





**Office of the Civil Service and
Local Appointments Commissioners**

Moving Forward

Statement of Strategy 2003 - 2005





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Foreword

I am pleased to present this Statement of Strategy for the period 2003 - 2005 which has recently been endorsed by the Minister for Finance. It sets out our strategic approach to delivering high quality, cost effective recruitment related human resource solutions to Government Departments, Local Authorities, Health Services and other public bodies over the next three years.

Our organisation faces very challenging times as we move into a new era of public service recruitment. The Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Bill will give Government Departments, Local Authorities and Health Boards the option of undertaking for themselves recruitment activity currently within the statutory remit of the Civil Service and Local Appointments Commissioners. A series of organisational transformations required to prepare our organisation for this new operating environment is currently under way. Effectively the current organisation will split into two independent bodies - the Public Service Commissioners and the Public Appointments Service. This strategy is focussed on preparing the way for both organisations to make a smooth transition to the new arrangements.

In recent years we have made significant progress in modernising our approach to the delivery of recruitment and selection services in line with the wishes of Government. A Customer Relations Management structure has ensured that the needs of client organisations have become the primary driver of our organisational development. This has led us, for instance, to consider a wider range of recruitment, selection and advisory services that can be tailored to meet the specific needs of individual clients thereby adding real value for clients.

We still have a distance to go in embedding this customer-centred focus in our organisation so that we can at all time guarantee the seamless delivery of high quality services tailored to the exact needs of specific customers.

In terms of e-government we have developed our publicjobs.ie website which already provides an on-line application facility for prospective recruits. Over the next three years we will exploit the full potential of this efficient, 24 hour, international platform. We have ambitious plans for web-enabling key services provided to all our customer groups including client organisations, applicants and members of selection boards. The site will also be developed as a portal site for advertising recruitment opportunities from all areas of the public service irrespective of whether we are directly involved in individual recruitment initiatives.

The recent review by external consultants of the Civil Service Modernisation Programme highlighted the fact that further progress is critically dependent on accelerating the progress of human resource management reforms. Likewise, Local Authorities and Health Services are increasingly focussed on developing their HRM capabilities as a means of supporting their current and emerging business needs. Improving the quality of work, portraying the public service as an employment of choice and ensuring that the best talent available is recruited and promoted are the key HRM challenges facing public service organisations today.

Our response to these challenges is threefold. Firstly, we are committed to the success of reforms already agreed under the recent social partnership agreement Sustaining Progress in the form of the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Bill and the introduction of open recruitment at higher levels within the civil service. Secondly, we will work as internal partners with public service organisations to develop their HRM capability through our recruitment, selection and related advisory services. Thirdly, we will proactively share the knowledge and perspectives we gain from our unique role in public service recruitment as a valuable input into human resource policy formulation for the public service.

I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the commitment and dedication already shown by our staff in adapting to the programme of ongoing change and in facing new challenges on an ongoing basis. It is important to note that this strategy has been devised through partnership structures, representative of all units in the organisation. I am confident that our commitment to partnership approaches, where information is shared openly and where all staff have a meaningful role in shaping the future of our organisation, will enable us to deal effectively with the challenges we will face in the implementation of this strategy.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the collective contributions of the Civil Service Commissioners, the Local Appointments Commissioners and the Steering Group on Implementation of the Strategic Review Report. Their support and leadership have been an invaluable resource to us in this ongoing period of transition and renewal.



Bryan Andrews
Chief Executive

Background

The role of the organisation is to support the Civil Service and the Local Appointments Commissioners in carrying out their statutory roles¹ in appointing personnel to specific positions in the Public Service. In order to illustrate the extent of such activity it is worth noting that during 2002 our work programme involved recruiting across a very broad spectrum, as follows:

- 2,551 clerical staff for Government Departments
- 1,095 middle management positions in Government Departments
- 235 prison officers for the prison service
- 570 Senior Management and Professional Staff for Government Departments
- 390 Senior Management and Professional Staff for Local Authorities and Health Boards
- 432 trainees for An Garda Síochána

In addition, we selected personnel for promotion within the Civil Service by means of inter-departmental competitions and assisted the Top Level Appointments Committee in assessing 129 people for 13 senior positions within the Civil Service. We also provided selection/testing services to the Nursing Careers Centre and other public sector agencies on request.

In total we filled over 5,000 positions and handled over 34,000 applications. Increasingly, we are providing broader Human Resource advisory services that complement our core business as a provider of recruitment and selection services. This involves a range of activities such as facilitating client organisations in determining their human resource requirements, job analysis studies, providing assessment services, training assessors in interviewing and selection techniques, advising clients on staff induction and retention strategies and promoting best practice in the areas of fairness, equality and diversity.

Research projects, in the form of job analysis or labour market research, which we undertake to inform our approach to recruitment and selection, is of considerable value to client organisations for the purpose of developing their own human resources.

¹ The Civil Service Commissioners Act, 1956 in the case of appointments to the Civil Service and the Local Authorities (Officers and Employees) Acts, 1926 - 1983 in the case of specific appointments within the Local Authority and Health Service sectors.

Organisation

Civil Service Commissioners:

The Civil Service Commissioners have statutory responsibility for recruitment to the Civil Service. The Commissioners are bound by law (the Civil Service Commissioners Act, 1956) to recruit by fair, open and merit-based means to various levels in the civil service. The Civil Service Commissioners are currently:

Dr. Rory O'Hanlon,
TD, Ceann Comhairle, Dail Eireann



Mr. Frank Murray,
Civil Service Commissioner



Mr. Ciaran Connolly,
Assistant Secretary, Department of Finance



Local Appointments Commissioners:

The Local Appointments Commissioners are responsible for the selection, by open competition, of persons appointed to specified Senior Management and Professional appointments in Local Authorities, Health Boards, Harbour Authorities, Fisheries Boards and Vocational Education Committees. The Local Appointments Commissioners are currently:

Dr. Rory O'Hanlon,
TD, Ceann Comhairle, Dail Eireann



Mr. Michael Kelly,
Secretary General,
Department of Health and Children



Mr. Niall Callan,
Secretary General, Department of
Environment and Local Government



Organisation

Office of the Commissioners:

Both sets of Commissioners are serviced by a joint secretariat. The current senior management team is as follows:

Mr. Bryan Andrews,
Chief Executive



Mr. Brendan O'Callaghan,
Director of Corporate Affairs



Mr. Niall Leavy,
Principal Psychologist



Mr. Padraig Love,
Head of Recruitment and Selection Services



Executive Summary

What are our Strategic Priorities?

Our strategic priorities for the years 2003 to 2005 can be summarised as:

- To **reduce costs, improve value for money and capture economies of scale** associated with Public Sector Recruitment by :
 - Broadening our client base to include public service bodies who are currently outside of our remit and who will welcome cost effective and quality focussed alternatives to meeting their recruitment needs.
 - Broadening the range of recruitment related HR services provided to existing clients.
 - Improving our organisational flexibility and streamlining our business processes.
 - Working as internal partners with clients.
 - Developing our Publicjobs website as a portal site for public sector recruitment, both nationally and internationally.
- To progress our **e-government** agenda through exploiting the industry-scale capacity presented by our interactive publicjobs website to its full potential. This presents an efficient 24 hour international platform on which to build new enhanced solutions and web-enabled services to all stakeholders in the recruitment process particularly client organisations, candidates, board members and members of the public.
- To strategically launch an **international** presence in the recruitment market through the acquisition and marketing of the publicjobs.com format of our website domain address
- To develop a stronger **Business/Customer Service ethos** across the Office with the customer as the driving focus.
- To **“Get it Right”** by strengthening our Quality Assurance mechanisms in the areas of continuous improvement, best practice and equality monitoring.
- To **e-enable** our testing and interview scheduling, introduce computer-based testing and make same day testing and instant scoring the norm.
- To **develop the skills mix, professionalism and capabilities of staff** in a culture based on **partnership, real involvement and innovation**
- To play a key role in supporting Public Service Modernisation by delivering quality recruits and by channeling the data and insights we gain from our unique role in public sector recruitment as a research input into central **public service HR policy development**.
- To strengthen our **internal management capability** and results focus by implementing the Management Information Framework and introducing Capacity Management techniques and systems,

Why pursue this Strategy?

The current slowdown in economic growth will require that Government spending be tightly controlled in order to preserve economic competitiveness. The recent budget for 2003 specifies that public service organisations must operate within their authorised staffing numbers and that the overall number of public servants will decrease by 5,000 over the next three years. The demand for recruits in areas for which we have statutory responsibility will decline although we will still be required to maintain sufficient panels of qualified candidates in place to respond efficiently to demands as they arise. In recent years we have greatly increased our overall recruitment capacity though adopting a customer focussed approach to service delivery, streamlining our business processes and developing the capability of staff and IT resources. We are now well positioned to use this capacity to provide cost effective and quality focussed recruitment, assessment and related advisory services to a wider range of public service organisations at a time when they face tight budgetary restrictions.

What are the expected outcomes?

Becoming the recognised primary source of expertise and best practice in Public Sector Recruitment and the recruitment provider of choice. Contributing on a number of levels to strengthening the Human Resource capability of clients. HR capability has been identified by PA Consultants as a critical enabler of the Public Service Modernisation Programme, which must continue despite budgetary restrictions.

Establishing the Publicjobs portal website to achieve significant savings on recruitment advertising across the Public Sector.

Increasing choice in accessing and availing of services, through the development of web-enabled and self-service approaches to our recruitment and selection processes.

