



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha
Department of Foreign Affairs

Corporate Governance Framework

2024-2026

Strategy, Governance & Change Unit

July 2024

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1. Introduction

Good governance in Government Departments and Offices is about delivering priorities, achieving objectives, behaving with integrity and acting in the public interest, in ways that are consistent with legal, regulatory and Government policy obligations. Effective governance is critical to the Department's performance and ability to deliver positive outcomes for the people of Ireland. The Department of Foreign Affairs is committed to working in an open and accountable manner and to developing and implementing behaviours and structures that support this approach.

The development of robust governance systems to support our legislative framework has been at the heart of changes in the Civil Service for more than a decade. The clear guidance provided by the [Ministers and Secretaries Acts 1924-2013](#) and the [Public Services Management Act \(1997\)](#) has been reinforced over time by the frameworks provided by governance procedures such as the [Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour](#), the [Public Spending Code](#) and [Report of the Working Group on the Accountability of Secretaries General](#) (the 'Mullarkey Report'). More recently, the [Public Service Reform Plan](#), its successor [Our Public Service 2020](#) and the 2030 [Civil Service Renewal Plan](#) have acknowledged and highlighted the critical role of robust and identifiable governance procedures in the Civil Service. The development of this Corporate Governance Framework is aligned with these commitments.

1.1 Purpose and Scope

This document is intended as a guide to everyone in the Department, and to the people we serve, on how we do our work and why we do it in the way we do. It also sets out our standards of conduct, our values and the governance systems and structures, particular to the Public Service, by which we operate. Therefore, its purpose is to draw together what we should do, and what we must do, in conducting our business. All staff have a role to play in ensuring good governance, adherence to the [Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour](#) in the performance of their duties, as well as to corporate policies, procedures, circulars and Office Notices.

The framework recognises the central role of leadership in developing and maintaining good governance, and accordingly sets out the statutory role of the Secretary General/Accounting Officer and the responsibilities of senior management in leading the Department and driving performance. However, the framework also acknowledges that systems alone cannot deliver good governance, and underlines the responsibility of staff at all levels of the organisation to adhere to the standards set out.

The Department's Management Board recognises that this Corporate Governance Framework is central to the Department's organisational governance and effectiveness. The Framework should therefore demonstrate the potential for continuous improvement and development and will remain a

living document. It will be regularly reviewed and updated by the Department's Strategy, Governance and Change Unit to ensure its continued relevance and utility.

1.2 Principles of Strong Corporate Governance

Good governance is underpinned by a set of core principles that help to guide the Department's work and to maintain the confidence of our stakeholders, as follows:

- **Integrity:** Good governance supports a culture and ethos that ensures behavior with integrity, a strong commitment to ethical values, and respect for the rule of law.
- **Responsibility:** Good governance helps the Department to define its priorities and outcomes in terms of sustainable economic and societal benefits and to determine the policies and interventions necessary to optimise the achievement of these priorities and outcomes. It means implementing good practices in transparency, reporting, communications, audit and scrutiny to deliver effective accountability.
- **Developing Capacity:** Good governance means developing the Department's capacity, including the capability of the leadership team, management and staff.
- **Accountability:** Good governance means increasing accountability by managing risks and performance through robust internal control systems and effective performance management practices.
- **Transparency:** Good governance ensures openness, effective public consultation processes and comprehensive engagement with domestic and international stakeholders

1.3 Civil Service Context and Structures

The following table outlines the overarching environment within which the Civil Service operates, and the context for Departments' governance arrangements.

Civil Service and Ministerial Accountability

- The legislative basis for this and all other Government Departments is the Ministers and Secretaries Acts 1924-2013.
- The Minister is in charge of the Department and is responsible to the Oireachtas for all elements of the exercise of her/his Departmental responsibility.
- A Department's relationship and communication with the Minister and her/his advisers is a key governance process. The successful delivery of business priorities and programmes is contingent on these relationships operating effectively.
- The Accounting Officer in the Department of Foreign Affairs is the Secretary General. She/he is personally responsible, and accountable to the Oireachtas, for regularity and propriety in the Department's accounts, the efficient and economical use of the Department's resources and for the control of assets held by the Department in accordance with Comptroller and Auditor General Acts 1866 to 1998.
- The Secretary General of the Department is responsible and accountable for managing the Department, providing advice to the Minister, and monitoring and implementing Government policies appropriate to the Department in accordance with the Public Service Management Act 1997

2. Department Overview

2.1 Our Mission

The mission of the Department of Foreign Affairs is to serve the Irish people, promote their values, and advance their prosperity abroad, and to provide the Government with the capabilities, analysis and influence to ensure that Ireland derives the maximum benefit from all areas of its external engagement. These duties are rooted in [Global Ireland: Ireland's Global Footprint to 2025](#) and [A Better World: Ireland's Policy for International Development](#). The Department's [Statement of Strategy 2024 – 2025](#) provides the framework for the articulation of its commitments under these policy statements, together with the Department's commitments under the Programme for Government.

The Department's [Customer Charter](#) guides our efforts to provide a high quality service.

The Minister and Secretaries Acts 1924 – 2013 provide the legislative basis for the Department's work.

2.2 Our Values, Behaviour and Culture

The work of officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs is framed by both their values, whether those pertain to the Civil Service generally or to the standards the Department sets itself, and the ethical standards required of them. Our values, set out below, underpin a strong culture of service in the Department and are a compass for our efforts to deliver high quality services and professional policy advice.

Diversity	We are committed to the principles of equality, impartiality and fairness, to valuing the contributions of all of our staff and to championing gender equality, inclusion and diversity.
Integrity	We approach our work with integrity, underpinned by the principles of independence and accountability.
Leadership	We recognise the importance of our leadership role serving the Irish people, promoting their values, and advancing their prosperity on the global stage.
Service	We are committed to providing Irish citizens travelling and living abroad with effective and responsive passport, consular and emigrant support services.
Excellence	We aspire to excellence in the analysis and advice we provide to Government, in the service we provide to our citizens and to the public, and in the management and use of resources assigned to us.

These values reflect the commitment set out in the Civil Service Renewal Plan to a deep-rooted public service ethos of independence, honesty, integrity, impartiality, equality, fairness and respect; a culture of accountability, efficiency and value for money; and the highest standards of professionalism, leadership and rigour. The engagement of all staff is vital in ensuring that these values work for the

Department and our stakeholders. Senior management leads on the communication of our values to all staff through regular engagement and the Department's strategic planning processes.

Civil Servants are required to familiarise themselves with the Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviours and the Ethics in Public Office Acts. Likewise, all locally employed staff are required to familiarize themselves with the local staff policy on the Codes of Standards and Behaviour. Furthermore, staff, guided by the Department's leadership, should be aware of all the frameworks governing the Civil Service including the application of requirements in relation to official secrecy, which also apply to former staff and Special Advisers. New staff are provided with clear guidance on their obligations during their induction training, as well as access to all related materials. Staff are regularly updated on the obligations and responsibilities pertinent to their roles and responsibilities, primarily through training and development programmes. All staff are required to complete mandatory Gender, Equality, Diversity & Inclusion (GEDI) training.

Staff of the Department also have access to Circulars relating to Conciliation and Arbitration, to the Grievance Procedure Circular 11/2001: Revised procedure for dealing with grievance problems, and to the [2015 Dignity at Work: An Anti-Bullying, Harassment and Sexual Harassment Policy for the Civil Service](#). The Grievance Procedure seeks to deal in a fair, prompt and impartial manner with the complaints of individual members of staff that are within the scope of the procedure, but are not appropriate for discussion under the Conciliation and Arbitration Scheme. There is a separate but similar grievance process for locally engaged staff, which is applied in line with local law in each location. The Civil Service is committed to protecting dignity and respect across the organization and promotes respect, dignity, safety, and equality in the workplace.

