



**An Roinn Forbartha
Tuaithe agus Pobail**
Department of Rural and
Community Development

FOI Publication Scheme

Updated July 2022

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1. Introduction

Section 8 of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 requires FOI bodies to prepare and publish as much information as possible in an open and accessible manner on a routine basis outside of FOI, having regard to the principles of openness, transparency and accountability as set out in Sections 8(5) and 11(3) of the Act. This allows for the publication or giving of records outside of FOI provided that such publication or giving of access is not prohibited by law. Such a Publication Scheme commits FOI bodies to make information available as part of their normal business activities in accordance with this scheme.

The Act requires that in preparing, reviewing or revising a publication scheme, an FOI body shall have regard to the public interest in:

- (a) allowing public access to information held by the FOI body;
- (b) the publication of reasons for decisions made by the FOI body; and
- (c) publishing information of relevance or interest to the general public in relation to its activities and functions generally.

Please find the Department of Rural and Community Development FOI Publication Scheme below. Each link in the scheme leads to content relevant to the category on the Department's website or externally located. If the information you require cannot be found in the scheme, you may wish to conduct a search on the Department's home page or to contact the Department.

If the information is not currently made publicly available by the Department, you may wish to consider making a Freedom of Information request. Details of how to make a Freedom of Information request or Access to the Environment request are outlined in Section 5 of this document.

2. Information about the Department

Our Mission

The Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) was established in July 2017 following a Government Decision, with a mission “*to promote rural and community development and to support vibrant, inclusive and sustainable communities throughout Ireland*”.

Following Government formation in June 2020, responsibility for the offshore islands transferred to the Department, by way of SI 379 of 2020, on 23 September 2020.

Our Structure

The Department is led by Minister for Rural and Community Development, [Heather Humphreys](#) T.D., and by [Joe O'Brien](#) T.D., Minister of State.

The Department is currently made up of three divisions, [Rural Development and Regional Affairs](#), [Community Development](#), and [Corporate Affairs and Strategic Development](#). Further information on the role or function of the Divisions is provided via the above links.

The Department's Management Board consists of the Secretary General, and three Assistant Secretaries, responsible for the respective Rural Development and Regional Affairs, Community Development, and Corporate Affairs and Strategic Development Divisions. Further details as to the Department's structure and management tiers is available on www.whodoeswhat.gov.ie.

Our Goals and Activities

You can read the Department's Statement of Strategy in full [here](#).

The Department's Annual Report is available [here](#).

To view the Department's Corporate Governance Framework in full, click [here](#).

Bodies under the Aegis of the Department

There are four bodies under the aegis of this department:

- Western Development Commission
- Pobal
- Water Safety Ireland
- Charities Regulator

The Department also provides secretarial support to the Charity Appeals Tribunal.

Further information on the bodies under the aegis of the Department is available [here](#).

3. Services Provided or to be Provided to the Public

The remit of the Department of Rural and Community Development includes supporting rural and community development in all communities across Ireland. This involves a range of policy initiatives and funding actions to improve the economic and social development of both rural and urban areas, including to address gaps in meeting the social needs of those areas.

Rural Supports

The Department provides a range of funding to support the needs of rural areas, including through the following funding programmes:

- Rural Regeneration and Development
- Small-Scale Rural Projects (CLÁR)
- Town and Village Renewal
- LEADER programme for Rural Development
- Local Road Improvement
- Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme
- Connected Hubs Fund

Further information on rural supports is available on the Department's website [here](#).

Community Supports

The Department also provides strong community supports with the aim of helping to empower and develop communities that value the health and wellbeing of all.

The Department supports communities through:

- Promoting community participation with a strong system of local government.
- Creating robust local collaboration structures by engaging with local communities.
- Supporting voluntary activity and active citizenship by promoting economic development, training and education opportunities and advocating for equal opportunities and social inclusion.

Further information on community supports is available on the Department's website [here](#).

Policies

The Department is also responsible for a number of key policies outlining measures to address the needs of rural areas, communities, and the community and voluntary sector, including:

- [Our Rural Future](#) – Rural Development Policy 2021-2025, a whole-of-Government policy for the sustainable development of rural Ireland.
- [Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities](#), a five-year strategy to support the community and voluntary sector in Ireland 2019-2024.
- [National Volunteering Strategy \(2021 - 2025\)](#) that recognises, supports and promotes the unique value and contribution of volunteers to Irish Society.
- The [National Social Enterprise Policy for Ireland 2019-2022](#), which focuses on building awareness of social enterprise, growing and strengthening social enterprise, and achieving better policy alignment.is

4. Financial Information

The Annual Appropriation Account of the Department is audited by the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Payments in excess of €20,000

The Department publishes details of payments made by the department with a value of, or in excess of, €20,000 on a quarterly basis. These details are published in line with the commitment in the Public Service Reform Plan.