In our future scenario the Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Bill envisages widespread legislative and institutional reform of Public Sector Recruitment. Our strategic priorities, particularly in relation to the development of a stronger business / customer service ethos and preserving fairness and probity, will facilitate the smooth transition to, and a preparedness for, the new Public Service Recruitment regime.

Our Mission

Through first rate recruitment, selection and advisory services, we will ensure that our clients can attract and retain people of the highest quality to enable the effective delivery of excellent public services.

Our Vision

Becoming the Recruitment Provider of Choice

Our future development as an organisation will be influenced primarily by the needs of our client organisations. Our approach to public service recruitment will be characterised by our desire to work closely and effectively with clients to ensure that we deliver quality recruits customised to their specific requirements. Our aim is to be the recruitment provider of choice and the source of best practice advice in public sector recruitment and selection, particularly as the recruitment legislative framework develops and becomes more flexible over the coming years.

Adding Greater Value - New Services, Broader Client Base

We will develop our capacity to assist clients, by acting as internal partners, to resolve the human resource challenges they face in delivering public services. Our core recruitment and assessment activities give us a unique and detailed insight into public sector recruitment and related HR activities. This in turn enables us to provide a broader range of services to clients in areas such as internal selection, interview and assessment, training and development, retention and work quality improvements and equality proofing of HR systems.

Our publicjobs website will be developed as a portal site for all public sector recruitment introducing new economies of scale, increasing efficiencies and improving value for money.

Our customised recruitment and assessment facilities at our Corporate Headquarters in Abbey Street, Dublin 1, including, interview and assessment facilities, training and seminar suites, interactive web facility, etc. will be utilised to greater effect and made available to a wide range of clients across the public service.

Dynamic, high visibility Presence in Labour Market

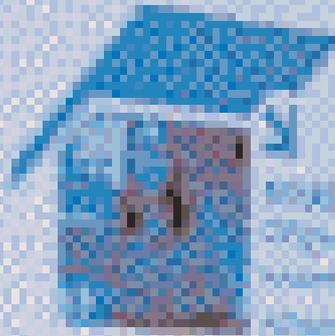
We will build on the success of our Careers Store and interactive publicjobs website to ensure that the image of the public service is enhanced and that we are positioned to attract people of the highest calibre. These cutting edge recruitment facilities put us in a unique position in the labour market and enable us to showcase public service careers in a dynamic, interactive way and to promote public service organisations as modern, progressive, employers of choice.

Central to Public Service Modernisation

We are determined to play a key role in shaping and strengthening the capacity of the public service of the future. Through the provision of quality customer-focussed recruitment, assessment and related services we gain unique information and insights that is invaluable as a research input into the determination of policies relating to the Strategic Human Resource Management in the civil and wider public service.



CAREER PROFILE



Work in a dynamic, growing environment with a focus on customer service and quality.

The company is seeking individuals who are motivated, self-starter, and have a strong desire to learn. The ideal candidate will have a minimum of 2 years of experience in a similar position and a strong understanding of customer service and quality control.



Apply Now

Statutory Framework

In previous Statements of Strategy we have highlighted the need for legislative and institutional reform in a recruitment regime that has remained relatively unchanged for over 40 years, despite major changes in the public service that it serves. Proposals for reform in the area of public service recruitment have been advanced by consultation under the Public Service Modernisation Programme. A key aspect of the proposed reforms involves the provision of effective recruitment services and putting in place a means of safeguarding the integrity of recruitment activities.

Recruitment will be overseen by **Public Service Commissioners** who will set binding guidelines for, and ensure compliance by, recruiters. The expertise currently held by the existing Office of the Civil Service and Local Appointments Commissioners will be retained in a new Public Appointments Service which will be available to provide recruitment and assessment services and advice to public service organisations. The **Public Appointments Service** will be an independent organisation to the Public Service Commissioners but subject to their guidelines and standards on recruitment activity. The existing role of the Minister for Finance, as policy maker in relation to public service recruitment, will be preserved under any new statutory arrangements.

Organisation transformation

We have over the past two years developed a more integrated approach to making real progress with the implementation of the broader public sector modernisation programme. Our overall strategic direction is aimed at moving the organisation beyond its pre-dominant focus on the probity of the selection process towards a broader business ethos, driven by the needs of the clients we serve. A Client Relations Management structure is already in place and is improving our understanding of clients needs. We have also concentrated on developing a strong staff involvement and development culture and invested in enabling information and communication technologies.

Our key critical success areas for moving the organisation forward at this point are:

- * Developing **additional business** based on providing a broader range of recruitment and related HR services to existing and new clients across the public service
- * Embedding the **client-centred** focus internally into all aspects of the organisation's work
- * Accelerating our development of **information and communications technologies and electronic services delivery**
- * **Re-designing our organisation** and developing our staff to ensure that our growing focus on new business, Client Relations Management and the full suite of e-recruitment services are supported to maximum effect.

In essence our new business ethos will provide clients with a highly professional, state of the art, customer-centred recruitment and advisory service by enabling us to compete within the labour market on cost, quality and speed while preserving the high standards of probity and integrity demanded of public service recruitment.

Our Values

Although publicly funded, our core business is recruitment and, in recent years, we have demonstrated a strong capability for operating in a competitive commercial market. The competitive labour market has had a profoundly positive impact on our confidence as an organisation and our own awareness of our business strengths.

The recruitment, selection and related human resource services that we provide are a key component on which the future development of the public service depends. This conviction informs our overall approach to business planning and service delivery which is based on three core values:

Quality Customer Service

We are a service provider to over 80 client organisations including government departments, local authorities and health services. In a typical year we consider in excess of 60,000 people for public service appointments. We believe that all customers are entitled to quality services delivered in good time and in a climate of courtesy, mutual respect, trust and confidence. We operate our business transparently, by providing customers with the clearest information possible at all times.

Quality of Product

We benchmark our services against best practice internationally. Best practice, in a broad sense, means applying a process that is demonstrably job-related and consistent, with each candidate being objectively assessed against the justifiable requirements of the job. We take a broadly based approach to quality assurance. Continuous evaluation, through client feedback and research and keeping abreast of new developments in selection techniques, is a key element of our approach to getting it right.

Public Service Values

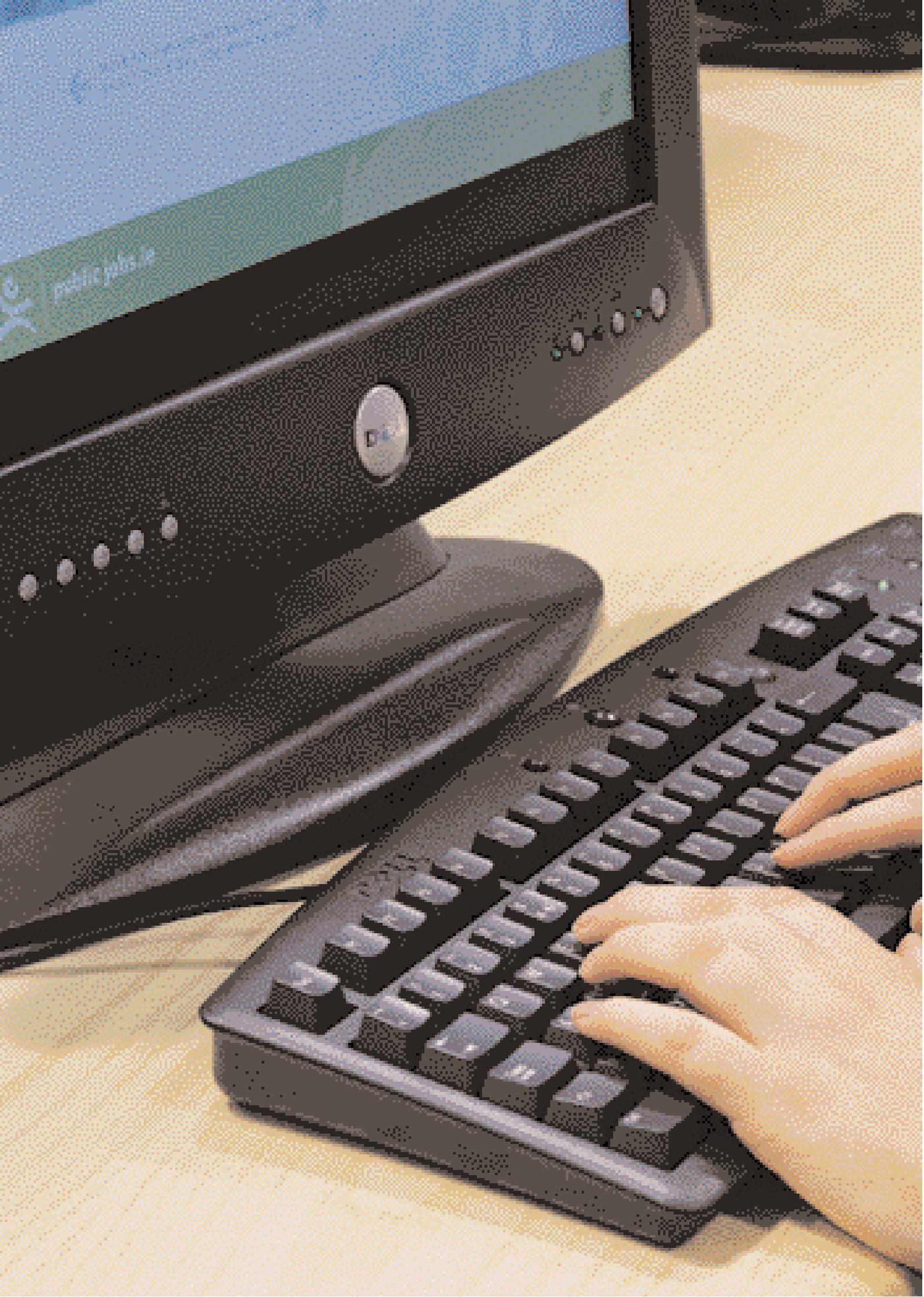
We continuously seek to obtain the optimum return on investment through making the best use of our share of public funds. Significant progress will continue to be achieved through new value adding processes and new efficiencies through our commitment to furthering the e-government agenda.

