementation of the programme. We will also deal in that report with the locations and organisations not covered in this report.

Civil service

2.1 We recommend that the locations/organisations listed in Table 1 be included in the first phase of moves.

Location	Organisation	Posts
Clonakilty	Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources	91
Drogheda	Department of Social and Family Affairs HQ ¹	215
Drogheda	Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources	47
Killarney	Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism HQ	141
Kilrush	Revenue Commissioners	50
Listowel	Revenue Commissioners	50
Newcastle West	Revenue Commissioners	50
Limerick	Department of Foreign Affairs	125
Longford	Irish Prisons Service HQ	159
Loughrea	Department of Transport	40
Newbridge	Department of Defence HQ ²	202
Portlaoise	Department of Agriculture ³	392
Sligo	Department of Social & Family Affairs ⁴	100
Trim	Office of Public Works HQ	333
Tullamore	Department of Finance	135
Total		2130

2.2 As indicated in our report of 30 July 2004, the Department of Agriculture & Food has already transferred 50 staff under this decentralisation programme to **Portlaoise**. The

¹ Number shown does not include 262 IT Staff which are covered by section 5.

² See section 3 on the Defence Forces.

³ Number shown does not include 203 IT staff. See Sections 2.2 and 5.

⁴ See section 2.3.

Department is proposing to move another group of staff in the first half of 2005 and to move further units later in 2005/early 2006. The intention is that about 100 jobs will be based in temporary accommodation and will move in due course to the new headquarters building along with the remaining Dublin-based staff and the 200 staff already in Portlaoise. The approach being adopted is driven by the Department's business and service requirements arising from the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy.

2.3 The Department of Social and Family Affairs is also beginning to transfer additional work to **Sligo**. Prior to the announcement of the decentralisation programme, it had been decided that certain work currently being carried out in Sligo (the One Parent Family Payment Scheme) would be transferred to the Department's local offices. This would have resulted in a reduction of about 100 staff in Sligo but, arising from the decentralisation programme and the resultant planned transfer of additional work, the Department will now be retaining some 500 jobs in Sligo.

Selection criteria

2.4 In selecting the other organisations in Table 1, we have paid particular attention to the figures which emerged from the CAF following the cut-off date for receipt of priority applications on 7 September 2004. We have reviewed the overall number of people interested in moving to these locations, and the extent to which the jobs available in particular grades at each location are matched by the applications for those grades, particularly in the case of the senior grades.

2.5 The selection has also had regard to other factors. We have reviewed those locations where the purchase of a site is very well advanced or can be advanced quickly and/or where it seems that a building can be procured quickly. We have considered the business-related issues that arose in the relevant individual implementation plans. We are also conscious, as indicated in our previous reports, of the challenges that need to be addressed as the implementation process moves forward. These include issues relating to the transfer of departmental headquarters, continued provision of customer services, effective cross-organisation collaboration and the particular challenges to be faced in dealing with professional and technical staff. We believe that the best way to overcome these challenges is to select a mix of organisations which is sufficiently representative in terms of the issues that need to be tackled. Finally, we believe it is also necessary to have an appropriate geographical distribution.

2.6 In the case of some of the new locations, many applicants are already working outside Dublin. It has been agreed with the civil service unions that, with some exceptions involving local transfer requests, such staff would be treated no less favourably than staff serving in Dublin. The particular arrangements for the transfer and training of these staff will need to be drawn up carefully. The filling of vacancies outside Dublin, as these staff move to the new decentralised locations, will need to be offset by not filling Dublin vacancies that arise from normal staff turnover. This is necessary to respect Government policy on numbers employed in the civil service.

2.7 The participation in the programme of staff currently located outside Dublin also offers certain benefits. Some will be remaining with their existing departments. In addition,

the established nature of the existing offices should help these offices to cope with the loss of staff if the transfers are managed carefully over a reasonable period.

