



Information Technology Policy Survey

2004

IRELAND

PART 1

This policy summary was provided in response to the
OECD Information Technology Outlook Policy Questionnaire 2004
National replies are summarised in the *OECD Information Technology Outlook 2004, Ch. 8.*

For further information, please contact:
Mr. Graham Vickery, ICCP Division, OECD
graham.vickery@oecd.org; Telephone: +33 1 45 24 93 87; Fax: +33 1 44 30 62 59

Table of contents

Executive Summary	9
1. TELECOMMUNICATIONS INFRASTRUCTURE	15
1.1 Broadband Infrastructure & Services	15
1.1.1 Telecommunications Infrastructure and the NDP	15
1.1.2 Regional Broadband Programme	16
1.1.3 Broadband Action Plan	16
1.1.4 Connectivity Framework Deals on backbone networks	17
1.1.5 Backbone Infrastructure	18
1.1.6 Broadband in Education and R&D	18
1.1.7 International Connectivity	18
1.1.8 Powerline Communications systems	19
1.1.9 Broadband in CLÁR areas	19
1.1.10 Digital TV Network Plan	20
1.2 Future Planning Permissions	20
2. LEGAL AND REGULATORY ENVIRONMENT	21
2.1 Broadcasting Act 2001	21
2.2 Data Protection	21
2.3 Electronic Commerce	22
2.4 Public Service Identity	22
2.5 Copyright	23
2.6 Company Law Review Group	23
2.7 Electronic Money	23
2.8 Radio Spectrum	24
2.9 Electronic Signatures	24
2.10 Digital Hub	24
2.11 Processing of Personal Data - Telecommunications Sector	25
2.12 Cybercrime	25
2.13 Illegal and harmful uses of the internet	25
2.14 ICT Accessibility	26
2.15 Public Services Broker	26
2.16 Health Information Bill	26
2.17 EU Directives on Electronic Communications	27
2.18 EU VAT Directives	27
2.19 Commercial Court	28
2.20 Network Security	28
2.21 Telecommunications Regulation	28
3. E-GOVERNMENT	30
3.1 Public Services Broker	30
3.1.1 Integrated Services	31

3.1.1.1 Donegal Integration Project	31
3.1.1.2 BASIS study	32
3.1.1.3 Marine and Natural Resources Services	33
3.2 Flagship Services to Citizens	33
3.2.1 Motor Tax	33
3.2.2 Driving Licences	33
3.2.3 Road Haulage Licences	34
3.2.4 Passports	34
3.2.5 Birth, Death and Marriage Certificates	34
3.2.6 Local Authority Housing	35
3.2.7 Planning Applications & Development Control	36
3.2.8 Electoral Register	36
3.2.9 Child Benefit	37
3.2.10 Court Fines	37
3.2.11 Education	37
3.2.12 Online Area Aid Applications	38
3.2.13 Disease Eradication Schemes	38
3.3 Flagship Services to Business	39
3.3.1 Revenue	39
3.3.1.1 Online Banking	39
3.3.1.2 Online Vehicle Registration Tax	39
3.3.1.3 Online Provision of Tax Clearance Certificates	39
3.3.2 Online Data Collection	40
3.3.3 Commercial Rates	40
3.3.4 Land Registration	41
3.3.5 Work Permits	42
3.3.6 Company Registration & Online Returns	42
3.3.7 Patents	43
3.3.8 Mining Licence	44
3.3.9 Forestry	44
3.3.10 Fisheries	45
3.3.11 Change of vehicle ownership	46
3.3.12 Redundancy Payments	46
3.3.13 Earth Resources Information Warehouse GSI	46
3.4 eEnabling the Public Service	46
3.5 e-Cabinet Project	47
3.6 eLegislation Office of the Attorney-General	48
3.7 Public Procurement- online tendering	48
3.8 e-Estimates	49
3.9 Development Applications Tracking System	50

3.10 Integrated Housing Package	50
3.11 Public Sector Technical Communications Infrastructure	51
3.12 ePayments Strategy	51
3.13 National Spatial Data Infrastructure	51
4. eBUSINESS	53
4.1 Accelerator Fund	53
4.2 ITS 2007	54
4.3 The Digital Hub	54
4.4 e-Procurement Awareness	55
4.5 Business Development	55
4.6 Chambers of Commerce SME projects	57
4.7 Shannon Development	57
4.7.1 Shannon Broadband Demand Study	58
4.8 eBusiness Monitor Project	59
4.9 Forfás	61
4.10 InterTradeIreland ITI	61
4.11 eWork Awareness	62
4.12 eWorking Training	62
5. R&D	64
5.1 NDP objectives	64
5.1.1 Technological Infrastructure/NDP	65
5.1.2 Regional Development/Infrastructure	65
5.1.3 3rd Level Institutions/NDP	66
5.1.4 Products & Services	67
5.1.5 R&D & Researchers	69
5.2 Science Foundation Ireland	69
5.3 EU Sixth Framework Programme 2002-2006	70
5.4 Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology	71
5.5 Researchers Group	73
5.6 Broadband Infrastructure for Education and R&D	74
6. Lifelong Learning	77
6.1 Blueprint for the Future of ICT in Primary and Secondary Level Education	77
6.1.1 Curriculum Integration	78
6.1.2 Schools Internet connectivity	79
6.1.3 Industry Advisory Group	80
6.2 Second chance, Further and Higher education	81
6.2.1 ICT Training	81
6.2.2 eLearning	81
6.2.3 ICT in Adult Literacy	82
6.2.4 Skills Needs in IT and Science	82

6.3 Taskforce on Lifelong Learning	83
7. E-INCLUSION	84
7.1 Coordination and Policy Development	84
7.2 Internet Services Provision for Community & Voluntary Sector	84
7.3 Capacity building	85
7.4 Provision of Local Content (MoBhaile Infrastructure)	86
7.5 Research	86
7.6 Accessibility	87
7.6.1 IT Accessibility Guidelines	87
7.6.2 Compliance with Accessibility Guidelines	87
7.7 Centre of Excellence in Universal Design	88
8. Additional E-GOVERNMENT Projects	89
8.1 eHealth	89
8.1.1 Public Service Identity	89
8.1.2 Health Information web pages	89
8.1.3 Appointments for Hospital Services	90
8.1.4 Medical cost reimbursement	90
8.1.5 Access to Laboratory results	91
8.1.6 eLearning for health professionals	91
8.1.7 Digital TV	92
8.1.8 Integrated Services	92
8.2 Marine Coastal Services	93
8.3 Online Import/Export declarations	93
8.4 Construction Industry & Relevant Contract Tax	93
8.5 Gift & Inheritance Tax Returns	94
8.6 Online Filing & Payment of Taxes	94
8.7 Census of Population	94
8.8 Integration of Justice Sector Systems	94
8.9 Domestic refuse - Dublin City Council	95
8.10 Private rented dwellings fees - Dublin City Council	95
8.11 Teagasc Online Analytical Systems	95
8.12 Small Claims	96
8.13 Teagasc Profit Monitoring Systems	96
8.14 National Archives	97
8.15 National Museum	97
8.16 Hydrometric Information	98
8.17 Iris Oifigiúil	98
8.18 Planning Consultations	98
8.19 National Art Online	98
8.20 Digital Maps Online Ordnance Survey	98

8.21 Botanic Gardens	98
8.22 Asylum/Immigration Services	99
8.23 Public Transport Smart Cards Railway Procurement Agency	99
8.24 Public Transport Real-Time Information	99
8.25 Social Welfare Schemes	100
8.26 GIS Strategy	100
8.27 Security Policy	100
8.28 Gaeltacht Grants	101
8.29 National Library	101
8.30 Marine Harmful Algal Blooms System	102
8.31 Coastal Weather Information	103
8.32 National Research Vessel Information Service	104
8.33 The Marine Information Resource Warehouse	105
8.34 Education	106
8.35 Teagasc Online Food Assurance Database	106
8.36 Heritage Projects	107
8.37 Library Services	108
8.38 Revenue Services	108
3.8.1 Tax Relief for Mortgages	109
8.39 Census Statistics	109
Appendix 1-list of prioritised services	110

New Connections

2nd Progress Report

Foreword ¹

This second report on the implementation of *New Connections* – the Government’s Action Plan for the Information Society in Ireland – points to much progress in a number of crucial areas such as Telecommunications Infrastructure, Legal and Regulatory, Environment, ICTs in Government and eInclusion.

In the closing months of 2003, for instance, the telecoms market started to respond to Government initiatives to stimulate competition in the marketplace and we now see a general improvement in the availability of broadband products with prospects of a continuation of this trend over the coming year.

Importantly, the ‘e’ agenda is now being mainstreamed across all areas of economic and social activity and the focus of attention is shifting towards the use of technology rather than simple awareness and access.

Online service delivery will be made easier following the selection by Reach of a build partner for the Public Services Broker and agreement on a list of priority services for on-line delivery by 2005.

The developments in online Government have also been very encouraging. The launch of the new computerised General Register Office electronically registers all births, deaths and marriages. This should make integration much more achievable, and we are already seeing this in the automated Child Benefit payments for second and subsequent children.

In recent weeks, people have been paying their Motor Tax online in what is turning out to be a very convenient and popular way for people to access public services.

The Land Registry made significant progress in electronic service delivery in 2003. This is having a tremendous impact on the way property-related transactions are being handled on a daily basis.

¹ This report reproduces in its entirety “New Connections: A strategy to realise the potential of the Information Society”, 2nd Progress Report, April 2004, Government of Ireland.

In 2003, the Revenue Commissioners made Employer Tax Credit Certificates electronically available, enabling employers to integrate employees' tax credit details into their payroll systems. Revenue are also offering a new online service for Tax Relief at Source for mortgages through their website.

The Central Statistics Office, in its first ever statistics on how ICTs are used in Ireland, revealed how the primary use of Internet technologies is email followed by travel and accommodation, information and shopping. Clearly, therefore, content and the use of technology are critical in stimulating greater engagement in the Information Society.

With further e-Inclusion initiatives being undertaken this year, I am confident that we can continue to show how technology can make a real difference to people's lives. E-mail and online shopping are a good start, but the challenge is to create meaningful and useful content to enable everyone to exploit technology to maximum advantage and to provide the levers of change and advancement that can help people to overcome barriers of personal and economic circumstance.

The Information Society is not something vague that has yet to emerge-it is here already. We are all participants to some degree or other. In the years ahead with an enlarged Europe – that will see greater global competition on Governments and individuals – it is important that we continue to be at the forefront and, perhaps more importantly, that we continue to be a strong, successful economy and society, based on the celebration and nurturing of knowledge and creativity, giving everyone a fair chance to participate.

Mary Hanafin, T.D.

Minister of State for the Information Society

Executive Summary

Telecommunications Infrastructure Developments

Widespread availability of open-access, affordable, always-on broadband infrastructure for businesses and citizens by 2005 remains perhaps the most important aspect of *New Connections*, with significant implications for the rest of the Action Plan.

The objectives for broadband infrastructure and services include:

- *Making open-access, affordable, always-on broadband infrastructure and services for businesses and citizens available throughout the State within three years*
- *Broadband speeds of 5mbit/s to home users and substantially higher for business users as the minimum standard in the medium term*
- *Putting infrastructures in place, with Exchequer assistance, to meet this three-year objective, capable of being upgraded to meet the long-term objective*
- *Target available funding at procuring open access, local access networks on a Public Private Partnership type basis*

Government Intervention

Considerable progress was made in 2003 with a Broadband Action Plan and a Regional Broadband Programme. It is evident that the market has failed to address regional broadband infrastructural and service deficits in a timely fashion. The Government is unconvinced that there is sufficient dynamic or competitive pressure in the market to ensure that towns other than those already addressed through a combination of market-led and Government initiatives will be addressed in the near term. Those deficits are unlikely to be addressed by the market of its own accord in the short to medium term. As a result, the Government has assumed a leading role in driving broadband delivery and has devised a programme of phased, targeted investment. In order to realise its objectives, the Government has put in place several programmes of initiatives to assist the private sector to address the existing gaps in communications infrastructure and services throughout Ireland, in both urban and rural areas. The rollout of access to broadband service and supply of the infrastructure needed to deliver it is a prime example of the success of such recent Government intervention.

Current Estimated Usage of Broadband

In December 2003, the total number of broadband subscribers (including Digital Subscriber Line, cable modem and broadband Fixed Wireless Access) was approximately 30,000. Following significant price reductions in recent months on DSL services and promotion of broadband by the main providers, the number of new DSL subscribers are now increasing at estimated rate of 1,000 per month.

The main broadband technologies deployed in Ireland are DSL, cable modem and broadband FWA. Satellite and Wireless Local Area Network (WLAN) technologies are also increasingly used. DSL alone accounted for about 80% of all users. As of 30th September 2003, approx 55% of all telephone lines in Ireland were connected to DSL-enabled exchanges.

Broadband Action Plan

In December 2003, a major new initiative was announced by Government to drive the broadband market in Ireland. €140 million of Exchequer funding is being invested up to 2007 (€35 million per annum) providing high-speed, open access broadband infrastructure in all cities and towns in the State with a population greater than 1,500.

The key elements of the Broadband Action Plan are:

- Connecting 88 towns of 1,500+ population to broadband with Community Broadband Exchanges and strategic fibre optic metropolitan area networks
- A new Group Broadband Scheme to facilitate smaller communities to pool their broadband demands and secure high speed connectivity from a range of providers in the Irish market with grant support from the Government. The aim of the scheme is to promote the rollout of broadband access to communities where the market may not be currently meeting demand from potential users. In particular, the scheme is designed to foster a unitary Information Society;
- Tougher fines for those infringing communications laws;
- New Policy Directions to the Communications Regulator (Comreg) focussing on delivering competitive broadband pricing;
- A website where consumers demanding broadband can register and see competing prices from broadband providers (www.broadband.gov.ie)

Connectivity Framework Deals

A new regional high-speed broadband connectivity framework deal on backbone networks was announced in December 2003. These deals will be a key driver of broadband outside Dublin. This move radically improves the economic case for providing broadband in the regions. Under the offerings, high-speed broadband packages,

including 155Mbps (STM1), 34Mbps, 100Mbps Ethernet, (622 Mbps), STM4 will be available to towns on the ESB Telecoms fibre optic network. In addition, 2.5Gbps wavelength products connecting Dublin to 26 regional towns will be made available on the EsatBT networks

Backbone Infrastructure

Other initiatives under the NDP e-commerce measure include co-investment in backbone infrastructure in the regions in conjunction with private sector partners. These projects include

- the construction of new national fibre backbone by ESB Telecom,
- the development of regional e-commerce centers by Nevadatele,
- the extension by EsatBT of its regional backbone network and
- the acceleration of rollout of DSL in 40 locations.

Eircom has also received co-investment from the Government in its DSL programme. Upwards of 900,000 telephone lines have already been DSL-enabled nationwide and the current aim is to have 1.4 million telephone lines DSL-enabled by the first half of 2004. With the rollout of the Government's broadband programme over this year and next, investment will be 7,000% more than 1997.

Broadband Infrastructure for Education and R&D

The Next Generation Internet Programme seeks to place Ireland at the leading edge of international Internet activity by installing major upgrades to European and US connections, increasing the speed and capacity of Internet access for institutions. The availability of advanced networking and complementary applications to the research and teaching programmes is seen as critical by all third-level institutions in Ireland. HEAnet manages Ireland's national research network.

HEAnet's US and European links enable all the universities and institutes of technology and other Irish higher education and research organisations to connect to all the leading colleges and researchers in the US and some 3,500 institutions across Europe. In addition, in December 2001, a link was installed between Dublin and Belfast linking Northern Irish colleges and UK colleges on JANET to HEAnet organisations at very high bandwidth.

The Legal and Regulatory Environment

The Departments of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources, Justice, Equality & Law Reform, Social & Family Affairs and Finance have made significant progress in

establishing a secure and predictable legal framework for electronic transactions as set out in the Action Plan. Key developments in the last year included:

- Legislation in the areas of Data Protection, e-enablement of Civil Registration, Digital Hub Development;
- Transposition of Directives in relation to Electronic Communications;
- Setting up a website to supply information and highlight network security issues (www.netsecure.ie).

Developments in e-Government

Public Services Broker

2003 saw considerable progress in the development of e-Government in Ireland. The Reach agency selected a preferred supplier for the design and build of the Public Services Broker. The aim is to have the Broker put in place by Q2, 2004. Reach have set ambitious target dates to make this happen.

2005 Services and the Services Index

The Information Society Commission published a report on e-Government in November 2003. Significantly, the Commission cautioned about putting services online purely for the sake of it, and recommended that only services with a tangible benefit that make economic sense should be put online. The Cabinet Committee on the Information Society agreed over eighty services that individual Departments have identified as online priorities (See Online Services Appendix 1).

Reach are working with individual agencies on the development of services for online delivery in keeping with the stated aim of having services online by 2005.

In addition, Reach have compiled a wider index of over 900 services spanning information, forms, online and interactive services currently featured on public sector web sites in Ireland. The index currently concentrates on Departments and their agencies, but later it will incorporate all public services, including Health and Local Authority services.

Service Integration and Child Benefit

The integration or 'connecting up' process is recognised as one of the main objectives of e-Government - where agencies 'collaborate' to give better and more responsive service to citizens. This took a significant step forward in June 2003 with the launch of the General Register Office (GRO) system making all its data on life events available in

electronic format. Part of the Civil Registration Modernisation Programme by the Departments of Social & Family Affairs and Health & Children, it is designed to streamline many of the internal processes. Indeed, the Department of Social and Family Affairs are now using this facility for the Child Benefit Scheme where registering a birth at the hospital 'triggers' the payment of child benefit.

Motor Tax

The Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government have made the payment of motor tax considerably more convenient. Since March 2004, you can renew your motor tax online 24 hours a day, seven days a week, using a credit or laser card and a unique pin number sent with the reminder from the Department's Vehicle Registration Unit. A successful online transaction will mean a new tax disc being delivered within five working days.

Developing the Knowledge Economy

The **eBusiness** agenda is under the remit of the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment and developments are in line with the overall strategy for the Information Society. This includes, in particular, the implementation of new initiatives and supports to help SMEs to adopt eBusiness and IT for competitiveness and the establishment of a Steering Group on eBusiness supports and policies for SMEs.

The Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment continued to oversee NDP funding to Research, Technological Development and Innovation.

Lifelong Learning

An €18 million Broadband for schools initiative was announced by both the telecoms sector and the Departments of Education & Science and Communications, Marine & Natural Resources in February 2004.

e-Inclusion and the Digital Divide

Mainstreaming of technologies in the workplace, the home and society continues to be of prime importance in promoting an inclusive, knowledge-based society. A review of the e-Inclusion implementation strategy was completed in 2003. On the basis of this review, the Cabinet Committee on the Information Society have recommended action in five priority areas: ICT Access, Learning and Skills, Building the ICT capacity of the Community and Voluntary Sector, Measuring inclusive Information Society development, Mainstreaming Information Society issues and Awareness Raising.

Arising from this, actions being put in place for 2004 include:

- The Department of the Taoiseach is developing an online repository of e-Inclusion best practice case studies and strategies at a national, regional and local level;
- National University of Ireland Maynooth has been commissioned to analyse the ICT needs of the Community and Voluntary Sector, and
- LGCSB has initiated pilot projects on ICT Infrastructure and Services for the Community and Voluntary Sector;
- The Local Government Computer Services Board (LGCSB) is developing the **MoBhaile** project making data collected and maintained by Local Authorities available to citizens spatially (i.e. linked to places and locations).