Annual Returns of Statements of Interests

Officers in the Department who are serving in certain designated Civil Service positions are required to prepare and furnish an Annual Statement of registrable interests, under the terms of the Ethics in Public Office Acts. Registrable interest forms must be completed in hard copy and returned to the Secretary General. Forms with a nil interest must be completed in hard copy and returned to Human Resources. The deadline for return is generally January each year and the form should cover the previous year.

Regulation of Lobbying

The [Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015](#) commenced on 1 September 2015. The Act provides for the establishment and maintenance of an online register of lobbying activity by the Standards in Public Office Commission, which makes information on the identity of those communicating with designated public officials on specific policy, legislative matters or prospective decisions available to the public. Lobbyists must report on their interactions with the Designated Public Officials. Section 6(4) of the Act requires each public body to publish a list of Designated Public Officials of that body. The list is a

resource for lobbyists filing a return to the Register who may need to source a designated public official's details. The list of Designated Public Officials of the Department of Foreign Affairs can be found [here](#).

Protected Disclosures

The [Protected Disclosures Act 2014 and Amendment Act 2022](#) provides statutory protections for workers in all sectors of the economy against reprisals in circumstances where they disclose information relating to wrongdoing that has come to their attention in the workplace. All public bodies, including this Department, are obliged under the Act to have internal procedures in place for dealing with protected disclosures and for these to be made available to their workers. The Department's Management Board has agreed and put in place a [Protected Disclosure Procedures](#), which set out the process by which a worker can make a disclosure, what will happen when a disclosure is made and what the Department will do to protect a discloser.

Public Spending Code

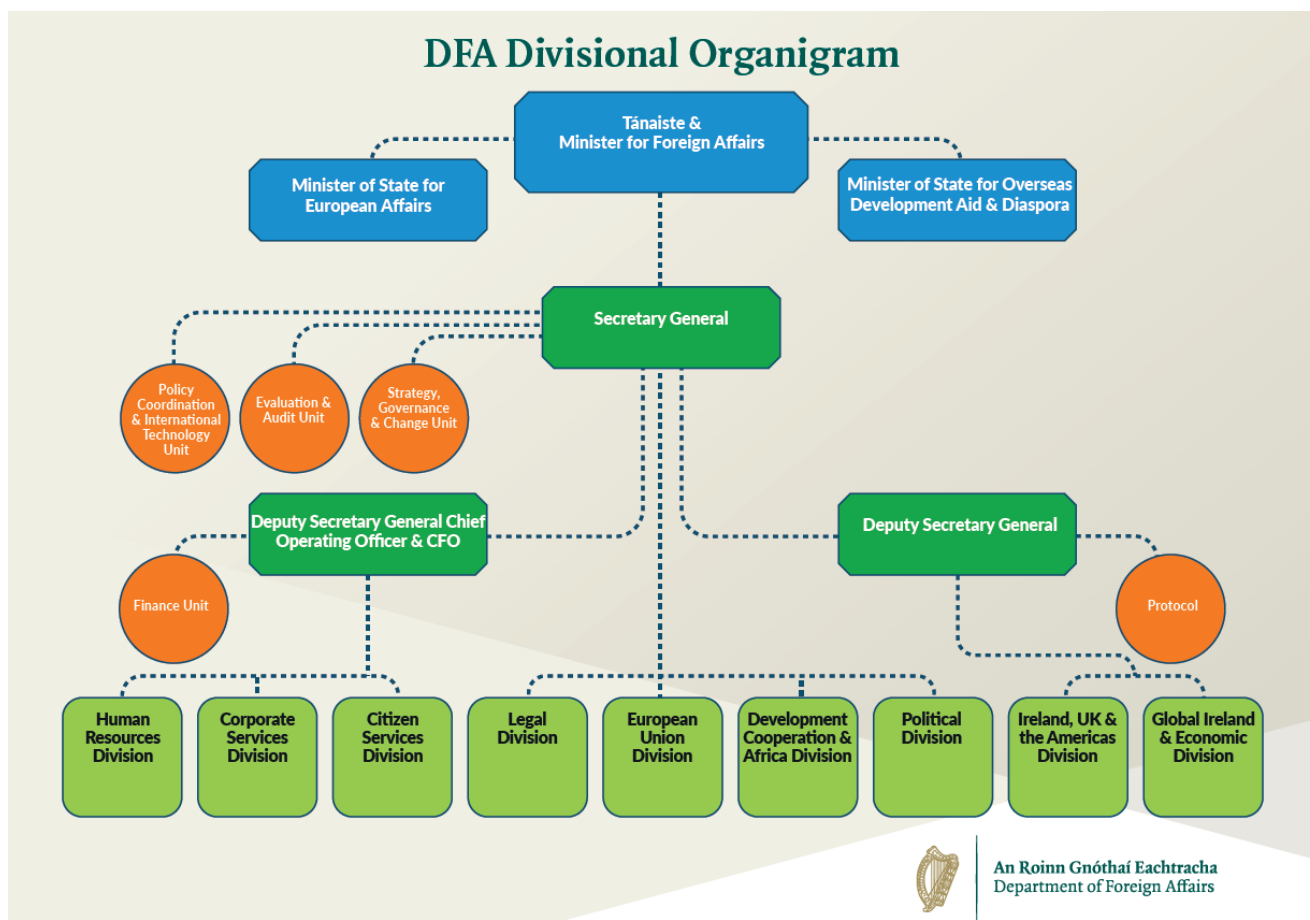
All Irish public bodies are obliged to treat public funds with care, and to ensure that the best possible value for money is obtained whenever public money is being spent or invested. The [Public Spending Code](#) is the set of rules and procedures that apply to ensure that these standards are upheld across the Irish public service. The Code brings together in one place all of the elements of the value for money framework that has been in force up to now, updated and reformed in some respects. The Code is maintained by the Central Expenditure Evaluation Unit (CEEU) of the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform. The Code provides clear guidance for staff and outlines the standards of behaviour expected with regard to public funds.

2.3 Organisational Structures

Clarity on roles, functions and decision-making structures in the Department is central to its functioning in an efficient and accountable manner. This is provided by the Management Board through the proper operation of the management procedures set out in this document.

The Department's structure at HQ is outlined in the chart below. The work of Divisions and Units is detailed in Appendix 1, with further information on their structures available at whodoeswhat.gov.ie.

By the end of 2024, the Department's footprint will include 102 overseas diplomatic and consular offices, in addition to offices in Dublin, Limerick, Cork, Armagh and Belfast.



2.4 Strategic Direction, Business Planning, and Performance Management

Establishing strategic direction and a robust business planning process are essential with the primary reference point (together with the Department's defined statutory responsibilities) being the Programme for Government.

Statement of Strategy

The Department's [Statement of Strategy](#) sets out how the Department implements the commitments assigned to it under the Programme for Government as well as the foreign policy priorities outlined in Global Ireland: Ireland's Global Footprint to 2025 and A Better World: Ireland's Policy for International Development. [The Public Service Management Act \(PSMA\) 1997](#) prescribes that the Department must secure the approval of the Minister for Foreign Affairs for Statement of Strategy every three years, or within six months of a new Minister taking office, which defines the objectives of the Department and the way in which it will achieve those objectives.

Business Planning

Implementation of the Statement of Strategy is articulated through over 120 Business Plans, supported by Risk Registers at business unit level. This ensures that all of the Department's activities and resources are focused on the same set of clear priorities. Business Plans outline the priority outcomes and outputs for the year ahead and include critical success factors and performance indicators. They

are formulated with the input of all staff from the respective unit or Mission and are created before the beginning of the relevant calendar year and updated as priorities dictate. Heads of Division are responsible for ensuring that the Business Plans of business units (including Missions) reporting to them are coherent with the Department's strategic objectives. The Management Board discusses HQ Business Planning before the beginning of each cycle. There is also an opportunity to review Business Plans mid-year.

Performance Management

The Performance Management and Development System (PMDS) provides a framework for linking individual performance with the Business Plan objectives of the relevant Division, Unit or Mission. Staff in the Department complete a role profile form annually, which links their individual role to priorities in their Division, Unit or Mission and plots their development needs and targets. Performance and development is monitored and managed during the year through ongoing informal dialogue and a formal interim, and end of year, review.

