

Appropriation Account 2024

Vote 29

Environment, Climate and Communications

Introduction

As Accounting Officer for Vote 29, 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 2024 for the salaries and expenses of the Office of the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, including certain services administered by that Office, and for payment of certain grants.

The expenditure outturn is compared with the sums

- granted by Dáil Eireann under the Appropriation Act 2024, including the amount that could be used as appropriations-in-aid of expenditure for the year, and
- provided for capital supply services in 2024 out of unspent 2023 appropriations, under the deferred surrender arrangements established by section 91 of the Finance Act 2004.

A surplus of €38.479 million is liable for surrender to the Exchequer.

The statement of accounting policies and principles and notes 1 to 7 form part of the account.

Transfer of functions

Following a Government decision in December 2023, responsibility for Ireland's marine planning system formally transferred to the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage on 14 May 2024 under SI 236/2024 - Foreshore (Transfer of Departmental Administration and Ministerial Functions) Order 2024; SI 219/2024 - Gas (Amendment) and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2024 (Transfer Day) Order 2024; and SI 109/2024 - Infrastructure for Spatial Information in the European Community (INSPIRE) (Transfer of Departmental Administration and Ministerial Functions) Order 2024.

The appropriation account, which must follow the form and format of the relevant estimate, reflects the above transfer of functions on a full-year basis. Therefore, all the transferred functions are accounted for in the 2024 appropriation 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 20 of 2024 have been applied in the preparation of the account. This includes the application of a number of Central Government Accounting Standards (CGAS) brought into effect from 1 January 2024.

To facilitate the transition of the appropriation account to the Central Government Accounting Standards, the Department has received derogations in respect of the following standards in respect of 2024.

- *CGAS 17 Property, Plant, and Equipment*

Property assets listed in Appendix A have not been recognised in the financial statements (CGAS 17:14).

Plans are in place to review and resolve issues relating to legal title and control of a number of properties, at which time the properties will be valued and recognised in the financial statements.

- *CGAS 32 Service Concession Arrangements: Grantor*

The service concession arrangement on the metropolitan area networks (MANS) has not been recognised in the financial statements due to imminent requirements to review contractual arrangements.

Basis of measurement

Depreciation of capital assets

Depreciation of property, plant and equipment and amortisation of intangible assets are calculated and charged in accordance with CGAS 17 and CGAS 31 respectively.

The useful lives and associated rates of depreciation/amortisation for major classes of property, plant and equipment are as follows.

<i>Asset class</i>	<i>Useful life</i>	<i>Rate of depreciation/ amortisation</i>
Leasehold improvements	50 years	2% per annum
Motor vehicles and mobile plant	5 years	20% per annum
Other specialist equipment including research vessels	5 to 10 years	10-20% per annum
IT hardware	5 years	20% per annum
Other equipment	5 years	20% per annum
IT operational software systems	5 to 10 years	10-20% per annum
Acquired and developed licences and software	5 years	20% per annum

Statement on internal financial control

Responsibility for system of internal financial control

As Accounting Officer, I acknowledge my responsibility for ensuring that an effective system of internal financial control is maintained and operated by the Department.

This responsibility is exercised in the context of the resources available to me and my other obligations as Secretary General.

Also, any system of internal financial control can provide only reasonable and not absolute assurance that assets are safeguarded, transactions authorised and properly recorded, and that material errors or irregularities are either prevented or would be detected in a timely manner. Maintaining the system of internal financial controls is a continuous process and the system and its effectiveness are kept under ongoing review.

Shared services

I have fulfilled my responsibilities in relation to the requirements of the Service Management Agreement between this Department and the National Shared Services Office for the provision of human resources and payroll shared services.

I rely on a letter of assurance from the Accounting Officer of the National Shared Services Office that the appropriate controls are exercised in the provision of shared services to this Department.

Financial control environment

A control environment comprising the following elements is in place.

- Financial responsibilities have been assigned at management level with corresponding accountability.
- Reporting arrangements have been established at all levels where responsibility for financial management has been assigned.
- Formal procedures have been established for reporting significant control failures and ensuring appropriate corrective action.
- There is an Audit Committee to advise me in discharging my responsibilities for the internal financial control system.
- Procedures for key business processes have been documented.
- There are systems in place to safeguard the assets.

Administrative controls and management reporting

A framework of administrative procedures and regular management reporting is in place, including segregation of duties and a system of delegation and accountability.

- There is an appropriate budgeting system with an annual budget which is kept under review by senior management.
- There are regular reviews by senior management of periodic and annual financial reports which indicate financial performance against forecasts.
- A risk management system operates within the Department.
- There are systems aimed at ensuring the security of the ICT systems.
- There are appropriate capital investment control guidelines and formal project management disciplines.

Internal audit and Audit Committee

The Department has an internal audit function with appropriately trained personnel, which operates in accordance with a written charter which I have approved. Its work is informed by analysis of the financial risks to which the Department is exposed and its annual internal audit plans, jointly approved by me and the Audit Committee, are based on this analysis. These plans aim to cover the key controls on a rolling basis over a reasonable period. The internal audit function is reviewed periodically by me and by the Audit Committee. I have put procedures in place to ensure that the reports of the internal audit function are followed up.

Procurement

The Department ensures that there is an appropriate focus on good procurement practice in the award of all contracts and that procedures are in place to ensure compliance with all relevant guidelines.

The Department has provided details of 16 non-competitive contracts in excess of €25,000 in the annual return in respect of circular 40/2002 to the Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform.

Non-compliance with procurement rules

The Department complied with the guidelines with the exception of five contracts and one part contract in excess of €25,000 (exclusive of VAT) totalling €527,012 (exclusive of VAT) as set out below.

- Three contracts for professional services with a combined total of €286,864, one of which was extended while a new procurement process was finalised, the second was extended while services were finalised and the third was extended while a recruitment process was finalised. All three contracts have expired.
- One contract for call answering services, with a value of €47,782, was extended to enable the handover to a new contractor. This has now expired and the new contractor is in place.
- One contract for media services, with a value of €33,966, was required as a matter of urgency while the contract under the OGP framework had expired. A new contract under the framework is now in place.
- One contract including specialist advisory services with a value of €158,400 in support of the NCSC.

The above contracts have been included in the 40/2002 annual return referenced above.

Risk and control framework

The Department has implemented a risk management system which identifies and reports key risks and the management actions being taken to address and, to the extent possible, to mitigate those risks.

A risk register is in place which identifies the key risks facing the Department and these have been identified, evaluated and graded according to their significance. The register is reviewed and updated by the Risk Committee (RC) and Management Board (MB) on a quarterly basis. The outcome of these assessments is used to plan and allocate resources to ensure risks are managed to an acceptable level.

The risk register details the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks and responsibility for operation of controls assigned to specific staff.

Ongoing monitoring and review

Formal procedures have been established for monitoring control processes and control deficiencies are communicated to those responsible for taking corrective action and to management and the MB/RC, where relevant, in a timely way. I confirm that key risks and related controls have been identified and processes have been put in place to monitor the operation of those key controls and report any identified deficiencies.

Review of effectiveness

The Department has procedures to monitor the effectiveness of its risk management and control procedures. The Department's monitoring and review of the effectiveness of the system of internal financial control is informed by the work of the internal and external auditors and the senior management within the Department responsible for the development and maintenance of the internal financial control framework.

The Department is currently implementing a Risk Management Improvement Plan, agreed by the Risk Committee and Management Board in July 2024.

Internal financial control issues***Tax compliance***

On 3 March 2020, the Office of the Revenue Commissioners (Revenue) gave notice of a site visit to get an understanding of the Department's processes and systems around ensuring tax compliance, benefit-in-kind on official vehicles and any other records as necessary.

