

Appropriation Account 2025

Vote 42

Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht

Introduction

As Accounting Officer for Vote 42, 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 2025 for the salaries and expenses of the Office of the Minister for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht, including certain services administered by that Office, and for payment of certain grants.

The expenditure outturn is compared with the sums

- granted by Dáil Éireann under the Appropriation Act 2025, including the amount that could be used as appropriations-in-aid of expenditure for the year, and
- provided for capital supply services in 2025 out of unspent 2024 appropriations, under the deferred surrender arrangements established by section 91 of the Finance Act 2004.

A surplus of €31.028 million is liable for surrender to the Exchequer.

The statement of accounting policies and principles and notes 1 to 6 form part of the account.

Transfer of functions

The Department of Rural and Community Development was renamed the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht following the transfer of functions on 2 June 2025 under SI 173/2025.

The Department retained all existing responsibilities and assumed additional functions in relation to the Gaeltacht.

Having regard to the transfer of functions and the restructured Department, the estimate for the Vote for Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht were for the full year 2025 and the account is presented on that basis in accordance with Section 24 of the Exchequer and Audit Department Act 1866.

Due to the transfer of functions, the resources to the Department have increased in terms of funding, staffing and accommodation.

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, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation in circular 25 of 2025 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 for periods of account commencing from 1 January 2025.

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 capital assets are as follows.

<i>Asset class</i>	<i>Useful life</i>	<i>Rate of depreciation/ amortisation</i>
Software licenses	Licence term 2-10 years	10%-50%
Acquired/developed software	10 years	10%
Buildings	50 years	2%
Furniture and fittings	10 years	10%
Office and IT equipment	5 years	20%

Payments to Pobal

Funds are advanced to Pobal in relation to the delivery of certain programmes on an agency basis. The total amount paid to Pobal in the year was charged against the relevant subheads in the year (note 6.3).

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

Payroll and human resource function are being provided on a shared services basis by the National Shared Services Office (Vote 18). In September 2025, the NSSO Financial Shared Services (FSS) system went live for wave 2.1 clients, including this vote. FSS replaced the existing financial system in use in the Department, and this meant that there were two separate accounting systems in place during the accounting year 2025.

I have fulfilled my responsibilities in relation to the requirements of the service management agreement between this Department and the National Shared Services Office (NSSO) for the provision of HR, finance and payroll shared service.

I rely on a letter of assurance from the Accounting Officer of the Vote for the NSSO that the appropriate controls are exercised in the provision of shared services, including financial shared services, to this Department.

For the period to September 2025, financial shared services were provided by the Financial Shared Service Centre in the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration (Vote 24). I have fulfilled my responsibilities in relation to the requirements of the service management agreement between the Department and the Financial Shared Service Centre. I rely on a letter of assurance from the Accounting Officer for Vote 24 that the appropriate controls were exercised in the provision of financial shared services to my Department.

The transition to the new NSSO Financial Shared Services represented a significant change management project for the Department. This was carefully planned and managed in terms of ensuring the ongoing effectiveness of the financial control environment. The Department continues to work with NSSO on the transition.

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 of the Department.

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 in place.

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.

The activity of both the Internal Audit Unit and Audit Committee was limited in 2025 due to the absence of the Head of Internal Audit for a significant portion of the year. A new Head of Internal Audit was subsequently appointed in November 2025. The Internal Audit Unit is now fully operational, and a budget has been made available to co-source audits in 2026 to support completion of the 2026 programme.

At the Audit Committee meeting on 10 December 2025, it was agreed that the audits from the 2025 annual audit plan would be brought forward to 2026 with some minor modifications.

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. Expenditure on goods and on professional and other contracted services, amounted to a total of €1.675 million in 2025.

It is Department policy to utilise the central frameworks insofar as possible, and to engage with the OGP in relation to more specific requirements when such instances arise.

The Department had no non-competitive contracts in excess of €25,000 to report in the annual return in respect of circular 40/2002 to the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation.

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

The register is reviewed and updated by the Risk Committee on a quarterly basis. In addition, an external review of the Department's risk management framework was undertaken during 2025. The outcome of these assessments is used to plan and allocate resources to ensure risks are managed to an acceptable level.

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 Management Board, 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.

Internal financial control issues

As noted, the transition to the new NSSO FMSS represented a significant change management process within the Department. Extensive staff training was a core part of this process. However, two payments were impacted by errors in selecting suppliers within the new system. As a result of this, payments of €9,071 and €26,048 meant for one entity were issued to a different supplier on the system. This was a result of human error and a strong focus is being placed on ongoing training.

