

An Roinn Comhshaoil,  
Aeráide agus Cumarsáide  
Department of the Environment,  
Climate and Communications



26 February 2021

Mr. Jack Savage  
Secretariat  
Committee of Public Accounts  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2  
D02 A272

**Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (Vote 29)**  
**Ref: S000166 PAC33**

Dear Mr. Savage,

I refer to your letter dated 25 January following my appearance before the Public Accounts Committee on 22 January 2021 in relation to the Department's 2019 Appropriation Account.

The information requested in the aforementioned letter is set out below.

Should you require any clarification or additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Catherine McGinty in my Department, by email at [Catherine.McGinty@DECC.gov.ie](mailto:Catherine.McGinty@DECC.gov.ie) or by phone at (01) 6782423.

Yours sincerely,

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**Mark Griffin**  
**Secretary General**

## **Breakdown of expenditure on external services during the procurement of the NBP**

The NBP advisors provided external expertise and support during the NBP procurement process. The main advisors: Analysys Mason, KPMG, Mason Hayes & Curran and PwC provided advice at each stage of the procurement process and were also involved in detailed discussions with the bidders.

Analysys Mason provided technical guidance, expertise and advice in relation to the technical aspects of the NBP procurement process. In addition to technical advice and papers, Analysys Mason participated in meetings with bidders during the Competitive Dialogue and the Solution phases of the procurement process, where details of bidders proposed technical solutions were outlined.

KPMG assisted with the development of the NBP procurement process, as well as providing financial and commercial advice through the procurement process. In addition to the Funding Report, Ownership Report and Governance Report during the development of the Intervention Strategy, KPMG also produced the Single Bidder Assessment Methodology report and the Project Re-Appraisal Report. KPMG provided advice and assistance during the evaluation of bids at the Invitation to Submit Detailed Solution (ISDS) and Invitation to Submit Refined Detailed Solution (ISRDS) stages of the process. KPMG also provided specialist personnel such as the project manager and commercial advisors under a separate contract.

Mason Hayes & Curran (MHC) were the legal advisors throughout the NBP procurement process. In addition to providing detailed legal advice, MHC was also extensively involved in the drafting of the NBP contract and in negotiations with the Preferred Bidder's legal team. MHC was involved in discussions with bidder teams during the Competitive Dialogue phase, Invitation to Submit Detailed Solution (ISDS) phase and Invitation to Submit Refined Detailed Solution (ISRDS) phase. MHC was also involved extensively in the period leading to the successful conclusion of the contract with the Preferred Bidder.

PwC was involved extensively in the development of the Intervention Strategy and other key reports during the procurement process. One of the critical reports produced by PwC was the CBA report, which was regularly reviewed and updated throughout the procurement process. PwC also provided State Aid expertise and assistance throughout the State Aid application process and supported the NBP team during engagements with the European Commission.

The table below provides a breakdown of expenditure on external advisers over the relevant period.

Company Name	Expenditure € (including VAT)					
	Nature of Advisory service	2016	2017	2018	2019	Total
Achilles Procurement Services	Procurement	-	6,354	-	-	<b>6,354</b>
Analysys Mason	Technical	556,925	1,302,541	1,392,014	1,257,561	<b>4,509,041</b>
Deloitte Ireland LLP	Tax and VAT	5,412	16,236	52,767	48,124	<b>122,539</b>
Here & Now Business Intelligence	Communications	7,380	5,904	16,236	-	<b>29,520</b>
KPMG	Financial and procurement and specialist personnel	1,098,616	4,777,776	4,726,924	2,770,407	<b>13,373,723</b>
Independent contractor	Communications	-	4,305	-	-	<b>4,305</b>
Marsh Ireland Ltd.	Insurance	-	-	11,531	67,773	<b>79,304</b>
Mason Hayes & Curran	Legal	456,506	3,003,411	1,529,413	1,378,953	<b>6,368,283</b>
MON Legal Consulting	Legal	-	-	-	4,096	<b>4,096</b>
Independent contractor	Telecommunications regulatory advice	-	-	6,150	-	<b>6,150</b>
Prisa Consulting	Technical, commercial, economic, financial and procurement	11,070	-	-	-	<b>11,070</b>
PricewaterhouseCoopers	Economic and strategic advice	143,146	759,927	467,508	487,596	<b>1,858,177</b>
RPS Consulting Engineers	Environmental	27,312	43,190	30,965	29,420	<b>130,887</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>		<b>2,306,367</b>	<b>9,919,644</b>	<b>8,233,508</b>	<b>6,043,930</b>	<b>26,503,449</b>

## **Review process for the NBP procurement**

The procurement process was overseen by a Procurement Board, principally made up of independent experts. In addition, a Process Auditor was also in place for the duration of the procurement. His role was to oversee the NBP procurement process and to ensure that the process adhered to the appropriate guidelines and the procurement design.