During 2020, the Department engaged external auditors to conduct two audits relating to 1) the use of contractors within the Department and 2) fleet management practices which identified potential tax compliance issues. Revenue was briefed on the findings of both audits and was advised that the Department would undertake a comprehensive internal tax review.

The Department provided regular updates to Revenue throughout the process which concluded with a presentation of the findings in July 2022. Following this the Department made an unprompted qualifying disclosure totalling €44,466.

There was further engagement with Revenue during 2023 and 2024 and the Department is awaiting a response from the Revenue Commissioners.

Following a review of VAT paid on invoices subject to Relevant Contracts Tax, the Department contacted Revenue in 2024 to request guidance on applicable VAT rates. Having received this guidance and completed a review of VAT paid in the years 2021, 2022 and 2023 as requested by Revenue, it was identified that there was an under payment of VAT of €21,727 by this Department during that period. Following further engagement with Revenue interest and penalties were calculated and a total payment of €28,039 was paid on 17 September 2024.

Oonagh Buckley

Accounting Officer

Environment, Climate and Communications

28 March 2025

Comptroller and Auditor General

Report for presentation to Dáil Éireann

Vote 29 Environment, Climate and Communications

Opinion on the appropriation account

I have audited the appropriation account for Vote 29 Environment, Climate and Communications for the year ended 31 December 2024 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 29 Environment, Climate and Communications for the year ended 31 December 2024, and
- has been prepared in the form prescribed by the Minister for Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation.

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 Climate, Energy and the Environment and have fulfilled my other ethical responsibilities in accordance with the standards.

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.

Non-compliant procurement

The Accounting Officer has disclosed in the statement on internal financial control that material level of non-compliance with national procurement rules occurred in respect of contracts that operated in 2024.

Loss due to late transposition of EU Directive

Note 6.5 discloses the payment to the European Commission in 2024 of a fine arising from the late transposition into Irish law of the 2018 European Electronic Communications Code Directive. Under article 124 of the Directive, full transposition by member states was required by December 2020.

In Ireland's case, the legislation required to give effect to the transposition was only put in place in 2022 and 2023. The final element of the transposition, providing for the transmission of public warnings through mobile communication devices in the event of a major emergency or disaster, was completed in November 2023. This was almost three years after the deadline.

Prior to completion of the transposition process, the Commission had commenced infringement proceedings against Ireland in the European Court of Justice arising from the ongoing delays. On 14 March 2024, the Court issued its judgement and imposed a lump sum fine of €4.5 million on Ireland for the failure to transpose the Directive on time.

Reporting on matters connected to Vote 29

My *Report on the Accounts of the Public Services 2024* includes sections dealing with the following matters that relate to Vote 29, or to funds administered by the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment.

- Chapter 12 provides an overview of the progress being made towards achieving climate neutrality targets for Ireland, and the potential financial implications of the targets not being met.
- Chapter 13 explains the circumstances around the cancellation of the remaining carbon credits in the statutory Carbon Fund, leaving the Fund effectively dormant.
- Chapter 23 reports on the operation of the controls over the receipts from the (temporary) capping of electricity sales revenues in the period December 2022 to June 2023, and the provisions made to use the funds which are being held in the statutory Market Cap Fund.

Seamus McCarthy

Comptroller and Auditor General

18 September 2025

Appendix to the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General

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 Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation's *Public Financial Procedures*, and with other directions of the Minister for Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation.
- 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 Dáil Éireann 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 Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation'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.

Appendix to the report of the Comptroller and Auditor General (continued)**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 29 Environment, Climate and Communications

Appropriation Account 2024

				2024	2023
		Estimate provision		Outturn	Outturn
		€000	€000	€000	€000
Programme expenditure					
A	Climate action and environment leadership				
	Original	138,319			
	Deferred surrender	1,800			
	Supplementary	1			
			140,120	127,776	115,894
B	Energy transformation				
	Original	544,012			
	Supplementary	523,320			
			1,067,332	1,038,995	1,406,927
C	Circular economy development		124,004	100,083	87,311
D	Connectivity and communications delivery				
	Original	409,450			
	Supplementary	30,000			
			439,450	466,958	357,640
Gross expenditure					
	Original	1,215,785			
	Deferred surrender	1,800			
	Supplementary	553,321			
			1,770,906	1,733,812	1,967,772
Deduct					
E	Appropriations-in-aid		9,145	10,530	17,762
Net expenditure					
	Original	1,206,640			
	Deferred surrender	1,800			
	Supplementary	553,321			
			1,761,761	1,723,282	1,950,010

Surplus

The surplus of the amount provided over the net amount applied is liable for surrender to the Exchequer. Under section 91 of the Finance Act 2004, all or part of any unspent appropriations for capital supply services may be carried over for spending in the following year.

	2024	2023
	€	€
Surplus	38,478,911	44,041,462
Deferred surrender	—	(1,800,000)
Surplus to be surrendered	<u>38,478,911</u>	<u>42,241,462</u>

Oonagh Buckley

Accounting Officer

Environment, Climate and Communications

28 March 2025

Notes to the Appropriation Account

Note 1 Operating Cost Statement 2024

	2024	2023
	€000	€000
Programme cost	1,666,141	1,910,644
Pay	55,318	43,615
Non pay	12,353	13,513
Gross expenditure	1,733,812	1,967,772
<i>Deduct</i>		
Appropriations-in-aid	10,530	17,762
Net expenditure	1,723,282	1,950,010
Changes in capital assets		
<i>Property, plant and equipment</i>		
<i>(note 2.1)</i>		
Purchases	(2,678)	
Depreciation	793	
Disposals cash	4	
Profit on disposals	(4)	
	(1,885)	(2,714)
Changes in net current assets		
Decrease in inventories	13	
Decrease in prepayments	362,248	
Decrease in accrued income	4,508	
Increase in deferred income	16,620	
Increase in provisions	150	
Decrease in accrued expenses	(1,164)	
	382,375	177,230
Direct expenditure	2,103,772	2,124,526
Expenditure borne elsewhere		
Net allied services expenditure (note 1.1)	16,439	18,140
Notional rents	1,584	1,584
Net programme cost	2,121,795	2,144,250

1.1 Net allied services expenditure

The net allied services expenditure amount is made up of the following amounts in relation to Vote 29 borne elsewhere.

		2024	2023
		€000	€000
Vote 9	Office of the Revenue Commissioners	62	60
Vote 12	Superannuation and Retired Allowances	13,857	14,251
Vote 13	Office of Public Works	1,066	3,309
Vote 18	National Shared Services Office	76	63
Vote 43	Office of the Government Chief Information Officer	1,161	262
Vote 20	Garda Síochána	121	114
	Central Fund – ministerial pensions	96	81
		16,439	18,140

Note 2 Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2024

	Note	2024 €000	2023 €000
Fixed assets			
Property, plant and equipment	2.1	23,091	3,925
Intangible assets	2.2	—	—
		23,091	3,925
Current assets			
Bank and cash	2.3	134,768	93,053
Inventories	2.4	138	151
Electricity credit prepayment	2.5	257,939	610,988
Other prepayments	2.6	12,257	21,456
Accrued income	2.7	1,244	5,752
Other debit balances	2.8	1,547	214
		407,893	731,614
<i>Less</i>			
Current liabilities			
Provisions	2.9	150	—
Accrued expenses	2.10	22,295	23,459
Deferred income	2.11	16,620	—
Other credit balances	2.12	127,648	91,198
Net Exchequer funding	2.13	8,667	2,069
		175,380	116,726
Net current assets		232,513	614,888
Net assets		255,604	618,813
Represented by:			
State funding account	2.14	255,604	618,813