We have a unique responsibility to show leadership in terms of promoting equality of opportunity in all our work. We constantly monitor our recruitment and selection activity to ensure compliance with the Employment Equality Act, 1998. We have made significant progress to date in encouraging increased participation by women, people with disabilities and older candidates in the selection process.



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centr





The background is a solid blue color with a fine, light-colored dot pattern. Overlaid on this are several white, hand-drawn style lines. A prominent feature is a large, complex, overlapping shape on the right side, resembling a stylized star or a cluster of intersecting paths. On the left side, there are two parallel horizontal lines. The upper line has several small white circles placed along it, and a larger white circle is positioned below it, slightly to the left. The overall aesthetic is clean, modern, and abstract.

Our Goals



Our Goals

External

1. To provide high quality, customised recruitment, selection and assessment services to client organisations across the public service in line with their own unique requirements.
2. To give client organisations greater control in getting the right people in line with their requirements and in a timely manner.
3. To add greater value to Public Sector Recruitment by complementing our core recruitment and selection services with a broader range of value-adding and related HR services and to extend our services to a wider range of public service organisations.
4. To generate efficiencies and achieve greater cost effectiveness in Public Sector recruitment by improving our organisational flexibility, continuously improving our processes, working as internal partners with clients and developing our publicjobs website as an internationally branded portal site for Public Service recruitment.
5. To be recognised as the primary source of best practice advice and expertise in public service recruitment, selection and assessment.
6. To channel our unique knowledge and understanding gained from researching, profiling and filling public service appointments as a key input to central Public Service HR policy development.
7. To harness fully the potential for using new information and communication technologies to deliver recruitment and selection services on-line to client organisations and candidates and to play a key role in achieving the Information Society's vision of integrated, electronic delivery of all public services.

Internal

8. To develop a stronger business ethos within the organisation.
9. To improve our internal financial and management information systems to enable us to achieve efficiencies, to provide increased levels of service at no additional cost and to increase our overall cost effectiveness in the competitive labour market.
10. To develop the capabilities of staff in a culture based on partnership and innovation.
11. To build upon our reputation as a centre of expertise in public sector recruitment and selection.

Environmental Assessment

Recent Developments and Emerging Trends

Our approach to strategic planning has been influenced by a number of key developments in our environment.

Economic Growth and Labour Supply

The pace of economic growth in Ireland since the mid-1990s has considerably shrunk the pool of unused talent available in the Labour market. Despite a slight upward trend in unemployment in recent months, the economy remains close to full employment. Our economy is expected to continue to grow, although at a slower rate than evident in recent years. This, together with high rates of participation in third level education, means that the source of high quality recruits will continue to be constrained over the next few years. It is clear that the labour market will remain competitive and challenging for the public sector.

The slowdown in economic growth also means that Government spending will be tightly controlled in the coming years in order to preserve economic competitiveness. The budget for 2003 specified that public service organisations must operate within their current authorised staffing numbers and that the overall number of public servants will decrease by 5,000 over the next three years. While this will reduce the demand for recruits, we will still be required to maintain sufficient panels of qualified candidates in place to respond efficiently to demands that arise within areas for which we have a statutory responsibility for recruitment. Across the public service, including those areas outside our statutory remit, the need for efficiency and value for money in recruitment will be heightened by the tight budgetary environment. We will respond by making our recruitment, assessment and advisory services available to public service organisations in general with a view to achieving cost savings, efficiencies and improved value for money on the total expenditure on public service recruitment.

National Development

The public service has played a key role in creating the economic conditions necessary for economic growth. The '*National Development Plan 2000- 2006*' demonstrates the Government's commitment to a broad range of measures aimed at achieving economic and social progress. The Local Authority sector under the 'Better local Government' initiative is also intent on making a strong contribution to shaping the Ireland of the future. The success of such programmes is heavily reliant on the degree to which public service organisations can attract and retain their share of the talent available in the labour market.

The new Programme for Government includes specific commitments that are critically dependent on effective recruitment and selection services. Successfully hosting the Presidency of the European Union during the first half of 2004 will require considerable HR resources. The Government has also renewed its commitment to the decentralisation of public services. It is anticipated some existing services will be relocated in line with the Government's National Spatial Strategy. This will place significant demands on our recruitment and HR advisory services.



Public Service Modernisation Programme

Since the publication of *'Delivering Better Government'* the public service has embarked upon an intensive programme of modernisation aimed at improving the quality and delivery of public services and increasing the accountability of service providers. The success of the modernisation programme is critically dependent on a new approach to Human Resource Management (HRM), including recruitment and selection, within the Civil Service. Likewise, the Local Authorities and Health Services are paying increasing attention to Human Resource Management policies and are developing strategies to support their own current and future business needs. This new focus on HRM has significant implications for the type and quality of recruitment and selection services demanded by Public Service organisations and the manner in which these services are provided.

The recent evaluation of the SMI Process by external consultants on behalf of the Department of the Taoiseach has identified HRM as being a critical enabler of further progress on the public service modernisation programme. Improving the quality of work, portraying the public service as an employment of choice, developing staff competencies, and identifying the leaders of tomorrow are among the key HR challenges faced by all Public Service bodies and which resonate directly with the work of our organisation.

Customised Recruitment, Selection and related Services

In our well-developed, complex, modern economy, Public Service organisations have become increasingly specialist organisations. This creates demands for a broader range of recruitment services that are customised to each organisation's specific needs.

Equality & Diversity

The grounds for potential discrimination have been extended by the Employment Equality Act, 1998 to include the nine areas of gender, marital status, family status, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, ethnic origins or membership of the Travelling Community. There are many challenges involved for organisations in equipping themselves to comply with this Act. There is an increased awareness of the need to develop new systems, practices and cultures that facilitate new approaches to handling equality and diversity in recruitment and selection, in particular, and in the workplace in general. Public service employers must be seen to lead by example in terms of offering equal opportunities for employment and for career advancement to all. Gender, disability and membership of the travelling community have been particularly identified as areas where greater progress towards equality needs to be made.

Equality does not mean treating everybody the same so much as extending equal opportunities to all. There is much evidence to suggest that atypical employment patterns and policies designed to enhance an individual's ability to balance their work and lifestyle effectively are conducive to promoting greater equality. A recent Fórfás study identified flexible working practices as the main requirement for prolonged participation in the workforce by people aged 55 years and over. The recent decision by the Irish Government

to promote tele-working, the agreement on tele-working between European trade unions and the agreement between unions and employers signed in Brussels in July, 2002 together pave the way for considerable advances on tele-working in the coming years.

Critical Analysis of Strengths, Opportunities and Challenges

It is important that our organisation is correctly positioned to respond effectively to the developments in our environment as described above. In this context we have undertaken a critical analysis of our strengths, challenges and opportunities at this point in time.

Core Strengths

- Knowledge of public sector
- Committed and highly expert staff
- Proven track record in probity
- Reputation and Integrity
- Proven quality processes
- Internal resource of key professionals
- External access to key professionals
- Competence in large volume recruitment
- Expertise in senior level and professional appointments