Throughout the procurement process there was considerable scrutiny by the Oireachtas, including by relevant Committees, where evidence was heard from the Department and stakeholders on a number of occasions at different stages of the procurement process.

An extensive range of documentation related to the project including the procurement process and the contract award has been published by the department and is available at the following link <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/dcb962-documents-relating-to-nbp/>

## **RTÉ's implementation of Eversheds Sutherland Report**

In 2018, RTÉ engaged Eversheds Sutherland (ES) to conduct a review on a list of 433 freelancers / contactors providing services across the organisation. In their report, ES recommended:

- RTÉ should review and update the policy and process with regards to the engagement of freelancers
- RTÉ should develop clear guidelines as to when and how to engage a contractor or employee.
- RTÉ should carry out a more detailed review of the contractor population as prioritised. This referred to the 157 contractors highlighted as high or medium risk as having attributes akin to employment.

RTÉ has completed the examination of all freelance /contractual employment arrangements. This review entailed ES conducting face to face meetings with the business line managers to gather further information of the facts and circumstances pertaining to each contractor. Following the review, RTÉ engaged with each individual contractor as pertained to their own unique circumstances.

On the basis of the respective offers, each individual was given a month to decide to accept, or reject, the offer of employment as appropriate. An appeals process was also established, in consultation with the unions. The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media, who have responsibility for RTE since 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2020, have advised that RTÉ offered 81 contracts of employment, of which 78 were formally accepted.

RTÉ has also worked closely with KPMG regarding the tax position for all its contractor groups, and has maintained close co-operation with both the Revenue Commissioners and the Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection.

In accordance with the review recommendations, RTÉ has updated the relevant RTÉ policies and implemented the corresponding training and awareness for all managers within the organisation.

### Annual Expenditure and outputs on energy upgrade schemes since 2017

An estimate provision of €141 million was allocated in 2019 under Subhead C4 for sustainable energy programmes. This subhead provides grant funding and operational costs for a number of energy programmes administered through the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI). Overall expenditure on this subhead in 2019, which was supplemented by savings elsewhere in the Department, amounted to €151 million. The following table shows a breakdown of this expenditure.

Item	2019 Expenditure €000
Better Energy – Homes	25,738
Better Energy - Warmer Homes	40,610
Better Energy - Communities	20,977
Better Energy – Smart grid	73
Better Energy – Financing	824
Better Energy – Warmth & Wellbeing	8,438
Warmth & Wellbeing Consultancy	37
Energy Efficiency Obligations including IT Systems of Record	1,263
Deep Retrofit	6,183
Electric Vehicles	22,760
SME Energy Efficiency	2,614
Support Scheme for Renewable Heat	1,033
Sustainable Energy Zones	199
Renewable Energy Information Office	332
EU legal obligations/market surveillance	1,076
Public Sector Energy Efficiency	11,070
Industrial Engagement	2,942
Technical Support Unit	240
Solar PV	4,798
<b>Total</b>	<b>151,205</b>

Attached below is a table showing details of grant funding only and the related output per year for each of SEAI's energy upgrade schemes since 2017.