2.1 Property, plant and equipment ^a

	Land and buildings	Leasehold improvements	Office and IT equipment	Specialist equipment and motor vehicles	Assets under development	Total
	€000	€000	€000	€000	€000	€000
Cost or valuation						
At 1 January 2024	—	—	2,158	7,563	2,697	12,418
Additions	—	3,046	1,932	117	(2,417)	2,678
Revaluation adjustment	17,495	—	—	—	—	17,495
Disposals	—	—	—	(21)	—	(21)
Adjustment: asset verification project ^b	—	—	837	843	—	1,680
Adjustment: asset reporting threshold ^c	—	—	(971)	(58)	(280)	(1,309)
At 31 December 2024	17,495	3,046	3,956	8,444	—	32,941
Accumulated depreciation						
At 1 January 2024	—	—	1,523	6,970	—	8,493
Depreciation for the year	—	20	489	284	—	793
Depreciation on disposals	—	—	—	(21)	—	(21)
Adjustment: asset verification project ^b	—	—	732	843	—	1,575
Adjustment: asset reporting threshold ^c	—	—	(971)	(19)	—	(990)
At 31 December 2024	—	20	1,773	8,057	—	9,850
Net assets						
At 31 December 2024	17,495	3,026	2,183	387	—	23,091
At 31 December 2023	—	—	635	593	2,697	3,925

Note ^a State-owned lands and buildings controlled or managed by the Department which do not have valuations are set out in Appendix A.

^b An asset verification exercise was carried out in 2024 and an adjustment was required to remove obsolete assets and assets no longer in existence and to add assets acquired in prior years not previously reported on the main fixed asset register.

^c In line with DPENDR circular 21/2020, the threshold for inclusion of capital assets in the statement of financial position was increased to €10,000 for an individual asset. The Department adopted this policy in 2023 and this adjustment relates to the removal of individual asset values of under €10,000 from the account which were identified in 2024.

Estimating the fair value of land and buildings

Tailte Éireann performed the most recent valuation of buildings. The valuation is effective as at 31 December 2024.

Non-specialised buildings are valued at fair value using market-based evidence.

Significant assumptions in the 31 December 2024 valuation include market rents and capitalisation rates.

Market rents range from €81 to €920 per square metre.

Capitalisation rates are market-based rates of return and range from 5.75% to 8.5%.

2.2 Intangible assets

	Acquired and developed software €000	Total €000
Cost or valuation		
At 1 January 2024	8,087	8,087
Additions	—	—
Adjustment: asset verification project ^a	(131)	(131)
Adjustment: asset reporting threshold ^b	(303)	(303)
At 31 December 2024	7,653	7,653
Accumulated amortisation		
At 1 January 2024	8,087	8,087
Amortisation for the year	—	—
Adjustment: asset verification project ^a	(131)	(131)
Adjustment: asset reporting threshold ^b	(303)	(303)
At 31 December 2024	7,653	7,653
Net assets		
At 31 December 2024	—	—
At 31 December 2023	—	—

Note ^a An asset verification exercise was carried out in 2024 and an adjustment was required to remove obsolete assets and assets no longer in existence from the account.

^b In line with DPENDR circular 21/2020, the threshold for inclusion of capital assets in the statement of financial position was increased to €10,000 for an individual asset. The Department adopted this policy in 2023 and this adjustment relates to the removal of individual asset values of under €10,000 from the account which were identified in 2024.

2.3 Bank and cash

at 31 December	2024 €000	2023 €000
PMG balance and cash	100,256	31,081
Energy Efficiency National Fund balance	31,021	55,935
Petroleum Infrastructure Programme Fund	3,491	6,037
	134,768	93,053

2.4 Inventories

at 31 December	2024	2023
	€000	€000
Equipment	3	19
Publications	135	132
	138	151

2.5 Electricity credit prepayment

Due to the rise in international energy prices and the knock-on effect for domestic customers, the Government approved Electricity Costs Emergency Benefit Schemes in 2022 and 2023.

In response to continued high prices in 2024, the Government introduced the fourth scheme of two payments of €114.68 each (ex. VAT) to be credited to over 2.2 million domestic electricity accounts between December 2024 and February 2025.

In 2024, the Department paid €519.952 million under the fourth scheme. €257.939 million of this was distributed to individual domestic electricity accounts in 2025 (2024: €610.988 million).

2.6 Other prepayments

at 31 December	2024	2023
	€000	€000
Administration	49	1,021
IT services and supports	1,243	649
Specific programme prepayment	10,965	19,786
	12,257	21,456

2.7 Accrued income

at 31 December	2024	2023
	€000	€000
Mining royalty invoices	1,003	3,755
Other debtor invoices	241	1,997
	1,244	5,752

2.8 Other debit balances

at 31 December	2024	2023
	€000	€000
Salaries of seconded staff	43	123
Payroll	1,381	—
Other suspense	123	91
	1,547	214

2.9 Provisions

Provision of €150,000 was made for legal costs not yet paid (2023: nil).

2.10 Accrued expenses

at 31 December	2024	2023
	€000	€000
IT services and supports	129	385
Administration	591	309
Specific programme accrual	18,080	22,765
Payroll-related accruals (note 2.21)	3,495	—
	22,295	23,459

2.11 Deferred income

at 31 December	2024
	€000
Foreshore licenses ^a	16,620
	16,620

Note ^a The deferred income of €16.6 million relates to payments received in advance since 2010 for the issuing of foreshore licences for long term periods up to 99 years. Responsibility for the foreshore programme formally transferred to the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage on 14 May 2024 under SI 236/2024 Foreshore (Transfer of Departmental Administration and Ministerial Functions) Order 2024.

2.12 Other credit balances

at 31 December	2024	2023
	€000	€000
Amounts due to the state		
Withholding tax	870	1,024
Value added tax	1,296	922
Exchequer receipts (note 4.3)	81,056	20,727
PAYE/PRSI	1,652	1,186
	<u>84,874</u>	<u>23,859</u>
Suspense		
Energy Efficiency National Fund (note 7.2)	31,021	55,935
Petroleum Infrastructure Programme Fund (note 7.1)	3,491	6,037
National Cyber Security Co-ordination and Development Centre – EU funding	3,034	3,019
Emergency call answering service	1,293	1,543
Extended producer responsibility schemes - producer contributions for litter clean-up	1,718	—
Climate Action Fund	1,360	—
Other	857	805
	<u>42,774</u>	<u>67,339</u>
	<u>127,648</u>	<u>91,198</u>

2.13 Net Exchequer funding

at 31 December	2024	2023
	€000	€000
Surplus to be surrendered	38,479	42,241
Deferred surrender	—	1,800
Exchequer grant undrawn	(29,812)	(41,972)
Net Exchequer funding	<u>8,667</u>	<u>2,069</u>
Represented by:		
Debtors		
Bank and cash	134,768	93,053
Debit balances: suspense	1,547	214
	<u>136,315</u>	<u>93,267</u>
Creditors		
Due to the State	(84,874)	(23,859)
Credit balances: suspense	(42,774)	(67,339)
	<u>(127,648)</u>	<u>(91,198)</u>
	<u>8,667</u>	<u>2,069</u>

2.14 State funding account

	Note	2024	2023
		€000	€000
Balance at 1 January		618,813	793,691
Disbursements from the Vote			
Estimate provision	Account	1,761,761	
Deferred surrender	Account	—	
Surplus to be surrendered	Account	(38,479)	
Net vote		1,723,282	1,950,010
Expenditure borne elsewhere	1.1	16,439	18,140
Non-cash items			
Capital asset net adjustments	2.1	(214)	
Notional rent	1	1,584	
		1,370	1,222
Net programme cost	1	(2,121,795)	(2,144,250)
		238,109	618,813
First time Recognition of Property, plant and equipment	2.1	17,495	—
Balance at 31 December		255,604	618,813
General reserve		238,109	618,813
Revaluation reserve		17,495	—
State funding account		255,604	618,813

