Údarás na Gaeltachta

Brian Stanley T.D.
Cathaoirleach
An Coiste um Chuntais Phoiblí
Teach Laighean
Baile Átha Cliath 2

28 Meán Fómhair 2021

Ref: S0470 PAC33

A Chathaoirligh, a chara,

I refer to the letter from the Clerk of the Public Accounts Committee, dated 14 September 2021, in relation to the disclosure made in the statement on internal control of the organisation's financial statements for 2019. This disclosure concerned weaknesses identified in the management and supervision of a capital project as well as measures taken to improve the control systems.

I now wish to give an account to the Committee that addresses the issues raised, namely:

1. the specific building requirements that gave rise to a substantial increase in the building budget and
2. the arrangements that are in place to address the weaknesses identified in the management of capital projects and to ensure compliance with public procurement and the Capital Works Management Framework.

I wish to confirm from the outset that Údarás na Gaeltachta is committed to maintaining the highest standards in the administration and management of capital expenditure. Since its establishment in 1980, the property portfolio has been a valuable resource for attracting and sustaining businesses in the

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Gaeltacht. Údarás has years of experience in delivering complex construction projects within budget and on time. The weaknesses identified in relation to the management of this particular project is a source of great disappointment to us as an organisation. This implementation of this project is not representative of how Údarás na Gaeltachta generally manages projects, and it is not in accordance with the values we hold.

As indicated in the attached report, this project was characterised by challenging and exceptional circumstances. Firstly, the project was to be located in an old large building built in the 1970s, which had remained empty for a number of years, and was in a state of disrepair. The poor condition of the building necessitated additional unexpected works to be undertaken during the project. Additionally, there was an urgency to have the building completed by a specific date to allow the company to meet customer orders.

It should be noted that the most significant part of the additional budget related to specific works sought by the company, to be reimbursed by them. The scope of these works was not clear to us at the outset, and hence we failed to properly identify, capture and report them. However, a legal agreement is in place with the company in relation to the reimbursement of the expenditure related to the specific works they requested.

An tÚdarás relied to a large extent on external consultants to manage the work on its behalf in progressing this project. It is clear that the supervision and reporting that might be expected from the consultants or from Údarás staff, particularly the reporting to the Board, was not adequate and satisfactory at critical junctures in this particular project, and we recognise that. To this end, the report outlines a range of actions we have taken to address the weaknesses identified during this project. These actions strengthen the existing practices that were already in place and mitigate the risk that the failures identified in this project may occur again.

Despite the significant increase in the project budget, the expenditure made has increased the value of the building owned by An tÚdarás. COVID-19 had a significant impact on the completion of the construction works and

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identified a number of flaws in certain aspects of the work completed. Údarás commissioned an independent assessment of the value of the works completed to confirm that there was no loss to the Exchequer. This much was confirmed. At this time, €2.8m has been spent on the building and we expect the final expenditure to be well below the total budget approved.

We can report that the company based in the building is operating successfully and providing full-time employment for 34 people. This number is well above the initial employment target of 20 full-time jobs for the project. The company is taking an innovative approach in the circular economy and has recently received funding from a variety of funds targeted at this sector and the green sector. Despite all the difficulties encountered in this project, we are confident that the company has a bright future and that the community and the State will benefit from the investment made.

I hope that the information provided in the report is helpful in providing the Committee with a comprehensive overview of the circumstances that led to an increase in the project budget and the remedial actions we have taken.

Is mise, le meas,

Mícheál Ó hÉanaigh

Mícheál Ó hÉanaigh
Príomhfheidhmeannach

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Tagraím den litir ó Chléireach an Choiste um Chuntais Phoiblí, dár dáta 14 Meán Fómhair 2021, ar an ábhar a bhain leis an nochtadh a bhí déanta sa ráiteas um rialú inmheánach de chuid ráitis airgeadais na heagraíochta don bhliain 2019. Bhain an nochtadh sin le laigí a aithníodh i mbainistiú agus i maoirseacht togra caipitil mar aon le bearta a glacadh chun na córais rialaithe a fheabhsú.

Is mian liom anois tuairisc a chur faoi bhráid an Choiste a fhreagraíonn don iarratas go dtabharfaí cuntas ar:

1. na riachtanais sainiúla tógála a d'fhág gur tháinig méadú suntasach ar an mbuiséad tógála agus
2. na socruithe atá in áit chun aghaidh a thabhairt ar na laigí a aithníodh i dtaca le bainistiú tograí caipitil chun a chinntiú go bhfuiltear géilliúil do riachtanais soláthar poiblí agus an Creat Bainistíochta Oibreacha Caipitil.

Ba mhaith liom a dheimhniú ón tús go bhfuil Údarás na Gaeltachta tiomanta go gcloífí leis na caighdeáin is airde ó thaobh riaradh agus bainistiú a dhéanamh ar chaiteachas caipitil. Ó bunaíodh an tÚdarás in 1980, tá an punann maoine ina acmhainn luachmhar chun gnóthaí a mhealladh agus a choinneáil sa Ghaeltacht. Tá taithí na mblianta ag an Údarás i seachadadh tograí tógála casta laistigh de bhuiséad agus in am. Is údar díomá dúinn

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mar eagraíocht na laigí a bhain le bainistiú an togra áirithe atá faoi chaibidil. Ní léiriú é an cás seo ar an mbealach gur iondúil go ndéanann Údarás na Gaeltachta tograí a bhainistiú, agus níl sé ionadaíoch ar na luachanna a chuireann muid romhainn mar eagraíocht.

Mar atá léirithe sa tuairisc, bhain cúinsí dúshlánacha agus eisceachtúla leis an togra seo. Ar an gcéad dul síos, bhí an togra le lonnú i sean-fhoirgneamh mór a tógadh sna 1970idí, a bhí fágtha folamh le roinnt blianta, agus a bhí i ndrochstaid. D'fhág drochriocht an fhoirgnimh go mba ghá tabhairt faoi oibreacha breise gan choinne le linn an togra. Sa bhreis ar sin ar fad, bhain práinn leis an bhfoirgneamh a bheith críochnaithe faoi dháta sonrach ionas go bhféadfadh an cliant chomhlacht freastal ar orduithe ó chustaiméir dá gcuid.