Key Challenges

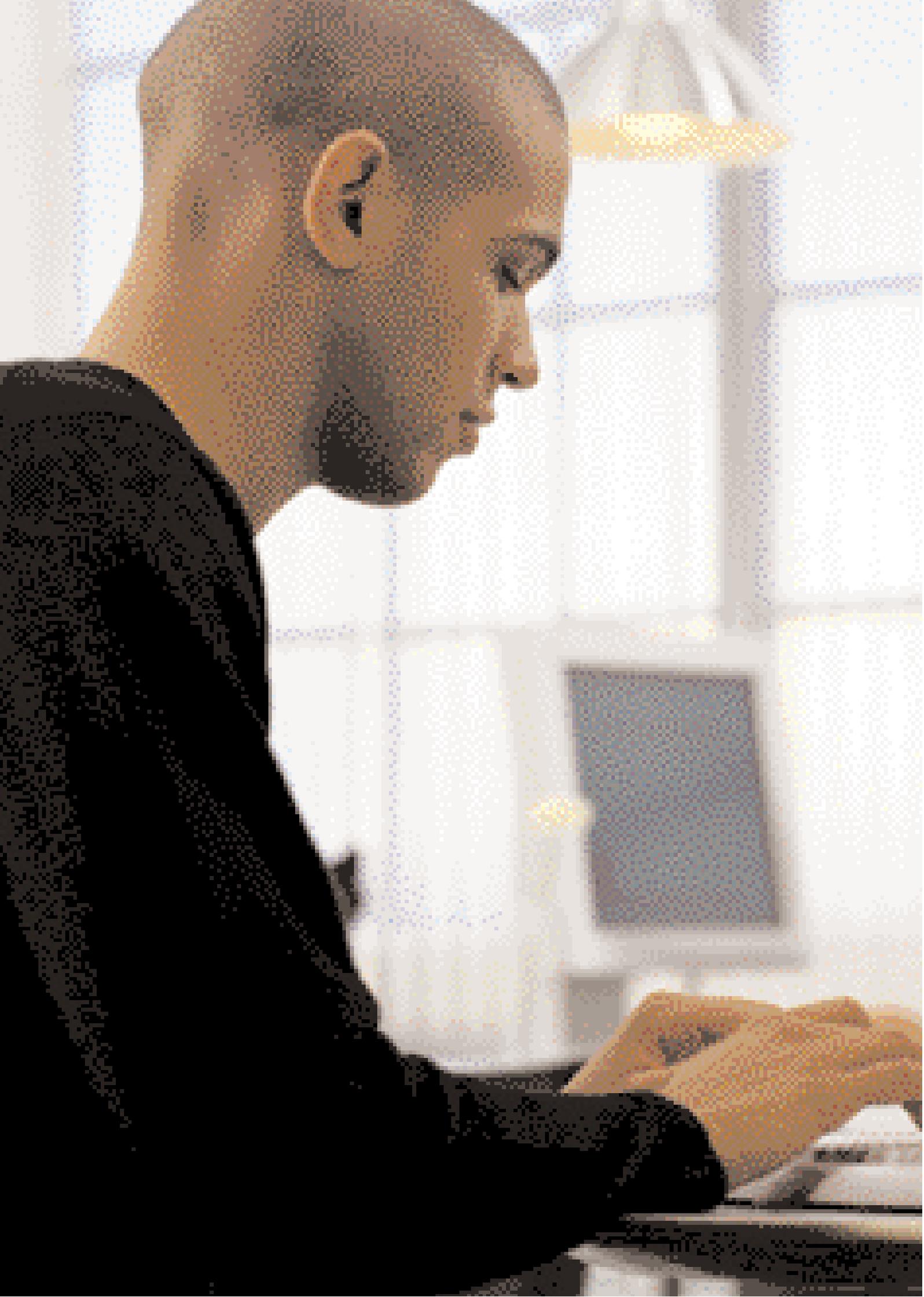
- Inadequate investment in key areas:
 - * Research and Development
 - * Knowledge Management
 - * Financial and Management Information System
- Internally embedding business ethos / client-centred focus in all areas of work
- Developing and attracting additional areas of business
- Managing our HR, Accommodation and ICT Capacity
- Moving forwards from our highly regulated, rigid approach where the focus on the process has traditionally taken precedence over individual clients and candidates
- Increasingly legal environment
- Transition to new statutory and institutional framework
- Reactive, short term focus



New Opportunities

- Custom designed recruitment facilities, including interview and testing facilities and Careers Store
- Interactive Publicjobs website
- New recruitment framework
- The Public Service HR reform programme (including PMDS)
- Graduate recruitment and marketing
- New enabling technologies
- Evolving employment legislation
- Flexible working arrangements
- Planned Government decentralisation
- Integrated Public Services including REACH
- New products and services
- Internationalisation of candidate pool
- Client willingness to outsource additional business
- New corporate image
- New strategic alliances with other organisations





The background is a solid yellow color with a fine, repeating pattern of small blue dots. Overlaid on this are several thin, light blue lines. Some lines form large, overlapping loops and curves, while others are straight lines. On the left side, there are two parallel horizontal lines, each with several small blue circular nodes spaced along them. In the bottom right corner, there are four light blue chevron symbols pointing to the right, arranged in a horizontal row.

Strategic Framework

Strategic Framework

We are now ready to set out a specific course of action to be pursued over the next three years in order to develop our organisation in line with our vision of the future. Our analysis clearly identifies that our future depends upon achieving progress in four critical success areas, each requiring it's own comprehensive programme of activities.

CRITICAL SUCCESS AREAS

PROGRAMMES

Developing a strong Customer Service culture which anticipates and exceeds the expectations of client organisations and candidates



The Customer Service Programme

Adding greater value to the Public Service by providing additional services with less resources



The Business Development Programme

Optimising the benefits of information and communication technologies



The Organisation Development Programme

Re-aligning our organisation structure to support our growing focus on client-centred and electronically based business development



The Strategic Human Resource Programme

Customer Service

“Anticipating and Exceeding Customers Needs”

- 1.1 Building on the success of our CRM Approach
- 1.2 Delivering recruits on time
- 1.3 Contributing to the Public Service Modernisation Programme
- 1.4 Understanding the Labour Market
- 1.5 Promoting Public Service Careers
- 1.6 Developing our understanding of the needs of potential recruits
- 1.7 Equality & Diversity
- 1.8 Enhancing Fairness and Probity
- 1.9 Getting it Right

New Business Development

“Adding Greater Value to the Public Service”

- 2.1 Adding Greater Value to Public Service Recruitment
- 2.2 Developing our own strong portfolio of e-friendly Recruitment and Assessment Products
- 2.3 To Provide Excellent Equality and Diversity Development and Auditing Services
- 2.4 To provide high quality Advisory and Training Services
- 2.5 To develop our Technology base and providing on-line options for all services
- 2.6 EU and International Focus

Strategic Human Resources Development

“Achieving Excellence Through Developing our People”

- 4.1 Becoming a Partnership Organisation
- 4.2 “Excellence Through People” - Contributing to Business and Organisation Development
- 4.3 Re-aligning our organisation and resources to ensure that current and emerging business needs are properly supported.
- 4.4 Fostering Innovation
- 4.5 Equality & Diversity
- 4.6 Towards a Safe, Healthy and Positive Working Environment
- 4.7 Developing External Relations

Organisation Development

“Efficient, cost effective and high quality service delivery”

- 3.1 E-Recruitment
- 3.2 Improving our Business Processes
- 3.3 Managing our capacity
- 3.4 Developing our Management Information Systems
- 3.5 Developing a Culture of Cost Consciousness
- 3.6 Risk Management
- 3.7 Knowledge Management
- 3.8 Cross Border Co-operation
- 3.9 Developing our International Focus

The Customer Service Programme

Our future development will continue to be primarily driven by the needs of our customers. Our success depends on our ability to embed the principles of quality customer service, as adopted by Government, into all corporate activities, from strategic and business planning to service delivery and from training and development to performance management.

As we move forward our priorities over the next three years will be on broadening our mechanisms for customer consultation and giving our customers greater choice in accessing and availing of our services. Our publicjobs website, which has industry-level capacity, provides an ideal platform for the development of web-enabled service delivery to all customers. We will maintain the awareness of staff on customer service issues and we will seek to continually improve our performance against the standards of service delivery to which we have publicly committed ourselves.

We will focus on anticipating and exceeding customers needs by: -

Action 1.1 Building on the success of our Customer Relations Management Approach

We will place the needs of clients at the forefront of our plans for organisational and business development. We will build on the progress achieved by creating a Client Relations Management (CRM) structure to provide customised recruitment services to client organisations. This CRM approach provides clients with a central point of access for assistance and advice in relation to their requirements across our entire range of recruitment and related activity. We are keen to work as 'internal partners' with clients on all aspects of service delivery and will consult with them at every opportunity in order to anticipate and improve our understanding of their specific needs. We will support clients on the introduction of human resource planning.

We will agree annual service level agreements with clients to guide service delivery. The introduction of formal follow-up mechanisms after the assignment of recruits and the setting up of Customer Panels will provide quality assurance at a higher level than is currently the case.

Action 1.2 Delivering recruits on time

Efficient delivery of recruits is a key requirement of clients. Our priority will be to continue to deliver clerical, administrative and graduate recruits on demand to clients and to significantly reduce time-scales for senior management, professional and specialist appointments. A key activity will be improving our ability to forward plan recruitment programmes and to manage our operational capacity more effectively. Process mapping has been helpful in streamlining our recruitment and selection processes during the past year and will become an integral part of operational activity across the organisation.

Action 1.3 Contributing to the Public Service Modernisation Programme

Human Resource Management is a central component of the Public Service Modernisation Programme and has been identified centrally as an area where progress needs to be accelerated. We will proactively contribute to this process by exchanging information and insights gained from our unique role in recruitment and selection that have the potential to inform the future development of Human Resource policies across the Public Service. Our recent report profiling the key senior management grade of Principal Office illustrates the quality of the contribution we can make here.

The Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Bill currently being drafted provides for a new more flexible recruitment model. We will continue to proactively participate in the consultative and legislative framework with a view to securing changes which afford greater flexibility for responding to the dynamics of the labour market while ensuring that the existing focus on fairness and probity in public sector recruitment is retained.

Despite budgetary restrictions, the public service modernisation process must continue apace. Our business development programme aimed at developing existing and additional services to a broader base of public service clients, will result in cost savings for other public service organisations and allow them to focus their own resources in other critical areas.

Action 1.4 Understanding the Labour Market

Our client organisations expect that our approach to service delivery and advice is based on an in-depth understanding of the labour market. We will continue to develop our understanding of the labour market by undertaking research and collecting data on trends in the supply and demand for relevant categories of recruits, by keeping up-to-date with approaches used by other employers, and, where appropriate, through formal market research. We will use the knowledge gained in these ways to advise clients on skills availability in the market place, on reaching specific target groups and on effecting improvements in the quality of work available to staff. We will proactively ensure that such knowledge is available as a research input to inform central policy decisions on these matters.



