Contents

1. About Pobal ........................... 2
2. Programmes we manage on behalf of Government ........ 3
3. Pobal’s Services ......................... 4
4. Developments .......................... 5

PROGRAMME APPENDIX ............... 9
1. About Pobal

Pobal is a not-for-profit company that manages programmes on behalf of the Irish Government and the EU. We are an intermediary that works on behalf of Government to support communities and local agencies toward achieving social inclusion, reconciliation and equality. We do this by managing funding and providing resources for suitable programmes.


The company is governed by a board of directors appointed by Government. They give their time and expertise on a voluntary basis. Pobal’s work is guided by a strategic plan and annual business plans that reflect the requirements of the specific years in question.

In keeping with our goal to operate a balanced regional approach to service delivery, we operate from office bases in Dublin, Monaghan, Sligo, Clifden, Letterkenny, Galway city, Limerick and Kilkenny.

The company has a framework agreement with the Department of Rural and Community Development and programme-specific service level agreements with a number of other Departments. Reporting accounts are subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

2. Programmes we manage or administer on behalf of Government

Currently, Pobal provides management and support services to circa 23 programmes for four Government Departments, the EU and other bodies.

Department of Rural and Community Development
Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP); Community Services Programme (CSP); Scheme to Support National Organisations in the Community and Voluntary Sector (SSNO); Seniors Alert Scheme (SAS); Dormant Accounts Fund; LEADER Programme.

Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection
Rural Social Scheme; Tús; Gateway; Ability.

Department of Children and Youth Affairs
Community Childcare Subvention (CCS); Training & Employment Childcare Programmes (TEC); National Free Pre-school Year in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE); Programme Supports
Programme; City/County Childcare Committees; National Voluntary Childcare Organisations; Early Years Capital; School Aged Childcare Capital; Learner Fund; Better Start; Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Youth Service Grant Scheme; Comhairle na nÓg Development Fund; Area Based Childcare (ABC), Affordable Childcare Scheme (ACS).

**Department of Health**
Healthy Ireland Fund

### 3. Pobal’s Services

Pobal’s services are founded on:

- A principle of supporting partnership approaches to decision-making and coordination between communities, State agencies and other stakeholders

- A rigour in transparency and accountability in the financial control and systems employed by Pobal and required of beneficiaries in receipt of funds

- A recognition that individuals, groups and communities, who are not able to participate in the labour market or access and participate in a range of services, require additional supports to facilitate their participation

- A commitment to resourcing Government Departments to respond to policy through the provision of data, analysis and good practice learnt from the programmes we manage

- The ability to bring a store of related programme knowledge, experience and expertise to managing new business/programmes

The exact nature of Pobal’s programme management activities is determined by the objectives of each individual programme. Some examples of this diversity of programme purpose include:

- **Multi-annual revenue and actions funding**
  For local development and social inclusion measures undertaken under the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP). Funding to support community-based local service delivery and community services (CSP).

- **Capital grants**
  Early Years Capital Programme; Dormant Accounts Fund capital grants.

- **Project funding**
  Dormant Accounts Fund projects
- **Specialist support**
  Facilitation and coordination of public and voluntary service provision; mentoring support.

- **Subvention funding**
  For example, Community Childcare Subvention Programme (CCS).

- **Payroll services**
  For low income farmers on the Rural Social Scheme (RSS), unemployed people on the Tús / Gateway programmes, and Community Services Programme funded salaries.

The value of funding contracts can range from a few thousand Euros to capital and multi-annual revenue funding, ranging from hundreds to millions of Euros.

### 4. Developments – 2016 / 2017

There has been continued significant investment by Government over the past two Budgets in the **early years** sector with increased capital funding, the introduction of AIM, the expansion of Better Start Quality Development Support Service to support the delivery AIM, expansion of targeted operational funding to make CCS open to private providers, the continued enhancement of PIP functionality – contracting process for 2016/2017 processed on-line for the first time for all early years operational funding programmes, and work on the development of the Affordable Childcare Scheme, including the roll-out of substantial new subsidy payments in 2017 and the development of a major suite of infrastructure to deliver on a longer-term funding platform during 2018/2019.

Throughout 2016 and into 2017, Pobal has played a key role in two of the most significant and ambitious local and community development orientated programmes delivered in the State, which both receive co-funding from the EU. Pobal provides national oversight and programmatic and technical supports on the **Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme 2015 – 2017 (SICAP)** to the Department of Rural and Community Development. Extensive work has taken place on the scoping and planning of the new iteration of SICAP, 2018 – 2022.

