

**D/PER**

**Programme for Government Commitments**

Accelerate capital works that are 'shovel ready' and labour intensive including schools and secondary roads.
We will reform public procurement to become a tool to support innovative Irish firms and to allow greater access to Irish small and medium sized businesses.
We will introduce new legislation to protect all small building subcontractors that have been denied payments from bigger companies.
We will draw up a new National Development Plan that reflects Ireland's changed economic circumstances, covering the seven-year period 2012-2019. The plan will be based on a comprehensive study of Ireland's public investment priorities over that period.
In the initial years, when resources will be most heavily constrained, we will prioritise investment in school building, non-national roads, healthcare, and in job-creation.
We will insist that major capital projects are subjected to proper cost-benefit analysis and evaluation, improving future productivity and growth prospects, and that the value-for-money obtained is significantly enhanced compared to the most recent period.
The new NDP will be based on traditional exchequer capital spending, plus other resources to be invested from the National Pension Reserve Fund, on the basis of obtaining a return on investment and that does not impact the Government Balance Sheet.
In developing the new NDP, we will re-examine the investment programmes of the semi-state companies to ensure that they are in line with new economic circumstances.
In order to ensure that public enterprise plays a full role in Ireland's economic recovery, we will create a holding company to manage the state's holdings of the semi-states, and to co-ordinate investment in key priority areas identified by the Government, including energy, water and forestry.
Over time, we also propose to finance the investment programme from the sale of certain state assets. We will target up to €2 billion in sales of non-strategic state assets drawing from the recommendations of the McCarthy Review Group on State Assets when available. Assets will only be sold when market conditions are right and when adequate regulatory structures have been established to protect consumer interests.
Re-prioritise capital funding for smaller projects that deal with specific immediate problems. Smaller projects are more labour intensive and more likely to be carried out by local contractors increasing short-run domestic economic impact. Investment priorities will include education, health and science and technology
Conduct a Comprehensive Spending Review to examine all areas of public spending and to assess effectiveness of spending programmes and value for company.
A referendum to amend the Constitution to reverse the effects of the Abbeylara judgement to enable Oireachtas committees to carry out full investigations.
A referendum to protect the right of citizens to communicate in confidence with public representatives.
Ministers' salaries will be reduced, political expenses vouched for and severance payments for ministers axed.
No political pensions will be paid to sitting TDs and in future no retired politician will get a political pension until the national retirement age.
Amend the Constitution to Give Dáil committees Full Powers of Investigation.
A statutory duty on any body established by or under statute, or with a majority ownership or funding by the State, to submit to the same parliamentary questions regime as applies to Government departments. This will involve a liability to provide answers to written questions within a specified number of Dáil sitting days. (We will however recognise the special position of bodies with a commercial mandate operating at arm's length from Government).
We will amend the rules to ensure that no senior public servant (including political appointees) or Minister can work in the private sector in any area involving a potential conflict of interest with their former area of public employment, until at least two years have elapsed after they have left the public service.
Restrictions on the nature and extent of evidence by civil servants to Oireachtas committees will be scrapped and replaced with new guidelines for civil servants that reflect the reality of the authority delegated to them and their personal accountability for the way in which it is exercised.
The Committee would be the formal channel of consultation and collaboration between the Oireachtas and the Ombudsman, responsible for receiving and debating her annual and special reports and for ensuring that her criticisms and recommendations are acted upon. For that purpose, she would attend as a regular witness before the committee.