Action 1.5 Promoting Public Service Careers

Marketing the public service as an employer of choice in a competitive recruitment environment is an ongoing challenge.

We have a broad-minded approach and we are continually prepared to research and develop new promotional strategies in line with the needs of our clients. Recent success in increasing the participation of undergraduates in our graduate recruitment programme demonstrates the importance of effective marketing strategies and will inform our future approach to graduate recruitment programmes that are vital to securing the management capabilities of our client departments into the future.

Our new facilities at Chapter House, particularly the Careers Store and the publicjobs website, offer a new channel into the labour market and a new way of helping potential recruits to explore in an interactive way, the variety of careers and opportunities available across the civil and public service. We will use the Careers Store to promote and showcase specific public service careers as a key part of recruitment campaigns.

The publicjobs website has developed a strong foothold in the market and we will develop its potential as the primary portal site for public service recruitment. Our close partnership with clients, facilitated by the CRM structure, will be important here in ensuring optimal returns on mutual investments in marketing.

All investment in the promotion of the Public Service as an employer of choice will be monitored and evaluated in order to ensure that it is effective and to inform future decision-making.

Action 1.6 Developing our understanding of the needs of potential recruits

Our success is critically dependent on the keenness of our understanding of the needs of the individuals we target as potential recruits. Our feedback survey system on applicants' perceptions of the recruitment and selection process will continue to result in improvements that reflect the needs of potential recruits. The surveys have recently been broadened to include questions relating to motivation for applying, where the advertisement was seen and applicants' perceptions of the public service as an employer will inform our approach to recruitment in future. We will broaden our consultative mechanisms by setting up a range of customer panels representative of groups of customers who are willing to meet us and give feedback on their experiences of dealing with us. A systematic complaints procedure is also being developed at present.

Our website currently enables people to apply and view test familiarisation material on-line and to register an interest in potential future vacancies. It

also has the facility to give regular, up-to-date information on recruitment programmes for which they have applied. We believe that frequent communication will reduce attrition rates throughout the selection process. We will extend the range of services available on-line in order to give people greater choice in their dealing with us. We will be in a position to schedule interview and test appointments on-line early in 2004. We will also invest in the development of computer-based testing materials.

We will continue, guided by feedback, to improve the quality of information given to potential recruits, conscious at all times that our messages and communication style should create and reinforce a positive impression of the public service as an employer. Our helpdesk and website will be used to provide structured and effective support for individuals in pursuit of a career in the public service. Induction courses for graduate recruits introduced in 2002 have been well received and will be extended to other categories of employees.

We will provide clear, comprehensive and timely feedback to applicants on their performance at each stage of the selection process.

Action 1.7 Equality and Diversity

Equality of opportunity is central to every aspect of our work. In 2001 we introduced an Equality Monitoring Survey of applicants who attend selection tests which addresses the nine areas protected against discrimination by the Employment Equality Act, 1998. This enables us to ensure that our policy of equality of opportunity is effectively implemented.

We will play a key role in ensuring that the public service leads by example where equality and diversity is concerned. This will include continuing to work closely with the Department of Finance to ensure that Government Departments and Offices fulfil their quota of 3% jobs being filled by people with disabilities. We will also specifically target members of the travelling community for clerical positions in Government departments.

Action 1.8 Enhancing Fairness and Probity

As noted earlier, a key aspect of the proposed legislative and institutional reforms involves putting in place a clear differentiation between the control of recruitment activity and the provision of recruitment services. Both these functions are currently within our area of responsibility. We will ensure that both functions are prepared for the smooth transition to a new operating framework. It is vitally important that any reforms are achieved without compromising the widespread public confidence in the probity and fairness of Public Service recruitment.

In order to facilitate the smooth transition to the new system of control we will, at an early stage, develop proposals in relation to the format and content of new Codes of Conduct. These Codes of Conduct will set out the broad principles of good recruitment practice that we envisage will replace the existing system of highly prescriptive regulations.

The organisation is currently beginning a series of transformations that will enable us to operate effectively in the recruitment market under a new statutory framework. In this context we will ensure that the over-riding need to develop a strong business ethos is achieved without any loss of our focus on fairness and probity underpinning all recruitment activity.

Action 1.9 Getting it Right

Excellence in service delivery is never a permanent achievement; it requires continuous analysis and attention in order to be maintained. We recognise that we need to be in a position to guarantee that our services will meet the requirements of our clients. We have moved beyond a centralised 'one size fits all' approach to public service recruitment towards a model where high quality, responsive services are tailored to the differing needs of individual clients. The quality of our product assumes a new importance and the imperative is no longer to get the job done but to get it right.

We will continuously review and evaluate the effectiveness of our approaches to service delivery and of our administrative processes and practices. Our client-centred focus enables us to offer follow-up services dealing with all aspects of service delivery. We will review and improve the predictability of our existing recruitment and selection methods. This will be coupled with a strong emphasis on researching and developing new approaches, such as the potential for assessment centres in senior management appointments and emerging "beyond competencies" approaches.

The Business Development Programme

As demand for recruits slows down, our future depends on our capacity to deliver a broader range of cost-effective services that add greater value to the public service. We currently have a monopoly on recruitment for the Civil Service and for recruitment to specified positions in the Local Authorities and Health Boards. We are confident that we can develop the capacity to provide recruitment and selection services to the wider public service. Our proven track record and expertise and our focus on probity is unrivalled in public sector recruitment.

Action 2.1 Adding Greater Value to Public Service Recruitment

We will pursue a three stranded approach to adding value to the Public Service recruitment as follows:

Broadening our range of services

Our rapid testing facility, known as the 'SMART Centre', has enabled us to provide clerical recruits on demand to Government departments by enabling potential recruits to sit the selection tests, receive their results and complete the assignment procedure on the same day. Other sectors of the public service, particularly Local Authorities and Health Boards, also have significant demands for clerical recruits for which they all compete individually, against ourselves and private recruiters, in a tight labour market. The 'SMART Centre' approach provides an ideal mechanism for a uniform public service approach to clerical recruitment which would achieve significant economies of scale by cutting down on the advertising and other overhead expenses incurred by each organisation. We will proactively encourage other public service organisations to work in partnership with us in meeting their own clerical recruitment needs.

We will also continue to extend the use of the 'SMART Centre' to other recruitment programmes. Our Client Relations Management structure gives us the facility to tailor our services to the specific needs of client organisations. This will involve training and advising clients in all aspects of recruitment and selection, preparing job profiles, facilitating the planning of HR needs, providing induction training and advising on improvements in work quality.



Broadening our Client Base

We have successfully provided recruitment and selection services to a number of public service organisation outside of our statutory remit (e.g. the Nursing Careers Centre, Garda Trainees). We will build upon this by proactively promoting our services to public bodies who may be interested in availing of cost- effective, high-quality recruitment solutions. Budgetary restrictions create a unique opportunity for us to assist public organisations outside our remit in meeting their recruitment needs. In this way cost savings on administrative budgets can be achieved and greater value for money derived from the total spend on public sector recruitment.

Sharing our facilities

Our new Corporate Headquarters has been custom designed for recruitment and selection activity. Facilities include the Careers Store and interactive website, interview and selection facilities, training rooms and a restaurant. We see these as a shared resource available to public service organisations and will provide them to client organisations at cost value.

Developing our publicjobs website as a portal site for public sector recruitment has the potential to realise huge savings in advertising costs across the public service. We will proactively encourage public service organisations to advertise their jobs on our portal. This will enable them to reduce their advertising spend by placing focussed adverts in conventional media which direct their target audience to more detailed information at publicjobs.ie.

Our success in this area will be dependent on our ability to manage our overall capacity. Business development will be coordinated by a Senior Management sub-group who will identify additional business activities, assess our capacity and decide on priorities based on where we as an organisation can make the most effective contribution.

Action 2.2 Developing our own strong portfolio of e-friendly Recruitment and Assessment Products

Our rapid testing facility has demonstrated that increased efficiency can be gained through supporting and delivering assessment electronically. Computer-based testing offers great potential to deliver existing assessments in new ways and to extend our current portfolio of tools and techniques.

The continued delivery of assessment solutions is dependent on our ability to develop a suite of high quality, well designed and validated Recruitment and Assessment products and tools. As we move forward we will focus

more on developing our own products for which we will own the intellectual rights. Products will be developed in close consultation with clients and tailored to their precise requirements.

In particular, we identify a need for new techniques to supplement the evidence obtained at interviewing and to improve decision making. The development and use of Assessment Centre approaches has the potential to increase the effectiveness of the approach to filling senior management and specialist appointments.

The development of our own portfolio of assessment products and approaches will be fortified by a comprehensive system for researching, evaluating and validating different aspects of our recruitment and selection programmes and the products we develop and use. This renewed focus on evaluation and follow-up will reinforce our commitment to continuous improvement and will play a significant part in helping to build client awareness and confidence in the effectiveness of our products and interventions.

Action 2.3 To provide excellent Equality and Diversity Development and Auditing Services

Our focus on equality is a core strength of our service and we are committed to continuing to promote and push the boundaries of equality in all aspects of assessment.

Our Equality Service will promote the continued development of a high quality and transparent Equality Monitoring and Reporting Service. Equality monitoring will be seen as an integral part of all aspects of our work and we will ensure that our products and services do not adversely affect equality profiles. We will provide a continuous programme of equality and diversity awareness training for staff and clients involved in all aspects of assessment.