Mission Reviews

The organisational performance and strategic direction of overseas missions in the implementation of the Department's high-level goals is periodically assessed through a programme of Mission Reviews. Recommendations for the consideration of the Management Board are made to address any issues arising and to highlight and promote best practice. It is the intention of the Management Board that each Mission will be reviewed once every ten years.

Performance Reporting

The Department is committed to regular and accurate reporting to provide our stakeholders with a measurable account of our progress against our goals. Our headline reporting cycle is set out in the below table. The Department also contributes other reporting data across the breadth of its work.

Framework	Reporting Frequency and Mechanism	Division/Unit
Programme for Government	Annual and as requested by Government	Strategy, Governance & Change Unit
Statement of Strategy	Reporting to Minister; Annual Report; Annual Revised Estimates; Annual Performance Report	Management Board; Strategy, Governance & Change Unit
Open Data	Framework under discussion	Security and Corporate Compliance Unit, Corporate Services Division
Government of Ireland Official Development Assistance Report	Annually	Development Cooperation and Africa Division
Civil Service Renewal 2030	As requested and in conjunction with the Civil Service Renewal Programme	Strategy, Governance & Change Unit

	Management Office. A range of indicators will be used to monitor progress at project level and will be reported on a regular basis to the Civil Service Management Board (CSMB). The CSMB will collectively lead on the delivery of the overall Strategy and oversee the implementation of CSR2024.	
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2.5 Internal Communications

Strong internal communication is a priority for this Department, and ensures that more than 3,000 staff at HQ and across the mission network can engage effectively with one another in an open and transparent manner. The Department is committed to fostering broad, inclusive communication practices, which are innovative and reflect the breadth of interaction across the organisation. The Department also recognises that senior management plays an important role in setting the tone for internal communications and is responsible for ensuring the optimum flow of information through the Department.

There are a number of structures in place in the Department to support strong internal communication, including but not limited to monthly Town Hall Meetings with the Secretary-General, weekly coordination meetings (as well as twice-weekly written updates to all staff); and the publication of Management Board and Management Board Sub-committee meeting minutes on the intranet. In addition, Heads of Mission conferences (approx. every 18 months); regional Heads of Mission meetings; meetings of the Senior Management Team (all HQ-based officers at Principal Officer/Counsellor level), and the Business Planning process offer important formats to ensure coherence and discuss priorities.

The Department is also developing a modern intranet and accompanying internal news content strategy to improve how staff access internal information and to enhance staff engagement, community and wellbeing in the Department.

2.6 Engagement with External Stakeholders

This Department is committed to ensuring that it delivers on its responsibilities in an open and transparent manner. The Department accounts to the Houses of the Oireachtas through parliamentary questions, the Oireachtas Scrutiny process ([European Union \(Scrutiny\) Act 2002 as amended](#)) and through three Oireachtas Committees, namely the Joint Committee on Foreign Affairs and Defence, Joint Committee on European Affairs and Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. The Secretary General of the Department also appears before the Oireachtas Public Accounts Committee.

Good relationships and communication between the Department and the Houses of the Oireachtas enable effective discharge of parliamentary functions regarding foreign policy and other elements within the Department's responsibility. To assist the development and maintenance of effective communication flows, the Department attaches importance to the secondment of officials to the Houses of the Oireachtas, including to support the work of the Foreign Affairs Committee, the Joint Committee on the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement, and Oireachtas engagement with the British Irish Parliamentary Assembly.

The Department recognises that it is ultimately accountable to the citizens of Ireland for the efficient and effective delivery of services. In this regard, the office of the Minister coordinates responses to representations from the public on behalf of the Minister. Procedures for dealing with Ministerial correspondence are available to all staff.

The Department applies an open approach to policy making, which enables us to engage with stakeholders from the earliest stages of policy-making. Regular open policy debates are hosted, with a view to involving practitioners, academics and experts in debating and developing policy options. It also advertises public consultations, publishes draft policy papers online and invites submissions from civil society and individual members of the public on relevant work areas. The Department seeks to encourage youth engagement including through the UN Youth Delegate Programme.

The Department represents Ireland in certain functions relating to its membership of the European Union, the United Nations, the Council of Europe, the Organisation for Security and Cooperation in Europe, and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development. In this regard, the Department is committed to rules based engagement that enhances our partner organisations and Ireland's peace and prosperity. The Department is committed to ensuring that obligations following from membership of international organisations are complied with in full.

2.7 Review of Effectiveness of Corporate Governance Framework

The Department's Corporate Governance Framework is a living document. It will be reviewed on an on-going basis and subject to a formal review every two years. The implementation of the Department's governance obligations is overseen by the Management Board, which is ultimately responsible for ensuring it remains fit for purpose.

3. Ministerial and Senior Management Roles and Assignment of Responsibility

The Department recognises that the way that managers behave and exercise their decision-making authority is critical in creating an organisation that fosters commitment, cooperation and engagement. It aims to deliver and develop strong, visible and energetic leadership, which is fair, transparent and professional, and anchored in effective performance management. The Department also encourages senior managers to approach their work with a whole of Department perspective.

This chapter sets out the roles and responsibilities associated with key leadership positions in the Department, both at home and abroad, and describes the policies that support the Department's effective operation.

3.1 Minister for Foreign Affairs

The Minister is in charge of the Department and responsible to Dáil Éireann for all elements of the exercise of the Department's responsibility. This responsibility ranges from significant political decision-making on major policy issues, to routine administrative responsibilities discharged by civil servants on the Minister's behalf. The Department's Corporate Governance Framework does not replace or usurp the Carltona Doctrine whereby powers vested in the Minister may be exercised, by officials of certain seniority and responsibility, without any express act of delegation. Where functions are transferred from one Minister to another at the request of Government, regard should be had to the guidelines on managing the efficient reorganisation of Departmental structures or functions.

3.2 Relationship with the Minister

The relationship and communication between the Minister and Department are central to the successful delivery of the Department's objectives and programmes.

The Management Board meets with the Minister for Foreign Affairs on a quarterly basis, and more often if required, to consider strategic policy and management issues. Meetings of the Minister with the Management Board supplement and do not replace ongoing interaction between Ministers, Board members and other senior officials.

The Secretary General and the Management Board are responsible for ensuring that the Minister's office is kept informed and updated on the division of responsibilities among senior management in order to maintain clarity and effective communication, including in relation to cross cutting issues. The

3.3 Recording of Ministerial Decisions

Submissions for approval by the Minister are first cleared by the relevant Head of Division and Secretary General and then submitted for Ministerial approval using the eSubmissions system.

Submissions include the context of and rationale for the request for approval. The responsible business unit maintains a record of the Ministerial decision, in line with statutory requirements

3.4 Ministers of State

The Minister retains full responsibility for all areas of the Department's work but may be assisted in certain duties by Ministers of State, subject to his/her supervision. Officials in the Department support the work of the Ministers of State in the achievement of their functions. The Minister of Foreign Affairs is supported by two Ministers of State: the Minister of State for Overseas Development and the Diaspora and the Minister of State for European Affairs (who is also assigned to the Department of the Taoiseach).

3.5 Secretary General and Accounting Officer

The [Ministers and Secretaries Act 1924-2013](#) and the [Public Services Management Act 1997](#) outline the statutory responsibilities of the Secretary General. Under the 1997 Act, certain duties are assigned to the Secretary General within the Department (section 4 (1), 9 (1) and 9 (2)), including but not limited to:

- Managing the Department
- Implementing Government policies appropriate to the Department
- Preparing and submitting the Statement of Strategy to the Minister and reporting on progress on its implementation
- Delivering output as determined by the Minister
- Providing advice to the Minister and using resources to meet the requirements of the [Comptroller and Auditor General \(Amendment\) Act 1993](#) in relation to regularity and propriety as well as economy, efficiency and effectiveness
- Ensuring proper use of resources and the provision of cost-effective public services
- Ensuring arrangements are in place to maximise efficiency in cross Departmental matters
- Preparing an outline of how specific responsibilities are assigned to ensure that the functions performed on behalf of the Minister are performed by an appropriate officer, or an officer of appropriate grade or rank, of the Department, in line with the [Public Services Management Act 1997](#)
- Managing matters relating to appointments, performance, discipline and dismissal of civil servants below the grade of Principal or its equivalent

The Secretary General may also be required to carry out other functions on behalf of the Minister under the umbrella of the [Public Services Management Act 1997](#).