Ba chóir a nótáil gur bhain an chuid is mó den bhuiséad breise le hoibreacha sainiúla a lorg an comhlacht, agus a bheidh dhá aisíoc acu. Ní raibh scóip na n-oibreacha sin soiléir dúinn ag an tús, agus theip orainn iad a aithint, a chur san áireamh agus a thuairisciú mar is ceart. An méid sin ráite, tá comhaontú dlíthiúil déanta leis an gcomhlacht a fhágann go mbeidh siad ag déanamh aisíoc ar an gcaiteachas a bhain leis na hoibreacha sainiúla a lorg siad.

I gcur i bhfeidhm an togra seo, bhí an tÚdarás ag brath cuid mhaith ar chomhlacht seachtrach chun an obair a bhainistiú ar a shon. Tá sé soiléir nach raibh an mhaoirseacht agus an tuairisciú a bheifí ag súil leis ón gcomhlacht comhairleoireachta ná ó fhoireann an Údaráis, tuairisciú chuig an mBord ach go háirithe, dóthanach ná sásúil ag pointí criticiúla i saolré an tionscadail seo, agus aithníonn muid sin. Chuige sin, tá cuntas tugtha sa tuairisc ar réimse gníomhartha atá glactha againn chun aghaidh a thabhairt ar na laigí a aithníodh mar thoradh ar an tionscadal seo. Neartaíonn na gníomhartha sin na cleachtais a bhí in áit cheana féin agus maolaíonn siad an riosca go dtarlóidh na teipeanna a léiríodh sa tionscadal seo.

In ainneoin an méadú suntasach a tháinig ar bhuiséad an tionscadail, tá an caiteachas a rinneadh tar éis cur le luach an fhoirgnimh atá in úinéireacht

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an Údaráis. Bhí tionchar nach beag ag COVID-19 ar chríochnú na n-oibreacha tógála agus aithníodh go raibh roinnt lochtanna ag baint le gnéithe áirithe den obair a bhí déanta. Rinne an tÚdarás measúnú neamhspleách ar luach na n-oibreacha a cuireadh i gcrích chun go bhféadfaí a dhearbhú nach raibh aon chaillteanas ann don Státchiste. Deimhníodh gur mar sin atá. Ag an tráth seo, tá €2.8m caite ar an bhfoirgneamh agus táimid ag tuar go mbeidh an caiteachas deiridh go maith faoi bhun an bhuiséid iomlán a ceadaíodh.

Is féidir linn a thuairisciú go bhfuil ag éirí go maith leis an gcomhlacht atá lonnaithe sa bhfoirgneamh agus iad ag cur fostaíocht lánaimseartha ar fáil do 34 duine. Tá an líon seo go maith os cionn an sprioc fostaíochta de 20 post lánaimseartha a bhí luaite leis an togra ag an tús. Tá cur chuige nuálaíoch á ghlacadh ag an gcomhlacht sa gheilleagar ciorclach agus maoiniú faighte acu le gairid ó chistí éagsúla atá dírithe ar an earnáil sin agus ar an earnáil ghlas. In ainneoin na ndeacrachtaí ar fad a bhain leis an togra seo, táimid dóchasach go bhfuil todhchaí maith i ndán don chomhlacht agus go mbeidh buntáiste don phobal agus don Stát le feiceáil ar an infheistíocht a rinneadh.

Tá súil agam go gcuidíonn an t-eolas atá tugtha sa tuairisc le léargas cuimsitheach a thabhairt don Choiste ar na cúinsí ba chionnsiocair leis an méadú a tháinig ar bhuiséad an togra seo agus ar na gníomhartha chun feabhais atá glactha againn.

Is mise, le meas,

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Details of additional spending on the renovation of an Údarás na Gaeltachta owned property located in Baile Ghib, Co. Meath

Background

Údarás na Gaeltachta is the regional authority responsible for the economic, social and cultural development of the Gaeltacht. The overall objective of Údarás na Gaeltachta is to ensure that Irish remains the main communal language of the Gaeltacht and is passed on to future generations. The authority achieves this objective by funding and fostering a wide range of enterprise development and job creation initiatives and by supporting strategic language, cultural and community-based activities.

Context - Property Portfolio

Údarás na Gaeltachta has an extensive property portfolio consisting of approximately 500 office units and factories located in the seven Gaeltacht regions. The property portfolio forms a cornerstone of the organisation's enterprise offering in attracting, stimulating and supporting economic, industrial and employment activity within the Gaeltacht. Údarás supported 7,844 fulltime jobs at the end of 2019, which fell to 7,363 at the end of 2020 due to the impact of COVID-19.

It should be noted that much of the property portfolio was built in the 1970s and 1980s and as a result, is in need of significant investment in order to comply with standards expected today. The table below outlines the capital allocation received by Údarás na Gaeltachta from the exchequer for the period 2019 to 2021. This allocation is used to support both investment in client companies (grant-aid and other supports) and the organisation's building programme. Approximately 40% - 60% of the allocation is used to directly support the capital building programme.

	2019	2020*	2021
Total Capital Funding	€9.70m	€10.00m	€14.40m
- Building Programme	€4.00m	€4.80m	€8.00m
- Industry Supports	€5.70m	€5.20m	€6.40m

**Once-off allocation under the Stimulus Programme is not included*

The property portfolio owned by Údarás na Gaeltachta is one of its biggest assets in attracting industry to the Gaeltacht. However, given its age profile, it can also act as a significant drain on our resources. Údarás generates rental income of approximately €4m per annum from its property portfolio. This income supports the maintenance and upkeep of its building portfolio. Údarás recognises the need to modernise its building portfolio and reduce, thereby, the burden of the ongoing maintenance costs, ensuring that buildings are of an acceptable standard for occupation by our client companies. Notwithstanding the welcome increase in the 2021 capital budget, significant investment is required to meet that objective and must be placed in the context of a capital budget in excess of €21m available in 2009.