2.8 Many applicants are from outside the relevant department/office. This was to be expected and was a feature of previous decentralisation programmes. The necessary arrangements in relation to staff moves, training and preserving appropriate corporate memory are being put in place. These will mitigate the risks associated with the scale of inter-departmental transfers that will be involved.

Other potential early movers

2.9 We considered including a number of other locations/organisations in the first phase but decided against it in order to keep the initial group at a manageable level and ensure it receives appropriate priority attention. However, we recommend that the organisations listed in Table 2 should also be regarded as potential “early movers” and should now start to plan accordingly. It may be that some of these organisations could end up moving along with the first group: they should certainly be moving shortly thereafter.

Table 2		
Location	Organisation	Posts
Athlone	Department of Education & Science	108
Carlow	Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment	313
Carrick-on-Shannon	Department of Social & Family Affairs	220
Knock Airport	Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs	164
Mullingar	Department of Education and Science	299
Wexford	Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government	258
Total		1362

2.10 The Department of Education and Science already has a strong presence in Athlone and the property solution for Athlone is well advanced. The Department is keen to ensure that its moves to **Athlone and Mullingar** take place within a reasonable period of each other. The CAF data indicates that there is substantial interest in both locations.

2.11 The OPW is currently finalising the purchase of a suitable site for the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment in **Carlow** and we understand that it would be possible to transfer viable business units to Carlow on a phased basis even if it took some time to achieve the full relocation.

2.12 There have been many applications for **Carrick-on-Shannon** and we understand that the Department of Social and Family Affairs would see merit in moving its Benefits Section there. (It had initially been intended to move this section to Donegal but alternative work can be moved there.) Given that the transfer of the Department’s headquarters to Drogheda is included in the first phase, we felt it would not be appropriate also to include Carrick-on-Shannon but there is a strong case for going ahead quickly with the Carrick-on-Shannon move.

2.13 The Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs is keen to press ahead with its move to **Knock Airport** and the current CAF data indicates that there is considerable interest in this location among civil servants.

2.14 Not all departments could be included in the first phase. However, the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government is due to move to four locations and the Department needs to be ready to make the first of these moves at an early stage in the programme. We recommend that the first move in this case should be to commence the relocation of the Department's headquarters to **Wexford**.

Next steps

2.15 The Public Appointments Service (formerly the Civil Service Commission) is in the process of collating the names of those who want to decentralise with their existing department. As soon as this information is available, all departments can start planning and making appropriate internal reassignments.

2.16 The Public Appointments Service will then collate and provide to departments the names of those who want to transfer to another department in order to decentralise. The organisations listed in the first phase need to receive priority in managing and making the necessary inter-departmental transfers, although these will inevitably affect all departments to some degree.

2.17 The arrangements for managing inter-Departmental transfers will also address the position of staff who want to remain in Dublin but who will be required to transfer to other Departments because there will no longer be posts available for them in their existing Departments. The selection of those to transfer will initially be done on the basis of volunteers. If there are insufficient volunteers, the "last in first out" principle will apply. The aim will be to ensure that, insofar as is possible, only one move between Departments takes place. Vacancies will arise in Dublin posts as individuals wishing to decentralise move to new organisations. The arrangements will aim to allow those moving to another Department in Dublin to indicate preferences on where they would wish to transfer, although it must be recognised that it will not always be possible to meet those wishes.

2.18 The approval by Government and release of the list of "first mover" organisations, and the issues arising in relation to managing these moves, will give a clear focus to the discussions which are underway between civil service management and unions about a range of issues relating to mobility, recruitment and promotion.

2.19 The OPW has provided us with a schedule of indicative timescales for all the locations listed in Tables 1 and 2 – see Appendix A. This lists the indicative construction start and completion dates for each location. Allowing for completion of the procurement and planning processes, it can be seen that eight buildings would be completed in 2006, a further nine in 2007 and the remaining four in 2008.