The Secretary General serves as Accounting Officer for the Department. The role of the Accounting Officer is outlined in detail in the [*Role and Responsibilities of Accounting Officers – A Memorandum for Accounting Officers \(2011\)*](#), as well as in the [*Comptroller and Auditor General Acts 1866 to 1998*](#) and [*Public Financial Procedures*](#).

The Accounting Officer is personally responsible for the safeguarding of public funds and property under his or her control; for the regularity and propriety of all the transactions in each Appropriation Account bearing her or his signature; and for the efficiency and economy of administration in her or his Department. In this regard, the Accounting Officer is personally answerable to the Oireachtas Committee of Public Accounts (PAC) for regularity, propriety and value for money through rigorous post factum examination of the manner in which Accounting Officers have discharged their responsibilities by means of independent audit and examinations by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Every year, the Accounting Officer must prepare the appropriation account (an account of expenditure and receipts) for each 'Vote' for which she or he is responsible. The Secretary General of the Department of Foreign Affairs is responsible for Vote 27 (International Co-operation) and Vote 28 (Foreign Affairs).

3.6 Special Advisors

The primary functions of Special Advisors are to secure the achievement of Government objectives and to ensure effective co-ordination in the implementation of the Programme for Government.

The role and duties of Special Advisors, as set out in section 11 of the Public Services Management Act 1997, are to assist the Minister or the Minister of State by providing advice; monitoring, facilitating and securing the achievement of Government objectives that relate to the Department, as requested; and performing such other advisory functions as may be directed while being accountable to the Minister or the Minister of State in the performance of those functions. The Special Adviser performs her or his role alongside the senior Civil Service in collectively supporting the Minister and the Government of the day.

The appointments of Special Advisors are coterminous with that of the Minister. Special Advisors are not part of the line management system of the Department, but are expected to comply with the Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviour.

3.7 Senior Management Roles & Responsibilities

The Secretary General is responsible for the assignment of responsibility for the performance of functions by individual officers, or grade or grades of officer, at Counsellor level and equivalent or

above, in accordance with Section 4 (1) and 9 (2) of the Public Services Management Act 1997. Appointments are aligned with the priorities set out in the Department's Statement of Strategy and reflect the business needs of the Department at the time of appointment, both at home and around the mission network. As outlined in Section 9 (2) of the Public Services Management Act 1997, officers to whom the responsibility for the performance of functions has been assigned shall be accountable for the performance of those functions to the Secretary General and to such other officers (if any) as may be specified under the assignment.

Deputy Secretary General (DSG)

The Secretary General is supported by two Deputy Secretaries General, responsible for operational and policy matters respectively.

Assistant Secretary

Specific responsibilities are assigned to officers at Assistant Secretary level or above in their function as Head of Division or as a Head of Mission serving abroad. Up to two-thirds of the Department's Assistant Secretaries serve abroad.

The role of Assistant Secretaries includes but is not limited to:

- Supporting the Secretary General/Accounting Officer in the fulfilment of their statutory role
- Contributing to the vision for the Department by preparing the Statement of Strategy
- Agreeing business plans for the Department and guiding and implementing the Department's risk management policy
- Delivering the outputs determined by the Minister, Secretary General and Management Board
- Playing a full role in the Management Board and/or its subcommittees as directed by the Secretary General.

As Head of Division

- Undertaking strategic planning for the Division in line with the objectives of the Department
- Managing the Division's performance, notably in relation to delivery of policies, objectives and outputs determined by the Minister, Secretary General, and Management Board
- Managing the network of missions under the Division's responsibility
- Ensuring that all advice provided to the Ministerial team is evidence-based, politically neutral and impartial
- Assigning specific responsibilities within the Division and managing and leading staff and performance, including through the PMDS process
- Ensuring the proper allocation and use of resources and compliance with all financial and other obligations related to the post

- Integrating risk management into policy advice and operations
- Identifying opportunities for reform and improvements within the Division
- Reporting to the Management Board on Divisional activities and operations
- Briefing staff within Division, or Units and missions reporting to the Division, on the context of decisions taken at the Management Board;
- Facilitating collaboration, partnerships and networks with other Departments to strengthen dialogue and performance
- Leading Ireland's external engagement by participating at EU and international fora

As Regional Coordinators

Assistant Secretaries serving abroad fulfil Head of Mission functions in major bilateral assignments. In some instances, Assistant Secretaries serving abroad may also function as regional coordinators, providing additional management and governance across the network in addition to their Head of Mission roles. The role of a Regional Coordinator is internal and does not affect or impinge the role of a Head of Mission vis-à-vis their accreditations. The purpose of the role is to develop strategic and operational coherence between missions in the region. Functions of a regional coordinator may include:

- Developing an esprit de corps among Heads of Mission and other colleagues in their respective regions, to provide mutual support across a range of areas
- Leading on coordination of implementation of regional strategies (where appropriate), business planning, cultural programming, regional funding, regional analysis, and other management, modernisation and compliance issues relevant in a regional context
- Convening in person regional Heads of Mission meetings annually and virtual coordination meetings on a regular basis to discuss shared priorities and best practice
- In some cases, acting as line manager for Heads of Mission in respective regions for PMDS purposes

Counsellor or equivalent

Officers at Counsellor or equivalent level are assigned responsibility as Head of Unit or Section at HQ or Head of Mission and are members of the Senior Management Team (SMT)

As Director/Head of Unit

- Managing the Unit or Section's performance, notably in relation to delivery of policies, objectives and outputs determined by the Minister, Secretary General, Management Board and relevant Head of Division
- Ensuring all advice provided by the Unit is evidence based, politically neutral and impartial

- Managing and leading overall performance of the Unit, including in relation to Business Planning, PMDS, HR and operations
- Ensuring the proper allocation and use of resources and compliance with all financial and other obligations related to the post
- Integrating risk management into policy advice and operations
- Ensuring coordination with other related Units and contributing to dialogue with other Departments and stakeholders
- Participating in the Senior Management Team

Heads of Mission

The Minister submits nominations for Head of Mission assignments for approval by the Government. The nomination of certain Heads of Mission are subject to the approval (agrément) of the authorities of receiving States and appointments are not formally confirmed until this approval is forthcoming. Head of Mission positions as currently filled by Officers at Assistant Principal/First Secretary grade and above.

In addition to the senior management responsibilities assigned to their grade, the role of a Head of Mission includes but is not limited to:

- Acting as the representative of Ireland in their country of accreditation and/or at a multilateral organisation
- Providing expert policy input and guidance on countries or areas of accreditation, ensuring that this is evidence based and impartial
- Building networks in countries/areas of accreditation to advance Ireland's interests
- Leading on agreed strategic objectives and integrating these effectively into Business Planning, with due regard to the Business Plans of relevant Divisions and Units at Headquarters
- Leading at Mission level on key health and safety obligations as well as identifying local risk factors and integrating these into Mission Business Planning & Risk Management and day to day engagement
- Working with state agencies to pursue opportunities that will deliver economic growth and jobs for Ireland and, where relevant, leading Local Market Teams in priority markets and reporting to the Trade and Investment Council
- Directing the Mission's public and media engagement
- Additional regional responsibilities as set out by the Management Board
- Managing, leading and developing staff in the Mission, including locally engaged staff, within the PMDS structures
- Providing assurance to the Accounting Officer by ensuring the proper allocation and use of resources, including: effective financial management; compliance with all financial and other

obligations relevant to the post; the provision of cost effective public services, including a high standard consular service for Irish citizens in line with the Customer Charter and an efficient visa service; identifying opportunities for reform and improvements within the Mission; ensuring the security of the Mission

3.8 Organisational Capacity & Capability

The Department recognises the need for adaptability and flexibility to ensure that it has the capacity to deliver on its mission. Structures may change from time to time to reflect the changing national and international environment that determines our objectives. The Department engages in workforce planning to ensure there is operational capacity across the organisation. This work is complemented by a series of [operational strategies, policies and supports](#) that reinforce the Department's ability to deliver on its objectives in an effective manner and ensure readiness for change. Key operational strategies include the Human Resources Strategy, the Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Action Plan 2022-2025, and the Digital Transformation Strategy 2022 - 2025. The Department also has policies and supports in place to ensure we meet our commitments and comply with our obligations, including with regard to Data Protection, Freedom of Information, the Official Languages Act, and the Children First Act (the Department published a Safeguarding Policy in 2022).