No further weaknesses in internal financial control were identified in relation to 2025 that resulted in, or may result in, a material loss.

Mary Hurley

Accounting Officer

Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht

15 September 2026

Comptroller and Auditor General Report for presentation to Dáil Éireann

Vote 42 Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht Opinion on the appropriation account

I have audited the appropriation account for Vote 42 Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht for the year ended 31 December 2025 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 42 Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht for the year ended 31 December 2025, 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 Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht 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.

I have nothing to report in that respect.

Seamus McCarthy
Comptroller and Auditor General

16 September 2026

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 the 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 the 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 42 Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht

Appropriation Account 2025

		2025		2024
		Estimate provision	Outturn	Outturn
		€000	€000	€000
Programme expenditure				
A	Rural Development and Regional Affairs			
	<i>Original</i>	212,714		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	1		
		212,715	208,172	210,607
B	Community Development	249,533	235,412	243,204
C	Charities Regulatory Authority	6,076	5,922	5,114
D	Gaeltacht			
	<i>Original</i>	106,730		
	<i>Deferred surrender</i>	2,200		
		108,930	98,544	—
Gross expenditure				
	<i>Original</i>	575,053		
	<i>Deferred surrender</i>	2,200		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	1		
		577,254	548,050	458,925
<i>Deduct</i>				
D	Appropriations-in-aid	39,609	63,233	41,252
Net expenditure				
	<i>Original</i>	535,444		
	<i>Deferred surrender</i>	2,200		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	1		
		537,645	484,817	417,673

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 (see note 6.8).

	2025	2024
	€	€
Surplus	52,828,000	3,235,482
Deferred surrender	(21,800,000)	—
Surplus to be surrendered	<u>31,028,000</u>	<u>3,235,482</u>

Mary Hurley

Accounting Officer

Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht

25 March 2026

Notes to the Appropriation Account

Note 1 Operating Cost Statement 2025

	2025	2024
	€000	€000
Programme cost	525,646	443,871
Pay	19,952	13,560
Non pay	2,452	1,494
Gross expenditure	548,050	458,925
<i>Deduct</i>		
Appropriations-in-aid	63,233	41,252
Net expenditure	484,817	417,673
Changes in capital assets		
<i>Property, plant and equipment</i>		
<i>(note 2.1)</i>		
Purchases	—	
Depreciation	332	
Loss on disposals	13	
	345	172
Changes in net current assets		
Increase in prepayments	(3,508)	
Increase in accrued income	(7,750)	
Increase in accrued expenses	60	
	(11,198)	13,349
Direct voted expenditure	473,964	431,194
Expenditure borne elsewhere		
Net allied services expenditure (note 1.1)	1,892	1,239
Notional rent	742	—
Net programme cost	476,598	432,433

1.1 Net allied services expenditure

The net allied services expenditure amount is made up of the following amounts in relation to Vote 42 borne elsewhere.

		2025	2024
		€000	€000
Vote 12	Superannuation and Retired Allowances	239	285
Vote 13	Office of Public Works	164	158
Vote 18	National Shared Services Office	634	24
Vote 20	Garda Síochána	149	134
Vote 24	Justice, Home Affairs and Migration	256	379
Vote 43	Office of the Government Chief Information Officer	374	259
Central Fund ministerial pensions		76	—
		1,892	1,239

Note 2 Statement of Financial Position as at 31 December 2025

	Note	2025 €000	2024 €000
Fixed assets			
Property, plant and equipment	2.1	11,112	11,457
Intangible assets	2.2	—	—
		11,112	11,457
Current assets			
Bank and cash		30,215	3,466
Prepayments	2.3	9,059	5,551
Accrued income	2.4	26,884	19,134
Other debit balances	2.5	579	373
		66,737	28,524
<i>Less</i>			
Current liabilities			
Accrued expenses	2.6	1,686	1,626
Deferred Income	2.7	779	779
Other credit balances	2.8	2,492	1,252
Net Exchequer funding	2.9	28,302	2,587
		33,259	6,244
Net current assets		33,478	22,280
Net assets		44,590	33,737
Represented by:			
State funding account	2.10	44,590	33,737

