



**Roinn Cumarsáide,  
Fuinnimh & Acmhainní Nádurtha**  
Department of Communications,  
Energy & Natural Resources

# Annual Report 2015



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**Roinn Cumarsáide,  
Fuinnimh & Acmhainní Nádurtha**  
Department of Communications,  
Energy & Natural Resources



## Department's Mission Statement

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Our mission is to facilitate the development of communications and energy infrastructure and markets that contribute to sustainable economic and social development, to promote the development of the public and private broadcasting sectors, to harness our natural resources in a productive and environmentally responsible manner, to pursue optimal outcomes for Ireland at EU and international fora and to work as a Department, within a unified Civil Service, in the most productive way in order to ensure the provision of high quality services to citizens.

### Our Values

Delivery of the goals and objectives set out in this Statement of Strategy will be underpinned by the values set out in the Civil Service Renewal Plan:

- A deep-rooted public service ethos of independence, integrity, impartiality, equality, fairness and respect.
- A culture of accountability, efficiency and value for money.
- The highest standards of professionalism, leadership and rigour.



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## Ministerial Foreword

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I am pleased to present this annual report on the activities of the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources during 2015.

This reports the activities and achievements of the Department during 2015 in delivering on the high level objectives, strategies and target outcomes set out in the Statement of Strategy 2015 to 2017.

It was a great privilege to be appointed as Minister in May 2016 to a Department that is central to delivery of policies and programmes of national strategic importance and which plays a major role in our national economic development.

Following the general election, the new Government announced changes to a number of Ministerial portfolios, which will result in the environment and climate change functions of the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government transferring to this Department. The Transfer of Functions Order to give statutory effect to this is being finalised and will come into effect shortly. The new Department will be titled the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment.

I would like to thank former Minister Alex White and Minister of State Joe McHugh T.D. for providing political leadership and overseeing the work of the Department in 2015.

I also wish to acknowledge the work of the staff of the Department throughout 2015 and to thank them for their commitment and efforts, which saw significant progress made across all areas of the Department's broad range of responsibilities.



I look forward to working with my colleague, Minister of State Seán Kyne T.D, on delivering on the Programme for Government commitments and the important policy agenda facing the Department in the coming years.

Denis Naughten, T.D.

**Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources**



## Secretary General's Statement

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The report sets out the major areas of activity and significant progress delivered in 2015 across the sectors for which the Department is responsible – Communications, Broadcasting, Energy and Natural Resources. It provides a summary of the key outputs in 2015 along with highlights of the programmes under each of the high level strategies and objectives in the Statement of Strategy.

I would like to acknowledge the strong commitment by staff in the Department and to express my appreciation for the dedication and good working relationships with the Department's agencies and State companies, who play a major role in delivering in key strategic and policy areas.

I look forward to working with our staff, agencies and stakeholders in advancing the Department's key priorities in 2016.

I would like to thank former Minister Alex White and Minister of State Joe McHugh T.D. for their support and leadership of the Department in 2015.

I look forward to working with Minister Denis Naughten T.D. and Minister of State Seán Kyne T.D. as Secretary General of a reconfigured Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment and to delivering on key commitments in the Programme for Government.

The Department will be preparing a Statement of Strategy this year for the new Department which will be submitted to the Minister for approval.

**Mark Griffin**

**Secretary General**



**Roinn Cumarsáide,  
Fuinnimh & Acmhainní Nádurtha**  
Department of Communications,  
Energy & Natural Resources





## Departmental Key Outputs in 2015

### Communications

- Household broadband market penetration at end 2015 showed a 0.3% increase over 2014, reaching 1.7 million subscribers by year end. Ireland's household broadband penetration rate (fixed + mobile), at 83%, was higher than the EU28 average of 80% at the end of 2015.
- The commercial telecommunications sector has invested over €2 billion in network upgrades and enhanced services since 2012 with approximately 1.2 million of the 2.3 million premises in Ireland now having access to high speed services of at least 30mbps.
- The Department continues to progress work on the Government's National Broadband Plan. This will involve a State-funded intervention to ensure those parts of the country which are not covered by telecoms industry investment in high speed services, will also have access to a modern, reliable and high-speed broadband service. In 2015, the Department undertook numerous consultation on the Intervention Strategy, and published the updated strategy in December 2015. The procurement process was also launched on 15 December, along with the updated High Speed Broadband Map.
- The Trading Online Voucher Scheme continued to be rolled out nationwide, in collaboration with the 31 Local Enterprise Offices and Enterprise Ireland. Overall, by end 2015, some 1,770 small businesses had been awarded vouchers to invest in developing their online trading capabilities. The scheme is having a positive impact and is attracting applications from across a wide range of sectors including retail, arts, crafts and design, manufacturing, food, and professional services.
- The BenefIT Programme, delivered in partnership with 46 community, voluntary and not-for-profit organisations, continued to provide digital skills training to citizens at over 700 locations nationwide. Over 140,000 training places had been delivered between the launch of the Programme in 2008 and the end of 2015.



- Building on the State's investment in high speed broadband connectivity in all second level schools, the School Digital Champion programme was launched in November 2015. It provides a platform to encourage and support students and schools to use digital technologies to make a positive impact within the school and in the wider community.
- During 2015, the NDRC continued to invest in digital innovation initiatives, facilitating the creation of new ventures, through its investment and support programmes. The Digital Hub Development Agency provided office space and enterprise supports for 98 digital companies (representing a 95% occupancy rate), employing 702 people at the Digital Hub cluster.
- Five notifications of media mergers were received during 2015; four were cleared by the Minister at the first phase examination stage. A fifth was undergoing the first phase examination at year end.
- Media Merger Guidelines and the Notification Form were published following public consultation.
- The Emergency Call Answering Service handled over 1.8 million calls in 2015, and continues to have one of the fastest response times in Europe.
- In December 2015, the Department secured various agreements, which allowed fibre to be laid in ducting alongside the Galway Mayo gas pipeline, and a major telecoms interconnectivity project to avail of this fibre infrastructure. A procurement process commenced in 2015 to appoint a Management Service Entity to manage the fibre on behalf of the Minister.

### Broadcasting/ Postal

- A total of €178.5 million was contributed through TV licence fee receipts to RTÉ to fund programme outputs.
- A total of €24 million of exchequer funding and TV licence fee funding of €9.3 million was provided to TG4 to deliver on programme commitments including 4.8 hours of new Irish language programming per day.



- €14.7 million in grants was provided from TV licence fee funding to the Broadcasting Fund and used to support 342 projects in the audio and audio-visual media sector.
- NewERA's review of efficiencies in RTÉ and the Indecon review of the Irish advertising market were published in April 2015.
- The most recent review of designated sporting and cultural events under the Broadcasting Act 2009 and the Audio Visual Media Services Directive was progressed in 2015 with the process to be completed this year by the Department.
- In December 2014, the Minister signed an order designating UTV Ireland as 'a television service having the character of a public service' under S. 130(1)(a)(iv) of the Broadcasting Act 2009. The new service commenced broadcasting on 1 January 2015.
- The National Postcode System, Eircode, was launched in July 2015. Website: [www.eircode.ie](http://www.eircode.ie)
- A review of the post office network was carried out in 2015 by the Post Office Network Business Development Group, under an independent Chairperson. The Final Report from the Group with recommendations was published in January 2016.

## Energy

- The Energy White Paper – Ireland's Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030 – was published in December. It sets out a framework to guide Irish energy policy and the actions that Government intends to take in the energy sector in the period up to 2030.
- €46 million was spent under the Better Energy Programme, resulting in energy efficiency upgrades to almost 21,700 homes and 350 community and commercial buildings.
- Other key areas of exchequer supported spend in 2015 included support for energy efficiency in the Public Sector of €1.7 million and support for energy efficiency in business of €1 million.



- In 2014-2015, energy suppliers delivered energy savings of 1110kWh under the Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme, exceeding the 1100kWh target for the two year period.
- A public consultation was undertaken on a new Strategy to Combat Energy Poverty.
- The Energy Efficiency Fund exceeded its target of €70 million in investment commitments. The Government has committed a total amount of €35 million to the Fund.
- 186 MW approx. of renewable electricity capacity was installed during the year. A total of 184 million litres of sustainable biofuels were placed on the road transport fuel market and 555 new electric vehicles were grant aided in 2015.

## Natural Resources

- July 2015 saw the enactment of the Petroleum (Exploration and Extraction) Safety Act 2015 which transposed the EU Offshore Safety Directive (Directive 2013/30/EU) on the safety of offshore oil and gas operations into Irish law.
- 43 applications for licensing options were received from 17 companies by the close of the Atlantic Margin Licensing Round in September 2015. This is by far the largest number of applications received in any licensing round held in the Irish Offshore. At a time of very low oil prices the strong interest in the response to the Round is very positive.
- September 2015 saw completion of the IOSEA5 (Irish Offshore Strategic Environmental Study) process with the adoption of the Plan underpinning IOSEA5 and publication of the IOSEA5 Statement.
- Section 20 of the Finance Act 2015, enacted in December 2015 implemented the revised oil and gas fiscal terms agreed by Government following on the recommendations of sectoral experts Wood Mackenzie in 2014. The new terms will apply in the case of petroleum authorisations first awarded after 18 June 2014.
- December 2015 saw commencement of production of gas from the Corrib gas field. The economic benefits of the Corrib gas field include the direct return to the Exchequer, the



significant economic activity generated from the development stage of the project together with a strengthening of Ireland's security of energy supply.

