

# New Connections

A strategy to realise the potential  
of the Information Society

Government Action Plan



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## **Foreword**

*New Connections*, the second Government Action Plan on the Information Society, was launched in April 2002.

It ambitiously sets out the Government's strategy to ensure that Ireland establishes itself as a world leading location for e-business and knowledge-based economic activity, and that the benefits of the Information Society are available to all Irish citizens.

The diversity of the Information Society agenda is reflected in the issues addressed in *New Connections*. Its aim has been to bring these diverse elements together in an accessible, easily understood manner, reflecting priorities moving forward.

I welcome the publication of this first progress report. This is a valuable snapshot, and has considerable significance in the overall context of our economy, both from an Irish and International perspective.

Much progress has been achieved since the launch of *New Connections*, and I am confident that in the coming months and beyond, further enhancement in the delivery of services for the Irish citizen will be implemented, particularly in the areas of eInclusion and telecommunications infrastructure.

This report comes as we prepare to participate in the UN World Summit on the Information Society in December 2003 and to host the EU Presidency in the first half of 2004.

Tá dul chun cinn thar na bearta á dhéanamh ar fud an domhain sna gnéithe seo. Teastaíonn uainn bheith chun tosaigh!

Mary Hanafin T.D.

**Minister of State for the Information Society**

**New Connections Action Plan:**  
**Progress Report 1- February 2003**  
**Overview**

**1. Background**

1.1 New Connections

In January 1999, the *Action Plan for the Implementation of the Information Society* was launched by Government and set out the policy agenda for the development of the Information Society in Ireland. *New Connections*, launched in March 2002, updates the policy strategies to achieve the original goals and takes account of developments since 1999. It covers seven policy strands: -

- **Key Infrastructures**
  - *Telecommunication Infrastructure*
  - *Legal & Regulatory*
  - *EGovernment*
  
- **Support frameworks**
  - *eBusiness*
  - *R&D*
  - *Lifelong Learning*
  - *eInclusion.*

1.2 Minister of State

In May 2002, the Government appointed Mary Hanafin, T.D., as Minister of State at the Department of the Taoiseach with special responsibility for the Information Society, in addition to her responsibilities as Government Chief Whip. Since her appointment, the Minister has had meetings with various interest groups and has been monitoring progress on key strategic issues.

1.3 Cabinet Committee

Following the appointment of the Government in June, the Taoiseach established a new Cabinet Committee on the Information Society with a view to stimulating further progress in areas such as the further development of e-Government and in response to recommendations coming from the Information Society Commission.

1.4 The Information Society Commission

The Information Society Commission has set up a number of working groups to look into issues surrounding the infrastructures and frameworks in the Action Plan. In December 2002, the Minister of State received the first report from the Chairman of the Information Society Commission. The Department of the Taoiseach is arranging for the report to be considered by the Information Society Implementation group of Assistant Secretaries early in 2003.

1.5 Online Reporting Tool

This is the first progress report on *New Connections* and is based on the content of a new online reporting facility to monitor progress on specific action items. Building the online tool necessitated a more detailed definition of some of the action items in consultation with Departments. It is intended to develop the online reporting facility further in the coming months and to provide a 'public window' on progress.

## **2. Summary of progress**

Since March 2002, there has been considerable progress under the different policy strands and these are set out in detail in the report. In summary, fourteen projects have been completed, eighty-three are on target, fifty-seven are slowed for the reasons outlined and four are new developments. No information was submitted on two projects.

### **2.1 Telecommunications Infrastructure**

The Telecommunications Regulation Commission was established in December 2002 with the specific mandate from Government to support national priorities.

#### **2.1.1 19 Towns Project**

The Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources has commenced the procurement process for the metropolitan networks for the '19 towns project' as the initial phase of the strategy. The project is at 'tender evaluation' stage and the engagement of Managed Services Entities to manage the new infrastructures is underway.

#### **2.1.2 Forfás review**

The Forfás review of developments under the NDP is underway and the final report is awaited.

#### **2.1.3 Issues arising**

Broadband remains the top Information Society priority. The high cost of narrowband access to business and the very limited availability and high price of Digital Subscriber Line/cable modern broadband services continue to attract attention and comment. However, arising from an interim report from Forfás in November 2002, there has been agreement that the Telecoms Infrastructure Forum (TIF) of IBEC and the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources will explore the scope for greater exploitation of existing infrastructures.

**2.2 Legal & Regulatory** In general, the legislative and regulatory agenda set out in *New Connections* is progressing satisfactorily. For instance, a key enabler is the recently passed *Communications Regulation Act 2002* which gave additional powers to the new Commission for Communications Regulation (Comreg). The Department of the Taoiseach will continue to monitor the implementation of the Information Society Action Plan and work with Departments to facilitate the unblocking of any legislative bottlenecks impacting on the Information Society.

#### **2.2.1 Issues arising**

Reports on legal issues concerning the Information Society were recently produced by the Information Society Commission and Forfás. The ISPU is currently having these reports considered by the relevant agencies to determine key legal issues moving forward. The Unit will continue to monitor emerging legislation that could affect the development of the Information Society.

### **2.3 e-Government**

#### **2.3.1 Public Services Broker**

Reachservices.ie is a facility for registration for online services and for online forms and has been in place since April 2002. Work is ongoing by the Reach agency on the procurement process for the Public Services Broker using a negotiated tendering procedure while the Basis and Oasis sites provide integrated information to businesses and citizens on Public Services.

#### **2.3.2 Other projects**

The e-Cabinet project at the Department of the Taoiseach has been given Government approval to proceed and it is expected that it will be deployed during 2003. The Revenue Online Service project is continuing to achieve success with a number of projects being completed ahead of schedule. Other

agencies, such as the Civil Service and the Land Registry are extending their range of services available.

### 2.3.3 Local Authorities

In the Local Authority sector, housing.westmeathcoco.ie went live before the publication of *New Connections* and it is intended to fully integrate this application into Reachservices.ie. All Local Authorities have upgraded their systems to support the online Planning Application and Development Control process, which includes citizen interaction with the draft development plan. Also, all Local Authorities have upgraded their systems to support online registration on the Electoral Register.

### 2.3.4 Health sector

The Health Boards Executive has agreed with the Department of Health & Children that it will take the lead nationally on behalf of individual health boards in relation to ehealth developments so that an integrated consistent framework is followed.

### 2.3.5 e-Payments

An e-Payments study by the Information Society Commission is underway to determine the options for stimulating and promoting e-payments both in Government and business in Ireland.

### 2.3.6 Issues arising

#### *Public Services Broker*

The slow delivery of the **Public Services Broker** is the biggest issue in the development of e-Government, and its continued delay will adversely impact on the development of online service delivery in agencies awaiting the shared components that comprise the Broker (registration, authorisation, personal data vaults, process flow etc.). In tandem with the development of the Broker, there is also an urgent requirement for *common standards* (interoperability, security, registration and authentication) to enable service delivery by Departments and Agencies through the Broker.

#### *PPSN*

The increasing diversity and pace of electronic Public Services development has brought to the fore issues about the use of a common personal services account number (**the PPSN**). It is inconceivable – and contrary to the rationale of integrated services delivery - that an individual would be obliged to have a separate unique personal account number for each service or service area. Yet the development of a common personal services number that would allow an individual to access all electronic Public Services raises many issues. These include privacy and other concerns about how such a number might be used; about the associated framework required to regulate who may access what personal data, on whose authority and for what purpose; and whether such a services identifier should be available for use outside of core Public Services e.g. by health professionals who provide services within a public policy framework. The Department of the Taoiseach, in consultation with other Departments and Agencies, is preparing proposals for a set of operating principles that will strike an appropriate balance between the personal privacy rights of individuals and the benefits for individuals of integrated online services delivery, and which will form the basis for drawing up rules for the use of a common personal services number. The proposals will be brought to the Cabinet Committee early in 2003.

#### *Online services in 2005*

In relation to the **target of 2005** for the delivery of online services, there is now a need to refine that target to ensure that optimum results are achieved in terms of effectiveness and impact. Over the coming months the Assistant Secretaries Implementation Group will be asked to focus on the identification of key services to the citizen, and time-lines will be set for specific deliverables over the next three years.

#### *e-Procurement*

The Government's **e-Procurement initiative** has potential to realise substantial savings on the procurement process for the Public Service. e-Procurement is also a key driver for the development of e-business, especially in the SME sector. The e-Tenders site has proved to be very successful and it is expected that the new European Public Procurement Directives, expected to emerge during 2003, will facilitate the further development of electronic public procurement.

### *Transforming Government*

There is a general acceptance of the need to focus on the **further development of e-Government**, beyond pure service delivery, to encompass transformation of the policy and administrative processes. To that end, the Departments of the Taoiseach and Finance are preparing proposals in relation to the core supports and mechanisms required to enable the wider, corporate Public Service to effect an ICT enabled transformation. The intention is to exploit the potential for greater synergies through collaboration and greater effectiveness from investments in technology, through the sharing of common processes and the aggregation of similar operations or components into shared service centres.

## **2.4 E-Business**

2.4.1 There are quite a number of initiatives focused primarily on the SME sector that, in the main, continue the broad range of initiatives under the Government's first Action Plan. Forfás are due to publish an e-Business monitor report shortly and the Information Society Commission is also addressing the issue.

### 2.4.2 Issues Arising

There is a growing sense that 'e-Business' has broadened out to the bigger issue of the 'knowledge economy' which is especially relevant now given the world economic situation as it affects Ireland. The intention is to focus attention on this area during 2003 and on the issues arising out of the Forfás report and the Information Society Commission's work, reviewing the policy options for positioning Ireland as a significant player in global terms by identifying and maximizing our strengths.

## **2.5 R&D**

### **2.5.1 Science Foundation Ireland**

Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) is administering over €635m of the Technology Foresight Fund over seven years. Projects approved to date total €100m.

### 2.5.2 Irish Council for Science Technology & Innovation

Irish Council for Science Technology & Innovation is developing a framework for national policy in research and technological development. It was due to submit proposals to the Tanaiste and Government by end of 2002.

### 2.5.3 Issues Arising

The significance of R&D investment has been brought into sharper focus over the last year as the economic downturn highlights the need to promote the development of the knowledge economy. The whole area of R&D and the development of knowledge-based enterprises is currently being considered by the Information Society Commission and the output from that process will be considered when it becomes available.

## **2.6 Lifelong Learning**

2.6.1 Fostering a learning environment and delivering new learning opportunities through the use of ICT is key to our move to a knowledge-based economy. The development of -a strategic framework for lifelong learning is also critical to active citizenship and social inclusion objectives and it is essential that we create the conditions whereby citizens have the skills, motivation and opportunity to access and benefit from learning in pursuit of a high quality of life.