2.1 Property, plant and equipment ^a

	Buildings	Land	Office and IT equipment	Equipment	Furniture and fittings	IT hardware and software	Total
	€000	€000	€000	€000	€000	€000	€000
Cost or valuation							
At 1 January 2025	13,352	—	783	—	188	—	14,323
Reclassifications	(9,162)	9,162	(678)	443	—	235	—
Additions	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Transfers in	—	—	—	—	4	—	4
Disposals	—	—	(105)	—	(32)	—	(137)
At 31 December 2025	4,190	9,162	—	443	160	235	14,190
Accumulated depreciation							
At 1 January 2025	2,327	—	425	—	114	—	2,866
Depreciation on reclassifications ^b	(2,108)	2,108	(396)	203	—	193	—
Depreciation for the year ^b	85	122	76	29	16	4	332
Depreciation on transfers	—	—	—	—	4	—	4
Depreciation on disposals	—	—	(105)	—	(19)	—	(124)
At 31 December 2025	304	2,230	—	232	115	197	3,078
Net assets							
At 31 December 2025	3,886	6,932	—	211	45	38	11,112
At 31 December 2024	11,025	—	358	—	74	—	11,457

Note ^a Cost or valuation includes some assets acquired for less than €10,000 prior to 1 January 2021.

^b Land assets, previously included with buildings, were reclassified during the Department's migration to NSSO FMSS in 2025. Accumulated depreciation associated with these assets was brought forward and charged until the date of data migration. As land assets are not depreciated, no further depreciation has been charged on these assets following reclassification.

2.2 Intangible assets

	Acquired and developed software €000	Total €000
Cost or valuation		
At 1 January 2025	585	585
Additions	—	—
Disposals	(585)	(585)
At 31 December 2025	—	—
Accumulated amortisation		
At 1 January 2025	585	585
Amortisation for the year	—	—
Disposals	(585)	(585)
At 31 December 2025	—	—
Net assets		
At 31 December 2025	—	—
At 31 December 2024	—	—

2.3 Prepayments

at 31 December	2025 €000	2024 €000
Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme	106	116
Community services programme	3,048	3,028
Rural supports	1,006	961
Rural regeneration and development	1,166	—
LEADER – rural economy sub programme	2,039	1,371
Administration	175	36
Islands	1,470	39
Public service initiatives	49	—
	9,059	5,551

2.4 Accrued income

at 31 December		2025	2024
		€000	€000
A.5	LEADER – rural economy sub programme	6,935	2,170
B.8	Programme for Peace and Reconciliation	19,760	16,748
—	Grant funding for recovery ^a	189	216
		26,884	19,134

Note ^a Repayments recoverable in relation to the Covid-19 Stability Fund 2020 and 2021.

2.5 Other debit balances

at 31 December		2025	2024
		€000	€000
	Travel pass schemes	26	17
	LEADER food initiative	—	17
	Payroll suspense	542	335
	Other debit suspense items	11	4
		579	373

2.6 Accrued expenses

at 31 December		2025	2024
		€000	€000
	Payroll related accruals	1,067	604
	IT services and support	—	124
	Specific programme accruals	619	859
	Administration expenses	—	29
	Other accruals	—	10
		1,686	1,626

2.7 Deferred income

at 31 December		2025	2024
		€000	€000
	EU advance for the 2023-2027 LEADER Programme	779	779

2.8 Other credit balances

at 31 December	2025	2024
	€000	€000
Amounts due to the State		
Income tax	292	260
Pay related social insurance	230	145
Professional services withholding tax	153	51
Value added tax	70	10
Local property tax	1	—
Universal social charge	52	—
Pension contributions	76	—
	<u>874</u>	<u>466</u>
Suspense		
Suspense control payables	1,509	—
Payroll deductions held in suspense	107	—
Tidy Towns	—	698
Other	2	88
	<u>2,492</u>	<u>1,252</u>

2.9 Net Exchequer funding

at 31 December	2025	2024
	€000	€000
Surplus to be surrendered	31,028	3,235
Deferred surrender	21,800	—
Exchequer grant undrawn	(24,526)	(648)
Net Exchequer funding	<u>28,302</u>	<u>2,587</u>
Represented by:		
Debtors		
Bank and cash	30,215	3,466
Debit balances: suspense	579	373
	<u>30,794</u>	<u>3,839</u>
Creditors		
Credit balances: suspense	(2,492)	(1,252)
	<u>28,302</u>	<u>2,587</u>

