

Version 16

# **Department of Foreign Affairs**

## **Second Decentralisation Implementation Plan**

16 March 2005

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## **CHAPTER 1**

### **FOREWORD**

For ease of reference, the following indicates the meaning, for the purposes of this plan, of a number of terms and abbreviations which appear frequently in the document.

<b>CAF:</b>	the <b>C</b> entral <b>A</b> pplications <b>F</b> acility
<b>CMOD:</b>	the <b>C</b> entre for <b>M</b> anagement and <b>O</b> rganisation <b>D</b> evelopment (based in the Department of Finance)
<b>CMTU:</b>	the <b>C</b> hange <b>M</b> anagement and <b>T</b> raining <b>U</b> nit of the Department of Foreign Affairs
<b>DCD:</b>	the <b>D</b> evelopment <b>C</b> ooperation <b>D</b> irectorate of the Department of Foreign Affairs, which is being decentralised to Limerick
<b>DCI:</b>	<b>D</b> evelopment <b>C</b> ooperation <b>I</b> reland (formerly “Ireland Aid”), the official name of the Government of Ireland’s programme of assistance to developing countries. The programme is managed by DCD.
<b>D/FA:</b>	the <b>D</b> eartment of <b>F</b> oreign <b>A</b> ffairs
<b>D/Finance:</b>	the <b>D</b> eartment of <b>F</b> inance
<b>GDIC:</b>	the Government’s Decentralisation Implementation Committee
<b>HQ:</b>	Headquarters, meaning the Department’s offices in Dublin
<b>HR:</b>	<b>H</b> uman <b>R</b> esources
<b>IR:</b>	<b>I</b> ndustrial <b>R</b> elations
<b>NGO:</b>	<b>N</b> on- <b>G</b> overnmental <b>O</b> rganisation
<b>PMDS:</b>	The <b>P</b> erformance <b>M</b> anagement and <b>D</b> evelopment <b>S</b> ystem for the Civil Service
<b>OPW:</b>	The Office of Public Works

## CHAPTER 2

### INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

The Minister for Finance announced on 4 December 2003 that the Development Cooperation Directorate (DCD) of the Department of Foreign Affairs was to be relocated to Limerick city under a new programme of decentralisation for the public service. The Government subsequently appointed a Decentralisation Implementation Committee to drive the decentralisation programme and report to Government on progress made. The Development Cooperation Directorate is responsible for the management and co-ordination of the Government's development co-operation programme - Development Co-operation Ireland (DCI).

In light of the recommendations of the March 2004 report of the Government's Decentralisation Implementation Committee (GDIC), the Department completed its first Decentralisation Implementation Plan in July 2004. The initial plan was prepared before information was forthcoming on the availability of office accommodation in Limerick. Nor at the time did the Department have any information about the numbers and grades of staff electing to decentralise to Limerick. The plan noted that decentralisation posed three key challenges for the Department:

- Ensuring continued operational effectiveness in the management of the Government's development cooperation programme;
- Ensuring continued coherence between development policy and other aspects of Irish foreign policy;
- Managing the human resources aspects before, during and after decentralisation.

On 24 November 2004, the Minister for Finance, having considered recommendations from GDIC, announced the names of the Departments which would be included in the first phase of moves under the decentralisation programme. DCD was included in the first phase with a projected timeframe of the first quarter of 2007 for the move. The November 2004 report also recommended that Departments moving in the first phase update their initial Decentralisation Implementation Plans by mid-February 2005.

The aims of this second implementation plan are:

- ❖ to provide an update on the main developments since the Department's July 2004 plan was finalised;
- ❖ to highlight the significant issues arising for the Department from these developments;
- ❖ to provide as much clarification as possible regarding the range of HR/IR issues arising from the decentralisation programme including the conditions under which staff will transfer with DCD to Limerick; and
- ❖ to set out a detailed action plan (with timelines) for achieving the objective of relocating DCD to Limerick during the first quarter of 2007.

Further updates of this plan will be prepared as the decentralisation project moves forward.

## CHAPTER 3

### MISSION AND MANDATE

#### 3.1 Overview

The Mission of the Department of Foreign Affairs is to advance Ireland's interests and values in the European Union and in the wider world, to promote Ireland's contribution to international peace, security and development, to protect its citizens abroad and to pursue reconciliation and partnership on the island of Ireland. One of the Department's primary goals, deriving from its mission statement, is to "make a substantial and effective contribution to lasting poverty reduction and sustainable growth in developing countries through the policy and programmes of Ireland Aid, and by working for a just and stable international economic system."

#### 3.2 Ireland's Development Cooperation Policy

Ireland has had an official development programme since 1974. It has grown steadily over the years from modest beginnings. The budget for 2005 amounts to €45 million, of which €170 million will be administered by DCD.

Ireland's development cooperation policy is an integral part of Ireland's wider foreign policy and its philosophy is rooted in our foreign policy objectives of peace and justice. Its programmes reflect our long-standing commitment to human rights and fairness in international relations.

##### 3.2.1 *Ministerial responsibility*

Responsibility for Irish foreign policy, including assistance to developing countries, lies with the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Mr Dermot Ahern, TD. Particular responsibility for Development Cooperation and Human Rights is presently assigned to the Minister of State at the Department, Mr Conor Lenihan TD.

##### 3.2.2 *Report of the Ireland Aid Review Committee*

The report of the Ireland Aid Review Committee, published in 2002, set out a blueprint for the future direction and management of Ireland's development cooperation policy. The report followed a comprehensive review of the Ireland Aid programme by a committee of independent experts chaired by the then Minister of State. The committee engaged in wide consultation with key development actors and stakeholders and made a series of recommendations, which were accepted by the Government. One of these related to the establishment of the Advisory Board, which is discussed in Chapter 4 below. With regard to business continuity, the review stated that "Another requirement for an efficient programme is that there should be maximum continuity of management and overall institutional memory".

##### 3.2.3 *White Paper on development assistance*

The Minister of State for Development Cooperation and Human Rights, Mr. Conor Lenihan T.D., has recently launched a consultative process that will lead to the first ever Government White Paper on development cooperation. This will involve engaging in a broad public consultation process regarding the future direction of the development cooperation programme. The Irish public, as well as NGOs and others who are familiar with the problems of the developing world, will be given an opportunity to express their views on all aspects of development cooperation policies.