2.6.2 Progress is already underway in a number of key areas: The National Qualifications Authority have published a framework of levels of qualification in 2002 and FÁS are working on the issue of accreditation of prior and experiential learning; the Department of Education and Science has created two posts within the NCCA to focus on developing the delivery of curriculum using ICT at primary and

post-primary level and HEA have gone to the marketplace to investigate the potential for e-learning to contribute to the further development of higher and further education and training in Ireland.

2.6.3 Issues arising

The Information Society Policy Unit expects to be represented on a Steering Group chaired by D/ETE to implement the recommendations of the Lifelong Task Force. It is also expected that the Steering Group will consider the Information Society Commission report, *Building the Knowledge Society* and a planned impact analysis report by the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) on capital investment in ICT in the primary and secondary education sectors.

**2.7 e-Inclusion**

2.7.1 The Government continues to place a high priority on the need for an inclusive approach to the implementation of all strands of the information society agenda. A number of projects including pilots have been completed or have reached an evaluation stage in their lifecycle (e.g. the Libraries initiative, the Muintir na Tíre ISP project, Equalskills and the CAÍT initiative). The *Universal Participation* initiative has not yet commenced and action is required early in 2003 to address this. In addition to projects driven by central Government, a number of Local Authorities have community access projects in progress. However, the ISPU does not have a comprehensive picture of all State-supported activity in this area. There is therefore the potential for overlap, duplication and inefficient use of public resources that needs to be examined and, if necessary, addressed. In addition, the Information Society Commission's first report has made a number of recommendations that highlight the need to evaluate current strategy implementation and a report has been commissioned on inclusive Information Society development due for publication in February.

2.7.2 Issues arising

The primary focus of the Department of the Taoiseach has been to ensure that there is a policy framework to underpin the successful implementation of the Government's objective of an Information Society for all. At this juncture, the Department is of the view that strategy should be reviewed taking account of the recently published report of the ISC and the results of the research commissioned by the ISC on inclusive Information Society development.

## 1) Telecommunications Infrastructure

### (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.*

#### (1.1.1) Phase 1 - pathfinder projects and PPP

CMNR

- *Implementation of Phase 1 intervention*
- *Funding of a set of pathfinder projects in 19 towns*
- *Identify a further 3 areas, of an appropriate population size, to trial a fixed wireless approach to the provision of the core local access infrastructure*
- *Explore industry interest in participating in a national PPP type arrangement for management and operation of local access networks.*
- *Bring into being an operator-neutral, alternative wholesale entity/broker to manage the open-access local access networks in an integrated manner*

#### Update

**The Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources has recently received sanction to proceed with a programme of nineteen pathfinder projects, which involve co-funding the construction by local and regional authorities of fibre optic Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs) around the country. The primary objective of this programme is to build and make available on an open access basis broadband infrastructure, which would remain in public ownership, but would allow private operators to utilise the infrastructure to provide broadband services.**

**A private sector Managed Services Entity (MSE) will market, maintain and administer access to the completed networks. A Code of Practice, which will govern the long term usage and operation of the networks, is currently being finalised. A request for tender document for the MSE is expected to issue in early 2003.**

**It is intended that these networks will facilitate and promote competition and further private sector investment in the provision of broadband services. These networks should also complement existing networks.**

**The Department recently issued a call for Wireless Local Area Network (WLAN) pilot proposals, with the aim of testing the feasibility of the technology and identifying appropriate access environments. Evaluation of proposals received *will be completed by end 2002.***

**D/CMNR are actively working to encourage demand and maximise private sector investment. Subsequent phases will:**

- *Cover the remainder of the 67 towns already identified as priorities in the NDP within three years*
- *Cover all 123 towns in the State, with a population over 1,500, within five years*
- *Consider any necessary modifications including revised targets and deadlines as appropriate in light of progress and lessons learned in phase 1.*

**D/CMNR is also co-funding seven projects with telecommunications operators under the National Development Plan 2000-2006, involving the development of broadband infrastructure. These projects, due to be completed in 2003, will result in a new national fibre backbone, extensive rollout of Digital Subscriber Line (DSL) services and leased line services around the country.**

## **(1.2) Future Planning Permissions**

**ELG**

- *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 passing of the 2000 Act and the making of new consolidated planning regulations in 2001 represents a fundamental overhaul of the planning system. The next step is to draft new Development Control Advice and Guidelines, which are made by the Minister and to which local authorities must have regard. The issue of obliging developers to provide ducting will be addressed in the guidelines. A major round of consultation on the draft guidelines will take place next year, with the guidelines being made in 2004.**

## (2) Legal and Regulatory Environment

### (2.1) Broadcasting Act 2001

CMNR

- *Award of licence(s) 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 have 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 RTE) to manage the transmission network. This proposal is currently being considered by the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources. D/CMNR will commence a review on the future of DTT in 2003. No date is yet available for the conclusion of this review.

### (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) Bill 2002, which gives effect to outstanding provisions of the Data Protection Directive (95/46/EC), is at Committee Stage in the Dáil. Part of the Directive has already been transposed by the European Communities (Data Protection) Regulations 2001, in particular concerning transfer of personal data outside the European Economic Area.

### (2.3) Electronic Commerce

ETE

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

### Update

Draft Regulations to give effect to the outstanding provisions of the Electronic Commerce Directive (2000/31/EC) are currently being finalised with a view to being signed into law early in 2003.

### **(2.4) Public Service Identity**

**SFA**

- *Enact the Civil Registration Bill. This will provide a legal framework for the 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 existing legislation for the registration of births and deaths has been amended to provide for electronic registration and the use of the PPS Number. It is hoped to have a new Civil Registration Bill published by the end of February 2003.**

### **(2.5) Copyright**

**ETE**

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

### **Update**

**The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment aim to transpose this Directive in 2003. Consideration is currently being given to the extent to which primary legislation will be required to transpose the Directive.**

### **(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 the substantial reform and restructuring of company law. In July 2002 the Government approved the drafting of the General Scheme of a Bill to give effect to the recommendations in the CLRG report as well as consolidating company law. 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. The objective is to submit the General Scheme for Government approval late in 2003.**

## **(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 Directive 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. It is currently anticipated that the Bill will be published in 2003.**

## **(2.9) Electronic Signatures**

**CMNR**

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

### **Update**

**Regulations have been drafted which designates the National Accreditation Board as the competent authority responsible for the development and implementation of a voluntary accreditation scheme for certification service providers. It is hoped that this legislation will be implemented in early 2003.**

## **(2.10) Digital Hub**

**CMNR**

- *Enactment of Digital Hub Development Agency Bill*

### **Update**

**The Digital Hub Development Agency Bill 2002 has now completed all stages in the Seanad. The Bill will now move to the Dáil. It is anticipated that the Bill will be enacted early in 2003.**

## **(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 Council of Europe Convention on Cybercrime was signed in February 2002 by the Minister for Justice, Equality and Law Reform.**

**Legislation enabling ratification of the Convention is currently being considered in the context of a Criminal Justice Miscellaneous Provisions Bill.**

**The Department is also leading Ireland's contribution to the development of a new EU framework decision on 'Attacks against Information Systems', discussions on which commenced in June 2002.**

## **(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-shows by the IAB on Internet safety issues in relation to parents and children*

### **Update**

**A reporting procedure has been put in place with the industry's representative association, the Internet Service Providers' Association of Ireland (ISPAI).**

**The IAB organised a successful workshop between the Internet industry and the Gardaí in June which identified issues of mutual concern.**

**Proposals to extend the scope of Irish research on internet safety issues are under discussion and a tender competition will be held shortly. The IAB's annual report will be published shortly.**

**Proposals for awareness projects include a roadshow, a further radio campaign, a poster campaign and information packs.**

The IAB hosted a conference in November 2002 on the theme of "Internet Safety - a shared responsibility". The conference brought together those at senior level in organisations with a role in child protection, child safety, parenting, and retail organisations, unions, the media, public representatives and those concerned with shaping laws in the area of internet safety.

#### **(2.14) ICT Accessibility**

**JELR**

The Disability Bill, proposed for publication in 2003, is expected to provide for

- *the 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**

Following a government decision on 26/02/2002, further consultations on the Bill are currently in progress. It is planned to bring the amended Bill through the Oireachtas in 2003, to include provisions for rights of assessment, appeals, provision and enforcement.

#### **(2.15) Public Services Broker**

**SFA**

- *Enactment of the Public Service Broker Bill*

#### **Update**

The Public Service Broker Bill will not be published before the middle of 2003.

#### **(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 year 1-2 following publication of the National Health Information Strategy.

#### **(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**

**Four Directives providing for control of market power of telecommunications and broadcasting transmission operators, universal telecommunications service, consumer rights and light-handed licensing of operations have been agreed at EU level and will be transposed into Irish law before 25 July 2003. The fifth directive (data protection and privacy) will be transposed into Irish law by 31 October 2003.**

#### **(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**

**Work has already begun in preparation for allowing electronic VAT invoicing under any secure system that guarantees the authenticity of origin and integrity of data on invoices. Transposition of the directive will be as flexible as possible, and the aim will be to significantly reduce tax compliance costs in this key area for taxable traders.**

**The VAT on e-Commerce Directive will be transposed into national law in the Finance Bill 2003, as will any remaining provisions of the Invoicing Directive.**

#### **(2.19) Commercial Court**

**JELR**

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

#### **Update**

**The President of the High Court has decided, on foot of recommendations made by the Committee on Court Practice and Procedure, to establish a Commercial Court/e-Court as part of the High Court structure. A working group is currently drafting the necessary Court Rules. Premises and other resources are being put in place. It is now envisaged that the Commercial Court will be established by September, 2003.**

## **(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**

**A Subcommittee of the Inter-Departmental Committee on Network and Information Security is currently preparing material for a national awareness campaign which is expected to commence in early 2003.**

## **(2.21) Telecommunications Regulation**

**CMNR**

- *Create Commission for Communications Regulation*
- *Dissolve the Office of the Director of Telecommunications Regulation and transfer to the Commission*
- *Increase penalties for breaches of licence conditions by operators from £1,500 to €1,000,000*
- *Provide for the improved management of public road opening for the purpose of laying telecommunications infrastructure*

### **Update**

**The new Commission for Communications Regulation was established by Order of the Minister for Communications, Marine and Natural Resources in December 2002. This gives full effect to the provisions of the Communications Regulation Act 2002.**

## (3) e-Government

### (3.1) Public Services Broker

**Reach**

The 'Public Services Broker' has been rebranded as ReachServices. Version 0.1, the Reachservices portal [www.reachservices.ie](http://www.reachservices.ie) went live in April 2002. It comprises an online citizen registration service, a central authentication system, an application forms repository and, since August 2002, an online e-receipts facility for participating agencies.