2.15 Commitments

	2024	2023
a) Global commitments	€000	€000
at 31 December		
Procurement of goods and services ^a	—	—
Capital grant programmes	535,247	395,224
Capital projects and programmes	1,777,372	2,214,275
Total of legally enforceable commitments	2,312,619	2,609,499
b) Capital grant programmes	€000	€000
Opening balance 1 January	395,224	313,573
New grant commitments	450,449	316,950
Grants paid in the year	(272,961)	(183,283)
Grants cancelled	(37,465)	(52,016)
Closing balance 31 December	535,247	395,224

Note ^a The 2023 comparative figure for procurement of goods and services has changed from the 2023 appropriation account following further guidance issued by the Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform regarding this disclosure requirement.

c) Major capital projects where the project value exceeds €10 million

Programme/ project	Expenditure			Expected lifetime project cost	
	To 31 Dec 2023	In 2024	Committed	2024	2023
	€000	€000	€000	€000	€000
National postcodes	33,628	2,878	6,600	43,106	41,029
National Broadband Plan	623,898	401,267	1,672,475	2,697,640	2,698,300
INFOMAR ^a	67,627	4,970	4,757	77,354	77,693
Tellus ^b	31,288	3,578	4,562	39,428	40,425
Post Office Network Funding Scheme	9,702	10,044	10,000	29,746	29,702
	766,143	422,737	1,698,394	2,887,274	2,887,149

Note ^a INFOMAR is a national survey programme which maps the Irish seabed and provides key baseline data for Ireland's marine sector.

^b Tellus is a national survey programme which gathers geophysical and geochemical data across Ireland via airborne geophysical surveying using a low-flying aircraft and ground-based geochemical surveying of soil, stream water and stream sediment.

Significant variations

An explanation is provided below in relation to any major commitment where the expected total spend has changed by more than €1,000,000 compared to 2023.

National postcodes

Increase in expected total commitment: €2.077 million

The increase reflects the extension of the Postcode Management Licence Holder contract, as approved by Cabinet, by three years to December 2026. The increase in the expected total spend now covers a thirteen-year timeframe, in contrast to the original ten-year estimate.

2.16 Contingent liabilities

There is potential for financial liabilities to arise in 2025 and subsequent years depending on the outcomes of current, pending and possible future legal actions including EU legal actions. The amounts involved cannot be determined at this point.

There is also the potential for financial liabilities should Ireland fail to meet its EU mandated greenhouse gas emissions reductions and energy targets. Given the range of uncertainties, it is not possible to accurately quantify the potential liability to the Exchequer at this point.

2.17 Operating leases

at 31 December	2024
	€000
Property lease expense ^a	124

Note ^a This lease is cancellable. There were no non-cancellable leases in the year. There were also no contingent rents payable nor sublease payments receivable.

2.18 Land remediation

The Department incurs costs in relation to historical mines, primarily in Avoca, County Wicklow. Expenditure relates to maintenance and rehabilitation, and safety works as needed, and additionally, environmental monitoring at Avoca and Silvermines which is reported under subhead C.3.

	Expenditure to end 2023	Expenditure in 2024	Contractual commitment	Total
	€000	€000	€000	€000
Avoca	5,232	218	—	5,450
Silvermines	11,190	—	—	11,190
Environmental monitoring	1,913	176	556	2,645
Other emergency works	45	8	—	53
	18,380	402	556	19,338

2.19 Cyber security

The Department is responsible for cyber security policy in Ireland and for the National Cyber Security Centre which manages the State's response to cyber security incidents and builds resilience across critical infrastructure and government. Expenditure relating to cyber security is reported under the connectivity and communications delivery programme as shown below, with administrative costs met from subheads D.1 and D.2 and operational funding provided through subhead D.6.

	2024	2023
	€000	€000
Administration – pay	6,189	5,024
Administration – non pay	296	257
Operations	8,789	8,284
	15,274	13,565

2.20 Expenditure on retrofit and energy efficiency programmes, by scheme, 2024

	2024 Estimate	2024 Outturn
	€000	€000
B.4 Residential/ community retrofit programmes		
Better Energy – Homes	61,800	50,116
Better Energy – Warmer Homes	210,248	230,447
Better Energy – Communities	45,300	41,430
Demand generation – national retrofit	1,050	1,128
Deep retrofit	500	192
Solar PV	54,680	65,314
Solar PV – medical vulnerable	16,203	754
BER supports	2,000	1,500
Community Activation Fund	3,950	2,620
One stop shop development	45,850	33,044
Renewable Electricity Support Scheme – Communities	1,617	437
Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme Current	1,150	1,218
	444,348	428,200
	€000	€000
B.5 Other energy efficiency programmes		
Business Energy Efficiency	2,310	2,652
Business Renewable Energy	2,925	2,672
Market surveillance	1,500	1,076
Public sector energy efficiency	2,000	2,433
SEAI/HSE Pathfinder (RePowerEU)	—	3,980

	2024	2024
	Estimate	Outturn
	€000	€000
Industrial engagement (EXEED)	3,000	1,143
Schools	200	226
Energy Show	120	77
Non-domestic microgen	150	161
Non-domestic microgen – commercial	—	64
Business Energy Upgrades Scheme (BEUS)	120	39
	12,325	14,523

2.21 Impact of accounting policy changes in 2024

Nine new central government accounting standards (CGAS) were implemented with effect from 1 January 2024. The implementation had the following impact on the State funding balance.

	2024
	€000
First time recognition of property, plant and equipment ^a	17,495
Provisions ^b	(150)
Holiday accrual ^c	(1,537)
Payroll accrual ^c	(1,953)
	13,855

- Note ^a CGAS 17 Property, Plant, and Equipment
 ^b CGAS 19 Provisions, Contingent Liabilities and Contingent Assets
 ^c CGAS 39A Employee Benefits Part A

Note 3 Vote Expenditure

Analysis of administration expenditure

Administration expenditure set out below has been apportioned across the programmes, to present complete programme costings.

		2024		2023
		Estimate provision	Outturn	Outturn
		€000	€000	€000
i	Salaries, wages and allowances	56,153	55,318	43,615
ii	Travel and subsistence	1,378	1,868	1,379
iii	Training and development	809	847	524
iv	Operational, services, supplies and sundry equipment	2,183	1,901	1,978
v	Digital capital investment and IT expenses	6,548	4,348	3,892
vi	Premises expenses	2,007	1,563	2,294
vii	Policy reviews, consultancy services and research	3,712	1,826	3,446
		72,790	67,671	57,128

Significant variations

This note outlines the reasons for significant variations (+/- 25% and €100,000) in administration expenditure

ii Travel and subsistence

Estimate provision €1.378 million; outturn €1.868 million

The additional expenditure of €490,000 primarily relates to the significant increase in staffing numbers. In addition, in preparation for the EU presidency, there has been an increase in EU related travel across the Department regarding EU directives and other associated meetings.

v Digital capital investment and IT expenses

Estimate provision €6.548 million; outturn €4.348 million

The underspend of €2.2 million primarily relates to

- less than anticipated costs associated with the relocation to the new building at Beggars Bush which was completed in 2024
- a large capital investment project on a hardware upgrade which was expected to take place in 2024 which was delayed while awaiting the publication of a new Office of Government Procurement framework.

vii Policy reviews, consultancy services and research

Estimate provision €3.712 million; outturn €1.826 million

The underspend of €1.886 million mainly relates to less than anticipated expenditure on a number of consultancies and several consultancies that were delayed.