3.9 Governance Role of All Staff

All members of staff in the Department play a central role collectively committing to the good governance of the Department through the requirements of this Framework, as well as by adhering to the Civil Service Code of Standards and Behaviours in the performance of their duties, corporate policies, procedures, circulars and Office Notices. These guiding documents are accessible to all staff on our internal intranet site.

4. Management Board and other Governance Structures

This chapter sets out the governance and management structures and procedures in place in the Department. It first clarifies the role of the Department's Management Board and its subcommittees, and then sets out the structures and procedures that govern the relationship between Divisions and Units at Headquarters and missions abroad.

The Department's Strategy, Governance and Change Unit is responsible for ensuring that that strong governance is in place across the organisation, including by supporting the Management Board and ensuring integration and coherence between the Board and each of its subcommittees, and ensuring the Board complies with its public sector obligations.

4.1 Management Board

The Management Board is a leadership and management team for the whole Department. Chaired by the Secretary General, the Board meets every fortnight, or more frequently if required, to consider strategic policy, operational and compliance issues that are critical to the work of the Department.

The Board operates according to the principles of shared participation and responsibility for the operational success of the entire Department. Board members have a responsibility to act in the best interests of the Department and are expected to take a wider corporate view of issues, as well as specific Divisional matters. Decisions at the Management Board are generally reached by consensus. Where consensus is not possible, the Secretary General will determine a course of action.

The Management Board comprises the Secretary General (Chair), two Deputy Secretaries General and a number of Assistant Secretaries serving at Headquarters. The Director of the Strategy, Governance and Change Unit is also a member of the Management Board.

The Management Board meet in **Programme Oversight Board format** once a month or as necessary. The Programme Oversight Board oversees the selection, prioritisation, resourcing and delivery of time bound projects in the Department. Projects which involve transformation and/or complex work which requires significant human and financial resources are overseen by the Programme Oversight Board. The Programme Oversight Board ensures that projects are aligned with the achievement of the Department's Strategic Goals, and strengthens the delivery of change in the Department using a Project Management Framework.

Further information on the role, responsibilities and routines of the Management Board and Programme Oversight Board are set out in its Terms of Reference.

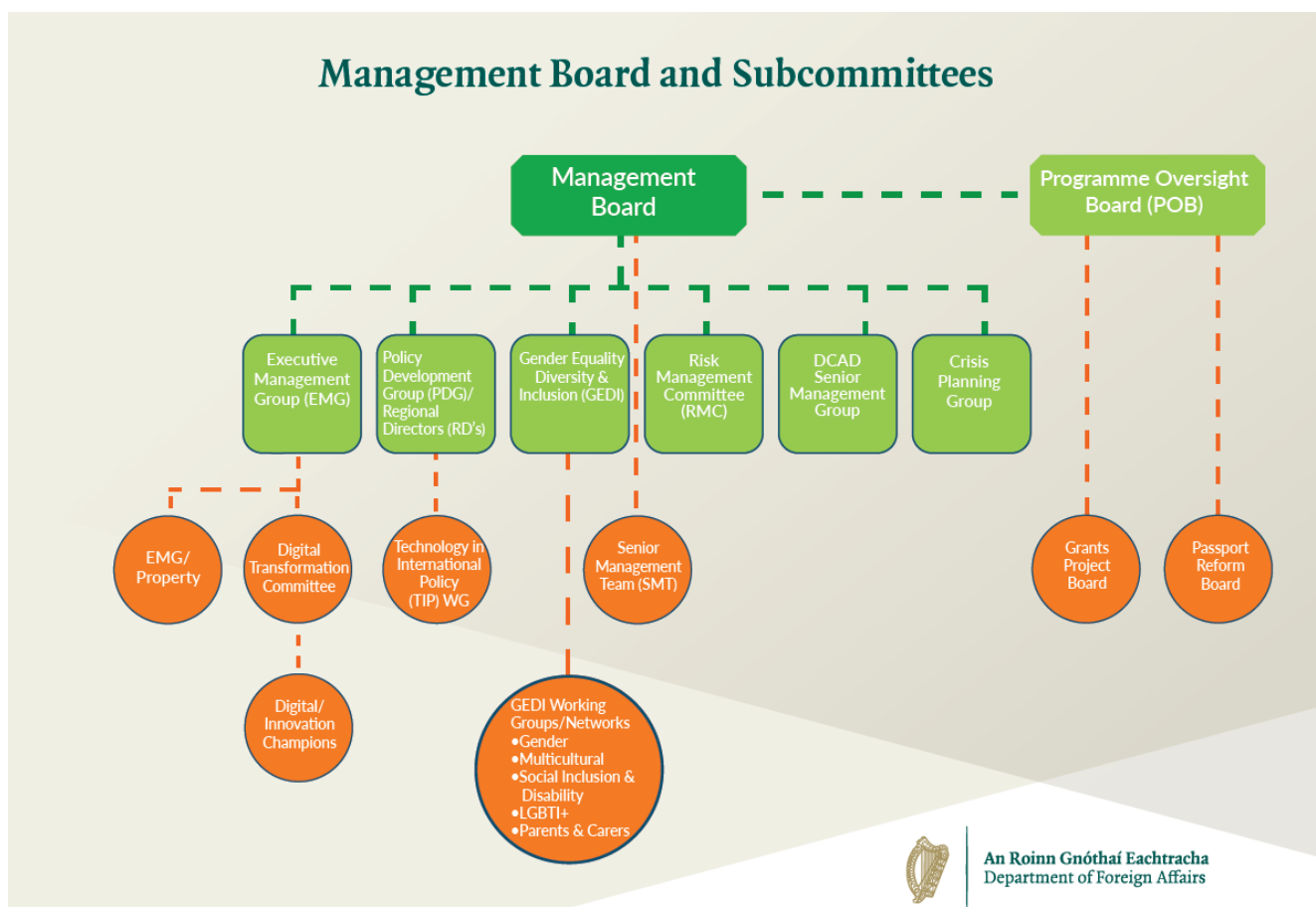
4.2 Subcommittees of the Management Board

A number of subcommittees have been established to support the Secretary General and Management Board in their governance of the Department. Each of these subcommittees is chaired by one or more Management Board members, as nominated by the Secretary General. Membership of the groups is drawn from both the Management Board and wider Department, depending on business needs.

Discussion of issues at subcommittee level allows for a detailed consideration of agenda items by members of the Group in question, reducing the number of issues that require subsequent consideration by the Management Board, and in some cases, eliminating the need for any further discussion by the Board. These subcommittees report to the full Management Board, to ensure all members have oversight of key work streams

Information on the role of each subcommittee is set out below. Further details on the responsibilities, membership and routines of each subcommittee can be found in their respective Terms of Reference.

From time to time, the Management Board may also establish ad-hoc and time-bound Management Board subcommittees to advance a particular work stream.



Executive Management Group: The Executive Management Group considers proposals and initiatives on corporate and operational matters relating to for example, Human Resources, health and

safety, security and compliance, cyber security, property management, passport services, consular services, communications, change management, ICT and implementation of the Global Ireland initiative.