- There was an active mineral exploration sector operating in Ireland in 2015 involving over 570 exploration licences.
- Lisheen Mine, which was operated by Vedanta Lisheen Mining Ltd ceased production at the end of 2015. The Department is working closely with the Environmental Protection Agency and Tipperary County Council to ensure compliance with all the necessary environmental and planning conditions associated with the closure of the mine, as well as the obligations under the Minerals Development Act 1940 to 1999. A ring-fenced closure fund is in place to ensure completion of the Mine Closure, Restoration and Aftercare Management Plan.
- Remediating historic mine site legacy issues continued through 2015 at Silvermines and Avoca, with the commencement of a programme of priority public health and safety works at Avoca. A number of shafts were made safe in Avoca by the replacement of disintegrated concrete caps. Planning Permission was obtained for the capping and regarding of spoil heaps at Tigroney West, Avoca, subject a number of conditions.
- Inland Fisheries Ireland continued to support Ireland's multi-million euro angling sector and tourism products across 77,000 Kms of rivers and streams and 240,000 sq. Kms of inland lakes, through monitoring and protection measures and in its continued support of events such as Fisheries Awareness Week, Something Fishy and the Dublin Angling Initiative. Through its Sponsorship Scheme in 2015, Inland Fisheries Ireland awarded just over €60,000 to angling clubs, angling federations, community groups and tourism service providers to support angling, angling competitions, novice angler initiatives and national angling teams. There was further angling promotion by Inland Fisheries Ireland which attended sixteen trade shows in Ireland, Germany, France, the Netherlands, Italy and the UK.
- Key outputs for the Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) in 2015 included completion of Phase 1 under the National Seabed Mapping project (INFOMAR) on time and on reduced



budget, continuation of the Tellus mapping Programme across the Irish Midlands, and roll-out of new initiatives in 3D Groundwater and integrated land mapping. The GSI also reported further progress through the Geoscience Ireland business cluster, with over 250 net jobs added by members to date.

- In 2015, the new Science Foundation Ireland, Industry and DCENR supported Irish Centre for Research in Applied Geosciences (iCRAG), commenced operation and recruitment of researchers. The c. €30 million centre has backing to 2020.

## High Level Objective 1 - Communications



To maximise the opportunities for economic growth, jobs, competitiveness and social inclusion by promoting ambitious commercial and State led investments in telecommunications and high speed broadband and communications networks, supporting small Irish business trade online, enhancing citizen

and educational engagement with digital technology and digital entrepreneurship.

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In the Communications area, the Department supports economic growth, jobs, competitiveness and social inclusion through a range of policies and regulation designed to facilitate a more digitally connected society. This includes plans to ensure that high quality broadband is available to all citizens through a combination of commercial and State investment, promoting the use of digital technologies by citizens and businesses, and through support for digital entrepreneurship.

### National Broadband Plan

The National Broadband Plan aims to ensure that every citizen and business, regardless of location, has access to a high quality, high speed broadband service. This is being achieved through a combination of commercial investment by telecommunications companies and a



State-funded network build, in areas where investment by commercial companies is not forthcoming.

The commercial telecommunications sector has invested over €2 billion in network upgrades and enhanced services since 2012 with approximately 1.2 million of the 2.3 million premises in Ireland now having access to high speed services of at least 30mbps. These very significant investments represent a step-change in the quality of services available. These investments are not only confined to urban areas – towns in every county in Ireland have been upgraded in the last three years in particular.

In July 2015, the Department published the draft Intervention Strategy for public consultation. The Strategy sets out the nature of the network and services that the Government intends to fund. Following extensive consultation on the Strategy and ongoing meetings with sectoral stakeholders, in particular industry stakeholders, the updated Strategy was published in December 2015.

In September 2015, the Government approved an allocation of €275 million for the National Broadband Plan, which will provide the initial stimulus required to deliver the Government's intervention. Combined with commercial investment, this will ensure delivery of high speed broadband to every city, town, village and individual premises in Ireland.

The updated national High-Speed coverage Map was published in December 2015 and is available at [www.broadband.gov.ie](http://www.broadband.gov.ie). The Map shows the extent of the State intervention area which is depicted amber on the Map. Over 750,000 addresses are the focus of the State intervention procurement process which commenced in December 2015. In addition, the High Speed Broadband Map shows where high speed broadband services are available or where industry has indicated they will be made available. These areas are shown in blue on the map. Members of the public can view their premises on the map, either by scrolling into individual areas, or by entering their Eircode.

The Department is monitoring the progress of the rollout of high speed broadband of all operators who were included in the blue area on the Map. Where plans do not materialise,



the Department has reserved the right to amend the High Speed Broadband map to include these premises in the NBP intervention, and the process for managing the Map throughout procurement was published in October 2015. Should operators deliver services beyond the current commercial plans these areas can also be taken out of the procurement process. Since 2015, the Department has identified up to 170,000 additional premises which will need to be included in the Intervention Area.

The formal procurement for a new State-funded network build, commenced on 22 December 2015, with the publication of a Pre-qualification Questionnaire and Project Information Memorandum. The procurement process is ongoing and it is anticipated that contract(s) for the network build and operation will be in place by June 2017.

The delivery of the NBP and telecoms infrastructure may also benefit from the provisions of “Directive 2014/61/EU on measures to reduce the cost of deploying high-speed electronic communications networks”. The Directive requires operators of communications, district heating, electricity, gas, transport and waste water networks to share their physical infrastructure with providers of high speed broadband network infrastructure, if requested, unless there are objective reasons to refuse to share in any particular case. The Directive also requires member states to establish a dispute settlement body to decide on disputes over access to other networks and disputes regarding the terms and conditions of access. These provisions of the Directive come into effect at the end of June 2016. During 2015, the Department commenced work on drafting the required national legislative text to transpose these network sharing requirements.

The Department has continued to actively engage in 2015 with other Departments and industry alike with a view to facilitating the removal of barriers to installation of telecommunications infrastructure and to the improvement of mobile service nationwide. Since the publication of the National Broadband Plan in 2012, a working group was established to address infrastructure issues which were identified by industry as creating barriers to deployment of services. The group is chaired by the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and includes representatives from this Department, the Local





Government Management Agency, Transport Infrastructure Ireland and Local Authorities. The Group has been consulting with industry on a range of issues relating to the siting of telecommunications infrastructure.

## Digital Single Market Strategy

The Digital Single Market (DSM) strategy was adopted on 6 May 2015 by the European Commission. The Commission's aim is to create a DSM where the free movement of goods, persons, services and capital is ensured — and where citizens and businesses can seamlessly and fairly access online goods and services, whatever their nationality, and wherever they live. The Commission believes that the DSM could contribute €415 billion to the European economy, boosting jobs, growth, competition, investment and innovation.

The DSM includes 16 initiatives across 3 pillars to be delivered by the end of 2016.

**Pillar 1 - Access:** better access for consumers and businesses to digital goods and services across Europe;

**Pillar 2 - Environment:** creating the right conditions and a level playing field for digital networks and innovative services to flourish;

**Pillar 3 - Economy & Society:** maximising the growth potential of the digital economy.

## Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs)

The State-owned Metropolitan Area Networks, which are located in 94 regional cities and towns, have played an important role in driving competition in the regions and have facilitated telecommunications operators, large and small, in providing high speed broadband services without having to build their own networks.

The Department continued to oversee the activities of enet, the Management Services Entity which manages, maintains and operates the MANs on behalf of the State. At the end of 2015, 85 of the 88 MANs were “lit” and in use by some 62 commercial operators enabling the provision of telecommunications and broadband services to customers over the fibre



network. These end customers include large indigenous companies, multinationals, SMEs, State entities, educational institutions, as well as fixed and mobile broadband customers outside Dublin.

### **Galway Mayo Fibre Project**

The Galway Mayo Fibre Project runs alongside the gas pipeline connecting the Corrib Gas terminal in North Mayo to the National Grid, at Craughwell in Co Galway. Fibre laying on the project started in December 2015, with the installation funded and arranged by Shell E and P Ireland. When completed, the project will provide high speed connectivity to a part of the State historically underserved by fibre; the fibre is already being used to connect a transatlantic fibre link onwards to Dublin.

### **Emergency Call Answering Service**

The Emergency Call Answering Service (ECAS) is responsible for answering all calls and texts (112 and 999) to the Emergency Services in the State. The ECAS provides a vital link between the caller and the Emergency Services ensuring the caller is connected through to the requested service and filters out non-emergency calls, freeing up time and resources of the Emergency Services to deal with genuine requests for assistance.

BT Ireland has operated the service under a Concession Agreement with the Department, since 2010. The contract expires on 14 July 2017 and a procurement process is underway for a new Concession Agreement.

The average speed of answer for a caller to ECAS in 2015 was 0.73 seconds, which is one of the fastest in Europe according to a report by the European Commission “Implementation of the European emergency number 112”<sup>1</sup>. Calls are passed to the appropriate Emergency Service with details of the emergency and the location of the caller within 7.26 seconds. The service has been available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year since it was launched in July 2010 and has regularly exceeded the parameters set

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<sup>1</sup> <https://e.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/news/implementation-european-emergency-number-112-results-ninth-data-gathering-round>



in the Concession Agreement. The ECAS has a 99% call handling accuracy target which has been continuously achieved, averaging at 99.6%. ECAS handled 1.86 million calls in 2015.

## National Digital Strategy

The Department continued to promote digital adoption and implement initiatives under the National Digital Strategy in three key areas - enterprise, citizens and education.

### Trading Online

With the growing digital economy in Ireland, estimated to be worth in excess of €12 billion in 2015, and increased consumer activity online, there are significant growth opportunities for businesses which trade online.

The Trading Online Voucher Scheme offers a financial incentive of up to €2,500 (subject to match funding), along with training, mentoring and networking, to help small and micro enterprises to develop their ecommerce presence. The scheme is administered by the national network of 31 Local Enterprise Offices (LEOs). By end 2015, some 1,770 businesses had successfully applied for a trading online voucher. Some 4,000 businesses benefitted from advice and peer-to-peer support through their participation in the information sessions delivered by the LEOs during 2015.

The scheme is having a positive impact and is attracting small businesses, including sole traders, from across a wide range of sectors including retail, arts, crafts and design, manufacturing, food, and professional services.

In July 2015, the Department published its first report into the enterprise impacts of the scheme, based on a survey of participants in the scheme. The report revealed that businesses that moved online experienced an average increase in sales of 21%. Some 40% of businesses had customer interactions from new markets overseas, and over 70% of businesses surveyed expect to recruit new staff. With the potential creation of an average 1.4 new jobs per company – in businesses that employ ten staff or less – trading online is making a tangible impact on jobs and economic activity in Ireland.



The roll-out of vouchers continues, and a further evaluation of the enterprise impacts of the scheme will take place in 2016.

