



Roinn an Taoisigh
Department of the Taoiseach

30 May 2018

Mr. Seán Fleming, T.D.
Chairman
Committee of Public Accounts
Leinster House
Dublin 2
D02 XR20

Dear Chairman

I refer to my attendance at the Committee of Public Accounts on 3rd May 2018, and the letter from the Committee Secretariat of 16th May 2018 regarding a number of issues on which I undertook to provide additional information. The additional information requested was as follows:

- 1. A note on the process that is followed in information being brought to the Government in relation to cases against the State.**
- 2. A note outlining the role played by the SCU in the drafting of replies to Parliamentary Questions with particular reference to a question put to the Department of Justice and Equality and interactions with the SCU.**
- 3. A detailed timeline including a breakdown of the approx. €700k spent on each stage of Project 2040.**
- 4. A note on the training provided to staff of the Department in relation to Protected Disclosures.**

I will address each item in turn:

- 1. A note on the process that is followed in information being brought to the Government in relation to cases against the State.**

Since 2006 for the Attorney General's (AG's) Office and 2007 for the State Claims Agency, reports have been submitted to Government three times a year for noting, generally in March, July and November, on:

- a) important litigation being handled by the AG's Office, the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and their Solicitors' Offices, as well as certain cases jointly dealt with by the AG's Office and solicitors from the Office of the Revenue Commissioners; and
- b) important and sensitive cases being handled by the State Claims Agency.

The Report from the AG's Office gives information on cases involving constitutional challenges to legislation/rules of law and other cases of significance. It contains information on the current status of the case and its implications. The details are updated by the relevant Department prior to the Report being submitted to Government. A list of cases is also provided which, in the Attorney General's view, need to be accorded special priority by Departments.

The Report from the State Claims Agency lists the cases which, in the assessment of the Agency, are important and sensitive. It contains information on the implications of the case and its current status.

2. A note outlining the role played by the SCU in the drafting of replies to Parliamentary Questions with particular reference to a question put to the Department of Justice and Equality and interactions with the SCU.

A very high volume of Parliamentary Questions (PQs) was received in the period from September 2017 to April 2018 in relation to the work of the Strategic Communications Unit (SCU). As with any Business Unit in the Civil Service, the staff best placed to answer PQs on the work of the Unit are generally those assigned to the Unit. This ensures that the answer is as accurate as possible.

There have been cases where a number of Departments received the same SCU-related PQ – e.g. in relation to the launch of Project Ireland 2040. In other cases, one or more

Departments may have received questions in relation to the set-up and workings of the SCU. In these cases, the most efficient use of resources was to co-ordinate these responses centrally. It is also common for PQs to be transferred from one Department to another in order to have them answered in the most efficient manner.

The PQ referred to by Deputy Cullinane at Committee was put down to Ms Frances Fitzgerald, T.D., when she was Tánaiste and Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation.

The question was:

“To ask the Tánaiste and Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation the way in which the new strategic communications unit will be used by the Office of the Tánaiste or her office, and if staff from the Office of the Tánaiste or her department will be moved to it.”

As this question was about the operation and staffing of the SCU – including its interaction with other Departments – the SCU was asked for input to the answer. This, as outlined previously, is typical of how PQs are answered.

3. A detailed timeline including a breakdown of the approx. €700k spent on each stage of Project 2040.

Expenditure commitments by the SCU on Project Ireland 2040 amount to a total of €756,119, which is broken down between media spend of €497,271 (including national and regional press, digital and cinema advertising) and production spend of €258,848.

Invoices processed by the Department of the Taoiseach to end of April 2018 for the Project Ireland 2040 launch and campaign total €551,036. A detailed breakdown of this expenditure is provided in the table below. Some invoices have yet to be received or are in varying stages of processing.