We will establish ourselves as the market leader in the provision of advice on equality in assessment and in the provision of a HR Systems Equality and Diversity Audit Service.



Action 2.4 To provide high quality Advisory and Training Services

We aim to position ourselves as the primary provider of high quality and high value assessment related advisory and training services (e.g. testing, Interviewing, etc) to the Public Service. A key focus will be on presenting proposals which clearly address client needs and which can be managed efficiently within an ever strengthening project management culture. We will establish a reputation for high quality, clear, constructive and well-anchored report writing.

In supporting our clients, our products and our network of associates (e.g. Board Members, Assessors, Occupational Psychologists), we will provide a comprehensive range of training programmes in the areas of recruitment, assessment, job design, development and equality. Developments in the e-learning area will be fully harnessed to ensure that the most effective solutions are delivered.

Action 2.5 To develop our technology base and provide on-line options for all our services

Publicjobs.ie is an ideal channel for delivering a broad range of services, where the emphasis will be on developing and managing effective relations with candidates and clients. The overriding aim is to present a user-friendly, flexible, efficient and dynamic public face for our benefit and for the benefit of client organisations. We will develop integrated systems, underpinned by a robust applicant management and tracking system, which supports and encourages end-to-end management of the candidate, from attracting applications through to gathering job performance data. The system will dovetail with Human Resource Information Systems used by clients.

The Organisation Development Programme

This programme combines innovation, continuous evaluation, quality assurance and best practice. The aim is to change and improve the way we work and deliver services and to ensure that effective systems and procedures are in place to support current and emerging business needs.

A key aspect of our future development will be in the electronic delivery of recruitment services. E-recruitment has a number of attractions for us. Firstly it allows us to achieve further efficiencies, particularly around the management of a large volume of paperwork (applications and CVs for each applicant). Secondly, it provides a new channel into the market place while simultaneously portraying the public service as a modern, professional, dynamic employer. Thirdly, it allows us to provide more choice and new and improved services to client organisations and to applicants.

Our organisational development programme is informed by a number of structural arrangements designed to support future thinking and development:

- * A Strong Client Relations Management structure provides an intimate appreciation of the needs of clients and a two-way communication channel for evaluating their satisfaction. It is an excellent consultation forum for brokering solutions and guiding our ongoing development.
- * A strong internal technical and professional expertise base is supported by a comprehensive network of associates, partnerships with external organisations and links with institutions of excellence all of which provides a strong basis for benchmarking our service and identifying gaps and areas for improvement.
- * A Strong Project Management base driven by a project office that supports organisational projects, oversees key business process improvement initiatives and ensures rapid progress on e-Government strategy.

Our organisation development programme will pursue the following objectives:

Action 3.1 E-Recruitment

In March, 2001 we published our e-government strategy demonstrating our commitment to electronic delivery of public services in line with the wishes of Government. We have developed close links with REACH, the agency established by Government to develop a 'public service broker' whereby citizens will be able to avail of all public services through a single point of contact. We have been earmarked as a REACH launch-service provider meaning that we will be one of the first services available through the REACH broker when it goes live to the public. We are on course to achieve this goal and will continue to prioritise this area and ensure that all systems development work is undertaken with this in mind.

We will realise the full potential of the industry-scale capacity presented by publicjobs.ie as an efficient 24 hour, international platform on which to build new enhanced solutions and web-enabled services to all stakeholders in the recruitment process, particularly client organisations, candidates, board

members and members of the public. Over time, applicants will be able to avail of self-selection and career advice options, be scheduled for selection events on-line, undergo selection tests, and even interviews on-line. Client organisations can expect a fully web-enabled client service database. Interview board members will also be served on-line. All of these options are being actively considered at present.

A range of projects over the next three years will provide a full suite of web-enabled services to all customers. Cost-benefit analysis has been used to determine that our immediate priority is to web-enable services to applicants for public service jobs. The immediate priorities will be in the area of computerised selection testing and on-line scheduling of appointments for interviews and selection tests. The Project Board, supported by the Project Office, will co-ordinate and prioritise further key strategic projects and will provide office-wide direction and focus on implementation.

Action 3.2 Improving our Business Processes

In recent years we have invested significantly in the application of competency-based selection and in developing our services in line with professional best practice. Based on our experience to date we will take stock of what has been achieved in order to further develop and refine our use of competency-based techniques. This review will involve close consultation with key stakeholders including the Commissioners, clients, staff, board members and applicants.

A core group of staff members are trained in Business Process Improvement techniques that will become an integral part of operational activity in all areas of the organisation. Business areas will be required to continually review their systems and procedures from the perspective of customer service, business efficiency, quality assurance and added value. Further work is required in order to standardise approaches across multiple teams. IT systems provide the capacity for moving towards a 'self service' approach to serving the needs of board members, candidates and clients.

Action 3.3 Managing our Capacity

Our capacity to deliver recruitment, assessment and related services is determined by our accommodation, IT systems and budgetary and staffing resources. We will contribute strongly to the public service by achieving the highest sustainable output rate that can be achieved by combining these resources. In recent years we have made significant improvements in the planning and scheduling of our workload. A system of forward planning for recruitment programmes is already in place. A priority as we move forward will be to develop a mechanism for planning the time and resources required for standard tasks. This will allow for better central co-ordination of office-wide workflows in terms of early identification of spare capacity, matching capacity to upcoming demands and targeting quality assurance interventions. A software booking system will enable us align our accommodation resources with forward work plans and ensure optimum utilization of all facilities.

Action 3.4 Developing our Management Information Systems

The concept of a public service-wide Management Information Framework has emerged through the Public Service Modernisation Programme. Its implementation will provide us with enhanced financial management systems and practices that will support the delivery of efficient recruitment and related services. In particular, these systems will provide quality management information to support value for money analysis, input/output measurement, planning, decision making, control etc. The Management Information Framework will assist us in maximising the value derived from our use of public funds by supporting VFM analysis, input/output measurement, the costing of services and the setting of performance indicators. We will ensure that the required systems are in place to inform planning and decision making from 2004 and onwards.



Action 3.5 Developing a Culture of Cost Consciousness

We are committed to deriving maximum value from our use of public funds by providing quality services in a cost-effective manner. We will continue to develop our Audit Committee, Internal Audit and management review arrangements in order to ensure that effective controls are in place within our financial systems.

Devolving budgets to line manager level will further increase cost consciousness while the continuous promotion of business process improvement initiatives throughout the organisation will identify tasks and procedures that no longer add any value to the overall business process.

Systematic staff training and development interventions will be a critical support to efforts to increase financial and business awareness, competence and control throughout the organisation.

Action 3.6 Risk Management

We have earned a strong reputation for fairness, openness and independence in public sector recruitment. We place great value on, at all times, preserving the highest level of public confidence in our work. Our internal audit unit will facilitate a detailed assessment across all work areas to identify all possible risks that represent a potential threat to our organisation. A register of risks will be drawn up and senior managers will report regularly to the Audit Committee on measures in place to counteract risks in their area of responsibility.

Action 3.7 Knowledge Management

We are a knowledge-based organisation which gathers and processes comprehensive information about the needs of client organisations, the labour market and the large volume of applicants who apply for public service careers in a particular year. Knowledge management - ensuring that all staff know the right thing at the right time to add value to service given to clients - is critical to our success. A dedicated team has been put in place to capture and distil relevant information, to encourage staff to share information and to put in place the systems and support essential to support this. A new intranet facility will provide an effective way for staff to share key information. The Business Process Improvement techniques that have become a feature of our work will provide a platform for staff members to continually question the relevance and value of the information we collect.

Action 3.8 Cross Border Co-operation

We have recently begun to establish valuable links the Northern Ireland administration. A number of meetings at Commissioner level have already taken place, alternating between both jurisdictions, and these have been followed up by contact with officials in the Department of Finance and Personnel (NI) and the Local Government sector. Both sides have welcomed the opportunity to exchange information and perspectives on topics of mutual interest such as competency-based recruitment and the filling of senior appointments. The nomination of a Northern Ireland official as a member of the Steering Group overseeing our recent Principal Job Analysis project underlines the potential for practical assistance beyond the exchange of views. We will continue to foster closer and beneficial links with our counterparts in Northern Ireland with a view to benchmarking our approach to service delivery against comparable elements of their system in a manner that facilitates our ongoing organisational development.

Action 3.9 Developing an International Focus

The competitive nature of the Irish labour market, the growth in internet-based recruitment and public sector recruitment reform means that we must increasingly develop an international focus. Our publicjobs website will be developed as an international brand during 2003. During the course of this strategic plan we will also pursue a number of other activities which will increase our perspective internationally. We will benchmark our business and management capabilities against appropriate private and public sector firms, at home and abroad, as a useful aid to our future development as an organisation.

We see considerable long-term benefits in becoming involved in research and advisory work in the international arena and will explore this area initially through strategic partnerships with organisations e.g. IPA, already involved in this line of work.

Plans to develop our IT systems in line with best international practice and to re-launch and market our website will strengthen also our capability to operate effectively in the international arena.



The Human Resources Programme

Our goals in relation to becoming a stronger business-driven and customer -centric organisation will be underpinned by a strong commitment to developing and enhancing our people capabilities and fostering a culture of meaningful involvement for all staff.

The internal structure of our organisation will be re-aligned in order to accommodate and facilitate progress in the critical success areas of developing new business. We recognise that our success in these areas can only be driven by our people, a factor which has motivated our recently successful bid to participate in the FÁS 'Excellence Through People' Scheme. Our approach to HR activities will be characterised by considering the needs and valuing the contribution of, all staff and providing the supports necessary to support them in doing their work and developing their capabilities.