2.10 State funding account

	Note	2025	2024
		€000	€000
Balance at 1 January		33,737	47,258
Disbursements from the Vote			
Estimate provision	Account	537,645	
Deferred Surrender	Account	(21,800)	
Surplus to be surrendered	Account	(31,028)	
Net vote		484,817	417,673
Expenditure borne elsewhere	1.1	1,892	1,239
Non-cash expenditure – notional rent	1	742	—
Net programme cost	1	(476,598)	(432,433)
Balance at 31 December		44,590	33,737

2.11 Commitments

	2025	2024
	€000	€000
a) Global commitments		
at 31 December		
Procurement of goods and services	—	—
Non-capital grant programmes	231,159	285,453
Capital grant programmes	363,885	264,923
Total of legally enforceable commitments	595,044	550,376
b) Non-capital grant programmes	€000	€000
Opening balance	285,453	231,701
Grants paid in the year	(237,568)	(198,201)
New grant commitments	183,274	251,953
Closing balance 31 December	231,159	285,453
c) Capital grant programmes	€000	€000
Opening balance	264,923	256,915
Grants paid in the year	(234,228)	(236,037)
New grant commitments	333,190	244,045
Closing balance	363,885	264,923

2.12 Contingent liabilities

There were no legal cases in 2025.

2.13 Impact of accounting policy changes

Commencing from 1 January 2024, central government accounting standards (CGAS) are being implemented on a phased basis. The implementation had the following impact on the State funding balance in the year of account.

	2025	2024
	€000	€000
Holiday accrual ^a	—	(221)
Payroll accrual ^a	—	(383)
	<u>—</u>	<u>(604)</u>

Note ^a 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.

		2025		2024
		Estimate provision	Outturn	Outturn
		€000	€000	€000
i	Salaries, wages and allowances	22,310	19,952	13,560
ii	Travel and subsistence	588	609	334
iii	Training and development	288	168	151
iv	Operational services, supplies and sundry equipment	690	515	487
v	Digital capital investment and IT expenses	1,233	600	243
vi	Premises expenses	687	426	173
vii	Policy reviews, consultancy services and research	279	134	106
viii	EU Presidency	117	—	—
		26,192	22,404	15,054

The comparative figures have been re-analysed to reflect the 2025 reorganisation of administration subheads.

Significant variations

The following notes outline the reasons for significant variations (at least +/- 25% and €100,000) in administration expenditure.

i Salaries, wages and allowances

Estimate provision €22.31 million; outturn €19.952 million

The shortfall in expenditure of €2.358 million was mainly due to the transfer of functions that occurred during 2025. The Gaeltacht division carried a large number of vacancies at the time of transfer. There is also some variation in these costs for each programme area. How we assess the apportionment of costs the programmes has been re-assessed for 2026 given these variations.

iii Training and development

Estimate provision €288,000; outturn €168,000

The shortfall in expenditure of €120,000 was due to lower than expected levels of demand, and the vacancy level within the area transferred to the Department.

iv Operational services, supplies and sundry equipment

Estimate provision €690,000; outturn €515,000

The shortfall in expenditure of €175,000 was due to less spend than anticipated on a number of expenditure items including entertainment, postal services, office supplies and external providers.

v Digital capital investment and IT expenses

Estimate provision €1.233 million; outturn €600,000

The shortfall in expenditure of €633,000 was primarily driven by increased internal/in house IT development which resulted in reduced expenditure on external digital capital investment.

vi Premises expenses

Estimate provision €687,000; outturn €426,000

The shortfall in expenditure of €261,000 relative to the estimate provision was due to expenditure on office premises and facilities in both Ballina and Na Forbacha sites being less than anticipated due to delays in planned upgrades.

vii Policy reviews, consultancy services and research

Estimate provision €279,000; outturn €134,000

The underspend of €145,000 is due to less demand for consultancy services in 2025 than anticipated.

viii EU Presidency

Estimate provision €117,000; outturn €nil

As part of the transfer of functions in 2025, this subhead was assigned to this Department. There was no requirement to draw from this subhead in 2025.

Programme A Rural Development and Regional Affairs

		2025		2024
		Estimate provision		Outturn
		€000	€000	€000
A.1	Administration - pay		8,674	9,991
A.2	Administration – non pay		1,112	1,305
A.3	Western Development Commission		2,858	2,977
A.4	Rural supports ^a			
	<i>Original</i>	46,031		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	15,001		
			61,032	58,582
A.5	LEADER – rural economy sub programme			47,621
	<i>Original</i>	42,000		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	(15,000)		
			27,000	23,098
A.6	Rural regeneration and development ^b		96,000	95,465
A.7	Islands		16,039	16,754
			212,715	208,172
				210,607

Note ^a A.4 Rural supports, includes the CLÁR programme, the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) and the Walks Scheme.