Over the last number of years, Údarás has striven to repurpose and retrofit its building stock to meet the demands of the current business environment, as well as making them more environmentally efficient. Údarás has been successful in sourcing additional funding to support its efforts to transform a number of its buildings into digital hubs. This additional funding has supplemented the capital allocation received from the exchequer and has resulted in the creation of a network of 31 digital hubs, 'gteic – Gréasán Digiteach na Gaeltachta'. However, the availability of sufficient funds to meet the demands of upgrading and maintaining the current building stock, along with undertaking new builds, remains an ongoing challenge.

Project in Baile Ghib, Co. Meath

In 2017, Údarás received an expression of interest from a company wishing to set up a business in the Baile Ghib Gaeltacht in Co. Meath. The business plan submitted by the company was based on creating sustainable and innovative recycling solutions for the industrial plastic industry. The company planned to recycle and repurpose industrial offcut filament and fibre material from polyethylene terephthalate (PET) manufacturing facilities in order to make PET pellets/chips.

Following a full business case assessment of the proposal by Údarás na Gaeltachta's executives, the Board approved a support package in February 2018 that included a major refurbishment and redevelopment of a 4,127 square metre Údarás-owned factory building in Baile Ghib. The factory, one of the oldest in our portfolio, was originally built in 1970s and had been vacant since 2015 following the departure of the previous tenant. The building was in a state of significant disrepair.

An allocation of €1.2m was approved by the Board of Údarás na Gaeltachta for the upgrade of the building to bring it to the advance factory stage. An external integrated design team was appointed by Údarás na Gaeltachta to oversee and manage the project on its behalf.

Additional Expenditure

The scope of the refurbishment work was initially restricted to shell and core upgrades to bring the factory building at Baile Ghib to advance factory standard, prior to being made available for lease to a new tenant. The additional budget required in excess of the original €1.2m approved by the Board arose from two distinct factors; (i) unanticipated costs that arose as the project progressed and (ii) cost arising from specific client requirements.

i. Unanticipated Project Costs - €0.6m

The original budget for the project included what was a relatively small allowance to cover works on the roof. As the building works progressed, a decision to alter the location of a large piece of machinery, to facilitate an improved workflow in the factory, necessitated a design change. The new location was in a section of the factory where the roof condition was significantly worse than had been initially thought. To complicate matters, the roof contained asbestos which added further to the costs. Furthermore, planned demolitions of internal walls resulted in unexpected damage to other areas of the fragile roof structure. Severe rainstorms in August 2019 (which caused widespread flooding and damage) caused the roof to leak badly onto the production equipment and electrical equipment, making repair an urgent necessity. The cost associated with this additional work, including the proper treatment of an asbestos roof, was close to €0.25m.

In addition to the roofing works, substantial costs were incurred due to the requirement to upgrade the electricity supply to meet the needs of the equipment used by the company. An application was submitted to the ESB and to the local authority to build a new substation and to install a new transformer. Extensive discussions were held with ESB, and a capital contribution was paid to ESB in 2018. However, owing to a delay in progressing and effectively managing these works and the company having to commence operations to meet customer orders, generators were required for a number of weeks. This resulted in additional costs of €0.35m.

ii. Client Requirements (up to a maximum of €1.7m)

The initial budget of €1.2m allocated to this project was to cover the cost of bringing the building to advance factory stage. It transpired that the client had additional requirements to cater for the type of activity being undertaken. These requirements were not adequately identified at the planning stage of the project, however. The works in question, requested by the client, related to specific mechanical and electrical works, and to civil engineering works outside the building.

Údarás agreed to include these client-specific requirements in the buildings works that had commenced. This was done on the basis that the company would repay the cost of the works, with interest, by way of additional fees to be repaid over a 20-year period. It is accepted practise for client-specific requirements to be incorporated into the overall project scope and recouped with interest from a client company over a defined period of time

The client-specific expenditure budget for the project in Baile Ghib was initially estimated at up to a maximum of €1.7m, subject to an independent valuation once the works were completed. The independent valuation, finalised in 2021, valued the client specific requirements at less than €1m, with an associated reduction in the total spend.

It is accepted that these client-specific requirements should have been accurately identified during the project scoping phase. At that early stage, it was assumed that the client would finance any such requirements. Subsequently the company requested Údarás to bear the upfront cost of these works which would be recouped, with interest, over a 20-year period. Údarás agreed to this request in accordance with the normal practice of assisting companies to undertake special works that would add value to the leased property. A legal agreement was signed by both parties to underpin the arrangement.

Project Implementation

An external integrated design team was appointed to manage the building project on behalf of Údarás na Gaeltachta. As previously outlined, the increase in the project budget can be attributed to unanticipated costs that arose during the project and client-specific requirements. However, the implementation of the project highlighted other areas of project governance that required attention and improvement, most notably:

i. Project Planning, Management and Oversight

The outsourcing of project management responsibilities is not uncommon for medium to large building projects due to a lack of staff in the Property Division of Údarás na Gaeltachta. In such instances, designated staff, at an appropriate grade commensurate with project scale, within the property division are assigned to work with the appointed consultants to plan, manage and implement the various projects.

It is apparent that the initial project scoping conducted was insufficient and did not adequately capture the client-specific requirements nor the additional electricity requirements of the project and the associated cost implications. Additionally, risks associated with the roof were not fully identified and accounted for by way of a sufficient contingency allowance.

The management of the project was outsourced to a third party in accordance with established practice. Despite frequent communications between Údarás staff and the appointed consultants it transpired that there was inadequate project oversight and related communications at critical times during the project lifecycle. Weaknesses in project management and failings in communications contributed to significant information gaps and delayed reporting to the Board. While insufficient staffing was a factor, it was clear from reviewing the project that there was a requirement to improve project management, oversight and reporting.

ii. Compliance with the Capital Works Management Framework & Public Procurement

The Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF) is a set of guidance notes and template documents that support the Government's objectives for Public Sector construction work. The review of this project highlighted the need to fully adopt the requirements of the CWMF, and to systemise those requirements into Údarás processes.