- *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 procurement process to engage a supplier to construct and deploy reachservices Phase 1 is at an advanced stage and construction work is scheduled to begin in January 2003. Once a supplier has been engaged, a programme delivery plan with time-lines will be published within three months.**

**Phase 1 will consist of the development of a number of initial 'launch services' in addition to an inter-agency messaging system. Other priorities include the incorporation onto reachservices of existing online services and the development of high-value services in the social welfare, education, health and local government sectors.**

#### (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

A Contact Centre study underway in Donegal will establish the requirements for an integrated contact centre, including an examination of channel interoperability issues.

- *Identify and resolve issues around integrated service delivery across multiple agencies.*
- *Pilot a range of services for delivery through the PSB*

## Update

Reach is working with agencies in the 'Donegal Integrated Services Project' to develop a model for delivering integrated services. The pilot will focus initially on Unemployment, Medical Card and Local Authority Housing services, the model will inform the design of the reachservices broker. 'Launch Services' identified for reachservices Phase 1 will incorporate a bundled package of services based on a specific life events theme.

### (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 this is tackled in two ways

- *Developing and maintaining the BASIS website ([www.basis.ie](http://www.basis.ie)) which delivers a complete view of public sector information on compliance and support services based around the 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 the co-ordination of the development of the delivery of joined-up Government services for business over the Internet*

## Update

The BASIS team have completed the development of the content for the Website and have recently completed a usability and accessibility review of the website which will involve direct input from business users. A new service is in place to notify registered users of changes to compliance or support services by e-mail.

Nine services spread across five different Government agencies were examined in a study on the feasibility of delivering Government services over the Internet in the context of the Public Services Broker. The study covered process review in the context of the self-service delivery model, the opportunities for sharing and re-using data, security and a cost benefit analysis for the delivery of these services. The final report will be delivered in January 2003 and will include a high level design specification for the development of these nine services. It will also provide an example of best practice for the development of the delivery of Public Sector Services online.

### (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 process of linking existing sites is currently underway and it is expected that this exercise will be completed by Q1 of 2003.

## **(3.2) Flagship Services to Citizens**

### **(3.2.1) Motor Tax**

**ELG**

- *Facility to pay motor tax charges online*

#### **Update**

**A contract for the development of the online system was awarded in September 2002. The business analysis phase of the project has been signed off and the design of the online system is almost complete. The project timetable now has the go-live date scheduled for March 2003.**

### **(3.2.2) Driving Licences**

**TRA**

- *Online application and payment for a driving licence*

#### **Update**

**The introduction of the driver licence penalty points system and the planned introduction of the smart-card driver licence requires that the online application and payment project be incorporated as one element of what is now a much larger e-enablement project. The availability of the PSB will influence the approach to be taken to authentication of applicants, digital signature, digital photo and document capture. The resource requirements, timescales and phasing of the different elements of this larger project remain to be determined.**

### **(3.2.3) Road Haulage Licences**

**TRA**

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

#### **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 which will have EU-wide compatibility and Member State inter-operability. This phase is expected to be completed by end 2004. The on-line application and payment phase will then be progressed. It will require the availability of the PSB 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 by end 2003*

##### Update

**The facility to apply on-line for passports is dependant on the availability of the new passport application system (APS); and registration and authentication components to be delivered by the Public Services Broker.**

**Work on the APS is underway and this system is expected to be completed in 2004.**

**On-line passport applications also require a fully functional Broker. The Department of Foreign Affairs has provided REACH with details of its requirements in this context. However the Department has no information, at this time, on when this might be operational nor when the necessary registration and authentication components will be available.**

#### (3.2.5) Birth, Death and Marriage certificates

SFA

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

##### Update

**The first step in this project will be the online facility for birth certificates. This element is dependent on the new computer system for Child Benefit in the Department of Social and Family Affairs which went live in November 2002.**

**The second dependency is the roll-out and implementation of the Civil Registration Modernisation Programme (GRO Project) due to commence in Q2 of 2003 and to be completed within 6 months. Within that timeframe it is expected that the new Civil Registration legislation will have been enacted.**

#### (3.2.6) Local Authority Housing

LGCSB

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

##### Update

**The services went live on [housing.westmeathcoco.ie](http://housing.westmeathcoco.ie) in February 2002 and incorporated the following:**

- **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 reachservices using the authentication process to ensure that the user is validated prior to accessing the backend system. The application will include an anonymous assessment and guided tours, both of which would enhance the application and allow for its deployment as a countrywide 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. LGCSB has developed an Intranet enquiry facility, currently being examined by a number of sites. This will be available for roll-out in 2003.**

**Development plans, unauthorised development, commencement notices and objections are in development.**

### (3.2.8) Electoral Register

**LGCSB**

- *Online registration on the electoral register*

**Update**

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

### (3.2.9) Child Benefit

**SFA**

- *Facility for online applications for Child Benefit involving improved integration with the birth registration process and the updating of child dependant payments on social welfare schemes*

#### **Update**

**Child Benefit moved to a new computer application which went live in November 2002. It is anticipated that the online facility for Child Benefit will be available following the roll-out and implementation of the Civil Registration Modernisation Programme due to commence in the 2nd quarter of 2003.**

#### **(3.2.10) Court Fines**

**Courts Service**

- *Online payment of Court fines*

#### **Update**

**Phase 1, the integration of the Criminal case management system and the court accounting system is anticipated to be complete by Q3 2003. It is anticipated that phase 2, 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**

**Design and build phase of online national database of adult learning to commence in 2003. Delivery is expected in late 2003/early 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. The delay in this project was due to prioritising a system to process online claims for substitute teachers.**

#### **(3.2.12) Online Area Aid Applications**

**AF**

- *Online access to area aid application*

#### **Update**

**The development of the system for online enquiry access by farmers to area aid applications is expected to commence in Q1 2003. The projected completion date is Q2 2003.**

### (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

**System testing is underway and a pilot is expected to commence in Q3 2003. Discussions are ongoing with Veterinary Ireland, representing the private veterinary practitioners, regarding its implementation. It is expected to be rolled out on a phased basis, and to farmers, by the end of 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 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. In the meantime we are looking at other alternatives.**

**These projects are completed, ahead of schedule.**

#### (3.3.1.2) Online Vehicle Registration Tax

RevComm

- *Online Vehicle Registration Tax for motor vehicle dealers by mid 2003*

#### Update

**This was delivered in November 2002 ahead of schedule.**

### (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*
- *Tax Clearance option available in ROS*

#### Update

**Stage 1 is at an early development stage with a live date of December 2002.**

**This will see a taxpayer completing and submitting an online application form for Tax Clearance, initially through the Revenue website. When the application form is processed and where the taxpayer has given 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 will be by pin security.**

**Stage 2 is automated processing within the Revenue systems of Tax Clearance applications, whether received on paper or electronically. Delivery date is mid 2003.**

**Stage 3 will see ROS service developed to allow Tax Clearance applications be transmitted through ROS and the results acknowledged securely to the taxpayer and published electronically. Delivery date is end 2003.**

### (3.3.2) Online Data Collection (CSO)

CSO

Online data submissions for:

- *Services inquiry by mid 2002*
- *Business Register inquiry by early 2003*
- *Agricultural inquiry by mid 2003*

#### Update

**The CSO participated in Phase II of the BASIS project for the Annual Services inquiry, Business Register inquiry and the Agricultural inquiry.**

**Phase II involved a feasibility study, the design of services for delivery over the internet and a costs benefit analysis. *This phase was completed in November 2002.***

### (3.3.3) Commercial Rates

#### LGCSB & Dublin Co.Council

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

#### Update

The [www.reachservices.ie](http://www.reachservices.ie) site facilitates payments by credit and debit card. These options are unsuitable for commercial payments of larger sums of money. An Electronic Funds Transfer option is currently being evaluated by the LGCSB. Pending the availability of a business identifier on the Public Services Broker (PSB), it has been agreed that the reachservices.ie site will provide an interim username/password login option for commercial payments. This interim solution will be available shortly and Dublin City Council will act as a pilot site for online rates payments.

The implementation of an online rates payment system for Dublin City Council is seen as a pilot project for the rest of the country. Assuming it is successful the plan is to offer this service to all Local Authorities during the course of 2003. However, it should be noted that this is only an interim solution. In order to significantly add value to the service, it will be necessary to provide rate payers with online access to their account information, rateable valuations etc. The level of authentication required for this service requires the availability of the business identifier on the PSB.

### (3.3.4) Land Registration

#### Land Registry

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

#### Update

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 maps. This work is being conducted through a Document Imaging Project which commenced in late 2001 and is scheduled for completion in late 2004. Under this project, about 6.4 million pages of these official records will be systematically scanned and indexed. The records are immediately made available online to EAS customers. This document imaging programme is now in full production and, to date, has been very successful. In fact, between 10,000 and 12,000 new images and index records are added to the online database each day and about 1.5 million images will have been added to the database by the end of 2002.

Land Registry are continuing to extend the range of services available through the EAS.

**At present about 60% of the Land Registry's potential customer base are now accessing some services through the EAS; over 70% of applications for some services are made online and about 1,500 online business transactions per day are being conducted through the EAS.**

#### **(3.3.5) Work Permits**

**ETE**

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

#### **Update**

**A new approach to the implementation of this project is being considered in the light of the Business Reengineering analysis undertaken. The technical specifications and the system build will be complete by end 2003. This service will be underpinned by new legislation.**

#### **(3.3.6) Company Registration & Online Returns**

**Companies Registration Office (ETE)**

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

#### **Update**

**The Annual Returns System went live in November 2002 allowing companies with enabling software to post annual returns. In 2003 a form will be made available online for annual returns.**

**The Company Registration Office has been liaising with the Company Law Review Group with a view to simplifying the Online Registration of a new Company. Technical solutions for online provision of this service have not yet been identified.**

#### **(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*

#### **Update**

**Online access to the Patents Journal will be available at the end of January 2003. The facility to access and search for trademarks, patents and industrial designs online is already in place from January 2003. Online payment of renewal fees for trademarks, patents and industrial designs is scheduled for the end of 2003.**

### (3.3.8) Mining Licence

CMNR

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

#### Update

**Plans are in place to deliver the minerals prospecting licence (PL) application facility and a credit card payment facility for public access online in Q1 of 2003. The internal business processes will be updated to support online delivery by Q2 2003.**

### (3.3.9) Forestry

CMNR

- *Apply online for forestry grants*

#### Update

**A project, the Integrated Forestry Information System (IFORIS), is underway to produce a new system for processing applications for Forestry grants and premia. Phase 1 of this project is scheduled for delivery during Q4 of 2003 to allow the Forest Service to use the new system to process 2004 premium applications. Phase 1 of IFORIS will include a pilot involving a Self Assessment Company (SAC) submitting applications online for a Forest Service scheme.**

### (3.3.10) Fisheries

CMNR

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

#### Update

**The definition of requirements for this first phase of the Integrated Fisheries Information System has been finalised and the Department is currently preparing to go to tender for the design and build stages of this system. It is planned that Phase 1 of this system will be delivered in Q4 of 2003.**

### (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

**Initially, it was anticipated that this project could be 'piggybacked' on the ROS system for the payment of Vehicle Registration Tax (VRT), in view of the common client base (motor dealers) for the bulk of the service. However, it has been decided that, with the motor tax project providing an online platform for the National Vehicle and Driver File (NVDF), changes of ownership should be provided as an integrated part of that service.**

Work on the change of ownership project will commence shortly after the March 2003 completion of the motor tax project but a key challenge is the authentication of the client base. Subject to agreement, one option is for ROS to pass authenticated customers to the change of ownership system. However, it would be preferable if the business identifier on the Broker could be used, as this would also provide the route for authenticated person to person transactions and is more in keeping with the overall direction of eGovernment.