Programme A Climate Action and Environment Leadership

		2024		2023
		Estimate provision	Outturn	Outturn
		€000	€000	€000
A.1	Administration – pay	9,104	8,969	7,633
A.2	Administration – non pay	2,689	2,002	2,352
A.3	Environmental Protection Agency	46,623	45,799	44,430
A.4	Environmental and climate research	17,100	16,717	16,173
A.5	Carbon Fund	—	—	2,905
A.6	International climate change commitments	26,500	26,500	26,408
A.7	Climate initiatives	9,500	9,672	9,132
A.8	Just Transition JTF (IE & EU)			
	<i>Original</i>	24,163		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(439)		
		23,724	15,328	5,118
A.9	Shared Island Fund			—
	<i>Original</i>	200		
	<i>Deferred surrender</i>	1,800		
		2,000	77	—
A.10	Subscriptions to international organisations	2,440	2,279	1,743
A.11	Just Transition Fund			
	<i>Original</i>	—		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	440		
		440	433	—
		140,120	127,776	115,894

Significant variations

The following outlines the reasons for significant variations in non-administration programme expenditures (+/- 5% and €100,000).

A.8 Just Transition JTF (IE & EU)

Estimate provision €24.163 million; outturn €15.328 million

The underspend of €8.835 million primarily relates to

- The national Just Transition Fund is a demand-led scheme. Expenditure under the Fund is determined by the awarded projects' ability to deliver milestones and submit drawdowns to the Department. A number of projects were unable to deliver on their goals, resulting in an underspend in 2024.

- Delayed implementation of the Local and Regional Enterprise Strategic Support Scheme (EU JTF) due to the nature of the project selection process, capacity building, and drafting of administrative documentation. However, significant progress was made in 2024: three funding calls were delivered with 42 projects approved for funding, 32 of which are under grant agreement, and 10 with grant agreements in progress. This will lead to a significant ramping up of expenditure in 2025.

A.9 Shared Island Fund

Estimate provision €2 million; outturn €77,000

The contracting phase between the local authorities and the Northern Ireland partners took longer than anticipated, resulting in a number of projects being unable to drawdown in 2024 as planned.

A.10 Subscriptions to international organisations

Estimate provision €2.440 million; outturn €2.279 million

The underspend of €161,000 was mainly due to less than anticipated expenditure on subscriptions and the timing of a payment on the United Nations environment programme.

A.11 Just Transition Fund

Estimate provision €nil; outturn €433,000

€440,000 was allocated through a supplementary estimate to the new subhead A.11 to repay to the European Commission prefinancing received as part of the EU JTF.

Programme B Energy Transformation

		2024		2023
		Estimate provision	Outturn	Outturn
		€000	€000	€000
B.1	Administration – pay	16,645	16,397	13,630
B.2	Administration – non pay	4,917	3,662	4,200
B.3	Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland – administration and general expenses	30,159	29,029	25,171
B.4	Residential/community retrofit programmes	444,348	428,200	320,357
B.5	Other energy efficiency programmes			
	<i>Original</i>	12,325		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	3,320		
		15,645	14,523	93,386
B.6	Other energy programmes (national/international)	5,910	4,009	3,846
B.7	Energy research programmes	25,445	20,719	18,010
B.8	Gas services	45	20	45
B.10	Single scheme pension payment to CRU	6	—	—
B.11	Electricity credit			
	<i>Original</i>	—		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	520,000		
		520,000	519,952	926,140
B.12	Subscription to international organisations	550	563	318
B.14	Regulation of district heating	662	—	234
B.15	Residential Retrofit Loan Scheme	3,000	1,921	1,590
		1,067,332	1,038,995	1,406,927

Significant variations

The following outlines the reasons for significant variations in non-administration programme expenditures (+/- 5% and €100,000).

B.5 Other energy efficiency programmes

Estimate provision €12.325 million; outturn €14.523 million

During 2024, funding under Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan (NRRP) which includes the REPowerEU was approved for an investment into a HSE Pilot Energy and Decarbonisation Pathfinder Project on behalf of DECC and supported by HSE and the SEAI. A supplementary estimate was provided to allocate funds to meet this expenditure under subhead B.5. This increase in expenditure was partly netted off by an underspend in the industrial engagement (EXEED) scheme of €1.8 million due to a number of large projects being delayed.

B.6 Other energy programmes (national/international)

Estimate provision €5.910 million; outturn €4.009 million

The underspend of €1.901 million was due primarily to cost savings on consultancy services required under the areas of offshore renewables, onshore renewables and security of supply in 2024.

B.7 Energy research programmes

Estimate provision €25.445 million; outturn €20.719 million

The underspend of €4.726 million relates mainly to the ocean energy project that had profiled the purchase of a piece of sensory equipment used for surveying in a maritime space (Floating LiDAR) being delayed. The delays in the procurement process due to costs being greater than anticipated has resulted in this spend being deferred to 2025.

B.11 Electricity credit

Estimate provision €nil; outturn €519.952 million

Due to the rise in international energy prices and the knock-on effect for domestic customers, the Government approved Electricity Costs Emergency Benefit Schemes in 2022 and 2023. In response to the continued high prices in 2024, the Government introduced the fourth scheme of two payments of €114.68 each (ex. VAT) to be credited to over 2.2 million domestic electricity accounts between December 2024 and February 2025. As this was an emergency measure, the cost of this scheme was not included in the original estimate for the Department and was provided through a supplementary estimate.

B.14 Regulation of district heating

Estimate provision €662,000; outturn €nil

It was originally understood that SI 350 of 2022, which transposed the 2018 Renewable Energy Directive, appointed the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) as the Regulator of District Heating Networks. However, as part of an SI review, the Department's legal unit expressed the view that the CRU had not been clearly designated or specifically appointed as the regulator of district heating and cooling and that the CRU had not been given the function under section 9 of the Electricity Regulation Act 1999 required to permit the advancement of public monies.

Work is underway to correctly appoint the CRU as the Regulator of District Heating Networks through primary legislation, in order to provide the legal basis for advancing the monies to the CRU which they require in order to perform their district heating networks regulatory functions.

B.15 Residential Retrofit Loan Scheme

Estimate provision €3 million; outturn €1.921 million

The variance relates to the Home Energy Upgrade Loan Scheme launching in April 2024 as opposed to the originally planned start date in January. This was due to work required to finalise the various legal agreements that underpin the scheme as well as the establishment of operational arrangements that were necessary to facilitate the launch of the Scheme. There were also lower than anticipated legal costs and costs incurred on due diligence work which was completed in 2024 but not invoiced until 2025.

Programme C Circular Economy Development

		2024		2023
		Estimate provision	Outturn	Outturn
		€000	€000	€000
C.1	Administration – pay	15,390	15,161	11,108
C.2	Administration – non pay	4,595	3,386	3,423
C.3	Mining and petroleum services	2,946	702	761
C.4	Geological survey programmes	14,800	14,374	12,064
C.5	Inland Fisheries	37,887	37,925	36,973
C.6	Waste management programmes	35,140	22,817	22,848
C.7	Subscriptions to international organisations	135	134	134
C.8	Environmental sustainability	500	—	—
C.9	Foreshore	2,611	253	—
C.10	Marine spatial planning	2,200	568	—
C.11	Maritime Area Regulatory Authority	7,800	4,763	—
		124,004	100,083	87,311

Significant variations

The following outlines the reasons for significant variations in non-administration programme expenditures (+/- 5% and €100,000).

C.3 Mining and petroleum services

Estimate provision €2.946 million; outturn €702,000 million

The underspend of €2.244 million mainly relates to reduced extraction rates of private minerals by mineral companies under state mining facilities, resulting in lower than expected compensation payments made to owners of mineral rights, most notably Tara Mines being under 'care and maintenance' for much of 2024 during which no mining activities took place.

