

PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT 2010-2014 (CROKE PARK AGREEMENT)
PART A - PROGRESS ON DEPARTMENTAL /AGENCY ACTION PLAN
For submission by 3 May 2011

1. Better human resource management: <i>Actions to include under this heading include reductions in numbers, redeployment, reconfiguration of service delivery, revisions in attendance arrangements, better attendance and absence management etc.</i>			
Terms of Agreement 2010-2014 <i>(refer to all relevant paragraphs)</i>	Target Date as per Current Action Plan	Action*	Comment**
4.12	End 2010	Guidelines on the Management of Underperformance agreed	Guidelines for Managers in the Management of Underperformance were approved and disseminated in the Department (July 2010) and information sessions on their content were provided in November and Decembers 2010.
4.10	Quarter 1 2011	Attendance Management Policy finalised and implemented	Attendance Management Policy was approved in February 2011 and implemented with effect from 1 March 2011. The policy was circulated to all staff prior to implementation. An online training programme was devised and used to reinforce the key features of the policy. Operation of the policy will be monitored and will be a key contributor to optimising attendance rates in the Department.
4.4, 4.7, 4.10	Quarter 2 2011	New Guidelines on the Management of Flexible Working Arrangements	Guidelines have been drafted and are in the process of finalisation.
4.1	End 2011	Development of Workforce Planning Techniques for use in the Department	Initial research has been completed and an outline for a pilot exercise is currently under consideration.

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4.7, 4.8	End September 2011	Review the application of Work Life Balance and flexible working policies that currently prevail in the Department to determine if they are operating to the benefit of the Department and its clients	Terms of Reference are currently under consideration and will be finalised shortly.
4.11	Immediate	Open / Direct Recruitment by the Department: Direct Recruitment of ICT specialists from the market	Department of Finance sanction was secured for the appointment of one specialised post at the EO grade, and an appointment has been made. Final sanction for the engagement of two specialist staff at HEO grade has not yet been agreed by that Department.
4.4	Ongoing	HR Best Practice Implementation by Departmental Agencies and Offices The Agencies and Offices will pursue implementation of best practice HR strategies for more efficient and effective implementation of their mandates. Examples will include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Staff mobility and flexibility to achieve business goals. ▪ Improved attendance management systems and practices (voluntary remote access / hot-desking etc) ▪ Expanding roles and responsibilities at all levels to grow competencies 	See actions and comments above in relation to Departmental Offices. See separate Agency Progress Reports on Action Plans, as each Agency is responsible for its own day to day HR strategies.

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4.1, 4.4	Ongoing	<p>Staff resources – doing more with less Department and Agencies already operating with reduced staff resources but servicing the same business objectives. This has necessitated the streamlining of procedures and the continuous questioning of whether services are being delivered in the most efficient and cost-effective manner as possible.</p> <p>BPR for Employment Appeals Tribunal (EAT) and Rights Commissioner Services (RCS), will identify opportunities for utilising staff resources across the employment rights bodies (including National Employment Rights Agency (NERA))</p>	<p>Staff numbers in the Department and its Offices have reduced by 9% from end Q1 2010 to end Q1 2011 yet the same level of services are being provided. In the dissemination, for example of the new Attendance Management Policy, cloud computing was availed of to provide an online solution which maximized effective knowledge transfer to staff, at their desks and minimised loss of productivity.</p> <p>See separate Agency Progress Reports on Action Plans in relation to reductions in staff resources.</p> <p>In the course of the BPR for EAT and RCS opportunities for utilising current staff resources of employment rights bodies to better effect were identified and NERA staff were deployed to assist in data entry for both RCS and EAT to reduce problem of backlogs.</p>
4.4, 4.8	<p>Feb 2011 – Feb 2012 subject to performance and progress on backlog</p> <p>End January 2011</p>	<p>Examine the possibility of greater flexibility for moving staff within / between related areas of the Department on a temporary basis (for example 4 NERA Inspectors (EOs) seconded to EAT to act as Secretaries to eliminate backlogs). The BPR for EAT and RCS will identify opportunities for NERA staff to be deployed to undertake EAT secretary role at hearings.</p> <p>The BPR for EAT and RCS will also look at the opportunity for NERA staff to discharge “clearing house” role on first instance complaints formerly routed separately to EAT and</p>	<p>3 NERA Inspectors seconded by agreement to EAT on 11 February 2011.</p> <p>As a first step in this process NERA has taken on the role of inputting claims to the Rights Commissioner Service case management system and has undertaken the</p>