During the course of the consultation process, DCD will seek to inform and engage the public in the work that it does, not only in offering assistance in the event of natural disasters such as the Asian tsunami, but also in its bilateral country programmes in Africa and elsewhere, and in collaboration with its partners in Europe and with the United Nations and other international organisations.

#### **3.2.4 Budget**

There is a separate Vote (No.29 – International Cooperation) in the Department to cover expenditure on development cooperation. The Directorate has a separate Finance Unit, charged with responsibility for administering expenditure from Vote 29.

The budget allocation for 2005 provides for an increase of €70 million over last year in Government spending on Official Development Assistance (this includes the extra funding of €10 million announced in the wake of the tsunami disaster). This will bring total Government expenditure to approximately €545 million in 2005. In addition, the Government has agreed to further increases of €65 million in each of the years 2006 and 2007. This represents an increase of 40% in total ODA spending over the next three years and an increase of 50% in the ODA expenditure administered by DCD. A total of €1.8 billion will be spent by Ireland on development assistance over the coming three years, demonstrating the Government's commitment to building quickly on the substantial progress to date towards achievement of the UN target of 0.7% of GNP for expenditure on overseas development assistance.

Continued expansion in the aid budget will have implications for the level of resources needed to ensure continued effective management of the programme, and must be taken into consideration by the Department in the context of assessing its requirements in Limerick.

## CHAPTER 4

### EXISTING STRUCTURES AND STAFFING

#### 4.1 Overview

The Development Cooperation Directorate, one of ten Divisions of the Department of Foreign Affairs, is responsible for administering the expenditure from Vote 29. It also has a co-ordinating role in relation to Official Development Assistance provided by other Government Departments. Relocation of the Directorate, which is currently housed at Bishop's Square, Dublin 2, will involve the transfer of some 130 posts to Limerick. The numbers by grade are listed in Annex 2.

#### 4.2 Role of the Overseas Missions

The DCI Programme is managed by the Development Cooperation Directorate in close collaboration with the Department's Offices in seven Programme Countries (Ethiopia, Lesotho, Mozambique, Tanzania, Timor Leste, Uganda and Zambia). These offices are responsible for the implementation and monitoring of aid programmes at local level. Generally, the Offices are headed up at Chargé d'Affaires level (Counsellor or First Secretary), with between one and three (depending on location and size of programme) specialist staff on long-term contracts as well as (in five of the seven locations) a Third Secretary. DCD officers are also assigned to the Embassy in Pretoria to oversee a significant programme in South Africa. In 2000 a representative office was opened in Ramallah while a new office opened in Sierra Leone in February, 2005 (this will also cover our development cooperation programme in Liberia). Following a Government decision in December, 2004, a resident diplomatic mission will be opened in Hanoi by mid-2005 to coordinate a development engagement with Vietnam, Cambodia and Laos.

All diplomatic and specialist staff assigned to offices overseas are subject to regular rotation between Ireland and the field.

Each field office also has a team of locally-employed staff who provide supplementary technical input and assist with the day-to-day management of substantial country programmes and projects.

Country programme budgets range between €10 million and €40 million in each of the three larger programmes (Ethiopia, Mozambique and Uganda), and between €4 million and €25 million in four others.

#### 4.3 Structure of DCD

The work of the Directorate is carried out by ten sections, as follows:

- Multilateral UN
- Multilateral EU
- Programme Countries 1
- Programme Countries 2
- Emergency and Recovery
- Civil Society
- Domestic, Balkans and CIS
- Technical Section
- Evaluation and Audit

- Support Services

In addition, staff of the Directorate provide administrative support to the Advisory Board for Development Cooperation Ireland. Further information on the role of the individual sections is provided below (an organigram is attached in Appendix 5)

#### ***4.3.1 Multilateral - UN***

The section is responsible for the international development cooperation aspects of Ireland's participation in the United Nations and in certain other multilateral organisations, especially the World Bank. It has policy oversight of the UN funds and programmes (mainly UNDP, UNICEF, UNHCR) to whose core budgets Ireland contributes. It coordinates national participation in the development processes of the UN through the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the various development conferences. It manages the budget for voluntary contributions to the UN funds and programmes (€47m from Subhead E in 2005) and to a number of World Bank trust funds. It promotes a national policy on the problem of debt in low-income countries.

#### ***4.3.2 Multilateral – EU***

The EU Multilateral Section provides advice on Ireland's participation in the formulation and implementation of EU development policies. In particular, it is responsible for Ireland's contribution to the European Development Fund. The Section is also responsible for DCI's input into EU and WTO trade negotiations, in coordination with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

#### ***4.3.3 Programme Countries 1 and 2***

Overall responsibility for the management and day-to-day implementation of individual country programmes lies with the Department's field office (Embassy or Consulate General) in each country. The two Programme Countries Sections coordinate and support the implementation of the programmes and facilitate communication between sections in the Development Cooperation Directorate and Offices in the programme countries.

#### ***4.3.4 Emergency and Recovery***

The Emergency and Recovery Section is responsible for the timely, effective and high quality delivery of Ireland's humanitarian assistance, which is mainly channelled through Irish and international Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), UN agencies and international organisations such as the Red Cross family.

#### ***4.3.5 Civil Society***

The Civil Society Section is responsible for the development and implementation of a civil society policy for the DCI programme. It is the primary interface between DCI and the development NGO community. The Section administers a Human Rights and Democratisation Scheme which assists human rights, democratisation and governance activities outside the DCI programme countries, and the Central American Programme.

#### ***4.3.6 Domestic, Balkans and CIS***

The Balkans and CIS Desk administers the Balkans/CIS Assistance Scheme which covers the countries of the Western Balkans and of the Commonwealth of

Independent States. This Section is also responsible for the promotion of development education. The work of the Information and Communications Officer, including publications, is part of this Section's output. The Section also administers the Organisational Development Grants Scheme to help NGOs, and it is in charge of the Resource Centre.

#### ***4.3.7 Technical***

The Technical and Specialist Section was established in 2003 with the objective of providing technical oversight and support for a complex and expanding DCI programme. Key responsibilities of the Section include the provision of advice regarding the use of different funding instruments; providing guidance and participation in the planning of expenditure programmes; input to DCI policy development and implementation; ensuring policy coherence and institutional memory; representing DCI at international meetings and contracting research and technical support which is relevant to the needs of the programme.