SEAI Scheme	2017		2018		2019		2020		Total 2017-2020	
	Expenditure €m	Output	Expenditure €m	Output	Expenditure €m	Output	Expenditure €m	Output	Expenditure €m	Output
Better Energy Homes	€17.50	14,618 Homes	€18.40	14,238 Homes	€24.00	18,531 Homes	€18.30	12,227 Homes	€78.20	59,614 Homes
Better Energy Warmer Homes	€22.60	6,555 Homes	€35.50	5,255 Homes	€39.80	3,142 Homes	€23.40	1,524 Homes	€121.30	16,476 Homes
Better Energy Warmth and Wellbeing	€6.50	360 Homes	€12.30	455 Homes	€8.40	340 Homes	€2.10	91 Homes	€29.30	1,246 Homes
Deep Retrofit	€0.90	18 Homes	€4.70	211 Homes	€6.00	114 Homes	€8.20	196 Homes	€19.80	539 Homes
Community Energy Grants	€22.70	1,965 Homes	€19.90	1,188 Homes	€20.50	696 Homes	€18.70	656 Homes 240 Non- Residential Buildings	€81.80	4,505 Homes 240 Non- Residential Buildings
Better Energy Finance	€0.20	62 Homes	€0.30	57 Homes	€0.80	130 Homes	€0.30	5 Homes	€1.60	254 Homes
Solar Pilot Scheme	Commenced 2018		€0.13	71 Homes	€4.50	1,827 Homes	€7.80	2,917 Homes	€12.43	4,815 Homes
Public Sector	€5.70	22 Public buildings	€12.60	69 Homes	€10.60	89 Public buildings	€9.60	90 Public buildings	€38.50	270 Public buildings
SME Grants	€0.07	102 SMEs	€1.40	266 SMEs	€1.10	227 SMEs	€0.00	0 SMEs	€2.57	595 SMEs
Large Industry Energy Network	€0.45	220 GWh	€0.60	187.5 GWh	€0.40	94.8 GWh	€0.50	121.8 GWh	€1.95	624 GWh
EXEED	€1.60	15 Beneficiaries	€1.60	30 Beneficiaries	€2.90	48 Beneficiaries	€3.20	59 Beneficiaries	€9.30	152 Beneficiaries
Support Scheme for Renewable Heat	Commenced 2020						€0.10	2 Beneficiaries	€0.10	2 Beneficiaries
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>€78.22</b>		<b>€107.43</b>		<b>€119.00</b>		<b>€92.10</b>		<b>€396.75</b>	

## **Guidance issued by the NCSC to the health sector**

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) has been engaged with the health sector for many years, both in terms of offering assistance with Advisories and Incident Response and, since the designation of a number of entities across the health sector as Operators of Essential Services (OES), has proactively engaged with stakeholders to increase the resilience of critical services.

The NCSC is taking a series of measures to deal with the operational challenges posed by the COVID-19 response process, and to help entities manage some of the risks posed by the response process. The NCSC is continuing to remind entities across the sector of the services that the NCSC offer, and is monitoring developments globally and on an EU basis so as to be in a position to react quickly to any incidents affecting health operators.

### Cyber Security Briefings

The NCSC has organised a number of sectoral briefings on cybersecurity for all sectors under its remit, including the health sector. The briefings provide OES with an updated briefing on the current cyber threat landscape as well as offering an opportunity for OES to share experiences and work together to ensure cybersecurity was to the fore as organizations adapted to the changed working environment.

A number of direct bilateral briefings were organized for health sector entities outlining the increased cyber risk, best practice & guidance, and reminding them of the services offered by the NCSC.

### Conference Calls with OES

The NCSC has organised a series of conference calls with all 67 OES to reinforce key messages and to explain the approach being taken in response to the emergency. These OES include the major critical care hospitals (the HSE 'Model 4 Hospitals') and the HSE itself.

### Alerts and Advisories Service

The NCSC has approximately 160 constituents, including Government Departments and Critical National Infrastructure, with whom it has been working for several years. NCSC communicates with these entities via an Alerts and Advisories Service; these are formal, standard documents issued by NCSC on foot of a serious vulnerability or recent cyber-attack and come with a colour-coded sharing protocol. The NCSC has published a number of COVID-19 specific advisories to constituents and these are updated on an ongoing basis. The NCSC has also, through the HSE, issued invitations to a large number of hospitals to join as constituents and the NCSC Twitter Account will also be used to share information on any ongoing incidents.

### Threat Intelligence

The NCSC is part of a formal EU CSIRT network (Computer Security Incident Response Team), and as such is part of the collective European cyber security response mechanism. One of the key tools available in this are Malware Information Sharing Platforms (or MISPs). These are secure mechanisms for sharing the technical details around cyber-attacks, and are used to rapidly disseminate information that can be used to defend IT systems against emerging attacks.

The NCSC has a number of these established with international partners and with critical infrastructure operators here, allowing these internationally sourced technical data to be deployed instantly to protect critical services (including by blocking threats).

The NCSC has also developed a new instance of MISP specifically for COVID-19 related threats, and is now offering this to all 67 Operators of Essential Services (OES) in the State. These OES are those essential services operators so designated by the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications pursuant to an EU Directive (the NIS Directive).

### Cyber Hygiene

The National Cyber Security Centre advises all users of ICT to take a series of measures around the resilience of their systems, and to report incidents to the NCSC. There are five key points suggested to improving cybersecurity.

### Cyber Assistance Scheme

This initiative involves a short term scheme to facilitate the rapid access by Healthcare providers to industry cyber security expertise in situations where they experience a serious cyber security incident. An incident could entail any form of cyber security incident that might impact the Healthcare providers' ability to deliver critical services.