#### (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](http://www.entemp.ie)

#### (3.3.13) Earth Resources Information Warehouse

**GSI (CMNR)**

- *Online provision and purchase of geological data*

#### **Update**

The first phase of this project is the indexing and scanning of all paper records. This is expected to be completed by Q1 2003. The next phase is the upgrading of internal database systems and the inclusion of a Geographical Information System (GIS) front-end which is due to be completed at the end of 2003. The online system is projected for 2004.

#### (3.4) eEnabling the Public Service

**FIN/DOT**

- *Proposals will be progressed during 2002 to shape developments to facilitate the creation of a knowledge based organisation in the context of the unfolding modernisation process*

#### **Update**

The XML draw down contract for this technology was placed in December 2002. In addition the design of a security architecture to facilitate secure communications and messaging is nearing completion. The first major application to utilise these technologies will be the eCabinet system (set out below).

The Civil Service ICT Managers Forum has set up a Working Group to examine opportunities to build common solutions and functionalities using web technologies. Work will begin in early 2003. The creation of managed libraries of such solutions and functionality will be examined in this context.

CMOD is examining a number of technologies to facilitate document and records management and the creation of multi-functional Intranet and Extranet Portals.

### **(3.5) eCabinet Project**

**TAO/FIN**

A prototype for the eCabinet 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 eCabinet initiative is progressing well. A presentation on the new model and how it will operate was made to Cabinet in September 2002 and the Government was strongly supportive.

The system design is well advanced and consultation with stakeholders is ongoing with a view to completing the design. Part of the software system has been built and trialled successfully. Work is continuing on design and build with a view to having a prototype ready to be piloted in the first half of 2003 – prior to rolling out the system to Departments and going live later in 2003.

### **(3.6) eLegislation**

**AG**

- *eEnablement of the process governing the preparation of legislation*

#### **Update**

The Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas and the Office of the Attorney General, are developing a system, interoperable with eCabinet for the electronic delivery of the legislative process, using the Web and other media, from the drafting of bills, through the various stages, through to enactment into law. This will enable Irish citizens and businesses to have full and immediate access in an integrated way to the legislative process including amendments tabled and translations. The system will improve the service provided to Members of the Houses of the Oireachtas, and will facilitate an interactive capability to enable representations to be made as legislation is being processed.

The translations project, which includes capturing and publishing the bilingual text (that is the enacting language and official translation) of the Acts of the Oireachtas (1922 to date), and a system for authoring new translations, will commence in January 2003.

A prototype system for processing amendments to bills using XML technology will be developed for the Bills Office in the Office of the Houses of the Oireachtas in January - March 2003.

### **(3.7) Public Procurement- online tendering**

**FIN**

Objectives include:

- *A facility enabling suppliers to reply to tenders electronically to become available during April 2002*
- *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**

Enhancements are currently being made to the etenders web site [www.etenders.gov.ie](http://www.etenders.gov.ie) which will facilitate the piloting of an online tendering system – an electronic post-box function - before the end of 2002. In order to maximise user confidence levels in the electronic tendering process, it is essential that a robust security environment is in place from the outset. Additional security features are therefore being implemented before rollout of the postbox.

As a separate exercise, an independent review of the existing etenders site, which was launched in December 2001, is currently underway and the results of this review will help guide the ongoing development of the National Tender Management Solution over the coming year.

### **(3.8) eEstimates**

**FIN**

- *eEnabling 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 first phase, moving internally from Lotus Smartsuite to Microsoft Office is now completed with the 2003 estimates campaign, being tracked using MS Excel as the basis for spreadsheet work.

A Microsoft Access database for amalgamating and reporting on Vote figures as a proof-of-concept model is completed and is now being enhanced to add additional reporting facilities. Other technologies are also being examined in order to investigate ways to promote ease of use and more flexible reporting and data analysis capabilities.

The RFT being prepared for issue to migrate the current Estimates database to MS SQL Server is being held back until January 2003 in order to reflect on the findings of this process.

### **(3.9) Planning Applications**

**ELG**

- *The delivery of a system by end 2003 to facilitate the receipt by Dúchas 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**

**Tenders for the development of the system have been received and are currently being evaluated. It is intended to award the contract in February, subject to a review of the project in the light of a report on the final division of Dúchas responsibilities between the Department of the Environment & Local Government and the Office of Public Works. The report is expected in January 2003.**

### **(3.10) Integrated Housing Package**

**ELG**

- *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 for the development of this major hub-and-spoke system to handle all elements of local authority housing business. It is anticipated that the contract will be awarded early in 2003. 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**

A new VPN (Virtual Private Network) will be progressed during 2002 to enhance existing infrastructure for communications between Departments and Agencies and to support the delivery of the Public Services Broker and the e-government process. It 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**

**Substantial progress has been made on the Government Virtual Private (Telecommunications) Network. All elements of the VPN with the exception of Managed Remote Services are available for draw down by Agencies. The Managed Remote Services will be progressed as needs arise. The Department of Finance has engaged extensively in bi-lateral discussions with public service agencies throughout the country to advise on and assist with the development of appropriate telecommunications architectures. The next steps will include the examination of potential public service traffic aggregation opportunities arising from broadband investment.**

### **(3.12) ePayments Strategy**

**IS Sec**

Objectives 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*
- *eEnablement of all payments to and from Government*
- *Development of electronic payment solutions for those who do not currently hold bank accounts*
- *Involvement of IPSO (Irish Payment Services Organisation) and other interested parties in progressing this agenda*

#### **Update**

**The need for engagement of consultancy expertise to support development of a national ePayments strategy has been identified by an Inter-Departmental Steering Group currently convened by the Department of the Taoiseach.**

**The consultancy is being taken forward under the aegis of the Information Society Commission in the context of its role as an independent advisory body to Government. What is expected is a report that will capture the value of an ePayments strategy, scoping out alternative policy options that might be considered by Government in this context, underpinned by stakeholder engagement. Consultants were appointed in December 2002 and their report will be available in Q1 2003.**

### **(3.13) National Spatial Data Infrastructure**

**ELG**

- *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 of the Environment & Local Government is in the process of assessing the resource requirements for this initiative. Key priorities include:**

- **Metadata - determining what spatial datasets are held across the public sector**
- **Standards and Specifications - resolving inter-operability issues**
- **Proof-of-concept - providing early tangible evidence of the value of NSDI development (there are three test-bed projects underway)**
- **Access - Optimising usage of spatially referenced information in both the government and commercial sectors, including whole-of-government Service Level Agreements (SLAs) with OSI.**

## (4) eBusiness

### (4.1) Accelerator Fund

ETE

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

- *complete ongoing projects and develop case studies and models of best practice for dissemination throughout the SME sector*

#### Update

**The Acceleration Fund funded one hundred and two projects. A total of twenty case studies have been completed and published to date. It is intended that thirty-five in-depth cross-sectoral case studies will be completed and published early in 2003. Details of these case studies can be found on the Enterprise Ireland's dedicated eBusiness Website <http://www.openup.ie/> A book and CD "Practical eBusiness - Competitive Advantage Through IT and eBusiness; A Handbook for Irish Managers" capturing the key learning points of the participating companies was also published by Enterprise Ireland**

**An independent Evaluator was appointed in June 2002 to carry out a comprehensive evaluation of the Acceleration fund. The report on the outcome of this evaluation will be completed by the end of January 2003.**

### (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 of regionally based high tech companies*
- *Digital Media District in Dublin and other support actions to develop the emerging industry of digital media*

#### **Update**

**Funding allocated to Webworks was €1.7m in 2003, €6.0m in 2004 and €2.3m in 2005 according to current estimates. This flexible, highly wired office and management set-up is expected to come on-stream in Galway, Cork, Sligo, Waterford and Limerick in early to mid-2004.**

**The first phase of the Digital Hub is underway and includes public sector investment of €130 million from the Irish government.**

#### **(4.3) The Digital Hub**

**CMNR**

The Digital Hub ([www.thedigitalhub.com](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 have the necessary telecommunications infrastructure for the Hub in place by mid 2002*

#### **Update**

**A Public Private Partnership is underway on the Digital Hub. Four consortia have been short listed for invitation to tender. Subject to planning permission, construction work is expected to start in early 2004. The Guinness Print Depot will be available as a working unit by mid 2003.**

**The Digital Hub Development Agency Bill has been passed by the Seanad and will now proceed to the Dáil.**

**Construction of 3km high-speed broadband fibre network was completed by Dublin City Council. The Network Operations Centre is due for completion in March 2003.**

#### **(4.4) e-Procurement Awareness**

**ETE**

Enterprise Ireland has 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*

## Update

Enterprise Ireland (EI) held a series of major conferences to highlight e-procurement trends amongst major OEMs and their Irish suppliers in 2002. The Business Linkages Department and the e-Business Unit of Enterprise Ireland will continue to promote this topic where specific opportunities arise, through workshops and individual company advice.