Policy Development Group / Regional Directors: The Policy Development Group and Regional Directors Group supports the Secretary General and the Management Board in their governance of the Department by providing guidance on policy matters. The format enables discussion on cross-cutting issues, such as development and implementation of regional strategies and policy initiatives, business planning, and economic, cultural and promotional initiatives. The meeting is an important forum for communication and coordination between Policy Development Group members and Regional Directors as well as Regional Co-ordinators, and facilitates exchange of best practice across the Department.

Development Cooperation and Africa Division Senior Management Group: The Senior Management Group is a subcommittee of the Management Board which supports the Director General of the Development Cooperation and Africa Division (DCAD) in the management and administration of resources allocated to the Department under Vote 27; the development and delivery of Ireland's policy for international development, [A Better World](#); and the management of all aspects of Ireland's relations with sub-Saharan Africa, as articulated in the [Africa Strategy](#).

Risk Management Committee: The Risk Management Committee supports the Chief Risk Officer in overseeing the implementation of the Department's Risk Management Policy and provides feedback on its operation at Divisional and Business Unit level in order to improve and refine the Department's approach to risk.

Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Subcommittee: The Gender, Equality, Diversity and Inclusion (GEDI) Subcommittee is co-chaired by two members of the Management Board and its work is progressed by five Networks/Working Groups, each with a focus on a specific area of equality, diversity and inclusion. The subcommittee works closely with HR towards the implementation of the GEDI Action Plan and the HR Strategy to build a positive, diverse, inclusive and innovative workplace.

Crisis Planning Group: The Departmental Crisis Planning Group is Chaired by the Director-General for Citizen Services ensures that the Department has the appropriate governance framework and the necessary resources in place, both at HQ and across the Mission network, to respond rapidly and at scale to crises abroad, and crises that could directly affect the Department's facilities and/or staff at headquarters.

4.3 Governance at Missions and between Missions and HQ

By the end of 2024, Ireland's diplomatic network will comprise 102 overseas consular and diplomatic offices, in addition to offices in Dublin, Limerick, Cork, Armagh and Belfast, through which the Department maintains diplomatic relations with 183 states. Good governance across the mission

network is critical to the Department's ability to deliver on its objectives in the context of a highly dispersed workforce. Each office of the Department abroad is led by a Head of Mission, who is responsible for ensuring that the Mission meets its strategic and operational objectives and that its day-to-day work is coherent with that of the Department and the Government as a whole. Each mission reports to a lead Division or Unit at Headquarters which has overall responsibility for ensuring coherence and a unified approach to policy implementation and is part of a regional group.

4.4 Relationship with Honorary Consuls

An Honorary Consul is an official representative of the Irish Government in a particular designated territory. The functions, privileges and immunities of Honorary Consuls are set out in the Vienna Convention on Consular Relations, 1963. The Diplomatic and Consular Relations Act, 1967 gave the Convention the force of law in the State. Honorary Consul appointments are made by the Government through the Minister in consultation with the relevant mission, Unit and Consular Directorate. The Government of the host State must also agree to an appointment.

While the roles and functions performed by Honorary Consuls can vary, they are generally appointed to:

- i. provide consular services and/or assistance to Irish citizens;
- ii. support local Irish community efforts; and
- iii. assist in the development of trade and economic relations with the country or region concerned.

A number of Honorary Consuls also play a role in delivering the visa service overseas. The appointment of an Honorary Consul is an honorary one, unsalaried and non-pensionable. Each Honorary Consul is entitled to an honorarium (currently €1,125 per annum) to cover their out-of-pocket expenses and can retain half of the consular fees they collect.

The terms and conditions of appointment require Honorary Consuls to submit a set of accounts to the Department every six months. They are also required to submit an annual report of their activities during the year and to comply with data protection/GDPR obligations. The initial appointment is limited in duration to a period of three years. The appointment may be renewed by mutual agreement.

Primary responsibility for supervising the activities and performance of Honorary Consuls rests with the mission accredited to the country or region in which the Honorary Consul is located (this is usually an Embassy but Consulates in the USA also perform this role). The Head of Mission is the Honorary Consul's immediate superior officer. Consular Directorate has overall responsibility for the administration of the network.

4.5 Governance across organisational boundaries

Members of the Management Board, and other Department staff, also contribute to broader Civil Service management. The Secretary General is a member of the Civil Service Management Board. Other Management Board members also participate in senior civil service management fora, as appointed by the Secretary General.

The European Union Division also chairs cross-Departmental groups on European Union and Brexit issues and supports the work of the Cabinet Committee on Europe. Ireland's approach to EU-UK issues is overseen by an internal group chaired by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. [The Department also chairs a working group on the Common Travel Area].

The Department hosts the Inter Departmental Committee on Human Rights (Human Rights Unit in Political Division), the Inter-Departmental Committee on Development (Development Cooperation and Africa Division) and co-hosts the Inter-Departmental Committee on Peacekeeping Operations with the Department of Defence (Political Division).

The Department emphasises the importance of cross-Departmental engagement in delivering broader Government priorities and commits to an interdependent and collegiate approach in all its dealings, structured or not, with other Government Departments and Agencies.

5. Audit, Assurance & Compliance Arrangements

Dáil Éireann approves funds for Government Departments to spend on the provision of public services every year. The Department of Foreign Affairs is accountable to the Dáil for those allocated funds, including through the Oireachtas Committees on Foreign Affairs and Defence, European Affairs, and the Implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. The Secretary General of the Department appears before the Public Accounts Committee as requested.

The Department's accounts are audited and reported on by the Comptroller and Auditor General who provides independent assurance that public money is properly managed, spent to good effect and is contributing to improvements in public administration.

5.1 Financial Governance

Finance Unit, led by the Chief Financial Officer, reports directly to the Secretary General/Accounting Officer and oversees the management of Votes 27 and 28. The Division maintains a Financial Policy and Procedures Manual, which reflects the Department's obligations under the Public Financial Procedures, with a view to supporting and informing officers with responsibility for accounting, budgetary control and financial management. The manual also sets out the authority limits for spending across the two Votes.

At the end of each financial year, the Department is required to report spend in the form of an Appropriation Account, which is submitted for review and audit to the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General. This Account must be submitted by 31 March. The Accounting Officer is required to supply a signed Statement of Internal Financial Control with this Annual Appropriation Account. The Statement of Internal Financial Control is the means by which the Accounting Officer declares his or her approach to, and responsibility for, risk management, internal control and corporate governance. It is also the vehicle for highlighting weaknesses in the internal control system in the organisation.

The Accounting Officer is responsible for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated by the Department. The objective of the Department's system of internal control is to provide reasonable, and not absolute, assurance that assets are safeguarded, that transactions are authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely manner. Maintaining the Department's system of internal financial controls is a continuous process and the system and its effectiveness are kept under ongoing review.

The Management Board also ensures that the discharge of duties in regards tax compliance is undertaken with a high degree of due diligence and care. These obligations are set out in the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (August 2016) and relevant tax legislation and regulations.

5.2 Shared Services

Payroll and human resources services are provided to the Department on a shared service basis by the National Shared Services Office. The Accounting Officer relies on a letter of assurance from the Accounting Officer of the Vote for Shared Services that the appropriate controls are exercised in the provision of shared services to the Department.

5.3 Public Procurement

Procurement governance in the Department refers to the policies and processes by which the Department holds itself accountable for its procurement and commercial contracting activities. The Department administers the governance structure of the Government's National Public Procurement Framework, and the rules and policies made under it.

The Secretary General, as Accounting Officer, is accountable for the Department's procurement activity and delegates responsibility for the contracting of all types of goods, services and works including ICT, works contracts and technical support to separate Heads of Business Units in the Department at home and abroad. Where this occurs, the Heads of Business Units ensure the application of appropriate governance mechanisms to manage all categories of goods, services and works procurement with the support of a centralised procurement unit in the Department.