While healthcare services in Ireland have a range of measures in place to prevent such incidents occurring here, the possibility cannot be ruled out, as evidenced by recent experiences elsewhere. The NCSC and Cyber Ireland has created a scheme to allow these healthcare providers to obtain rapid access to industry cyber security expertise for a short period, free of charge. Cyber Ireland is an IDA funded group, based in Cork Institute of Technology, founded to contribute to the ongoing development of the Cyber Security Sector in Ireland.

The scheme's assistance mechanisms would be triggered by the NCSC, on the request of the entity experiencing the incident and reporting the incident to the NCSC, and would be run with the assistance of Cyber Ireland. The scope extends to Hospitals, Laboratory facilities and Healthcare Organisations with responsibility for the management of COVID-19.

The NCSC Incident Response Handler will activate the scheme when they deem necessary, based on a number of criteria being met in an incident response. Upon activation of the Cyber Assistance Scheme, the NCSC Incident Response Handler may request assistance from a panel of approved Subject Matter Experts. The panel of experts shall be formed and coordinated by the NCSC with the assistance of Cyber Ireland.

The Subject Matter Expert, upon agreement, will undertake to provide assistance to the affected Healthcare provider. It is envisaged they will provide support in the management of the incident. The initial phases of a cyber security incident are often critical, and it is these phases that this scheme is intended to cover. On that basis, it is expected that the period of engagement by a volunteer will generally not exceed 48 hours, although circumstances may differ in each case.

Notwithstanding the assistance to be provided by the industry volunteer, responsibility for responding to and managing cyber security incidents remain the primary responsibility of individuals and entities

#### Information Sharing & Data Analysis

The NCSC works to receive, collate, and analyse data from cyber-attacks, and to devise and distribute mitigation measures to counter the target and effect of these cyber-attacks.

The NCSC acts as a locus for information sharing and coordinates with those targeted to apply these mitigation measures and plays a central role in protecting critical national infrastructure and to comply with EU requirements on cyber security capabilities, co-operation and reporting.

### **Note on the National Retrofit Scheme**

#### **National residential retrofit targets**

The 2019 Climate Action Plan commits Ireland to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in the residential sector from 6Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2017 to between 3-4Mt CO<sub>2</sub>e in 2030 and setting a trajectory towards net-zero carbon emissions by year 2050.

To achieve these emission reductions, the Climate Action Plan sets a target of upgrading 500,000 homes to a Building Energy Rating of B2/cost optimal by 2030, and installing 400,000 heat pumps to replace older, less efficient heating systems. These targets were confirmed in the Programme for Government and represent a very significant increase in both the volume and depth of retrofit activity in Ireland.

While the retrofit programme clearly offers a huge opportunity to create and retain jobs, move to the new green economy and achieve our climate goals, it also represents a major challenge in terms of stimulating demand and delivering the targeted levels of activity.

The existing National Development Plan makes an allocation of €3.7 billion for retrofit and heat pump installation. The Programme for Government commits to a funding allocation of €5 billion.

#### **National Retrofit Plan**

Details on Phase I of the retrofit plan were announced in October 2020. The focus is on a range of new and enhanced support schemes as well as the establishment of the National Retrofit Delivery Office in the SEAI.

€221.5 million in capital funding has been provided for SEAI residential and community retrofit programmes this year. This represents an 82% increase on the 2020 allocation and is the largest ever budget for the schemes. This allocation will kick-start the first phase of our retrofit programme.

Of this amount, €109 million has been provided to support lower income households to retrofit their homes and participate in the transition. This represents an increase of €47 million on the 2020 allocation for energy poverty schemes and means that almost half of the total residential and community retrofit budget will support people vulnerable to energy poverty. The funding will mean

that more households can receive free energy efficiency upgrades making their homes warmer, healthier and cheaper to run, in line with the Programme for Government.

The balance of the residential and community retrofit budget (€112.5m) will be spent on expanding existing SEAI grant schemes and introducing new initiatives and schemes in 2021. The new initiatives/schemes include:

- A B2 Bundle Scheme, which will facilitate deeper renovation of homes to BER B2, at scale, managed by one stop shops;
- A Heat Pump Ready Homes Campaign, which will use key data from the Building Energy Rating database to target homes that are suitable for the installation of heat pumps with grant incentives; and
- A Community Activation scheme focused on supporting Sustainable Energy Communities and small-scale, capacity-building projects, pilots and feasibility studies.

It is intended to align the delivery of the Phase 2 of the Retrofit Plan with the National Development Plan review this year.