<p>We intend to end the heavy dependence on a very limited pool of extremely expensive private solicitors firms providing legal services to the State and agencies, look at ways to require agencies to seek legal advice from the CSSO and not from the private sector in order to save costs, and ensure that legal work at the bar for the State is spread more equitably rather than confined to a very limited pool as at present.</p>
<p>We will legislate to restore the Freedom of Information Act to what it was before it was undermined by the outgoing Government, and we will extend its remit to other public bodies including the administrative side of the Garda Síochána, subject to security exceptions.</p>
<p>We will extend Freedom of Information, and the Ombudsman Act, to ensure that all statutory bodies, and all bodies significantly funded from the public purse, are covered.</p>
<p>We will introduce Whistleblowers legislation.</p>
<p>We will introduce a statutory register of lobbyists, and rules concerning the practice of lobbying.</p>
<p>We will progress the Statute Law Revision Project in order to enhance public accessibility to the statute book.</p>
<p>We will abolish the additional pay for Ministers who leave office. We will restrict the payment of pensions to politicians so that in future a member can only qualify for a pension at the national retirement age (currently 65) and upon leaving public life. We will cap taxpayers' subsidies for all future pension schemes for politicians (and indeed for everybody) that deliver income in retirement of more than €60,000.</p>
<p>We will legislate and change Dáil standing orders to ensure the absolute confidentiality of information entrusted to members of the Dáil by their constituents or informants, and ensure that such information cannot be compulsorily disclosed through the legal process except with the consent of the informant.</p>
<p>We will publish cost-benefit analyses for major infrastructure proposals and "tax expenditures" in advance of Government approval.</p>
<p>Public sector bodies will be required to publish balance sheets and to move to accruals from cash-flow accounting.</p>
<p>Every Purchase Order by a Government Department or agency for more than €20,000 will be published online. We will give the Comptroller and Auditor General and Oireachtas Committees the extra powers needed to carry out value-for-money audits of State programmes.</p>
<p>Public bodies will be required to openly compete for budget resources by publishing pre-budget spending requests, and what they would deliver in return for such allocations to help deliver Programme for Government.</p>
<p>We will conduct a Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) to examine all areas of public spending, based on the Canadian model, and to develop multi-annual budget plans with a three-year time horizon. This plan will be presented to the Dáil for debate. It will assess effectiveness in achieving desired outcomes, and value for money</p>
<p>The CSR will examine the number, range and activities of bodies funded significantly from public purse, including at local government level, and reduce numbers where appropriate. In future, when proposing a new agency, it will be necessary to prove that the proposed new functions cannot be carried out within the existing framework.</p>
<p>Every public body will set out clear and unambiguous long, medium and short term strategic priorities, which will be clearly communicated to public service and citizens. Strategic priorities will be translated into high level goals for all Departments, on a 'whole of government' basis, and in consultation with Ministers.</p>
<p>Performance indicators will be identified to monitor progress on high level priorities. Annual reports of departments and agencies will include output statements and audited financial accounts prepared on generally accepted accounting principles. The performance information provided in output and outcome-focused measurement will feed into the decision making process for future plans at political and senior management level.</p>
<p>The reform process will provide for increased delegation of budgets, subject to detailed plans, relevant performance reporting and audited accounts compiled in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.</p>
<p>Detailed business cases will be required for major projects, with review and reporting requirements built in to the plan. Sanctions will be imposed at an early stage for significant overruns.</p>
<p>We will change the current emphasis on performance reporting to performance management. All medium to long-term projects that involve significant public spending will be subject to cost benefit analysis, and to on-going evaluation. The results of programme evaluations will be published and programmes not meeting their objectives will be wound down.</p>
<p>Performance and progress will be published in a new, audited annual Public Service Delivery Reports. Oireachtas Committees will expose any failure to hit milestones and targets. Each sectoral Committee will take on new powers, similar to those wielded by Public Accounts Committee, to hold Ministers and public servants to account for value for money. This will feed into Oireachtas consideration of the next Budget.</p>
<p>Where appropriate, agency boards will be scrapped and agency managers will be accountable directly to Ministers.</p>
<p>We will bring forward the annual Estimates cycle, so that it becomes more timely and relevant. It will in future start at the beginning of the preceding year and conclude by the summer.</p>