Detail of invoices processed by the Department of the Taoiseach to end of April 2018 for the Project Ireland 2040 launch and campaign

Category	Description	Company	Payment Date	Amount paid (including VAT)
Advertising / Creative Services	Production of high resolution videos and other graphics; real-time rendering; studio booking/recording, etc.	CAWLEY NEA TBWA LIMITED	08-Feb-18	€121,191.90
Printing and Binding	Name Tags for Sligo (16th February 2018)	HACKETT REPROGRAGHICS	26-Feb-18	€178.35
Translations	Irish Sign Language-English interpreter for the launch of Project Ireland 2040 (16th February 2018)	BRIDGE INTERPRETING LTD	02-Mar-18	€256.50
Printing and Binding	Printing of the Project Ireland 2040 overview brochure	PRINTFIX LTD	12-Mar-18	€516.60
Advertising	Agency fees/third party costs	CAWLEY NEA TBWA LIMITED	26-Mar-18	€104,941.14
Advertising	Cinema Advertising	PHD MEDIA (IRELAND) LIMITED	04-Apr-18	€96,975.50
Advertising	Digital Advertising	PHD MEDIA (IRELAND) LIMITED	04-Apr-18	€69,636.84
Advertising in Publications	Irish Times/Examiner partnership	PHD MEDIA (IRELAND) LIMITED	04-Apr-18	€144,974.02
Advertising	Video production	CAWLEY NEA TBWA LIMITED	26-Apr-18	€12,365.19
TOTAL				€551,036.04

In addition, Deputy O'Brien asked for details of metrics on the number of people who have viewed material produced by the SCU. The relevant metrics (including in relation to campaigns run by the SCU in conjunction with other Departments and Agencies) are provided in the table below as at 15th May 2018.

Campaigns	Twitter Views	Facebook Views	You Tube Views	Total Views
<i>Global Ireland</i>	1,870,000	2,560,927	2,511,757	6,942,684
<i>Project Ireland 2040 (Short)</i>	1,907,000	451,422	222,983	2,581,405
<i>Project Ireland 2040 (Long)</i>	1,017,207	367,881	223,149	1,608,237
<i>Action Plan for Education</i>	82,518	80,427	6,259	169,204
<i>Ireland as a Digital Hub/Destination for FDI</i>	37,080	72,367	8,128	117,575
<i>Self Employed Benefits</i>	160,401	134,255	18,422	313,078
<i>Irish Aid</i>	184,195	166,277	11,082	361,554
<i>Healthy Ireland</i>	288,535	343,682	45,453	677,670
<i>Bliain na Gaeilge</i>		166,019	56,777	222,796
<i>Luas</i>	65,623	392,804	40,535	498,962
<i>Self Employed PRSI</i>	87,579	139,366	56,784	283,729
<i>Budget Infrastructure</i>	122,421	61,905	40,124	224,450
<i>Budget Introduction</i>	77,459	140,900	159,289	377,648
<i>Rugby World Cup</i>		906,388	274,149	1,180,537
<i>Back to School</i>	92,182	51,981	74,000	218,163
Total Views	5,992,200	6,036,601	3,748,891	15,777,692

4. A note on the training provided to staff of the Department in relation to Protected Disclosures.

The Protected Disclosures Act, 2014 provides a robust statutory framework within which employees can raise concerns regarding potential wrongdoing that has come to their attention in the workplace in the knowledge that they can avail of significant employment and other protections if they are penalised by their employer or suffer any detriment for doing so.

The Act requires every public body to establish and maintain procedures for dealing with protected disclosures and to provide written information relating to these procedures to their employees.

In line with the Act (and the guidelines issued by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in September 2015), my Department has a Policy on Protected Disclosures which sets out the process by which an employee can make a disclosure, what will happen when a disclosure is made, and what my Department will do to protect a discloser.

The following training on Protected Disclosures has been provided to relevant staff in the Department of the Taoiseach:

Date	Description
21/05/2015	Conference on Whistleblowing
25/11/2015	Training on Protected Disclosures Act 2014
24/02/2016	Follow-up training on Protected Disclosures Act 2014
29/06/2017	PAI Conference on Whistleblowing, Protected Disclosures and Public Sector Organisations

An Office of Government Procurement Framework is now in place for training services under the Protected Disclosures Act and future training on the Act will be sourced using this Framework.

I trust that this information provides the clarification requested by Committee Members.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M. Fraser'.

Martin Fraser
Secretary General