### **Review of costs and benefits of the Eircode system**

The Department will undertake an interim Value for Money Review in 2021 that assesses the extent to which the existing commercial arrangements associated with Eircode have represented value for money since the commencement of commercial business operations, and to identify and, to the extent possible with reasonable accuracy, quantify all relevant benefits.

### **Public Awareness**

Since the launch of Eircodes in July 2015 the use of Eircodes, as part of an address, continues to grow and is used widely among the public, businesses and public sector. This can be seen by independent research and by the use of the free Eircode Finder website.

Independent research by Amárach in 2020 showed 93.3% of respondents were able to supply a correct and verified Eircode for their address, and 73% know their Eircode by memory. The survey was undertaken to determine, in year 7 of the Eircode program, that at least 80% of the general public knows the Eircode for their address, as part of the PMLH contract.

<b>Nationally representative face-to-face surveys to show the % of the public that know their Eircode.</b>	<b>2015 (at launch)</b>	<b>2017 (Year 4)</b>	<b>2020 (Year 7)</b>	<b>2023 (Year 10)</b>
Public Awareness targets	60%	70%	80%	90%
Results from research surveys conducted by Amárach Research.	89%	84%	93.3%	-

The Eircode Finder tool is a free to use website which allows members of the public and businesses to find Eircodes for addresses and to get directions to address locations using an Eircode Finder such as a SatNav. Since the launch in July 2015, there have been 82.9 million lookups on the Finder.

Eircode Finder Statistics	2016	2017	% Increase 2016 to 2017	2018	% Increase 2017 to 2018	2019	% Increase 2018 to 2019	2020	% Increase 2019 to 2020
Total no. of lookups	6,018,890	10,267,200	71%	15,440,000	50%	19,581,000	27%	27,892,000	42%
Average monthly lookups	501,574	855,600		1,286,667		1,631,750		2,324,000	

### Public Sector Implementation

Eircodes have also been integrated and used by the large public sector bodies including the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), the Department of Social Protection (DSP), the Department of Education and the Health Service Executive (HSE).

Shortly after the launch of Eircode, the National Ambulance Service (NAS) integrated Eircodes into their Computer Aided Dispatch system and encourage people who are seeking an emergency ambulance to have their Eircode available to pass it on to the call taker. The NAS continue to install their ambulances vehicles with Digital Mobile Data Systems that allows responding crews to have the call details sent to their Mobile Data Terminal (MDT) screens together with the Eircode and visual location data in map format to assist with ambulance arrival at the correct location. The MDT rollout of units installed in Ambulance vehicles is almost two thirds completed nationally.

Other notable integration of Eircodes has already been seen in online passport applications (Department of Foreign Affairs), national Census forms (Central Statistics Office), student grant applications (SUSI), property marking and Mobility Project (An Garda Síochána), the Journey Planner App (National Transport Authority), Waste Management (Sligo County Council), Customer Care Services (Waterford Councils), and the National Broadband Plan map (DECC).

HSE are incorporating Eircodes into a number of their key operational systems including Primary Care Reimbursement Service, Patient Administrative Systems and the Individual Health Identifier (IHI) system as part of the Governments eHealth strategy. You can also search the HSE Website map using your Eircode to check where your local health services can be accessed.

### Eircode Usage in Response to COVID 19

The Community Call is an initiative led by local authorities during COVID 19 to coordinate community activity and provide assistance to where it is needed across the country. Local authorities log Eircodes from people who call or email looking for assistance and from volunteers registering to help. Feedback from local authorities has been that the inclusion of Eircodes in their customer relationship systems for Community Call has made the work at the call centres much easier to register volunteers and get them directly to someone in need of help, especially in remote and rural areas.

The Covid-19 Data Hub, launched by the Department of Health, brings all available information on the spread of the virus together in Ireland into one place, including a breakdown and timeline of the virus spread by county. Members of the public can search the interactive map using Eircodes to find Covid 19 cases in any Electoral area.

Social distancing has increased the demand on the delivery of goods and services. To assist with this effort Eircode increased the number of daily lookups during this time from 15 to 50 per day.

The 10 month total for March to December 2020 was 24.3m and the 10 month total for the same period in 2019 was 16.6m. This is a 46% increase reflecting the increased usage of the Finder since COVID 19.