The management of public procurement and contract administration was not satisfactorily implemented for all elements of this project. Although this was primarily the responsibility of the consultants engaged on the project, insufficient oversight was exercised by Údarás staff at critical points. However, having subsequently engaged an independent quantity surveyor to assess the value of the works completed, Údarás na Gaeltachta is satisfied that no loss to the State was incurred as payment was made only on the value of the works completed. The works carried out also added significantly to the value of the Údarás owned asset.

iii. Approval and Management of Budgets

The Board of Údarás na Gaeltachta is responsible for the approval of all capital expenditure. A budget of €1.2m was initially approved by the Board for this project. The increase in costs were identified internally as the project was progressing but there was a high degree of uncertainty of the total subsequent cost implications. Coupled with the time pressures of delivering the project by a specific date, there was a delay in seeking Board approval for the additional spend. Notwithstanding the uncertainties that pertained to the complete identification of the costs, poor communications and reporting resulted in the Board not being informed promptly of the requirement for an additional budget for this project.

Measures adopted to Strengthen the Governance of Capital Projects

i. Project Planning, Management and Oversight

Údarás na Gaeltachta recognises that project planning and continuous assessment is key to the successful implementation of building projects. We have placed an ever greater emphasis on more in-depth scoping of projects and identifying potential associated risks at the outset. Projects and their scope are continuously assessed to ensure that they remain on track and that any variations are quickly identified.

The identification of risks and uncertainties has resulted in changes to how we assess the contingency allowance attaching to projects. More emphasis has been placed on ensuring an adequate allowance for contingencies based on the project risks that have been identified, along with unknown factors that may impact on costs. The adequacy of the contingency allowance is kept under constant review during the project life cycle.

In 2021, Údarás received sanction from the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media to hire two additional staff members in our Property Division; a quantity surveyor and a project manager. These new staff members are now in situ and will assist greatly in the evaluation, management and review of projects on an ongoing basis.

A new process of formal monthly reviews of capital expenditure conducted by senior executives from the Finance, Corporate Services and Property Divisions has been implemented. This review adds to the overall oversight of the various projects and concentrates on the current status of projects, the identification of risks and the budgetary position. Information gathered during this process is used to provide a monthly update to the Board regarding the spend to date on projects and the identification of any project risks.

Other improvements relating to project change control documentation and file management processes have been introduced in order to improve the overall governance of projects.

ii. Compliance with Capital Works Management Framework (CWMF) & Public Procurement

The organisation has reassessed its compliance with the Capital Works Management Framework and has taken steps to ensure that standard templates are used for all elements of a project including contract administration. This requirement is being applied as a standard procedure for all projects. In 2021, Údarás received sanction from the Department to recruit two additional finance staff, one of whom will have responsibility for advising and monitoring compliance with public procurement regulations.

The organisation has taken a number of key measures to ensure better awareness and compliance with public procurement rules including:

- organising a mandatory bespoke public procurement refresher training programme for all relevant staff
- circulating the organisation's updated procurement policy to all staff
- engaging procurement specialists to assist with the procurement strategies for building works and driving better efficiencies
- outlining the procurement policy to be adopted in the project documents submitted to Board for consideration

In addition to the above steps, Údarás has also engaged the services of an external company to advise on how the organisation can ensure best practice in complying with the requirements of the Public Spending Code. This will inform our approach to ensuring best practice in the evaluation, approval and implementation of building projects in the future.

iii. Approval and Management of Budgets

All capital expenditure must be approved by the Board of Údarás na Gaeltachta. Requests made by the Board to improve the information provided in project documents have been implemented. These include:

- a more granular breakdown of the various line items included in the proposed budget
- the inclusion of an adequate allowance for contingencies based on the level of risk and uncertainty
- the procurement strategy to be followed

The reporting of capital spending to the Board has been improved with monthly updates provided on projects with a budget in excess of €100,000. Any risks identified through the oversight of projects are highlighted in these reports.

In the coming months, Údarás will introduce a new accounting system, MS Dynamics, that will further strengthen our financial controls especially with regard to project budgets. In the interim, steps have been taken to manually replicate some of the additional functionality that will be available once the new system is available.

The addition of a new position of assistant accountant, which has been sanctioned by the Department, will assist with the overall governance framework that is in place.

Conclusion

The initial project scope for the refurbishment of a factory unit in Baile Ghib was relatively straightforward. The intention was to upgrade an old factory unit to advance factory standard. A budget of €1.2m was allocated by the Board to cover the costs involved. Due to unanticipated project costs of €0.6m and estimated specific client requirements of €1.7m, (to be recouped from the company over an agreed period) the budget for the project increased significantly. The final cost for the client specific requirements has now been independently evaluated at less than €1m which will result in a reduction in the revised budgeted expenditure. Overall expenditure on the project to date is €2.8m. The anticipated final expenditure on the project will be in the region of €3.0m and is not expected to exceed €3.2m.

Údarás na Gaeltachta have identified poor internal and external project communications and reporting that resulted in a delay in informing the Board of the escalating costs and the arrangements that had been agreed with the company. Other deficiencies in the governance of the project, in areas such as planning, reporting and oversight, came to light, as did issues around full compliance with the Capital Works Management Framework and public procurement. As outlined above, steps have been taken to address these issues.

Although by no means an excuse for the deficiencies identified, the project was being progressed at a time of significant staffing challenges within Údarás na Gaeltachta, as well as a client imperative to have the project completed within a very tight timeframe. Much progress has been made in the last number of months to mitigate the risks that were highlighted. We are satisfied that appropriate steps have been taken to ensure that no loss was incurred by the taxpayer and that the works completed have added to the value of the building. It should be recognised that Údarás na Gaeltachta has a long history in delivering significant capital projects on time and within budget. The management of this particular project is not representative of how projects are typically delivered by the organisation.