The Information Society Fund

The Information Society Fund had its remit extended by Government to 2005. The Fund is operated in partnership between the Departments of the Taoiseach and Finance with an Evaluation Board drawn from both departments, and its administration provided by the Department of Finance. The Fund provides resources to “fast track” suitable Information Society initiatives which progress the objectives set out in the Government’s *New Connections* Information Society Action Plan. During 2003 C.€43m was made available in the Fund of which C.€35m was allocated to Government departments for specific initiatives with almost €8m retained to cover initiatives proposed during the year. The Fund was again fully subscribed in 2003.

Areas in which progress on key initiatives was supported in 2003 included e-government and e-business initiatives such as Reach, ROS, motor tax online, Land Registry electronic access, eCabinet, public sector e-recruitment, e-inclusion and content enhancement initiatives together with a range of service specific initiatives from numerous departments. Funding was also provided for infrastructures to facilitate new cross-government efficiencies – the Government VPN telecommunications network - and for measures to help promote the safe use of the Internet.

Further details on the Fund and how it operates are available on the Department of the Taoiseach website (www.taoiseach.gov.ie).

e-Europe and e-Government Benchmarking

Progress is continuing in the area of electronic public service delivery. In the context of the e-Europe Action Plan, in a 4th assessment of 17 European countries on electronic service delivery across 20 online public services, Ireland was rated joint 2nd with Denmark and behind Sweden on the online sophistication of its services.

1. Telecommunications Infrastructure

DEVELOPING THE CAPACITY NECESSARY FOR DELIVERY OF ADVANCED
TELECOMMUNICATIONS SERVICES

1.1 Broadband Infrastructure & Services

CMNR

The objectives for broadband infrastructure and services include:

- ❑ *Making open-access, affordable, always-on broadband infrastructure and services for businesses and citizens available throughout the State within three years*
- ❑ *Broadband speeds of 5mbit/s to the home and substantially higher for business users as the minimum standard within 10-15 years*
- ❑ *Putting infrastructures in place, with Exchequer assistance, to meet the three year objective, capable of being upgraded to meet the long term objective*
- ❑ *Target available funding at procuring open access, local access networks on a PPP-type basis*

Update

1.1.1 Infrastructure Rollout Initiatives

Under the National Development Plan (NDP) 2000-2006, an indicative €200 million, part-funded by the ERDF, has been set aside for broadband infrastructure projects that will enable provision of world-class communications services.

The e-commerce and telecommunications measure of the NDP ensures that support from public funds is provided to overcome identified gaps in infrastructure, maximise the utility of shared information and drive demand for new services and activities in order to facilitate the benefits of the new digital economy being evenly spread across all regions of the country and to contribute to economic and social cohesion in the Information Society. Specific initiatives are targeted to curb a possible emergence of a digital or spatial divide.

In addition to the pathfinder projects detailed at 1.1.2, the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources (DCMNR) is co-funding seven projects with telecommunications operators under the National Development Plan 2000-2006, involving the development of broadband infrastructure. These projects will result in a new national fibre backbone, extensive rollout of Digital Subscriber Line DSL services and leased line services around the country.

1.1.2 Regional Broadband Programme

A key initiative under the e-commerce measure of the NDP is the Metropolitan Area Network (MAN) intervention announced in March 2002. This initiative involves the construction of high-speed fibre-optic rings linking the key business districts in 19 towns and cities across the country within a partnership with local and regional government organisations. These Metropolitan Networks will provide high-speed broadband infrastructure to businesses, schools, hospitals and private consumers on an open-access basis. More than €64 million has been committed to the 1st phase of this programme for the period 2003-2004.

All network construction is now underway and is expected to be operational in mid-2004. When completed, a neutral Management Services Entity (MSE) will provide open access to the networks, on a cost basis, to broadband service providers. The MSE will manage, maintain and operate these networks on behalf of the State. The process of recruiting the MSE is well advanced and an announcement on appointment is imminent. These networks will facilitate and promote competition in the broadband market and stimulate private sector investment in the provision of broadband service.

1.1.3 Broadband Action Plan

In December 2003, a major new initiative was launched to drive the broadband market in Ireland. €140 million of Exchequer funding will be invested between now and 2007 (€35 million per annum) providing high-speed, open access broadband infrastructure in all cities and towns in the State with a population greater than 1,500.

The key elements of the Broadband Action Plan are:

- Connecting 88 towns of 1,500+ population to broadband with Community Broadband Exchanges and strategic fibre optic metropolitan area networks;**
- Group Broadband Scheme to facilitate smaller communities to pool broadband demands and secure high speed connectivity from a range of providers in the Irish market with grant support from the Government. The aim of the scheme is to promote the rollout of broadband access to communities where the market may not be currently meeting demand from potential users. In particular the scheme is designed to foster a unitary Information Society approach;**

- ❑ **Tougher fines for those infringing communications laws;**
- ❑ **New policy directions to the Communications Regulator (Comreg) focussing on delivering competitive broadband pricing;**
- ❑ **A Website where consumers demanding broadband can register and see competing prices from broadband providers, www.broadband.gov.ie**

1.1.4 Connectivity Framework Deals on backbone networks

Under the offerings, high-speed broadband packages, including 155Mbps (STM1), 34Mbps, 100Mbps Ethernet, (622 Mbps), STM4 will be available to towns on the ESB Telecoms fibre optic network. In addition, 2.5Gbps wavelength products connecting Dublin to 26 regional towns will be made available on the EsatBT networks. The broadband products and pricing in the ESB Telecoms offering are as follows:

- ❑ **34 megabit products @ €50,000 per annum**
- ❑ **Ethernet 100mbps @ €50,000 per annum**
- ❑ **STM1 @ €100,00 per annum and**
- ❑ **STM4 @ €400,000 per annum**

All pricing is point-to-point on ESB's extensive fibre wrap network. This new network consists of almost 1,300 kilometres of 48-fibre cable in a figure-of-eight loop around Ireland, taking in all four provinces and most major towns and cities. The Government and the European Regional Development Fund supported ESB Telecoms construction of this network under the NDP 2000-2006.

The EsatBT offering involves an ultra high-speed product and leverages the investment made by the Government and EsatBT in its regional fibre network in recent years, including the significant investment made in the Western Digital Corridor. The pricing in the EsatBT offering is designed to encourage connectivity to groups of towns. On average, the cost per wavelength per annum is in the region of €150,000 to €200,000.

Individual ISP's, telcos and consortia will be able to draw down capacity from these framework deals.

1.1.5 Backbone Infrastructure

Other initiatives under the NDP e-commerce measure include co-investment in backbone infrastructure in the regions in conjunction with private sector partners. These projects include the construction of new national fibre backbone by ESB Telecom, by the national Electricity Supply Board, the development of regional e-commerce centers by Nevadatele, the extension by EsatBT of its regional backbone network and the acceleration of its rollout of DSL in 40 locations. Eircom, the incumbent operator, has also received co-investment from the Government in its DSL programme. Upwards of 900,000 telephone lines have already been DSL-enabled nationwide. With the rollout of the Government's broadband programme over this year and next, investment will be 7,000% more than 1997.

1.1.6 Broadband Infrastructure for Education and R&D

CMNR/E&S/ET&E/HEAnet

The availability of advanced networking and complementary applications to the research and teaching programmes are seen as critical by all third-level institutions in Ireland. HEAnet's US and European links enable all the Universities and Institutes of Technology and other Irish higher education and research organisations to connect to all the leading colleges and researchers in the US and some 3,500 institutions across Europe. In addition, in December 2001 a link was installed between Dublin and Belfast linking Northern Irish colleges and UK colleges on JANET to HEAnet organisations at very high bandwidth.

In October 2002, Trinity College Dublin upgraded its access circuit to the HEAnet network as a trial of a new Gigabit Ethernet link at 1000Mbps. This has been successfully tested and UCD have also upgraded its access circuit to the HEAnet backbone to one gigabit; this linkage is currently undergoing user testing. Other clients, including NUI Galway will follow in this regard.

1.1.7 International Connectivity

CMNR

A Public Private Partnership (PPP) entered into in 1999 has greatly increased the levels of competitively priced international connectivity from Ireland to Europe, Asia and to the United States. The Government negotiated a number of amendments to the original contract and the original capacity may now be

packaged as short-term leases. 2.5 Gb wavelengths and IP products are now available. The Reach of the network has been increased and connectivity to additional European, US and Asian cities is now available. In all, over 50 cities are now covered by this connectivity contract.

As a result, Ireland is now one of the cheapest locations worldwide for international leased lines. The original project was also designed to promote investment in strategic and research-related initiatives. To take one example, seven STMs have been assigned to the national education research network, HEAnet, for strategic and educational purposes, enabling the network to link with the UK and other national research networks.

1.1.8 Powerline Communications systems

CMNR

- *To trial the potential of powerline communications systems to provide an alternative broadband infrastructure*

Update

ESB and the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources are funding a major trial of broadband powerline technology, which will take place over the coming months. The trial will concentrate on the Tuam area of County Galway and aims to try out this rapidly developing technology in homes, schools and businesses in the area. This project is part of a €50m project being co-funded by the Department under the National Development Plan 2000 – 2006 to broadband enable the ESB's transmission network nationally. This project will also build on recent trials of emerging broadband technologies including wireless and satellite.

1.1.9 Broadband in CLÁR areas

CMNR

- *Trial broadband technology in selected industrial estates, business and educational/training centres in the CLÁR regions*

Update

The Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources is working with the Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs, to develop communications and Information Society infrastructure and services in up to 15 locations throughout the CLÁR areas. These are areas where there has been significant population decline in recent decades. The process of evaluating the applications received in response to that invitation is currently underway.

The trial will evaluate the broadband technology used for its potentially wider deployment throughout the CLÁR regions. The trial is technology-neutral and should enable local industries, public services, educational institutions and the wider communities there to obtain access to broadband networks. A total of up to €500,000 may initially be available, consistent with the Regional Aid Guidelines, to extend advanced communications infrastructure and services to the CLÁR area.

1.1.10 Digital TV network plan

DCMNR

- *Government to deliver a digital changeover plan within six years*

Update

A pilot project to make available a digital television network to over one million viewers in the greater Dublin area will get underway shortly.

Planning for the project is expected to be carried out with RTE 1, Network 2, TG4 and TV3, broadcasting from Three Rock, Co Dublin. It is also proposed that at least six other channels, probably UK services, would be provided.

1.2 Future Planning Permissions

EHLG

- *Consider making it obligatory, in future planning permissions, for the developer of new urban roads, housing developments and industrial estates, to lay ducting and transfer it to the Local Authority*

Update

The Planning and Development Act, 2000 makes the roll-out of telecommunications infrastructure a mandatory element of Local Authority development plans. Local Authorities have the power to impose conditions relating to the provision of ducting etc. in granting planning permissions, and these conditions are currently being imposed in many appropriate cases. The Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government will shortly engage with the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources on this issue and, pending the outcome of those discussions, will issue advice to Local Authorities by late 2004.

Legal and Regulatory Environment

ENSURING A SECURE AND PREDICTABLE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR ELECTRONIC TRANSACTIONS THAT PROVIDES THE NECESSARY CONFIDENCE FOR CITIZENS AND BUSINESSES.

2.1 Broadcasting Act 2001

CMNR

- ❑ *Award of licences to operate Digital Terrestrial Television DTT multiplex*
- ❑ *Separation and sale of the existing RTÉ transmission network to separate companies*
- ❑ *Digital Terrestrial Television platform to be used as a vehicle for the development of multimedia services and electronic information services, including those provided by means of the internet*

Update

Following the introduction of the Broadcasting Act 2001, invitations were issued to apply for licences to operate a Digital Terrestrial Television DTT multiplex. One application was received from IT'S TV. This application was withdrawn in October 2002.

RTÉ has proceeded with the separation of the transmission network but not with its sale. The organisation has proposed to set up a subsidiary wholly owned by RTÉ to manage the transmission network. The Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources is currently undertaking a review on the future of DTT (See 1.1.10).

2.2 Data Protection

JELR

- ❑ *Enact the Data Protection Amendment Bill transposing the outstanding provisions of the Data Protection Directive 95/46/EC*

Update

The Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003 was enacted on 10 April 2003.

By order, SI No. 207 of 2003, made by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform, the Data Protection (Amendment) Act 2003 (Commencement) Order 2003), the provisions of the Data Protection (Amendment) Act took effect from 1 July 2003, except the provisions relating to registration of data controllers and data processors (section 16 of the Act) and the provision relating to enforced subject access requests in connection with employment (section 4(13) of the Data Protection Act 1988, as inserted by section 5). Existing registration

requirements will continue to apply pending the outcome of a consultation process, which is currently underway.

2.3 Electronic Commerce

ETE

- *Transposition of the outstanding provisions of the Electronic Commerce Directive 2000/31/EC to be completed during 2002*

Update

The Regulations giving effect to the essential provisions of the Directive on Electronic Commerce - Directive 2000/31/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 8 June, 2002 on certain legal aspects of Information Society services, in particular electronic commerce, were signed by the Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment on 24 February, 2003 and came into force on that date. Guidelines to the Regulations are available on that Department's website (www.entemp.ie).

2.4 Public Service Identity

SFA

- *To provide a legal framework for the e-enablement of the Civil Registration process and in particular, for the use of the PPS number, as the key identifier in the registration of future life events*

Update

The 2002 Social Welfare Act provides the legislative base for allocation of a Personal Public Service (PPS) Number to a child at birth registration, and the setting up of a Public Service Identity.

The Civil Registration Act 2004 was signed into law on 27 February, 2004. This provides a new legislative framework for civil registration and enables modernisation of the civil registration process.

The Department of Social and Family Affairs (DSFA) is seeking to develop a common Public Service Identity database to be made available to all Departments for validation of customer identity details. Since September 2003, DSFA has commenced the allocation of a PPS number and the creation of a child's Public Service Identity on the basis of the electronic notification of the birth registration from the General Register's Office.

2.5 Copyright

ETE

- *Transposition of the outstanding provisions of the Directive on Copyright in the Information Society 2001/29/EC*

Update

While the requirements of this Directive were, for the most part, anticipated by the provisions of the Copyright and Related Rights Act 2000, which came into force on 1 January, 2001, it was necessary to ensure that the measures in the 2000 Act actually achieved the result intended by the final text of the Directive. This involved a complex process of textual examination, recently completed by the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment. In addition, a widespread consultation process was undertaken. Draft Regulations under the European Communities Act, designed to complete the process of transposition, are in the final stages of preparation.

2.6 Company Law Review Group

ETE

- *Enactment of legislation to give effect to the recommendations of the Company Law Review Group to restructure and simplify the companies code*

Update

The Company Law Review Group (CLRG) produced its first report in February 2002, which recommended substantial reform and restructuring of company law.

In July 2002, the Government approved the drafting of a General Scheme of a Bill, which will give effect to the recommendations in the report as well as consolidating the Companies Code in a new Principal Act.

Work is proceeding on both objectives, reform and consolidation, with the objective of obtaining Government approval in mid-2004 to draft the new Companies Bill. The Review Group is currently working on its second report. The intention is to factor in the recommendations emerging from the second report into the drafting of this Bill (See 3.3.4).

2.7 Electronic Money

FIN

- *Transposition of two Directives relating to e-money: 2000/46/EC and 2000/28/EC*

Update

The Statutory Instrument bringing the Directives into force was signed by the Minister for Finance in May 2002.

2.8 Radio Spectrum

CMNR

- *Enactment of Radio Communications Bill*

Update

Work has commenced on drafting the Heads of the Bill in the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources.

2.9 Electronic Signatures

CMNR

- *Implementation of Regulations on Certification Service Providers Electronic Signatures Directive 99/93/EC*

Update

Regulations have been drafted that designate the National Accreditation Board as the competent authority responsible for the development and implementation of a voluntary accreditation scheme for certification service providers. The Regulations are currently being handled by the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel.

2.10 Digital Hub

CMNR

- *Enactment of Digital Hub Development Agency Bill*

Update

The Digital Hub Development Agency Act, 2003 was signed into law on 8 July, 2003. On 21 July 2003, in accordance with Section 4 of the Act, the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources signed the order, which established the Digital Hub Development Agency. The new Agency will continue the work undertaken by Digital Media Development Ltd in developing the Digital Hub, the Government's flagship project in digital content located in the Liberties/Coombe area of Dublin.

2.11 Processing of Personal Data - Telecommunications Sector

CMNR

- *Transposition of EU Directive Concerning the Processing of Personal Data and the Protection of Privacy in the Telecommunications Sector 97/66/EC*

Update

This Directive was transposed into Irish law by S.I. No. 192 of 2002, signed by the Minister for Public Enterprise on 8 May 2002.

2.12 Cybercrime

JELR

- *Transposition of the Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime*

Update

The extent of additional legislative provisions required to give effect to the European Cybercrime Convention is currently being examined by the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform. It is likely that any legislative requirements to give effect to the Cybercrime Convention will be included in a Criminal Justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill, the heads of which it is hoped will be ready for submission to Government for approval by mid-2004.

2.13 Illegal and harmful uses of the internet

JELR

- *Extension of the scope of Irish research, by the Internet Advisory Board (IAB) on internet safety issues relating to parents and children*
- *Implementation of an awareness road-show by the IAB on Internet safety issues in relation to parents and children*

Update

A review of the Code of Practice and Ethics is nearing completion by a sub-group of the Board. The report of the IAPCODE project team was received in November 2003 and is being considered by a sub-group in the context of its final report to the Board. A national awareness campaign, aimed mainly at parents whose children are going online in the home, took place in December 2003 and January 2004. The campaign consisted of national radio, poster, online banner and teletext elements as well as some print advertising. The IAB website has been updated (www.iab.ie).

Plans for a phased research project are being finalised. This will focus on possible harmful effects of multi-media access to the Internet by Irish children (via TV, 3-G phone technology etc). The Board, in partnership with the Internet

Services Providers Association of Ireland (ISPAI), will undertake a campaign to enhance the profile of the Hotline for reporting Child Pornography (www.ISPAI.ie). The IAB is co-financing a video on Internet safety as part of the SAFT project (an EU project looking at Safety Awareness for Teens, of which NCTE is the Irish partner). In addition, the IAB conference will be held in early June, theme being finalised at present. It is intended that the first phase of the research project will feed into the conference. The Board will also consider the issue of spam in depth as part of its 2004 work.

2.14 ICT Accessibility

JELR

- *Establishment of a Centre of Excellence in Universal Design, with a remit including the promotion of design for all principles in ICT products, services and systems*

Update

The consultation process on disability legislation was completed in February 2003. In view of the complex and cross-cutting issues involved, the Government agreed in February 2003 to refer the process of overseeing the preparation of the revised Disability Bill to the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Social Inclusion, with a view to expediting preparation of the legislation. It is now planned to bring the amended Bill through the Oireachtas in 2004, It is expected to publish a Disability Bill shortly with a view to its enactment at the earliest possible date.

2.15 Public Services Broker

SFA

- *Enactment of the Public Service Broker Bill*

Update

Reach has selected a preferred supplier to build Phase 1 of the Public Services Broker (PSB), which is scheduled to go live in June 2004. With Phase 1 of implementing the Public Service Broker now underway, the need for legislation will be addressed in planning for Phase 2 of the PSB.

2.16 Health Information Bill

HC

- *A legislative framework to underpin the National Health Information Strategy will be developed*

Update

The target publication date for the Health Information Bill is one to two years following publication of the National Health Information Strategy, which is now at an advanced stage of development.