In relation to the **LEADER** programme (2014-2020), Pobal provides technical support to the Department of Rural and Community Development across a range of functions that include technical appraisal, business system development, monitoring and financial verification. The programme officially launched in Autumn 2016. Pobal is currently working intensively to support the programme and Department through completion of the necessary EU “Article 48” processes.

**Dormant Accounts Fund (DAF)**, is a scheme for the disbursement of unclaimed funds from accounts in credit institutions in Ireland. During 2017 Pobal managed a new round of funding applications under three DAF measures and in ran support events for successful grantees.
**Seniors Alert Scheme (SAS)** - The Seniors Alert Scheme encourages community support for vulnerable older people and funds personal monitored alarms through local community organisations. The management of SAS transferred from the (previous) Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (DECLG) to Pobal during 2015. This involved Pobal procuring equipment suppliers and engaging hundreds of local community groups in the roll-out of a new service model for the scheme which was launched in November 2017. There has been a number of positive changes to the scheme widening of eligibility criteria, primarily that individuals no longer need to live alone to access the scheme. The funding of one year free monitoring for individuals who register with the scheme from 1st November 2017 also applies. During 2017 Pobal managed a publicity campaign on the SAS and ran a number of support sessions for community groups.

The overall aim of the **Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO)** is to provide multi-annual funding towards the core costs of national organisations in the community and voluntary sector to assist them to operate and fund core staff positions (SSNO). In 2016, Pobal, on behalf of the DECLG managed a new application and appraisal process for this funding with 71 national organisations being approved. Pobal and the Department hosted information sessions for potential applicants and following the appraisal and approval process, provided support and post-contract support session for the successful organisations. The 71 organisations will be in receipt of funding under SSNO, up until June 2019.

The Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection have engaged Pobal’s assistance in the specification and administration of a new activation programme for people with disabilities called the **Ability Programme**. This programme seeks to build on the learning and best practice from the EU funded DACT programme that concluded last year. This programme is fully exchequer funded, and is being designed as a multi annual programme. The programme aims to provide pre-activation supports for young people with disabilities (15-29 years of age) to improve their employability through a range of person-centred supports. Pobal’s role extends from programme specification to application and appraisal, contracting and monitoring and verification.

**Systems Developments**
Pobal continues to develop ICT solutions to enable and assist in the effective management of all funding programmes and core business processes. Our systems development strategy, vision, and associated procurement is closely aligned to the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER)’s ICT strategy.

- **Funding Programme Management System (HUB)**
Pobal’s Funding Programme Management System (HUB) continues to be the centre point for our cross programmatic data, business processing and reporting. In 2016, the platform was enhanced to further increase Pobal’s ICT capability and capacity, enabling the efficient roll out of many new funding programmes. Some notable recent enhancements to HUB include tighter integration with Revenue for eTax compliance and the automation of audit processes.
**Programmes Integration Project (PIP)**

PIP was launched in August 2014 and currently holds secure data on over 5,700 early years services, facilitates the management of over 19,900 yearly contracts and has processed over 564,509 child registrations since 2014 for a range of DCYA Funded Programmes including the ECCE programme.

Development efforts focused on the addition of new components and functionality to further support the early year’s programmes and related business processes. PIP supported the roll out of Better Start supports, the AIM (Access and Inclusion Model) and recent Early Years Capital & School Age Capital programmes. Other notable enhancements focused on the expansion of CCS (Community Childcare Subvention), the online service profile, enhanced payments processing and automated online contract activation.

PIP was also enhanced for the Department of Education and Skills which provides end to end functionality for their Early Years Education-Focused Inspection process.

Having one core shared record of early years services data is a huge asset for all stakeholders within the early years sector and will support the design and development of future programmes including the Affordable Childcare Scheme.

**On-Line Portals**

New online portal features and enhancements have been developed to support the Dormant Accounts Fund, Learner Fund, Comhairle na Óg and re-contracting for the Community Services Programme.

**Business Intelligence and Pobal Maps**

As Pobal’s centralised dataset grows and there is an increased focus on how we report and analyse this data. Pobal have a dedicated monitoring and reporting team and a number of reporting tools are now being used to effectively export, report and analyse this valuable data including SQL Server Reporting Services, Microsoft Power BI, Power View and Power Pivot.

Work continued on Pobal’s GIS software (Pobal Maps) and a new upgraded interface and a mobile friendly version of the application was launched in May 2016.