^b A.6 Rural regeneration and development, consists of the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF), the Town and Village Renewal Scheme (TVRS), and the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS).

Significant variations

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

A.4 Rural supports

Estimate provision €46.031 million; outturn €58.582 million

The additional expenditure over the estimate provision was due to increased demand under the Local Improvement Scheme.

A.5 LEADER – rural economy sub programme

Estimate provision €42 million; outturn €23.098 million

LEADER is a multi-annual programme with grants approved in one year generally not falling due until subsequent years. The shortfall of almost €19 million was due to project approvals by local action groups under the new 2023-2027 LEADER programme being lower than expected.

Programme B Community Development

		2025		2024
		Estimate provision	Outturn	Outturn
		€000	€000	€000
B.1	Administration – pay	5,953	6,477	5,654
B.2	Administration – non pay	927	768	641
B.3	Supports for community and voluntary sector (part funded by the National Lottery)	23,872	23,767	21,110
B.4	SICAP, local/regional development supports (part funded by the National Lottery)	72,475	71,974	71,865
B.5	Local community development committees (support)	3,405	3,202	2,885
B.6	Supports for disadvantaged communities	7,500	7,500	7,500
B.7	Dormant account measures	11,570	10,543	11,639
B.8	Programme for Peace and Reconciliation	7,337	9,737	6,282
B.9	Water Safety Ireland	2,492	2,492	1,855
B.10	Library development and archive service	8,101	5,352	5,166
B.11	Community Enhancement Programme	22,001	10,000	28,594
B.12	Community Services Programme	55,400	58,100	52,390
B.13	ESF social innovation supports	3,500	3,500	2,500
B.14	Ukraine supports – community fund	25,000	22,000	25,123
		249,533	235,412	243,204

Significant variations

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

B.5 Local community development committees (support)

Estimate provision €3.405 million; outturn €3.202 million

The shortfall in expenditure of €203,000 relative to the estimate provision was due to delays in the implementation of recommendations arising from reviews of the training needs of the community and voluntary sector. These have not progressed as anticipated in 2025 but will do so in 2026.

B.7 Dormant account measures

Estimate provision €11.57 million; outturn €10.543 million

The shortfall in expenditure of €1.027 million relative to the estimate provision was due to reduced demand for expenditure from measures previously approved in Dormant Account Fund Action Plans.

B.8 Programme for Peace and Reconciliation

Estimate provision €7.337 million; outturn €9.737 million

The increase in expenditure of €2.4 million relative to the estimate provision was due to additional capital requirements of the SEUPB under the PEACE Programme. The increased resource was provided from savings within the capital element of libraries development.

B.10 Library development and archive service

Estimate provision €8.101 million; outturn €5.352 million

The shortfall in expenditure of €2.749 million relative to the estimate provision was due to delays by local authorities in commencing or progressing capital works on library projects.

B.11 Community Enhancement Programme

Estimate provision €22.001 million; outturn €10 million

The shortfall in expenditure of €12.001 million relative to the estimate provision was due to project commencements and subsequent completions taking longer than anticipated. Funding of €11 million was carried forward for use in 2026 with the remaining €1 million allocated to ORIS though virement.

B.14Ukraine supports – community fund

Estimate provision €25 million; outturn €22 million

The shortfall in expenditure of €3 million relative to the estimate provision was due to later than anticipated approvals in 2025. Further ramp-up is forecast by local authorities in 2026. Funding of €3 million was carried forward for use in 2026.

Programme C Charities Regulatory Authority

		2025		2024
		Estimate provision	Outturn	Outturn
		€000	€000	€000
C.1	Administration – pay	76	142	75
C.2	Administration – non pay	32	18	14
C.3	Charities Regulatory Authority	5,943	5,749	4,999
C.4	Charities Appeal Tribunal	25	13	26
		6,076	5,922	5,114

Significant variations

There are no significant variations (more than +/- 5% and €100,000) for this programme area.