Some payments may be excluded if their publication would be prevented under Freedom of Information legislation. Payments in relation to grants, for grants-in-aid, reimbursements, etc. have also already been excluded.

This [page](#) contains details of Purchase Orders over €20,000 made by this Department and prompt payment reports.

Prompt Payments

It is a government requirement that all central government departments, the Health Service Executive, the local authorities and all other public sector bodies (excluding commercial semi-state bodies) pay their suppliers within 15 calendar days of receipt of a valid invoice.

This arrangement does not alter contractual relationships and does not change the legal position in relation to late payments.

The Department of Business Enterprise and Innovation collates and publishes the composite quarterly returns by central government departments of payments made to their suppliers within 15 days.

As part of the 15-day prompt payment requirement, government departments and relevant public sector bodies are required to publish on their respective websites, their quarterly payment performance reports. Government departments are also required to publish the quarterly composite reports covering the bodies under their aegis. This information is published on the Department of Rural and Community Development's website [here](#).

5. Procurement

A [Procurement](#) Officer is in place to ensure that all procurement in the Department is carried out in accordance with public procurement rules and procedures, and that it complies with relevant EU and national legislation and best practice.

The role of the Procurement Officer is to monitor and oversee internal procurement processes and procedures and to liaise with the Office of Government Procurement in terms of best practice and emerging development. The Procurement Officer oversees the Department's procurement policy and support and update staff in relation to procurement generally and reports to senior management as appropriate on procurement matters.

Full details of policies and procedures relating to the Department, including compliance, procurement, audit and other guidelines, are available in our [Corporate Governance Framework](#).

6. Freedom of Information Process

Details of how to make a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act or the Access to Information on the Environment EU Regulations are published on the [Department's website](#). These details are set out below.

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act 2014 asserts the right of members of the public to obtain access to official information to the greatest extent possible consistent with the public interest and the right to privacy of individuals.

How to make an FOI request

FOI requests should be submitted in writing, by post or email to:

Freedom of Information Officer

Address: Department of Rural and Community Development, Trinity Point, 10-11 South Leinster Street, Dublin 2, D02 EF85

Email: foi@drcd.gov.ie

All requests should include the following pieces of information:

- a statement that the request is being made under the FOI Act
- a detailed outline of the records requested
- if applicable, the date range which applies to your request
- the format in which you would like to receive the released records
- More information is available on the [FOI website](#).

Access to information under FOI is subject to certain exemptions and involves specific procedures and time limits. If we do not have access to the requested information, we will either forward your application on to the relevant public authority or advise you of where to direct your request. One way or the other, you will be notified.

Assistant Principal Officers are FOI decision makers for the Department. Principal Officers will be the decision makers for internal reviews of any appeals received.

Access to Information on the Environment

The [European Communities](#) (AIE) Regulations 2007 grants legal rights to those seeking access to information on the environment from public authorities.

It states that information relating to the environment which is either held by, or for, a public authority must be made available on request to any person, subject to certain exceptions.

How to make an AIE request

To make an AIE request, applicants must submit a written request by post or email to:

Freedom of Information Officer

Address: Department of Rural and Community Development, Trinity Point, 10-11 South Leinster Street, Dublin 2, D02 EF85

Email: foi@drccd.gov.ie

All requests should include the following pieces of information:

- a statement noting that the application is being made under AIE Regulations
- the applicant's contact information
- a detailed description of the environmental information being sought
- the preferred format in which you would like to receive the information

Access to information under AIE is subject to certain exemptions and involves specific procedures and time limits. If we do not have access to the requested information, we will either forward your application on to the relevant public authority or advise you of where to direct your request. One way or the other, you will be notified.

Assistant Principal Officers are AIE decision makers for the Department. Principal Officers will be the decision makers for internal reviews of any appeals received.

7. FOI Disclosure Log and Other Information Published

The following information is published on the Department of Rural and Community Development's website as part of its FOI Publication Scheme:

- [FOI Disclosure Logs](#) - Details of non-personal requests which have been handled by the body under FOI, as set out in the Code of Practice on FOI.
- [Ministerial Expenses](#) - Details of general and foreign travel expenses of government Ministers based in the Department.
- [Minister's Diaries and Secretary General's Diary](#) – Details of Ministerial engagements and engagements by the Secretary General. *Note: Diaries may not reflect every single official engagement because some may have been arranged, postponed or cancelled at very short notice. Diaries are published in arrears.*
- [Management Board Minutes](#) - Minutes of meetings held by the Department's Management Board.