2.17 EU Directives on Electronic Communications

CMNR

- ❑ *Transposition of the EU Directive 2002/19/EC on Access to and Inter-connection of networks*
- ❑ *Transposition of the EU Directive 2002/20/EC on Authorisations*
- ❑ *Transposition of the EU Directive 2002/22/EC on Universal Service and User Rights issues*
- ❑ *Transposition of the EU Directive 2002/21/EC on Common regulatory framework*
- ❑ *Transposition of EU Directive 2002/58/EC on processing of Personal Data and the protection of privacy in the electronic communication sector*

Update

The Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources transposed the first four Directives into Irish Law on 21 July, 2003 by Regulations Under the European Communities Act. The Data Protection Directive was transposed into Irish Law on 6 November, 2003.

The EU Electronic Communications Regulatory Package is designed to bring current Community legislation on electronic communications into line with the far-reaching changes, including technology convergence, taking place in the telecommunications, media and information technologies sectors. The legislative package consists of a Framework Directive, four other Directives on Authorisations; Access and Interconnection; Universal Service and User Rights and Data Protection and a Decision on Radio Spectrum.

2.18 EU VAT Directives

FIN

- ❑ *Transposition of the EU Directive 2002/115/EC on VAT invoicing*
- ❑ *Transposition of the EU VAT Directive on electronic services 2002/38/EC*

Update

The VAT on e-Commerce Directive was transposed into national law in the 2003 Finance Act. This complies with the transposition date required in the Directive of 1 July, 2003.

Aspects of the VAT treatment of electronic invoicing have already been transposed in regulations and further changes were transposed in the 2003 Finance Act with further small changes in Regulations completed by Q1 2004.

2.19 Commercial Court

JELR

- *Implementation of recommendations on the creation of a Commercial Court*

Update

The Commercial Court was established with effect from 12 January, 2004. Provision for the rules of the new court was made under the Rules of the Superior Courts (S.I. No. 2 of 2004). The Commercial Court will use courtrooms equipped with facilities for digital audio recording and document and evidence presentation. Where required, the taking of evidence by means of video conferencing can be facilitated.

2.20 Network Security

CMNR

- *Completion of review of existing national arrangements regarding computer emergency response and implementation of a national campaign to increase awareness of network security issues amongst SMEs, citizens and the public sector*

Update

On 2 July, 2003 the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources launched the website www.netsecure.ie which forms the central focus of the national network security awareness campaign. The website provides basic information on network security issues and is focussed on the needs of citizens and SMEs. A booklet based on the website has been distributed to FÁS offices, libraries, ECDL centres and Chambers of Commerce. A review of existing national arrangements regarding computer emergency response is currently being undertaken.

2.21 Telecommunications Regulation

CMNR

Update

The heads of the Electronic Communications (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill are currently being prepared and it is expected that the Bill will be published this year. This Bill will provide for:-

- **the regulation of the .IE domain registry;**
- **access to broadcasting networks and delivery of content services to all end users at retail level;**
- **the creation of indictable offences for breaches of enforcement measures imposed by the Commission for Communications Regulation;**
- **the creation of a database of broadcasting distribution services customers.**

3. e-Government

A CENTRAL LEADERSHIP ROLE FOR GOVERNMENT IN DRIVING WIDER
ENGAGEMENT WITH TECHNOLOGIES THROUGH INTERNAL BUSINESS
PROCESSES AND SERVICE DELIVERY.

3.1 Public Services Broker

Reach

- *Develop and deploy the platform, the Public Services Broker, to support integrated access to all services of central and local government through a single point of contact and through multiple access channels*

Update

The Reach agency has selected a preferred supplier for the design and build of the Public Services Broker with the aim to have the Broker put in place in Q2 2004.

In addition to its ongoing work on the Public Services Broker, Reach developed the Inter Agency Messaging Service (IAMS) to exchange life event messages between the new General Register Office system, Department of Social & Family Affairs, Central Statistics Office and other public service agencies. The complete set of linked systems went live in September 2003 on exchange of birth, marriage, death and PPS number messages between these agencies. Death event data publication to the GMS and public service pension providers went live in Q1 2004.

In parallel with the development work, Reach are starting to concentrate with individual agencies on the development of services for online delivery in keeping with the stated aim of having services online by 2005.

Reach have compiled a wider index of over 900 services spanning information, forms, online and interactive services currently featured on public sector web sites in Ireland. For the moment, the index concentrates on Departments and their agencies.

Reach also continues to support the e-Government pilot project, reachservices - (www.reachservices.ie), which it developed as a prototype with the LGCSB.

3.1.1 Integrated Services

Reach

There are three projects under integrated services:

- ❑ *Donegal Integration Project*
- ❑ *BASIS study*
- ❑ *Marine & Natural Resources Services*

3.1.1.1 Donegal Integration Project

Reach

- ❑ *Identify and resolve issues around integrated service delivery across multiple agencies*
- ❑ *Pilot a range of services for delivery through the PSB*
- ❑ *Establish the requirements for an integrated contact centre, including an examination of channel interoperability issues.*

Update

Integrated Service Centres: office accommodation has been completed in Carndonagh, Milford, Letterkenny and Dungloe. Arrangements are being made for staff from a number of public sector agencies to relocate to these service centres.

Contact Centre: An interim report concerning attitudes to conducting government business over the phone, based on a nationwide survey of the general public, was completed in July 2003.

Reach is continuing to work with the 'Donegal Integrated Services Project' to identify and resolve issues around integrated service delivery. The Donegal pilot will implement, monitor and evaluate a system whereby staff based in the 'Integrated Services Centre', acting as registered agents of the Public Services Broker, will help deliver a cross-section of public services to members of the public in the Donegal area.

Currently, the Donegal Project Team are focusing on unemployment, medical card and Local Authority housing services. The Department of Finance's Centre for Management, Organisation & Development (CMOD) is also conducting a study based on the Donegal pilot on the potential for a common system of means assessment across the same service areas.

3.1.1.2 BASIS study

ETE

The main objective of the BASIS (Business Access to State Information and Services) project is to make it easier for business to deal with Government, and it does this by:

- *Developing and maintaining the BASIS website (www.basis.ie) which delivers a complete view of public sector information on compliance and support services based around every day actions of a business like starting a business, employing staff, expanding a business*
- *Working with other Government agencies and the Reach Agency in coordinating the development of the delivery of joined up Government services for business over the Internet*

Update

A usability and accessibility review of the BASIS website was carried out at the end of 2002 and most of the recommendations of this review have been implemented. A revised version of the site went live in September 2003.

At the meeting of the Cabinet Committee on the Information Society, held in February 2003, it was decided that on the question of the publication and dissemination of information about public services

- ***Reach, Comhairle and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment will explore the consolidation and integration of the information repositories for citizen and business services - Oasis and Basis - and report back to the Committee in September 2003, and***
- ***Departments and agencies will examine how they can contribute to the central and standardised provision of information on services to citizens and businesses in a way that removes duplication and supports the proposals brought forward by Reach, Comhairle and the Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment.***

Comhairle and the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, in consultation with Reach, the Department of the Taoiseach and CMOD, completed the required exploration and found that there was no business case to justify the integration of the BASIS and Oasis information repositories.

3.1.1.3 Marine and Natural Resources Services

CMNR

- *To provide a single point of access for online services to the commercial fishing industry and the specific customer segment of commercial Sea Fishermen*

Update

The Sea Fishing Portal is a key element of the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources (D/CMNR), implementation of e-Government that places customers at the centre of service delivery. The Sea Fishing Portal will provide a single point of access for online services to the commercial fishing industry and the specific customer segment of commercial Sea Fishermen. The portal will create a directory of services currently provided by multiple agencies under the aegis of D/CMNR. The broad group of service types are: Registration Services, Licensing, Grant Applications, Training, Advisory and Business Development Services, Trade Services and Information Services.

This portal site is in the final stages of development and is due to be launched in the near future.

3.2 Flagship Services to Citizens

3.2.1 Motor Tax

ELG

- *Facility to pay motor tax charges online*

Update

Since March 2004, it is possible to renew motor tax payments online 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, using a credit or laser card. A unique pin number is sent with the reminder by the Department of Environment, Heritage & Local Government's Vehicle Registration Unit. The new tax disc is delivered within five working days of an online transaction.

3.2.2 Driving Licences

TRA

- *Online application and payment for a driving licence*

Update

With regard to Online Driving Licence Applications, the Department of Transport's immediate priorities reflect their current focus on Penalty Points and related matters. The Department is also considering establishing a new

agency with responsibility for Driving Licences and e-enablement of that service would fall within the remit of that agency.

3.2.3 Road Haulage Licences

TRA

- *Provide online application and payment for a road haulage licence by end 2002*

Update

A quality review of the systems and processes in operation across the Division was completed in 2002. A detailed design specification has now been produced for a new database to provide a foundation for the project.

An additional priority requirement has arisen, which is to put an electronic tachograph system in place that will have EU-wide compatibility and Member State interoperability. This phase is expected to be completed by Q4 2004.

The online application and payment phase will then be progressed. It will require the availability of the Public Services Broker for both personal and business authentication, as well as appropriate technology for document capture and secure business information transmission. Decisions on timing and budget for next stages remain to be finalised.

3.2.4 Passports

FA

- *Facility to make complete passport applications online*

Update

The facility to apply online for passports is dependent on the availability of the new passport application system APS, and registration and authentication components to be delivered by the Public Services Broker. Further progress has been made on the development of the APS with the first passports from the new APS expected in Q2/Q3 2004.

3.2.5 Birth, Death and Marriage Certificates

SFA

- *Provide facility to make online applications for birth, death and marriage certificates*

Update

The new civil registration computer system went live on 1 July, 2003 in the General Register Office (GRO), Dublin, and caters for the electronic production

of birth, death and marriage certificates for both postal and personal applications. This facility has since been rolled-out to a further 40 offices around the country. Roll-out to the remaining offices will be completed by Q2 2004.

Electronic registration of births and deaths commenced in September 2003 in the Cork Registration Office and is now available in 18 offices countrywide. It is planned to complete training and roll-out to all offices by end May 2004. An electronic searching facility for genealogists and family researchers will be available in the General Register Office HQ by mid-2004.

The Civil Registration Act, 2004, facilitates the introduction of new processes and procedures for marriages along with their electronic registration and will be implemented in the latter half of 2004.

The facility to electronically request certificates online is being developed by Reach as one of the launch services on the Public Services Broker which is expected to go live in June 2004.

3.2.6 Local Authority Housing

LGCSB

- ❑ *Enable online applications for local authority housing including an online self-facility to assess eligibility*

Update

A basic system has been installed on each local Authority. Work is continuing on a more comprehensive system that will incorporate:

- **Re-engineered content on 22 Housing Services Online;**
- **Guided Tours to explain what happens to the application once received;**
- **Eligibility checker Anonymous Assessment to facilitate establishing eligibility prior to application;**
- **Online Registration and Application Citizen portal for application tracking;**
- **Backoffice workflows, using a workflow engine for Loans and Grants;**

Going forward, the application will be integrated with Reach Services using the authentication process to ensure that the user is validated prior to accessing the back-end system. The application will include an anonymous assessment facility and guided tours, both of which would enhance the application and allow for its deployment as a national solution for Housing Assessment.

3.2.7 Planning Applications & Development Control

LGCSB

- *Online access to the planning application and development control process, including citizen interaction with the draft development plan*
- *Online access to and registering of unauthorised development, commencement notices and objections*

Update

All Local Authorities have upgraded their database systems to support this application. Enhancements to this iPlan product are ongoing including the requests for Consultants via electronic means, electronic delivery of Submissions to Planners etc.

LGCSB has developed an Internet enquiry facility ePlan, currently being used by a number of sites and in the process of being rolled out to others. Enhancement to this product will include the electronic lodging of 'Representations', 'Submissions' and 'Commencement Notices'.

Development plans, unauthorised development, Architectural Inventory systems are developed and available for deployment. Migration of Planning Graphical Information is underway in some sites, positioning it for deployment on the web. This will provide an extra dimension to the ePlan access. Work is continuing on the GIS datasets and their delivery via the internet.

Online access enquiry facilities are now available in 60% of the major Local Authorities. Local Authorities have also provided online citizen interaction to their Development plans as they are being revised. Document Management facilities in the Planning Area are currently on pilot in a number of Local Authorities and, following a successful exercise, this will facilitate access to the complete Planning File online.

3.2.8 Electoral Register

LGCSB

- *Online registration on the electoral register*

Update

All Local Authorities have upgraded their internal databases to support this project. There are issues regarding the online application for Registration on the Electoral Register. The application requires authentication by designated officers, e.g. Gardaí. Therefore, a change in legislation is required before this facility can become a reality.

Deliberations with the Data Protection Commission concluded with a positive result. The software to provide online enquiry facilities is currently undergoing pilot testing and will be available for rollout. A Working Party was constituted comprising representatives from the DOEHLG, LGCSB and Local Authorities to oversee and guide the technological advances in this area.

3.2.9 Child Benefit

SFA

- ❑ *Use of birth registration data to trigger the issue of personalised part-completed claim forms from the new Child Benefit/SDM system live (November 2002).*
- ❑ *Automated award of Child benefit from the second child onwards.*

Update

Following the electronic registration of a birth, an electronic message is sent from the civil registration computer system to the client identity services computer system in DSFA. On receipt, a Personal Public Service (PPS) Number is allocated for the child and the mother is notified. An electronic message is then sent to the Child Benefit computer system to trigger the issue of part-completed Child Benefit claim forms for the first child and automatic award from the second child onwards. The electronic integration of birth registration with child benefit claim processing has been in operation since September 2003 and has resulted in significant benefits for the customer, GRO and DSFA.

3.2.10 Court Fines

Courts

- ❑ *Online payment of Court fines*

Update

It is anticipated that the building and development of the online system for payment of court fines will be completed by mid-2004.

3.2.11 Education

ES

- ❑ *Online national database of adult learning opportunities, complemented by a national telephone help-line service*
- ❑ *Online management information system to provide further education centres throughout the country with information on participation patterns and outcomes of further education programmes*

Update

Delivery of the online national database of adult learning is expected in mid 2004.

The tendering process for the design and building of an online management information system is underway. Delivery is to be phased from Q2 2004.

3.2.12 Online Area Aid Applications

AF

- *Online access to area aid applications*

Update

The Internet Registration system for all electronic services has now been developed and was launched into the live environment in mid-September 2003.

The project to provide online read-only access to Area Aid Applications is complete and, following a business decision, this service has been made available to customers who are fully registered.

3.2.13 Disease Eradication Schemes

AF

- *Development of systems to support disease eradication schemes incorporating online access for veterinary practitioners and subsequently catering for farmer access*

Update

The Animal Health Computer System (AHCS) was piloted on target in Q4 2003. To date, it has been implemented in four District Veterinary Offices (DVOs) and will be rolled out to the remaining DVOs in 2004. The new system has been developed to support the Department's various animal health and welfare activities. Data concerning annual herd tests to assist with combating the spread of Tuberculosis and Brucellosis in the National Bovine Herd, are captured currently on stand-alone database systems in each DVO which date back to 1986; these have been bypassed by huge advances in technology which are not compatible with the Department's other strategic systems. The purpose of AHCS is to convert the stand-alone systems into a single central database; to significantly improve the functionality available to users; and to ensure that the system is capable of interfacing directly with the Department's other major computer systems. Private Veterinary Practitioners (PVP's) are now able to interact directly with the AHCS System over the Internet. It is intended that farmers will be given access to the system at a future date. The system is fully

integrated with the Corporate Customer System (CCS) and also shares animal data with current and future systems (such as the Animal Movement System and the National Genotype Programme) to give a complete picture of an animal's life cycle. Roll-out is ongoing and will continue throughout 2004.

3.3 Flagship Services to Business

3.3.1 Revenue

3.3.1.1 Online Banking

RevComm

- ❑ *Enhanced management services for customers by end 2002*
- ❑ *Online banking*

Update

Following a workshop for the main Revenue Online Service (ROS) users in February 2002, a number of enhancements were introduced to the Access Control System within ROS to deal with issues that arose for large companies and tax agents using ROS.

The online banking solution available currently was a short-term answer for Income Tax Pay & File in 2002. The preferred technical solution will be made available when the banks are ready. However, to date, they are not in a position to provide this option.

3.3.1.2 Online Vehicle Registration Tax

RevComm

- ❑ *Online Vehicle Registration Tax for motor vehicle dealers*

Update

This was delivered in November 2002, ahead of schedule. Currently over 70% of eligible vehicles are being registered via the online service. The take-up in some regions is in excess of 80%.

3.3.1.3 Online Provision of Tax Clearance Certificates

RevComm

- ❑ *Online form and electronic publishing of Tax Clearance status*
- ❑ *Automatic processing of Tax Clearance applications*

Update

This allows a taxpayer to submit an online application form for Tax Clearance, through a secure facility from the Revenue website. The application form is then automatically processed by the standard Revenue systems and if the taxpayer gives permission, the Tax Clearance status will be published through the Revenue web site and the status will remain on the site for the duration of the certificate. Access to the site is by pin security.

Since November 2003, there has been automated processing within the Revenue systems of Tax Clearance applications, whether received on paper or electronically.

3.3.2 Online Data Collection

CSO

Online data submissions for:

- Services inquiry*
- Business Register inquiry*
- Agricultural inquiry*

Update

The CSO participated in Phase II of the BASIS project for the three inquiries named above. Phase II involved a feasibility study, the design of services for delivery over the internet and a costs benefit analysis. This project was completed at the end of 2002.

A project to put the Milk and Milk Products Inquiry (an Agricultural inquiry) and the Retail Sales Inquiry (a Services inquiry) online began in July 2003. The former was put online in October 2003, while the latter went live in December 2003.

The Business Register Inquiry will not be put online as a result of recommendations from the BASIS project.

3.3.3 Commercial Rates

LGCSB

- Online pilot system for commercial rates payments in Dublin City Council*
- Online Payments of Commercial Rates countrywide*

Update

The www.eforms.ie site facilitates payments by credit and debit card. These options are unsuitable for commercial payments involving large sums of money so an Electronic Funds Transfer facility was developed by the LGCSB. Pending the availability of a business identifier on the Public Services Broker (PSB), it has been agreed that the www.eforms.ie site will provide an interim username/password login option for commercial payments. This interim solution is available and Dublin City Council will act as a pilot site for online rates payments. The scheduled 'live' date has been deferred to Quarter 2 2004.

The implementation of an online rates payment system in Dublin City Council is seen as a pilot project for the rest of the country. Further enhancements during 2004 will allow customers to view their debtor account details online. The solution will be compatible with the PSB.

3.3.4 Land Registration

LReg

- *Development of the Land Registry's Electronic Access Service (EAS) to support access to a broader range of folios and filed map plans*

Update

During 2003, the EAS has been significantly enhanced in order to increase accessibility, extend functionality and improve ease of use for its increasing customer base. In particular, there is a major extension of the EAS underway which has the express objective of providing online access to a broader range of folios and filed plan map records. This work is being conducted through a Document Imaging programme which commenced in late 2001 and is scheduled for completion in late 2004.

- This is a major phase of the EAS project and is supported by the Government's Information Society Fund which has the express objective of converting an estimated 6.4 million pages of unique paper records into electronic format. The programme of converting these documents commenced in January 2002 and exceeded four million pages by Q4 2003. About 12,000 to 14,000 images per day are created, indexed, checked and published over the web. To date, uptake and usage of the EAS service has far exceeded projections with:
- An estimated 70% of the Land Registry's potential customer base regularly accessing services through the EAS

- **Over 70% of applications for some services being made online rather than through traditional channels (public counters and post)**
- **About 2,300 online business transactions per day being conducted through the EAS**
- **The number of transactions conducted through the system increasing at a rate of over 60% per annum.**

3.3.5 Work Permits

ETE

- *An online application system for work permits will be provided by early 2003*

Update

In 2002, the BASIS project carried out a feasibility study of nine services spread across five separate government agencies. The feasibility study included a high-level design specification for each of these services in the context of the Public Services Broker.