With regard to the client company, it commenced operations in Baile Ghib in 2019 and has surpassed its business expectations to date. At the end of 2019, the company had 20 full time staff employed and has now grown to 34 staff, with plans for further expansion. It is working with industry partners and third level institutions to transform the plastics industry through a project which was approved earlier this year for grant aid under the Government's Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund. More recently, it was successful in being selected under the Government's first Circular Economy Innovation Grant Scheme (CEIGS) for a project that aims to develop the technology capable of sustainably recycling marine litter and discarded/used fishing nets.

Sonraí maidir le caiteachas breise a bhain le hathchóiriú ar réadmhaoin de chuid Údarás na Gaeltachta atá lonnaithe i mBaile Ghib, Co. na Mí.

Cúlra

Is é Údarás na Gaeltachta an t-údarás réigiúnach atá freagrach as forbairt eacnamaíoch, shóisialta agus chultúrtha na Gaeltachta. Is é cuspóir foriomlán Údarás na Gaeltachta ná a chinntiú go bhfanfaidh an Ghaeilge mar phríomhtheanga an phobail sa Ghaeltacht agus go dtabharfar ar aghaidh í chuig na glúnta atá le theacht. Baineann an tÚdarás an cuspóir sin amach trí thacaíocht a thabhairt do réimse leathan tionscnamh forbartha fiontraíochta agus cruthú post agus trí tacú le gníomhaíochtaí straitéiseacha teanga, cultúrtha agus pobalbhunaithe.

Comhthéacs – Punann Maoine

Tá punann fhairsing réadmhaoine ag Údarás na Gaeltachta ina bhfuil tuairim is 500 aonad oifige agus monarcha atá lonnaithe sna seacht gceantar Gaeltachta. Tá an phunann réadmhaoine mar bhunchloch do thairiscint fiontraíochta na heagraíochta i mealladh, spreagadh agus ag tabhairt tacaíocht do ghníomhaíocht eacnamaíoch, thionsclaíoch agus fostaíochta laistigh den Ghaeltacht. Thacaigh an tÚdarás le 7,844 post lánaimseartha ag deireadh 2019, a thit go 7,363 ag deireadh 2020 mar gheall ar thionchar COVID-19.

Is ceart a aithint gur tógadh cuid mhór den phunann mhaoine sna 1970ídí agus sna 1980idí agus, mar thoradh air sin, go bhfuil infheistíocht shuntasach de dhíth uirthi chun go mbeidh sí ar chaighdeán atá inghlactha sa lá atá inniu ann. Léirítear sa tábla thíos an leithdháileadh caipitil a fuair Údarás na Gaeltachta ón Státchiste don tréimhse 2019 go 2021. Úsáidtear an leithdháileadh seo chun tacú le hinfheistíocht i gcliantchomhlachtaí (deontais agus tacaíochtaí eile) agus i gclár tógála na heagraíochta araon. Úsáidtear tuairim is 40% - 60% den leithdháileadh chun tacú go díreach leis an gclár tógála caipitil.

	2019	2020*	2021
Maoiniú Caipitil Iomlán	€9.70m	€10.00m	€14.40m
- Clár Tógála	€4.00m	€4.80m	€8.00m
- Tacaíochtaí Tionscadail	€5.70m	€5.20m	€6.40m

**Níl soláthar aon uaire faoin gClár Spreagtha san áireamh*

Tá punann réadmhaoine Údarás na Gaeltachta ar cheann de na hacmhainní is mó atá aige chun tionscal a mhealladh chuig an nGaeltacht. Mar gheall ar a próifíl aoise, áfach, is féidir leis ídiú suntasach a dhéanamh ar na hacmhainní a bhíonn ar fáil. Gineann an tÚdarás ioncam cíosa de thart ar €4m in aghaidh na bliana óna phunann réadmhaoine. Tacaíonn an t-ioncam sin le híoc as an gcothabháil a bhíonn le déanamh ar an bpunann. Aithníonn an tÚdarás an gá atá lena phunann tógála a nuachóiriú agus, ar an mbealach sin, an t-ualach a bhaineann le costais chothabhála leanúnacha a laghdú, ag cinntiú go bhfuil na foirgnimh ar chaighdeán a bheidh sásúil dár gcliant chomhlachtaí. In ainneoin an méadú a tháinig ar bhuiséad caipitil 2021, dá mhaitheas é, tá infheistíocht shuntasach ag teastáil chun an cuspóir sin a bhaint amach agus ní mór í a chur i gcomhthéacs buiséad caipitil d'os cionn €21m a bhí ar fáil in 2009.

Le blianta beaga anuas, tá iarracht déanta ag an Údarás a stoc foirgneamh a athchóiriú agus a ath-fheistiú chun freastal ar riachtanais ghnó an lae inniu, agus chun iad a dhéanamh níos éifeachtúla ó thaobh an chomhshaoil de. D'éirigh leis an Údarás maoiniú breise a aimsiú chun tacú leis na hiarrachtaí atá ar siúl aige moil dhigiteacha a dhéanamh as roinnt dá fhoirgnimh. Tá an maoiniú breise seo tar éis cur leis an leithdháileadh caipitil a fuarthas ón Státchiste agus mar thoradh air sin cruthaíodh líonra de 31 mol digiteach, 'gteic – Gréasán Digiteach na Gaeltachta'. Mar sin féin, is dúshlán leanúnach é cistí leordhóthanacha a bheith ar fáil chun freastal ar riachtanais chothabhála na bhfoirgneamh reatha chomh maith le tabhairt faoi fhorbairtí nua.

Tionscadal i mBaile Ghib, Co. na Mí

In 2017, fuair an tÚdarás léiriú spéise ó chomhlacht ar mhian leo gnó a bhunú i nGaeltacht Bhaile Ghib, i gCo. na Mí. Bhí an plean gnó a sholáthar an comhlacht bunaithe ar réitigh athchúrsála inbhuanaithe agus nuálacha a chruthú don tionscal plaisteach tionsclaíoch. Bhí sé beartaithe ag an gcomhlacht athchúrsáil agus athchuspóir a dhéanamh ar fhiliméad astarraingteach tionsclaíoch agus ábhar snáithíneach ó shaoráidí monaraithe teireataláit phoileitiléine (PET) chun millíní/sliseanna PET a dhéanamh.