#### ***4.3.8 Evaluation and Audit***

As its name implies, this Section is responsible for evaluation and audit functions across the DCI programme. It conducts an active schedule of evaluations and audits with a view to searching continuously for improvements in programme implementation and to maintaining high standards of accountability.

#### ***4.3.9 Support Services***

The Support Services Section deals with a range of corporate functions, including human resources, internal coordination, accounts, statistics and input to the annual Estimates process. This Section also monitors and advises on the commissioning of consultancies. DCD commissions consultancies in circumstances where specialised knowledge or skills are not available in-house, or where an independent evaluation of programmes or of funding proposals is required.

### **4.4 The Advisory Board for Development Cooperation Ireland**

The Advisory Board for Development Cooperation Ireland was established in 2002 on the recommendation of the Ireland Aid Review. The purpose of the Board is to provide general oversight and advice to the Minister on the strategic direction of the development cooperation programme. The Board's membership numbers at least eight and a chairperson, drawn from a range of backgrounds, including the NGO community, public service, social partners and the business sector. All members serve voluntarily and are appointed in an individual rather than a representative capacity. The Board is supported by a small Secretariat.

### **4.5 Key relationships**

As indicated above, DCD works closely with a range of domestic and international bodies. Within Ireland, DCD liaises continuously with other Government Departments, Non-Governmental Organisations, missionary organisations and a range of other stakeholders. On the international stage, there is regular contact with EU partners, other donor organisations, the World Bank and a range of UN agencies. Within the Department, close co-ordination between DCD and other Divisions of the Department, notably the Political and EU Divisions, is vital to ensure coherence between development and wider foreign policy. Maintaining effective collaboration

with offices in Programme Countries, with Embassies in countries receiving significant funding and with other Missions (including Ireland's Permanent Representations to the EU and UN) will also be of central importance during and after decentralisation.

## CHAPTER 5

### 5.1 Overview

The decentralisation of DCD will involve the relocation of some 130 posts to Limerick City. On the basis of current information it is estimated that up to 100 of the 130 posts in DCD may have to be filled by new staff willing to transfer to Limerick. Also, around 100 of the Department's existing staff have applied to leave the Department in order to avail of decentralisation opportunities with other Departments/Agencies. The resulting turnover of staff will pose significant challenges for the Department in terms of managing the Human Resources implications for DCD and other Divisions while ensuring business continuity. The Department's Human Resources Strategy will be updated to reflect these new challenges.

#### 5.1.1 *Key outstanding issues relating to transfers under the CAF.*

Some of the key human resource and industrial relations issues outstanding at a central level include the transfer protocol, seniority for CPSU grades, promotion procedures and the operation of the Dublin CAF.

At a Departmental level the following issues remain outstanding:

- The conditions under which existing DFA staff will transfer to Limerick, particularly staff in the diplomatic and technical/specialist grades for whom overseas postings are a condition of service;
- The conditions under which staff of other Departments will be imported to fill unsubscribed departmental grade (diplomatic) posts in Limerick;
- Whether and how the *Last in First out* system would operate in the context of a surplus being created in DFA due to the import of staff for Limerick.
- The means by which Aid Offices abroad are to be staffed after decentralisation.

### 5.2 The process of decentralisation

#### 5.2.1 *Central Applications Facility (CAF) results for Limerick*

In November 2004, the Public Appointments Service (which operates the CAF) provided the Department with a breakdown by grade of first preference applications for Limerick lodged by officers of DFA and other Departments/Agencies. Analysis of the lists indicates that, in general, middle and lower grade posts will be filled with relative ease whereas many senior and most specialist posts remain undersubscribed. Details of the incoming/external applicants have since been received by DFA although a number of errors and queries remain to be dealt with.

##### *Diplomatic posts*

No first preference applications have been made from within DFA to fill the seven Counsellor/Principal Officer (PO) posts. Four applications were made by officers of other Departments in the Principal Officer (PO) grade. There were 13 applications for

the 19 First Secretary/Assistant Principal (AP) posts, three from within DFA. The four Third Secretary posts have been applied for by officers in the grade in DFA.

#### *Development Specialist grades*

In the technical/specialist grades, no applications were received for the three Principal Development Specialist (PDS) posts. According to data provided by CAF, three of the 12 Senior Development Specialist (DS) posts were applied for and three applications were received for the 9 Development Specialist (DS) posts, all from within the Department. Four officers in the DS grade were recruited subsequent to the Government's decentralisation announcement and their contracts of employment provide for relocation to Limerick.

#### *Other grades*

An excess of first preference applications were received for posts in the middle ranking and junior general service grades, with the small number of applications made by DFA staff being compensated for by larger numbers from other Departments. See, however, comments below regarding Revenue staff already based in Limerick.

In December 2004, the Department contacted its internal applicants for Limerick to enquire whether it was still their intention to transfer with DCD in 2007. Taking account of the responses received, a revised table has been drawn up showing numbers of applicants by grade (see Annex 3). As can be seen from the table, there were 26 first preference applications from DFA staff in the required grades. A total of 114 officers from other Departments have applied under the CAF to move to Limerick. Also noted below the table are the numbers of applications received from officers in departmental grades, including some serving in State Agencies. These figures are shown separately because issues surrounding interchangeability of grades in the Civil and Public Service remain to be resolved at central level.

#### ***Changes in overall total of applications***

The number of officers available to fill the DCD posts is expected to change further for several reasons. Firstly, many of the DFA applicants recently contacted by HR Unit indicated that while they were still interested in principle in making the move to Limerick, they would need clarification on certain key HR/IR issues before they could confirm their intentions. Secondly, it is understood that approximately 40 of the external applicants are already based in the Office of the Revenue Commissioners in Limerick City and will not be permitted to "decentralise" from Revenue to DFA. In addition the position of other applicants from the wider Limerick region has yet to be clarified. Finally, it should also be noted that the table deals with first preference CAF applications only. It is our understanding that officers who selected Limerick as their second, third etc. preference applications will at some point be asked if they wish to nominate Limerick as their first preference.