**Other system development projects**

**Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme (SICAP)**

Pobal, on behalf of the Department Rural and Community Development implemented a system (IRIS) to support and monitor the Social Inclusion Community Activation Programme. The system facilitates the management of annual plans and associated financial and monitoring processes. The system is accessible by all programme stakeholders such as Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs), the funding Department and Pobal. For SICAP 2018 – 2022 work has taken place to modify IRIS.
• **LEADER (Rural Development Programme 2014-2020)**
  Pobal has been supporting the Department of Rural and Community Development in the development of an ICT system to support the administration of LEADER funding (2014-2020). The system will support the management, implementation and monitoring of local development strategies, as well as the core work and administration costs of the Local Action Groups (LAGS). The system is being developed and rolled out on a phased basis. Phase 1 and 2 are now live. The requirements gathering for Phase 3 and associated development has taken place over 2017.

• **Senior Alerts Scheme (SAS)**
  Pobal successfully developed and implemented a new online system to support the end to end administration of the Senior Alerts Scheme. As of December 2017, 603 Local Groups have registered and over 21,231 individuals have benefited from the scheme.

**Change management and cost saving**

The key challenge for Pobal is to continue to remain true to our core values while keeping our cost base as reasonable as possible and continuously improving our service offer to our varied stakeholders.

In 2008 Pobal administered €346.9m in funding to beneficiaries and our administration fee was 5.68%. In 2016 we administered approximately €451.5m and our equivalent administration budget was 4.44%. Pobal’s overall administration budget is a composite of individual programme management fees negotiated annually as part of our service level agreements with our respective funders.

In late 2008, Pobal initiated a cost cutting programme to reflect our reduced administration budget. During this period, we reduced staff numbers and introduced cost saving measures that included pay cuts. More recently we implemented additional pay cuts for higher earners, increased working hours, reduced annual leave and introduced other related productivity measures aligned to those in the Haddington Road Agreement. Our grading and pay structures are aligned to Civil Service grading and pay structures and the company ensures that the salaries of all staff adhere to the recommended guidelines.
PROGRAMME APPENDIX

Further details on all programmes can be found on our website: www.pobal.ie

A. Early Years & Young People

Pobal provides a range of services and supports to and on behalf of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), across a range of early years and young people related programmes listed below.

Targeted Programmes:

The Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) Programme
CCS is a targeted Programme, subventing childcare costs for eligible parents, as a childcare funding support to low income and disadvantaged families. The CCS subvention amount reduces the cost of childcare and parents pay the balance of the cost of their child’s place. The programme opened to community childcare services was extended to private childcare services under Community Childcare Subvention Plus (CCSP).

- Universal Subsidy (CCSU): As part of its plan to make childcare more affordable, DCYA introduced a universal subvention payment from September 2017, the payment of which is facilitated through the CCSP childcare programme for those children aged between six months and three years.
- Community Childcare Subvention Resettlement (CSSR): This programme provides childcare support to Programme Refugees to support their resettlement and integration into Irish society;
- Community Childcare Subvention Resettlement (Transitional) (CSSR(T)): As part of the “Rebuilding Ireland – an Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness” the DCYA has provided access to free childcare for children of families experiencing homelessness.

Training & Employment Childcare Programme (TEC)
TEC provides access to subsidised childcare for the children of participants in qualifying employment training programmes. Pobal administers the funding by making payments and conducting compliance visits.

Early Childhood Care & Education Programme (ECCE)
ECCE provides early childhood care and education for children of pre-school age (over three and not more than 5 and a half years old). The State pays a capitation fee to participating playschools and daycare services that provide a pre-school service free of charge to all children within the qualifying age range. Pobal provides a range of services in respect of ECCE including contracting approved providers, administering child registrations, paying providers and on-site compliance checks. In August 2016 Pobal took over responsibility for processing payments to service providers on behalf of the DCYA.
Programme Supports Programme
Previously known as “non-contact time payments” to assist with non-contact costs associated with administering the operational funding schemes (CCS, TEC & ECCE).

Sustainability (CE Transition)
Sustainability funding made available to support providers whose viability is under threat.

Legacy Capital Programmes
Pobal continues to manage contractual commitments under the following programmes:-
  o National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP) 2006 to 2011
  o Equal Opportunities Childcare Programme (EOCP) 2000 to 2006

Learner Fund
In 2017 a bursary (of up to €750) was made available to early years practitioners who had completed a major award in Early Childhood Care and Education at Level 7, Level 8, or Level 9 qualification on the National Framework of Qualifications since the inception of the Learner Fund.