The annual Estimates will in future distinguish between monies being allocated to maintaining the existing level of service for existing programmes and money to support new programmes or policy decisions.
The Book of Estimates will be accompanied by a detailed performance report on what the previous year's spending had achieved. It will also give details of the level of performance achieved by agencies under service delivery agreements with Government.
Oireachtas members will be given, from within existing resources, dedicated resources for the proper scrutiny of the Estimates.
We will give the Comptroller and Auditor General the extra powers needed to carry out value-for-money audits of State programmes.
We will, subject to there being no compulsory redundancies and to the protection of front line services: Reduce the total number of public sector employees by between 18,000 and 21,000 by 2014, compared to the total number at the end of 2010. Reduce this number by a further 4,000 by 2015.
All appointments at Principal Officer level and above will be open to external competition and at least one-third of such appointments will be reserved for candidates from outside traditional civil service structures for a 5-year period.
Pin down accountability for results at every level of the public service – from Ministers down – with clear consequences for success and failure. Ministers will be responsible for policy and procurement and public service managers for delivery.
Where appropriate, agency boards will be scrapped and agency managers will report directly to Ministers and their Departments on performance against targets.
Put in place a Whistleblowers Act to protect public servants that expose maladministration by Ministers or others, and restore Freedom of Information.
There will be no more "golden handshakes" for public servants that have failed to deliver.
Overhaul TLAC (Top level Appointments Commission), with the chairperson and the majority of members drawn from outside the public sector.
Introduce a reformed incentive system for all grades within core Government departments to reward cross-departmental teams that deliver audited improvements in service delivery and cost effectiveness.
Go beyond the recommendations of An Bord Snip to rationalise core processes that are duplicated across the public service, by establishing shared back-office operations for information technology, human resource management, payments and entitlement applications, business inspections and procurement.
Review the Local Government Efficiency Review as part of our Comprehensive Spending Review.
Make substantial cuts to the number of State bodies and companies
Instigate a Government-wide review to identify and eliminate non-priority programmes and outsource, where appropriate, non-critical functions.
Rather than giving fixed budgets to traditional public service providers like the HSE, VECs and FÁS, we will put resources into the hands of citizens to acquire services that are tailored to better suit their needs and less expensive for the taxpayer.
Establish a new model of financing social interventions – called Social Impact Bonds – that share audited exchequer savings with charitable and voluntary organisations.
Where appropriate we will open up the delivery of public services to a range of providers.
We will give schools, hospitals and other public service bodies new freedoms – within strict budgets and new accountability systems – to set their own staffing needs, automate routine processes and adapt work practices to local staff and customer needs.
We will legislate for a reformulated code of laws, replacing both the Ministers and Secretaries Acts and the Public Service Management Act, which will spell out the legal relationship between Ministers and their civil servants and their legal accountability for decisions and for management of Departments.
The system of implied general delegation of a Minister's statutory powers to civil servants will be abolished and replaced by a fixed and determined system of delegation of specified powers to specified officers.
Where a responsibility is delegated through several civil service grades, each grade will be held accountable for their element of it and departmental officials giving evidence to Oireachtas committees will be obliged to speak on their own behalf for their delegated responsibilities and, where appropriate, defend themselves and their actions.
Delegation orders will spell out the functions of the Minister in supervising the exercise of delegated powers: the Minister will be responsible for ensuring that adequate standards are maintained; outputs are delivered as determined or agreed; and procedures are in place to provide the Minister with the necessary and correct information to enable him or her to respond to problems of administration and to give an account of those problems, and of any necessary corrective action, to the Dáil and to the public.

We will bring to an end the unacceptable executive practice where no record is kept of ministerial involvement with an issue and resulting decisions.

We will review the grading structure of the civil service and public service and reduce number of management grades. Public service managers will be given greater autonomy in deciding how they use staffing budgets and resources to achieve agreed outcomes.

We will remove barriers to mobility across the public service. As part of this we will create a new tier of senior public service management structures, where senior officials are rotated across the public sector to nurture the collaborative culture needed to tackle the biggest cross-cutting social and economic challenges.

High level strategic goals will be reflected in individual goals, in a new performance management and development system for staff. Staff recognition schemes will be developed and devolved, with particular emphasis on team awards. Staff will be encouraged to put forward suggestions for improving service delivery and organisation efficiency and effectiveness.

Government services websites, public offices, telephone services, and helplines will be reconfigured to facilitate access to a broad range of government services through a single point of contact.

We will extend the remit of Ombudsman to third level institutions.

Review existing tendering processes for legal services by Government and State and semi-State agencies to ensure value for money and end anti-competitive practices.