Tar éis d'fheidhmeannaigh Údarás na Gaeltachta measúnú iomlán a dhéanamh ar an gcás gnó, cheadaigh an Bord pacáiste tacaíochta i mí Feabhra 2018 ina raibh athchóiriú agus athfhorbairt mhór ar mhonarcha 4,127 méadar cearnach a bhí faoi úinéireacht an Údaráis i mBaile Ghib. Tógadh an mhonarcha, ceann de na cinn is sinne inár bpunann, ar dtús sna 1970ídí agus bhí sí folamh ó 2015 nuair a d'imigh an tionónta a bhí ann roimhe sin. Bhí drochbhail ar an bhfoirgneamh.

Cheadaigh Bord Údarás na Gaeltachta leithdháileadh €1.2m chun uasghrádú a dhéanamh ar an bhfoirgneamh agus é a thabhairt go dtí staid réamh-mhonarchan. Cheap Údarás na Gaeltachta foireann deartha chomhtháite sheachtrach chun maoirsiú agus bainistiú a dhéanamh ar an togra thar a cheann.

Caiteachas Breise

Bhí scóip na hoibre athchóirithe teoranta ar dtús do chreatlach agus croí-uasghráduithe chun an mhonarchan i mBaile Ghib a thabhairt go dtí staid réamh-mhonarchan, sula gcuirfí ar fáil ar léas é do thionónta nua. Tháinig an buiséad breise a theastaigh sa bhreis ar an €1.2m a cheadaigh an Bord ar dtús ó dhá chúinse ar leith; (i) costais gan choinne a tháinig chun cinn de réir mar a chuaigh an tionscadal ar aghaidh agus (ii) costas a d'eascair as riachtanais shonracha an chliaint.

i. Costais Tionscadail Gan Choinne – €0.6m

Bhí liúntas beag áirithe sa mbuiséad bunaidh chun oibreacha ar an díon a chlúdach. De réir mar a chuaigh na hoibreacha tógála ar aghaidh, ba ghá athrú a dhéanamh ar an dearadh de bharr cinneadh a rinneadh píosa mór innealra a athrú, chun sreabhadh oibre níos fearr sa mhonarcha a éascú. Bhí an suíomh nua i gcuid den mhonarcha ina raibh bail an díon i bhfad níos measa ná mar a measadh ar dtús. Mar chasadh ar an scéal bhí aispeist sa díon a chur go mór leis na costais. Ina theannta sin, rinneadh damáiste gan choinne do chodanna eile den struchtúr leochaileach dín mar thoradh ar leagan ballaí inmheánacha a bhí beartaithe. De bharr stoirmeacha a tharla i mí Lúnasa 2019 (a bhí mar chúis le tuilte agus damáiste forleathan) tharla sileadh ón díon a rinne damáiste do threalamh táirgeachta agus do threalamh leictreach agus fágadh go mba ghá tabhairt faoi oibreacha deisiúcháin láithreach. Bhí an costas a bhain leis an obair bhreise seo, lena n-áirítear cóireáil chuí ar dhíon aispeiste, gar do €0.25m.

Chomh maith leis na hoibreacha ar an díon, tabhaíodh costais shuntasacha mar gheall ar riachtanas a bhain leis an soláthar leictreachais a uasghrádú chun freastal ar riachtanais an trealaimh a úsáideann an comhlacht. Cuireadh iarratas isteach chuig BSL agus chuig an údarás áitiúil chun fostáisiún nua a thógáil agus claochladán nua a shuiteáil. Rinneadh plé fairsing le BSL, agus íocadh ranníocaíocht chaipitil leo in 2018. Mar sin féin, de bhrí go raibh moill ar na hoibreacha agus gan bainistiú éifeachtach déanta orthu, mar aon leis an riachtanas gur chuir an comhlacht tús le hoibríochtaí chun orduithe custaiméirí a shásamh, bhí gineadóirí ag teastáil ar feadh roinnt seachtainí. Bhí costais bhreise €0.35m mar thoradh air sin.

II. Riachtanais Chliaint (suas le huasmhéid €1.7m)

Leithdháileadh buiséad tosaigh de €1.2m ar an tionscadal seo chun an costas a bhain leis an bhfoirgneamh a thabhairt go dtí staid réamh-mhonarchan. Tharla sé go raibh riachtanais bhreise ag an gcliant chun freastal a dhéanamh ar an gcineál gníomhaíochta atá ar siúl aige. Níor aithníodh na riachtanais sin a dhóthain ag céim phleanála an tionscadail, áfach. Bhain na hoibreacha a lorg an comhlacht le hoibreacha meicniúla agus leictreacha ar leith, agus le hoibreacha innealtóireachta sibhialta lasmuigh den fhoirgneamh.

D'aontaigh an tÚdarás na riachtanais shonracha seo a chur san áireamh sna hoibreacha foirgnimh a raibh tús curtha leo. Rinneadh é sin ar an mbonn go n-aisíocfadh an comhlacht costas na n-oibreacha, le hús, trí tháillí breise a aisíoc thar thréimhse 20 bliain. Tá sé mar chleachtas inghlactha go ndéantar ionchorprú ar riachtanais shainiúla an chliaint i scóip an tionscadail agus go ndéanann an client-chomhlacht aisíoc le hús thar thréimhse ama atá socraithe.

Measadh ar dtús go mbeadh buiséad caiteachais suas go dtí uasmhéid €1.7m de dhíth chun freastal ar riachtanais shainiúla an chliaint, faoi réir luacháil neamhspleách a bheith déanta nuair a bhí na hoibreacha curtha i gcrích, don tionscadal i mBaile Ghib. Léirigh an luacháil neamhspleách sin, a tugadh chun críche in 2021, go raibh na costais a bhain le riachtanais shainiúla an chliaint faoi bhun €1m, le laghdú gaolmhar ar an gcaiteachas iomlán.