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		RCS/Labour Relations Commission (LRC). Proviso that it is a net efficiency gain and not an additional administrative burden.	acknowledgement phase of EAT cases.
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2. Better Business processes: *Actions under this heading would include efficiency measures and improvements to the processes by which your Department/Body delivers its services to the public, including changes to the technology used, better data management, including around identity, and so on.*

Terms of Agreement 2010-2014 (refer to all relevant paragraphs)	Target Date as per Current Action Plan	Action*	Comment**
4.13	End 2011 ongoing	Elimination of requirement for “originally- signed” applications Examine extension of E-signature for all applications to DETI and Offices and Agencies and amend legislation as necessary.	Elimination of requirement for signature on claims forms on original submission to EAT – parties can now sign on day of hearing. This would permit fully online and automated systems with consequential efficiency gains (BRP for EAT and RCS recommended that new case management system incorporate use of eForms and eFiling of documents) eForm being developed for EAT – see material on this separately.
4.15	Ongoing	Facilities Management Department to consolidate buildings network in Dublin	We will seek to free up a building and/or reduce overheads. Four Business Units have been moved from Earlsfort Centre to Kildare Street. The position of the CCC Division in Earlsfort Centre is being reviewed. In addition 2 floors of the Earlsfort Centre have been transferred to Department of Social Protection. The transfer of some of the Trade function to DFA may help this ongoing project. The Department (ERIR Division) continues to seek support from OPW in pursuit of relocation of all IR and employment rights bodies in a single location at Tom Johnson House.
4.13	Depends on legislative requirements	Reduce use of postal resources Reduce requirement of sending hard copy letters and other correspondence to clients, respondents and interested parties generally of various Offices. The requirement to do so is often framed by legislation so the discontinuation of such practices will require legislation.	Cost/Efficiencies – in addition to the reduced postage costs, this would also free up a certain amount of staff time. The Business Services Unit has brought this project to the attention of the Offices/Business Units concerned and will continue to monitor the position. Business Services Unit will continue to drive the change to electronic communication.

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4.13, 4.15		Rationalise and share data on scheduling of cases, hire of external venues for hearings of Rights Commissioners/ EAT/Labour Court and Equality Tribunal (D/JELR). Shared approach to E-booking and E-invoicing to be explored.	BPR for EAT & RCS identifies opportunities for improved scheduling of cases among agencies with scope for coordinated IT identification /booking of venues. Note: this is predicated on successful delivery of IT systems upgrade in EAT and would involve cross-divisional collaboration with Finance / IT units.
4.13, 4.15		EAT & RCS/LRC	BPR for EAT & RCS will identify opportunities for increased e-mail correspondence with clients under proposed case management system changes
4.13, 4.15		Labour Court	A plan for the replacement of the manual postal system for the dissemination of JLC rate change proposals has been devised and is ready for implementation. This plan takes account of the various legal obligations in existence insofar as they relate to the requirements to advise the various parties involved. On implementation, the new system will involve considerable costs savings relative to the current system in terms of direct postal charges and other related costs (paper, printing, stationery, etc). It will also reduce the man-hours allocated to the process. The implementation has been put on hold pending changes to the JLC structure arising from either or both of the current High Court challenge or the outcome of the current JLC/REA review.

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4.16	Q2 2011 Not included in current action plan – target date end April 2011 Not included in current action plan – target date: ongoing	Online Payslips/P60s and other certs Payment of salaries to all staff by Electronic Fund Transfer (EFT) Expanded use of EFT mechanism for payment to suppliers	Phase 1 of this project was completed in Q4 2010 with the introduction of the new form of payslip. The final phase of the project is on course for completion by end Q2 – this includes the rollout of online payslips, P60s, USC and PRD certificates to all staff of the Department. Salaries Section will have moved to 100% EFT payments by end April 2011 Regular suppliers are actively encouraged to complete a mandate form to enable payment by EFT.
4.16	End 2011	EFT payment of Travel claims	Is underway and currently on time for delivery ahead of Plan – revised target end May 2011.