These services included the development of the online application for a work permit, a service delivered by the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment. The BASIS project intends to continue its strategy in this area and develop an online service for work permits. One of the key elements of this project will be the sharing and re-use of information collected by the following government agencies:

- **D/Enterprise, Trade and Employment Work Permits;**
- **Companies Registration Office;**
- **FÁS;**
- **D/Justice, Equality and Law Reform (Garda National Immigration Bureau);**
- **Revenue;**
- **D/Foreign Affairs.**

This project is also listed as one of the launch services for the Public Services Broker. It is expected that the detailed design phase of this project will be completed by May 2004. The online service is scheduled to go live in the first half of 2005.

3.3.6 Company Registration & Online Returns

ETE

- *Online filing of annual returns*
- *Online registration of a new company by early 2004*

Update

Annual returns can be filed wholly electronically using electronic signatures. Currently, it is necessary to use a software package to avail of this facility. By mid-2004, this facility will be made available on the web.

The Online Registration of a Company project is dependent on the Act that will give effect to the recommendations of the Report of the Company Law Review Group. New company incorporations are filed electronically by submitting a disk CRODISK. 80% of company incorporations are filed by this method. It is intended to introduce fully online incorporation by 2005, when the necessary statutory steps have been taken to implement the Report of the Company Law Review Group.

It is currently possible to conduct company searches online and to obtain duplicate certificates of incorporation, solely for public use. Several forms required under the Companies Acts can now be filed online:

- **registration of a business name;**
- **change of address of a company, business name or external company;**
- **changes in the directors/secretary of the company.**

It is intended to make all forms available online by mid-2004.

3.3.7 Patents

ETE

- *Online access to Patents Office Journal*
- *Access to the Patents Offices Registers and Databases, with facilities to search the Patent and Trademark designs databases, to renew Patents and Trademarks and to view, search and renew Industrial Designs*
- *e-Payment of Renewal Fees*

Update

The Online Journal search system provides searching of all journals published since November 2002.

Online access to the Patents Office Official Journal/Registers/Databases is available since January 2003.

The online payment of renewal fees for Patents and Trademarks project is ongoing. Substantial work has been achieved and tenders for banking services have been issued. However, during the progressing of the project, it was decided as a matter of administrative and financial expediency that the facility for ePayments should be extended across the entire Department and not restricted to the Patents Office. This additional work, together with extended discussions with the Department of Finance regarding sanction for the use of Credit and Debit Cards and agreement on how the system will be financed going forward, has resulted in the go-live date being pushed back until Q2 2004.

A feasibility study into the online filing of Patent, Trade Mark and Industrial Design applications was conducted. The report was presented to the Patents Office in June 2003. Following feedback from the Office, the final report was published in October 2003.

3.3.8 Mining Licence

CMNR

- *Apply online for a prospecting licence including access to Geographical Information Data*

Update

Minerals Administration and Programme Support (MAPS) Phase 1 provides an integrated system with Geographical Information Systems (GIS) functionality for the management of activities in Exploration and Mining in the State and for the marketing and promotion of inward investment. MAPS also provides an overall Architecture and Development Environment for ISD on which the other business applications will be implemented.

Phase 1 – The first release of this system that includes the minerals prospecting licence application facility and a credit card payment facility for public access online is available at www.dcmnronline.ie

Phase 2 – This phase of the system, providing a full online transaction for Prospecting Licence Applications, is under development and is expected to be implemented in Q2 of 2004.

3.3.9 Forestry

CMNR

- *Apply online for forestry grants*

Update

In the light of the Government decision to transfer responsibility for the Forestry Service from the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources to the Department of Agriculture and Food the development of the Integrated Forestry Information System (IFORIS) is on hold.

3.3.10 Fisheries

CMNR

- *Online application for vessel registration certificates and fishing licences*

Update

The Integrated Fisheries Information System (IFIS) provides a single centralised database containing all information pertinent to the administration and enforcement of Sea Fisheries. The objective of IFIS is to provide a *single system* that will integrate the related business processes of Licensing, Registration and Sea Fisheries Control online; it will facilitate access to information for reporting purposes, enhance the ability of the Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources to exchange data with external agencies, and maximise the potential for citizen access.

The IFIS system will be developed and deployed on Internet architecture. This means that IFIS users, subject to appropriate authorisation and security, and regardless of their location, will access the system via an Intranet browser on their desktop or portable device. It also means that aspects of the system can be exposed for citizen access over the public Internet infrastructure.

This development is planned over a number of phases with priority requirements to be implemented in Phase 1. The first phase of this system will support the Department's business process as it relates to:

- **Issuing Licences for Sea Fishing Vessels;**
- **Registration of Sea Fishing Vessels;**
- **Capacity management of the Irish Fishing fleet;**
- **Monitoring the operational Activities of Sea Fishing Vessels;**
- **Recording the declared Landings of Sea Fishing Vessels and Shellfish gatherers as reported on EU Log Sheets;**
- **Compilation of statistics on fishing effort and catch for policy development and EU regulatory compliance;**
- **Transmission of reports on Vessel Registration and Fish Catch to the EU FIDES II System.**

The design stage of Phase 1 of this system was completed in December 2003. Next phase of the system is expected to be implemented in Q4 of 2004.

3.3.11 Change of vehicle ownership

ELG

- ❑ *Notify change of ownership of a vehicle online for major motor traders*
- ❑ *Notify change of ownership of a vehicle online for smaller traders*
- ❑ *Notify change of ownership of a vehicle online for person to person transactions*

Update

The Department of the Environment & Local Government will put in place arrangements to amend the infrastructure to accept online notifications of changes in vehicle ownership as access to an authenticated customer base becomes available.

3.3.12 Redundancy Payments

ETE

- ❑ *Online service to calculate redundancy payments for employers and employees*

Update

The calculator is on the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment website www.entemp.ie.

3.3.13 Earth Resources Information Warehouse GSI

CMNR

- ❑ *Online provision and purchase of geological data Earth Resources Information Warehouse*

Update

The first phase of this project is the indexing and scanning of all paper records. The next phase is the upgrading of internal database systems and the inclusion of a Geographical Information System (GIS) frontend. The online system is projected for 2004.

3.4 e-Enabling the Public Service

FIN

- ❑ *Proposals will be progressed during 2004 to shape developments to facilitate the creation of a knowledge-based organisation in the context of the unfolding modernisation process.*

Update

The XML toolset (available under a public service drawdown contract) is being used to develop the e-Cabinet system. In addition, it is being evaluated in the context of preparatory work for the development of Small Claims, e-Legislation and e-Bills systems.

A messaging technology developed by Reach is being used to transfer birth and death notifications from the GRO to those Departments and Organisations requiring them.

Policy positions are also being developed in relation to interoperability and identity management, with particular reference to the work already carried out on the Public Service Identifier (PSI) for personal identities and the Business Services Identifier (BSI) for business entities, to ensure that they can facilitate all public service identity management requirements.

3.5 e-Cabinet Project

TAO

A prototype for the e-Cabinet project will be developed in 2003 with full deployment thereafter incorporating:

- *Electronic distribution and management of Cabinet papers*
- *Use of technologies to improve presentation of complex issues at Cabinet*
- *Use of technologies in direct support of Cabinet meetings*
- *Creation of new information resources.*

Update

The e-Cabinet initiative is progressing well. Following testing of the new software, Phase I of the application (drafting and managements of memoranda within and between Departments) was piloted in Q3 2003 in three departments (D/Finance, D/ET&E and D/JELR). Familiarisation sessions for users of the system across departments were organised and hosted in D/Taoiseach in September/October 2003. A presentation of the system was made to Cabinet in December 2003.

Issues which were identified in the pilot, including those due to the wide variety of infrastructures across Departments, have been addressed. Feedback from the pilot and from participants in the familiarisation sessions has been taken on board in the further development of the application and many enhancements have been added.

The key infrastructure, including that for the Cabinet suite, is now in place and operational. Phase 1 of the system will be deployed to departments for May 2004. It will enable electronic drafting, collaboration and transmission of Government Memoranda from the initial draft through all stages of the process up to and including the Cabinet table.

Liaison and consultation with key stakeholders will continue and further functionality will be added in subsequent phases.

3.6 e-Legislation

AGS

- *e-Enablement of the process governing the preparation of legislation*

Update

A report documenting and specifying the business requirements of the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel was published in 2003. A Project Charter has been approved for the next phase of the e-Legislation Project which is to develop and implement, in consultation with other stakeholders and having regard to the e-Cabinet and e-Democracy initiatives, an e-Legislation solution to support the process of authoring and managing legislation text Bills, Restatements and Statutory Instruments.

Currently, as part of the e-Legislation Project, the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel is engaged in collaboration with the Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas in the design of a Document Type Definition for Bills to support the authoring, amending and exchange of Bills between Government Departments and Offices which will set the standard to which all Bills will require to be formatted in the future.

3.7 Public Procurement - online tendering

FIN

- *Prioritise the implementation of procurement systems to support online receipt of tenders as a further development of the e-tenders facility already in place. Objectives include:*
 - *A facility enabling suppliers to reply to tenders electronically*
 - *A facility to provide integrated access to all procurement opportunities with the public sector, evolving towards supporting all stages of the procurement process online*
 - *Online tendering for state contracts*

Update

A senior procurement specialist is on secondment for one year from June 2003 to work with the National Public Procurement Policy Unit (NPPPU) in the Department of Finance. An implementation strategy has been developed to facilitate procurement management reform supported by low cost and low risk e-procurement initiatives. The focus will be on achieving sustainable change through ensuring knowledge and skills transfer, organisational capacity building, approaches to aggregating public sector demand and enhancement of existing e-procurement systems. Work is ongoing on all elements of the strategy including the following:

- As part of the organisational capacity building initiative, procurement improvement projects are in train in three Departments/sectors and by September 2004 projects will be completed in eight Departments/sectors;**
- An Aggregation Strategy is almost complete and an e-Catalogue is being acquired to represent aggregated arrangements in electronic format;**
- A new management company has been appointed to run the e-tendering site on an Oracle platform. The site is being enhanced to improve overall performance. A Post Box (i.e. electronic tender submission facility) and a notification system are being developed and will be rolled out by mid-year. Work has started on developing more focused training and education for public sector procurement in the medium to longer term.**

The Government Contracts Committee has been reconstituted into committees for (i) goods and services (GCC) and (ii) construction (GCCC). Specific guidance on construction related procurement will be developed in consultation with all key stakeholders in the coming year. On the general procurement side, new guidelines on tendering process, reflecting provisions in new EU public procurement Directives, will issue shortly.

3.8 e-Estimates

FIN

- *e-Enabling interaction between the Department of Finance and public agencies in relation to the administration of the public finances, including the Estimates process and the ongoing monitoring of public expenditure.***

Update

The Department of Finance has commenced a multi-year project to modernise the IT systems supporting the Multi-Annual Budgets/Estimates cycle and the ongoing monitoring of public expenditure and to e-enable the associated interactions with other Departments and Offices.

In this context, a market exercise to acquire a Financial Business Intelligence Application was completed in December 2003 with the selection of the GEAC Performance Management Product. The Department is using the software to build a pilot application with a completion date of mid-Summer 2004. The pilot will replicate a complete Estimates life cycle and enable validation and proving of the selected technology.

3.9 Development Applications Tracking System

EHLG

- *The delivery of a system to facilitate the receipt by the Department's Heritage Division of draft plans, planning and development applications, foreshore licence applications etc. from planning and other regulatory authorities. The system will enable the tracking of applications and submissions made thereon and will provide public access.*

Update

The tender process has been concluded on this project and a preferred supplier has been identified, with whom contract negotiations are at an advanced stage. Work will begin on the project shortly and development is scheduled to take approximately eight months.

3.10 Integrated Housing Package

EHLG

- *Automated exchange of information between local authorities and the Department of the Environment and Local Government.*
- *Unified housing system for all 88 housing authorities.*
- *Online provision of housing services.*

Update

Tenders have been received and evaluated for the development of this system to handle all elements of local authority housing business. A preferred supplier has been identified and the final requirements specification is being concluded.

The system will facilitate data exchange between Local Authorities and the Department and will enable a range of housing services to be made available online. The development and roll-out of the system is likely to take approximately three years.

3.11 Public Sector Technical Communications Infrastructure

FIN

- *The VPN Virtual Private Network will provide for:*
 - *Fixed, mobile and lo-call voice services for all sectors of Government*
 - *Managed data services to support the intranet needs of various sectors of the public service, interconnectivity with the Public Services Broker, and public service access to the internet*
 - *Mobile or e-working employees and agents of Government to access Government servers and portals securely.*

Update

Infrastructure completed.

3.12 e-Payments Strategy

IS Sec

- *Priorities will include:*
 - *fostering wider engagement with electronic payment channels*
 - *involving the social partners in building consensus around making greater use of electronic payments in the economy*
 - *the e-enablement of all payments to and from Government*
 - *the development of electronic payment solutions for those who do not currently hold bank accounts*
 - *active involvement of IPSO Irish Payment Services Organisation and other interested parties in progressing this agenda.*

Update

An Accenture report on an National ePayments Strategy was published in 2003. Work is continuing under the different strands including use of smart control technologies, electronic transfer funds in all Government transactions and banking mechanisms to facilitate the needs of the unbanked.

3.13 National Spatial Data Infrastructure

EHLG

- *Integrate spatial data or geographically referenced information with all wider information-management processes across Government, consistent with the*

principles underpinning integrated delivery of services through the Public Services Broker

Update

The Department has now established appropriate structures to manage the project with representation from a range of agencies at working group and steering committee level, reporting to the overall Steering Committee of the National Spatial Strategy. The agencies involved will agree a timetable for the development of the Data Infrastructure.

4. eBusiness

SUPPORTING THE COMPETITIVENESS OF BUSINESS IN MEETING THE
CHALLENGES OF THE NEW COMPETITIVE ENVIRONMENT

4.1 Acceleration Fund and eBIT eBusiness and IT Advice initiative

ETE

- *The Acceleration Fund was established by Enterprise Ireland to fast-track significant scale projects designed to integrate ICTs into business processes.*

- *The eBusiness and IT Advice initiative was launched with the objective of building on the Acceleration Fund and achieving a broad impact across a larger number of companies.*

Update

An independent evaluation of the Acceleration Fund was completed in March 2003. As recommended in this evaluation, a new initiative eBIT was launched in May 2003. The eBit eBusiness and IT Advice initiative is managed by Enterprise Ireland (EI) with support from IDA Ireland, Shannon Development and Údarás na Gaeltachta on behalf of the Dept of Enterprise, Trade & Employment. It provides assistance to SMEs, mainly in the manufacturing sector. In terms of enterprise development, the priority is to assist and encourage Irish enterprises and SMEs, in particular, to make the most appropriate use of eBusiness and IT in the interests of competitiveness.

eBIT focused on providing consultancy advice to assist companies to properly identify their IT and eBusiness needs in the context of their overall business strategy and to formulate an appropriate action plan to meet those needs. Enterprises were offered the option of a free one-day visit by an IT/eBusiness consultant and/or a 50% grant towards a more extensive consultancy assignment. Those activities were complemented by the continuation of a range of activities disseminating the best practice messages of the eBusiness Acceleration Fund to all companies. The consultancy element of this project finished in December 2003, with 110 companies having completed free day consultancy places and 48/49 companies having participated in the grant-aided multi-day consultancy.

The Tánaiste launched Enterprise Ireland's enhanced Openup campaign of awareness and education in eBusiness and IT in December 2003 to disseminate the eBusiness and IT message to companies. The campaign which is rolling out over the next six months also includes a short video giving the key messages

for companies, for broadcast in Dublin and Cork; a CD containing case studies and guides; and an information pack which Enterprise Ireland has developed and mailed to some 8,500 companies. The www.openup.ie website continues to disseminate best practice eBusiness information and deals comprehensively with every aspect of the eBIT project.

4.2 ITS 2007

ETE

- *ITS 2007 is a range of specific initiatives by Enterprise Ireland aimed at developing high value added, knowledge intensive industries, and helping them to achieve fast growth. Information can be found at the website <http://www.enterprise-ireland.com/>. Initiatives include:*
- *Webworks – flexible, highly wired office accommodation and management support, for clusters for regionally based high tech companies.*

Update

It is envisaged that contracts will be awarded by mid 2004. Construction should commence early in 2005. However, this will depend in large part on progress in relation to the planning process.

4.3 The Digital Hub

CMNR

- *The Digital Hub <http://www.thedigitalhub.com/> will provide:*
- *Start-up facilities for early stage, fast growth and established companies to undertake R&D into digital industries*
- *The Digital Hub Development Agency Bill will be progressed during 2002 to provide a statutory basis for Digital Media Development Ltd*
- *Dublin City Council to develop the necessary telecommunications infrastructure for the Hub*

Update

Currently, Media Lab Europe and eight digital media companies are located in The Digital Hub and employ in the region of 200 people. They cover a mix of sectors including eLearning, ePublishing, web development, digital TV, multimedia, digital asset management and audiovisual production. They are now operating at 157 Thomas Street and the upper floors of 10 – 13 Thomas Street.

A new project office opened at 10-13 Thomas Street in December 2002. The office also includes an information centre, a learning space for the local

community and local schools and facilities to showcase digital media projects as well as lettable office space on the upper floors.

The new Digital Depot building was launched in late 2003. Digital Depot comprises 20,000 sq ft of flexible enterprise space specifically created to meet the demands of the Digital Content/Media sector. The development is being undertaken as a joint venture between Enterprise Ireland, Dublin City Council and the Digital Hub Development Agency. Havok, an international player in the Games Sector, has located their Corporate Headquarters in The Digital Hub and is one of the first tenants of the Digital Depot.

Three consortia have been shortlisted for the development of the second phase of The Digital Hub. The project is estimated to deliver in the region of 500,000 sq ft of development through a mix of enterprise, retail, residential, learning and educational space. Subject to planning and the suitability of development bids, it is intended that construction work will commence on site in 2004.

4.4 e-Procurement Awareness

ETE

- *To work with major OEMs and their Irish suppliers, to establish electronic trading between them*

Update

Enterprise Ireland (EI) established a key e-procurement action within its National Linkage Programme to work with major OEMs and their Irish suppliers, to establish electronic trading between them.

EI held a series of major conferences to highlight e-procurement trends amongst major OEMs and their Irish suppliers in 2001.

The e-Procurement Awareness run by the Business Linkages Department of Enterprise Ireland in conjunction with IBM was a fixed-term project which finished in 2001.

The Business Linkages Department of Enterprise Ireland is primarily focused on seeking out, and promoting new business opportunities for Irish suppliers in either local multinationals or in new emerging markets.

4.5 Business Development

ETE

- *Enterprise Ireland will continue to support clients under the EI Business Development Model:*
 - *Innovation - the Technology Development Advisors will assist companies to identify their requirements and will call the relevant expert services within and external to EI to meet that need*
 - *Operations - the Benchmarking and World Class Business services will address the issue of eBusiness in their work with companies. In addition eBusiness projects will also be eligible for subsidy under the proposed Competitiveness Fund*
 - *Human Resource Development - the training advisors in the HRD section will assess the eBusiness skills needs of companies and put together the appropriate intervention from EI and external resources*
 - *Enterprise Ireland to provide developmental support for new and existing companies who are developing and supplying hardware, software and services*

Update

Enterprise Ireland (EI) has completed development of a website database for suppliers. Over 700 profiles have been prepared on industrial supply companies, which will assist those companies in introducing their products or services to major customers at home and overseas. Work is still ongoing on this project.

EI is developing 'Knowledge Sharing' within EI by establishing Knowledge Communities. Communities have been established for engineering, regional development, investment services, software & international traded services and international internship (EI Graduate Programme).