Programme D Gaeltacht

		2025		2024 ^a
		Estimate provision	Outturn	Outturn
		€000	€000	€000
D.1	Administration – pay	7,607	3,342	—
D.2	Administration – non pay	1,811	360	—
D.3	Gaeltacht support schemes			
	<i>Original</i>	13,199		
	<i>Deferred surrender</i>	<u>385</u>		
		13,584	12,289	—
D.4	Irish language support schemes (part funded by National Lottery)			
	<i>Original</i>	15,450		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	<u>(700)</u>		
		14,750	11,240	—
D.5	An Coimisinéar Teanga	1,677	1,637	—
D.6	Údarás na Gaeltachta - administration	16,453	16,453	—
D.7	Údarás na Gaeltachta – current programme expenditure	7,000	7,000	—
D.8	Údarás na Gaeltachta – grants for projects and capital expenditure			
	<i>Original</i>	15,204		
	<i>Deferred surrender</i>	<u>1,200</u>		
		16,404	17,554	—
D.9	Cross border cooperation/ comhoibriú thuaidh theas			
	<i>Original</i>	20,129		
	<i>Deferred surrender</i>	<u>615</u>		
		20,744	19,200	—
D.10	Language planning process			
	<i>Original</i>	6,700		
	<i>Supplementary</i>	<u>700</u>		
		7,400	8,810	—
D.11	Tionscnaimh seirbhíse poiblí/public service initiatives	1,500	659	—
		108,930	98,544	—

Note ^a 2024 outturn figures were accounted for in 2024 Vote 33 Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

Significant variations

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

D.3 Gaeltacht support schemes

Estimate provision €13.199 million; outturn €12.289 million

The shortfall in expenditure of €910,000 relative to the estimate provision was due to delays in larger capital projects going ahead. The increased cost of construction and the percentage of costs that the organisation must cover themselves is a factor in the reduction of applications received.

D.4 Irish language support schemes (part funded by National Lottery)

Estimate provision €15.45 million; outturn €11.24 million

The shortfall in expenditure of €4.21 million relative to the estimate provision was due to envisaged capital projects which did not materialise during 2025 and other applicant capital projects which have not reached drawdown stage yet. Funding of €3.5 million was carried forward for use in 2026 with the remaining €700,000 allocated to subhead D.10 Language planning process through virement.

D.8 Údarás Na Gaeltachta – grants for projects and capital expenditure

Estimate provision €15.204 million; outturn €17.554 million

The increase in expenditure of €2.35 million relative to the estimate provision was due to faster progression of the capital works programme. The increased resource was provided from savings within the capital element of Gaeltacht support schemes.

D.10 Language planning process

Estimate provision €6.7 million; outturn €8.81 million

The increase in expenditure of €2.11 million relative to the estimate provision was due to a number of strategic projects related to the implementation of the *Straitéis 20-Bliain don Ghaeilge*. Funding to meet the additional demand was provided through savings from public service initiatives and Gaeltacht support schemes.

D.11 Tionscnaimh seirbhíse poiblí/public service initiatives

Estimate provision €1.5 million; outturn €659,000

The shortfall in expenditure of €841,000 relative to the estimate provision was due to an underspend in a project providing research services to the Department owing to issues with the recruitment of staff and the delayed commencement of a largescale awareness campaign which will now take place in 2026.

Note 4 Receipts and Revenue

4.1 Appropriations-in-aid

		2025		2024
		Estimate provision	Realised	Realised
		€000	€000	€000
1	LEADER – rural economy sub programme	17,320	7,564	18,874
2	Programme for Peace and Reconciliation	8,000	4,778	7,006
3	Dormant accounts – programme expenditure	11,570	9,930	11,639
4	ESF Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme	465	38,784	2,400
5	Additional superannuation contributions	602	1,154	519
6	Miscellaneous contributions	1,652	1,023	814
		39,609	63,233	41,252

Significant variations

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

1 LEADER – rural economy sub programme

Estimate provision €17.32 million; realised € 7.564 million

The shortfall in receipts of €9.756 million was due to reduced level of payments under the EU LEADER programme during 2025, which resulted in a corresponding reduction in the level of EU receipts received by the Department.

2 Programme for Peace and Reconciliation

Estimate provision €8 million; realised €4.778 million

The shortfall in receipts of €3.222 million was due to receipts anticipated in 2025 not being issued until 2026.

3 Dormant accounts – programme expenditure

Estimate provision €11.57 million; realised €9.93 million

The shortfall in receipts of €1.64 million relative to the estimate provision was due to reduced demand for expenditure from measures previously approved in Dormant Account Fund Action Plans. The dormant accounts receipts generally reflect the expenditure within the area for the year.