Month	Number of Finder Lookups	% increase on same month previous year
March 2019	1,476,000	32%
March 2020	1,949,000	
April 2019	1,481,000	55%
April 2020	2,295,000	
May 2019	1,580,000	45%
May 2020	2,285,000	
June 2019	1,489,000	54%
June 2020	2,296,000	
July 2019	1,629,000	38%
July 2020	2,250,000	
August 2019	1,658,000	26%
August 2020	2,095,000	
Sept 2019	1,713,000	38%
Sept 2020	2,356,000	
October 2019	1,807,000	52%
October 2020	2,750,000	
Nov 2019	1,947,000	60%
Nov 2020	3,118,000	
Dec 2019	1,844,000	57%
Dec 2020	2,904,000	

### **Eircodes Commercial Uptake**

There are 1531 (end December 2020, 19% increase on December 2019) business organisations and State Agencies who are licencing Eircodes within their business systems and operations across a wide spectrum of sectors, including logistics/deliveries, utilities, hotel, retail, telecommunications, Insurance, financial, fast food deliveries, Service Engineers and Property Management. These organisations have incorporated the Eircode into their business services, and this is growing all the

time with new customers. There are many more businesses using the free Eircode Finder in their day-to-day operations.

The six largest international Sat Nav providers have all integrated Eircodes within their products i.e. Google Maps, Microsoft (Bing/Nokia Maps), TomTom, HERE Navigation, Garmin and Apple. This enables members of the public and businesses to get directions and accurately locate addresses, particularly in rural areas

Capita have licensed 39 approved Eircode Providers (end December 2020) who resell Eircode database and products incorporating Eircodes. Many of these Eircode Providers are SME's developing Eircode applications for use by businesses across a wide spectrum of business categories.

**Commercial organisations up-take of Eircode licences - Stats sourced from Capita's annual reports.**

Commercial Bodies	2016	2017	% increase 2016 to 2017	2018	% increase 2017 to 2018	2019	% increase 2018 to 2019	2020	% increase 2019 to 2020
Business Users (licenced users)	596	910	53%	1180	30%	1284	9%	1531	19%

**The €8.6 million spent by EirGrid under 'Selling and Advertising' in 2019**

EirGrid is a commercial state company charged with the implementation of Government energy policy and ensuring a secure supply of electricity via the development of the Irish electricity transmission system. This involves the maintenance, improvement and technological upgrade of the network.

The Commission for the Regulation of Utilities' (CRU) report "*Consultancy support for Electricity Revenue Controls (2016-2025) – Price Review 4 and 5 TSO and TAO Historic Opex and Capex July 2020*" provides a breakdown of the €8.6m costs reported under the 'selling and advertising' category over the five years from 2016 – 2020 under Price Review4 (PR4) as shown in the table below.

PR4 Outturn					
2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
€1.4m	€1.6m	€1.5m	€2.3m	€1.8m	€8.6m

EirGrid is accountable to the independent regulator for the sector, the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU), for all such expenditure. The CRU engages in detailed scrutiny of EirGrid's revenues

and publicly consults on its proposals. This ensures that there is transparency, public engagement and accountability in all revenues provided to EirGrid through the regulatory process.

The 'Selling and Advertising' category for recording costs incurred by Eirgrid includes community engagement measures, expenditure on publications, events including the Ploughing Championships, the annual EirGrid industry conference.

CRU engaged extensively with EirGrid in determining that the costs that it incurred in the 2016-20 period, were efficiently incurred. The overall expenditure for PR4 was deemed acceptable.

Engagement by EirGrid provides stakeholders with the information they need to participate and helps EirGrid understand their concerns. It also provides an opportunity for EirGrid to explain to those affected how and when they can have input to projects.

### **Potential future use of Lough Ree and Shannonbridge Power Plants**

The first progress report of the Just Transition Commissioner, Mr. Kieran Mulvey, published on 22 May 2020, recommended that a study be undertaken in relation to the future potential of the ESB-owned power stations at both Lanesborough (Lough Ree Power) and Shannonbridge (West Offaly Power) for the establishment of a dedicated Energy Hub in the Midlands. This was subsequently included as a commitment in the Programme for Government.

A feasibility study into options for the future use of the existing infrastructure at the West Offaly and Lough Ree sites has been underway over the last number of months.

This work is being overseen by a steering group chaired by the ESB, and includes representatives of the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, the Just Transition Commissioner, and relevant Local Authorities. The work of this group is expected to conclude shortly.

The 2002 grants of planning stated that permission for the two sites would expire on 31 December 2020, and power generation operations at both plants has now ended. Any other use for the sites is subject to the appropriate planning and environmental licencing processes. The ESB has an obligation under the 2002 planning permission to remediate the existing sites before the end of 2022.