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4.13	End 2011	Switch to eT&S for inputting of Travel claims	Two options reviewed. Project will have to go to etender. Finance Unit to put proposal for switch to eT&S to Management Board (MAC) for approval late May/early June. Tender request to issue June/July. Project expected to start late Summer 2011.
4.13, 4.16	Mid 2012	Develop an on-line application and payment system for Employment Permits	Action on is linked to consideration of a single application process for migration and work permissions purposes.
4.13	No date given	Employment Permits – Single application process for immigration and work permissions.	Initial discussions between the Department and the Department of Justice & Defence commenced with a view to development of a scoping document outlining an integrated approach for intending customers of the service. Further detailed consideration will be required including an analysis of the likely costs, benefits and savings that might be achievable from adopting such an approach.
4.4	2011	Reception Arrangements in Buildings of Dept and Offices Review reception arrangements for Dublin offices.	Enable more efficient use of staff resources. Improved productivity and enable more staff to fulfill customer-facing role. This is an ongoing matter. Business Services Unit will finalise a formal review as soon as practicable.
4.15	Dependent on central systems being put in place.	Shared Services Between the Department, Offices and Agencies in ICT, HR, Finance, Pensions, Facilities Management and Procurement.	Reduction in the number of corporate services staff needed in each agency. Development of expertise in particular areas e.g. pensions, where small agencies can not develop the required expertise. See Facilities Management above on shared services options

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			<p>envisaged for IR and employment rights bodies.</p> <p>The Department's ICT Unit has begun a process of exploring with equivalent functions in the Agencies opportunities for increased cooperation, shared procurement and shared services. As a first step, information is being gathered on ICT systems and technologies in place to identify opportunities for increased cooperation and/or shared services. A similar information gathering process has been initiated to identify any opportunities for shared procurement. In parallel to this, an online collaborative forum has been established for ICT staff in these bodies, and plans are in place to increase the value of this service by extending it gradually to other public service bodies.</p> <p>Further progress will require decisions from the centre.</p>
4.15	Feasibility study to be completed by end 2011.	The Department will explore with its Offices and Agencies shared services opportunities.	<p>See above</p> <p>Initial phase has commenced.</p>
4.13, 4.14	Feasibility study to be conducted by mid 2011	H.S.A. GeoSmart Inspection workflow system to be made available to other inspection bodies that need to update their systems e.g. to NERA or similar bodies.	Discussion between HSA and NERA. Feasibility study completed by NERA. IT Unit in discussion with HSA re possibility of HSA hosting a NERA module on GeoSmart.
4.15	End 2011	Procurement Consolidate / streamline procurement across the Department and its Offices and Agencies	<p>Greater purchasing power to secure better prices. Sharing of expertise should reduce duplication of resources.</p> <p>This is an ongoing project which has been improved by the establishment of a Procurement Committee with representatives of the Department, its Offices and its Agencies.</p>

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4.13		Publications Review publications process with a view to maximising the downloading of publications and where paper copies are essential to minimise the costs of these.	Reduce printing and distribution costs. This is an ongoing process but a formal review will be initiated by Business Support Unit as soon as practicable.
4.14	To commence January 2011	Administration of NERA prosecution and enforcement activity being devolved to Regional Offices.	Commenced January 2011 – being implemented on a phased basis, approx 50% of cases now devolved.
4.13	Based on standard IT tendering and development practices end 2013	Update current EAT IT system.	To be reconciled with action on BPR and streamlining on direction of new Minister.
4.13		Ditto for LRC/Rights Commissioners as per BPR recommendations on common IT system for both EAT and RCS.	
4.13	Early 2011 for initial phase. Full eFiling only on delivery of upgraded IT system.	Introduce eForm which can be completed online by EAT claimants, including phased introduction of a complementary back office capacity that is capable of eliminating manual inputting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Form developed April 2011. b. Testing May 2011. c. Online June 2011. d. Full electronic filing only on delivery of upgraded IT system.