2.20 In the case of the locations/organisations listed in Table 1:

- (i) each organisation should prepare the next and deeper iteration of its individual implementation plan in the light of this report and our report of 30

- July 2004, the data which is now available from the CAF and its target building availability date in Appendix A;
- (ii) this iteration of the plan should include an implementation schedule with a phased timeline for the location concerned;
 - (iii) the more detailed plans should be submitted to us by 14 February 2005;
 - (iv) we will establish a sub-group of the Decentralisation Liaison Officers Group representing these organisations to provide a cross-departmental forum for those involved in managing the first moves; and
 - (v) following receipt of these plans, we will establish appropriate reporting mechanisms to track progress on transfer achievements.

2.21 Corresponding arrangements should be put in place for the organisations listed in Table 2. They should submit the next iteration of their plans to us by 31 March 2004.

2.22 Finally, we recommend that all organisations review their individual implementation plans in the light of this report and our report of 30 July 2004, the data which is now available from the CAF and the latest information available from the OPW on property in preparation for sequencing of their moves. This Group will arrange, in conjunction with Department of Finance, to monitor progress in the development of these plans.

Defence Forces and Garda jobs

3.1 The decentralisation of the Defence Forces and the Department of Defence should be managed together in an integrated fashion. As indicated above, we recommend that the latter should be included in the first phase of moves. Accordingly, we recommend that the Defence Forces should submit to us an updated implementation plan, which includes an implementation schedule with a phased timeline, by 14 February 2005.

3.2 A total of 200 jobs from Garda Headquarters are due to relocate to Thurles. This includes approximately 115 civil service jobs which were included in the CAF. The CAF data indicates that there is a high level of interest in Thurles among civil servants. We recommend that the Garda Commissioner, in conjunction as necessary with the Department of Justice Equality & Law Reform, should prepare an updated implementation plan dealing with the overall move. This plan should be submitted to us by 14 February 2005 and should include an implementation schedule with a phased timeline.

3.3 Following receipt of these plans, we will establish appropriate reporting mechanisms to track progress on transfer achievements. We will also establish appropriate fora for communication between our Group and the military/Garda authorities.

State agencies

4.1 The CAF figures for the State agencies are not as good as those for the civil service. There is an understanding and experience within the civil service of decentralisation. This does not exist within the State agencies, where there is little tradition of inter-agency transfer. Clearly, there are different issues that arise in dealing with the State agencies. Particular concerns have been raised about the extent to which the programme is truly voluntary. The correct approach is to tease out the issues and develop good long-term solutions in consultation with all of the parties involved.

4.2 It has been suggested to us that the adoption of a more individualised approach for State agencies offers the best way of moving the implementation process forward. It is the responsibility of the board and senior management of each agency to implement the Government decision and to report to its “parent” department in the first instance on the progress being made. Many agencies have emphasised the need to do this in a way which recognises the particular nature of the employment relationship between staff and their individual agencies and the need to ensure that core service delivery is not imperilled.

4.3 There are potential solutions that need to be explored and developed. These could include, for example, phased moves of viable units with a sufficient critical mass of volunteers. They could also include appropriate arrangements for inter-changeability between an agency and the civil service on terms that would be acceptable to all concerned and would facilitate to the greatest extent possible the preferences of individual staff in the agency and in the civil service. Whatever solutions are developed need to respect the voluntary nature of the programme.

4.4 Against this background, we recommend that the State agencies listed in Table 3 receive initial priority attention in terms of implementing the programme, while still ensuring progress for the remaining organisations.