4 ESF Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme*Estimate provision €465,000; realised €38.784 million*

The excess receipts of €38.319 million arose mainly because funding under the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme was received from the EU in September 2025. This receipt could not form part of the Department's Revised Estimate for 2025, which was published in September 2024, as the EU approval process was not complete at that time, and the recoupment of the funds was not certain.

5 Additional superannuation contributions*Estimate provision €602,000; realised €1.154 million*

The excess receipts of €552,000 relative to the estimate provision was due to higher than anticipated contribution receipts from the Department and agencies.

6 Miscellaneous contributions*Estimate provision €1.652 million; realised €1.023 million*

The shortfall in receipts of €629,000 relative to the estimate provision was due to a number of refunds anticipated in 2025 not being received until 2026. These receipts are, by their nature, difficult to estimate.

4.2 Revenue for the Vote

Appropriations-in-aid represent cash amounts received in the year. Revenue of the Vote represents income related to the activity of the year, based on the accrual principle.

	2025
	€000
Non-exchange transaction revenue	
Central Fund grant	484,817
European funding received	46,348
Dormant accounts funding	9,930
Additional superannuation contributions	1,154
Other revenue	
Miscellaneous income	13,551
Total revenue	555,800
Represented by	
Total appropriation-in-aid (note 4.1)	63,233
Central Fund grant	484,817
Increase in accrued income	7,750
	555,800

4.3 Extra receipts payable to the Exchequer

	2025	2024
	€000	€000
Balance at 1 January	16	16
Voluntary surrender of ministerial salaries	—	16
Údarás na Gaeltachta – disposal of shares	596	—
Transferred to the Exchequer	(612)	(16)
Balance at 31 December	—	16

Note 5 Staffing and Remuneration

5.1 Employee numbers (full time equivalents)

At 31 December	2025	2024
Department	278	210
Agencies ^a	306	87
	584	297

Note ^a Comprises staffing of the following agencies: Charities Regulatory Authority, Western Development Commission, Water Safety Ireland. Due to the transfer of functions during 2025 the following bodies were integrated: An Coimisinéir Teanga, Údarás na Gaeltachta, and An Foras Teanga/the Language Body.

5.2 Pay

Remuneration of Department staff ^a		
	2025	2024
	€000	€000
Pay	18,182	12,460
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	117	76
Overtime	9	1
Employer's PRSI	1,644	1,023
	19,952	13,560

Note ^a The total pay figure is distributed across subheads A.1, B.1, C.1. and D.1.

Remuneration of agency staff ^a

	2025	2024
	€000	€000
Pay	18,140	5,176
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	55	25
Overtime	1	—
Employer's PRSI	1,847	518
	20,043	5,719

Note ^a The total pay figure is distributed across subheads A.3, B.9, C.3, D.5, D.6 and D.9.

5.3 Allowances and overtime payments

	Number of recipients	Recipients of €10,000 or more	Highest individual payment	
			2025 €	2024 €
Department staff				
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	8	—	4,713	24,551
Overtime	1	—	2,481	421
Extra remuneration in more than one category	1	—	—	11,597
Agency staff				
Higher, special or additional duties allowances	6	4	24,962	17,421

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	2025	2024
20,000	59,999	131	112
60,000	69,999	49	28
70,000	79,999	28	14
80,000	89,999	16	8
90,000	99,999	22	15
100,000	109,999	8	4
110,000	119,999	8	4
120,000	129,999	7	4
130,000	139,999	4	—
140,000	149,999	—	—
150,000	159,999	—	—
160,000	169,999	1	1
170,000	179,999	—	1
180,000	189,999	2	1
190,000	199,999	1	—
200,000	209,999	—	—
210,000	219,999	—	—
220,000	229,999	—	1
230,000	239,999	1	—

5.5 Remuneration and benefits of Accounting Officer

	2025	2024
	€000	€000
Basic pay	236	225

The value of retirement benefits earned in the period is not included above. The Accounting Officer is a member of the civil service pre 95 pension scheme and her entitlements to retirement benefits do not extend beyond the standard terms of that scheme.

5.6 Payroll overpayments

at 31 December	Number of recipients	2025	2024
		€	€
Overpayments	36	28,591	20,554
Recovery plans in place	1	1,659	3,655

In addition to the one recovery plan in place, there were twenty overpayments fully recouped in 2025, with the remaining number in progress/to be progressed during 2026.