### (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 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

Though the eBusiness Acceleration fund is now closed, the dissemination activities continue via seminars, case studies, guides and a book/CD. All of these draw on the experiences of companies supported under the Fund and provide a unique guide to eBusiness adoption. The dissemination activities are managed by Enterprise Ireland's eBusiness Unit which also maintain a website <http://www.openup.ie/>

### (4.6) Chambers of Commerce SME project

ETE

- *To build e-business capacity within small and medium sized businesses primarily through training and awareness programmes*

## Update

In early 2002, in light of the lack of urgency among SME's to prepare for e-business due to reasons that were documented at the time, the focus of the programme changed to address the perceived irrelevance of e-business among decision makers. Instead of developing an e-business strategy through a time consuming training programme, the e-business development executives worked one-on-one with owner/managers to identify synergies between their business objectives and ICT. Through that process the businesses developed an e-business action plan and training needs were thus identified.

The Chamber e-Business Survey 2002 demonstrates that while Internet penetration has levelled off:

the number using Revenue online has risen by 85% from 14% to 26%;  
the number banking online has increased by 61% since 2001 and is now 55% of businesses surveyed;  
the number taking orders online is now 40% - an increase of 29% since 2001;  
55% of businesses have web sites - an increase of 19% in the last year.

The new survey throws new and valuable light on the nature and rate of our national progress on the e-business front. An independent evaluation of the CCI project is underway and can be expected in early 2003.

#### (4.7) Shannon Development

ETE

Shannon Development has a number of initiatives that would significantly enhance the Information Society and e-Business environment in the Shannon Region. These include:

- **Knowledge network project:** a unique initiative creating a network of 5 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 pilot 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
- **USHER programme:** offers support to European Regional Development Authorities (RDA's) who will in turn pass on the benefits directly to small and medium sized enterprises

#### 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 now invested €18m in three new locations - Kerry Technology Park, Tipperary Park and Birr Technology centre. Infrastructural work will begin at the fifth location - Information Age Park, Ennis in early 2003.

During 2002, fourteen companies participated in the eCluster Pilot programme and further e-Clusters are being planned for 2003.

The USHER project has developed an e-Advisory Toolkit which contains a handbook of advisory practice, as well as web based decision support tools, checklists and a portfolio of eBusiness case studies from around Europe. The project is supported by the EU FP5 IST Programme and further information can be found at <http://www.usherproject.org.uk/>

#### **(4.8) eBusiness Monitor Project (Forfás)**

**ETE**

The key objectives of the Forfás study are:

- *To identify, monitor and assess key environmental factors necessary for e-Business development*
- *Adoption of e-Business in key sectors of the Irish economy*
- *Assess implications of international e-Business developments/drivers (market, technology, etc) on Irish e-Business environment*
- *Compare Ireland's environment for e-Business growth and the performance of key sectors in e-Business, relative to leading countries*

#### **Update**

**The report has been completed, with a summary of the key findings and actions required circulated to relevant parties within Government. The final report is due early in 2003 and will be available on the website <http://www.forfas.ie/>**

**In 2002, Forfás continued to monitor the development of eBusiness in Ireland and internationally through the eBusiness monitor process, which is funded under the Government's Information Society Fund.**

**In August 2002, Forfás initiated a new eBusiness monitoring process with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, IDA Ireland and Enterprise Ireland. It assesses the development potential of eBusiness in Ireland, outlines the policy responses of other countries, and analyses the relative stage of eBusiness development in Irish enterprise and the requirements for a conducive eBusiness environment. Ireland is benchmarked relative to Australia, Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Singapore, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the United States.**

***e-Business: Where Are We and Where Do We Go from Here?* was published in August 2002. <http://www.forfas.ie/publications/ebus2002/ebusiness2002.pdf>**

**The e-business monitor has also provided a significant input into Ireland's Information Society policy through the provision of analysis and policy recommendations to the Government's Second Information Action Plan (*New Connections*) and the Information Society Commission's report to Government (*Building the Knowledge Society*).**

#### **(4.9) Forfás**

**ETE**

Forfás e-business initiatives:

- *Review of data centres, eMarket places & eProcurement*
- *Monitor issue of VAT on business*

- *Complete a digital content Industry study*
- *Complete reviews of third generation (3G) mobile communications and mCommerce*
- *Completion of benchmarking reports on Telecommunications and Policy Analysis*

#### **Update**

**The review of data centres, eMarket places and eProcurement was completed in 2001.**

**Forfás continues to monitor the issue of VAT on business.**

**The Digital Content Industry report has been completed with a summary of the key findings and actions required circulated to Government. A strategy of the Digital Content Sector in Ireland was published in November 2002**  
[http://www.forfas.ie/publications/digicontent02/021105\\_digital\\_content\\_report\\_s.pdf](http://www.forfas.ie/publications/digicontent02/021105_digital_content_report_s.pdf)

**Reviews of third generation (3G) mobile communications and mCommerce will be completed in 2003.**

**A baseline benchmarking report on Telecoms & Policy Analysis was completed in February 2002, followed by an updated report in July. The next updated report will be completed in April 2003.**

**Forfás also completed and published another report related to the eBusiness Monitor in 2002, namely the *Legislating for Competitive Advantage in eBusiness and ICT***

[http://www.forfas.ie/publications/ebus\\_ict\\_leg02/021029\\_ebusiness\\_ict\\_leg\\_72dpi\\_s.pdf](http://www.forfas.ie/publications/ebus_ict_leg02/021029_ebusiness_ict_leg_72dpi_s.pdf)

#### **(4.10) InterTradeIreland (ITI)**

**ETE**

- *Explore the benefits of all-island co-operation towards enhancing Ireland's standing as a world leading location for e-business and knowledge-based economic activity (Digital Island project)*

#### **Update**

**The mandated work set out in the decision of the North South Ministerial Council in June 2002 in relation to the Digital Island project is continuing.**

**Separately, but in collaboration with the Digital Island Group, ITI are implementing an all-island public procurement portal to raise awareness of the exploitable opportunities in the public procurement sector islandwide and to promote enhanced cross-border trade and business collaborations in that sector.**

#### **(4.11) eWork Awareness**

**ETE**

The eWork Business Awareness Campaign was established by Enterprise Ireland to increase awareness of the competitive advantages e-working can offer. As part of the Campaign, various initiatives to highlight the benefits of e-working have been undertaken. These include the:

- *development of Irish e-working case studies*
- *development of printed guidelines for business*
- *establishment of a website*
- *provision of a 1850 helpdesk*
- *commissioning by Enterprise Ireland of MRBI to conduct surveys to monitor e-work practices within Irish businesses.*

#### **Update**

**A major media campaign (national and local radio) to promote eWork Business Awareness took place in September 2002. During September and October 2002, advertisements were placed in relevant publications targeted at Human Resources Managers, who have a crucial determining role in relation to a decision to introduce e-work into organisations. In addition, Enterprise Ireland sponsored a supplement on eWorking published with the Sunday Business Post in November 2002.**

**During September/October 2002, Enterprise Ireland commissioned MRBI to conduct a major survey to monitor e-work practices in Irish businesses. This was the third survey carried out since the beginning of the Campaign and built on earlier surveys to monitor e-work practices in Irish businesses surveyed.**

**Results of the survey are published on Enterprise Ireland's e-work website at <http://www.ework.ie/> under REPORTS & SURVEYS**

#### **(4.12) eWorking Training**

**ETE**

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

**Work on the development of a training course, on the competencies necessary to support e-working arrangements, was undertaken jointly between the Forum and FÁS, and completed during 2002. The course delivers a nationally recognised and accredited course in e-working which is delivered and supported using the internet. It is available through the FÁS Net College website. The course will be accredited by FETAC (Further Education and Training Awards Council).**

## (5) R&D

### (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 management ability to control the R&D process*

#### Update

**A sum of €1.523/IR£1.2bn has been allocated under the NDP for RTDI for industrial development related activities. This funding is being administered through a range of schemes under the Productive Sector Operational Programme, aimed at enhancing innovation competitiveness. EI has developed sectoral strategies in food, services, engineering, printing and construction products. In addition strategies have been developed to build emerging sectors such as biotechnology, photonics and nanotechnology.**

**Enterprise Ireland has completed development of a website database for suppliers. 315 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.**

**Enterprise Ireland is developing ‘Knowledge Sharing’ within EI by establishing Knowledge Communities. The engineering area offered to be one such Community. The Community established an intranet website, ‘Engineering On Line’. The website categorises information under the headings of the Business Development Model. Information hosted on the site ranges from sectoral strategies, key contacts, market information, key clients etc. There are also case studies on design, benchmarking and client development work. The site also has its own ‘news feed’ and e-discussion facility. ‘Engineering On-Line’ has at this stage become a key source of information not just for the Engineering Community but also for the wider organisation. Many development advisors involved in engineering find the site a very useful for source material used for a variety of reasons e.g. writing applications for relevant committees within EI, dealing directly with their clients etc. The site attracts c.2,656 visitors per month with c. 400 user sessions of more than 10 mins. Further Knowledge communities have been established for regional development and investment services.**

### (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*

**No information submitted**

### (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 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 (see above)**
- **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.**

### (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*
- *Ensure a vibrant and dynamic pool of high quality, technically literate graduates, from the graduate to postdoctoral levels, to service the needs of a knowledge-based economy*

#### **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.

**Develop a world-class research environment in our higher education institutions and State research agencies**

### **Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions**

**The Programme for Research in Third Level Institutions (PRTLTI) allocates funding on 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 (infrastructural and programmatic),**
- (ii) enhancement of the numbers, quality and relevance of graduate output**
- (iii) support of high quality inter-disciplinary and inter-institutional research.**

**To date an unprecedented €600 million has been allocated to third level institutions under this programme for research. Substantial funding has also been provided from private philanthropic sources who have supported the strategic focus and competitive basis of the programme.**

**The impacts of PRTLTI have been significant:**

- 62 new and expanded research programmes established**
- 90,000 additional square metres of research space funded, from an indicative baseline of 50,000 in 1999.**
- 796 new post-graduate research posts in place to date in the research system with projected numbers of over 1,500 by the end of Cycle 3 (PRTLTI funded research posts are projected to increase from 192 in 1999 to over 1,600 in 2006, an increase of over 730%)**
- 40 new inter-institutional programmes/initiatives established**
- Over 1,900 publications to date arising from PRTLTI funded programmes (over 2.5 years), representing a 250% increase in output compared to the previous period.**
- New research funding to 15 third level institutions in total, including 6 Institutes of Technology.**

### **Other Research Funders in Higher Education Sector**

**The two recently established Research Councils-The Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology (IRCSET) and the Irish Research Council for the**

**Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS)-now provide 'bottom-up' funding for talented individual researchers, students and postdoctoral fellows. In addition support for basic research is also provided by Science Foundation Ireland (SFI) in the sectors of biotechnology and information and communications technologies (€67m allocated to date since 2000) and by Enterprise Ireland (EI) project research (€7.9m allocated in 2001) and the Health Research Board (HRB) (€11.6m in 2001). As a result, there are now well-established funding mechanisms in place to support individual researchers, research projects and institutions and which provide integrated programmatic support for the development of centers of excellence within and between the institutions.**