### Citizen Skills & Engagement

Almost one in six Irish adults has never used the internet. Working in partnership with 46 community, voluntary and not-for-profit organisations, the Department's Benefit Programme provides basic digital literacy skills in some 700 locations nationwide. During 2015, over 27,000 training places were delivered to help people get online and reap the full economic and social benefits of a digital society. A review of Benefit will take place in 2016 with a view to focusing digital inclusion efforts to best effect.

The Department continued to work with Ireland's Digital Champion, David Puttnam and other stakeholders to raise awareness and help motivate more people to get online.

### Schools Digital Champion Programme

The Department has supported the transition to digital technology in teaching and learning through its investment in the delivery of 100Mbps connectivity to every second level school in Ireland. In 2015, a new initiative, the School Digital Champion Programme was developed, in collaboration with the Department of Education and Skills. This initiative is in line with the National Digital Strategy and the Digital Strategy for Schools.



The programme was launched as a pilot in November 2015 in second level schools in Counties Cavan, Clare, Galway, Laois, Louth, Monaghan, Offaly and Westmeath. It is designed to elevate digital skills and to facilitate project-based learning, innovation and the development of 21st century skills. Through their participation in the programme, students undertake a solution-focused technology challenge to solve

real world issues within the school, community or local business.



The Department funded research by ESRI into the role and effects of ICT in teaching and learning, before and after the installation of high speed broadband connectivity. This report is due to be published in 2016.

## Digital Entrepreneurship

The Department continued to support a growing and vibrant digital start-up community in Ireland through both the NDRC and the Digital Hub Development Agency.

### National Digital Research Centre (NDRC)

NDRC continued to fund digital innovation initiatives and facilitate the creation of new ventures through its principal investment and support programmes:

**VentureLab:** a 6 month programme with the objective of getting start-ups based on novel, defensible science and technology to market and ready for seed investment.

**Catalyser:** a 6 month accelerator programme aimed at start-ups and founder teams with deep know-how and technology that addresses a significant unmet market need

**LaunchPad:** a 3 month accelerator programme to enable entrepreneurial teams to transform solid ideas into commercially viable start-ups.

During 2015, NDRC invested in 18 LaunchPad digital accelerator projects and had 2 science-based VentureLab projects under development. NDRC also invested in 4 Catalyser companies with sectoral knowledge and expertise, and in 2 SciTech companies. NDRC estimates that, by the end of 2015, companies in its portfolio had created more than 546 high value full-time jobs and 138 part-time jobs in Ireland, and had attracted cumulative follow-on investment of €130 million.

### Digital Hub Development Agency (DHDA)

The Digital Hub Development Agency continued to provide flexible office space solutions and supports for emerging digital enterprises at the Digital Hub cluster. At end 2015, 98 companies (representing a 95% occupancy rate), employing 702 people, were located in the



Digital Hub cluster. To date, some 220 digital companies have outgrown the space available in the Hub, and gone on to expand their businesses elsewhere.

The Agency's strategy envisages a significant expansion of its office capacity through the development and refurbishment of its properties. The refurbished 19<sup>th</sup> century Grainstore building, providing 10,000 sq. ft. of additional office capacity, opened in 2015 and is fully let to client companies. The project, was delivered by way of strategic partnership with a private developer, and also involves the construction of student accommodation on the site, due to be open in time for the 2016/2017 academic year.

A competitive dialogue process for the development of a further site (approximately 1.1 hectares) was also commenced in 2015. It is expected that the development could result in the addition of a significant amount of commercial office capacity for the DHDA, as well as making an important contribution to economic and social activity in the Dublin 8 area through a number of mixed-use developments.

Within the context of the Government's programme to rationalise State Agencies, Government approval was granted in 2015 to draft legislation to effect the merger of the DHDA with Dublin City Council (DCC). Work on this transition, and the legislative provisions to underpin it, was advanced during the year.

## Cyber Security

The Department published a National Cyber Security Strategy in 2015, setting out the challenges facing the State and citizens and the measures to be taken in the period to 2018. The National Cyber Security Centre within the Department continued to work with partners and constituents across Government, and dealt with a number of incidents during the year, as well as continuing to issue security advisory notices to Government Departments and key agencies in regard to cyber incidents.

The Department also engaged in the final EU deliberations on the proposed Network and Information Security Directive, as well as engaging with stakeholders on this as the matter developed. The Directive, which will come into effect in mid-2016, will impose a significant



set of tasks on the Department with regard to the cyber security of critical infrastructure and of Digital Service Providers in the State.

## Internet Governance

The Department engaged in pan-European dialogue on issues of internet governance, including participation in various European Union and Council of Europe discussions and meetings of the European Dialogue on Internet Governance (EuroDIG). Department officials participated in the European Commission's High Level Group on Internet Governance (HLIG) and attended meetings of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) Government Advisory Committee (GAC) engaging with and contributing to the development of final proposals for the transfer of stewardship of the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA) functions and the creation of enhanced accountability measures for ICANN. At a domestic level, officials also sat on the Policy Advisory Committee of the Irish Internet Domain Name Registry (IEDR).

## Internet Content Governance

The Internet Content Governance Advisory Group (ICGAG) was formed in December 2013. The Group conducted a public consultation on the issues arising from widespread access to online content and its impact on society as a whole; this consultation ran between 28 January and 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014.

The Report of the ICGAG was submitted to the Minister on 30 May. It contains 30 structural, legislative and administrative recommendations, the responsibility for which fall across a number of Government Departments.

Following the publication of the ICGAG Report, a cross departmental implementation group was established, chaired by the Department and comprising representatives from the Department of Health, Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Department of Justice (Office of Internet Safety) and the Department of Education. The implementation group continued its work throughout 2015.



## Media Mergers Regulation

The media mergers function is contained in the Competition and Consumer Protection Act 2014. Media Merger Guidelines and the associated Media Merger Notification Form were developed and published by the Department during 2015, following public consultation.

The Minister received notification of five media mergers during 2015. Following a first phase examination process, the Minister determined that four of these mergers should be allowed to proceed as they would not be contrary to the public interest of protecting the plurality of the media in the state. The fifth was undergoing the first stage examination process at year end.





## High Level Objective 2 - Broadcasting



To promote, support and protect a diverse and plural media sector, including the provision of relevant, efficient and high quality public service broadcasting, and a broadcasting sector underpinned by a proportionate and effective regulatory regime.

### Funding of Public Service Broadcasting

The existing system for funding public service broadcasting (i.e. the TV Licence system) faces a range of challenges, including unacceptably high levels of evasion. The Department is working on an ongoing basis with An Post and RTÉ to ensure that the necessary actions are being taken to support the effective operation of the system and is also examining a number of additional actions that might be taken, including legislative measures, with the aim of further strengthening the system.

### Designation of Major Events

The Audio-visual Media Services (AVMS) Directive allows Member States to designate certain sporting and cultural events as being of major importance to society and to provide that events so designated should continue to be available on free television services.

The Broadcasting Act 2009 sets out the relevant provisions for designating such of events in Ireland and includes an obligation to review the list every three years. The most recent review was initiated by the Department by way of an initial public consultation in 2014, with a further public consultation taking place in 2015 which sought submissions on the current list and the possible designation of three additional events. Since then, an exercise has been undertaken which involved reviewing the current list, those events proposed for designation and submissions received during the public consultations and their report is now being considered by the Minister prior to making a decision in the matter.



## UTV Ireland Designation

In December 2014, the Minister signed an order designating UTV Ireland as ‘a television service having the character of a public service’ under Section 130(1)(a)(iv) of the Broadcasting Act 2009. The new service commenced broadcasting on 1 January 2015.

## RTÉ

The Department continued to work with RTÉ in the context of the challenging financial environment faced by the company and to ensure that effective corporate governance was in place, including a new Public Service Statement and revised Statement of Strategy.

The Department assisted RTÉ with a number of initiatives in 2015, including the Irish Radio Player app, developed in conjunction with the Independent Broadcasters of Ireland, which allows the public to locate and listen to all Irish radio stations on-line.

Four members were appointed to the Board of RTÉ in February 2015.

## Broadcasting Authority of Ireland 5 Year Review

Following the Broadcasting Authority of Ireland’s 5 Year Review of the adequacy of funding of the public service broadcasters (RTÉ and TG4), the Department received NewERA’s review of efficiencies in RTÉ and the Indecon review of the Irish advertising market in 2014. The Reports were published on 21 April 2015 and are available on the Department’s website.

The Department continued to review existing broadcasting legislation with a view to identifying the legislative changes required as a consequence of the BAI review and of the developing situation with regard to commercial and community broadcasting.

## Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI)

### Sound and Vision

Under Section 158 of the Broadcasting Act 2009, the BAI operate the Sound and Vision Scheme which supports the production and transmission of high quality programming based on Irish culture and heritage. The fund is allocated through television licence fee receipts.



Sound and Vision II ran from 2012 to 2014 and provided funding of over €70 million for circa 1,500 TV and radio projects.

Prior to the scheme's expiration at the end of 2014, the Department received a proposal from the BAI for a new scheme (Sound and Vision III) and this subsequently received approval to operate from January 2015.

Funding of €16 million was allocated under Sound and Vision III during 2015 for 77 TV and 259 radio projects.

### Archiving Scheme

The Archiving Scheme is also funded through television licence fee receipts. The scheme provides funding support for the development of an archiving culture in the Irish broadcasting sector which will contribute to the preservation of broadcasting heritage.

The Scheme launched in 2012 and implementation commenced with funding in 2013. A second funding round was held in 2014. Across the two rounds, 48 applications were received and after assessment, €3.77 million was awarded to support 17 projects.

The BAI requested that the Department extend the Scheme until 2016 and approval for this request was granted in July 2014.

Funding of €1 million was provided under the archiving scheme in 2015 to 6 projects.

### Access Rules

The BAI Access Rules determine the levels of subtitling, sign language and audio description that broadcasters in Ireland are required to provide in accordance with their statutory obligations. Under the Broadcasting Act 2009, a review of these rules is required every two years.

The Department received this review in the second half of 2014 for analysis and consideration prior to the report being laid before both Houses of the Oireachtas in early 2015. The Access Rules 2015 are now available on the BAI website.



**Roinn Cumarsáide,  
Fuinnimh & Acmhainní Náúrtha**  
Department of Communications,  
Energy & Natural Resources



## High Level Objective 3 - Postal

To ensure Irish customers, both business and residential, enjoy competitively priced, high quality postal services on a par with the highest quality standards in key comparator EU economies.