A portion of the profiled expenditure was also provided for emergency works, which by their nature arise unpredictably and did not arise in 2024.

C.6 Waste management programmes

Estimate provision €35.140 million; outturn €22.817 million

The underspend of €12.323 million was primarily due to (i) funding allocated to a number of sites for landfill remediation not drawn down as works did not progress at the anticipated pace, and (ii) progress on the expansion of the Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authorities (WERLAs) being slower than anticipated, partly due to recruitment issues.

C.8 Environmental sustainability

Estimate provision €500,000; outturn €Nil

This funding was provided for Inland Fisheries Ireland in relation to the Barriers Removal Project. Following the revised estimates process, it was agreed funding for this project was to be provided by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and therefore no expenditure was incurred from this subhead in 2024.

C.9 Foreshore

Estimate provision €2.611 million; outturn €253,000

The underspend of €2.358 million was mainly due to the anticipated costs for legal settlements being less than estimated. Further cost savings were incurred on other costs associated with the administration of the foreshore function, due to the establishment of Maritime Area Regulatory Authority (MARA) in July 2023 which resulted in the Minister no longer having the vires to accept new applications under the Foreshore Act. The Minister may continue to make determinations on ongoing applications to bring them to a conclusion and the phasing out process of the foreshore functions requires managing a residual reduced number of applications through the foreshore assessment process to conclusion.

C.10 Marine spatial planning

Estimate provision €2.200 million; outturn €568,000

The marine spatial planning programme transferred from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications through a transfer of functions in May 2024. This transfer resulted in delays in expected spend on the programme in 2024.

C.11 Maritime Area Regulatory Authority

Estimate provision €7.800 million; outturn €4.763 million

The underspend of €3.037 million was due to (i) less pay cost than anticipated due to issues in recruiting and onboarding of staff to the authority (ii) delays in planned non-pay project costs including the office fitout, database licensing costs and external design support costs (iii) slower recruitment than anticipated in the associated non-pay related IT and other costs related to staff that did not occur in 2024.

Programme D Connectivity and Communications Delivery

		2024		2023
		Estimate provision	Outturn	Outturn
		€000	€000	€000
D.1	Administration – pay	15,014	14,791	11,245
D.2	Administration – non pay	4,436	3,303	3,537
D.3	National Broadband Plan			
	<i>Original</i>	343,500		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	30,000		
		373,500	409,851	290,100
D.4	Other communication infrastructure	9,350	6,859	3,527
D.5	Other digital economy programmes	8,950	8,752	8,107
D.6	National Cyber Security Centre	10,700	8,789	8,284
D.7	Emergency alert service	3,000	69	42
D.8	Brexit Adjustment Reserve – An Post	—	—	23,096
D.9	Post Office Network	10,000	10,044	9,702
D.10	EU compliance	4,500	4,500	—
		439,450	466,958	357,640

Significant variations

The following outlines the reasons for significant variations in non-administration programme expenditures (+/- 5% and €100,000).

D.3 National Broadband Plan

Estimate provision €343.500 million; outturn €409.851 million

In order to meet the Minister's contractual obligations, additional funding, including a €30 million supplementary estimate and a virement of €40 million, increased the NBP budget provision.

NBI continued to make significant progress in the deployment of the NBP network during 2024 and exceeded the target for premises passed agreed with NBI. The timing of claims by NBI has an impact on the level of NBP payments. Payments are directly linked with the completion of programme milestones and the actual outturn for 2024 reflects the significant progress made.

D.4 Other communication infrastructure

Estimate provision €9.350 million; outturn €6.859 million

The underspend of €2.491 million relates primarily to

- (i) Delays in the procurement of the transition team for the Next Generation Eircode 2026 project due to reprioritization of project planning. The Department is currently identifying the long term operator of Eircode through strategic review.
- (ii) Delay in the launch of the public sector licence due to legal reviews. (The public sector licence provides a full Eircode database to public sector bodies free at end of point of use.)

- (iii) Delayed expenditure under the Euro QCI project due to finalising operational procedures with the consortium partners.
- (iv) Underspend under the subsea cables consultancy project which was delayed due to additional scope being added to the project resulting in subsequent delayed engagement with the external advisor.

D.6 National Cyber Security Centre

Estimate provision €10.700 million; outturn €8.789 million

The underspend of €1.911 million relates to delays in finalisation of the new headquarters for the NCSC which impacted planned expenditure on technology infrastructure and other projects.

D.7 Emergency alert service

Estimate provision €3 million; outturn €69,000

The underspend of €2.931 million relates to the delay in the procurement phase of the project due to the required assistance of expertise advice to assist with the procurement of the system.

Note 4 Receipts

4.1 Appropriations-in-aid

		2024		2023
		Estimated	Realised	Realised
		€000	€000	€000
1	Proceeds of fines in respect of inland fishery offences	50	43	41
2	Receipts under the Minerals Development Act 1940 and the Petroleum and Other Minerals Act 1960	2,772	2,938	11,287
3	Petroleum Infrastructure Support Group	210	—	17
4	Geological Survey Ireland income	300	267	290
5	Rent on properties in GPO	223	87	292
6	Pension contributions from agencies	340	383	461
7	Receipts from additional superannuation contributions on public service remuneration	3,600	5,055	4,242
8	Dormant account receipts	500	40	—
9	Foreshore receipts	150	131	—
10	Miscellaneous receipts (note 4.2)	1,000	1,586	1,132
		9,145	10,530	17,762

Significant variations

The following outlines the reasons for significant variations in appropriations-in-aid (+/- 5% and €100,000).

2 Receipts under the Minerals Development Act 1940 and the Petroleum and Other Minerals Act 1960

Estimate provision €2.772 million; realised €2.938 million

The excess of €166,000 relates to the remaining agreed legacy mining income from 2021 and 2022 which was recovered in 2024.

3 Petroleum Infrastructure Support Group

Estimate provision €210,000; realised €Nil

As a result of the formal wind-down of the PISG, taking effect on 1 July 2021, there were no receipts of overdue or outstanding PIP payments received in 2024.

5 Rent on properties in GPO

Estimate provision €223,000; realised €87,000

The decrease of €136,000 in rental income relates to payment for 2024 invoices not being received until 2025.

7 Receipts from additional superannuation contributions on public service remuneration

Estimate provision €3.600 million; realised €5.055 million

The excess of €1.455 million relates to an increase in staff numbers in the Department and agencies.

8 Dormant account receipts

Estimate provision €500,000; realised €40,000

Inland Fisheries Ireland only required €40,000 dormant account funding and therefore only this amount was drawn down from the NTMA via DPENDR. The remaining €460,000 is scheduled to be drawn down in 2025.

10 Miscellaneous

Estimate provision €1 million; realised €1.586 million

The excess of €586,000 relates to (i) greater than anticipated salary overpayment and expenses recoupment from prior years and (ii) a number of refunds received from other bodies that related to prior years and could not be netted off the expenditure subhead.

4.2 Miscellaneous receipts

	2024	2023
	€000	€000
Royalties in respect of metropolitan area networks	1,083	1,002
Corrib verification	23	25
Costs recovered from other bodies	345	46
Fixed assets disposal proceeds	4	13
Salary overpayment and expenses recoupment from prior years	130	45
Other	1	1
	1,586	1,132

4.3 Extra receipts payable to the Exchequer

	2024	2023
	€000	€000
Balance at 1 January	20,727	—
Receipts from emissions trading scheme ^a	137,021	156,707
Galway Mayo telecommunications duct	293	306
Drawdown of RESS performance bonds	6,391	2,146
Refund of unused Electricity Costs Emergency Benefit Scheme funding ^b	58,558	22,611
Annual levies for maritime area consents	—	7,249
Voluntary surrender of Ministerial salaries	21	21
Sale of land (Foreshore and MARA)	1,811	—
Prior year refunds received in 2024	1,154	—
Transferred to the Exchequer	(144,920)	(168,313)
Balance at 31 December	81,056	20,727

Note ^a €137,021 million represents Ireland's net share of receipts arising from auctioning of allowances in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme in 2024; gross amount of €138,814 million before payment of €1.793 million for expenses to the EPA which administers the scheme for Ireland.