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4.12		IR: Ditto for LRC/Rights Commissioners as per BPR recommendations on common IT system for both EAT and RCS.	
4.13	Ongoing – Spring 2011 onwards.	HSA to make better use of teleconference and web-based facilities for internal meetings & more use of Webinars for interacting with industry.	HSA has already run two very successful Webinars on the Chemicals side.
4.13	ongoing	CRO to increase innovative e-filing solutions	Overall CRO aims to make filing more efficient for presenters and to save CRO time in processing submissions filed. A system to file and sign annual returns and accounts fully electronically was introduced at the end of 2010 and efforts to increase take-up among 170,000 companies filing are underway. CRO is currently preparing to launch an electronic system for filing to incorporate a new company. In addition CRO and RFS continue to enhance the search and retrieval function for documents filed on the www.cro.ie website and will during Q2 2011 make available Registry of Friendly Society submissions electronically. Strong stakeholder consultation is conducted by the CRO in launching all new e-filing initiatives.
4.14	Q2 2011	Make more use of desktop inspection by Enforcement Agencies in combination with and preparatory to on-site inspections, especially in very specialised areas (e.g. chemicals). HSA, with 12 months experience of its GeoSmart, case-management system, is already well advanced in refining its	Legislation is required following submission to Minister.

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		<p>risk-profiling system in order to enable a more targeted inspection regime.</p> <p>BPR for EAT & RCS will identify scope for reduction in “in-person” hearings where straightforward claims can be handled expeditiously through written procedure In order to see if there is scope for reducing the number of in-person hearings (without increasing expense for currently non-represented clients), the BPR to consider the possibility of the use of written submissions on pilot basis.</p>	
4.13	<p>NERA solicitor appointed 2011</p>	<p>Legal services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➢ Appointment of NERA in-house solicitor. ➢ LRC to explore possibility of access to legal services secured by other ERIR bodies, including NERA - while recognising the limitations on that Office's reduced service. 	<p>Solicitor commenced October 2010.</p> <p>BPR for EAT and RCS identified access to legal support for Rights Commissioners as a means of minimizing time spent investigating case law and preparing recommendations.</p>
4.15	Ongoing	<p>Review of <i>Departments</i> and public bodies with responsibilities for chemicals and control of substances to eliminate duplication and overlapping responsibilities. For example, the <i>Pesticides Control Services</i> and the H.S.A. currently fulfil similar roles in relation to both pesticides and other chemicals.</p>	<p>Minister briefed. Discussed with HSA – HSA preparing submission on possible wider integration options including the chemicals area. HSA paper to be presented to Department and Minister in April 2011.</p>

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3. Delivering for the Citizen: *Actions under this heading would include efficiency measures and improvements to the processes by which your Department/Body its services to the public, including changes to the technology used, better data management, including around identity, and so on.*

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4.14	Feasibility study to be completed by mid 2011.	<p>Exploring the potential for a sharing of “field officer/ inspectorate resources – short of formal integration</p> <p>Explore the potential to maximise use of the inspectorates whereby each inspector would have some training in other areas/disciplines such that an “informed view” could be taken as to more obvious breaches in the workplace.</p>	HSA and NERA have recently finalised a report on areas of potential cooperation between them including in the enforcement area and these will be developed during 2011.
4.14	Implementation dependent on legislative amendment	<p>Consolidated Inspections / Risk Based Enforcement</p> <p>Progress the work of the inter – Departmental Risk Based Enforcement Group with a view to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Delivering on the “Smart Economy” commitment to develop a consolidated inspection regime, as appropriate. (b) Developing proposals for data sharing between offices and agencies to enhance risk based enforcement. 	Requires a legislative amendment