The Software & Internationally Traded Services categorises information under Internet Telecoms Technology, Financial/Life Sciences, Digital Media, High potential start-ups, Electronics Software Technology and Software Clusters. Detailed information on target sectors, EI clients within each sector, upcoming events and an information store are provided.

The regional development knowledge community provides updated town profiles for over 100 towns throughout Ireland, as well as relevant regional policy documents.

Investment Services has proved a key information source for Development Advisors. This site includes a guide to writing proposals, guidelines and limits for financial incentives as well as information on venture capital funds, the Mentor and Business Angel programmes and Equity Investments.

4.6 Chambers of Commerce SME projects

ETE

- *The main focus of the PRISM III programme was e-procurement as the main impetus to the use of ICTs among SMEs. CCI intend to deliver this programme by:*
 - *raising awareness of the challenges and opportunities of e-procurement both within the public and the private sector*
 - *organising training programmes to provide SME owner-managers with the skills necessary to develop and implement an e-procurement strategy*
 - *commissioning the fourth consecutive annual SME eBusiness Survey*
 - *undertaking a series of dissemination activities that will share the knowledge and experience acquired through the programme.*

Update

CCI ran a successful programme in the last six months of 2003 to raise awareness of the impact that e-procurement will have on suppliers and to provide training to SMEs. As part of the programme, nearly 600 SMEs attended workshops around the country where speakers from the public and private sector provided an overview of developments and best practice in e-procurement. An online training programme was developed for these companies that will enable them to develop and implement a strategy to meet the challenges and opportunities. CCI also published a series of guides to trading online and internet security. The SME eBusiness Survey 2003 showed that there is a steady growth in the use of internet applications and that confidence in eBusiness is still relatively high, though there are concerns about broadband availability and security.

4.7 Shannon Development

ETE

- *Shannon Development has a number of initiatives that would significantly enhance the Information Society and eBusiness environment in the Shannon Region. These include:*
 - *Knowledge network project: a unique initiative creating a network of five key technology locations in Ireland's Shannon Region that will work to bring business, education and innovation together, to create Ireland's most*

dynamic and exciting world class location for living and working in the knowledge area

- *eCluster programme: the e-Cluster programme assists companies to create and implement an ICT Improvement Plan which meets the needs of customers and suppliers and focuses on achieving return on the technology investment and improving the bottom line*

Update

Knowledge network project - each location includes an Innovation Works facility to grow new knowledge-based start-ups, state-of the-art business expansion space for growing businesses, and strong links to a Third Level Education Facility.

The National Technological Park, Limerick, was established in the mid-1980's; the company has recently invested €18m in three new locations - Kerry Technology Park, Tipperary Technology Park and Birr Technology Centre.

Mary Harney TD, Tánaiste and Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment launched Information Age Park Ennis in November, 2003. This new 35-acre Technology Park is being constructed by Shannon Development on the outskirts of Ennis. A total of €110 million will be invested between the public and private sectors in the new Park over the next 15 years. Planning permission has been granted for Phase 1, involving investment of €9 million by Shannon Development, to provide 45,000 square feet of incubation, large floor-plate and own door office accommodation within the next 12 months. Infrastructural work has already commenced.

eCluster Programme - Further eCluster Programmes consisting of 15 companies are ongoing. The Programme consists of training on all aspects of Information and Communications Technologies (8 days), and focused ICT consultancy (17 days).

4.7.1

- *Shannon Broadband Demand Study: To identify, stimulate and consolidate demand for broadband in the Shannon region.*

The Shannon Broadband Demand Study was approved for funding through the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment under the Information Society Fund in 2003. Shannon Broadband Ltd. (Shannon Broadband) was set up by Shannon Development, working with the local authorities, to progress the development of a world-

class broadband infrastructure in the region. This followed a review of telecommunications infrastructure in the Shannon Region which identified significant supply-side deficits. The aim of the Shannon Broadband project is to initiate a new demand-driven approach to last mile broadband issues – Shannon Connect.

Update

Shannon Broadband completed three principal activities in 2003 with funding under the Information Society Fund.

- **Shannon Broadband put in place a cross-organisational team involving all the partner organisations, known as the Shannon Connect team. The team had a key role in information-gathering, given its linkages and knowledge of the Region. The consultant, Mason Communications, met with the Shannon Connect Team and produced a final report between October and December 2003. The report covers current initiatives in the Region; broadband brokerage international initiatives particularly UK and an overview of the Region's Potential Demand Profile and a Regional Action Plan to achieve 100% coverage.**
- **A Database Management System with Front End was put in place during 2003, to enable geographical location/community requirements in the Region to be captured and appropriate solutions determined. The database was designed so that the service requirement of each community group/organisation may be correctly quantified. A formal launch of a web-based tool to enable data entry by communities/organisations is planned for 2004 to coincide with the formal launch of the Shannon Connect Initiative.**
- **Shannon Broadband held a regionally focussed broadband forum for information-gathering and action planning purposes, in December 2003. All interested parties, including those sourced from the contact databases of Shannon Development and the Local Authorities, were invited to input to the Action Plan during this interactive session.**

4.8 eBusiness Monitor Project

ETE

- *The key objectives of the Forfás study were to :*
 - *Identify, monitor and assess key environmental factors necessary for eBusiness development*
 - *Adoption of eBusiness in key sectors of the Irish economy*

- *Assess implications of international eBusiness developments/drivers market, technology, etc. on Irish eBusiness environment*
- *Compare Ireland's environment for eBusiness growth and the performance of key sectors in eBusiness, relative to leading countries*

Update

In August 2002, Forfás initiated a new eBusiness monitoring process with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland.

The final Forfás eBusiness monitor report was published in December 2003. The report compares Ireland's eBusiness performance with those of eight leading eBusiness economies worldwide. It outlines that eBusiness, while currently worth €77 billion (within the EU), is forecast to grow to €2.2 trillion by the end of 2006, representing a significant growth opportunity for Irish industry. Ireland's eBusiness environment has many strengths when compared with other leading eBusiness economies, particularly the availability of IT supports/skills within the economy, the pro-business fiscal environment, and the commitment to eGovernment. However, a number of key issues remain to be addressed if Ireland is to retain and develop its current global eBusiness standing and if we are to promote greater eBusiness adoption and the creation of an environment which further supports eBusiness development. Action in areas such as broadband roll-out, enterprise supports to SME's, continued implementation of eGovernment, and increased societal adoption of internet technologies will have direct and substantial influence on the scale and timing of the development of eBusiness in Ireland. Four priority recommendations are proposed to maximise Ireland's eBusiness opportunity and aimed at driving enterprise eBusiness adoption, eBusiness innovation and eBusiness foreign direct investment.

- **The Government's implementation plan for the emerging knowledge society (New Connections) needs to be supported by an underpinning vision and roadmap**
- **The introduction of widespread availability of broadband access at competitive prices**
- **The rollout of eProcurement in the Public Service should be progressed as a matter of priority**

- **A review of eBusiness policies and supports should be undertaken**

With reference to the last recommendation, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment have established a steering group to review eBusiness supports and policies for SMEs. It is intended to have a strategy document completed by April 2004.

4.9 Forfás

ETE

Forfás continues to undertake a range of studies with the development agencies, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and other bodies that are of relevance to the Information Society, including:

- *Progression on the implementation of the digital content study with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment*
- *Completion of a major review of the potential to further develop ICT clusters in Ireland*
- *Completion of a major review of the potential of wireless as an internationally tradable sector from Ireland*
- *Continuation of the broadband benchmarking and Policy Analysis reports (January 2004). The next report will be prepared for November 2004.*

Update

The report 'Wireless communications: an area of opportunity for Ireland' was published in April 2004.

The report on Broadband Telecommunications Benchmarking study was published in January 2004. The next report will be prepared for November 2004.

4.10 InterTradeIreland ITI

ETE

- *Explore the benefits of all-island co-operation towards enhancing Ireland's standing as a world-leading location for eBusiness and knowledge-based economic activity - Digital Island Project.*

Update

The mandated work in the three priority areas set out in the decision of the North South Ministerial Council in June 2002 - eBusiness, ICT Infrastructure and Services, and Government Services to Business - is continuing.

4.11 eWork Awareness

ETE

- *Increase awareness of the competitive advantages e-working can offer firms.*

Update

In April 2000, the eWork Business Awareness Campaign was established by Enterprise Ireland (EI), as an initiative of the e-Work Action Forum. Focused on business decision makers, the Campaign aimed to increase awareness of the competitive advantages e-working can offer firms. Initiatives included the development of Irish e-working case studies, the production of printed guidelines for business, the establishment of a website and the provision of an 1850 helpdesk. They also included national radio and press advertising campaigns and the commissioning of MRBI to conduct major surveys to monitor e-work practices within Irish businesses.

2002 was the third and final year of the eWork Business Campaign. Results of the campaign are published on EI's e-work website at www.ework.ie under 'Reports & Surveys'.

4.12 eWorking Training

ETE

- *The e-Work Action Forum to develop a recognised scheme of accreditation in the competencies necessary to support successful e-working arrangements during 2002.*

Update

During its lifetime (November 1999 – December 2002), the e-Work Action Forum achieved considerable progress in furthering the e-work agenda. It raised awareness of the potential for e-work through remedying information gaps and addressed the issue of the lack of specific training, which previously impacted negatively on the operating environment for e-work.

To address the training issue, the Forum considered that a special e-work training course would greatly facilitate an increased uptake in e-working options. Consequently, during 2002, the Forum worked with FÁS to develop a suitable training course on the competencies necessary to support successful e-work arrangements. The objective was to develop a nationally recognised and accredited course in e-working which could be delivered and supported using the internet.

The course was launched at the end of 2002. It is aimed at those employees who are currently e-working, those who wish to e-work and their managers. The course covers issues such as communications, technical issues, workspace, regulatory background and self-management for the e-employee. A separate module for managers only, deals with managing e-work. The course is delivered online at <http://www.fas-netcollege.com>. It has recognised accreditation by the Further Education and Training Awards Council (FETAC).

5. Research & Development

ESTABLISHING THE FOUNDATIONS FOR INNOVATION THROUGH SCIENCE
AND TECHNOLOGY TO SUPPORT KNOWLEDGE-BASED ECONOMIC ACTIVITY

5.1 NDP objectives

ETE

- *Enterprise Ireland has developed programmes to:*
 - *Build the capability of firms to carry out R&D at a significant and continuous level and to initiate strategic R&D development;*
 - *Encourage and support high quality, high risk R&D projects;*
 - *Encourage company participation in collaborative R&D projects, both national and international;*
 - *Develop their management ability to control the R&D process.*

Update

€2.5bn has been allocated to Research, Technological Development and Innovation across a range of sectors under Ireland's National Development Plan 2000-2006. This funding is being administered through a range of schemes under the Productive Sector Operational Programme. Enterprise Ireland (EI) has developed sectoral strategies in food, services, engineering, printing and construction products.

Key investments aimed at building Ireland's research capability are now underway across basic and applied research activities and innovation support. Investments are aimed at building R&D capability and capacity in industry, including collaboration between industry and the third level sector. A range of initiatives is also being pursued to support the further development of the pervasive technologies of ICT and biotechnology.

At the end of 2003, the funding supplied to support companies under the RTDI Competitive Scheme since June 2000 reached €43 million. In December 2003, the total funding committed to these company R&D projects reached €111 million. This committed funding will assist almost 600 companies to achieve new market advantage through products or processes developed through enhanced application of technologies.

EI will maintain current progress, continue promotion through the R&D Awareness Initiative and will also work with companies to identify technology issues and opportunities using its recently-formed teams of technologists.

5.1.1 Technological Infrastructure/NDP

CMNR

- *Contribute to balanced regional development by strengthening the technological infrastructure of the regions and matching them to the needs of enterprise*

Update

See Chapter 1 - Telecommunications

5.1.2 Regional Development/Infrastructure

ETE

- *Contribute to balanced regional development by strengthening the technological infrastructure of the regions and matching them to the needs of enterprise*

Update

Enterprise Ireland (EI) is taking a clear and pro-active leadership role in the regions to assist client companies in accessing and using technology. The aim is to build innovative regions where the business environment is supportive, where there are good networks and linkages, and where companies are provided with the expertise and support to diagnose their technology needs.

Initiatives include:

- **Entrepreneurial training in regional locations through the enterprise platform initiative. This initiative brings entrepreneurs into the regions where they are supported to develop business plans. All participants on these initiatives are required to have previous experience in industry. Experience has shown that these entrepreneurs subsequently stay within the region. Over 70% have businesses that are based on information.**
- **Regional incubators are being established with grant support of €24 million in nearly all the Institutes of Technology in regional centres around Ireland. A further €1 million has been committed to colleges to assist with the design and development costs and then the management costs of the incubators. The first incubator completed was at the National College of Ireland and €2,412,502 of the €2.54 million committed was paid in January 2003.**
- **Two networks have been established with TecNet, involving all the Institutes of Technology and the Atlantic University Alliance. The resources of these groups will be directed to client companies to create and sustain flexible relationships between the research and technology community within the college and local industry. EI intend to run further development activities for the incubator operators under EI's Incubator +**

initiative. They will also continue to monitor the completion of the construction stages of the incubators approved for support.

- **An initiative was launched to initiate a substantial level of applied research activity in Institutes of Technology in the BMW region. As part of a pilot initiative, a fund of €2 million has been set aside for the Institutes of Technology to recruit a significant research leader and team with a view to undertaking applied research which will have a strong commercial relevance to the region.**

5.1.3 3rd Level Institutions/NDP

ES

- ❑ *Increase the quantity and quality of the R&D linkages between companies and between third level institutions and companies*
- ❑ *Develop a world class research environment in our higher education institutions and State research agencies*

Update

The HEA, in its recent publication 'Creating and Sustaining the information Society', identified the issue of R&D linkages between companies and third level institutes as one of crucial importance in the overall Research area.

In order to address this issue, the HEA is currently participating in working groups under the auspices of the Irish Council for Science, Technology and Innovation and an inter-agency group chaired by Enterprise Ireland, both of which are examining the issue of technology transfer.

The Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTLTI) allocates funding on a competitive basis to Third Level institutions (including those outside the aegis of the HEA). The objectives of the Programme are:

- (i) Facilitation of the strategic development of institutional research capabilities mechanisms to support individual researchers, research projects and institutions which provide integrated programmatic support for the development of centres of excellence within and between the institutions;**
- (ii) Ensure a vibrant and dynamic pool of high quality, technically literate graduates, from graduate to post-doctoral levels, to service the needs of a knowledge-based economy;**
- (iii) Support high-quality inter-disciplinary and inter-institutional research.**

The PRTLTI is, with other research programmes such as those administered by SFI, the Health Research Board and the Research Councils, a key part of the national strategy to transform Ireland into an Innovation Society.

In 2002/03, the PRTLTI capital programme was paused. The pause created doubt and confusion over the long-term plans for Government investment in research, both within Ireland and equally importantly internationally. That pause was reversed in the recent budget and the Minister for Education and Science has affirmed his strong support for the continuing investment in research and development.

In order to provide a basis for more strategic and sustained investment in research, the HEA have proposed, as part of their submission to the Enterprise Strategy Group, the creation of a new statutory fund which would include all Government funding for basic research. The fund would be ring-fenced, and protected from the normal Estimates process, thus guaranteeing long-term stability of funding. The fund would be administered by a Cabinet Committee, which would also exercise an oversight role in respect of national research programmes.

Investment in ICT skills

Over the course of 2002/2003, the Higher Education Authority (HEA) allocated €8 million to third level institutions to enable them to enhance their programmes for ICT training and education.

This is the first allocation from the Information Technology Investment Fund set up in 2002, and managed by the HEA, on foot of recommendations from the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs. This upgrading of facilities will enhance the quality of teaching and learning in ICT and should also contribute to enhanced course completion rates in ICT.

5.1.4 Products & Services

ETE

- *Help firms to develop innovative products, services, and processes*
- *Upskill companies' RTI capability through a series of appropriate interventions*
- *Commercialise research leading to the introduction of new knowledge-based products and services into industry and to the creation of new technology-based firms.*

Update

With the enhanced research investment committed through the NDP, ensuring effective commercialisation systems and structures will be a key policy focus over coming years. A number of studies have been undertaken by the Irish Council for Science, Technology and Innovation (ICSTI) of the issues involved. Enterprise Ireland is leading a group of agencies with the aim of supporting and strengthening the commercialisation activities of our universities.

In May, the first series of R&D Awareness actions concluded in Galway and Kilkenny. After a call in the Official Journal of the EU, new consultant appointments were agreed for a new series of seminars and consultancy assignments to assist companies to become innovative and formalise their R&D for the 2003-04 period. The first meeting of the new programme was held in September 2003 in Dublin and further meetings took place in Louth, Mayo and Cork in November 2003.

The Atlantic University Alliance launched its Masters in Technology Management through distance education. First year enrolments are for 43 participants in this ground-breaking course. Also under the Innovation Management Initiative, three seminars were held, and 15 mainly three-day training courses or workshops, at several different locations around Ireland, to assist companies in their management of R&D were either in progress or completed between March and December 2003. These courses range from foundation level courses to sophisticated interactions with companies in specific sectors, such as food, who need to take their R&D capability to new levels to succeed.

Following a competitive selection process, EI committed €12 million funding in July 2003 to 42 new Technology Development projects to be undertaken by experienced and skilled researchers in colleges in Ireland with the aim of developing technologies for commercial exploitation in Ireland. The college researchers will work in partnership with staff of EI's Programmes in Advanced Technologies to ensure the optimal chances of a successful outcome.

The next step for EI is Providing Proof of Concept funding to colleges to enable them to develop their research ideas to a stage where it is clearer whether or not a commercial outcome may be achieved through a Technology Development project or otherwise.

5.1.5 R&D & Researchers

ETE

- *Increase the quantity and quality of the R&D linkages between companies and between third level institutions and companies*
- *Increase the number of researchers and other research personnel employed in Irish industry*

Update

Enterprise Ireland (EI) delivers a range of technology innovation supports to clients as part of an overall business development model that covers the balanced development of business strategy, marketing, human resources and finance. This enables a company to build the capability that will most effectively exploit its technology innovation. In addition, EI recognises the need to support research in areas of emerging technologies, where threats and opportunities will arise for companies in Ireland, and works closely with colleges to facilitate the transfer of the results from this research into firms to allow them access to new knowledge and to identify areas where new, technology based firms can spin off. Initiatives in 2003 include:

- **The development of client R&D capabilities through R&D grant aid, RTI and innovation management;**
- **Building links between EI clients and the research community nationally and internationally with the potential co-financing of research projects of strategic importance;**
- **€13m committed to support 54 proof of concept and technology development projects;**
- **Supporting campus companies and innovation centres to ensure that start-ups have access to the level of support needed in the crucial first years;**
- **The Enterprise Platform programme: a one year, full-time professional training and enterprise support programme aimed at the needs of entrepreneurs in a business start-up situation. There are seven Enterprise Platforms Programmes and one Cross Border Programme.**

A very successful Campus Enterprise Day was held in May 2003 in Portlaoise at which there were 200 attendees made up of participants in the Enterprise Platform Programme, Venture Capitalists and other contacts. Presentations were made of importance to the entrepreneurial developments.

5.2 Science Foundation Ireland

ETE

- *Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) was set up to:*

- *Embed existing firms in the Irish economy and facilitate their re-positioning higher up the value chain;*
- *Attract the R&D activities of foreign investment projects;*
- *Foster the start-up of high potential technology based firms;*

Update

On 25 July 2003 SFI was established on a statutory basis under the Industrial Development Science Foundation Ireland Act as an Agency of Forfás.

Science Foundation Ireland's Vision Statement 2003-2007 was officially launched in September 2003.