Note 6 Miscellaneous

6.1 National Lottery funding

		2025		2024
		Estimate provision €000	Realised €000	Realised €000
B.3	Supports for community and voluntary sector (part funded by the National Lottery) ^a	15,655	15,921	13,746
B.4	SICAP local/regional development supports (part funded by the National Lottery)	3,006	2,911	3,045
D.4	Irish language support schemes (part funded by National Lottery) ^b	10,700	9,990	—
		29,361	28,822	16,791

Note ^a The schemes part-funded by National Lottery funding within the B.3 subhead are the Volunteering Supports, Scheme to Support National Organisations, and the Senior Alert Scheme. The total outturn for these in 2025 was €6.532 million, €3.7 million and €7.669 million respectively.

The Senior Alerts Scheme is also part funded by the Dormant Accounts Fund, given the level of demand for the scheme, and the outturn for both 2024 and 2025 includes €2.7 million and €1.98 million respectively which is funded through the Dormant Accounts Fund, with the remainder (i.e. €1.72 million in 2025) part-funded by the National Lottery.

The grants part-funded by National Lottery funding within the B.4 sub-head are for work or projects that are outside of the Department's Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme but within its ethos, with a focus on organisations that provide supports to those who are disadvantaged.

^b Gaeltacht 2024 outturn amounts were accounted for in Vote 33 Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

6.2 EU funding

Expenditure under subheads A.5 LEADER – rural economy sub programme, B.4 SICAP local/regional development supports (part funded by the National Lottery), B.8 Programme for Peace and Reconciliation and B.13 ESF social innovation supports are co-financed by the EU.

6.3 Payments to Pobal

Pobal administers or supports a number of grant programmes on behalf of the Department. In 2025, the Department transferred amounts totalling €85.744 million to support these programmes as outlined below.

		2025	2024
		Realised	Realised
		€000	€000
A.1	Human resources – POBAL secondment	76	—
A.4	Rural supports	1,580	2,630
A.5	LEADER – rural economy sub programme	1,761	2,622
A.7	Islands	—	65
B.3	Supports for community and voluntary sector (part funded by the National Lottery)	11,364	10,849
B.4	SICAP, local/regional development supports (part funded by the National Lottery)	3,728	3,178
B.6	Supports for disadvantaged communities	1,422	1,395
B.7	Dormant account measures	4,063	4,761
B.11	Community enhancement programme	1,316	22,563
B.12	Community services programme	58,100	52,390
B.13	ESF – social innovation supports	2,334	2,500
		85,744	102,953

Note ^a Pobal has identified amounts totalling €15.862 million which remain unspent in relation to 2025 payments from the Department (€25.437 million in 2024 and €13.93 million in 2023). In line with circular 13/2014, any such balances are taken into account when making subsequent payments to Pobal. These amounts exclude payments in respect of Pobal's administration costs related to services provided on behalf of the Department.

6.4 Write-offs

The following sums were written off in the year	2025	2024
	€000	€000
LEADER programme	115	—
Community services programme	39	—
	154	—

6.5 Compensation and legal costs**Payments/costs paid by the Department in the year**

	Total 2025	Total 2024
Number of cases	—	1
	€000	€000
Department's own legal costs	—	—
Payments by/on behalf of Department		
Compensation	—	—
Legal costs	—	88
Total	—	88

6.6 Fraud and suspected fraud

at 31 December	Number of cases	2025 €000	2024 €000
Suspected fraud	—	—	18

6.7 Statement of loans for Gaeltacht housing

at 31 December	2025 €000	2024 €000
Opening balance on 1 January	174	170
Interest written off	—	—
Annual penal interest accrued	3	4
Repayment of principal	—	—
Payments of interest	—	—
Closing balance on 31 December	177	174

6.8 Deferred surrender

Deferred surrender comprises savings in 2025 of €21,800,000 in capital expenditure in the following subheads that were carried over to 2026.

		2025	2024 ^a
		€000	€000
A.5	LEADER – Rural economy sub programme	4,300	—
B.11	Community Enhancement Programme	5,000	—
B.14	Ukraine supports – Community Fund	9,000	—
D.4	Irish language support schemes (part funded by National Lottery)	3,500	—
		21,800	—

Note ^a 2024 deferred surrender of €2,200,000 in respect of Programme D Gaeltacht was previously accounted for in 2024 Vote 33 Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.