**Ensure a vibrant and dynamic pool of high quality, technically literate graduates, from the graduate to postdoctoral levels, to service the needs of a knowledge-based economy**

**In late 2003 the Higher Education Authority (HEA) has allocated some €5.5m to third level institutions to enable them to enhance and modernise equipment used in the teaching of Information Technology and Communications courses. This is the first allocation from the Information Technology Investment Fund set up in 2003, 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.**

**In addition to this first allocation, the HEA is currently reviewing submissions from the institutions for other Measures in the Fund. These proposals are aimed at enhancing the numbers of students taking ICT courses at third level. Given the context of demographic decline at second level, institutions were asked to consider in particular measures to enhance the participation rates of students from disadvantaged background in ICT courses at third-level. It is hoped therefore that these proposals will both address the skills needs of the ICT sector and additionally contribute to the enhanced equity of access to higher education. Finally, institutions have also been asked to examine means to enhance the skills of existing employees in ICT industry, through for example, the provision of part-time and modular day release education and include up-skilling of those in employment and opportunities for the unemployed to gain high technology skills.**

#### **(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*

**See below**

### (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*

**Enterprise Ireland 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 Enterprise Ireland recognises the need to support research in areas of emerging technologies, where threats and opportunities will arise for companies in Ireland. We work closely with the 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 undertaken in 2002 include:**

- **The development of client R&D capabilities through R&D grant aid, RTI and innovation management education (the entrepreneur in a high growth company programme run with UCD, PROSPECT for researchers interested in commercialisation).**
- **Building links between EI clients and the research community nationally and internationally with the potential co –financing of research projects of strategic importance.**
- **€20 million in initial funding to support 250 proof of concept 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 one currently running.**

### (5.2) Science Foundation Ireland

ETE

Science Foundation Ireland has been set up to:

- *embed existing firms in the Irish economy and facilitate their repositioning 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

**Thirteen new awards, amounting to approximately €32 million over five years, were announced in September 2002. These awards, combined with those announced in July**

2001, mean that SFI is currently supporting over eighty research projects totalling over €145 million over the next five years.

SFI is currently operating as a sub-board of Forfás. The Industrial Development (Science Foundation Ireland) Bill was published in December 2002 to establish SFI as an agency of Forfás.

### **(5.3) EU Sixth Framework Programme (2002-2006)**

**ETE**

- *Proposals will be progressed to ensure optimal promotion of and participation in the €16.5bn 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. This was followed by the publication of the first Calls for Proposals in December 2002, which included three calls relating to Information Society Technologies (see [www.cordis.lu/fp6](http://www.cordis.lu/fp6) for details).

Proposals will be progressed to ensure optimal promotion of and participation in the €16.5bn Sixth Framework Programme with a particular focus on supporting Information Society development. The thematic area “Information Society Technologies” receives a budget of over €3.6 billion in the Sixth Framework Programme, and all Departments and Agencies will fully explore the potential of funding mechanisms in progressing the objectives and commitments set out in the Programme.

A network of National Delegates and National Contact Points was put in place to give practical information and assistance to potential participants and ensure that Ireland secures the maximum benefits from the Framework Programme, and was launched by the Tánaiste in December 2002.

A new dedicated unit to provide a National Information & Support Service to potential participants has now been established within Enterprise Ireland - <http://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.

### **(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**

**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:**

### **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.**

**In 2002 a total of 119 projects were approved for funding totalling €16 million. Applications for funding in 2003 are currently being examined.**

### **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 2002 some 221 applicants received awards to a total of €1075m. In March next a further call will issue for up to 150 further scholarship applications under the scheme. Award recipients receive funding of €19,050 for each of three years for Doctorate level research (total funding of €57,150) and of €19,500 (one year) for Masters level research.**

### **Post Doctoral Fellowship Scheme**

**The Post-doctoral Fellowship Scheme is designed to stimulate and support Post-doctoral research in the sciences, engineering and technology.**

**Up to 40 individual awards are available in 2002/2003 with €33,000 (+PRSI) available in the first year and second year, plus appropriate expenses of €5,000 each year at an overall cost of €3.2m.**

## **(5.5) Researchers Group**

*The Higher Education Authority*

**ES**

- *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 Higher Education Authority has established a Working Group on Increasing Participation in Irish Research, currently the work of the group is nearing completion and a report is due shortly.**

### **(5.6) Broadband Infrastructure for Education and R&D**

**ETE/CMNR/E&S**

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

#### **Update**

##### **Next Generation Internet Programme**

**The project seeks to place Ireland at the leading edge of international Internet activity by installing major upgrades to our European and US connections thereby increasing the speed and load-bearing capacity of Internet access for institutions. This will enable real-time collaboration with high-speed education and research networks and the development of new advanced IT applications based on Internet technology. These include activities such as 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.**

**The network links and Global Crossing circuits were launched by the Minister for Public Enterprise, at HEAnet's first national networking conference at the Tipperary Institute in November 2001. This brought on-line connectivity to the pan-European Geant network in Europe through 155Mbps links to London and Frankfurt. While US links from HEAnet's CityWest node went live to the New York Internet Exchange. In late 2002 Heanet upgraded the capacity of the links connecting it to the Geant European 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.**

**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**

**With support from the HEA and the Department of Education and Science, HEAnet has upgraded the national backbone network during 2002. The base capacity has been doubled to 310Mbps, while the number of 1000Mbps (Gigabit) links is being increased in heavily used parts of the infrastructure.**

**With resources made available by the HEA, an aggressive programme of client upgrades to the National Backbone Network was undertaken in 2002. 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.**

**The largest of these client upgrades took place in October 2002, when Trinity College Dublin upgraded its access circuit to the Heanet network as a trial of a new Gigabit Ethernet link at 1000Mbps. This is the first such link to be connected to any Irish University, and University College Dublin and University College Galway will follow shortly in February 2003.**

## **(6) Lifelong Learning**

### **(6.1) Blueprint for the Future of ICT in Primary and Secondary level Education**

**ES**

The principles underpinning this initiative include the development of wiring-networking infrastructure in all schools; lowering the computer/pupil ratio; a further development of teaching skills to fully integrate ICT into learning and teaching and facilitation of software/multimedia resource development for use in schools.

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

#### **Update**

**Under the Blueprint, a total capital grant aid of €78.72m was allocated for the support of ICT in schools. Some € 45m of this allocation has issued directly to schools in December 2001 and May 2002. This includes a provision of over €5m specifically for the ICT equipment requirements of pupils with special needs. A further phase of direct capital grant aid is scheduled for 2003. In order to measure the impact of Blueprint Initiatives and Schools IT2000 and assess how the sector has changed since the last survey in 2000, the National Centre for Technology in Education (NCTE) launched a census of ICT infrastructure in schools in late 2002 to measure progress in ICT hardware and software development, scope and usage and ICT training delivery in all schools.**

**Recognising the key role of Principals in the successful use of ICT in learning and teaching, the Department, through NCTE and the Education Centre Network, organised nationwide seminars for Principals. All primary principal seminars have been completed and those for post-primary Principals will be completed before the end of the current school year.**

**The Government has also supported a programme of ICT training in which every teacher in the country has been provided with the opportunity to gain the requisite skills. To date over 75% of teachers have availed of this service.**

**Whereas initial training had focussed on basic training, the NCTE are now entering a phase of course delivery more focussed to the use of ICT as a curriculum delivery tool.**

**An additional €20m in the period 2001-2003 is allocated to fund a national advisory and support network for the initiative and for the provision of a range of additional ICT training for teachers.**

**The NCTE is continuing to develop and disseminate software/multimedia resources tailored for the Irish context. A number of initiatives are underway and some resources have already been disseminated through the education portal, ScoilNet.**

### (6.1.1) Curriculum Integration

ES

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

#### Update

**The Government is concerned with a number of broad issues relating to the integration of ICTs into the activities of the school at both first and second level. Chief amongst these concerns is the way in which the curricula may need to be adapted in order to ensure that the best use is made of the resources now being made available to schools. In this regard, the Department has obtained sanction for the appointment of two officers within the NCCA whose role will be to further develop issues relating to the delivery of curriculum using ICT at primary and post-primary level.**

**An initiative to develop and disseminate a set of teacher guidelines for the use of ICTs in the primary school has been piloted in a number of schools throughout the country in association with NCTE ICT advisors based in 10 Education Centres. The pilot phase has been completed and the NCCA are currently finalising the guidelines in preparation for dissemination to schools generally. The NCCA is focussing its attention on two approaches to the question of ICT at post-primary level for existing subjects which could benefit from the use of ICT. The first approach is the development of student competence in using ICT, and secondly, the use of ICT as a resource for teaching and learning throughout the curriculum.**

### (6.1.2) Schools Internet connectivity

ES

Providing speedy, always on access to the Internet for schools is essential to the broader policy of integrating ICT into education.

- *Provide schools with affordable access to adequate bandwidth*

#### Update

**A request for tender has issued for a detailed study of available options in relation to the provision of high-speed broadband connectivity to primary and post-primary schools on an affordable, cost effective basis. It is intended that this study will be completed by April, 2003. In the interim, Eircom has agreed to continue the Information Age Schools programme for the new school year with enhanced access to the Internet of ten free hours per week instead of five.**

### (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.**

## (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 is a key component of the Back to Education initiative.

- *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 implemented in 2002, providing 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.**

### (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 is 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.**

### **(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 <http://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 and Equalskills is currently being piloted in a number of these.**

**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.**

### **(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 €12m was approved for the fund for 2002 including a contribution of €2m from the National Training Fund. The HEA invited proposals from third level institutions to meet equipment and other recommendations outlined by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs. The equipment fund was allocated on a per capita basis to the Institutions. Proposals for other measures are currently being examined by an expert evaluation team set up for that purpose. It is expected that this work will be completed by the end of November 2002.**

#### (6.2.5) Task Force on the Physical Sciences

ES

- *Address issues in relation to the uptake of the sciences at second and third level*
- *Progress recommendations included in the report of the Task Force on the Physical Sciences published in March 2002*

**No information submitted**

#### (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](http://www.entemp.ie/lfld/lifelong.pdf)**

**In light of this report, the Information Society Policy Unit will initiate a review of this policy area in Q2 of 2003 in collaboration with the relevant Government Departments and with the Economic and Social Policy Division in the Taoiseach's Department focussing on key areas including inter alia:**