At the end of December 2003, SFI was funding over 141 research projects with a combined financial commitment of over €321 million over five years.

5.3 EU Sixth Framework Programme 2002-2006

ETE

- *Proposals will be progressed to ensure optimal promotion of and participation in the €16.5 bn to ensure that Ireland secures the maximum benefits from FP6 over the next four years*

Update

The European launch of the Sixth Framework Programme for research, technological development and demonstration activities 2002-2006, took place in Brussels in November 2002.

Under the Sixth EU Framework Programme for research, the second call for proposals in the thematic area "Information Society Technologies" was published in June 2003, (closing date was October 2003). IST receives a budget of over €3.6 billion in the Framework Programme and proposals will be progressed to ensure optimum promotion of and participation in the Programme.

A new dedicated unit to provide a National Information & Support Service to potential participants has now been established within Enterprise Ireland www.fp6-ireland.com. This central support service will disseminate information and will work in close cooperation with all the national delegates for the various specific areas of FP6.

European Research Area (ERA): Ireland is committed to working closely with the European Commission to pursue the objective of increasing investment on R&D and innovation in the EU with the aim of approaching 3% of GDP by 2010. 2/3 of this new investment should come from the private sector. In this regard, work is ongoing to review and assess progress in Ireland on each of the emerging policy issues, and agree policy priorities for Ireland to pursue as its contribution towards the European Research area and the 3% target. This objective is strategically in line with the national priority to develop a globally competitive and sustainable knowledge-based economy.

ERA High Level Steering Group: A cross-departmental group has been established to assess and agree policy priorities which Ireland should pursue as its contribution towards the creation of a European Research Area and the 3% target. The group is due to report by Q2 2004.

5.4 Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology

ES

- Establish schemes of support for researchers in science, engineering and technology including new and improved grant schemes for postgraduate scholars and post-doctoral fellows;*
- Provide funding for research projects.*

Update

Since its public launch in 2002, IRCSET has established itself as a key element of the State's research support and promotion infrastructure under the National Development Plan.

The Council's programmes, operating as The Embark Initiative, are recognised among relevant research, media and other external audiences to be playing an important role in supporting career development among promising new and experienced researchers, in the national interest.

In the past year, IRCSET significantly stepped up its outreach initiatives, most notably in the staging of a major national research symposium, the establishment of a research excellence award together with the IEI, the establishment of linkages with the ESF and the CNRS (France) and briefing meetings with a number of industry representative and policy focussed organisations. These included the Oireachtas Friends of Science Grouping (Chair), the ESRI, IBEC, ICT Ireland, and the Irish Research Scientists Association, etc.

The overall resources allocated to the Council in 2003 were €10.5 million, considerably below the NDP “profile” figure of €14.3 million. Nonetheless, momentum has been maintained on the main award schemes and it is expected that financial allocation will improve in subsequent years.

The numbers of awards were constrained by the available financial resources and it has been most encouraging that the volume and quality of applications from the research community have been excellent.

In the context of Government policy on the Information Society, and with the financial support of the Information Society Fund, a sophisticated, online grants application and management system was commissioned successfully.

The Embark Initiative is a major national research funding initiative operated by the Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology. Through a range of highly innovative schemes, the Embark Initiative invests in People and Ideas, addressing individual research funding needs at Masters, Doctoral and Postdoctoral level and encouraging the most talented researchers to advance their careers in Ireland. The Irish Research Council operates under the National Development Plan under the auspices of the Department of Education and Science.

Embark currently operates a number of research grant schemes:

The Basic Research Grants Scheme

The Basic Research Grants Scheme is directed at supporting high-quality, novel, exploratory research in the third level education sector, with particular emphasis on new researchers. It aims to provide finances for researchers to build on their existing research programmes, and to give new researchers or researchers who have returned after a career or parental leave break the opportunity to establish their research careers.

This Scheme is open to all full-time and contract academic staff in third level colleges in Ireland. Applications will be accepted for projects in specific disciplines and, within this specification, interdisciplinary proposals will also be accepted.

The scheme is run in cooperation with Enterprise Ireland, and in 2003, thirty awards were funded by Embark, with 60 being funded by Enterprise Ireland.

Post Graduate Research Scholarships

The Post Graduate Scholarship Research Scheme is designed for either Masters or Doctorate level researchers in the sciences, engineering or technology. In 2003, an additional 149 applicants were awarded funding, following the 221 applicants funded in 2002.

A significant research symposium was held for all researchers funded in the Royal Hospital, Kilmainham, to encourage interdisciplinary experience and information sharing <http://www.ircset.ie/symposium.html>

A book of abstracts of all research projects was published at http://www.ircset.ie/book_abstracts_final.pdf

Post Doctoral Fellowship Scheme

The Embark Postdoctoral Fellowship Scheme offers funding over two years to researchers at an early stage of their career who plan to complete postdoctoral level research in the sciences, engineering or technology. In 2003, 37 awards were made under the scheme.

The Scheme is designed to empower researchers at an early stage of their research career to build upon their PhD work and to benefit from the experience of established research teams. It is also targeted at developing the country's international reputation as an important location in which to carry out world class research, so that Ireland retains and attracts the highest level R&D capabilities for the future. In line with developing policy on mobility, the scheme is open to any Doctoral degree holder worldwide who wishes to progress their career in Ireland.

5.5 Researchers Group

ES

The Higher Education Authority to:

- *Establish a working group to examine ways to attract researchers into Ireland and to promote research as a career option to undergraduates*

Update

The HEA and Forfás published its report on Increasing Participation in Irish Research in July 2003. The key findings of the report are:

- **Ireland needs to double its recent output of researchers to implement our research strategy: the new research funding schemes operated by the Higher Education Authority, Science Foundation Ireland and others will go a long way towards meeting this demand;**
- **Quality of research training is now critical for the future: in order to ensure this quality is achieved, the higher education institutions should actively review their systems of training and benchmark against the best international practice;**
- **Ireland needs to be able to attract international researchers: both to ensure we have the numbers to meet our research needs and to ensure we benefit from world class researchers carrying out their work here.**

These recommendations are addressed to a range of key stakeholders, including Government Departments, research funding agencies and third level institutions.

5.6 Broadband Infrastructure for Education and R&D

ETE

- *Progress proposals to ensure that our educational and R&D sectors are underpinned by best-in-class broadband infrastructure*

Update

Developments in 2003 included the upgrade of European research connections, general internet connections and links to Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

This has placed Ireland amongst the leading countries in Europe for research connectivity, enabling Irish researchers to collaborate seamlessly on any project across Europe.

Next Generation Internet Programme

The Next Generation Internet (NGI) Programme was launched at HEAnet's first national networking conference at the Tipperary Institute in November 2001. The NGI programme is made possible by support from the Higher Education Authority, the Department of Education and Science, the Department of Transport as well as the Information Society Development Fund. The first stage of the NGI project brought online connectivity to the pan-European GEANT network in Europe through 155Mbit/s links to London and Frankfurt.

Additionally, three 155Mbit/s links provided by Global Crossing, connected HEAnet's CityWest node to the New York and Chicago Internet Exchanges.

The NGI Programme seeks to place Ireland at the leading edge of international Internet activity by installing major upgrades for Irish Education and Research organisations to Europe and the US. This will enable real-time collaboration between Irish education and research organisations and the rest of the world. It will also make possible the development of new advanced IT applications based on Internet technology. Other new possible Internet technologies are digital libraries, virtual laboratories and telemedicine. The availability of advanced networking and complementary applications to the research and teaching programmes are seen as critical by all third-level institutions in Ireland.

In December 2003, HEAnet moved its connection from 60 Hudson St in New York to the New York Education and Research Network (NYSERNet) co-location facility at 32 Avenue of the Americas in New York. As NYSERNet is a not-for-profit organisation, this new facility is dedicated to interconnecting and hosting research and education networks from all around the world on a cost recovery basis. Moving to the NYSERNet co-location space has also allowed HEAnet to directly connect to Abilene (US Internet 2 research network), CA*net4 (Canadian research network), NYSERNet network and the Japanese Education and Research network SINET. Locating at the NYSERNet location space also enabled HEAnet to connect to the Starlight optical networking exchange in Chicago over a one Gbit/s link provided over the CA*net4 network.

From the initial start of the NGI programme in November 2001, HEAnet has continued to manage the programme in a pro-active way through continued upgrades and technical and contractual negotiations. In late 2002, HEAnet upgraded the capacity of the links connecting it to the GEANT European research network from two diverse 155Mbit/s links to two diverse 2.5Gbit/s links. This has placed Ireland amongst the leading countries in Europe for research connectivity, enabling Irish researchers to collaborate seamlessly on any project across Europe. In June 2003, the Global Crossing transatlantic links were upgraded to one 622Mbit/s, terminating in New York.

HEAnet's US and European links enable all the universities and institutes of technology and other Irish higher education and research organisations to connect to all the leading colleges and researchers in the US and some 3,500 institutions across Europe. In addition, in December 2001, a link was installed between Dublin and Belfast linking Northern Irish colleges and UK colleges on JANET to HEAnet organisations at very high bandwidth. Following the success of

the initial Dublin-Belfast link in December 2001, it is planned to upgrade the link in 2004 to enable the forecasted demand for Grid computing between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland as part of the all Ireland Cosmogrid and Grid Ireland projects.

There has been a significant uptake by Irish researchers of HEAnet's new strategic links to the NGI in Europe, North America and elsewhere. Indeed many of these links have enabled the Irish research community to develop and expand their Ipv6 (next version of the Internet protocol) network, by connecting to other Ipv6 enabled networks around the world. Other new services introduced by HEAnet in 2003 were multicast and video conferencing services.

HEAnet National Backbone and client upgrades

With support from the HEA and the Department of Education and Science, HEAnet has upgraded the national backbone network during 2003. The HEAnet national backbone was upgraded from 2 x STM-1 (310Mbit/s) to Gigabit Ethernet (1000Mbit/s) between Dublin - Cork, Cork - Limerick and Limerick - Galway. These links, provided by EsatBT, complement existing Gigabit connections between HEAnet locations at Galway, CityWest, Brooklawn House and Kilcarbery Park to create a fully Gigabit Ethernet backbone.

With resources made available by the HEA, an aggressive programme of client upgrades to the National Backbone Network was undertaken in 2003. Many large clients have doubled the connection bandwidths in the past year, while major upgrades of some of the smaller institutions is still under way.

In late 2002, HEAnet started a pilot project to upgrade the Trinity College access circuit to a new Gigabit Ethernet link at 1000Mbit/s. This pilot project was successful and UCD have also upgraded their access circuit to the HEAnet backbone to 1 Gbit/s in 2003. Other clients, including UL and DCU will connect at 1 Gbit/s to the HEAnet national backbone very shortly. The current network map of the HEAnet is available from www.heanet.net

6. LIFELONG LEARNING

ENSURING THE AVAILABILITY OF KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS AND
SUPPORTING NEW WAYS OF LEARNING.

6.1 Blueprint for the Future of ICT in Primary and Secondary Level Education

ES

- *Enhance the use of ICT in Primary and Secondary level Education*

Update

Since 1998, almost €140 million has been made available to schools in order to realise the Government's vision of preparing all students for the Information Age. Under the Blueprint for the Future of ICT in Education Initiative 2001-2003, schools received substantial capital grant aid of almost €50 million during 2001 and 2002.

While it had been intended to continue a similar level of grants to schools in 2003, this was not possible since budgetary constraints saw the allocation for ICT capital provision in 2003 cut from €27 million to €6.6 million. The bulk of this allocation (€5.3 million) was issued directly to schools in December 2003. It was recommended to schools that in using the grant, they should give priority to the networking of computers in schools.

The National Centre for Technology in Education conducted a census of all schools in order to determine the level and pace of ICT infrastructural development (following similar surveys in 1998 and 2000). The data from the census show that significant reductions have been achieved in the computer-to-pupil ratios in schools. Since 1998, Pupil/Computer ratios have been reduced from 35:1 to less than 11:1 at primary level and from 16:1 to less than 9:1 at second level. Progress has been made in relation to teacher ICT skills, and classroom usage of the technologies. The census also points to deficiencies in relation to computer networking, Internet connectivity and technical maintenance.

In this regard, the Department is currently considering a draft new policy framework to follow the Blueprint Initiative (finished end of 2003) in order to both continue the general progress made to date and to target specific areas of concern highlighted in the ICT census. The key objectives identified are:

- To further enhance and maintain computer facilities in schools and ensure that schools have appropriate internal networks put in place;
- To get broadband into all schools and to establish a centrally managed schools network with appropriate back-up support services for this purpose;
- To re-focus training and development programmes on pedagogical use of ICT;
- To give ICT a more central role in the curriculum and in student assessment;
- To promote the development of quality educational resources online for use in learning and teaching;
- To facilitate and encourage industry/school collaboration on ICT issues;
- To monitor and evaluate the impact of ICT at school level and ensure that ICT resources contribute effectively to learning outcomes.

6.1.1 Curriculum Integration

ES

- *Integration of ICT into education at first and second level*

Update

Education Officers for ICT in education were appointed in March and April 2003 to the National Council for Curriculum Assessment (NCCA) to monitor and evaluate the development of computer skills in school and to promote the effective use of computers in the curriculum. The officers will also ensure collaboration with the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) so that issues relating to Information and Communications Technology in the curriculum may be progressed at both first and second level.

The NCCA guidelines for primary schools on integrating ICT into the teaching and learning environment have been finalised and are being prepared for distribution to schools. Work is continuing on the development of Guidelines for

ICT at second-level which will be considered and developed in the context of the various subject committees of the NCCA.

The NCCA has advised the Department of Education and Science that, rather than introduce a stand-alone, computer-based subject at Junior or Leaving Certificate level, the focus at both primary and post-primary levels should be on the use of ICT as a teaching and learning tool and its integration across the curriculum. The NCCA is conscious of the need to identify the range of skills and conceptual understanding that pupils should have attained through their engagement with ICT right across the curriculum at different levels of education, particularly by the end of the period of compulsory education.

At both first and second level, students are encouraged and assisted to use ICT and to develop their skills in this regard. At post-primary level, in particular, opportunities are provided for students to incorporate the use of ICT in their work in a number of subjects, including the preparation and presentation of project and folio work in the State examinations.

Learning about and using ICT is also integral to the range of technology subjects offered in schools, to the revised science syllabuses at Leaving Certificate level and to the Transition Year, Leaving Certificate Applied and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programmes where dedicated ICT modules already exist. In the latter two programmes, the study of and use of ICT represents a requirement and use of ICT features prominently in assessment processes and components.

6.1.2 Schools Internet connectivity

ES

- Provide schools with affordable access to adequate bandwidth*

Update

Following consultation with the Departments of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources, Finance and Taoiseach's, the Department of Education and Science commissioned a study in 2003 to advise on the range of options for rolling out broadband connectivity for schools in the light of evolving market capability, developments in technology and infrastructure and school size/location.

Datanet Ltd. were commissioned to undertake the study examining the relevant cost, funding, phasing and procurement issues and providing a tender

specification for the Department which could form the basis of an approach to the market in the light of available funding.

Proposals for the provision of broadband connectivity to schools were being considered by Government following the Datanet Consultancy Report and subsequent discussions with the telecommunications industry on a partnership model for delivering broadband to schools. An €18 million Broadband for schools initiative was announced by the telecoms sector and Departments of Education & Science and Communications, Marine & Natural Resources in February 2004.

6.1.3 Industry Advisory Group

ES

- *Establish an IT Industry Advisory Group to formalise links between the IT industry and schools at national level in the development and implementation of innovative IT projects and in the process extend the boundaries of traditional education through the use of ICT*

Update

The composition of this group and its terms of reference is under consideration by the Department. It is hoped that the dialogue commenced with IBEC and the Telecommunications and wider ICT sectors referred to above will inform deliberations in this regard and lead to a more formal and on-going interaction between the Department and Industry.

6.2 Second chance, Further and Higher education

6.2.1 ICT Training

ES

- ❑ *Expansion of the opportunities for Basic ICT Skills Training for adults offering part-time flexible options in Further Education;*
- ❑ *Increase the number of adults availing of ICT training at modest cost under the schemes in second level/further education schools and colleges, and in training centres, which support adult self-funded learning.*

Update

The first phase of the Back to Education Initiative incorporating an adult ICT skills programme, was in operation in 2002, and provided 6,000 part-time options in Further Education. This will increase on a phased basis with a view to having 20,000 extra places each year by 2006. During 2003, 10,800 individuals participated in the Initiative at a cost of approximately €14.4 million.

6.2.2 eLearning

ES

- ❑ *Examine the potential for e-learning to contribute to the education and training sectors, at further and higher levels;*
- ❑ *Develop a national collaborative e-learning framework*

Update

The Higher Education Authority, on behalf of the Minister for Education and Science and working with a small Inter-Departmental group, placed a call for proposals in January 2003 to investigate the potential for e-learning to contribute to the further development of higher and further education and training in Ireland. The intention was to seek proposals which would, through the implementation of an e-learning service, improve quality, increase access and demonstrate efficiencies in cost-per-learner in the area of higher education and/or training.

The call for proposals process which was initiated in 2003 was discontinued due to a lack of available resources. More generally the future development of e-learning issues may be considered as part of the OECD review of higher education.

6.2.3 ICT in Adult Literacy

ES

- *Develop distance learning ICT literacy programmes for use in the home, the workplace, public libraries and in education and training centres;*
- *Explore the use of TV in delivering to support the literacy programmes.*

Update

The National Adult Literacy Agency has been funded to develop a website www.literacytools.ie which provides for interactive worksheets in literacy, numeracy and personal development, allied with a resource directory for tutors, and guidelines on the criteria to be used for assessment of ICT-based tools.

Of the 731 venues where adult literacy tuition takes place, 328 are equipped to include ICT as part of the programme.

Discussions have been held with Learn Direct Northern Ireland and UK on the piloting of e-learning literacy programmes in the VEC adult literacy schemes.

Since 2000, four series of a TV adult literacy programme called "Read Write Now" (RWN) have been commissioned by the Department of Education and Science and shown on RTÉ, in partnership with the National Adult Literacy Agency.

The series was to provide literacy tuition to raise literacy awareness among the target audience, that is the half-million adults with literacy problems, and encourage them to join the adult literacy services of the vocational education committees.

RWN was the most successful educational programme ever on RTÉ with average audiences of over 144,313. The TV programmes were supplemented by workbooks that were paid for by the Department. Copies of each series were issued free of charge to customer groups on video, the cost being underwritten by the Department. Overall, each series cost in the region of €500,000.

6.2.4 Skills Needs in IT and Science

ES

- *Ensure the supply of skilled graduates in emerging market needs areas*

Update

A new Information Technology Skills Fund was established in May 2002 to support third level IT skills provision. A sum of €12 million was approved for the fund for 2002 including a contribution of €2 million from the National Training Fund. The HEA invited proposals from third level institutions to meet the equipment and other recommendations outlined by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs. The equipment fund was allocated on a per capital basis to the Institutions.

6.3 Taskforce on Lifelong Learning

ES

- *Establishment of a strategic framework for lifelong learning*

Update

The report of the Task Force was published in November 2002 (www.entemp.ie/lfld/lifelong.pdf). The key recommendations of this report include:

- Developing and implementing a National Framework of Qualifications;
- Ensuring basic skills;
- Providing Comprehensive Guidance, Counselling and Information;
- Addressing delivery, accessing and funding measures;
- Providing better opportunities for workplace learning, and learning of workers.