#### ***Implications of CAF results for senior management team in Limerick***

The CAF results highlight a significant shortfall of applicants for the senior management (Heads of Section) level posts in DCD, with only four officers from other Departments having applied for the 10 Counsellor/Principal Development Specialist posts. The Department's annual cycle of overseas postings is currently underway. This will involve transfers of diplomats and development specialists between missions and HQ. Taking this into account and having regard to the need to have a management team in place prior to decentralisation, it is essential that

conditions of service of the senior management team transferring to Limerick be clarified as a matter of urgency. These issues are currently under discussion with the Department of Finance.

***Import of staff from other Departments for transfer to Limerick.***

The Department aims to begin importing applicants from other Departments by summer 2005. However, this process cannot begin until agreement is reached centrally between Public Service management and Unions and between D/Finance and line Departments, on all the protocols and procedures to be followed in making assignments from the CAF. The Department is continuing to engage on this issue at central level via the Decentralisation Liaison Officers Group (DLOG).

***Assignment of DFA Staff to DCD***

Human Resources Unit has already begun the process of moving DFA staff who are willing to transfer to Limerick into DCD. To date, this has been achieved by filling vacancies as they arose in the normal course of events. This process will continue over the coming months, and particularly in the context of the Department's annual cycle of overseas postings. The Department, will, as requested, provide D/Finance with monthly up-dates on assignments so that they in turn can inform the relevant Oireachtas Committee.

***5.2.2 Maintaining expertise in the aid area***

The Development Cooperation Directorate is currently staffed by diplomatic officers experienced in the aid area, by specialist/technical experts and by general service officers. Issues will arise with regard to maintaining the level of expertise already provided by the diplomatic staff who transfer between HQ and diplomatic postings overseas at regular intervals. It should be noted, in this context, that the requirement to serve abroad at the direction of the Minister is a condition of service for diplomatic officers and development specialists.

Consideration is currently being given to the situation of diplomatic staff who are subject to the rules of transfer abroad as part of their conditions of service, with the possibility that they may be assigned to either Dublin or Limerick on transfer back to Ireland, as well as to the issue of the staffing of Aid Offices abroad.

DCD's specialist technical staff are an indispensable component of the staffing complement. They have crucial expertise in the development field and play a key role in planning, implementing, monitoring and evaluating complex development programmes and policy. In order to ensure the continuing efficient operation of the programme, maintaining the current levels of specialist expertise in Limerick will be crucial. At present, a large number of specialist posts remain unsubscribed and this problem needs to be addressed urgently.

***5.2.3 ICT staffing***

In a decentralised environment, ICT will play a crucial role in facilitating liaison with the Division's internal and external stakeholders. The Department will ensure that there is a separate reliable ICT support service in DCD in Limerick staffed at a senior level (see para. 9.2.1).

#### ***5.2.4 Staff on worksharing and career breaks***

Officers applying for decentralisation who currently avail of worksharing may need clarification, before accepting an offer of transfer, that they may continue their current working pattern. The Department will make every effort to accommodate such requests in light of DCD's operational requirements in Limerick.

Officers on career break, special leave or other temporary absences were entitled to apply under the CAF for decentralised posts. Those on career breaks whose applications are approved will have to negotiate their return dates with the decentralising Department. The position of those returning from career breaks during the decentralisation programme, who wish to remain in Dublin, will also need to be addressed.

### **Transfer to Limerick - general HR issues**

#### ***5.2.5 Supporting the movers***

The Department intends to provide maximum possible practical support to those who are moving to Limerick e.g. by facilitating contacts between staff and key bodies in the City (e.g. estate agents, schools, colleges etc.). With regard to the availability of child care facilities, we await the outcome of the work of the inter-departmental committee established on foot of the GDIC Report to consider this issue. It is understood that broader measures to assist those moving are also being considered by the Department of Finance, in consultation with the Employee Assistance Service.

#### ***5.2.6 Managing staff transfers***

As indicated previously in this document, managing the staff turnover associated with decentralisation will be a key challenge for the Department. The formulation and implementation of development cooperation policy has become increasingly complex and specialised over recent years. This is reflected in the increasing proportion of DCD posts which are occupied by specialist grades.

Key posts will need to be filled as early as possible ahead of the relocation, while some experienced staff who are not transferring to Limerick may need to be retained in sections right up to the decentralisation date. These issues will need to be kept under careful review.

Management of the logistics of the relocation process will be a key factor in its success. It will be important to ensure that the move itself takes place within a fixed timeframe.

In order to maximise retention of corporate memory and minimise the risk to business continuity, the Department will seek to maximise overlaps between existing DCD staff and those coming into the Directorate for transfer to Limerick.

Subject to the constraints imposed centrally with regard to conditions of service, the Department will explore the potential for facilitating the maximum retention of experienced DCD staff through greater availability of flexible working arrangements (e.g. e-working).

### **5.3 Staff remaining in Dublin**

#### ***5.3.1 Managing potential staff surplus***

The Department recognizes that the CAF process may create a surplus of staff in Dublin based Departments (including D/FA). Should this arise, D/FA would wish to retain its own net staff surplus rather than export staff to other Departments against their will. The issues surrounding the operation of the *last in first out* (LIFO) principle in D/FA have been raised by D/FA with D/Finance. The Department has particular concerns that officers who opted for a career in the diplomatic service, involving obligatory service overseas, should not be forced to change their career path dramatically arising from the Government decision on decentralisation.

Similar concerns arise in relation to the technical staff of the Directorate who have devoted their careers to specialisation in the development cooperation sphere and for whom decentralisation creates a similar challenge.

The Department would also have to insist that the LIFO system does not apply to any person who had already opted to relocate to its new passport facility in Balbriggan (including staff who transferred to the Department for that purpose).

#### ***5.3.2 Impact of organisational change***

We recognise that significant organisational change can impact negatively on the morale of some of those affected. The Department will seek to minimise the impact of the forthcoming changes on staff through careful planning and implementation of the decentralisation decision and by communicating plans and actions as they happen.

Many of the current staff of DCD will have to move to new posts in the Department. If the CAF process produces a surplus of staff in Dublin, some officers of the Department may have to move to other Departments/Offices in Dublin. These matters will require careful planning, taking account of the personal needs of the individuals involved and the business continuity requirements of the Department. The Department's communications strategy for decentralisation will be particularly important in this regard (see chapter 10).

The Department also recognises that decentralisation poses opportunities for organisational change and will make every effort to ensure that such opportunities are availed of.