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### Postcodes

Eircode, the National Postcode System for Ireland was officially launched by the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources on 13 July 2015 together with the online 'Eircode finder tool' on the website [www.eircode.ie](http://www.eircode.ie). The Eircode Finder, is a look up application that helps citizens and business to fully utilise the postcode system.

A national information campaign was completed over the summer to inform the public about Eircodes and promote their usage. The campaign included advertisements in the national media, including TV, radio and newspapers. An integral element of the communications strategy was the Community Outreach Programme for eircodes using networks of community and voluntary organisations, in conjunction with the Wheel and Irish Rural Link.

As part of the implementation process an address matching exercise was carried out on public sector databases. The purpose of this exercise was to populate key government databases with postcodes prior to launch. Approximately 80 million records were encoded. By end 2015 public sector bodies such as the Revenue Commissioners, the Department of Social Protection and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine were already using Eircodes in day to day business. Capita had by end 2015 signed up 23 Value Added Resellers to provide a broad spectrum of specialist services to businesses including database cleansing, address lookup and geocoding.

The Data Protection Legislation (The Communications Regulation (Postal Services) Amendment Act 2015) was introduced in mid-2015 to clarify the position in respect of Eircodes and data protection.



## An Post

The Department continued to work with An Post in 2015 to ensure that effective corporate governance was in place. It engaged regularly with the company in relation to its financial position and the implementation of its change programme. The decline in mail volumes due mainly to economic factors together with the steady increase in electronic substitution pose significant challenges which continue to impact on the company. Managing reductions in costs and efforts to diversify its income streams are key drivers for An Post as it seeks to compete effectively and remain the operator of choice in the postal market.

A review of the post office network was undertaken by the Post Office Network Business Development Group, under an independent Chairperson, Mr Bobby Kerr. The Group examined the potential and opportunities for new Government and commercial business that could be transacted through the post office network and published its Final Report and recommendations in January 2016.

## ComReg

The Department continued to engage with the Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) during 2015 in relation to ComReg's role as the national regulatory authority for the postal sector and its obligations under the Communications Regulation (Postal Services) Act, 2011. In accordance with the ComReg approved mails price cap mechanism, An Post increased the price of a domestic stamp from 68 cents to 70 cents in July 2015.



## High Level Objective 4 - Energy



To ensure security, sustainability and competitiveness of energy supply for the economy and for consumers, and, within EU and global frameworks, to ensure an appropriate contribution by Ireland to achieving EU and international energy and climate objectives.

### White Paper on Energy Policy

A new Energy Policy Paper, – Ireland’s Transition to a Low Carbon Energy Future 2015-2030 was published in December. It outlines the long-term energy policy framework out to 2030. Its objective is to guide a transition to a low carbon energy system, which provides secure supplies of competitive and affordable energy to our citizens and businesses while emphasising the importance of citizen input into policy making.

### All Island Single Electricity Market (SEM)

Under the Third Energy Package, new electricity and gas network codes and guidelines are being developed at EU level, which aim to promote increased cross-border trade in electricity and gas throughout Europe.

Ireland and Northern Ireland have to implement Commission Regulation (EU) 2015/1222 (Capacity Allocation and Congestion Management Guideline) for the all island wholesale electricity market by 31 December 2017. Under this guideline Member States are required to designate at least one Nominated Electricity Market Operator (NEMO) to perform cross-border (day ahead and intraday) electricity market coupling. The Department assigned responsibility for the designation of a NEMO in this jurisdiction to the CER in February 2015 and EirGrid was designated the NEMO for Ireland in October 2015. Compliance of the



wholesale market with this code is being achieved by the Integrated Single Electricity Market Project (I-SEM) led by the regulators in Ireland and Northern Ireland. More generally, the I-SEM project will facilitate Ireland's effective participation in the EU Internal Energy Market. The publication of the High Level Design for the new market in September 2014 by the regulators marked a key milestone in this project. The project has now entered its final phase and the new market will "go-live" by Q4 2017.

One of the steps required to ensure compliance with the Capacity Allocation and Congestion Mechanism (CACM) is the requirement to change the definition of the Single Electricity Market in legislation. Drafting work commenced on this in 2015 as part of the Energy Bill process (see below), with the anticipated enactment of the Energy Bill by the Oireachtas during 2016.

As part of the Energy Union "Summer Package", the European Commission launched a consultation on a new energy market design in July 2015. The Department submitted a substantial response to the consultation and will be involved in the negotiation of wholesale market legislation in 2016.

### **EU Gas Network Codes**

Throughout 2015 the Department continued to participate in discussions on various gas network codes under the separate gas comitology process. The Network Code on Gas Balancing of Transmission Networks, which was adopted in 2014, applied from 1 October 2015, while the Network Code on Interoperability was adopted on 30 April 2015 and will apply from 1 May 2016. Discussion is ongoing at EU level in relation to Codes on Tariffs and Incremental Capacity Mechanisms. The European Commission recently outlined an ambitious implementation timeframe in respect of elements of these codes, with entry into force expected by end 2016 followed by a 12 month implementation period.

### **Emergency Management**

Security of gas and electricity supply is underpinned through the European Union (Security of Natural Gas Supply) Regulations 2013 (S.I. No 336 of 2013), which gave effect to EU





Regulation 994/2010, concerning measures to safeguard security of gas supply. The Commission for Energy Regulation, as Competent Authority has responsibility for ensuring compliance with and implementation of the measures under Regulation 994/2010.

In 2015 the Department engaged with the Office of Emergency Planning (Department of Defence) on the development of a new draft national framework for strategic emergency management which is expected to be finalised in 2016. This will provide greater clarity and guidance to Departments on emergency management matters and their roles and responsibilities.

The Division also participated in various fora and exercises in relation to security of electricity and gas, including the National Coordination Group, chaired by the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government, on flooding and on improving national preparedness for extreme weather events; and the Gas and Electricity Emergency Planning Group, which includes the energy regulator (Commission for Energy Regulation) and network operators (Gas Networks Ireland, EirGrid, ESB), on electricity and gas emergency management matters.

The Division worked under the auspices of the Government Taskforce on Emergency Planning in 2015 to engage with key stakeholders on the first phase of an oil emergency management programme. This involved facilitating meetings and discussions with the oil industry, central Departments and agencies, the emergency services and utilities to discuss how critical services such as emergency services and utilities could be afforded priority access to fuel supplies in an extreme oil emergency scenario. Further phases of the programme will be taken forward in 2016.

The National Oil Reserves Agency continues to progress the rebalancing of emergency oil stocks held on the island of Ireland (rather than holding these in other EU Member States) to enhance security of supply. At the end of 2015, 68% of stocks were held on the island of Ireland.



## Trans-European Energy Infrastructure

EU Regulation 347/2013, on “Guidelines for Trans-European Energy Infrastructure” entered into force in May 2013 following which a list of European Union Energy Infrastructure Projects, known as “Projects of Common Interest” (PCIs) was adopted by the EU Commission. PCIs are projects to enhance the EU’s energy security. The second PCI list was adopted by the EU Commission in late 2015 and contains Irish electricity and gas energy infrastructure projects.

## Grid Development

Following on from EirGrid’s announcement in December 2014 of a new approach to public engagement, EirGrid published the consultation strategy paper ‘Your Grid, Your Views, Your Tomorrow’ in March. This was EirGrid’s second review of its Grid25 strategy, since the inception of the project in 2008.

The strategy plans for the achievement of an optimal balance between the competing demands of publicly consulting on necessary network development, choosing the best emerging technology options for that development, and minimising new build. The strategy also represents a key part of EirGrid’s renewed efforts to encourage greater public participation in the organisation’s decision making.

The strategy confirmed the need to reinforce the transmission system in the South East, but suggested an alternative to the original “Grid Link” proposal. This ‘regional option’ involves upgrading existing transmission lines rather than building new lines.

The strategy found that there remains a clear need for the North South transmission link project, and that the existing proposal for a 400kV overhead line remains the most appropriate solution. EirGrid made a formal application for the project to An Bord Pleanála in June. The application is for the provision of a second high-capacity electricity transmission line between Ireland and Northern Ireland. The extra line is expected to lead to reduced costs to consumers, increased efficiency in the all-island electricity grid, increased security of supply and increased integration of renewable energy sources into the electricity system.



The North South Transmission Link project was designated a Project of Common Interest (PCI) by the European Commission in October 2013 and reaffirmed in November 2015. PCIs are energy projects deemed by the European Commission to be of strategic, trans-boundary importance. As such, the project is at the forefront of the EU's Energy Union agenda.

In July EirGrid put forward three solutions for its Grid West project following their submission to the Independent Expert Panel in February. The project remains under consideration at the end of the year.

## Renewable Energy

The level of renewable energy continued to increase in 2015, with approximately 186 MW of renewable electricity generating capacity connecting during the year. The primary support mechanisms for renewable electricity in Ireland - the Renewable Energy Feed-in Tariff (REFIT) schemes - closed to new applications on 31 December 2015.

The Department launched two public consultations in July 2015 on the development of a new renewable heat incentive (RHI) and a renewable electricity support scheme (RESS). The initial phase of the consultation closed in September 2015 and was designed to review the technology options that may be supported by the new incentive schemes. There will be further public consultations which will give all interested parties opportunities to participate in the development of the support schemes. Although onshore wind energy has been the most cost effective renewable technology in the Irish electricity market, it is recognised that onshore wind must be complimented by other policies such as ocean, solar and bioenergy to meet our renewable energy ambitions.

Following publication in October 2014 of the draft Bioenergy Plan, work commenced in 2015 on the Strategic Environmental and Appropriate Assessments which will inform the content of the finalised Plan.

In terms of the longer term decarbonisation objectives, negotiations continued in 2015 on the EU Climate and Energy Framework 2030 and the Department is actively participating in



the whole of Government approach, which is underpinned by rigorous systems and economic modelling, to determine a technically feasible, cost-effective and fair contribution for Ireland to make to the overall EU ambition.