City & County Childcare Committees (CCCs)
There are 30 CCCs who operate as local agents of DCYA and support the delivery of early education and childcare programmes at a local level.

Voluntary Childcare Organisations (VCOs)
VCOs work at a national level to support their member early years services. Seven organisations received funding for approved work programmes supporting quality service development and national early education and childcare frameworks.

Better Start Quality Development Service
Better Start is a new national early years quality development support service for early years education and care providers. Pobal hosts the Better Start service on behalf of DCYA and provides a range of associated management and support services. Under this programme Pobal do not have a remit to disburse funding.

Access and Inclusion Model (AIM)
The Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) is a programme of supports designed to ensure that children with disabilities can access the ECCE Programme in mainstream pre-school settings. Primarily Pobal manage the application, appraisal and decision making for AIM Level 5 & 7.

Area Based Childhood Programme
The ABC programme targets additional investment in evidence-based early interventions to improve the long-term outcomes for children and families living in areas of disadvantage. DCYA and The Office of the Tánaiste, Atlantic Philanthropies (AP) and the Centre for Effective Services (CES) are among the stakeholders.
Comhairle na nÓg Development Fund

Comhairle na nÓg is a forum for input by young people into decision making on policies and the development of local services by statutory and voluntary organisations.

Youth Service Grant Scheme

Under this scheme funding for the support of voluntary youth work is made available on an annual basis to 31 national and major regional voluntary youth organisations.

Youth Café Programme 2012-2013

Capital funding was made available for fit-out, refurbishment works, building enhancement projects for the start-up of new Youth Cafés. A core function of a youth café is that it offers support to young people, ranging from practical support to advice through their participation in activities that are of interest to them and that are varied and on offer at times that suit their normal activities. Closure of the programme fund was reported to DCYA in 2017.

Affordable Childcare Scheme

The Affordable Childcare Scheme (ACS) will provide financial support for parents towards the cost of childcare. It will provide a system from which both universal and targeted subsidies can be provided towards the cost of childcare.

This new Scheme will replace the existing targeted childcare programmes with a single, streamlined and more user-friendly scheme, providing both universal and targeted childcare subsidies. Pobal are working closely with the DCYA on the development of the Affordable Childcare Scheme and will be responsible for the administration of the scheme once launched.

B. Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)

Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme, aims to tackle poverty, social exclusion and long-term unemployment through local engagement and partnership between disadvantaged individuals, community organisations and public sector agencies.

The first iteration of SICAP concluded in December 2017, with SICAP 2018-2022 commencing in January 2018. SICAP is managed locally by 33 Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) with support from Local Authorities. Programme actions are delivered by PIs across 51 Lots. The ESF Programme for Employability, Inclusion and Learning (PEIL) 2014-2020 is co-financing SICAP in the years 2018-2020 for €60million (at 50% reimbursement).

Pobal provides a range of tailored supports to each Local and Community Development Committee (LCDC) as well as support to the Programme Implementers in each local area.

Pobal’s role has included designing the programme framework based on learning from SICAP 2015 – 2017 and the outcomes of a national consultation process in early 2017 and providing ongoing programmatic and public procurement supports.
C. Community Services Programme

The Community Services Programme (CSP) is delivered by Pobal on behalf of the Department of Rural and Community Development. The Community Services Programme is designed to meet locally identified gaps in the provision of services to communities. The programme focuses on areas where community services are lacking. A core requirement of the programme is that service providers use a social enterprise model, whereby they generate non-public revenue, by charging fees for services delivered or through fundraising. The programme supports services which fit into one of three service areas:

- Community halls and facilities
- Services to local communities, especially to disadvantaged communities
- Community enterprises providing employment to marginalised groups e.g. members of the travelling community and people with disabilities.

Pobal’s role in the administration of the Programme ranges from management of the annual recontracting process, the management of twice yearly monitoring returns, intensive beneficiary engagement via the Development Coordinators, quarterly payment schedules and ad hoc supports/processes and audit.

D. Rural Social Scheme (RSS), Tús, & Gateway

- **RSS**
  The Rural Social Scheme (RSS) is sponsored by the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. The Scheme provides a supplementary income to eligible low income farmers and fisherpersons. This is achieved through the provision of part-time employment opportunities which provide services of benefit to rural communities. The Scheme is implemented at a local level by Local Development Companies and Urdaras na Gaeltachta. Pobal operates a payroll function for participants and supervisors, on behalf of the Department, and administers financial compliance checks and provides a help desk facility for the Implementing Bodies.