### **5.4 Post-decentralisation arrangements**

#### ***5.4.1 Filling future vacancies***

The Department will discuss with the Department of Finance how vacancies arising after decentralisation are to be filled. We understand that open recruitment and inter-departmental promotion policies are to be amended to take account of the regional spread of Government offices post decentralisation. Clarification is needed on whether the CAF system will produce panels from which a proportion of future vacancies will be filled.

#### ***5.4.2 Other HR issues***

We will also draw up a strategy for managing a range of other HR issues including the following:

- Supporting staff who experience difficulties in adapting to the decentralised workplace environment;
- Ensuring continued effective management of PMDS;
- Examining scope for expanding the range of family friendly flexible working arrangements available to staff;
- Provision of appropriate staff participation and consultation procedures, including making any necessary arrangements for Limerick based staff to participate at the Departmental Council and Partnership Committee fora in Dublin.

#### ***5.4.3 Management of HR function in Limerick***

The Department has already devolved considerable responsibility for HR matters to the Support Services Unit of DCD. We will consider what further management challenges may arise from the transfer to Limerick and will put in place appropriate strategies to ensure that the framework for management of the HR function in Limerick is clearly defined and provides an appropriate channel of communications between the Limerick office and the HR Unit in Dublin. Consideration of these issues will take account of the planned upgrade of the Department's current HR management system to the new PeopleSoft system. This system, which is expected to be introduced in 2005, will facilitate greater and more effective devolution of HR functions to line management throughout the Department.

#### ***5.4.4 Requirement for a small staff complement in Dublin***

The need to ensure continued coordination and coherence in policy making and to manage incoming visits and functions in Dublin will require the presence of a small number of DCD staff in Dublin on an ongoing basis. This issue is addressed in more detail in Chapter 7, dealing with business issues.

## CHAPTER 6

### TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

The Department's training needs arising from decentralisation will be met through a combination of on-the-job training and formal training, organised internally by DFA's Change Management and Training Unit (CMTU) and centrally by CMOD. Ensuring adequate induction and handover periods are key considerations. The July 2004 implementation plan included an outline of the Department's own training plan for decentralisation. That plan, a copy of which is included at Annex 4, took account of the recommendations contained in the first GDIC report of March 2004.

During the second half of 2004, D/Finance (CMOD) continued to develop an overall decentralisation training plan, identifying areas suitable for common responses and options for skills transfer and mainstreaming the training across organisations. The main areas identified for central training were as follows:

- Preparing job guides
- Business Process mapping/re-engineering
- Project Management
- Communicating decentralisation
- Basic records management
- Knowledge management

Training in Project Management is already underway and has been attended by officers of DCD.

DFA's July 2004 plan highlighted the importance of continued liaison with CMOD to ensure that our internal training plan complemented rather than duplicated the training initiatives being undertaken centrally. The Department will meet with CMOD in April to offer feedback on the initiatives proposed, to discuss how they might be tailored to best meet the needs of DFA and to consider other initiatives which might be of particular relevance to this Department.

The Department will continue to liaise with CMOD and will further develop its own internal training plan in the coming months in the context of the detailed planning to be undertaken for the import of a large number of staff from other Departments and the replacement on a phased basis of most of the staff of DCD.

## CHAPTER 7

### BUSINESS ISSUES

In order to meet the Government's target date for relocation of 2007, DCD will need to have most of the new senior management team in place by the first quarter of 2006, so as to allow the team become familiar with the work well in advance of the move. This will entail addressing the question of how to fill the remaining posts, after those who applied to the CAF have been accommodated. Some posts may have to be filled by competition.

#### **7.1 Handover and Induction Periods**

Around 100 new staff will have to be absorbed into DCD and on a phased basis well before the move. This will require careful planning to ensure adequate induction and handover periods. The new staff will probably be taken in tranches of up to 20 at a time. The issue of accommodation will arise in relation to overlapping of new staff with existing staff. A period of three months will have to be allowed between each tranche to allow for "bedding down". This will necessitate taking in the first new staff in the summer of 2005, so that the last tranche will be taken in by the summer of 2006.

The details of all this have yet to be worked out. Consultation with staff interests and senior management in DCD will be essential to ensure smooth absorption of new staff. For the reasons outlined above, it is clear that the move to Limerick could not be undertaken any earlier than the first quarter of 2007.

#### **7.2 Review of Strategies and Business Plans**

The Department's internal strategies and business plans will need to be reviewed and updated to take account of the impact of decentralisation. This will be particularly important in the Development Cooperation Directorate itself, where management of decentralisation is expected to run concurrently with the expansion of the DCI Programme as it moves closer to the achievement of the UN target for expenditure on development cooperation. The operational challenges arising from decentralisation at a time of expansion will have to be reflected in DCD's business planning model going forward. The preparation of a new White Paper on Development Policy will also be taking place during the period leading up to decentralisation. The implications of the decentralisation programme for the Corporate Services Division of the Department will also need to be reviewed and factored into ongoing strategic and business planning exercises.

#### **7.3 Coordination and communications issues**

##### **7.3.1 Internal Communications**

Development cooperation is an integral part of our wider foreign policy and there is, therefore, a need for ongoing contact with other Divisions in the Department to ensure coherence and effectiveness. Video-conferencing has an important role to play in facilitating both internal and external communication and will need become a key communications tool within the modus operandi of DFA. A new intranet, currently

being piloted in DCD, will also facilitate internal communications when introduced throughout the Department.

ICT offers some scope to enable more business to be transacted without the need for face-to-face contact between staff from various Divisions. However, it cannot replace personal contact and represents a less than effective alternative in some cases.

We will consider to what extent the need for presence of staff from Limerick is required at intra-Departmental meetings and whether staff, who are required to travel to Dublin for particular events, can also cover other meetings (such as the twice-weekly coordination meetings) which arise at the time.

### ***7.3.2 Liaison with external stakeholders***

The nature of the work undertaken by the Development Cooperation Directorate necessitates regular liaison and coordination with a range of domestic and international bodies. For example, consultation and liaison with NGOs and missionary organisations is a particularly important feature of the work of the Civil Society and Development Education Units, necessitating a constant cycle of meetings. Such coordination and regular contact will remain an integral feature of the Directorate's work post-decentralisation. Most of the domestic bodies with which DCD works will remain in Dublin post-decentralisation, although a number of Government Departments with which there is regular liaison will themselves be decentralising. To ensure external stakeholders are informed of the decentralisation process, the DCI website will include a link to the Department's webpage on decentralisation.