## Better Energy Programme

The Better Energy Programme is operated on behalf of the Department by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) to provide grant aid to householders, communities and people at risk of energy poverty to make energy efficiency improvements. In 2015 €46 million was spent under the programme:

- 6,867 homes received free upgrades under the Better Energy Warmer Homes Scheme at a cost of €18.1 million.
- 33 projects were completed under the Better Energy Communities Programme, delivering energy upgrades to 2,200 homes and 349 public, private and community buildings at a cost of just over €13.57 million.
- 12,612 homes received grant aid under the Better Energy Homes Scheme at a cost of €14.68 million.

## Energy Audits

The 2012 EU Energy Efficiency Directive requires Member States to introduce a series of measures to deliver energy efficiency and emissions reduction targets. These measures cover activities in the public sector, utilities, buildings and transport, financing of energy projects, and energy use in large enterprises. One of the requirements relates to energy audits. Ireland put in place a scheme to implement energy audit requirements for large (non SME) enterprises in mid-2015 which addresses the requirement of Article 8. "The Energy Auditing Scheme" is administered by SEAI.



## Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme

Since 2014, all major energy suppliers in Ireland have been required to deliver annual energy savings by working with their customers in the commercial and residential sectors, as well as those customers in energy poverty. This scheme accounts for around half of the energy savings that Ireland is required to deliver by 2020 under Article 7 of the 2012 EU Energy Efficiency Directive.

In 2014-2015, obligated energy suppliers collectively delivered energy efficiency savings of 1110kWh, exceeding the 1100kWh target for the two year period. The scheme will continue in 2016 but will be reviewed pending the implementation of the second phase of the scheme 2017-2019. This review will involve a public consultation which will be published in the second quarter of 2016. A report outlining energy savings to date arising from the Scheme will also be published later this year.

## Energy Efficiency Fund

The Energy Efficiency Fund was established to provide finance for energy efficiency projects in the public and private sectors. The Fund stimulates energy efficiency upgrades in the commercial and public sectors by investing in projects such as building retrofit, industrial energy efficiency, combined heat and power and urban infrastructure. The Fund has a 3 year investment horizon from May 2014 to May 2017.

In 2015 the Energy Efficiency Fund exceeded its target of €70 million in investment commitments following further private funding. The Government has already committed a total of €35 million to the Fund. There is a strong pipeline of private and public projects across a variety of sectors including healthcare, financial services and hospitality and the Fund is actively engaged in a number of tender processes.

## Energy Poverty

A consultation paper on the Government's next affordable energy strategy issued in January 2015. This was accompanied by an overview of the progress made since the release of the



Government's first affordable energy strategy in 2011. This commenced a one month public consultation phase which saw 47 submissions made on energy poverty from a variety of stakeholders including energy suppliers, charitable organisations, think tanks, policy advocacy groups and concerned members of the public. The Department hosted a workshop in May 2015 for those who made submissions to the consultation paper. This process led to the development of a new Government strategy to combat energy poverty which was published in early 2016.

### Public Sector Energy Efficiency

All Public sector bodies are required to improve their energy efficiency by 33% by 2020. The most recent SEAI Monitoring & Reporting assessment of performance shows that significant progress has been made towards this target. The latest monitoring report was published in 2015 and shows that by the end of 2014, public sector bodies are about half-way to the target with approx. 17% of the 33% energy efficiency target achieved. This has resulted in energy efficiency gains of 1,840GWh. It has also reduced CO2 emissions by 418,000 tonnes per annum and led to energy savings of €121 million for 2014.

In 2015, the Department worked with stakeholders to develop a new Public Sector Energy Efficiency Action Plan which will be finalised and submitted to Government in 2016. This action plan will provide guidance, support and further impetus to help all public sector bodies take the further steps needed to achieve the ambitious 2020 targets.

### Energy Labelling and Eco-Design

To ensure Compliance with the Energy Labelling, Ecodesign and Labelling of Tyres Directives each EU member state is required to carry out market surveillance activities. As the designated Market Surveillance Authority, DCENR has been responsible for the enforcement of this legislation. During 2015 an ongoing programme of market surveillance inspections was conducted to monitor compliance and ensure retailers and importers are informed of their obligations under legislation with follow up action where necessary. The Department also identified the opportunity for improving the service and availing of synergies with other



functions through a transfer of operational market surveillance responsibility to SEAI. A commitment to make this transfer in 2016 was given in the Energy White Paper.

### **Full Ownership Unbundling**

EU Directive 2009/73/EC requires significant restructuring of European gas transmission operators in line with one of three “unbundling” options.

The transfer of ownership of Gas Networks Ireland (GNI), a subsidiary of Ervia, to the Minister for the Environment, Community and Local Government by way of Government Order on 24 November 2015 (as provided for under the majority-shareholding Minister provision in section 32 of the Gas Regulation Act 2013 facilitated the submission of GNI’s application for certification under the Full Ownership Unbundling model in line with the certification procedure set out in Article 10 of the Directive. GNI submitted an application in relation to Full Ownership Unbundling to the CER on 30 July 2015, for consideration under the procedures as set out Article 10. The CER notified the European Commission of its preliminary decision that GNI was in compliance with the Full Ownership Unbundling requirements of the Directive on 30th November 2015, in line with timelines in Article 10 (6).



## High Level Objective 5 - Natural Resources



To exploit and manage our inland fisheries, mineral, hydrocarbon and other geological resources in a sustainable and productive manner.

The Department is charged with managing the country's Natural Resources in a sustainable and productive manner. The sector is a key source of wealth creation, a significant source of employment and makes a real contribution to our economic welfare and revenue base.

### Minerals

Ireland, which had been the largest producer for Zinc in Europe, dropped to second place during 2015 with an active exploration sector involving over 570 exploration licences.

The Minerals Development Bill 2015 was published during the year. The Bill seeks to consolidate and modernise legislation on exploration and extraction of minerals (lead, zinc, gypsum, etc., but not petroleum), replacing a compendium of legislation from 1940 to 1999. The Bill will make better provisions for the prospecting for, and development, management and control of, the mineral resources in the State. The Bill passed all stages in the Seanad in 2015 and will resume in the Dáil in 2016.

In 2015, the Department continued to monitor mining activities to ensure compliance with the conditions of State Mining Licences and Leases and adherence to best practice. This regulatory activity included regular physical inspections of mining operations, both on surface and underground.

The number of active mineral prospecting licences declined slightly in 2015 to 575 as of 31 December, compared with 639 licences at the end of 2014. Licences were held by a broad mixture of indigenous and international exploration companies. Direct expenditure invested by prospecting licence holders in working these licences amounted to over €15 million.





Ireland's mining policies and administration have once again been recognized in an international benchmark report of the Canadian based Fraser Institute. The most recent annual survey for 2015, based on responses from the industry, ranked Ireland first in the world among 109 jurisdictions for good mining policy for the third year in a row.

Receipts from exploration and mining activities in 2015 were €6.782 million. Of this, €6.474million was in respect of mining receipts and €0.308 million was in respect of prospecting licence fees.

### **Offshore Oil and Gas Exploration**

The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources continues to actively promote exploration and development opportunities offshore Ireland to the international oil and gas industry. Industry activity in 2015 included two regional 2D seismic acquisition surveys located primarily in the Porcupine Basin and the Celtic Sea; and the drilling of a well by PSE Seven Heads Ltd on the Midleton prospect in the Celtic Sea. As at the end of 2015 there were 3 Petroleum leases, 30 Exploration Licences and 11 Licensing Options active in respect of the Irish Offshore. The number of exploration authorisations in place is running at the highest levels ever since exploration began in the Irish offshore four decades ago.

### **Atlantic Margin Licensing Round**

The 2015 Atlantic Margin Oil and Gas Exploration Licensing Round opened for licensing all of Ireland's major Atlantic basins: Porcupine, Goban Spur, Slyne, Erris, Donegal and Rockall. The form of petroleum authorisation on offer was two year Licensing Options; although the actual duration of each Licensing Option offered will be determined by the quality of the agreed work programme. Where holders of Licensing Options wish to move forward to seek an exploration licence, the licence on offer will be a Frontier Exploration Licence of fifteen years duration, with a first phase of three years, and three subsequent phases of four years. 43 applications for licensing options were received from 17 companies by the close of the Round in September 2015. The applicant companies include majors, mid-cap companies and smaller companies. This is by far the largest number of applications received in any licensing



round held in the Irish Offshore. At a time of very low oil prices the strong interest in the response to the Round is very positive.

### **Corrib gas field**

At end December 2015, following the grant of consent by the Minister for Communications, Energy and Natural Resources to the Corrib partners to operate the Corrib gas pipeline, production of gas commenced from the Corrib gas field. The gas produced from the Corrib field will be supplied to the national grid via the 149km pipeline constructed by Bord Gáis Networks, which runs from the gas terminal in Bellanaboy Co Mayo to Ballymoneen outside of Galway. The economic benefits of the Corrib gas field include the direct return to the Exchequer, the significant economic activity generated from the development stage of the project together with a strengthening of Ireland's security of energy supply. It is estimated that Corrib will have an operating life span of between 15 to 20 years and gas production will on average meet 42% of all island gas demand over the first two years of operation, declining thereafter.

### **Enactment of the Petroleum (Exploration and Extraction) Safety Act 2015**

The Petroleum (Exploration and Extraction) Safety Act 2010 (PEES) empowered the Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) to set up a petroleum safety framework for petroleum activities that is risk-based and is permissioning, in that a Safety Case produced by an Operator needs to be accepted by the CER before petroleum activities/operations can commence.

In 2013 the EU agreed the Offshore Safety Directive (Directive 2013/30/EU), on safety of offshore oil and gas operations. The Petroleum (Exploration and Extraction) Safety Act 2015 enacted in July 2015 transposed this Directive into Irish law - integrating the Directive requirements with the safety regulatory system for oil and gas exploration and production activities in Ireland introduced under the 2010 PEES Act and building on the Petroleum Safety Framework being operated successfully by the CER since December of 2013.



## Enactment of revised fiscal terms for oil and gas production

In June 2014 Government approval was received to revise Ireland's oil and gas fiscal terms along the lines recommended by sectoral experts Wood Mackenzie. Section 20 of the Finance Act 2015 implements the recommendations by introducing a Petroleum Production Tax (PPT) which will apply in the case of any petroleum authorisation first awarded after 18 June 2014, and which replaces the Profit Resource Rent Tax introduced in the Finance Act 2008 in respect of such authorisations.