Under the [National Public Procurement Policy Framework](#), the governance structure in all Departments requires the assignment of a Procurement Officer to support the Department in meeting the various procurement obligations including procurement compliance, effective procurement planning, robust internal procurement systems, efficient approval processes, and the appropriate delegation of authority.

The Department of Foreign Affairs is a 'contracting authority', defined under EU Directives as a body governed by public law. As a contracting authority, the Department of Foreign Affairs public procurement is governed by Directive 2014/24/EU on public procurement (goods, services and works) as transposed into Irish law by S.I. No. 284/2016; Directive 2014/23/EU on the award of Concession contracts S.I. No. 203/2017; [the Office of Government Procurement Public Procurement Guidelines for Goods and Services \(2023\)](#); [Guidelines for the Engagement of Consultants by the Civil Service](#) (2006); the [Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies](#) (2016) [Green Procurement – Guidance for the Public Sector](#) (EPA) (2014); DPER Procurement Circulars and the [Public Spending Code](#).

The Department's procurement governance objectives are:

- Implementing Government and EU procurement regulation and guidelines

- Obtaining value for money in the exercise of procurement functions
- Improving competition and facilitate access to the Department's procurement business by the private sector, especially by SMEs
- Identifying and managing conflicts of interest
- Treating participants in an ethical and fair manner
- Administering procurement processes ensuring full transparency

The Department has set procedures for competitive processes depending on the level of expenditure to be incurred. These comply with Irish and EU procurement regulations. These competitive processes are set out in the Department's Procurement Procedures, which are available to all staff via the Intranet. The Department's Chief Financial Officer is required to approve all contracts signed by the Department with a value of €25,000 or more.

5.4 Evaluation & Audit

The Evaluation and Audit Unit supports the work of the Department by providing an independent evaluation and internal audit function to the Department, and through insight and knowledge of the Department, provides advice concerning corporate performance, governance, risk management and internal control. The Unit reports directly to the Secretary General who approves the annual evaluation and audit work plan.

The Unit conducts evaluations of the Department's policies and strategies that generate evidence to provide accountability for public funding and inform strategic and operational decision-making. The Unit is part of the Irish Government Economic Evaluation Service (IGEES) and as such conducts assignments such as Spending Reviews that are undertaken under the Public Spending Code.

The internal audit function provides independent and objective assurance on the overall adequacy and effectiveness of the Department's framework for governance, risk management and internal control, through risk-based internal audit work plans. Procedures are in place to track that recommendations arising from audit and evaluation reports are implemented by the Department.

The Unit also maintains a fraud register, in line with the [Department's Counter-Fraud Policy](#), and provides support and advice in preventing and responding to fraud and other irregularity in business operations and programmes.

5.5 Audit Committee

The Department of Foreign Affairs has an independent Audit Committee, appointed to provide independent advice to the Accounting Officer regarding the suitability and robustness of the Department's frameworks, systems and procedures for governance, risk management and internal control systems, and the evaluation of the Department's policies and strategies. The Audit Committee has an advisory role with no executive functions, responsibilities or powers and has no role in approving evaluation and audit reports.

The Committee is comprised of a maximum of six members, all external to the Department, whose backgrounds include audit, evaluation, risk management, overseas development assistance, and public administration. The Committee meets at least six times a year. The Audit Committee's annual reports are published on the Department's website.

5.6 Passport Service Policy & Legal Unit

The Policy and Legal Unit in the Passport Service oversees the effective application of policies, procedures and guidelines and enhances the governance and audit function within the Service.

5.7 Official Development Aid Budget Oversight and Grant Management

The ODA programme is an integral part of our foreign policy, allowing Ireland to contribute to reducing global poverty and improving the lives of some of the world's poorest communities. A Better World – Ireland's policy for International Development - sets out the breath and scope of Ireland's International Development cooperation. Through our ODA programme, Ireland supports developing countries across the world to make real and sustainable changes for the better in the lives of their most vulnerable citizens. Our development cooperation programme provides Ireland with a significant global presence and footprint – including in fragile states and conflict-affected contexts. Each year allocations for the Department's ODA Budget, Vote 27 are submitted to an interdepartmental committee (IDC) for consideration.

A standard approach to grant management is in place in relation to all grants to partner organisations under the Department's ODA Budget, Vote 27. It provides a framework to ensure that those tasked with managing the resources allocated to the Official Development Assistance programme do so in such a way that will deliver optimal results, demonstrate full and transparent financial accountability, generate learning, and support timely and accurate reporting.

5.8 Risk Management

The Department's risk management approach is governed by a Risk Management Policy. The policy seeks to ensure that an awareness of risk and risk management and mitigation informs all aspects of the Department's work. The Secretary General and Management Board approve and implement the Risk Management Policy and are Risk Owners for strategic or cross-cutting risks facing the Department.

The Chief Risk Officer (CRO) is a Management Board member, appointed by the Secretary General, and is responsible for ensuring that risk is identified and managed in the Department. The CRO chairs the Risk Management Committee and is the reporting channel between the Committee and the Management Board. The CRO is supported in their work by the risk management Secretariat in the Strategy, Governance and Change Unit.

Heads of Unit/Mission are responsible for managing risk within their Unit/Mission and individual staff members also have responsibility for risk management. Staff should proactively identify risks and bring these to the attention of management in a timely and effective manner. They should also contribute, as appropriate, to specific planned actions to mitigate risk as detailed in their Business Unit's Risk Register.

The Department maintains a Risk Register and a Management Board High Level Risk Register using the Office of Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO)'s eRisk platform. The Management Board considers risk as a regular agenda item.

5.9 Corporate Services Division

Corporate Services Division plays an important role in governance, particularly through the work of its Security, Coordination and Compliance Unit. This Unit has responsibility for security, health and safety, data protection, freedom of information, records management and customer service.

The Unit is responsible for managing security risks to the personnel and assets of the Department at home and across the mission network. The Unit ensures that staff have appropriate security information and training resources, secure workplaces and the appropriate policies and planning in place to manage security risks.

The Unit represents the Department on the interdepartmental Government Taskforce on Emergency Management and at the National Emergency Coordination Centre. It also ensures that the Department has the appropriate emergency management and business continuity planning framework in place to promote business resilience.

The Unit works closely with the ICT Unit, the Cyber Security Director and other business Units in relation to information and cyber security, including classified information, through the National Security Agency (NSA) and the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) and other interdepartmental channels.

The Department is committed to providing a safe and healthy work environment for all staff in the Department and its Offices, including customers, visitors, contractors and members of the public in accordance with the [Safety, Health & Welfare at Work Act 2005](#) and the [Safety, Health & Welfare at Work \(General Application\) Regulations 2007](#) and other relevant legislation. Across the mission network, all missions are required to adhere to all applicable legislative and other requirements set out by the relevant authorities in the host country.

The Health and Safety team in Corporate Services Division is committed to identifying and then, as far as is reasonably practicable, providing the necessary guidance and policy to eliminate, reduce and control occupational risk, through consultation and engagement with staff across HQ and the mission network. In accordance with legal and other requirements, health and safety policy is developed through SCCU. Through a process of risk assessment, health and safety risk is required to be identified and controlled at each workplace to protect staff and others affected by our operations. Specific health and safety obligations of the Department are kept under regular review and new requirements are notified to the Management Board and Executive Management Group as appropriate by Security, Coordination and Compliance Unit.

The Corporate Services Management Unit acts as departmental and divisional coordinator including for PQs and memos to Government.