Whilst video-conferencing has an important role to play in facilitating internal and external communication, it is not always a satisfactory substitute for meetings. There will be scope for some such meetings to take place in Limerick, however, it is inevitable that a significant number of meetings will have to continue to take place in Dublin. The physical presence of staff is essential (there is no viable alternative) in respect of a range of meetings, including attendance at meetings of Oireachtas Committees (principally the Foreign Affairs Committee) and sub-Committees (notably the Sub-Committee on Development). The participation of staff at meetings of certain interdepartmental groups and committees will also continue to be necessary.

### ***7.3.3 Arrangements for coordination with rest of D/FA and for handling of Dublin business***

We recognise that frequent travel to Dublin is likely to be a feature of the work for staff (particularly at more senior grades) in certain sections in DCD. We will explore options to ensure that the distribution of responsibilities can be organised in such a way as to ensure a reasonable and fair distribution of travel obligations between the various sections within the Directorate. In particular, a DCD liaison office, situated in the Department and staffed by a Counsellor, First Secretary and support staff will facilitate coordination with other Divisions of the Department and provide support to officers who are required to travel to Dublin for meetings.

### ***7.3.4 Public Resource Centre***

DCD has in the past maintained a Public Resource Centre, which was previously a part of APSO, as a specialist learning resource for professionals within the development sector, including development educators. As there has been a steady

decline in user numbers, a decision has been taken to close the Centre. DCD will retain a small internal library and visitor centre in Limerick. Options are currently being considered for the transfer of existing resource materials to appropriate locations.

#### **7.4 Knowledge management**

The implementation of knowledge management systems within the Department has been recommended in the Department's ICT strategy. The decentralisation of DCD to Limerick is likely to lead to significant staff turnover and a temporary loss of institutional memory. Accordingly, progress in putting in place systems for knowledge management will be critical in advance of decentralisation.

Capturing and sharing expertise and insights about development through effective knowledge management systems will be crucial. A robust system will capture and share information and in so doing will develop the capacity of the Directorate to perform to its potential, and to diminish dependence on a few core individuals. The piloting of an intranet in DCD is a significant step. The achievement of overlaps between existing staff and those imported for decentralisation will be crucial in this regard.

##### **7.4.1 PMDS**

The implementation of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) has led to clearer definitions of the roles of individual officers. Individual role profiles and the competences required to perform those roles are defined and will be available to newly appointed staff. Pending relocation, we will ensure that these definitions are reviewed regularly and that they take account of changes which arise from decentralisation.

##### **7.4.2 Testaments**

Regular rotation of staff is a feature of the Department of Foreign Affairs. In addition to preparation of role profiles, individual officers also prepare testaments (job guides) which set out, for their successors, the principal issues of the day and how these should be addressed. The preparation of such testaments within DCD and elsewhere in the Department will assume greater importance as decentralisation approaches.

#### **7.5 International Travel**

Frequent international travel is a feature of the work of the Department of Foreign Affairs and of the Development Cooperation Directorate. Proximity to Shannon Airport following decentralisation will be valuable in respect of travel to London and North America. However, most international travel in DCD tends to be to multilateral meetings in Brussels and Geneva, or to long-haul destinations, primarily in Africa. It may be necessary, therefore, to travel to Dublin on occasion in order to make onward connections.

We recognise that decentralisation to Limerick will increase the time that our staff spend travelling on official business and has the potential to make it more difficult for them to achieve an appropriate work-life balance. While the scope for intervention is limited by the nature of the work and travel involved, we will endeavour to ensure that as far as possible there is a reasonably equitable distribution of travel across

sections. In consultation with the Department's HR Unit, local management will consider flexible family-friendly initiatives which could be of assistance to staff in improving the balance between their personal and working lives.

We also recognise that the extra travel involved may result in additional costs to the Department which will need to be taken into account in the preparation of future spending estimates.

#### **7.6 Processes/systems**

It is proposed to review the range of working systems used across the Department with a view to establishing how the relocation to Limerick will impact on their operation in DCD. This review will incorporate consideration of issues such as:

- Handling of Parliamentary Questions
- Responding to ministerial correspondence
- Responding to requests under the Freedom of Information Acts
- Human Resource Management systems.

#### **7.7 Business Process mapping and re-engineering**

The Department will also set up a team within DCD to review business processes particular to the operation of DCD. This will take account of the internal/external linkages arising from the Division's activities e.g. external recruitment, internal D/FA coordination, liaison with non-Governmental organisations etc. The review will consider:

- how existing processes will be affected by the relocation to Limerick;
- what changes will be required to those processes;
- a strategy and timeframe for the achievement of the necessary changes.

#### **7.8 Costs arising from decentralisation**

It is not possible at this time to prepare an accurate projection of future costs arising from the decentralisation of DCD to Limerick. However, issues such as additional training, carrying extra posts during the transitional phase, increased travel and subsistence costs, ICT installation costs etc. will all need to be examined in due course with a view to both quantifying and minimising the costs involved.

##### **7.8.1 Accommodation costs**

Pending a decision on selection of accommodation for DCD in Limerick, no meaningful projection can be made of the additional costs which will arise in setting up the new office.

## CHAPTER 8

### RISK MANAGEMENT

The November 2004 Report of the GDIC Committee recommended that each Departmental Decentralisation Plan incorporate appropriate risk mitigation and management strategies. A Risk Management Policy and a Risk Management Programme have now been agreed for the Department as a whole. The roll-out of the Risk Management process in the Department will take place over the coming weeks.

Risk management can provide a tool to ensure the best possible systems are in place to minimise or manage the risks facing a Department. A major change such as decentralisation changes the risk profile by giving rise to new risks and exacerbating existing risks. A risk analysis of the decentralisation process can help to identify appropriate control actions and can assist decision-makers in relation to the timing, phasing and management of the process.

In November 2004, a half-day workshop was held with the Heads of Sections in DCD to identify the principal risks both to DFA and DCD. The following were some of the key risks and mitigation strategies identified. At this stage only the principal risks have been identified. Many other risks will have to be considered when more detailed planning takes place.