Our Strategic HR Development Programme will pursue the following strategic actions:-

Action 4.1 Becoming a Partnership Organisation

We are committed to becoming a Partnership organisation in the truest sense based on an inclusive culture where information is freely available, where all voices are heard and where all staff have a meaningful and valuable role to play in shaping the future of our organisation.

Over the past two years partnership structures, representative of all units of the organisation, have been central to the decision-making process at the heart of our commitment to delivering a high quality public service. Our Partnership model has been highlighted as a success within the public sector. We will ensure that we avoid any sense of complacency and continue to proactively promote inclusion and participation by all staff in partnership structures. There is still work to be done in instilling a sense of ownership and awareness of the Partnership process throughout the office. This can only be done by ensuring that good channels of communication exist within our organisation and Partnership itself must be constantly aware of its role in making this a reality. Partnership will build on its success as a driver of the change and modernisation programme within the organisation. The ultimate aim will be to reinforcing partnership in the mindset of all staff members in their overall approach to their work.

Action 4.2 "Excellence Through People" - Ensuing that all Staff Contribute to business and organisation Development.

We believe that our drive towards business excellence is critically dependant on our capacity to encourage involvement and participation of each staff member in deciding the future direction of the organisation and in developing each staff member to ensure that they fulfill their potential. This fundamental belief motivated our decision to apply for the FÁS 'Excellence Through People' Award earlier this year. In qualifying for the award we gained very valuable feedback from FÁS in the form of an action plan which will further improve our focus on staff inclusion and development. This action plan is a priority and we are committed to maintaining our participation in the 'Excellence Through People' scheme, which will be reviewed annually by FÁS.

Over the next three years we plan to devolve responsibility for the administration of HR functions to line managers. Devolution will be progressed on a phased basis, in close consultation with line managers, with the aim of giving them greater control over staff matters and enabling them to manage more effectively. A particular emphasis will be placed on equipping managers to deal with discipline and under-performance. This, in turn, will enable our own HR Unit to play a more strategic role in contributing to business and organisation development.

A priority for 2003 will be to ensure that each staff member completes a full cycle of PMDS, in a timely manner, and that this position is maintained each year thereafter. Upward feedback will be introduced on a phased basis from 2003. Each staff member will have a unique development plan that is focussed on helping them to meet the business need in their own area of work. At a central level efforts will be directed at ensuring that the PMDS system is quality assured, that training plans are properly resourced and that a systematic approach to managing under-performance is developed and applied.

A training plan, based on strategic and business plans and allied to the PMDS system, will be produced each year. A budget equivalent to 5% of payroll will be dedicated to training and development during each year of the strategic planning cycle. A key focus will be placed on reviewing the effectiveness of all expenditure on training. Our investment in training and development will be carefully monitored to ensure it meets the business needs of the Office and that it is effectively delivered in a way that is conducive to improving performance and giving value for money.

Through their work in the Office, many of our staff have become experts in recruitment and other key business activities. We are committed to the concept of continuous professional development and encourage membership of professional bodies and associations which enable staff to keep skills up-to-date, to network and to acquire further skills. A library, including journals and e-learning facilities, was opened to staff in 2003.



Action 4.3 Re-aligning our organisation and resources to support our current and emerging Business Needs

A detailed HR Planning exercise will be undertaken in 2003 in order to identify the staffing requirements and skills set needed within the organisation in order to cater for business and organisational development over the next 3 years. This exercise will inform management decisions in relation to issues such as the recruitment, promotion, retention, deployment and training of staff. The over-riding priority will be to use our capacity to best effect to meet the demands of client organisations.

Action 4.4 Fostering Employee Innovation

Recent innovations such as the 'SMART Centre', Careers Store and interactive website have been achieved through the collaborative efforts of staff. We will continue to foster such creativity in a positive working environment where information is shared and where staff are encouraged to constructively challenge the way work is done. Our focus on changing and improving our work will be encouraged through training, participation in cross-functional working teams and participation in internal and inter-departmental networks. Innovative ideas will be encouraged and rewarded through the use of exceptional performance awards and through the INPUT staff suggestion scheme.

Action 4.5 Equality & Diversity

The principle of Equality of Opportunity is central to our role as the primary provider of recruitment services within the public service. We are conscious of the responsibility we hold and the need to be seen to lead by example in the promotion of equal opportunities. We have already exceeded the gender targets set down in 'Gender Equality - Making it Happen' (the civil service gender equality policy) and have exceeded the government quota for 3% of public service positions to be filled by people with disabilities. We will ensure that our performance against these targets are maintained and strengthened as we go forward. Equality and diversity awareness will be an integral part of training and development initiatives with the aim of ensuring that all staff understand that equality is a key component of their work. We will equality proof our internal human resource systems and will proactively ensure that all qualified people are encouraged to participate in opportunities for development and advancement.

Action 4.6 Towards a Safe, Healthy and Positive Work Environment

We are committed to providing a safe, healthy and stimulating working environment for staff. We will continually strive to eradicate any hazards, obstacles or issues which make the organisation a less pleasant place to work. We will continue to undertake a major staff attitude survey every two years in order to establish staff perception of their working environment.

The findings and resulting action plan will be advanced by partnership and a comprehensive progress report will issue to staff every six months. This will be supplemented by ongoing consultations on specific issues through partnership, internal networks and focus groups and our Staff Magazine 'Chapterhouse'.

The Office has put in place all arrangements necessary to fully comply with the civil service Anti-Bullying and Harassment Policy. Induction training for all new entrants will include guidance on how to recognise and respond to bullying and harassment. Similar training will be provided to existing staff.

Action 4.7 Developing external relations.

In keeping with our public service values we are committed to playing a strong role in the wider community in which we operate. We have already put in place a Recruitment and Assessment Management Development programme where middle management staff from client organisations have joined this Office on secondment in order to broaden their recruitment and HR skills. We are also keen to source short-term placements for our staff with other public service organisations in order to give them a broader experience of the public service. We will also continue to establish links with the business, schools and community groups in our new neighbourhood in Dublin City Centre and are committed to extending our facilities and services to benefit community development in every way possible.



Making it happen

In this Statement of Strategy we have set out our approach to developing our services in line with the needs of the modern public service. We are about to move into a new era of Public Sector recruitment that will see fundamental changes in the type of recruitment and selection services demanded by Public Service client organisations and the manner in which these services are provided.

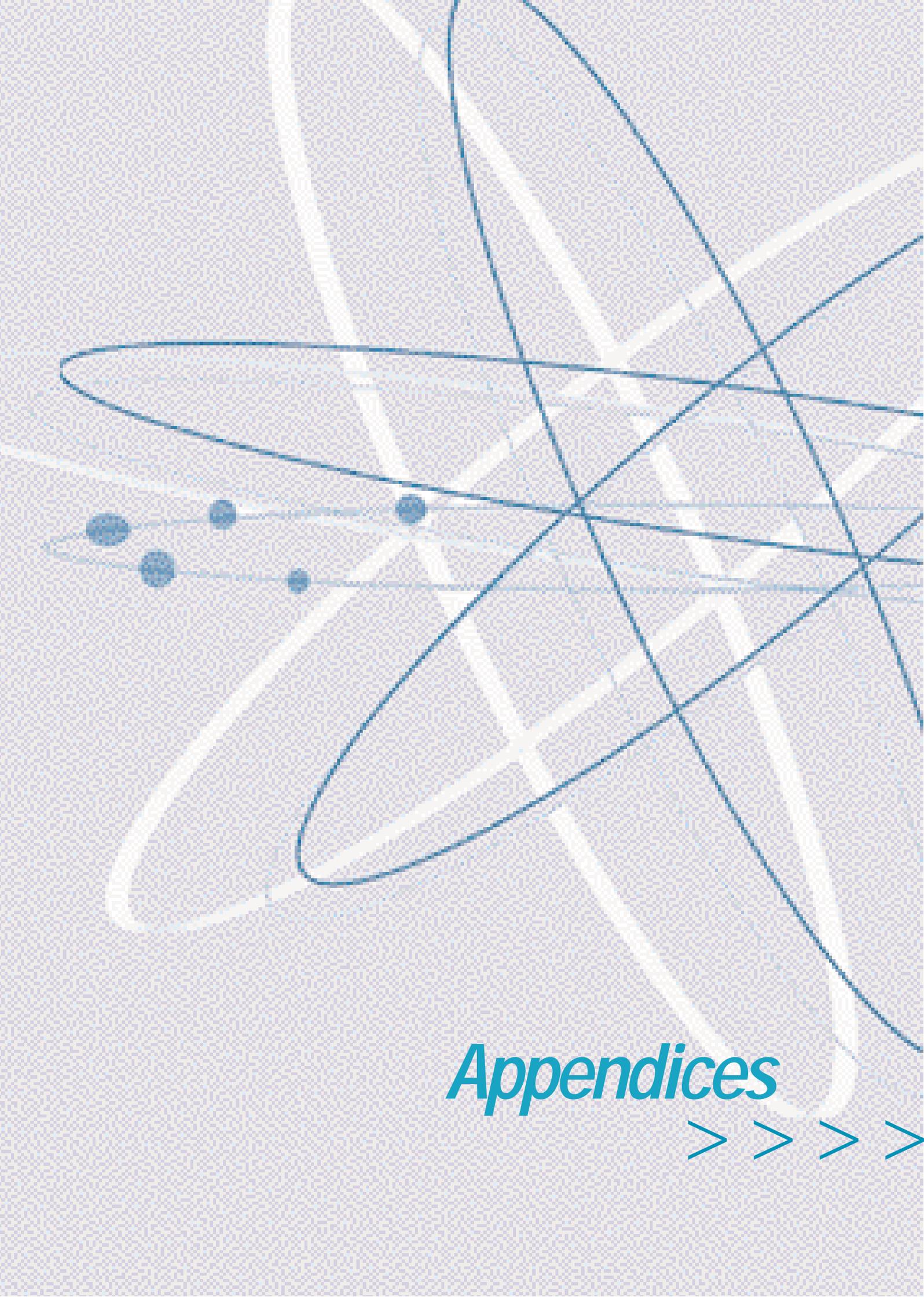
We are strongly focussed on achieving our high level goals over the next three years. We will use the four strategic programmes and associated actions will as a 'balanced scorecard' to monitor and review progress towards the achievement of our long-term goals.