ESB has extensive ongoing operations in the region, which include ESB Networks depots in Athlone, Ballinasloe, Longford, Mullingar, Portlaoise, Roscommon and Tullamore with more than 400 staff working from these locations and a National Training Centre in Portlaoise has 43 staff providing training to 280 apprentices. The Centre is also used to support the technical and development training needs for staff across ESB.

ESB also owns and operates several renewable energy windfarms across the Midlands. Each of which contributes significant revenues in Local Authority rates and provides appropriate community gain funds.

## **TV Licence compliance**

The vast majority of people pay their TV licence fee. The level of compliance has increased in recent years and the current rate of evasion is 12.6% which is down 2.4% from 2016 levels. It is estimated that this level of evasion equates to a loss of up to €40 million per annum to public service broadcasting.

COVID-19 impacted TV Licence sales in 2020 as TV Licence Inspections were suspended in line with public health guidelines. There were 961,277 TV Licences sold in 2020, which was down 6.3% on 2019 levels and 6.7% below the 2020 target.

An Post continues to act as collection agent in accordance with Section 145 of the Broadcasting Act 2009. An Post are paid commission on a sliding scale for the number of licences sold and are incentivised to increase the level of sales. A Service Level agreement is in place with An Post in respect of their role as collection agent.

An Post have spent a considerable amount of time and resources in dealing with this issue and have implemented a number of measures to reduce evasion rates including:

- TV Licence Inspectors attendance times have been changed to allow Inspectors to make visits later in the evening and on Saturdays when people are more likely to be at home.
- Inspection areas have been re-assigned as certain areas have grown rapidly over the years. The new inspection areas should ensure that the work load is more evenly distributed. Some of the administrative work has also been centralised to allow more time for inspections.
- An Post and RTÉ have worked on a marketing campaign that seeks to ensure both new and repeat sales.

In terms of enforcement, An Post concentrates its initial efforts on getting people to buy the licence when due and by following up with a series of reminder notices and inspector visits. Prosecution is a matter for the Courts Service and in 2019 (latest available data), 14,015 summons were applied for and 6,068 cases were brought to court for non-payment of TV licences.

Recommendations on a sustainable funding model for the next decade will be made by the Future of Media Commission. The terms of reference and membership of this Commission were agreed by Government in September 2020. The Commission is chaired by Professor Brian MacCraith, former President of Dublin City University, and also include experts in public service media, independent journalism, social media, new technology platforms, media economics, culture, language, creative content, governance and international best practice.

The Commission has held a public consultation and is engaging in Stakeholder consultation and is expected to Report to An Taoiseach and Minister Catherine Martin by end July this year. There will be no change to the existing funding model pending the completion of the Commission's work.

## Breakdown of Environment Fund expenditure in 2019

Category	Programme / Project	2019 Expenditure €
Environmental Protection Agency	Environmental Protection Agency – Administration Costs	5,000,000
Enforcement initiatives	Enforcement Initiatives	
	Local Authority Enforcement Measures Scheme	7,604,561
	Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authorities	1,038,981
	Other Enforcement Initiatives	177,046
	Anti-Dumping Initiative	2,900,675
	Regional Waste Management Offices	109,751
Contributions to national and international bodies	Subscriptions to International Organisations- Environmental Radiation	1,276,486
	Subscriptions to International Meteorological Organisations	1,376,896
Built and Natural Heritage Projects	National Parks and Wildlife	
	Turf Compensation	3,024,162
	Biodiversity Unit	56,560
	Peatlands Issues	200,036
Waste prevention and national market development programme	Waste Policy Consultancies	30,622
	National Waste Prevention Programme	2,205,083
	National Strategy on Biodegradable Waste	80,914
	Awareness Campaign	351,160
Office of Environmental Enforcement	Office of Environmental Enforcement	2,000,000
Environmental awareness	Grant Assistance	
	Irish Environmental Network (EENGO)	1,060,000
	Local Agenda 21 Partnership Fund	513,414
	European Environment Bureau	5,000
	Young Environment Awards	50,000
	Green Awards	7,500
	Advertising	5,847
	Green Schools	210,000
	Aarhus Awareness	7,481
Bioeconomy	3,000	
Landfill closure and after care	Kilconnell landfill	2,802,125
Anti-litter initiatives	Local authority anti-litter awareness grants	859,739
	National Spring Clean (An Taisce)	225,000
	National Litter Pollution Monitoring System	58,886
	Irish Businesses against Litter	40,000