- The PPT will be payable in addition to the existing 25% rate of corporation tax that applies to the profits from oil and gas production.
- The PPT payments will be deductible for the purposes of calculating the amount of corporation tax due.
- The operation of the PPT regime will result in a maximum marginal tax take on a producing field (combining the corporation tax and petroleum production tax) of 55%.
- Once a field starts producing oil or gas, a minimum PPT payment of 5% will be payable in each year of production on the gross revenue (net of transportation costs) of a field.
- The ultimate PPT amount due on each field will be determined on a sliding scale depending on the profitability of the field.

## Irish Offshore Strategic Environmental Assessment 5 (IOSEA5)

2015 saw completion of the IOSEA5 (Irish Offshore Strategic Environmental Study) process with the adoption of the Plan underpinning IOSEA5 and publication of the IOSEA5 Statement.

The objectives of IOSEA5 were to inform the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources of specific environmental considerations in its future petroleum activities under licensing rounds in the Atlantic Margin Basins, as well as the award of licences in the Celtic and Irish Seas, and to provide exploration companies working offshore with an



operational baseline against which they can conduct their work and ensure the protection of the marine environment.

Following on from public consultation on the Natura Impact Statement and draft Environmental Report - with events in May 2015 in Killybegs, Galway, Dublin and Cork - October 2015 saw the adoption of the Plan underpinning IOSEA5 and publication of the IOSEA5 Statement. The Plan describes the type and level of activity (both geophysical survey and drilling) anticipated in the entire offshore area under Irish jurisdiction for the period 2015 to 2020.

### **ObSERVE Programme**

The ObSERVE Programme, which is being undertaken by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources in partnership with the National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht over the period 2015 to 2018, is a significant data acquisition programme designed to acquire new environmental baseline data, with the aim of filling existing data gaps regarding protected marine species and sites in key offshore basins. It comprises both acoustic surveys with respect to cetaceans in selected Atlantic Margin waters, and a series of aerial surveys for both cetaceans and seabirds. Programme implementation commenced in May, 2015.

The Programme is unique to Ireland in terms of its proactive approach to ensuring a clear understanding of animal occurrence, distribution, and density within a defined offshore area, based on the data acquired. The Programme will be of benefit to the regulatory regime in assessing petroleum activities applications in compliance with environmental law. It will also benefit Industry in planning petroleum activities to be carried out in the Irish Offshore and understanding what mitigations will need to be employed.

### **Unconventional Gas Exploration and Extraction**

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has commissioned a research programme into the potential impacts of Unconventional Gas Exploration and Extraction on the environment and human health.



This all-island programme of research, which is being administered by the EPA, is composed of five interlinked projects, including an extensive desk-based literature review of Unconventional Gas Exploration and Extraction practices and regulations worldwide.

This scientific research programme is considering existing baseline data with respect to groundwater, air and seismicity, and the potential implications and mitigations that are required to be considered in order to understand the possible environmental impacts of using this technology and whether or not it can be undertaken in an environmentally protective manner, in accordance with the requirements of environmental law.

The research programme has been designed to produce the scientific basis, which will assist regulators, both North and South, in making an informed decision about whether it is environmentally safe to allow Unconventional Gas Exploration and Extraction.

No application to engage in Unconventional Gas Exploration and Extraction has been received in the Department, nor would any such application, if submitted, be considered until the research programme has concluded and there has been time to consider its findings. Any policy decision will be taken in the context of the objective of achieving a low carbon energy system by 2050.

## Geoscience Development & Research

The Geological Survey of Ireland (GSI) continues to develop the Geoscience Sector through its role in the provision of geological data, information, partnering and planning tools as the National Geoscience Agency for Ireland, and is the lead for a number of specific initiatives.

### INFOMAR

INFOMAR is the flagship National programme to map all of our valuable marine territory, which is almost ten times our landmass. The programme, which is a listed Key Enabler under the Irish Integrated Marine Action Plan “Harnessing our Ocean Wealth”, is funded by the Department and is being undertaken by GSI in conjunction with the Marine Institute.

Previous external economic studies have shown that the return on investment is over four times the cost of data acquisition and this return is spread across multiple sectors, public



and private, including SMEs and Research organisations. 2015 marked a major milestone for the programme with completion of Phase 1 Operations (2006-2015), including mapping of all 26 Priority Bays and 3 Priority offshore areas, as selected by stakeholders. In 2015, the programme mapped over 2,000 km<sup>2</sup> of area including completion of Bannow Bay, Youghal Bay, Dungarvan Bay, Wexford Harbour and surrounds, Boyne Estuary, Carlingford Lough and Lough Foyle. A review of Phase 1 will be completed early in 2016 as part of Phase 2 planning, which will encompass the completion of mapping of all Irish claimed territorial waters. The data and knowledge being gathered under the INFOMAR programme is utilised in a range of areas including: marine safety/charting; offshore energy; aquaculture; coastal protection; environmental protection; shipwreck heritage; marine tourism and research.

### Geoscience Initiatives



These are a series of targeted measures managed by GSI, to support planning and develop the role and application of Geoscience/Geology in Ireland. A number of pilot programmes undertaken in 2014 have now been developed as new multiannual projects, based on stakeholder demand and newly available datasets. These included Integrated Land mapping, combining surficial and deeper geological mapping in response to new Tellus datasets, and Groundwater 3D mapping of complex aquifers such as in karst areas, sand and gravels, and where particular water quality issues exist. In 2015 extensive groundwater and mapping work was carried out in three areas, North Cork/Mallow, Donegal and Roscommon. In addition a draft National Landslide Susceptibility Map was completed and further progress was made in relation to Ireland's participation in International tsunami warning systems. A highlight in the area of geotourism was the granting of UNESCO site status to members of the Global Geopark network, which includes three Irish sites all of which are supported by GSI, Copper Coast (Waterford), Burren/Cliffs of Moher (Clare) and Marble Arch (Cavan/Fermanagh).



## Tellus

Tellus is the name given to the systematic programme of scientific data collection on soils, water and rocks by ground geochemical sampling and airborne geophysical surveys. In 2013 the EU (INTERREG) funded Tellus Border project was completed and in 2014 an extremely positive external evaluation of the project was received. Information from the project is helping to manage the environment and support sustainable development of our natural resources. The Tellus North Midlands project across Longford, Westmeath and Roscommon was completed in April 2015. In addition, a further survey phase took place over Eastern Ireland later in 2015, (Meath, North Wicklow and Dublin) as part of a three year phase to complete 50% of the country by end of 2017. The Tellus programme continued to work closely with stakeholders on outputs and to sponsor applied research projects across a wide range of sectors. In 2015 Tellus won a prestigious Civil Service Innovation and Excellence Award for Insight and Analysis.

## Geoscience Ireland

Throughout 2015, GSI have continued to work with Enterprise Ireland and Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade to develop the business cluster Geoscience Ireland (GI). There is an acknowledged need to internationalise the skills and services provided by the wider geological community, and in 2015 the cluster was increased to 24 companies employing over 1,200 people with a turnover of more than €250 million. Member companies have to date provided over 250 new jobs since joining and operate in over 50 countries, with about 64% of revenue from overseas.

## Research

GSI support Geoscience research through data provision, partnering and financial assistance. In 2015 the GSI Griffith Geoscience Research Programme I (2007-14) was reviewed, and has been a considerable success in terms of outputs, employment and funds leveraged (€16 million). GSI also carried out a Short Research Call funding 41 projects, each for up to 1 year, with a maximum cost of €30,000, with 18 projects lead by industry/SMEs and 23 by academics. In 2015 the new Irish Centre for Research in Applied Geoscience (iCRAG)



commenced operations. iCRAG, which involves all Irish Third Level Geoscience Departments, has SFI funding of €18 million along with €8 million from industry partners for a six year period to end 2020, is strongly supported by DCENR and GSI and is expected to have a significant role for Irish geoscience in research, understanding and societal impact.





## Inland Fisheries

The Department continued to implement Government policy to fully align the management of the wild salmon fishery with scientific advice and to this end a total of nine Bye-laws and two Statutory Instruments were introduced; two of the bye-laws were river-specific, taking cognisance of individual stocking levels. A suite of regulations ahead of the 2016 salmon season was put in place by the end of 2015.

Implementation of the national eel management plan, to comply with EU Council Regulation 1100/2007, continued. Measures undertaken included operations for the trapping and transporting of eels around ESB hydro-stations on the Shannon, the Lee and the Erne and the undertaking of scientific sampling. The Conservation of Eel Fishing Bye-law, which prohibits fishing for eel, or possessing or selling eel caught in a river in the State, was renewed for a further three years until 2018. In November 2015, a new collaborative research initiative was announced. The initiative will include Inland Fisheries Ireland scientists and a number of former eel fishermen with a view to further developing national knowledge of the species and the medium to longer term potential for recovery. A scientific fishery is to be undertaken for three years commencing in 2016 to increase data and knowledge ahead of further review of eel management measures.



The Department exercised corporate governance over Inland Fisheries Ireland and the Loughs Agency (as a co-sponsor Department) ensuring compliance with the relevant codes of practice, adherence to budgetary profiles and the achievement of statutory requirements.

The Department worked closely with IFI in 2015 to ensure continued progress on efficiencies, property rationalisation and innovation in terms of fisheries protection to increase effectiveness in the deployment of resources. In relation to property rationalisation, in March 2015, IFI purchased a property near its HQ in Citywest which is



being fitted out and will house its warehousing, laboratory and archiving facilities. This continues IFI's strategy of exiting from expensive long term leases, in line with Government policy and the rationalisation of operations.

In recognition of the need for a complete overhaul of the legislation governing the inland fisheries sector, the Department continued the detailed review of the Fisheries Acts 1959-2010, along with wide range of associated secondary legislation, with a view to producing one modern statute for the sector.

The Minister of State attended two meetings of the North South Ministerial Council (Aquaculture and Marine Sector) under which the Loughs Agency of the Foyle Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission (FCILC) operates.