Table 3		
Location	Organisation	Posts
Birr	FAS	390.5
Clonakilty	BIM	94
Drogheda	Comhairle	47.5
Dundalk	Sustainable Energy Ireland	40
Loughrea	National Safety Council	12
Portarlinton	National Council for Curriculum and Assessment	28
Thomastown	Health and Safety Authority	111
Total		723

4.5 In selecting these agencies we had regard to a number of criteria. The CAF data indicates that there is already a critical mass of potential volunteers in Sustainable Energy Ireland and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment. FÁS already has a geographically dispersed structure and workforce, the total numbers involved are sufficient to offer a sizeable pool of potential volunteers and the phased relocation of viable business units should be an option from a business perspective. Others are moving to the same locations as civil service departments which are listed in Tables 1 or 2 and, as BIM for example pointed out in its implementation plan, “The co-location of BIM and the Seafood and Coastal Zone Divisions of DCMNR in Clonakilty will give critical mass to the delivery of Government services to the marine seafood sectors from their new one-stop-shop location.” Similar and/or other considerations apply in the case of the remaining agencies selected.

4.6 While the primary focus should be on developing appropriate implementation options at the organisational level, there is also a need for some overall co-ordination. We will establish a new network comprising Decentralisation Liaison Officers from these seven agencies and their respective departments to provide a forum for two-way communication

between the Implementation Group and management in the agencies concerned. We also recommend that there should be further and ongoing discussions between the Department of Finance and the ICTU Group of unions to deal with cross-organisational and cross-sectoral issues arising in progressing implementation of the programme, particularly for these seven agencies but also for the remaining agencies included in the programme.

- 4.7 In the case of the seven individual agencies, we recommend that:
- (i) each organisation should prepare the next and deeper iteration of its individual implementation plan in the light of this report and our report of 30 July 2004, the data which is now available from the CAF and a target building availability date for its location that it can use for planning purposes (where appropriate the latter should be agreed with the OPW);
 - (ii) this iteration of the plan should include an implementation schedule with a phased timeline; and
 - (iii) the updated plans should be submitted to us by 31 March 2005.

Following receipt of these plans, we will establish appropriate reporting mechanisms to track progress on transfer achievements.

ICT staff

5.1 Budget 2004 recognised the importance of ICT systems in terms of service delivery and the need for particular care in managing the relocation of these services, and the associated jobs, outside Dublin. Chapter 5 of our report of 31 March 2004 dealt with the decentralisation of ICT staff.

5.2 The CAF data in relation to ICT jobs is still being analysed. We believe, however, that the decentralisation of ICT jobs requires detailed planning by individual bodies and that they would be facilitated by the development and operation of a number of central initiatives designed to help organisations who are moving to secure the necessary staff skills and to make use of common ICT infrastructures.

5.3 We have previously highlighted the need for a strong “pipeline” of suitable staff to make good any ICT staff losses arising from decentralisation and for centralised mechanisms to be put in place for re-building lost skills. Appropriate supports in this regard need to be specified by CMOD and discussed further with the civil and public service unions. They could include, for example, arrangements for common training and certification for various skills, as well as selective use of external recruits, and for procurement frameworks for making interim and selective use of outside contractors, as well as promotion competitions that include certification requirements of suitability for ICT work.

5.4 CMOD should also be tasked with fast-tracking the provision of critical shared framework infrastructures and external resource procurements such as data centres and shared services.

5.5 We recommend that the relevant departments and agencies (Agriculture & Food, Finance, the Local Government Computer Services Board, Social & Family Affairs, REACH and the Revenue Commissioners) should each prepare individual implementation plans taking account of planning assumptions to be supplied by CMOD based on the foregoing.

These plans should be submitted to us, after consultation with CMOD, by 31 March 2005. They should include an implementation schedule with a phased timeline for transfer of viable units – given an overall aim of ensuring that phased transfers take place as early as possible, and that critical operational systems and customer service delivery are not imperilled.

5.6 In preparing their plans, departments/agencies should first evaluate the data available from the CAF (i.e. the various preferences of ICT and non-ICT staff willing to transfer to the relevant locations), do a gap analysis in terms of headcount, skills and experience, and detail the consequences in terms of replacement/training and what needs to be done in that regard. The OPW should provide each organisation with a target building availability date for its locations that it can use for planning purposes.