#### **8.1 Risks to the Department of Foreign Affairs**

##### ***8.1.1 Coherence***

The Strategy Statement of the Department of Foreign Affairs (2003-2005) recognises that to make an effective contribution to efforts to increase the coherence and impact of international development cooperation it is necessary to ensure maximum coherence within overall foreign policy. There is a risk that the physical separation of DCD from the rest of the Department could impede coherence between development policy and foreign policy. Structured meetings on policy coherence and the use of video conferencing facilities can help mitigate this risk. However, this will remain a key strategic risk, even if controls are in place, and will need to be monitored by the Management Advisory Committee.

The Strategy Statement also recognises the importance of strong co-ordination with other Departments to ensure coherence with overall foreign policy. This has particular relevance to DCD in terms of policy on world trade, trade and employment, debt, environmental issues, international health issues, education policy and development education. This is a risk that will arise for many Government Departments as a result of decentralisation. It will require clear Government policies and processes on coherence mechanisms.

##### ***8.1.2 Financial***

In view of the current size of the budget and the fact that the budget is set to increase substantially in 2006 and 2007, steps will need to be taken to ensure that staff turnover resulting from decentralisation does not impact on financial accountability. This risk can be mitigated by seeking to maintain key staff during the transition phase, assigning new staff (to the finance unit in particular) with the appropriate skills and

experience, providing appropriate training and induction and developing clear transition strategies.

### **8.1.3 Human Resources**

There are several key human resource issues which will need to be addressed. It will be necessary to take steps to ensure that a cadre of diplomatic staff with skills in development is maintained within the Department. This is a structural challenge for the Department and human resource strategies will need to be developed for the different grades. In addition, clarification will need to be obtained re conditions of service in regard to staff movements between HQ, Limerick and Embassies and DCD Offices in the field.

A clear strategy on the absorption of staff not moving to Limerick will also need to be developed.

### **8.1.4 Communications**

Communications and interactions between DCI and the rest of the Department will present major challenges, including attendance at MAC and coordination meetings. Informal contacts will also be more difficult. In addition, steps will need to be taken to ensure continuing effective liaison with the Houses of the Oireachtas, Foreign Affairs Committee, ODA sub-committee and the Departmental Audit Committee amongst others. This risk can be mitigated by ensuring a regular presence in Dublin of key staff and holding periodic Departmental meetings in Limerick. The liaison office referred to in Chapter 7.2.3 will have an important role to play in this regard. Video-conferencing can play a key role in facilitating both internal and external communication and upon decentralisation must become a key element of the Department's modus operandi.

### **8.1.5 Public Perceptions**

A clear publicity strategy will need to be developed to reassure external stakeholders and the broader public that decentralisation does not in any way imply a reduced priority to the Government's commitment to ODA.

## **8.2 Risks to Development Cooperation Ireland and its programme**

### **8.2.1 Strategic Risks**

The loss of expertise and institutional memory during the decentralisation process will pose significant challenges in respect of ensuring programme quality in particular given the expanding ODA budget. In order to mitigate this risk, it will be essential that a plan to retain existing staff is developed and substantial induction for new staff is provided. Other strategic risks include; difficulties in interacting with high-level delegations from abroad such as Ministers, Heads of Missions and Heads of Agencies interacting with the DCI Advisory Board, the majority of whose members are Dublin based and ensuring continued interaction and partnership with key Irish stakeholders such as NGOs, Dublin-based academic institutions etc. Regular meetings, facilitating access to video-conferencing, and the establishment of a liaison office in Dublin should help to mitigate this risk.

### **8.2.2 Financial Risks**

It is critical that the current budget of over half a billion euro, is managed, overseen and accounted for by staff who have an understanding of development issues and the context for the disbursement of overseas aid. The conditions under which aid is disbursed in some of the most difficult environments in the world mean that strict financial controls are necessary. Developing a strategy to retain staff and allocate new staff with the appropriate skills and experience may help to mitigate this risk. The transition period in particular will need to be managed closely to ensure that accountability mechanisms are adequately supported.

Additional administrative costs will need to be borne by the Department to cover costs due to relocation, including staff handover periods, training, travel and subsistence costs and separate IT support.

### **8.2.3 Reputational Risks**

Appropriate management structures will need to be in place to ensure the effective management of both the transitional phase and the expanded budget and to ensure continued programme quality and impact.

A communications strategy will need to be developed to ensure that decentralisation does not impact on DCI's profile nationally or hinder a sense of public ownership of DCI's work.

### **8.2.4 Operational Risks**

There are a range of operational risks associated with decentralisation such as depletion in organisational memory, increased time associated with travel both within Ireland and internationally and difficulties in coordinating with external stakeholders on operational issues such as grants committees. In order to mitigate these risks, a clear plan must be put in place to manage the transition phase.

In addition, the process of organisational change may impact on motivation and morale amongst staff. Given the potential for change of this magnitude to adversely affect business continuity, the Department is committed to putting in place effective strategies to support all involved in the change process, including a proactive internal communication strategy.

## CHAPTER 9

### PROPERTY/FACILITIES

#### 9.1 Office accommodation in Limerick

The Department's first implementation plan noted that the Department was in consultation with the Office of Public Works (OPW) regarding a Limerick Corporation site which had been identified by OPW in the King John's Castle area of Limerick. In September 2004, OPW advised DFA that an alternative option in the Bishop's Quay area of the city was also under consideration. This option consisted of 7 floors in a 13 storey building. In December 2004, the Department wrote to OPW outlining its serious reservations about the suitability of this building. The King John's Castle site is the department's preferred option and this has been communicated to OPW. A decision on this needs to be taken.

#### 9.2 Provision of Corporate Services in Limerick

##### 9.2.1 ICT

It is recognised that the provision of modern IT systems and services for DCD will be critical to maintaining efficient communication between the Department's offices in Limerick, Dublin and the Missions. Ddecentralisation to Limerick provides an opportunity for DCD to upgrade our IT system to ensure the highest possible IT service provision. Specifically, it is intended that:

- modern PCs with up to date personal productivity systems, word-processing, email, presentation software etc., and access to DCD specific systems will be provided to all staff members;
- secure protected desktop internet access will be provided through the Department's central ICT systems at HQ;
- video-conferencing services in Limerick and DFA HQ will be available;
- knowledge management systems including a Departmental Intranet will be provided;
- the office in Limerick will be connected to the Department's Wide Area Network (WAN) over secure resilient high-speed always-on telecommunications links;
- an on-site ICT support service, headed at by a senior IT officer, backed up by the services of the HQ ICT Unit will be in place from the time of opening of the Limerick office; and
- the efficient operation of the ICT systems in Limerick will be monitored at the Department's Network Operation Centre at HQ.