Glactar leis go mba chóir na riachtanais a bhain go sonrach leis an gcliant a bheith aitheanta go cruinn le linn chéim scóipe an tionscadail. Ag an gcéim luath sin, glacadh leis go mbeadh riachtanais den sórt sin á maoiniú ag an gcliant féin. Ina dhiaidh sin, d'iarr an comhlacht ar an Údarás costas na n-oibreacha seo a sheasamh a d'íocfaí ar ais, le hús, thar thréimhse 20 bliain. D'aontaigh an tÚdarás leis an iarratas seo de réir an ghnáthchleachtais atá ann cabhrú le comhlachtaí oibreacha speisialta a dhéanamh a chuirfeadh le luach an réadmhaoine atá ar léas. Shínigh an dá pháirtí comhaontú dlíthiúil chun feidhm a thabhairt don socrú.

Cur chun feidhme an tionscadail

Ceapadh foireann deartha chomhtháite seachtrach chun bainistiú a dhéanamh ar an togra tógála thar ceann Údarás na Gaeltachta. Mar a tugadh le fios roimhe seo, ba iad na costais gan choinne a tharla le linn an tionscadail agus na riachtanais a bhain go sonrach leis an gcliaint a mba chúis leis an méadú ar bhuiséad an tionscadail. Mar sin féin, léirigh cur i bhfeidhm an tionscadail seo go mba ghá díriú ar réimsí eile de rialachais tograí agus iad a fheabhsú, go háirithe:

i. Pleanáil Tionscadail, Bainistíocht agus Maoirsiú

Níl sé neamhchoitianta seachfhoinsiú a dhéanamh ar fhreagrachtaí bainistíochta tionscadail do thograí foirgníochta a bhíonn ar mheán agus ar mhór scála mar gheall ar easpa foirne i Rannóg Maoine an Údaráis. I gcásanna den sórt sin, sanntar baill foirne ainmnithe laistigh den Rannóg Maoine, ag grád cuí i gcomhréir le scála na dtionscadal, chun oibriú leis na comhairleoirí ceaptha i bpleanáil, bainistiú agus i gcur i bhfeidhm na dtionscadal.

Is léir nach raibh an chéad scóip a rinneadh leordhóthanach agus nár cuimsíodh mar is ceart riachtanais shainiúla an chliaint ná riachtanais breise leictreachais an tionscadail agus na himpleachtaí costais a bhain leo. Ina theannta sin, níor sainaithníodh na rioscaí a bhain leis an díon ina n-iomláine agus níor cuireadh liúntas teagmhasach leordhóthanach go leataobh chun an costas a chlúdach.

Ag teacht le cleachtais seanbhunaithe bhí seachfhoinsiú déanta ar bhainistiú an tionscadail chuig tríú páirtí. In ainneoin cumarsáid leanúnach idir foireann an Údaráis agus na comhairleoirí a bhí ceaptha is léir nach raibh maoirseacht agus cumarsáid dóthanach déanta ag tráthanna criticiúla le linn saolré an tionscadail. Chiallaigh laigí i mbainistiú an tionscadail agus teipeanna sa chumarsáid go raibh bearnaí suntasacha sa bhfaisnéis a bhí ar fáil agus bhí moill ar thuairisciú chuig an mBord. Cé go raibh tionchar ag an easpa foirne ar an méid a tharla, is léir ón athbhreithniú a rinneadh ar an tionscadal go raibh gá le feabhas a chur ar bhainistiú tionscadail, ar mhaoirseacht agus ar thuairisciú.

II. Comhlíonadh an Chreata Bainistíochta Oibreacha Caipitil & Soláthar Poiblí

Is sraith nótaí treoracha agus cáipéisí teimpléid é an Creat Bainistíochta Oibreacha Caipitil (CWMF) a thacaíonn le cuspóirí an Rialtais d'obair thógála na hEarnála Poiblí. Léirigh an t-athbhreithniú ar an tionscadal seo an gá atá ann go bhfeidhmeofaí go hiomlán de réir riachtanais an CWMF, agus go ndéanfaí an méid sin a chórasú i bpróisis an Údaráis.

Ní raibh bainistiú ar sholáthar poiblí agus ar riarachán conarthaí curtha i bhfeidhm go sásúil i ngach gné den tionscadal seo. Cé gurb iad na comhairleoirí a bhí fostaithe ar an togra a bhí freagrach as sin go príomha, ní dhearna foireann an Údaráis dóthain maoirseachta ar a gcuid oibre ag tráthanna criticiúla. D'fhostaigh Údarás na Gaeltachta suirbhéir cainníochta neamhspleách ina dhiaidh sin chun measúnú a dhéanamh ar luach na n-oibreacha a rinneadh, agus táthar sásta nár íocadh ach de réir luach na n-oibreacha a bhí déanta agus dá réir nach raibh aon chaillteanas tabhaithe ann don Státchiste. Ní mór a áireamh chomh maith gur chuir na hoibreacha a rinneadh go mór le luach na sócmhainne atá faoi úinéireacht an Údaráis.

III. Faomhadh agus Bainistiú Buiséid

Tá Bord Údarás na Gaeltachta freagrach as an gcaiteachas caipitil ar fad a cheadú. Cheadaigh an Bord buiséad €1.2 m don tionscadal seo ar dtús. Aithníodh go hinmheánach go raibh costais an tionscadail ag dul in airde faoi mar a bhí an tionscadal ag dul chun cinn ach bhí leibhéal ard éiginnteachta ann maidir leis na himpleachtaí costais iomlána a d'fhéadfadh a bheith i gceist. I dteannta an brú ama a bhí ann an tionscadal a sheachadadh faoi dháta ar leith, bhí moill ann cead an Bhoird a lorg don chaiteachas breise. In ainneoin na n-éiginnteachtaí a bhain le na costais ar fad a aithint go hiomlán, chiallaigh droch-chumarsáid agus tuairisciú nár cuireadh an Bord ar an eolas go pras maidir leis an riachtanas do bhuiséad breise don tionscadal.

