

Staffing of ICT positions for decentralisation programme

Introduction

1. The Report of the Decentralisation Implementation Group entitled “Selection of organisations/locations for inclusion in the first phase of moves” was approved by the Government in November, 2004. This Report included recommendations on the advancement of the implementation of the relocation of the ICT elements of the Department of Agriculture and Food, Social and Family Affairs, REACH, the Revenue Commissioners, CMOD and the Local Government Computer Services Board. All public bodies, however, have mission critical ICT elements and this paper should therefore be viewed as applying to all Departments/Offices.

2. The DIG Report noted that the Budget 2004 announcement of the decentralisation programme 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. The Group stated that it believed that the decentralisation of ICT jobs required 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 public bodies to secure the necessary staff skills and to make use of common ICT infrastructures.

Transfers

3. The need for a strong “pipeline” of ICT staff to make good any staff losses arising was one of the initiatives identified by the Implementation Group. Based on this recommendation, CMOD have worked with the relocating organisations to identify the range of initiatives that will be required to staff the ICT elements of the relocating organisations. As part of this work Departments/Offices have received full details of the numbers/grades of their ICT staff willing to transfer from the Central Applications Facility.

4. Based on the information supplied from the CAF, Departments/Offices will attempt, in the first instance, to fill ICT posts using the agreed CAF rankings. To ensure that those applicants from another Department/Office have the requisite skills to fill an ICT post, (*at the same grade*) the originating Department will be required to certify the applicants stated ICT skills and current role. Applicants who are currently working in a non-ICT role will, in the first instance, be required to undergo normal aptitude testing and interview for ICT posts. Successful applicants at this stage of the selection process will then be required to undergo and succeed in a certified ICT training programme before being assured of a transfer to the relocating Department.

Promotions

5. When the processes detailed at 4 above are completed it is anticipated that vacancies will still exist. In this event, Departments/Offices intend to conduct specific ICT promotion competitions (both internal and inter-departmental) to fill the shortfall in numbers willing to relocate. These competitions will be based on existing standardised ICT skill sets (e.g. the ICS skill listing). Applicants for these competitions will be required to either

- (a) already have appropriate ICT qualifications and experience or
- (b) commit to undergo and succeed in a certified ICT training programme as a prior condition of promotion.

It will be strict condition of all transfers/promotions under (4) and (5) above that the applicants agree to relocate to the relevant provincial locations for the agreed period appropriate to the grade.

Recruitment

6. Where sufficient staff to make up the shortfalls do not emerge from either the transfers, certified training programmes or promotions, Departments/Offices will proceed to recruit qualified, experienced ICT personnel at all grades, in accordance with the procedures agreed with the unions in the context of sustaining progress.

7. In tandem with the above, ICT Divisions will have continued freedom to go to the market to identify and employ external experts (defined as individuals with a particular expertise that would take a minimum of 2 years to develop) and contractors/consultants as stop-gap measures until sufficient numbers of internal staff with requisite knowledge and experience are in place.

8. Every effort will be made to ensure that experienced and skilled ICT staff, who have opted to remain in Dublin, and who have assisted with the decentralisation programme in terms of planning, mentoring, coaching, hand-overs, system migration, etc., will be accommodated as best as possible in subsequent post allocations.

9. Replacements for senior ICT managers who have opted to remain in Dublin, will be put in place at the earliest possible date to facilitate planning and training.