^b Funding was provided to ESB Networks and two other electricity providers in 2023 under the Electricity Costs Emergency Benefit Scheme III. ESB Networks returned unused funds in 2024 totalling €58.377 million including bank interest earned of €4.05 million and two other providers returned €180,687.

Note 5 Staffing and Remuneration

5.1 Employee numbers

Full time equivalents	2024	2023
Number of staff at year end		
Department	799	646
Agencies ^a	1,191	1,066
	1,990	1,712

Note ^a The agencies included here are the Digital Hub Development Agency, Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland, Inland Fisheries Ireland, the Loughs Agency, Maritime Area Regulatory Authority and the Environmental Protection Agency. Agency pay details included in notes 5.2 and 5.3 below relate to the same agencies.

5.2 Pay

Remuneration of all staff (Department and agencies) ^a		
	2024	2023
	€000	€000
Pay	124,898	102,943
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	420	543
Other allowances	1,593	1,576
Overtime	66	40
Employer's PRSI	12,661	10,300
Severance pay	34	228
Total pay	139,672	115,630

Remuneration of Department staff

	2024	2023
	€000	€000
Pay	50,154	39,337
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	223	328
Overtime	34	23
Employer's PRSI	4,873	3,699
Severance pay	34	228
Total pay	55,318	43,615

Remuneration of agency staff

	2024	2023
	€000	€000
Pay	74,744	63,606
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	197	215
Other allowances	1,593	1,576
Overtime	32	17
Employer's PRSI	7,788	6,601
Total pay	84,354	72,015

Note ^a The remuneration arrangements refer to the pay element of subheads A.1, A.3, B.1, B.3, C.1, C.5, C11, D.1 and D.5. These figures include non-voted moneys to ensure compliance with Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform guidelines (circular 20 of 2024).

5.3 Allowances and overtime payments

	Number of recipients	Recipients of €10,000 or more	Highest individual payment	
			2024 €	2023 €
Department staff				
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	46	7	32,051	34,172
Other allowances	—	—	—	—
Overtime	15	—	6,138	8,345
Extra remuneration in more than one category	7	1	9,034	16,545
Agency staff				
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	63	2	14,159	20,586
Other allowances	293	3	12,451	10,131
Overtime	26	—	4,559	3,807
Extra remuneration in more than one category	45	4	13,427	16,879

5.4 Department employee pay bands

The number of Department employees whose total employee benefits (including basic pay, allowances, overtime; excluding employer PRSI, employer pension costs) for the financial year fell between €20,000 and €59,999 and within each band of €10,000 from €60,000 upwards are as follows.

Pay bands (€)		Number of employees	
From	To	2024	2023
20,000	59,999	392	329
60,000	69,999	86	74
70,000	79,999	67	70
80,000	89,999	80	62
90,000	99,999	53	37
100,000	109,999	31	18
110,000	119,999	20	14
120,000	129,999	8	6
130,000	139,999	7	2
140,000	149,999	1	1
150,000	159,999	—	3
160,000	169,999	3	2
170,000	179,999	2	3
180,000	189,999	3	1
190,000	199,999	—	1
200,000	209,999	1	—
250,000	259,999	1	—

5.5 Remuneration and benefits of Accounting Officer

The Accounting Officer's remuneration and taxable benefits for the financial year was as follows.

	2024	2023
	€000	€000
Oonagh Buckley basic pay	250	74
Mark Griffin severance payment	—	228
Mark Griffin basic pay (to Sept 2023)	—	157
	250	459

The value of retirement benefits earned in the year are not included above. The Accounting Officer is a member of post-1995 superannuation scheme for established civil servants and her entitlements to retirement benefits do not extend beyond the standard terms of that pension scheme.

5.6 Other remuneration arrangements

One retired civil servant who had been recruited through an open competition in 2019 and was subsequently promoted through an open competition in 2022 received a salary of €85,165 during 2024.

DPENDR abatement waiver granted until July 2024 for this officer with an extension with DPENDR for approval.

This account includes expenditure of €734,292 in respect of five officers who were serving outside the Department for all or part of 2024 and whose salaries were paid by the Department.

This account does not include expenditure of 24 officers who were serving outside the Department for all or part of 2024 in other Government departments/offices.

5.7 Severance

During 2024, a Special Advisor for the Minister of this Department exited and received a severance and redundancy payment of €33,566. This payment was consistent with the terms of the severance arrangements set out for the 33rd Dail.

5.8 Payroll overpayments

at 31 December	Number of recipients	2024 €	2023 €
Overpayments	68	195,942	159,702
Recovery plans in place	8	49,012	69,414

Note 6 Miscellaneous

6.1 EU funding

The outturn shown in subheads A.8, B.4, B.5 and C.4 includes payments in respect of activities which are co-financed by the EU through various projects set out below.

Subhead	EU Fund	Outturn		Funding received	
		2024 €000	2023 €000	2024 €000	2023 €000
A.8 Just Transition JTF (IE&EU)	EU Just Transition Fund ^a	7,494	1,153	—	—
B.4 Residential/community retrofit	ERDF ^a	66,638	34,216	—	—
B.5 Other energy efficiency programmes	RePowerEU ^a	3,980	—	—	—
B.7 Energy research programmes	ERA-Net ^b	—	77	—	—
C.4 Geological survey	EU Horizon	18	119	50	109
C.4 Geological survey	Interreg	—	135	124	75

In addition to the above, the following amounts were received into suspense accounts

Suspense	NCC IE	116	2	—	1,600
Suspense	Cyber CORE Network	27	—	—	1,421
Suspense	TrustBoost	—	—	158	—

Note ^a The expenditure disclosed under the EU Just Transition Fund, ERDF and REPower EU (which is part of the NRRP) are all part of the wider payments applications that will be submitted to the EU by Ireland as a whole. Any funds received from these EU funding streams will be returned directly to the Exchequer.

^b Refunds received from the EU on ERA-Net projects are refunded to SEAI directly and shown in their accounts as EU income

6.2 Fraud and suspected fraud

The Department is aware of an allegation of a suspected fraud which may have occurred in a service provider in receipt of grant funding during 2021. This case is still under investigation by the appropriate authorities and the Department awaits the outcome.

6.3 Compensation and legal costs

Payments/costs paid by the Department in the year				
	Claims by		Total	Total
	Employees	Members of the public	2024	2023
Number of cases	—	4	4	5
	€000	€000	€000	€000
Payments by/on behalf of Department				
Compensation	—	—	—	36
Legal costs	—	439	439	567
2024 Total ^b	—	439	439	603
2023 Total	10	593		603

Note ^a At 31 December 2024, 33 general litigation cases were outstanding.

^b All cases were settled in 2024. The figures shown represent the full costs incurred by the Department in relation to those cases.

6.4 Late interest payments

	2024	2023
	€	€
Interest payments	30,588	47,116

6.5 EU fine

The Communications Regulation and Digital Hub Development Agency (Amendment) Act 2023 and the European Union (Electronic Communications Code) Regulations 2022 transposed the European Electronic Communications Code (EECC) Directive in its entirety except for Article 110. That article was transposed by the European Union (Electronic Communications Code) (Public Warning System) Regulations 2023 (SI 583 of 2023) which was signed into law by the Minister on 29 November 2023. The Commission was notified of the implementation of the Public Warning System and the full transposition of the Code on 30 November 2023.