Following the move of DCD to Limerick the Department will continue to examine the opportunities provided by modern ICT systems to maintain and improve communication between HQ and Limerick and with the Missions.

##### 9.2.2 Finance Unit

In the context of administration of a separate Vote for DCD, the Department has already devolved considerable responsibility for financial management to the Finance Unit in the Support Services area of the Directorate. We will consider what further management challenges may arise from the transfer to Limerick and put appropriate

strategies in place to ensure that the framework for management of the Finance Unit function in Limerick is clearly defined and entails appropriate channels of communications between the Limerick office and the Finance Unit in Dublin.

### ***9.2.3 Accommodation and Management Services functions***

The Support Services Unit of the Directorate will be required to administer a range of support functions in the areas of accommodation and services, in consultation with the Corporate Services Division in Dublin. Further versions of this plan will consider in more detail how these issues, including those listed below, are to be handled:

- Building maintenance
- Security systems
- Procurement of office equipment and supplies
- Cleaning
- Registry/Library/ and Archives functions (including records management issues)
- Procurement of newspapers and publications
- Post and by hand deliveries
- Website management

### ***9.2.4 Accommodation in Dublin for Minister of State and support staff***

The Minister of State will require a suite of offices in Dublin to participate in Oireachtas business and to conduct other Departmental business. The Department will liaise with the Office of Public Works to ensure that appropriate accommodation will be available for the Minister of State and support staff.

### ***9.2.5 Other Accommodation in Dublin***

We have already highlighted in Chapter 7, dealing with Business issues, that office facilities are likely to be required for a small staff complement to be based in Dublin. The Department will liaise with OPW regarding the identification of suitable accommodation with a view to housing the two staff groups as near as possible to each other.

## CHAPTER 10

### PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICATIONS

#### 10.1 Project Management

The Department has established an internal Decentralisation Committee to drive the process forward in D/FA. The committee, which is headed jointly by the Assistant Secretaries in charge of Corporate Services and DCD, also comprises key representatives from DCD and senior officials who head up the primary Corporate Services Units in the Department.

In addition, the Department has established a Decentralisation Unit within the HR function, which has practical day to day responsibility for decentralisation issues. Additional staff resources will be assigned to the Unit in order to enable it to oversee the Limerick project. A Decentralisation Unit has also been established within DCD with responsibility for DCD-specific issues.

Whilst we still await more detailed information from Department of Finance regarding a number of HR issues, to be agreed centrally, and from OPW regarding accommodation, the Department has established a smaller decentralisation project team made up of key representatives from DCD and Corporate Services. This team is charged with drawing up and implementing a detailed plan under the stewardship of the internal Decentralisation Committee and the Management Advisory Committee. To this end, a number of officers from DCD have attended Decentralisation Project Management Training organised by CMOD.

The Department recognises that the success of its implementation programme will be increased by ensuring continuity of staffing in the context of assignments of key personnel to manage the project. In placing people in key roles, every effort will be made to facilitate long term placements so that staff can build up the experience and expertise which will be critical to successful implementation.

#### 10.2 Communications

##### 10.2.1 *Internal communications*

The Department recognises that communications will be vital to successful implementation of the decentralisation programme. Some of the risks associated with the project can be mitigated through timely and effective communication with staff. It is appreciated that staff will continue to have significant concerns with regard to matters such as conditions of employment and the selection of suitable accommodation in Limerick.

The Department is committed to ensuring that staff interests are consulted and kept informed of developments and of issues arising during the implementation process. A sub-group of the Departmental Council has already been set up to deal with Industrial Relations issues arising. The Partnership Committees (Departmental and local DCD committees) will provide additional channels of communication and participation.

The Department has been actively engaged in providing staff with information and documentation on the decentralisation process since the 2003 budget day announcement. The Secretary General has issued communications to staff and will continue to be actively engaged in the project. The Department continues to review and update its communications procedures in light of feedback received from staff and other interested parties, with a view to ensuring that staff are informed of any developments in a timely manner.

### ***10.2.2 External communications***

The Department recognises the need to maintain communication links with important contacts and interest groups in the Limerick City area. Senior personnel of the Department have already had a very useful meeting with the Limerick City Manager and other senior officials. The Department has been assured of the willingness of the City authorities to assist D/FA in whatever way possible to facilitate a smooth transition of DCD to Limerick. We have already noted in this document the importance of providing the maximum practical support and information to those transferring to Limerick. In this context, we will continue to engage with relevant organisations in Limerick with a view to facilitating information flow to staff of the Department about matters such as housing, childcare, schooling, transport and leisure activities.

It will be important to ensure that external stakeholder are updated on progress in decentralisation.

### **10.3 Liaison with Other Organisations**

The Department sees the benefit in drawing on the experience of others who have already been through a similar experience of decentralisation and may have experienced issues similar to those with which we are faced. Representatives of the Department from DCD and HR recently met with their counterparts in DFID (UK's Department for International Development) which has headquarters in both London and Glasgow. While their situation is different in many respects from DCD's, the visit was of great interest and a number of the experiences well worth taking on board.

The Department will also liaise with other departments currently decentralising or who have previous experience of decentralisation.

### **10.4 Migration Strategy**

In the short term, the Department will undertake the following tasks to progress the decentralisation programme:

- Continue to engage with OPW regarding the selection of suitable accommodation in Limerick and arrange for an inspection visit to the chosen site for staff interests in due course;
- Ensure that appropriate information and consultation procedures are in place in line with the communications strategy outlined above;
- Continue the risk analysis programme already underway in DCD;

- Begin to review and, where necessary, re-engineer business processes in the Department to take account of the impact of decentralisation;
- Continue to liaise with D/Finance regarding a range of outstanding Human Resources issues of concern to the Department and its staff;
- In particular, continue to engage with D/Finance on the DFA-specific HR issues for which we have not yet got agreed solutions.
- Continue to move D/FA staff who will transfer to Limerick into DCD;
- Work with HR Units of other Departments to ensure early release of staff from other Departments to transfer to Limerick;
- Organise appropriate training for those managing the project and for those who will be the keytrainers of new staff joining DCD.