Under the new Social Partnership agreement, '*Sustaining Progress*', a Group chaired by D/ETE was recently established to oversee work on the implementation of the recommendations of the Task Force on Lifelong Learning. Pending the establishment of the National Adult Learning Council (NALC) on a statutory basis, and the assignment of staff, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment and the Department of Education and Science together with FÁS and other relevant agencies are proceeding with implementation of those recommendations which do not require further research or additional resources to advance implementation. A Status Report will be compiled mid-2004 on progress being made on the recommendations of the Task Force.

7. e-Inclusion

ENSURING AN INCLUSIVE INFORMATION SOCIETY THAT ADDRESSES
DISADVANTAGE AND EXCLUSION.

7.1 Coordination and Policy Development

DoT

- *Review and rearticulate the implementation strategy*

Update

The review of the e-Inclusion implementation strategy has been completed. It considered, inter alia, the evaluations of the CAIT Initiative, the Equalskills Project and the Muintir na Tíre Project as well as the Itech Research Report 'eInclusion: expanding the Information Society in Ireland'. On the basis of the outcome of this Review, the Cabinet Committee on the Information Society have recommended action in five priority areas:- ICT Access, Learning and Skills, Building the ICT capacity of the Community and Voluntary Sector, Measuring inclusive Information Society development, Awareness Raising and Mainstreaming Information Society issues.

Mainstreaming Information Society issues has been achieved in part by: -

- the inclusion of Information Society issues in '*Sustaining Progress*', as well as priority been afforded to eInclusion as a Special Initiative of '*Sustaining Progress*'; '*Including Everybody in the Information Society*'.
- Identification of eInclusion as an important element in minimising the risk of exclusion in the National Action Plan against Poverty and Social Exclusion (NAPs/incl) 2003 – 2005.

7.2 Internet Services Provision for Community & Voluntary Sector

LGCSB/DOT

- *To pilot the development of low-cost ISP, web-hosting and technical support solutions for community and voluntary groups*

Update

The Local Government Computer Services Board, within the framework of the existing Local Authority role of Community and Enterprise and in collaboration with relevant Government Departments and Agencies, are piloting the Mobhaile Community and Voluntary Services Project in Westmeath, Offaly, North

Tipperary and South Tipperary Local Authorities -

<http://www.mobhaile.ie/html/community.htm>. This Pilot Project, funded from the Information Society Fund, will help to build the ICT capacity of the Community & Voluntary sector. It aims to meet the demands of the C & V Sector in establishing an on-line presence and to provide them with the ability to communicate with members, interested parties and citizens by means of websites, hosted intranets, secure e-mail and SMS gateways. It will provide the Local Authorities with an eChampion to stimulate, help, develop, encourage, and empower the Community and Voluntary Sector within their respective counties. eChampions will also work together in this deliverable and create a cross-county community network of learning and excellence and deliver a future countrywide community portal.

Toolsets will be provided to the eChampions in order for them to carry out this work. These toolsets will include an ability to create websites, an ability for Community website owners to maintain websites, add content, add members and advise members of changes in site content and an ability to host websites (at little or no cost to the C & V Sector).

7.3 Capacity building

CRGA/DOT/LGCSB

- *Develop a programme of structured support to build and enhance ICT capacity among community and voluntary organisations*

Update

An analysis of the ICT needs and the ICT capacity of the Community and Voluntary Sector is currently being undertaken by the Department of Computer Science in NUI Maynooth. The results of this analysis will feed into the roll-out of the Mobhaile C & V Pilot project by the LGCSB. This analysis will build on the work already undertaken by The Wheel, the Muintir na Tíre Project and the needs analysis of the C & V Sector in Co. Meath. The analysis will:-

- **identify the components of an ICT educational programme specifically for the C & V Sector (i.e. CVDL);**
- **identify the specific needs of the C & V Sector in order for them to promote access to and participation in the Information Society within their own organisations and among late adopters of technology;**

- **identify the existing mechanisms, if any, used by this sector to e-enable individuals and communities and to highlight the benefits and opportunities afforded by ICTs;**
- **ensure that a bottom up approach to building the capacity of the Sector is implemented. This analysis will not be seeking to evaluate how technology may be imposed on this Sector but it will evaluate how technology may be used to maximise the potential of these organisations to benefit their constituents and the wider society.**

7.4 Provision of Local Content (MoBhaile Infrastructure)

LGCSB

- *Local Government Computer Services Board to undertake pilot project on making information collected by Local Authorities available to citizens in an accessible way.*

Update

The Local Government Computer Services Board are undertaking a pilot project exercise, "Mobhaile Infrastructure", which will make data, collected and maintained by Local Authorities available to citizens in a way that makes it useful, relevant and easily accessible e.g. location of recycling centres, post boxes etc <http://www.mobhaile.ie>. This data will be presented through maps of local areas. In this context, pilot projects in South Dublin, Mayo and Meath have been approved for funding from the Information Society Fund.

7.5 Research

DOT

- *Research into the nature and extent of the Digital Divide in Ireland*

Update

In October 2003, Itech Research published research, 'eInclusion: expanding the Information Society in Ireland', into the extent of inclusive Information Society development in Ireland drawing on international comparisons.

In November 2003, for the first time ever, the Central Statistics Office published statistics on how ICTs are being used in Ireland today, in the home and in business. The statistics draw on a number of existing data sources as well as on two new surveys (concerning the use of ICTs by households and

enterprises). These statistics are being analysed in the ongoing development of evidence based eInclusion policy and will now be published on an annual basis.

An online repository of national, regional and local eInclusion projects will be available shortly.

7.6 Accessibility

7.6.1 IT Accessibility Guidelines

JELR

- *Development of guidelines for electronically delivered services, to minimise the risk of introducing accessibility barriers by service providers in the public and private sectors*

Update

The National Disability Authority [IT Accessibility Guidelines](http://www.accessit.nda.ie) (www.accessit.nda.ie) were launched in June 2002. Since then, the Guidelines, which are available as a website, have been promoted in a number of IT publications. A brochure highlighting the website and a promotional video have been distributed to key stakeholders throughout the public service.

7.6.2 Compliance with Accessibility Guidelines

JELR

- *To identify or provide examples of tools or methods that may be used to assist in determination of compliance with accessibility guidelines*

Update

The NDA have carried out a national Web Accessibility Survey which sought information on the planning and procurement, design and development, testing and maintenance of public sector websites. The survey received 130 responses and its results are being used to inform some of the work of the Public Services Accessibility Initiative in the NDA. Current work being undertaken as part of this Initiative includes:-

- **A draft set of guidelines for public service bodies on accessibility in the physical environment, ICT and quality customer services. Four of these guidelines relate explicitly to ICT;**

- **Questionnaire to elicit feedback from public service bodies on these guidelines;**
- **Organisation of presentations and workshops on accessibility and the Public Services Accessibility Initiative provision of documentation to assist in the production and implementation of an Accessibility Audit and Accessibility Action Plan by each organisation;**
- **Provision of knowledge and expertise on accessibility;**
- **Staging of a conference in September 2004 at which details of an accessibility award process for public service providers will be announced;**
- **Produce criteria for award;**
- **Award accessibility symbol to compliant public service providers;**
- **Monitor accessibility levels of public service providers.**

7.7 Centre of Excellence in Universal Design

JELR

- *Establishment of a Centre of Excellence in Universal Design with a remit to include the promotion of design for all principles in electronic and ICT-based products, services and systems*

Update

It is expected to provide for the establishment of a centre for excellence in universal design under legislation currently being prepared in the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform.

8. Additional e-Government Projects

8.1 eHealth

HC

- *Publication of the National Health Information Strategy*

Update

The National Health Information Strategy is at an advanced stage of development.

8.1.1 Public Service Identity

HC

- *Use of the Public Service Identity*

Update

Work is continuing on a strategy to ensure that the health services maximise the benefits of interoperability with the Public Services Broker. This strategy is being reviewed by HeBE and Reach, and is targeted for completion in Q2, 2004. The Health Services Portal, being launched in May 2004, will utilise Reach Services from the launch date.

Objectives/Priorities for April 2004-October 2004

- **Complete the strategy for systems interoperability between the health services and the Public Service Broker.**
- **Continue the current initiative for using the Personal Public Services Number in the GMS.**
- **Continue collecting PPSNs to facilitate use of the Public Service Identity in the health services.**
- **Develop the detail for a pilot project for transmitting births and deaths data from the General Register Office into the health sector's CCEI index, for supporting the provision of individualised services.**

8.1.2 Health Information web pages

HC

- *Health information web pages that will build on the work of OASIS*

Update

From May 2004, Ireland will have a national health services portal, which will also be accessible through OASIS. The Health Services Portal aims to provide all health service users with a single online point through which they can access up-to-date information, and a secure place in which to transact business. OASIS will be able to link its health information to the content on the Health Services Portal.

Objectives/Priorities for April 2004 to October 2004:

- **Launch Health Services Portal at the EU eHealth Conference in May.**
- **Complete the early-stage development work and content delivery schedule, as outlined in the scoping study, which is available on the HeBE website – www.hebe.ie**

8.1.3 Appointments for Hospital Services

HC

- *Appointments for hospital services*

Update

The North Eastern Health Board is continuing its pilot initiative to enable local GPs to refer patients directly for certain hospital procedures e.g. endoscopies. The intention is to reduce waiting times for such treatments, as the patients concerned do not have to go first through the hospital outpatients department. An electronic booking system has been installed at Louth County Hospital; and a number of local GPs have indicated their willingness to join the scheme.

Objectives/Priorities for April 2004-October 2004:

- **Put in place the infrastructure and supports necessary for enabling the first group of GPs to refer patients directly to appropriate services at Louth County Hospital, by the end of this period.**

8.1.4 Medical cost reimbursement

HC

- *Medical cost reimbursement through implementation of online patient identification systems by mid-2003*

Update

The GMS is undertaking this project to automate the transfer of claims from community pharmacies, and to enable pharmacists to verify online, a patient's identity and eligibility using the PPS Number. The *Claims Messaging* element was 'live' in 11 pharmacies at the end of March 2004; this means these pharmacists are using electronic messaging to make their returns and claim the appropriate refunds. The Online Patient Validation application is currently going through development testing; this means it is being made ready for deployment at the pilot sites.

Objectives/Priorities: April 2004 - October 2004

- **Roll-out '*Claims Messaging*'; target is 150 pharmacies by end-2004.**
- **Finish development testing of *Online Patient Validation* application, in order to make it ready for deployment at pilot pharmacy sites.**

8.1.5 Access to Laboratory results

HC

- *GP Access to laboratory results*
- *Messaging standards for health service interactions*

Update

The Messaging Project has now developed standards for the electronic notification of four message types from hospitals to general practice. Over 200 GPs in 5 health board areas and in Healthlink are receiving results and reports directly into practice computers. Work on a mechanism for transmitting messages seamlessly from any acute hospital in the country to any general practice in the country has now started, using the learning and co-operation achieved during the first phase.

Objectives/Priorities for April 2004 – October 2004

- **Progress the development of new standards for other message types, based on the benchmark HL7 Messaging Standard.**
- **Move forward with a process around gaining agreement from stakeholders on the convergence of local messaging projects.**

8.1.6 eLearning for health professionals

HC

- *eLearning for health professionals*

Update

The eLearning project aims to deliver high-quality, enterprise-wide, online learning for health services and clinical personnel; and to identify the technologies for supporting eLearning in the health services. Standards for content authoring have been agreed by Health Boards. Content for the '*Clinical Audit*' module is complete, and the material for the '*Service Planning*' module is well advanced.

Objectives/Priorities for April 2004 – October 2004

- **Finalise content for 'Service Planning'**
- **Obtain accreditation for 'Clinical Audit'**
- **Obtain accreditation for 'Clinical Audit'**

8.1.7 Digital TV

HC

- *Exploratory use of digital TV for delivery of health-related services*

Update

Further investigation is needed on core issues e.g. on technology and national government policy for deployment of Digital TV. When fully rolled out, the Health Services Portal will expose content through digital TV. Some of the content being developed for the launch of the portal will be made available through RTÉ's teletext service, Aertel.

8.1.8 Integrated Services

HC

- *Development of a single point of access to all relevant health information and services as an integral part of the development of e-government services generally by end 2003*

Update

Development work is currently underway on Ireland's first-ever national Health Services Portal, which is to be launched in May 2004. The Portal is intended to be a dependable, widely-recognised, up-to-date information resource; and a secure place for service users to transact business. Its deployment fulfils core objectives in the Government's 'New Connections' report, and the EU's 'eEurope 2005 Action Plan.

Objectives/Priorities for April 2004 – October 2004

- **Launch Health Services Portal at the EU eHealth Conference in May.**
- **Complete the early-stage development work and content delivery schedule, as outlined in the scoping study for this phase.**

8.2 Marine Coastal Services

CMNR

- *Online management of services offered in the coastal zone e.g. Aquaculture and Foreshore licensing*

Update

The Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources have identified the need for a Coastal Zone Management System to contribute to the effective management of Departmental activities in the coastal zone.

It is planned that the project scope and systems analysis stages of the Coastal Zone Management System will commence in Q2 of 2004.

8.3 Online Import/Export declarations

RevComm

- *Inter-community acquisitions and disposals i.e. Intrastat and VIES returns.*

Update

The new computerised transit system NCTS and Non-EU VAT on e-Commerce are both available on ROS since end-June 2003.

ROS provides a facility for operators of the existing paper-based Community Transit system to electronically submit transit messages to ROS and link to the new EU-wide operational computerised transit system.

The Intrastat and VIES service was released in December 2003.

8.4 Construction Industry & Relevant Contract Tax

RevComm

- *Filing and payment options for the construction industry in relation to Relevant Contract Tax by mid-2003*

Update

The release date for Relevant Contracts Tax was March 2003. This included access to customer information services and the ability to file and pay the

monthly Forms C30. The development for the annual returns C35 was completed and released in December 2003.

8.5 Gift & Inheritance Tax Returns

RevComm

- ❑ *Gift & Inheritance Tax Returns IT38 for solicitors and individuals by end-2002*

Update

The ROS version of the Form IT38 for gifts/inheritorances taken on or after 5 December 2001 was made available in September 2002.

8.6 Online Filing & Payment of Taxes

RevComm

- ❑ *Form 11 for the 2001 short tax year*
- ❑ *Deposit Interest Retention Tax DIRT*
- ❑ *Life Assurance Exit Tax LAET*
- ❑ *Investment Undertaking Tax IUT*
- ❑ *Dividend Withholding Tax DWT*
- ❑ *Professional Services withholding Tax PSWT*
- ❑ *Environmental Levy Tax.*

Update

All the above forms are online for filing and payment since May 2002.

8.7 Census of Population

CSO

- ❑ *Online dissemination of Census 2002 statistics on a phased basis from mid-2003*

Update

The principal demographic results from the 2002 Census of Population were published in June 2003 and made available on the CSO website (www.cso.ie). Further results were published in July and August. The principal socio-economic results were published in October 2003. Further results will be published on a phased basis until mid-2004.

8.8 Integration of Justice Sector Systems

JELR

- ❑ *To establish a single, unifying infrastructure to facilitate sharing of information between the Garda, Courts Service Criminal, Probation and Welfare Service and Prison Authority*

Update

Data connectivity from the Garda organisation to the Justice Sector Data Network was established in May 2003 to provide a test environment for the sectoral Financial Management System. The Department is contributing to the work of Reach on identity management with particular reference to the work already carried out on the Public Service Identifier (PSI) for personal identities to ensure that they can facilitate all public service identity management requirements, including those in the broader justice sector.

8.9 Domestic refuse - Dublin City Council

ELG

- *Pilot online system for payment of domestic refuse charges*

Update

Dublin City Council customers can currently pay their refuse charges over the internet www.billpay.ie. The City Council do not intend to switch this service to the Reachservices.ie site in the immediate future, due to the additional investment this would involve. The Council will examine the issue of migrating this service to the Broker when it becomes available.

8.10 Private rented dwellings fees - Dublin City Council

ELG

- *Pilot online system for payment of private rented dwellings fees by early 2003*

Update

Statutory responsibility for the registration of private rented accommodation and the collection of registration fees is being transferred from Local Authorities to the new Private Rented Tenancies Board in 2004. The provision of this online service will be examined following the establishment of the Board. The Board will handle registrations on a nationwide basis so the Reach of any online system would be greater than that provided by Dublin City Council.

8.11 Teagasc Online Analytical Systems

AF

- *Online information on samples submitted for analysis soil, silage, blood, water, grass.*

Update

The system is now live and is currently available online to Teagasc clients. The system will be made available to all farmers who use the analytical services based on a system of self-registration.

8.12 Small Claims

JELR

- *Online procedure for lodgement of small claims by mid-2003*

Update

Development of the on-line Small Claims system has now commenced. The detailed functional specification has been signed off and detailed design has been delivered. It is anticipated that the initial implementation of the system will now take place in the Dublin Metropolitan District Court in July 2004. The system will be piloted in this office for 2-3 months. A strategy for the deployment of the public access part of the system is currently under consideration and it is expected that a decision will be made shortly in this regard. The system will then be deployed on a phased basis to all District Court offices nationwide.

Slippage in the time scales for the development of the on-line Small Claims system should be taken in the context of the ongoing work associated with the development and roll-out of the CCTS system which is required to support the Penalty Points System. The position is that all available Courts Service resources have been assigned to the deployment of the Criminal Case Management System nationwide to ensure that the Courts Service is in a position to meet its commitments relative to the Government's priority for the introduction of a fully-automated penalty points system.

8.13 Teagasc Profit Monitoring Systems

AF

- *Teagasc Profit Monitoring Systems consisting of Dairy Herd Monitor and e-Profit Monitor to assist farmers in identifying improved returns achievable from their enterprises.*

Update

Dairy Herd Monitor - completed as per 1st Progress report.

With regard to the eProfit Monitor, the full implementation date was delayed to coincide with the peak usage period in January 2004.

Dairy Herd Monitor - completed.

e-Profit Monitor - Full live testing of the system began in June 2003 and led to the formation of a Pilot Group consisting of specialists and main users. The system was rolled out to this group at the end of October 2003 and was ready for implementation by the end of November. It was decided that formal user training be delayed until the peak period of December/January when practical usage of the system would benefit the learning process. All enterprise advisors who operate in this area are now fully trained and there are 1200 farmers currently registered on the system.

Next Steps

The project is now completed but regular maintenance will be required to ensure that the system is current with CAP reform changes as they occur. In this regard, it is proposed to reconvene the specialist/user pilot group in order to monitor the operation of the system and to investigate any changes required to improve its effectiveness.

8.14 National Archives

AST

- New online facility to allow reservation of catalogue items in advance will be developed*

Update

The first phase of this has commenced with the making available online of certain databases and finding aids. This will add value to readers/researchers visits to the National Archives by enabling them carry out preliminary searches from home or elsewhere. The list of databases and finding aids is being added to as resources permit. Online provision of the entire National Archives catalogue is not achievable in the short term.

8.15 National Museum

AST

- Online catalogue management system for the National Museum collection*

Update

The National Museum expects to recruit an IT Manager whose priority will be the consideration of the new Botanic Gardens catalogue system with a view to replicating a similar system on the NMI website.

8.16 Hydrometric Information

OPW

- *Online availability of information concerning water levels by mid-2002.*

Update

This project has been completed and the site has been live since June 2003.

8.17 Iris Oifigiúil

OPW

- *Online availability of Iris Oifigiúil*

Update

The development of this application has been completed. Iris Oifigiúil is currently live on the web with issues from January 2003.

8.18 Planning Consultations

OPW

- *Online viewing of and submissions concerning proposed OPW developments*

Update

This project is progressing with a completion date of mid-2004.