## High Level Objective 6 - Corporate Management

To promote and operate a culture of value for money and continual evaluation of our performance in a measurable, transparent and accountable manner. To develop our staff and deliver the public service reform agenda and Civil Service Renewal Programme whilst providing a high quality service to our customers and stakeholders

### Human Resources

#### Strategic HR

A new HR Strategy was developed in 2015 to reflect the transition of transactional HR operations to PeoplePoint in November 2014. There are six key components to the strategy with priority areas of activity and an implementation identified within each strand. The key elements of the strategy are:

- HR Service Delivery
- Career Development & Employee Mobility
- Organisational Development
- Talent Management
- Learning & Development
- Communications & Consultation

#### Resourcing

The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources currently employs 276 staff which equates to 263.3 FTEs (full time equivalents).

#### Workforce Planning

The 2015 Workforce Plan formed the basis of recent recruitment and promotion competitions which were designed to ensure that the Department can deliver key priorities in accordance with agreed timescales.



The Department has pro-actively engaged with the Reform Agenda in terms of HR initiatives, shared services and ICT enhancements. This has included the movement to a shared HR Service, PeoplePoint, as well as a Payroll Shared Service in Tullamore.

### **Attendance Management Policy**

The Department's lost time rate for sick leave of c.2.6% is well within the overall target rate of 3.5% across the Civil Service.

### **Performance Management**

Calibration was introduced on a pilot phase in 2014 and 2015. The 2015 process informed the development and introduction of the objectives for the Leadership Development Programme which the Department commenced last year. One element of the Leadership Development programme was based around Coaching & Performance Management. In addition, short workshops on 'Delivering effective performance feedback' have been run for staff at all supervisory levels. DCENR moved from the paper format to the electronic PMDS system with effect from 2015 with all PMDS now completed through the Peoplepoint system. The completion rate for PMDS within the Department in 2015 was 91%.

### **ICT**

The Department continued to operate shared services with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine on ICT.

### **Corporate Governance**

A Corporate Governance Division was established in 2015 to provide a cohesive approach to the Governance of the State Bodies under the Department's remit. Over the course of the year responsibility for the oversight of An Post, ESB, Bord na Móna, EirGrid, RTE, and TG4 transferred into the Division. The Division has implemented a streamlined approach across a number of areas relevant to State Bodies including appointments to State Boards, processing requests for Ministerial consents, developing shareholder letters of expectation and financial monitoring.



## Finance

Gross Expenditure for 2015 was €399.962 million, which funded key measures in the Communications, Broadcasting and Energy and Natural Resources areas.

## Overview of Energy Usage in 2015

In 2015, the Department consumed 2,775,175 kWh of energy which is a 16.9% reduction of energy consumption over the baseline period 2006 – 2008.

During the year, energy consumption was influenced by a new zoned heating system in our Adelaide Road offices enabling more proactive energy management.

The Department is developing a formal Energy Policy and Action Plan which will see the establishment of an Energy Management Team and an Energy Audit will be carried out in 2016.



## Appendix A: Structure of the Department

**MARK GRIFFIN**  
**SECRETARY GENERAL**

<b>KATHERINE LICKEN</b> <b>ASSISTANT</b> <b>SECRETARY</b>	<b>MICHAEL MANLEY</b> <b>ASSISTANT</b> <b>SECRETARY</b>	<b>BRIAN CARROLL</b> <b>ASSISTANT</b> <b>SECRETARY</b>	<b>PATRICIA CRONIN</b> <b>ASSISTANT</b> <b>SECRETARY</b>
Telecommunications Policy and Regulation	Energy Efficiency and Affordability	Inland Fisheries	Human Resources/ Information Systems
Communications Business and Technology	Strategic Energy Policy Division	Geological Survey of Ireland	Corporate Support
National Digital Strategy and Telecommunications Market Contracts	Electricity & Gas Regulation	Exploration and Mining	Corporate Governance
Broadcasting Policy	Energy Security	Petroleum Exploration	Finance and Corporate Affairs
Internet Policy	Decarbonisation Policy and Coordination	Petroleum Development	Internal Audit
Chief Technical Advisor	Chief Technical Advisor's Office		Press Office
			Economic Unit
			Legal Unit



**Roinn Cumarsáide,  
Fuinnimh & Acmhainní Náúrtha**  
Department of Communications,  
Energy & Natural Resources



## Appendix B: Vote 29 - 2015 Estimates and Provisional Outturn

Subhead	Estimate €000	Outturn €000
<b>COMMUNICATIONS</b>		
A.1 - Administrative Pay	4,660	4,025
A.2 - Admin Non Pay	1,787	1,448
A.3 - Information and Communications Technology	15,435	13,130
A.4 - Multimedia Developments (including capital carryover)	6,000	5,785
A.5 - Information Society & inclusion (including capital carryover)	5,202	3,374
A.6 - Other Services	500	-
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>33,584</b>	<b>27,762</b>
<b>BROADCASTING</b>		
B.1 - Admin Pay	988	854
B.2 - Admin Non Pay	612	495
B.3 - Grant to RTE	185,724	178,499
B.4 - Payment to an Post	12,457	11,609
B.5 - Grant to TG4	33,160	33,160
B.6 - Broadcasting Fund	14,704	14,665
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>247,645</b>	<b>239,282</b>
<b>ENERGY</b>		
C.1 - Admin Pay	4,557	3,937
C.2 - Admin Non Pay	2,162	1,752
C.3 - SEAI Admin & General Expenses	7,000	6,771
C.4 - Sustainable Energy Programmes (incl capital carryover)	56,301	56,004
C.5 - Energy Research Programmes	9,061	7,184
C.7 - Gas Services	32	32
C.8 - Subscriptions to International Organisations	240	171
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>79,353</b>	<b>75,851</b>
<b>NATURAL RESOURCES</b>		
D.1 - Admin Pay	6,451	5,572
D.2 - Admin Non Pay	3,159	2,631
D.3 - Petroleum Services	4,641	4,509
D.4 - Mining Services	3,585	917
D.5 - GSI Services	9,524	8,554
D.6 - Ordnance Survey Ireland	7,415	7,000
D.7 - Subscriptions to International Organisations	135	132
<b>Sub-total</b>	<b>34,910</b>	<b>29,315</b>



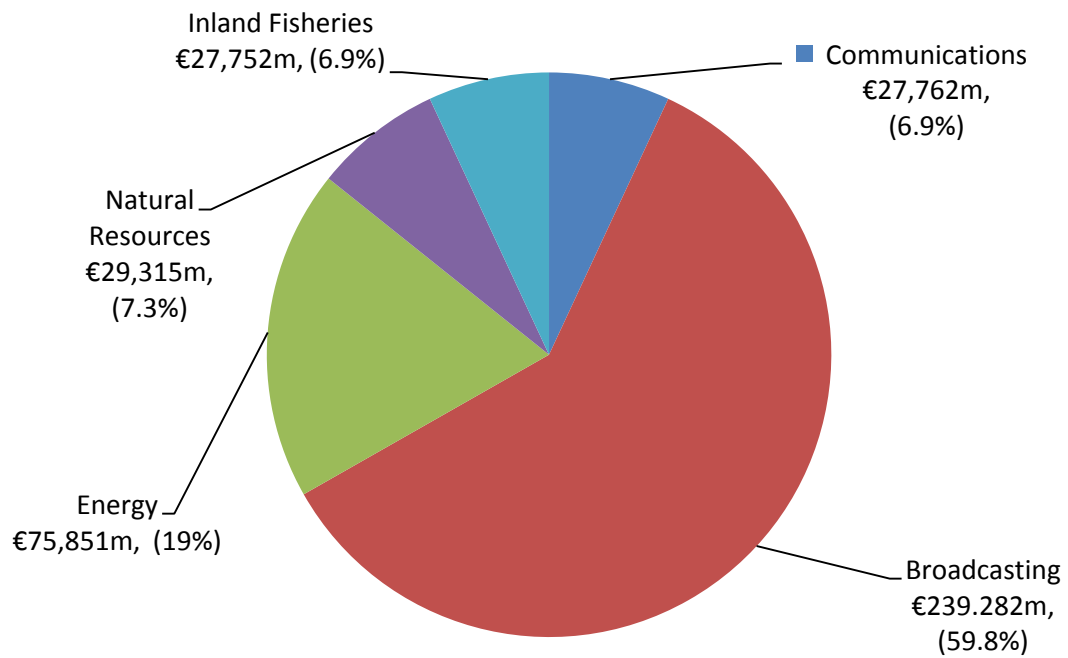


Subhead	Estimate €000	Outturn €000
<b>INLAND FISHERIES</b>		
E.1 - Admin Pay	894	773
E.2 - Admin Non Pay	422	343
E.3 - Inland Fisheries	26,343	26,636
Sub-total	27,659	27,752
<b>Gross Total</b>	<b>423,151</b>	<b>399,962</b>
<b>APPROPRIATIONS-IN-AID</b>		
F.1 - Proceeds of Fines & Forfeitures for fishery offences	50	25
F.2 - Mineral & Petroleum Receipts	15,455	14,787
F.3 - Petroleum Infrastructure Support Group	437	297
F.4 - Broadcasting Licence Fees	222,130	214,018
F.5 - Geological Survey Receipts	550	595
F.6 - Rent on properties in GPO	223	350
F.7 - Miscellaneous Receipts	1,323	1,732
F.8 - Pension Contributions from Agencies	1,084	1,102
F.9 - Receipts from pension-related deduction on public service	4,165	3,746
Appropriations-in-Aid Total	245,417	236,652
<b>Net Total</b>	<b>177,734</b>	<b>163,310</b>

<b>2015 Provisional Outturn Summary</b>	
PROGRAMME	Outturn €000
Communications	27,762
Broadcasting	239,282
Energy	75,851
Natural Resources	29,315
Inland Fisheries	27,752
<b>Total</b>	<b>399,962</b>



## 2015 Provisional Outturn





## Appendix C: Legislation

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### Acts Enacted and Other Bills:

#### **ACTS:**

Petroleum (Exploration and Extraction) Safety Act 2015

#### Bills Progressed or Initiated:

- Minerals Development Bill
- Geothermal Energy Development Bill

#### Statutory Instruments

The following Statutory Instruments were made in 2015:

S.I. No.	TITLE
16 of 2015	European Communities (Internal Market in Natural Gas and Electricity)