5.7 The individual plans should also assume the availability of, and where possible the use of, critical shared framework infrastructures in accordance with paragraph 5.4 and should, where appropriate, be co-ordinated with those of co-locating organisations.

5.8 We do not believe a big-bang approach is suitable for the transfer of ICT complements in an organisation. Additionally, we believe that the transfer of one organisation's ICT complement should not await the complete transfer of another organisation's ICT complement to the same location where organisations are co-locating. Instead we believe that the approach should be to transfer viable units/sections on a phased basis and that this approach should be adopted when developing implementation plans.

5.9 CMOD should also develop and promulgate a communications package to help small and medium size departments consider the extent to which they might locate their own ICT staff in the specified locations.

Other Work

6.1 The relocation of 350 health sector posts forms an integral part of the decentralisation programme. However, this needs to be managed in the context of the major structural reform of the health services which is currently underway. In the circumstances, we have decided to report on this aspect of the programme in spring 2005 when the overall position in relation to the structural reform programme will be clearer.

6.2 Preparations are being advanced on the various other aspects of the work programme outlined in our earlier reports. We will report to you on the progress being made in our next report in spring 2005.

Indicative Timescales for initial phases of Decentralisation Programme

Location	Possible procurement mechanism	Organisation	Posts	Indicative Construction Start	Indicative construction completion
Athlone	DB	Department of Education and Science	108	Q4 2005	Q4 2006
Carrick-on Shannon	DB	Department of Social and Family Affairs	220	Q4 2005	Q2 2007
Carlow	DBFM	Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment	313	Q2 2006	Q2 2008
Clonakilty	DB	Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources	91	Q4 2005	Q1 2007
Drogheda	DBFM	Department of Social and Family Affairs HQ	477	Q2 2006	Q2 2008
Drogheda ⁵	DB	Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources	47	Q4 2005	Q4 2006
Killarney	DB	Department of Arts, Sport and Tourism HQ	141	Q4 2005	Q1 2007
Kilrush	DB	Revenue Commissioners	50	Q4 2005	Q4 2006
Listowel	DB	Revenue Commissioners	50	Q4 2005	Q4 2006
Newcastle West	DB	Revenue Commissioners	50	Q4 2005	Q4 2006
Knock Airport	DB	Department of Community Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs	164	Q4 2005	Q1 2007
Limerick	DB	Department of Foreign Affairs	125	Q4 2005	Q1 2007
Longford	Traditional	Irish Prisons Service HQ	159	Q2 2005	Q4 2006
Loughrea	DB	Department of Transport	40	Q4 2005	Q4 2006
Mullingar	DBFM	Department of Education and Science	299	Q2 2006	Q2 2008

⁵ Alternatively, DCMNR could be accommodated in same building as DSCFA HQ.

Newbridge	DB	Department of Defence HQ	202	Q4 2005	Q2 2007
Portlaoise	DBFM	Department of Agriculture	595	Q2 2006	Q3 2008
Sligo	Traditional	Department of Social and Family Affairs	100	Q3 2005	Q3 2006
Trim	OPW designed	Office of Public Works HQ	333	Q4 2005	Q4. 2007
Tullamore	DB	Department of Finance	135	Q4 2005	Q1 2007
Wexford	DB	Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government	258	Q4 2005	Q2 2007
Note: Q1, Q2 etc = Quarter 1, Quarter 2 and so on.					

Note:

Where a fit-out only is required, or sites with planning permission are involved, above timescales can be shortened.

Assumptions:

1. Decision to proceed given immediately (November 2004).
2. Clearly defined sites are available without restrictions when required. Above target dates are based on construction on greenfield sites.
3. Client Departments/Offices sign-off on accommodation brief prior to contract.
4. No delays to planning process.
5. No delays from unknown site conditions.