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4.15		<p>Streamlining or outsourcing call-centres</p> <p>A number of Business Units / Agencies (NERA, HSA, Employment Permits) operate individual call centres – explore possibilities for merging and / or outsourcing.</p>	<p>Rationalisation of resources allocated to call-centre function with possibility to streamline the service to cover a number of functions in the DETI family. Call-centre duties and technology can be shared thereby giving flexibility and greater ability to maintain service in the face of staff reductions.</p> <p>Outsourcing would have a cost which would have to be taken into account.</p> <p>The review has not yet been initiated. The Business Services Unit (Information Section) together with the ICT Unit will commence the review as soon as practicable.</p>
<p>4.15</p> <p>[Note this needs additional information from CRO – contacts made awaiting information]</p>	<p>Once BPR completed</p> <p>CRO will complete in Q1 2011 a CBA of retaining the conversion of manually completed annual returns into electronic format function in-house versus outsourcing.</p>	<p>Establishing alternative ways of securing processing / call handling capacity including, for example, through outsourcing of data entry / LRC recommendations / dictaphone typing and/or using capacities available within the ERIR bodies or within the wider Department e.g. NERA assisting with LRC processing backlogs.</p>	<p>BPR for EAT and RCS recommended a single “clearing house” / call centre to handle all individual grievance claims.</p> <p>See reports on NERA assisting LRC processing backlogs.</p> <p>As a first step in this process NERA has taken on the role of inputting claims to the Rights Commissioner Service case management system and has undertaken the acknowledgement phase of EAT cases.</p>

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4.13	End 2011	Review and reduce the amount of information obligations that employers are obliged to submit to Regulatory bodies. This may require legislative changes.	The initial focus of this is on the OWT Form 1, which is currently being examined.
4.14	No date given – need to structure and formalise the informal existing arrangements	Formal channels of communication and information sharing between INIS, GNIB, NERA, DSP, Revenue and Employment Permits staff to facilitate sharing of information leading to more comprehensive enforcement regime. NERA has structured and formalised arrangements with DSP and Revenue. There are also informal arrangements with Employment Permits and GNIB.	Need to examine and find a solution for data protection issues to ensure necessary safeguards are in place.
4.13	January 2011	Reduce the review period for examining employment records of employers to one year.	Implemented and effective from 1 March 2011.
4.13, 4.14	Q1 2012	Develop new module to GeoSmart inspection system to enable insurance companies to electronically submit Insurance forms –‘report of thorough examination of lifting equipment’ which is a legal requirement – to the HSA. This will require an initial investment of up to €15,000. And implementation will be subject to a business case showing adequate savings in administration cost.	A business case was prepared by HSA which showed that the administrative savings to either the Authority or insurance companies did not justify the cost of implementing this action.

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4.15	Ongoing	<p>Greater use of free or minimal cost public facilities for hearings of EAT (also applies to other ERIR tribunals).</p> <p>EAT – Will continue to seek greater use of free or minimal public facilities for hearings. However, there has been a change in the last year, in that many public venues, that had formerly agreed to provide these free of charge, such as Courthouses, VECs, etc are now either charging or indicating that they no longer want to facilitate EAT hearings in their venues. Resolution of this may require a central direction in relation to maximizing the utility of public buildings.</p> <p>IR: See under 2.2 Facilities Management above.</p>	OPW has been requested to make available a list of all public buildings which could be used to host EAT hearings and asked to issue a direction that such facilities should be made available.
4.13	Mid 2011	<p>Greater use of ICT in information dissemination etc. by the LRC.</p> <p>See above on relevance of common system recommendations of BPR on EAT and LRC/RCS.</p>	
4.13	Mid 2011	Online Filing of Trade Marks.	Delayed due to technical and procurement complications.
4.14	Beginning in 2011, and phased and inclusive basis	<p>BPRs EAT and Rights Commissioner Service of LRC. BPR underway.</p>	<p>BPR completed on EAT and Rights Commissioner Service of LRC.</p> <p>BPR recommendations to be assessed via submission to new Minister on Streamlining of employment rights bodies.</p>

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		Recommendations to be assessed via Working Group on Procedural & Administrative Streamlining.	
4.15	Ongoing	Agree systems with <i>Department of Social Protection and State Claims Agency</i> for data sharing on issues of mutual interest (e.g. occupational injuries and sickness issues)	Subject to interdepartmental agreement and possibly legislative developments

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