On 8 February 2024, Ireland received notification that the Commission had confirmed to the European Court of Justice that the notified legislation transposes Article 110 in a complete manner and that Ireland had fully complied with its obligations under the EECC as of 1 December 2023. On the basis that Ireland had fully transposed the Code Directive, the Commission withdrew its request for a daily penalty fine in the infringement case.

On 14 March 2024, the European Court imposed a lump sum fine of €4.5 million for failure to transpose the EECC Directive on time and failure to notify the European Commission of the transposition. Following notification from the EU Commission, the fine was paid on 4 July 2024. The infringement proceedings were formally closed by the Commission on 3 October 2024. There is no further possibility of fines in respect of this issue.

Note 7 Miscellaneous accounts

7.1 Petroleum Infrastructure Programme Fund

Statement of the receipts and payments of the Petroleum Infrastructure Programme Fund for the year ended 31 December 2024.

	2024	2023
	€000	€000
Balance at 1 January	6,037	6,065
Receipts	—	168
Payments	(2,546)	(196)
Balance at 31 December	3,491	6,037

The Petroleum Infrastructure Programme (PIP) was set up by the Department in 1997 in order to promote hydrocarbon exploration and development activities. It was funded by contributions from companies holding petroleum authorisations for offshore Ireland.

Following on from Government statement of September 2019, the decision was made to wind-down the PIP programme, therefore as of 1 July 2021 no new annual contribution requests are issued for this programme.

Outstanding receipts in relation to the PIP fund from payments invoiced before this date are recorded as appropriations-in-aid and paid into the fund via subhead C.3.

The fund is currently administered by the Geoscience Regulation Office in the Department.

PIP fund payments increased significantly during the year due to the number of offshore renewable energy research projects that were undertaken in 2024.

7.2 Energy Efficiency National Fund

Statement of receipts and payments of the Energy Efficiency National Fund for the year ended 31 December 2024.

	2024 Profile estimate ^a €000	2024 Total €000	2023 €000
Balance at 1 January		55,935	124,263
Receipts from IEEI		—	322
Receipts from buy out of energy credits		26,728	—
Reduce Your Use campaign	(2,283)	(805)	(5,225)
Residential/community retrofit programmes	—	—	(10,825)
Business energy efficiency programmes	(5,800)	(3,837)	—
First loss loan scheme	(47,000)	(47,000)	(52,600)
Balance at 31 December		31,021	55,935

Note ^a The profile estimate represents the Department's budget set aside for these programmes and schemes in 2024.

Significant variations

The following outlines the reasons for significant variations in expenditures on the EENF (+/- 5% and €100,000).

The expenditure in the year was €3.441 million lower than originally profiled.

Reduce Your Use campaign

Profile estimate €2.283 million; outturn €805,000

Reduce Your Use, a public information and communications campaign on energy efficiency, was funded through the EENF in 2024. The variance in expenditure of €1.478 million was due to the fact that, as per standard practice, all advertising and communications campaigns were placed on hold in the fourth quarter of 2024 during general election campaign and government formation period. This would usually be the period that the Reduce Your Use campaign would be most active, addressing energy use and efficiency during the winter heating period.

Business Energy Efficiency Programmes

Profile estimate €5.8 million; outturn €3.837 million

Following the publication of the REV sanction was granted by the Minister under section 10(2) of SI 131/2014 European Union (Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme) Regulation 2014 to use €5.8 million from the EENF to fund SEAI capital business schemes (EXEED €2 million, Support Scheme for Renewable Heat (SSRH) €2 million, Business Energy Efficiency scheme €1.8 million). The funds used were to be the remaining uncommitted balance from IEEI dividends received in prior years.

The variance of €1.963 million relates to (i) updates to the Support Scheme for Renewable Heat (SSRH) terms and conditions, which were expected to further increase the uptake of the scheme's supports but were not approved in 2024 as expected (ii) an underspend in the Industrial Engagement (EXEED) Scheme of €1.8 million due to a number of large projects being delayed for individual unforeseen circumstances.

Schemes co-funded between the EENF and Vote 29

	2024		
	B.5 Vote	EENF	Total
	€000	€000	€000
Business Energy Efficiency	2,652	1,875	4,527
Business Renewable Energy (Support Scheme for Renewable Heat)	2,672	957	3,629
Industrial Engagement (EXEED)	1,143	1,005	2,148
	6,467	3,837	10,304

First Loss Loan Scheme

Profile estimate €47 million; outturn €47 million

In December 2023, sanction was granted from the Minister of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform to utilise €47 million of the remaining funds from the €160 million transferred from Vote 29 in 2021 on the first loss loan scheme.

Background and activities of the Energy Efficiency National Fund (EENF)

The European Union (Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme) Regulations 2014 (SI 131 of 2014) permitted the Minister, with the consent of the Minister for Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform, to establish a fund known as the Energy Efficiency National Fund (EENF).

The objectives of the Fund are:

- to support the delivery of energy efficiency improvement programmes and other energy efficiency improvement measures, and
- to promote the development of a market for energy efficiency improvement measures.
- to alleviate energy poverty.

The Ireland Energy Efficiency Fund was launched in March 2014 to provide funding to public and private sector energy efficiency projects with the investment criteria to be set out in the Fund documents. The Minister was a minority shareholder in the Fund. A total of €14.03 million from the EENF was invested in Ireland Energy Efficiency Investments plc (IEEI). Private sector funding comprised the slightly greater amount of the investment at the initial drawdown and this has increased since 2018 with the Minister holding 26.1%. The Minister, along with the other investors, has been represented on an investment advisory committee and all shareholders receive annual reports and interim financial statements on IEEI's performance.

The Minister, as shareholder, received distributions from IEEI in 2021, 2022 and 2023 totalling €17.383 million. As at the 30 September 2024, the State's investment in IEEI was valued at €181,748. The fund is in the wind down phase since 2024 and SDCL (fund managers) are preparing the final statement of assets and liabilities, expected end Q1 2025.

As part of this liquidation process there may be a final payment if there are excess assets after all creditors and wind down fees are discharged. The most recent payment from the sale of assets within the IEEI, received on 24th February 2025 was €308,000.

The Fund is also used to accommodate contributions from obligated energy companies (large energy suppliers and distributors that sell more than 400GWh of energy per year to final customers) in lieu of their energy saving targets under the Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme (EEOS). Under SI 522 of 2022, the EEOS will continue to 2030. Any contributions made to the EENF by obligated companies under the EEOS, where they buy out a portion of the target, must be used by the Minister to deliver the equivalent amount of energy savings (KTOE) via alternative measures. 2024 was the first time under EEOS legislation that funding was received into the Energy Efficiency National Fund. Income to the fund in 2024 was €27 million from the buyout of 2023 energy credits by obligated parties.

Appendix A Schedule of lands and buildings

The Minister owns the Galway Fishery in Galway City and the Owenea/Owentocker Fishery in Co. Donegal, both of which are managed by Inland Fisheries Ireland.

The Minister also has a beneficial interest in the metropolitan area networks (MANs), the construction of which was funded jointly with certain local authorities and the European Regional Development Fund.

The Minister owns land to facilitate the remediation of the Avoca and Silvermines legacy mine sites.

Following a search completed on Land Direct, a significant number of properties have been identified as being registered in the ownership of the Minister's predecessors, but where property titles may not have transferred during past transfer of functions. Further action is required to identify the position on the ground regarding use, ownership and control with a view to deciding whether these properties need inclusion in the Appropriation Account under Central Government Accounting Standard 17 Property Plant and Equipment, Para 14 Recognition.

Enquiries will need to be made in order to ascertain the nature and extent these properties actually belong to the Minister and the State. Those assets that require transfer will be transferred and those that are not will be valued.