

Appropriation Account 2023

Vote 15

Secret Service

Introduction

As Accounting Officer for Vote 15, I am required each year to prepare the appropriation account for the Vote, and to submit the account to the Comptroller and Auditor General for audit.

In accordance with this requirement, I have prepared the attached account of the amount expended in the year ended 31 December 2023 for Secret Service.

The expenditure outturn is compared with the sums granted by Dáil Éireann under the Appropriation Act 2023.

A surplus of €593,000 is liable for surrender to the Exchequer.

The Statement of Accounting Policies and Principles and notes 1 to 4 form part of the account.

Statement of accounting policies and principles

The standard accounting policies and principles for the production of appropriation accounts, as set out by the Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform in circular 22 of 2023, have been applied in the preparation of the account.

Statement on internal financial control

Prescribed arrangements are in place with the Department of Justice and the Department of Defence for the drawdown of moneys from the Secret Service Vote and for the annual certification by the respective Ministers of moneys actually expended during the year, as well as balances held at the year-end.

For security reasons, restrictions are in place regarding operations and information about the individual transactions. This places a limitation on the normal direct controls available to me as Accounting Officer of a Vote. In the circumstances, I rely on annual certified statements signed by the Ministers to whom moneys have been issued, which are underpinned by operational controls put in place by their Departments.

David Moloney
Accounting Officer
Secret Service

7 March 2024

Comptroller and Auditor General

Report for presentation to the Houses of the Oireachtas

Vote 15 Secret Service

Opinion on the appropriation account

I have audited the appropriation account for Vote 15 Secret Service for the year ended 31 December 2023 under section 3 of the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993.

In my opinion, the appropriation account

- properly presents the receipts and expenditure of Vote 15 Secret Service for the year ended 31 December 2023, and
- has been prepared in the form prescribed by the Minister for Public Expenditure National Development Plan Delivery and Reform.

Basis of opinion

I conducted my audit of the appropriation account in accordance with the International Standards on Auditing (ISAs) as promulgated by the International Organisation of Supreme Audit Institutions. My responsibilities under those standards are described in the appendix to this report. I am independent of the Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform and have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the standards.

For the purposes of this audit, I have been furnished with certificates from the Minister for Justice and the Minister for Defence which support the expenditure from the Vote. The audit included review of operational controls over the moneys issued from the Vote.

I believe that the audit evidence I have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion.

Report on the statement on internal financial control, and on other matters

The Accounting Officer has presented a statement on internal financial control together with the appropriation account. My responsibilities to report in relation to the information in the statement, and on certain other matters upon which I report by exception, are described in the appendix to this report.

I have nothing to report in that regard.

Seamus McCarthy
Comptroller and Auditor General

22 April 2024

Appendix to the report

Responsibilities of the Accounting Officer

The Accounting Officer is responsible for

- the preparation of the appropriation account in accordance with section 22 of the Exchequer and Audit Departments Act 1866
- ensuring the appropriation account complies with the requirements of the Department of Public Expenditure National Development Plan Delivery and Reform's *Public Financial Procedures*, and with other directions of the Minister for Public Expenditure National Development Plan Delivery and Reform
- ensuring the regularity of transactions, and
- implementing such internal control as the Accounting Officer determines is necessary to enable the preparation of the appropriation account free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Responsibilities of the Comptroller and Auditor General

I am required under section 3 of the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993 to audit the appropriation account and to report thereon to the Houses of the Oireachtas stating whether, in my opinion, the account properly presents the receipts and expenditure related to the vote.

My objective in carrying out the audit is to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the appropriation account is free from material misstatement due to fraud or error. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with the ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of the appropriation account.

As part of an audit in accordance with the ISAs, I exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. In doing so,

- I identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the appropriation account whether due to fraud or error; design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks; and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for my opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.

- I obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the internal controls.
- I assess whether the accounting provisions of the Department of Public Expenditure National Development Plan Delivery and Reform's *Public Financial Procedures* have been complied with.

I communicate with the Accounting Officer regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that I identify during my audit.

I report by exception if, in my opinion,

- I have not received all the information and explanations I required for my audit, or
- the accounting records were not sufficient to permit the appropriation account to be readily and properly audited, or
- the appropriation account is not in agreement with the accounting records.

Reporting on the statement on internal financial control

My opinion on the appropriation account does not cover the Accounting Officer's statement on internal financial control, and I do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with my audit of the appropriation account, I am required under the ISAs to read the statement on internal financial control and, in doing so, consider whether the information contained therein is materially inconsistent with the appropriation account or with knowledge obtained during the audit, or if it otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work I have performed, I conclude that there is a material misstatement, I am required to report that fact.

Reporting on other matters

I seek to obtain evidence about the regularity of financial transactions in the course of audit. I am required to report under section 3 of the Comptroller and Auditor General (Amendment) Act 1993 if I identify any material instance where public money has not been applied for the purposes intended or where transactions did not conform to the authorities governing them.

I am also required under the 1993 Act to prepare, in each year, a report on such matters arising from my audits of the appropriation accounts as I consider appropriate. In such cases, the audit reports on the relevant appropriation accounts refer to the relevant chapter(s) in my annual *Report on the Accounts of the Public Services*.

Vote 15 Secret Service**Appropriation Account 2023**

	2023		2022
	Estimate provision	Outturn	Outturn
	€000	€000	€000
Programme expenditure			
Secret service	2,000	1,407	1,189
	2,000	1,407	1,189

Surplus

The surplus of the amount provided over the net amount applied is liable for surrender to the Exchequer.

	2023	2022
	€	€
Surplus to be surrendered	593,259	811,090

David Moloney
Accounting Officer
Secret Service

7 March 2024

Notes to the Appropriation Account

Note 1 Operating Cost Statement 2023

This note is not applicable in the case of the Secret Service Vote.

Note 2 Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2023

	Note	2023 €000	2022 €000
Current assets			
Sub-account balances		500	307
PMG balance		<u>277</u>	<u>88</u>
Total current assets		777	395
Less current liabilities			
Net Exchequer funding	2.1	<u>777</u>	<u>395</u>
Total current liabilities		777	395
Net current assets		<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>
Net assets		<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>
Represented by:			
State funding account	2.2	<u>—</u>	<u>—</u>

2.1 Net Exchequer funding

at 31 December	2023	2022
	€000	€000
Surplus to be surrendered	593	811
Exchequer grant (un)drawn	184	(416)
Net Exchequer funding	777	395

Represented by:**Debtors**

Sub-account balance	500	307
PMG balance	277	88
	777	395
	777	395

2.2 State funding account

	Note	2023	2022
		€000	€000
Balance at 1 January		—	—
Disbursements from the Vote			
Estimate provision	Account	2,000	
Surplus to be surrendered	Account	(593)	
Net vote		1,407	1,189
Net programme cost		(1,407)	(1,189)
Balance at 31 December		—	—

Note 3 Vote Expenditure

The expenditure outturn was €593,000 (30%) lower than the amount provided. The estimate is necessarily conjectural.

Note 4 Salary of Accounting Officer

The Accounting Officer for Vote 15 Secret Service is also the Accounting Officer for Vote 11 Office of the Minister for Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform. His salary level is disclosed in the Appropriation Account for Vote 11.