- **National Qualifications system**
- **Digital literacy**
- **Developing the potential of eLearning e.g. electronic delivery of further and higher level education and training and overcoming barriers facing many potential learners.**
- **Upskilling of the existing workforce in the IT sector**

## **(7) eInclusion**

### **(7.1) Coordination and Policy Development**

**IS Sec**

- *Review and rearticulate the implementation strategy.*

#### **Update:**

**The Government continues to place a high priority on the need for an inclusive approach to the implementation of all strands of the Information Society agenda. A number of projects were completed or reached an evaluation stage in their lifecycle and the recommendations of the Task Force on Lifelong Learning have been accepted by Government. It is now timely to initiate a review of the policy area to ensure the continued relevance and robustness of the framework that underpins the Government's objective of 'an Information Society for All'. The review will build on the lessons learned from the work completed to date to inform future work programmes and funding decisions, and provide for synergies across all sectors of the community, both public and private. The IS Policy Unit will initiate the review early in Q1 2003.**

### **(7.2) Universal Participation Initiative**

**ELG**

- *To promote participation in the Information Society through a Local Authority-led initiative aimed, inter alia, at building computer skills and providing local content.*

#### **Update**

**An application for assistance from the Information Society Fund for the development of a Universal Participation Initiative through the County and City Enterprise Boards was made in June 2002. While approval for the funding of €170,000 required to run pilot projects in 2002 was received, no commitment was received on the much greater funding (approx. €600,000) required to roll-out the scheme in 2003. It was decided that pilot projects should not be undertaken in the absence of such a commitment. The proposal has been re-examined and a revised proposal for two pilot projects has been submitted to the Information Society Policy Unit for consideration.**

### **(7.3) Internet Services Provision for Community & Voluntary Sector**

**IS Sec**

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

#### **Update**

**Muintir na Tíre, with the assistance of the Department of Social and Family Affairs, piloted the implementation of ISP facilities in 2002 by building a portal which may be used by community and voluntary groups. An evaluation of the project including a set of recommendations on enhancements to the facility was published in November 2002 ([www.muintir.ie/ict/ict.html](http://www.muintir.ie/ict/ict.html))**

**Work is on-going to prioritise follow-on actions for 2003 that will build on the achievements of 2002 and will inform a submission for additional funding. Any such funding decisions will be considered in the context of the outcome of the review of the eInclusion Implementation Strategy.**

### **(7.4) CAIT Initiative**

**CRGA**

- *Encourage late adopters to engage with information and communication technologies in a beneficial way*
- *Empower communities to harness the benefits of the new technologies*
- *Employ information and communications technologies to overcome particular socio-economic barriers which exist for some communities*

#### **Update**

**The second CAIT Initiative was launched in February 2002 and will be completed by June 2003. Up to €3 million was made available from the Information Society Fund to fund the scheme. This figure includes administration costs for the scheme as well as funding for the individual projects. Fifty projects throughout the country are currently being funded under this 2nd initiative - giving a total of 121 projects being funded under CAIT. A further group of applications are currently being assessed and the successful projects among these applicants will be awarded funding before the end of 2002.**

**Work Research Co-operative, Social and Economic Research Consultants Ltd. have been contracted to evaluate how successfully the CAIT projects are achieving their goals of encouraging the target groups to participate fully in the Information Society. The final report will be published in early 2003 and will be available on <http://www.cait.ie/> The need for a further initiative including the question of funding is already being**

examined and will be informed by this final report and the outcome of the planned review of the eInclusion implementation strategy.

#### **(7.5) Capacity building**

**CRGA**

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

#### **Update**

**The Department of Community, Rural and Gaeltacht Affairs will examine the provision of an IT support structure for the sector as part of any future CAIT initiative. In addition the Department of Social and Family Affairs and the IS Policy Unit and the Economic and Social Policy Division within the Department of the Taoiseach will be consulted in the context of modifying personal development programmes for the sector to incorporate basic ICT support training.**

#### **(7.6) Equalskills**

**IS Sec**

- *Provide 100,000 people in the South West and Shannon regions with training in basic ICT skills.*

#### **Update**

**This pilot was launched in September 2001 and completed at the end of 2002. An evaluation report is underway and a report will be published in January 2003.**

#### **(7.7) Research**

**ISC**

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

#### **Update**

**The Information Society Commission has contracted Models Research to research into inclusive Information Society development. A report will be published in March 2003.**

#### **(7.8) Accessibility**

**JELR**

##### **(7.8.1) IT Accessibility Guidelines**

- *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 Irish National Disability Authority [IT Accessibility Guidelines](#) were launched in June 2002. Included are guidelines for accessible products and services, including descriptions of high level accessibility goals and the difficulties faced by users; prioritised guidelines for each technology; motivation and justification for each guideline and guidance on design techniques and testing methods. Guidelines are available for the following technologies:

- **Web: Websites, Online Applications, Online Forms.**
- **Public Access Terminals: ATMs, Information kiosks, Ticket vending machines, Information displays, Card readers.**
- **Telecoms: Fixed line phones, mobile phones, IVR Systems**
- **Application Software : Windows, Macintosh, Unix, Linux, Java**

Since June 2002, 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. Additional work is being undertaken to illustrate and enhance the website which is currently text-based only.

### (7.8.2) 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 National Disability Authority has begun developing a system for a compliance symbol and a means of auditing compliance with the accessibility guidelines.

### (7.9) 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

The establishment of a Centre of Excellence in Universal Design is expected to be provided for under the proposed Disability Bill. Following a Government decision on 26/02/2002, further consultations on the Bill are currently in progress. It is now proposed to bring the amended Bill through the Oireachtas in 2003.

## (8) Additional eGovernment Projects

### (8.1) eHealth Pilot Projects

HC

- *Publication of the Health Information Strategy*

#### Update

It is expected that the strategy will be published in Q1 2003.

#### (8.1.1) Public Service Identity

HC

- *Use of the Public Service Identity by end 2002*

#### Update

**The National Health Information Strategy will address the introduction of a system for unique identification within the health sector based upon the PPS Number. Attention will be given to enabling the identifier to enhance the safety of personal care and to promote the quality of service delivery, whilst safeguarding the privacy, confidentiality and security of personal information in line with a robust information governance framework provided for in the proposed legislation.**

#### (8.1.2) Health Information web pages

HC

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

#### Update

**The Department of Health and Children provide health information to OASIS on a regular basis. This is in place. Regional health boards have been working to provide additional information appropriate to their region through local websites. The next stage in 2003 is to work with OASIS in providing regional information to OASIS.**

#### (8.1.3) Appointments for Hospital Services

HC

- *Appointments for hospital services*

#### Update

**This work will be undertaken in the context of the procurement and implementation of a national hospital information system which is currently underway. The solution for**

**provision of laboratory results to GPs is being designed to ensure that it can also deal with other communications such as appointments.**

#### (8.1.4) Medical cost reimbursement

**HC**

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

#### **Update**

**The implementation of an online patient identification systems enabling pharmacies to provide improved individualised services is at an advanced stage and the first phase is due for completion in 2003.**

#### (8.1.5) Access to Laboratory results

**HC**

- *GP Access to laboratory results by end 2002 and build on the success of the pilot projects. This project has been expanded considerably to encompass messaging standards for a whole range of health service interactions into 2003 and is linked to appointments for hospital services.*

#### **Update**

**Pilots have been delivered within the health services. These are being brought together to ensure a consistent and scalable route forward. A messaging standard for primary care is being developed by the HeBE project team. The pilots have provided valuable learning experiences, in understanding the priorities and processes for GP's in electronically accessing information from the acute hospitals.**

#### (8.1.6) eLearning for health professionals

**HC**

- *eLearning for health professionals*

#### **Update**

**A pilot project on service planning for health professionals, through eLearning, has been developed in 2002 in partnership between the Health boards, the Office for Health Management and Letterkenny Institute of Technology. It is planned to continue to the next phase with the development and rollout of eLearning within the health services in 2003.**

### (8.1.7) Digital TV

HC

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

#### Update

The use of digital TV is being explored by a number of health boards within the context of the HeBE eGovernment project team. An exploratory project has been agreed with RTÉ to identify the migration path from analog to digital medium. A series of programmes is being written for Nationwide and also being written into the storyline of Fair City [Irish soap series]. This is being initially piloted in one health board area.

### (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 2002*

#### Update

This project is pending PSB procurement. It will encompass health information web pages, which will build on the work of OASIS.

The Health Board Executive (HeBE) eGovernment group plan to develop a strategy in 2003 on how health information and services can be provided in the context of REACH and OASIS. A national eGovernment group, under the auspices of HEBE, was created in mid 2002 to facilitate an integrated approach to eGovernment within healthcare.

The Public Services Broker procurement process is currently in progress and this will inform the strategy for provision of health information and services online. It is recognised that health must take advantage of overarching eGovernment initiatives such as REACH and OASIS.

### (8.2) Additional eGovernment Projects

#### (8.2.1) Marine Coastal Services

CMNR

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

#### **Update**

**The Department's overall Information Technology Programme Plan is currently being reviewed in light of additional areas of responsibility in the areas of Communications and it is planned that a revised Programme Plan will be published in Q1 of 2003.**

#### **(8.2.2) Online Import/Export declarations**

**RevComm**

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

#### **Update**

**The Intrastat and VIES service may/may not be released in 2003. They are being scoped out at present and a request for funding for the Intrastat returns has been sent to Luxembourg.**

#### **(8.2.3) Construction Industry & Relevant Contract Tax**

**RevComm**

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

#### **Update**

**It is planned to release services for Relevant Contracts Tax in March 2003. These include access to customer information services and the ability to file and pay the monthly Forms C30. The development for the annual returns C35 may be developed later in the year depending on the funding position.**

**Project will be completed by mid 2003 as scheduled.**

#### **(8.2.4) Gift & Inheritance Tax Returns**

**RevComm**

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

#### **Update**

**Project will be completed by end of March 2003. Significant changes to the business process are being introduced simultaneously and hence the deferred release date.**

#### **(8.2.5) Online Filing & Payment of Taxes**

**RevComm**

*Online filing and payment of:*

- *Form 11 for the 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.**

#### **(8.2.6) Census of Population**

**CSO**

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

#### **Update**

**The Preliminary Report of Census 2002 is available on the website.**

**<http://www.cso.ie/publications/demog/cen02.pdf>**

**The definitive population figures will be disseminated from mid 2003 onwards.**

#### **(8.2.7) Online Heritage Licences**

**ELG**

- *Online licence processing for archaeological licences, excavation reports and hunting licences by end 2002*

#### **Update**

**This project was significantly slowed following the transfer of Dúchas to the Department of the Environment and Local Government, as ICT staff assigned to the project did not transfer to the DoELG. Work on the project will re-start in 2003 as staff vacancies are filled.**