In line with the Public Service Management Act, 1997 divisional business plans will be prepared annually ensuring that practical projects and activities designed to achieve our high level goals are put in place across the organisation. This business planning process will serve as a prompt to review the continuing relevance of our overall high level goals and to revise them as necessary. This, for instance, will ensure that they continue to reflect emerging business needs and developments on the Public Service Modernisation Programme and emerging Government Policy.

A Strategy Group representative of partnership structures, management and functional responsibilities will monitor strategic and business development progress. Annual divisional business plans will be reviewed after six and nine months and at year-end. Progress reports will issue to the Senior Management team and the Partnership Committee.

A formal project management structure is in place to ensure proper governance of the implementation of key strategic programmes and projects. The Project Board, which consists of the membership of the Management Advisory Committee, meets monthly to monitor the progress on all aspects of key strategic programmes and projects in order to ensure their effective implementation in line with corporate strategy.

We are committed to monitoring our progress in the current year against the comprehensive measures outlined in Appendix 1. These measures will be revised and enhanced annually to ensure that they remain focussed on current and emerging business requirements.



Appendices



APPENDIX 1

Standards of Performance

Organisation Priorities

Recruitment and Selection Services

Key Task	Standard
Assignment of Clerical Recruits	Demand for Clerical Officers to be met within 5 days of request from clients
Assignment of Executive Officers	Demand for Executive Officers to be met within 10 days of request from clients
Assignment of Administrative Recruits	Demand for Administrative staff to be met within 10 days of request from clients
Customised once-off appointments	All appointments within this category to be filled within 8 to 12 weeks of initial request (variation reflects the complexity of competitions)
IT Specialist Panels	Panels of qualified candidates for IT grades to be maintained continuously.
Client Satisfaction	Satisfaction rating with recruitment process times and quality to be 80%.
Candidate Satisfaction	Satisfaction rating with the quality of the recruitment process to be 80%.

Customer Service

General	Regular consultation with key customer groups (candidates, staff, client departments and members of selection boards)
Written correspondence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Routine correspondence to be dealt with in 3 days ● Non-routine correspondence to be acknowledged within 3 days and followed up within 10 days.
	Telephone Queries

E-government

Website	Publicjobs website to be established as an international brand by the 2nd quarter of 2003 Computer-based Testing Computer-based testing will be in place by the third quarter of 2003.
Web-enabled service delivery	Interactive, web-enabled services to be available to all customer groups by 2005

Organisation Priorities

Human Resources

Key Task

Staff Satisfaction

Involvement and Communication

Training

Standard

Staff Satisfaction ratings to be 80% during 2003 and revised upwards thereafter.

Maintaining accreditation with the FÁS 'Excellence through People' Award.

Expenditure on training to be 5% of pay roll in real terms each year.

Equality of Opportunity

Encouraging workplace diversity

In relation to the government quota of 3% for the employment of people with disabilities:

- Exceed the quota in this Office each year and establish best practice approaches
- Proactively encourage and support client organisations in achieving the quota.

 Diversity policies to be an integral part of HR Strategy developed through partnership structures.

Promoting Equality Internally

 Promoting equality through the provision of Management Development programmes.

 Regular Equality Audits of internal promotion systems.

Promoting Equality Externally

 Ongoing equality monitoring in relation to 9 areas protected by the Employment Equality Act.

 Equality reports on four large volume competitions per year.

APPENDIX 2

Summary of Key Strategic Projects

Project Name: **MANAGEMENT INFORMATION FRAMEWORK (MIF)**

Description

The MIF is a new management information system (financial and non-financial) which is being adopted by all Government Departments.

Benefits

The MIF will:

- Improve the quality of information available to support planning, decision-making, and control
- Improve our business effectiveness by facilitating value for money analysis, input/output measurement, etc.
- Improve our accountability for our use of public funds
- Facilitate the introduction of Service Level Agreements between client organisations and this Office.

Delivery Date

Full Implementation by 2003.

Project Name: **IMPLEMENT E-GOVERNMENT/E-RECRUITMENT STRATEGY**

Description

Our e-recruitment / e-government strategy is aimed at developing our capacity to deliver key services via the Internet. In line with this strategy, for instance, we aim to e-enable our services for all customer groups (client departments, customers, board members and staff) and encourage self service approaches wherever possible.

Benefits

The project will:

- Increase customer choice in accessing and availing of our services
- Improve our ability to compete effectively in the Labour Market
- Ensure that we meet our commitments under the Information Society Action Plan

Delivery Date

Computer-based testing will be in place by the third quarter of 2003. Web-enabled services will be extended to client organisations on an ongoing basis.

Project Name: IMPLEMENTATION OF NEW HR SYSTEM

Description

'People Soft' is a new HR system which will replace our existing computerised Personnel Administration System (PAS).

Benefits

- Modern HR Application capable of effectively supporting our strong focus on developing our Human Resources as a key strategic asset.
- Uniform system being adopted by all government departments ensuring compatibility in the transfer of records.

Delivery Date:

In accordance with centrally determined time-scale.

Project Name: RESTRUCTURING OFFICE

Description

Successful Implementation of Modernisation Programme in recent years.

Benefits

- Redeployment of staff to return to core numbers.
- Mainstreaming CRM Ethos throughout organisation.
- Aligning organisation structure and skills sets to operate effectively in new legislative environment.
- Ensuring smoothest possible transition to the two independent organisations envisaged by Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Bill.

Delivery Date:

December, 2003 (contingent on progress of new PSM Bill).



Project Name: IMPLEMENTATION OF PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT AND DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM (PMDS)

Description

To implement the new PMDS system agreed centrally under the Public Service Modernisation Programme.

Benefits

- Ensuring that staff at all levels are empowered to deliver on business needs
- Ensure that our organisation meets the commitments outlined under the 'Programme for Prosperity and Fairness'

Delivery Dates

First Full cycle of PMDS will be completed in 2003. Upwards feedback to be introduced from 2004.

Project Name: DEVELOPMENT OF PORTAL SITE FOR PUBLIC SECTOR RECRUITMENT

Description

Our Publicjobs website will be developed as a platform for promoting all public service careers

Benefits

- Savings on advertising costs across the Public Sector
- Improving Awareness and branding of Public Sector Jobs
- Better Customer Service

Delivery date

Publicjobs to be established as an international brand by the second quarter of 2003.

APPENDIX 3

Cross Departmental Activities & Strategic Partnerships

Activity: Public Sector Recruitment

Key Organisational Links

Government Departments,
Local Authorities, Health Boards
and other public bodies

Our Responsibility

- To provide customised recruitment assessment and related advisory services tailored to the needs of clients

Activity: Public Service Modernisation

Department of the Taoiseach
Programme

- To Implement the agreed Civil Service change agenda within our organisation
- To contribute to policy formulation, particularly in the key area of HR policy
- To participate proactively in cross-departmental working groups

Activity: New Legislation

Department of Finance
Client Organisations

- To work in partnership with the Department of Finance, who have overall responsibility for public sector recruitment policy, in advancing the proposed Public Service Management (Recruitment and Appointments) Bill.

Activity: Personnel Officer Network

Department of Finance
Client Organisations

To support, in partnership with the Department of Finance, this important forum for addressing matters of mutual interest.

Activity: Strategic Review Report on Future Requirements of the Office

Steering Group on implementation
representative of key stakeholders
in the Recruitment Process

- To facilitate and provide administrative support to the Steering Group and its Chairman Mr. Frank Murray, Civil Service Commissioner in, overseeing the implementation of this Report.
- To progress the implementation of recommendations outlined in the report.
- To give stakeholders the opportunity to act via the Steering Group as a positive force for progress towards organisation development and business excellence.

Activity: REACH initiative (integrated delivery of all public services).

Key Organisational Links

REACH

Our Responsibility

To work closely with the REACH organisation to ensure that we participate fully in the progression of integrated and accessible public services.

Activity: Marketing and Retention Strategy

Client Organisations

To facilitate client departments in implementing this strategy as agreed through the Public Service Modernisation Programme.

Activity: Equality / Disability Policy

Department of Finance and all client organisations

To proactively support, in partnership with the Department of Finance, all Government departments in providing equal employment opportunities.

Activity: Cross Border Cooperation with Northern Ireland

Civil Service Commissioners (Northern Ireland)
Local Government Staff Commission (Northern Ireland)

To exchange information and share best practice on areas of matters of common interest in the domain of Public Sector Recruitment.



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