8.19 National Art Online

OPW

- *Online viewing of the state art collection*

Update

This system is live since January 2004 and available for viewing at www.opw.ie

8.20 Digital Maps Online Ordnance Survey

FIN

- *Online access to digital data and maps for corporate clients and the general public on a phased basis*

Update

The aim is to have the software implemented by Q2 2004

8.21 Botanic Gardens

ELG

- *Online catalogue management system for the Botanic Gardens*

Update

The electronic plant catalogue has been completed and populated and will be made available online. It should be noted that responsibility for the Botanic Gardens and for this project has been transferred to the Office of Public Works.

8.22 Asylum/Immigration Services

JELR

- *Strategy for delivering integrated services in the immigration/asylum/refugee area by end-2003.*

Update

A project board for the Asylum IT Strategy implementation programme is in place. The Department is consulting with CMOD to ensure that the asylum sector solution leverages central government solutions, for example the Reach InterAgency Messaging Service, where possible. The Department plans to go to tender shortly for the first phase of the Asylum IT Strategy Implementation Programme. This will produce a detailed specification of the IT systems involved.

8.23 Public Transport Smart Cards/Railway Procurement Agency

TRA

- *Smartcard initiatives to enable integrated ticketing, park'n'ride schemes and concessionary travel by end-2003*

Update

The Railway Procurement Agency has been tasked with delivering the Luas and Metro rail projects and with delivering integrated ticketing. Smartcard initiatives are envisaged to enable integrated ticketing, park'n'ride schemes and concessionary travel. This payment system for all public transport modes will be introduced by way of contactless smartcard technology in consultation with the general public, transport operators, and institutional stakeholders. The project is being undertaken in 4 distinct phases: Economic Evaluation (completed); System definition (underway); followed by the Procurement and Implementation phases. The full Integrated Ticketing System is to be 'rolled-out' with a 'go-live' date of February 2006.

8.24 Public Transport Real-Time Information

TRA

- *Extension of pilot real-time passenger information initiatives, currently in operation on DART and Suburban Trains.*

Update

The Dublin Transportation Office has established a committee that includes representatives from the Department of Transport, the Public Transport Operators, the National Disability Authority, the Local Authorities and academics from Trinity College Dublin.

The committee has procured Atkins Transport Systems as consultants to undertake a four month study into public transport information and Real Time Passenger Information. The output of this study is anticipated to be an implementation strategy, incorporating short, medium and long-term projects for public transport information and real time passenger information on all modes of public transport in the Greater Dublin Area. The study has now been completed and the final report is to be circulated to committee members shortly.

8.25 Social Welfare Schemes

SFA

- *To provide for online delivery of appropriate social welfare schemes*

Update

Extensive internal and interagency infrastructural work (with GRO) to enable online service provision is ongoing and opportunities for e-enabling services are being examined.

8.26 GIS Strategy

LGCSB

- *National framework for Sectoral Geographical Information Systems by mid-2002*

Update

The Local Government Computer Services Board (LGCSB) has developed a framework for the utilisation of Geographic Information Systems in Local Authorities. All LGCSB Internet GIS applications will be built using this basic framework, including the Mobhaile initiative that has been piloted in seven Local Authorities in 2004.

8.27 Security Policy

LGCSB

- *Develop security policy and architecture for the Local Government sector.*

Update

A security policy to allow for e-Government has been developed. The Security Policy and Architecture is currently being implemented in all Local Authority Offices. To date, most Local Authority Offices have been audited and prepared for rationalisation. A significant number of sites are already certified.

The Security Policy ensures that Local Authority Offices are secured in the five key areas of tape backups antivirus protection, UPS protection, RAID redundancy and air conditioning. Due to current trends in IT, this policy has been extended to include automated patch management, an audit of firewall rules and web and email filtering.

The Architecture being implemented includes a standard IP framework and a national Windows structure and national email structure to which Local Authority Offices can be migrated.

The scope of the project has been extended considerably since its inception in the areas of migrations and security and it is now envisaged that all aspects of the project will be completed by mid-2005.

8.28 Gaeltacht Grants

CRGA

- *Online applications for Gaeltacht Grants*

Update

Design and build of the online system is expected in 2004. The Department is exploring the possibility of developing an interim solution with Reach.

8.29 National Library

AST

- *Online catalogue management system for the National Library by end 2003*

Update

The National Library's website gives access to online catalogues, containing 270,000 entries. These records include the Irish printed collections and all books to 1800. Programmes to convert the catalogues of remaining books to online form are in progress.

The online catalogue includes links to 6,000 digitised prints and 4,200 digitised photographs. These make up a representative selection of images from the major pictorial collections. The usefulness of this image bank is enhanced by

the ability to trace items by means of the database search. The Library intends to initiate new programmes with a view to substantially increasing the numbers of items digitised. A project to convert the catalogue of topographical prints to online format is also in progress.

The Library's website also includes a database of Irish newspapers and a database of manuscript lists. These lists include major Library collections such as the Joyce Papers 2002, and allow researchers to access remotely a broad range of sources. Additions to these sources are regularly made.

8.30 Marine Harmful Algal Blooms System

CMNR

- *Availability of test results for the presence of harmful algal blooms that can be dangerous to shell fish.*

Update

The HABS system is now fully online at the Marine Institute web site. The system provides the following areas of functionality:

- **Input of test results:** Laboratories around the country testing for the presence of substances toxic to human health can input test results directly to the HABS database at the Marine Institute via a secure https web interface;
- **HABS database:** All test results are collated and stored in the HABS database allowing national trends to be identified different test results, chemical, biological, to be collated;
- **HABS decision platform:** By applying business rules to the contents of the HABS database, the Decision Platform facilitates scientific staff by highlighting shellfish production areas that have returned results requiring analysis in order to determine whether the production area should be closed;
- **HABS reporting:** The HABS reporting element of the system allows for results, both current and historical, to be queried via the Marine Institute Web Site. A pseudo-GIS map interface is provided from which production areas can be selected. Date ranges can also be selected as can species type.

In addition, test results are distributed to interested parties, principally the Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI) by email, fax and SMS. In the last reporting period, the Marine Institute and the FSAI held a joint requirements workshop. This identified the requirements and architecture for a system that

would transfer data from HABS to the databases of the FSAI via web services. This will enable the data to be made available as consumer information on the FSAI web site and facilitate public health decisions made by FSAI staff.

Next Steps: Development of a web service to allow exchange of data from the Marine Institute to the Food Safety Authority of Ireland.

8.31 Coastal Weather Information

CMNR

- *Online access to coastal weather data*

Update

This service continues to automatically update the Marine Institute website with information from the national Marine Data Buoy network, and feeds the information on to both Met Éireann and the UK Met Office.

The web pages generated using information from the weather buoys generate approximately 30% of all traffic to www.marine.ie, or some 46,000 page views in 2003.

The service is used by a wide range of users including the fishing industry directly and via the Met Éireann near shore weather warning service, the shipping industry, emergency services including the Coast Guard and the water based leisure industry.

A development project is underway with the following objectives:

- **To improve the quality and reliability of information being displayed on the web site;**
- **To provide summary information on the current status of each weather buoy in graphical format on the web site;**
- **To integrate information being returned by weather stations on board the National Research Vessels to the Coastal Weather Information Service;**
- **To enable users of the site to request via SMS;**
- **This project has complete requirements definition and has commenced implementation.**

8.32 National Research Vessel Information Service

CMNR

- *The development of a new online ship to shore data management service SDMS to be installed on both the Celtic Voyager and the Celtic Explorer.*

Update

This service known to ships' users as the Survey Data Management System – SDMS - has a dual role. Firstly, it is intended to facilitate the efficient management of the national resource represented by the Research Vessels Celtic Voyager and Celtic Explorer. Secondly, it is intended to make details of the schedules of the vessels available to scientific users and the public at large. Currently, the system makes the following facilities available via the Marine Institute Web site or directly on board:

- **Potential users of the vessels are able to apply online for ship-time and to register all the details of their proposed surveys;**
- **When users board the ship all of the information they have submitted in their application will be available to them online via the ship's systems;**
- **Scientists, both in real time and in batch mode using a utility associated with SDMS, can easily interrogate data collected by the ships' Data Acquisition Systems (DAS);**
- **On completion of a survey, mandatory reports are now automatically generated;**
- **Data collected during surveys with SDMS are event stamped, thereby enabling the chief scientist on a survey to easily analyse the data relative to the sequence in which events were taken;**
- **Details of the uses for which the research vessels are being used are posted to the Marine Institute web site.**

Further development has been broken down into three strands:

Survey Planning: The system is currently being advised to reflect the additional complexity of managing the RV Celtic Explorer, acoustically the most advanced research vessel in the world. Additional functionality is being added to give greater transparency regarding the actual usage of the ship, e.g. to show when it is in passage between surveys, being maintained etc.

Event Marking: In deployments so far on the RV Celtic Voyager, it has been found that scientists require greater flexibility on how, and in particular where, scientific events can be marked during survey. A requirements gathering exercise is underway to determine mechanisms to improve data entry and event marking using mobile devices and wireless technology.

Post Cruise Reporting: A further iteration on the system will further develop the automatic generation of meta data summary data describing the detailed data collected during the cruise, its transfer to The Marine Information Resource

Warehouse (see below) and the generation of reports to the Marine Institute Web site.

Next Steps:

- **Commencement of requirements gathering for strand to allow Post Cruise Reporting.**
- **Implementation of Event Marking and Post Cruise Reporting strands in 2004.**

8.33 The Marine Information Resource Warehouse

CMNR

- *Online access to a wide range of Marine data to provide regulators, marine businesses, academic researchers and the public at large with access to a wide range of information and services to support day to day activities and interests.*

Update

The Marine Information Resource Warehouse represents a programme of projects that together will deliver a National Marine Data Store. Component projects of the programme include the following:

Meta-data Catalogue: This project is underway and follows a brief pilot conducted in March/April 2003. The pilot determined the following;

- **The meta-data catalogue should follow ISO 19115 meta-data standard;**
- **The meta-data catalogue should be constructed using an architecture based on the ESRI tool set;**
- **It is feasible in the short term to deliver on line access to some data sets listed in the meta-data catalogue.**

Following on from the Prototype project, a full implementation project has been underway for the past three months. This project is now ready for deployment to the Marine Institute web site. Upon deployment, it will be possible for visitors to www.marine.ie to browse an inventory of all data holdings held by the Marine Institute, view summary data and in some instances browse to the associated data sets described by the summary data.

The meta-data catalogue project opens the possibility of information exchange across agencies. To this end, the Marine Institute is eager to ensure a common approach with other state agencies and is eager to share experiences. To this end, validation of the usage of ISO 19115 has been carried out with the GSI and the EPA.

Interim Data Store: While the Marine Information Resource Warehouse is under development, it is necessary for the Marine Institute to develop an interim mechanism in which to hold data, in particular data originating from the National Research Vessels. This interim data store is now in place and has been operational for a number of months.

Oceanographic Data Store: As a first step in building the Marine Information Resource Warehouse, a data store concentrating on Oceanographic data will be constructed. This project commenced in August 2003. The data model will integrate closely with that of SDMS. The Oceanographic Data Store will be expanded to include further Marine Data during the course of 2004. This will require the development of a number of migration tools (see below) to take certain data sets from existing ad-hoc storage mechanisms. Initially the data store will replace the Interim Data Store outlined above.

Online Services: Online services allowing the public to query data held in the Marine Information Resource Warehouse will be developed in 2004. These include data visualisation tools and GIS tools. It is planned to take an incremental approach to the development of these services, that is to deliver basic data query and transfer tools, followed by more advanced data visualisation tools.

Data Migration tools: In order to populate the Marine Information Resource Warehouse, the Marine Institute will build a number of data transformation and migration tools to take existing data sets into the Warehouse schema. This work will take place in 2004.

Next Steps:

- **Development of online services and data migration tools in 2004.**

8.34 Education

ES

- *Online school information database*
- *Online facility for student grants application and payment*

Update

Information on individual schools is available on the Department of Education & Science's website. This will be expanded on an on-going basis.

8.35 Teagasc Online Food Assurance Database

AF

- *Food Assurance Online to provide a comprehensive food assurance database for Primary producers, Teagasc courses HETAC, FETAC accredited (Agriculturists and veterinarians/other professionals/industry personnel)*

Update

Three interactive online learning modules were developed and incorporated into the Food Assurance Online website in advance of the original November 2003 deadline for launch of the service. The modules are:

- **Best Farm Assurance Practice**
- **Farm Food Safety: A Hazard Analysis Approach**
- **Welfare Guidelines for Livestock Farms**

In the interim, it was decided to develop six online interactive generic checklists covering beef, dairy, lamb, grain, welfare assurance and farm safety. These are useful educational tools and support the three online learning modules. The addition of this extra interactive material extended the project timeframes and the target date for launch of food assurance online is now Q2 2004. The site itself is currently accessible to all Teagasc staff through the Teagasc intranet.

Next Steps

- **Launch of Food Assurance Online in Q2 2004**
- **Continued population of the database with information/gateway links**
- **Continued addition of further online resources as part of Food Assurance Online**

8.36 Heritage Projects

ELG

- *Heritage Licences - to enable online processing for archaeological licences, hunting licences and excavation reports*
- *Heritage Visitor Services - to enable the online sale of heritage cards and publications as well as providing education packs and event information and facilitating the tracking of the use of heritage cards*
- *GIS Heritage Information - to make GIS data on heritage available online*

Update

Online Heritage Licences: A project team will be established shortly to begin work on this project.

Heritage Visitor Services: Responsibility for Education and Visitor Services, including this project, has been transferred to the Office of Public Works.

GIS Heritage Information: A tender process is nearing completion for the engagement of consultants to establish a database of heritage information in a browser accessible form. This will enable the presentation of this data on the internet.

8.37 Library Services

ELG

- *To make public library catalogues available online*

Update

Significant progress has been made on this objective over the period with 19 of the 32 library authorities now having catalogues available online.

8.38 Revenue

- *To supply Electronic Versions of Employer Tax Credit Certificates (P2cs) for ROS Customers*

From November 2003, Revenue will issue all P2Cs (employer copies of employees' Tax Credit Certificates) to all ROS customers via their secure ROS Inbox (both original and amended certificates). These employers will be able to view and/or download these details from ROS and integrate them into their payroll systems.

These include:

- **Filing for VIES and Intrastat Returns;**
- **Relevant Contracts Tax. The extension of this service to cater for filing and payment of the RCT35;**
- **Introduction of Web Services for Corporation Tax;**
- **Budget updates and the release of all forms for 2004, including the 2003 Income Tax Form 11.**

8.38.1 Tax Relief for Mortgages

- *develop an online facility through the revenue website www.revenue.ie to allow people to enter their bank details to claim for Tax Relief at Source for mortgages.*

Update

Revenue have also developed an online facility through their website www.revenue.ie to allow people to enter their bank details to claim for Tax Relief at Source for mortgages. This was released in February 2004.

8.39 Census Statistics

CSO

- *Online dissemination of Census 2002 statistics on a phased basis from mid-2003*

Update

The Principal Demographic Results from the 2002 Census of Population were published in June 2003 and made available on the CSO website. Further results have been published on a phased basis since then and this process will continue until mid-2004.

Appendix 1

Department	Prioritised Services
Agriculture and Food	<input type="checkbox"/> Teagasc Profit Monitoring Systems <input type="checkbox"/> Teagasc Online Analytical Systems <input type="checkbox"/> Online Area Aid Applications <input type="checkbox"/> AHCS Disease Eradication Schemes
Arts, Sport & Tourism	<input type="checkbox"/> Online catalogue of National Archives <input type="checkbox"/> Online catalogue in National Library <input type="checkbox"/> Online catalogue in National Museum
Communications, Marine and Natural Resources	<input type="checkbox"/> Online facility to make payments and receive payments <input type="checkbox"/> Online application for vessel registration & fishing licences <input type="checkbox"/> Apply online for Forestry grants <input type="checkbox"/> Apply online for Prospecting/Mining Licence including access to Geographical Information Database <input type="checkbox"/> Apply online for sea fishing licences
Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs	<input type="checkbox"/> Online applications for Gaeltacht Grants
Education & Science	<input type="checkbox"/> Online adult learning database <input type="checkbox"/> Primary Pupil Database <input type="checkbox"/> Online Claims System for payment of non-established primary/post-primary teachers <input type="checkbox"/> Further Education Management Information System
Enterprise, Trade & Employment	<input type="checkbox"/> Online access to Patents Office journal & payments <input type="checkbox"/> Online Work Permits <input type="checkbox"/> BASIS business portal

	<input type="checkbox"/> Consumer Protection Portal <input type="checkbox"/> Import/export licences online <input type="checkbox"/> EAT decisions online
Environment, Heritage & Local Government	<input type="checkbox"/> Duchas Development Applications Tracking System <input type="checkbox"/> Online catalogue for Botanic Gardens <input type="checkbox"/> Change of vehicle ownership <input type="checkbox"/> Pay Motor Tax online <input type="checkbox"/> Universal Participation Initiative promoting participation on the Information Society <input type="checkbox"/> Library Services <input type="checkbox"/> Online Heritage Licences <input type="checkbox"/> Heritage Online System <input type="checkbox"/> GIS Heritage Information
LGCSB	<input type="checkbox"/> E-Government Readiness Project <input type="checkbox"/> Higher Education Grants System <input type="checkbox"/> e-Direct Contact Management System <input type="checkbox"/> Data Interoperability Framework <input type="checkbox"/> Mobhaile e-inclusion initiatives <input type="checkbox"/> Host Reach services.ie <input type="checkbox"/> Online planning enquiries and e-Democracy projects <input type="checkbox"/> e-Register of electors <input type="checkbox"/> Online Services to Businesses <input type="checkbox"/> Local Government e-Procurement
Finance	<input type="checkbox"/> eEnabling the Public Service <input type="checkbox"/> e-Estimates <input type="checkbox"/> Public Sector Technical Communications Infrastructure <input type="checkbox"/> Online access to Digital Maps (OSI) <input type="checkbox"/> Public Procurement- online tendering
OPW	<input type="checkbox"/> Online National Art Collection <input type="checkbox"/> Online OPW Planning Consultations

Foreign Affairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Online Passport applications
Health & Children	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eligibility and Refunds on Drug Payment Schemes
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provision of information on Health services to patients
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Diabetes Shared Care Pilot
	<input type="checkbox"/>	e-Learning in service planning and clinical audit
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Eligibility for general medical services
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Delivery of laboratory results to GPs
Justice, Equality & Law Reform	<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop Asylum/Immigration Services Strategy
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Create Commercial Court
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Research tools/methods to determine compliance with Accessibility Guidelines
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Online lodgement of Small Claims
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Integrate of Justice Sector Systems
	<input type="checkbox"/>	On-the-spot Fines System
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Online Payment of Court Fines
	<input type="checkbox"/>	e-Procurement & Management Information Framework
	<input type="checkbox"/>	e-Work
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Interoperability across organisational/national boundaries
Courts	<input type="checkbox"/>	Court Fines
Land Registry	<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop Land Registry's Electronic Access System
Social & Family Affairs	<input type="checkbox"/>	Card based access to Social Welfare Schemes
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Online applications for Birth, Death and Marriage Certificates
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Automate Child Benefit System
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Public Service Identity common customer database
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide a legal framework to e-enable civil registration process (Public Service

Identity)

Taoiseach **e-Cabinet Project**

Transport **Online application of Road Haulage Licences**

 Public Transport Smart Cards (Railway Procurement Agency)

 Public Transport Real-Time Information

Central Statistics Office **Online dissemination of Census of Population statistics**

 Expansion of online data submission for Business inquiries

 Expansion of online dissemination facilities for all statistics produced by the CSO and, in particular, the provision of web-based analysis

Revenue Commissioners **Gift & Inheritance Tax Returns**

 Construction Industry & Relevant Contract Tax

 Online Import/Export declarations