	(Amendment) Regulations 2015.
17 of 2015	Energy (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2012 (Commencement) Order 2015.
70 of 2015	Control of Fishing for Salmon (Amendment) Order 2015.
161 of 2015	International Renewable Energy Agency (Designation) Order 2015.
254 of 2015	Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 (Accelerated Capital Allowances for Energy Efficient Equipment) (Amendment) (No. 1) Order 2015.
337 of 2015	Communications Regulation (Postal Services) (Amendment Act 2015 (Commencement Order) 2015.
520 of 2015	Gas Regulation Act 2013 (Commencement) Order 2015.
535 of 2015	Gas Act 1976 (Appointment of majority-shareholding Minister) Order 2015.
556 of 2015	Electricity Regulation Act 1999 (Public Service Obligations) (Amendment) Order 2015.
559 of 2015	Electricity Regulation Act, 1999 (Water) Levy Order, 2015.
<b>S.I. No.</b>	<b>TITLE</b>
560 of 2015	Electricity Regulation Act 1999 (Petroleum Safety) Levy Order 2014.
561 of 2015	Electricity Regulation Act 1999 (Gas) Levy Order 2015.
562 of 2015	Electricity Regulation Act 1999 (Electricity) Levy Order 2015.
570 of 2015	Electricity Regulation Act 1999 (Petroleum Safety) Levy Order 2015.
581 of 2015	Wild Salmon and Sea Trout Tagging Scheme (Amendment) Regulations 2015.
587 of 2015	Taxes Consolidation Act 1997 (Accelerated Capital Allowances for Energy Efficient Equipment) (Amendment) (No. 2) Order 2015.
603 of 2015	Section 16A (5) Energy (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1995, (Deemed Contracts) Regulations 2015.

Inland Fisheries bye-laws



Bye-Law No.	Title
No. C.S. 319	Conservation of Eel Fishing Bye-Law.
No. C.S. 320	Conservation of Salmon and Sea trout (Closed Rivers) Bye-Law.
No. 933	Conservation of Salmon and Sea Trout (Draft Nets and Snap Nets Bye-Law.
No. 934	Conservation of Salmon and Sea trout (Bag Limits) Bye-law.
No. 935	Conservation of Salmon and Sea trout (Catch and Release) Bye-law
No. 936	Angling Bye-law
No. 937	Conservation of Sea Trout Bye-law
No. 938	Conservation of Salmon and Sea Trout (River Suir) Bye-law
No. 939	Conservation of Salmon and Sea Trout (River Shannon) (Catch and Release) Bye-law



## Appendix D: Petroleum Authorisations granted

A total of 61 petroleum authorisations were extant at 31 December 2015: These included

- 3 Petroleum Leases
- 13 Licensing Options (of which 3 were subject to follow-on applications),
- 30 Exploration Licences (of which 3 were subject to follow-on applications)
- 15 Petroleum Prospecting Licences (of which 1 was subject to an extension request)

Three new authorisations were granted during 2015. These included one offshore licensing option and two petroleum prospecting licences. Details of these new authorisations are set out in the following table:

Authorisation No.	Authorisation Type	Licensee	Area
LO 15/1	Licensing Option	Fastnet Oil & Gas Ireland Ltd	Irish Offshore
PPL 1/15	Petroleum Prospecting Licence	Faroe Petroleum (U.K.) Limited	Irish Offshore
PPL 2/15	Petroleum Prospecting Licence	Trans International Oil Exploration	Irish Offshore



## Appendix E: Bodies under the aegis of the Department

The Department was responsible for 18 commercial, non-commercial and regulatory State bodies in 2015 as outlined below:

BODY	MAIN ROLE
<b>COMMUNICATIONS</b>	
<b>An Post</b>	Ireland's national postal service provider.
<b>Commission for Communications Regulation</b>	ComReg is charged with the regulation of the communications market in Ireland. Its remit covers all kinds of transmission networks from the traditional telephone wire service through to operators providing TV services and from mobile phone networks to the postal service.
<b>Digital Hub Development Agency</b>	Established under the Digital Hub Development Act 2003 to oversee the development of the Digital Hub.
<b>BROADCASTING</b>	
<b>Raidió Teilifís Éireann</b>	RTÉ is a public service broadcasting corporation and a statutorily independent body.
<b>TG4</b>	TG4 is an Irish language public service broadcasting corporation and a statutorily independent body.
<b>Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI)</b>	The Broadcasting Authority of Ireland (BAI) was established on 1 October 2009, as an independent regulator for radio and television broadcasters in Ireland. The BAI has a range of objectives and functions. In carrying out its functions, the BAI must make sure that its approach to regulation is proportionate and takes into account the range and type of broadcasting services in Ireland. The BAI has a responsibility to ensure that broadcast regulation is stable. The Authority also has a role to play in encouraging technological development in the broadcasting sector.



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Department of Communications,  
Energy & Natural Resources





BODY	MAIN ROLE
<b>ENERGY</b>	
<b>Electricity Supply Board</b>	<p>The ESB is a statutory corporation established under the Electricity (Supply) Act 1927. It is a vertically integrated utility involved in the generation, transmission, distribution and supply of electricity.</p> <p>Following the enactment of the Electricity (Supply) (Amendment) Act 2001 a 5% employee shareholding scheme was put in place.</p>
<b>EirGrid plc</b>	<p>EirGRID plc. was established to act as the independent Transmission System Operator (TSO), in line with the requirements of the EU Electricity Directive and became operational as the TSO on 1 July 2006.</p>
<b>Ervia</b>	<p>Ervia is a commercial semi-state company with responsibility for the national gas and water networks and infrastructure in Ireland.</p> <p>Responsibility for corporate governance of Ervia was transferred to the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government on 24 November 2015.</p>
<b>Commission for Energy Regulation</b>	<p>The Commission for Energy Regulation (CER) is responsible for the licensing and authorisation of energy undertakings, ensuring security of electricity and gas supplies, regulation of certain tariffs and the development of national and regional electricity and gas markets in line with its statutory functions and national and EU requirements, and safety regulation in respect of upstream petroleum extraction and exploration activities.</p>



<b>Irish National Petroleum Corporation</b>	Following the sale of its business and commercial assets (Whitegate Refinery and Bantry storage terminal) in July 2001, the INPC has no operational capacity/ employees. Its current activities are limited to its rights and obligations under the Sale and Purchase Agreement attaching to the 2001 transaction.
<b>BODY</b>	<b>MAIN ROLE</b>
<b>Bord na Móna plc.</b>	Bord na Móna plc is a supplier of products and services based principally on peat. The Company is also providing products and services in environmental, renewable energy, electricity generation and waste management business sectors. In June 2014, the Government decided to streamline and refocus the commercial operations of Bord na Móna and Coillte, primarily in the bioenergy and wind energy sectors. The decision requires Bord na Móna and Coillte to proceed with a partial merger in four key areas: wind; biomass; tourism and recreation; and shared services.
<b>National Oil Reserves Agency</b>	Maintains strategic stocks of oil in line with the State's oil stockholding obligations to the EU and the International Energy Agency (IEA), and administer Ireland's Biofuels Obligation Scheme.
<b>Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland</b>	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), formerly the SEI, was established in 2002 to promote and assist the development of sustainable energy.
<b>NATURAL RESOURCES</b>	



<b>Inland Fisheries Ireland</b>	Inland Fisheries Ireland is responsible for the protection, management and conservation of the inland fisheries resource and sea angling across the country.
<b>Mining Board</b>	An independent board set up under the Minerals Development Act 1940, its function is to determine compensation in various cases. It is also charged with deciding what minerals are to be excepted from the State's exclusive right to work minerals under that Act.
<b>BODY</b>	<b>MAIN ROLE</b>
<b>Loughs Agency of the Foyle Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission</b>	The Agency is a North South Body established under the British Irish Agreement Act 1999, responsible for:  (a) the promotion and development of Lough Foyle and Carlingford Lough for commercial and recreational purposes in respect of marine, fishery and aquaculture matters;  (b) the management, conservation and protection, improvement and development of inland fisheries;  (c) the development and licensing of aquaculture; and (d) the development of marine tourism.
<b>Ordnance Survey Ireland</b>	Ordnance Survey Ireland provides quality mapping and geographic information services on a national basis.  Responsibility for Ordnance Survey Ireland was transferred to the Department of Department of Justice and Equality on 1 January 2016.



## Appendix F: Commercial State Sponsored Bodies

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The Department's accounts do not consolidate the accounts of the State Sponsored Bodies under its aegis. However the Minister and through him the Department, had responsibility in 2015 on behalf of the State for six commercial State Sponsored Bodies and financial details in relation to these Bodies are available on the following websites.

[www.anpost.ie](http://www.anpost.ie)

[www.esb.ie](http://www.esb.ie)

[www.ervia.ie](http://www.ervia.ie)

[www.bordnamona.ie](http://www.bordnamona.ie)

[www.rte.ie](http://www.rte.ie)

[www.eirgrid.com](http://www.eirgrid.com)



## Appendix G: Acronym Index

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AVMS	Audio-visual Media Services
BAI	Broadcasting Authority of Ireland
CACM	Capacity Allocation and Congestion Management
CER	Commission for Energy Regulation
COMREG	Commission for Communications Regulation
DCENR	Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
DHDA	Digital Hub Development Agency
ESB	Electricity Supply Board
EuroDIG	European Dialogue on Internet Governance
EU	European Union
FCILC	Loughs Agency of the Foyle Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission
GAC	Government Advisory Committee
GPO	General Post Office
GSI	Geological Survey of Ireland
HLIG	European Commission's High Level Group on Internet Governance
IANA	Internet Assigned Numbers Authority
ICANN	Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers
ICGAG	Internet Content Governance Advisory Group
ICT	Information and Communications Technology
INFOMAR	The National Seabed Mapping project
INPC	Irish National Petroleum Corporation
I-SEM	Single Electricity Market Project
MANs	Metropolitan Area Networks
Mbps	Megabits per second
MW	Megawatt
NBP	National Broadband Plan
NGA	Next Generation Access



NDRC	National Digital Research Centre
PCI	Projects of Common Interest
REFIT	Renewable Energy Feed In Tariff
RTÉ	Raidió Teilifís Éireann
SEAI	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland
SEM	Single Electricity Market
SFI	Science Foundation Ireland
S.I.	Statutory Instrument
TG4	Teilifís na Gaeilge
TSO	Transmission System Operator