Category	Programme / Project	2019 Expenditure €
Regional waste management planning	Regional Waste Management Planning Offices	400,000
	Hazardous Waste One Day Collections - Households & Small Businesses	50,000
Environmental levy collection costs	Revenue charges for the collection of Environment Levies	404,608
Pollution control air/climate	Air Quality/Noise	116,244
	Climate Change	187,392
	Irish Forum on Natural Capital	35,000
	Climate Action Regional Offices	1,639,119
Other	Producer Responsibility Review	38,109
	Waste Capacity Contingency	163,335
	Supporting Civic Amenity Sites to Implement National Policy on Household Waste	70,394
	Circular Economy	120,000
	Food Waste Prevention Programme	15,000
	Sustainability Initiatives	2,050
	Bioeconomy/Climate Action LIFE Project	310,000
	Innovation Fund NCP Activity	1,440
	Sustainable Development Goals Initiatives	134,958
	National Economic and Social Council (NESC)	67,971
	Bank Charges	1,923
<b>TOTAL EXPENDITURE</b>		<b>37,038,466</b>

### **The use of temporary CCTV cameras to reduce illegal dumping**

Ireland's Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy, published in September 2020, commits Government to implementing a range of measures to tackle the problem of illegal dumping. One of the commitments contained in the Action Plan states that "all waste enforcement legislation will be "data proofed" to ensure that all available and emerging technologies can be fully utilised in a manner which is GDPR compliant."

In September 2020, the Data Protection Commissioner wrote to the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications concerning data protection issues with the use of CCTV cameras for litter and waste enforcement purposes.

It is the view of the Data Protection Commission (DPC) that, although the Litter Pollution Act and the Waste Management Act provide Councils with powers to prevent, investigate, detect and prosecute littering and dumping offences, the Acts do not provide for processing of images of members of the public using CCTV footage. This advice is being considered by the Department.

The DPC is currently engaging with a City and County Managers Association (CCMA) on the practical issues raised by the DPC.

The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications is working on the draft heads of a Circular Economy Bill, with a view to underpinning measures promoting the development of a circular economy. It is considered that relevant output from the CCMA/DPC discussions and/or the commitment in the Waste Action Plan could be introduced in the Bill. This could help to ensure that the processing of personal data may be carried out by local authorities tasked with enforcing litter and waste law, in order to protect our environment from the scourge of illegal dumping, while at the same time respecting the privacy rights of citizens.

Other commitments in the Waste Action Plan to target illegal dumpers include:

- The development of an illegal dumping sites action plan;
- The introduction of further Fixed Penalty Notices;
- The development of an anti-dumping toolkit to assist local authorities in targeting illegal dumpers; and
- The further roll out of the National Anti-Dumping Initiative

Since 2015, local authorities have been assisted by three waste enforcement regional lead authorities, WERLAs, covering the southern, eastern and midlands, and Connacht-Ulster regions. The WERLA structure helps to facilitate a co-ordinated approach to waste enforcement. This is done by setting common priorities and objectives for waste enforcement and ensuring consistent enforcement of waste legislation while still leaving local authority personnel as first responders on the ground. Last year, the Department provided €1.1 million to support WERLA office work.

Also in 2020, €7.6 million was allocated by the Department to local authorities under the annual local authority waste enforcement measures grant scheme. This supports the recruitment and retention of more than 150 local authority waste enforcement personnel.

Some €3 million was allocated to local authorities in support of the 2020 anti-dumping initiative. A sum of €1 million of this allocation was ring-fenced to combat illegal dumping activities arising from the Covid-19 crisis. Anti-dumping initiative funding supported in excess of 300 projects nationwide in 2020. Since the introduction of the anti-dumping initiative in 2017, total funding of €9.3 million has been provided in support of more than 1,000 projects.

Department officials will liaise with enforcement staff in the WERLAs, local authorities and other agencies with a view to obtaining information on 2020 out-turns and indicative trends. This information will help to decide on priorities for 2021 funding and enforcement activities.

In order to provide for a more coordinated and strategic approach to dealing with waste crime, multi-agency forums have been established in all Garda Regions. These are facilitating more Garda led multi-agency operations and have resulted in the cessation of very significant illegal waste activities with corresponding environmental benefits on identified sites across the country.

Penalties for illegal dumping are significant. Persons who are found to be responsible for the unauthorised disposal of waste are liable to a maximum fine of €5,000 on summary conviction and/or imprisonment for up to 12 months, and to a maximum fine of €15 million on conviction on indictment and/or imprisonment for up to 10 years. The upcoming Circular Economy Bill may also consider further changes to Fixed Penalty Notices.