- **Tús**
  Tús is an Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection employment initiative for long-term unemployed people. Tús offers one year placements with community and voluntary organisations, co-ordinated and managed locally by Local Development Companies, Udaras na Gaeltachta and other implementing bodies. Tús also receives funding under the Youth Employment Initiative. It uses the same administrative systems and structures as the Rural Social Scheme, with Pobal’s also providing a data capture mechanism through the CRM system.

- **Gateway**
  Gateway is an employment activation initiative of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, launched in 2013 and managed through City / County Councils. Gateway provides quality and suitable working opportunities for people who are unemployed while at the same time are carrying out beneficial work within communities. Gateway placements are for a maximum period of 22 months. Pobal’s role is to provide payroll services for Gateway to City/County Councils. We also provide information systems that manage data about the programme, its participants and their work.
E. Dormant Accounts Fund
The Dormant Accounts Fund (DAF) programme came about as a result of the Dormant Accounts (Amendment) Act (2005). This allows for the use and disbursement of Dormant Accounts funding to tackle disadvantage. Funding is targeted at three specific areas:
1. Economic and Social Disadvantage
2. Educational Disadvantage
3. Supports for People with Disabilities

F. Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO)
The overall aim of SSNO is to provide multi-annual funding towards the core costs of national organisations in the community and voluntary sector to assist them to operate and fund core staff positions. SSNO has a primary focus on the provision of core funding to national organisations that demonstrate good governance and deliver services and supports that have a focus on one or more of the following: addressing poverty, social exclusion and promoting equality.

G. Better Start
Better Start is a national initiative established by DCYA to promote and enhance the quality of early childhood education and care (ECEC) for children from birth to six years, in Ireland. It provides a Quality Development Service to ECEC providers in implementing Síolta (the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education) and Aistear (The National Early Years Curriculum Framework) the Quality Development Service is one of a range of state funded supports aimed at enhancing the quality of early childhood education and care.
Under the Access and Inclusion Model (AIM) Better Start provides expert advice, mentoring and support to providers and practitioners from specialists in early years care and education for children with disabilities. www.betterstart.ie

H. Seniors Alert Scheme
The administration of the Senior Alerts Scheme transitioned to Pobal from the Department of Environment Community and Local Government during 2015. The objective of the Seniors Alert Scheme (SAS) is to encourage community support for vulnerable older people in our communities through the provision of personal monitored alarms to enable older persons, of limited means, to continue to live securely in their homes with confidence, independence and peace of mind.
Funding is available towards the purchase of equipment (i.e. personal alarm and pendant) by a registered organisation. Funding is made available by the Department of Rural and Community Development. The first year of the cost of monitoring by a registered monitoring provider is also provided free of charge under the scheme from 1st November 2017 when a range of changes to the programme were implemented.

The equipment is funded via Pobal and made available through community, voluntary and not-for-profit organisations registered with Pobal under the SAS.
I. LEADER Programme
Since its launch in 1991, LEADER has provided rural communities, across the EU, with the resources to enable local partners to actively engage and direct the local development of their area, through a community-led local development (CLLD). The Department of Rural and Community Development is the programme manager for LEADER. Pobal supports the Department in elements of the programme including managing the Local Development Strategy (LDS) selection process; technical appraisal of the annual progress report; monitoring of progress against the LDS; financial verification checks and the roll out of a dedicated ICT system for the management of the programme.

J. Ability
Pobal administers the Ability programme on behalf of the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection. Ability is a programme which aims to provide pre-activation supports for young people with disabilities (15-29 years of age) to improve their employability through a range of person-centred supports. There is a total of €10 million available for this programme over a three-year period 2018 to 2021. This funding includes co-financing allocated under Priority 2 of ESF PEIL 2014-2020. A call for applications opened in December 2017 and is due to close at end of January 2017.

K. Healthy Ireland Fund
Pobal administers one programme on behalf of the Department of Health. The Healthy Ireland Fund supports innovative, cross-sectoral evidence-based projects and initiatives that aid the implementation of key national policies in areas such as obesity, smoking, alcohol, physical activity and sexual health. In 2017 the Fund provided supports to Local Community Development Committees, Children and Young Persons Services Committees, Sport Ireland, The Local Government Management Agency and The Mayo Education Centre to progress eligible activities.

Further information is available at www.pobal.ie