Appendix 1: HQ Divisions and Stand-Alone Units

HQ Divisions

- **Corporate Services Division** comprises the Department's Property Management, Security and Corporate Compliance and Information Communications Technology Units. Through the work of these Units, the Division deals with the issues of health and safety, data protection, freedom of information, archiving, records management and business continuity. It also provides technological infrastructures and services in support of the Department's work, and deals with strategic and management issues relating to property and future places of work both at HQ and overseas, including as part of the Global Ireland initiative.
- **Development Cooperation and Africa Division** manages and leads on the Government's official development assistance (ODA) programme, known as Irish Aid. The ODA programme is an integral part of our foreign policy, allowing Ireland to contribute to reducing global poverty and improving the lives of some of the world's poorest communities. Through the programme, Ireland supports developing countries across the world to make real and sustainable changes for the better in the lives of their most vulnerable citizens. Ireland also provides humanitarian assistance to those most in need in the most fragile contexts across the globe. As well as development cooperation, this programme also includes humanitarian response, climate change response and peace and security policy. In addition, the Division is responsible for engaging with multilateral organisations, including the United Nations agencies, international humanitarian organisations and multilateral and regional development finance institutions with the aim of strengthening multilateralism and enabling cooperation and international action. The Division also has responsibility for all aspects of Ireland's bilateral relations with Africa including political and economic relations with the countries of that continent.
- **European Union (EU) Division** develops and co-ordinates Ireland's EU policy. This includes Ireland's policy on and approach to the UK's withdrawal from the EU as well as coordinating the Government's overall response to the outworkings of Brexit, including the Windsor Framework. In close conjunction with the Permanent Representation, Brussels and Irish Embassies in the other EU Member States, it is responsible for seeking to ensure that they understand and where possible support Irish positions on EU issues. It also has responsibility for Irish policy towards the Western Balkans, Türkiye, Russia, the countries of the EU's Eastern Partnership and the Central Asian republics, and for Ireland's participation in the Council of Europe, and the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE). The Division oversees Ireland's bilateral relations with all European states, EU (other than the UK) and non-EU, and manages the Department's European missions.

- **Global Ireland and Economic Division (GLOBEC)** is responsible for promoting Ireland as a destination for business, investment, tourism and education, to enhancing our economic reputation overseas, and to showcasing our unique cultural heritage. It seeks to advance Ireland's prosperity by enabling Ireland's economic diplomacy to promote the Government's economic and enterprise priorities internationally; The Unit works closely with all Team Ireland partners at home and abroad to implement Ireland's *Trade and Investment Strategy 2022-2026: Value for Ireland, Values for the World*, including through supporting the Minister in his role as a member of the Trade and Investment Council, supporting Local Market Team / Regional Market Team structures overseas. It manages the Global Ireland Programme, which aims to double Ireland's influence and impact in the world by 2025 and leads a number of significant events that promote Ireland abroad, including the annual global St. Patrick's Day programme and Ireland's participation in Expo .The Division has overall responsibility for the Department's communications, information and digital media management and for cultural promotion and diplomacy. The Division also hosts **Asia Pacific Unit** has responsibility for all aspects of most of our bilateral relations between Ireland and the Asia and Pacific region and is informed and guided by the refreshed Asia Pacific Strategy. which was published in October 2023, and sets out high-level ambitions to enhance our political, economic, cultural and people-to-people relations with the region. The Unit also works with Departments to deliver integrated policy positions that reflect Ireland's values and strategic interests and maximises our participation at the OECD.

- **Citizen Services Division** is the largest Headquarters Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs, reflecting the Department's strong commitment to providing effective and timely services to Irish citizens at home and abroad, and to providing support for, and leading the Government's engagement with, the global Irish community. The Director General oversees the work of the Passport Service, the Consular Directorate, which is responsible for delivering consular services and assistance to Irish citizens overseas, and the Irish Abroad Unit, which leads on Government engagement with the diaspora.

- **Human Resources Division** has three main Units. HR Abroad assists and supports officers and their families as they undertake postings and assists and supports posted staff in the role as local staff managers. HR HQ Workforce Planning Unit directs workforce planning, competitions, recruitment, assignments and postings. HR Strategy and Operations Unit coordinates the implementation of the HR Strategy, the Gender, Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Action Plan, and directs workplace relations, performance management, wellbeing, employee engagement, HR operations, and training and development. Human Resources Division has responsibility for implementing the Public Sector Reform Agenda across the

Department, in cooperation with the Secretary General and the Strategy, Governance and Change Unit.

- **Ireland, United Kingdom, and Americas Division** works to promote peace and reconciliation on the island of Ireland and the full and effective implementation of the Good Friday Agreement. The Division also has lead responsibility for bilateral relations with the UK, the US, Canada, Latin America and the Caribbean. Working in close collaboration with EU Division, the Division leads on island of Ireland and British-Irish implications of the EU-UK relationship. The Division also supports the continued implementation of the **Institutions of the Good Friday Agreement**. The Department represents the State in the Joint Secretariats to the British-Irish Intergovernmental Conference (Belfast), to the North South Ministerial Council (Armagh) and the British Irish Council (Edinburgh). The Division hosts the Dublin Secretariat of the International Fund for Ireland, an independent international organisation established in 1986 by the Irish and British governments following the Anglo-Irish Agreement.
- **Legal Division** provides legal advice and assistance to the Minister and the Department on matters of public international law, human rights law and European Union law as it relates to foreign policy, and issues of domestic law particular to the Department; leads on international legal policy on international humanitarian law, international criminal justice and the law of the sea; represents Ireland in international legal proceedings and in legal committees in international organisations; carries out functions with respect to extradition and mutual legal assistance; and administers the Department's Treaty Office.
- **Political Division** is responsible for foreign policy strategy, and ensuring Ireland's values, interests and foreign and security policy objectives are reflected in the EU's Common Foreign and Security Policy (CFSP) and the EU's Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP), and in other multilateral organisations, most notably the United Nations, in keeping with Ireland's support for effective multilateralism and a stable rules-based international order. Political Division is overseen by the Political Director, supported by the Deputy Political Director, and includes a secretariat, five thematic units (disarmament and non-proliferation, human rights, international security policy, United Nations, sanctions), and two geographic units (Middle East and North Africa, and European Neighbourhood), responsible for all aspects of Ireland's relations and strategic engagement with the Middle East, North African, Gulf, Eastern European, Southern Caucasus and Central Asian regions. **A Peace and Stability unit** sits jointly between Political and Development Cooperation and Africa Divisions, and is responsible for policy towards peacebuilding and supporting peace processes and conflict prevention globally.

Standalone Units

- **Protocol** is responsible for the preparation and organisation of visits abroad by the President and visits to Ireland at Head of State, Head of Government and Foreign Minister level. In addition, Protocol facilitates official events and manages official hospitality undertaken by the Department and coordinates correspondence between the Department and Áras an Uachtaráin. The Protocol service also facilitates the operation of diplomatic missions in Ireland in accordance with international and domestic legislation.
- **Evaluation and Audit Unit** provides an independent evaluation and audit function to the Department. The Unit supports the work of the Department by providing independent objective assessment, assurance, advice and insight regarding corporate performance, governance, risk management and internal control.
- **Finance Unit** has responsibility for all aspects of the Department's finance and budgetary functions, including the development and implementation of the Department's finance strategy, across both Votes 27 and 28. The Division also has responsibility for the public procurement function as well as the Department's engagement with relevant Civil Service-wide shared services initiatives.
- **Strategy, Governance and Change Unit** supports the formulation of Departmental strategic processes to ensure effective implementation of the Department's high-level goals. The unit ensures that strong governance systems are in place across the Department, in full compliance with public sector obligations, through support of the Management Board and its various sub-committees. The Unit leads on the Department's business planning, risk management and performance reporting processes as well as the implementation of the Public Service and Civil Service Reform Agendas. The Unit has responsibility for the annual Mission Review Programme of embassies and consulates, which assesses the organisational performance and strategic direction of a Mission in the implementation of the Department's high-level goals. The Unit is central to the promotion of innovation and change across the Department including through the provision of project management support through the Project Management Office, a key driver of transformation and delivery of strategic projects, through the framework of the Programme Oversight Board (POB).
- **Policy Coordination and International Technology Unit** works to contribute to strategic policy formulation within DFA, by developing and coordinating analysis of longer-term trends in policy areas of priority interest within Ireland's external relations, to inform our future action. The Unit is also responsible for the Technology in International Policy. The Unit works in close

cooperation with key stakeholders within DFA and across Government, and aims to develop stronger and mutually beneficial relationships between DFA and the broader foreign policy community.