

Chapter 15

National Treasury Management Agency

15.1 National Debt

The National Treasury Management Agency has the statutory function of borrowing moneys on behalf of the Exchequer and managing the National Debt on behalf of and subject to the control and general superintendence of the Minister for Finance.

Expenses incurred by the Agency in the performance of its functions are met from the Central Fund. The Agency incurred expenditure of €19.9m on administration in 2005 (€16.5m in 2004 as adjusted for FRS17).

Under the provisions of section 12 of the National Treasury Management Agency Act, 1990 I am required to audit the accounts of the Agency and when making my statutory annual report on the Appropriation Accounts, to make also a report to Dáil Éireann regarding the correctness of the sums brought to account by the Agency in the year. The Agency's accounts for 2005 have been audited and the accounts, including an administration account and accounts relating to the National Debt, have been presented to the Minister who has laid copies thereof before both Houses of the Oireachtas.

I am satisfied that the accounts properly present the transactions of the Agency in 2005 and its balances at year end.

Table 49 shows the outturn for the National Debt in the five year period 2001-2005.

Table 49 National Debt 2001 – 2005

	National Debt Outstanding €m	Debt Service Cost €m
2001	36,183	2,379
2002	36,361	2,169
2003	37,610	2,277
2004	37,846	2,203
2005	38,182	2,238

The composition of the National Debt⁵³ at 31 December 2005 is shown in Table 50.

Table 50 Composition of National Debt as at 31 December 2005

	€m
Medium/Long term Debt	31,936
Short term Debt	3,688
National Savings Schemes	4,741
Less: Domestic Liquid Assets	(2,183)
National Debt	38,182

The Agency's performance in regard to its activities is independently measured by an international accounting firm who are specifically engaged for that purpose. The rationale and basis of the performance measurement was agreed with the Department of Finance. It was determined that, measured on a net present value basis against an independent benchmark portfolio, savings attributable to the Agency's management in the year amounted to €25.6m.

⁵³ The National Debt is stated on the basis of nominal amounts of principal originally borrowed.

15.2 Savings Bank Fund

The audit of the Post Office Savings Bank is carried out on my behalf by the auditors of An Post subject to my right to carry out further audit tests which I consider necessary.

In 2006 they reported to me on their audit of the 2005 accounts. I accept their opinion that the accounts of the Post Office Savings Bank give a true and fair view of its transactions for that year-end and of its year-end balance.

In addition to managing the National Debt, the National Treasury Management Agency is responsible for the investment and management of funds remitted to the Exchequer by the Post Office Savings Bank. The Exchequer is responsible for the repayment to the Bank of all such funds and for meeting interest charges thereon.

The state of affairs of the fund at year-end is shown in Table 51.

Table 51 Post Office Savings Fund

	2005 €m	2004 €m
Liability in respect of funds due to depositors and creditors	1,489	1,304
Value of related investments held by Post Office Savings Bank Fund (at cost prices) ⁵⁴	1,499	1,315
Surplus at 31 December	10	11

⁵⁴ The market value of the investments held by the Fund was €1.6m less than their cost price.