#### **(8.2.8) 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**

**A secure Virtual Private Network for all of the Justice sector agencies is now in place. Most of the major agencies in the sector have now been connected to the infrastructure. The main exception is the Garda Síochána, which has not yet connected to the backbone infrastructure.**

**A common data model for the criminal justice sector will be revisited shortly to review its application to the wider justice sector (e.g. immigration & asylum area). Work has started on defining the interfaces for sharing information between systems owned by the Courts Service, the Garda, the Prisons Service and other players. Work is also being carried out on the definition of a common identifier for the criminal justice sector and the immigration and asylum sector, in association with REACH. It is intended to progress each of these projects to completion over the next 12 months.**

#### **(8.2.9) Domestic refuse - Dublin City Council**

**ELG**

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

#### **Update**

**The mechanism for allowing customers to log on to a local authority website and make a payment to Dublin City Council by credit or debit card is complete and ready for deployment. The ability of the reachservices.ie site to send coded information on the transactions to allow Dublin City Council dynamically update relevant backend systems will be completed before the end of 2002.**

**Internal discussions are ongoing in Dublin City Council as to how to proceed. One area of concern is the extent to which this represents an improvement of service to customers. The ability to pay domestic refuse charges already exists on billpay.ie (linked from the City Council's website). The Council are considering whether they should proceed with the development in advance of the availability of the full Broker.**

#### **(8.2.10) 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 mid 2003. The provision of this online service will be examined following the establishment of the Board.**

#### **(8.2.11) Teagasc Online Analytical Systems**

**AF**

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

#### **Update**

**The system is now live and currently available online to Teagasc clients.**

#### (8.2.12) Small Claims

**JELR**

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

#### **Update**

**The initial requirements analysis has been completed. Tendering for the building and development of the system will be commenced in Q1 2003. It is estimated that the online system will be in place before the end of 2003.**

#### (8.2.13) Teagasc Profit Monitoring Systems

**AF**

- *Profit monitors to assist farmers in identifying improved returns achievable from their enterprises (phased basis from early 2002)*

#### **Update**

**Phase 1 for Dairy Enterprises is live and available to Teagasc customers. Phase 2 for drystock enterprises is due to go live in Q1 2003.**

#### (8.2.14) National Archives

**AST**

- *New online facility to allow reservation of catalogue items in advance will be developed, including integration with a proposed Geographic Information System (GIS) browser*

#### **Update**

**Phase one of the project involves automating the internal system of reservations and phase two provides online dissemination arrangements. The first stage of the project is planned to be undertaken in mid/late 2003. Full completion of the project will take another two years.**

#### (8.2.15) National Museum

**AST**

- *Online catalogue management system for the National Museum collection*

**Update**

**The system will be based on the online catalogue being developed by the Department of the Environment & Local Government for the Botanic Gardens. It is expected to be rolled out by [no date given...]**

(8.2.16) Hydrometric Information

**OPW**

- *Online availability of information concerning water levels*

**Update**

**This project has been completed and the site has been live since June of this year.**

(8.2.17) Iris Oifigiúil

**OPW**

- *Online availability of Iris Oifigiúil*

**Update**

**The development of this application has been completed and is currently being piloted by the Publications Section of the Government Supplies Agency. It is anticipated that the site will be 'live' early in 2003.**

(8.2.18) Planning Consultations

**OPW**

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

**Update**

**Due to internal resourcing issues, this project will not be completed until early 2003.**

(8.2.19) National Art Online

**OPW**

- *Online viewing of the state art collection*

**Update**

**Copyright issues are being addressed. It is expected that the application will be available by early 2003 containing details of works of art where the copyright issues have been resolved.**

#### (8.2.20) Digital Maps Online

OS

- *Online access to digital data and maps for corporate clients and the general public on a phased basis from mid 2002*

#### Update

**The project is due for completion in 2002. It is within budget and meets the required specification. There have been some delays by the software supplier due to complex technical issues on the design of the mapping database. However a proposed solution is under review now and we are considering a phase 1 completion date of November 2002.**

#### (8.2.21) Botanic Gardens

ELG

- *Online catalogue management system for the Botanic Gardens*

#### Update

**This project was significantly slowed following the transfer of Dúchas to the Department of the Environment and Local Government as ICT staff assigned to the project did not transfer to the DoELG.**

**The project involves two phases. The first phase involves developing an electronic database to contain the Botanic Gardens plant catalogue and will be completed in early 2003. The second phase will see the availability of the database online and will be completed towards the middle of 2003.**

#### (8.2.22) Asylum/Immigration Services

JELR

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

#### Update

**Preparation of an IT strategy for the asylum area commenced in mid 2002 and will be agreed shortly.**

#### (8.2.23) 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. What is envisaged are smartcard initiatives 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, namely: 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.**

#### **(8.2.24) Public Transport Real-Time Information**

##### **Dublin Transportation Office (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 which 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.**

#### **(8.2.25) Social Welfare Schemes**

**SFA**

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

#### **Update**

**Child Benefit moved to a new computer application which went live in November 2002. It is anticipated that the online facility for Child Benefit will be available following the roll-out and implementation of the Civil Registration Modernisation Programme due to commence in the 2nd quarter of 2003.**

#### (8.2.26) GIS Strategy

**LGCSB**

- *National framework for Sectoral Geographical Information Systems*

##### **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.**

**Since August the basic infrastructure has been implemented in twelve Local Authorities, with implementations ongoing where requested. This includes the ability to present information using maps.**

**An enhanced version of the basic implementation is being piloted in January 2003, in Cork City Council and Laois County Council. Following testing, this will be rolled out to all Local Authorities.**

**A proof of concept project, to test the interoperability of the Open GIS standards is to commence Q1 2003.**

#### (8.2.27) 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. So far most of the Local Authority Offices have been audited and prepared for rationalisation. A significant number of sites are already certified. It is expected that all Local Authority Offices will be certified by mid 2003.**

#### (8.2.28) GIS Heritage Information

**ELG**

- *Online provision of geographic information systems relating to heritage by end 2003*

##### **Update**

**This project was significantly slowed following the transfer of Dúchas to the Department of the Environment and Local Government as ICT staff assigned to the project did not transfer to the DoELG. Work on the project will re-start in 2003 as staff vacancies are filled.**

#### (8.2.29) Gaeltacht Grants

CRGA

- *Online applications for Gaeltacht Grants*

#### Update

The change of Departments has slowed this project.

**Phase 1, the upgrade of the internal databases to support the online application, has gone out for tender and the upgrade internal database systems are expected to be in place by the end of 2003. Design and build of the online system is expected in early 2004. The Department is exploring the possibility of developing an interim solution with REACH.**

#### (8.2.30) Heritage Online System

ELG

- *Online sale of Departmental publications and heritage cards, tracking of heritage cards usage, survey forms for citizens, education information packs and heritage event information by early 2003*

#### Update

**This project was significantly slowed following the transfer of Dúchas to the Department of the Environment and Local Government as ICT staff assigned to the project did not transfer to the DoELG. Work on the project will re-start in 2003 as staff vacancies are filled.**

#### (8.2.31) National Library

AST

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

#### Update

**It is intended to base the system on the online catalogue that is being developed by the Department of the Environment & Local Government for the Botanic Gardens. It is expected to be rolled out by [no date supplied]**

#### (8.2.32) Marine Harmful Algal Blooms System

CMNR

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

### **Update**

**This new system allows Test Laboratories nation-wide to lodge shellfish test results online with the Marine Institute's National Reference Laboratory. Analysis reports are then provided via the web to fish farmers and the general public in addition to automatic notification of the status of coastal bays by email, fax and SMS. A further development of this system is the transfer and integration of Marine Institute data into the databases held by the Food Safety Authority (FSA). The FSA will provide web updates to the general public via their web site. This service has been fully tested and will go live in mid December 2002.**

### **(8.2.33) Coastal Weather Information**

**CMNR**

- *Online access to coastal weather data*

### **Update**

**Service is live and there are plans to expand the online product suite in 2003.**

### **(8.2.34) National Research Vessel Information Service**

**CMNR**

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

### **Update**

**This service will allow potential users of the vessels 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 and on leaving the ship mandatory reports will be automatically generated. The data collected during surveys will be available to individual scientists and also transferred to the Institute's Oceanographic Data Warehouse. Information about each survey programme and the data collected will be made available to the general public online.**

### **(8.2.35) 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**

**In 2002, the Institute began development of this project working in close collaboration with the GSI, who are partners in the Seabed Survey. The project focuses on the design, development and deployment of a Marine Data Warehouse. Components of the project**

**include a meta-data catalogue that provides an inventory of data, projects and collaborators, a warehouse of oceanographic information and a set of online services that provide discovery tools, simple analysis and data delivery.**

(8.2.36) Education

**ES**

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

**Information on individual schools is available on the Department of Education & Science's website. <http://www.education.ie/> This will be expanded on an on-going basis.**

## Appendix 1

Abbreviation	Index of Department Names	Contact
AF	Department of Agriculture & Food	Eamonn.Minogue@agriculture.gov.ie
AG	Office of the Attorney General	deirbhle_murphy@ag.irlgov.ie
AST	Department of Arts, Sport & Tourism	webmaster@dast.gov.ie
CMNR	Department of Communications, Marine & Natural Resources	webmaster@dcmnr.gov.ie
CRGA	Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs	eolas@pobail.ie
CSO	Central Statistics Office	information@cso.ie
DEF	Department of Defence	defence@iol.ie
ELG	Department of the Environment & Local Government	Philip_O'Flaherty@environ.irlgov.ie
ES	Department of Education & Science	webmaster@education.gov.ie
ETE	Department of Enterprise, Trade & Employment	Sinead.Gilligan@entemp.ie
FA	Department of Foreign Affairs	Joe.Nugent@iveagh.irlgov.ie
FIN	Department of Finance	Colm.McGlynn@finance.gov.ie
HC	Department of Health & Children	Customer_services@health.irlgov.ie
JELR	Department of Justice, Equality & Law Reform	info@justice.ie
OPW	Office of Public Works	Colm.McGlynn@finance.gov.ie
Reach	Reach	Victor.Galvin@reach.ie
RevComm	Revenue Commissioners	jnbrowne@revenue.ie
SFA	Department of Social & Family Affairs	info@welfare.ie
TAO	Department of the Taoiseach	ISPU@taoiseach.gov.ie
TRA	Department of Transport	MattBenville@transport.ie
LGCSB	Local Government Computer Services Board	mreilly@lgcsb.ie
Is Sec	IS PU Secretariat	ISPU@taoiseach.gov.ie