Bearta a glacadh chun Rialachas Tionscadal Caipitil a Neartú

i. Pleanáil Tionscadail, Bainistíocht agus Maoirsiú

Aithníonn Údarás na Gaeltachta go bhfuil pleanáil tionscadail agus measúnú leanúnach ríthábhachtach do chur i bhfeidhm rathúil na dtograí tógála. Tá béim níos mó ná riamh curtha againn ar scóipeáil níos doimhne ar thionscadail agus ar rioscaí féideartha gaolmhara a shainaithint ag an tús. Déantar measúnú leanúnach ar thionscadail agus ar a scóip chun a chinntiú go bhfanfaidh siad ar an mbóthar ceart agus go sainaithneofar aon athrú go tapa.

Mar thoradh ar shainaithint na rioscaí agus na n-éiginnteachtaí, tá athruithe tagtha ar an gcaoi a ndéanaimid measúnú ar an liúntas teagmhasach a ghabhann le tionscadail. Cuireadh níos mó béime ar a chinntiú go gcuirfear teagmhais leordhóthanach ar fáil bunaithe ar na rioscaí tionscadail a sainaithnítear, chomh maith le tosca anaithnide a d'fhéadfadh tionchar a bheith acu ar chostais. Déantar athbhreithniú ar leordhóthanacht an liúntais theagmhasaigh go rialta le linn shaolré an tionscadail.

In 2021, fuair an tÚdarás cead ón Roinn Turasóireachta, Cultúir, Ealaíon, Gaeltachta, Spóirt agus Meán beirt bhall foirne breise a fhostú inár Rannóg Maoine; suirbhéir cainníochta agus bainisteoir tionscadail. Tá na baill foirne nua seo fostaithe anois agus cuideoidh siad go mór le meastóireacht, bainistiú agus athbhreithniú a dhéanamh ar thionscadail ar bhonn leanúnach.

Cuireadh próiseas nua i bhfeidhm ina ndéanann feidhmeannaigh sinsearacha ó na Rannóga Airgeadais, Seirbhísí Corparáideacha agus Maoine athbhreithnithe foirmiúla míosúla ar chaiteachas caipitil. Cuireann an t-athbhreithniú seo leis an maoirseacht fhoriomlán ar na tionscadail éagsúla agus díríonn sé ar staid reatha na dtionscadal, ar shainaithint na rioscaí agus ar chúrsaí buiséid. Úsáidtear faisnéis a bhailítear le linn an phróisis seo chun nuashonrú míosúil a chur ar fáil don Bhord maidir leis an gcaiteachas go dtí seo ar thionscadail agus maidir le haon rioscaí tionscadail a aithnítear.

Cuireadh feabhsuithe eile i bhfeidhm maidir leis an gcóras chun rialú a dhéanamh ar athruithe i dtionscadail agus próisis bhainistíochta comhad, d'fhonn rialachas foriomlán na dtionscadal a fheabhsú.

ii. Comhlíonadh Chreata Bainistíochta Oibreacha Caipitil (CWMF) & Soláthar Poiblí

Tá athmheasúnú déanta ag an eagraíocht ar a mhéid a chomhlíonann sí leis an gCreat Bainistíochta Oibreacha Caipitil agus tá bearta déanta aici lena chinntiú go n-úsáidtear teimpléid chaighdeánacha le haghaidh gach gné de thionscadal, riarachán conarthaí san áireamh. Tá an ceanglas sin á chur i bhfeidhm mar nós imeachta caighdeánach do gach tionscadal. In 2021, fuair an tÚdarás cead ón Roinn beirt bhall foirne airgeadais bhreise a earcú, agus beidh duine amháin acu sin freagrach as comhairle agus monatóireacht a dhéanamh ar chomhlíonadh na rialachán soláthair phoiblí.

Tá roinnt bearta tábhachtacha tógtha ag an eagraíocht chun feasacht agus comhlíonadh níos fearr a chinntiú i dtaca le rialacha soláthair phoiblí, lena n-áirítear:

- clár oiliúna éigeantach saincheaptha ar sholáthar poiblí a eagrú do na baill foirne ábhartha uile,
- beartas soláthair nuashonraithe na heagraíochta a scaipeadh ar an bhfoireann go léir,

- saineolaithe soláthair a úsáid chun cabhrú leis na straitéisí soláthair d'oibreacha tógála agus éifeachtúlacht níos fearr a chur chun cinn,
- eolas maidir leis an mbeartas soláthair atá le glacadh a chur san áireamh sna doiciméid tionscadail a chuirtear faoi bhráid an Bhoird lena mbreithniú.

Chomh maith leis na céimeanna thuas, tá an tÚdarás tar éis seirbhísí chomhlacht seachtrach a fháil le comhairle a thabhairt ar bhealaigh inar féidir leis an eagraíocht dea-chleachtas a chinntiú maidir le riachtanais an Chóid Chaiteachais Phoiblí a chomhlíonadh. Beidh an méid sin mar bhonn don chur chuige atá againn maidir leis an dea-chleachtas a chinntiú agus tionscadail tógála á measúnú, á gceadú agus á gcur chun feidhme amach anseo.

iii. Faomhadh agus Bainistiú Buiséid

Is gá go mbeadh gach caiteachas caipitil ceadaithe ag Bord Údarás na Gaeltachta. Cuireadh iarratais a rinne an Bord chun feabhas a chur ar an bhfaisnéis a sholáthraítear i ndoiciméid an tionscadail i bhfeidhm. Áirítear orthu sin:

- miondealú níos mionsonraithe ar na míreanna éagsúla líne a áirítear sa bhuiséad atá beartaithe,
- liúntas leordhóthanach do theagmhais a chur san áireamh bunaithe ar an leibhéal riosca agus éiginnteachta,
- cuntas maidir le an straitéis soláthair a bheidh le leanúint.

Feabhsaíodh an tuairisciú ar chaiteachas caipitil don Bhord le thuairisc mhíosúil curtha ar fáil ar thionscadail a bhfuil buiséad níos mó ná €100,000 acu. Cuirtear béim sna tuarascálacha sin ar aon rioscaí a aithnítear tríd an mhaoirseacht a dhéantar ar thionscadail.

In sna míonna amach romhainn, tabharfaidh an tÚdarás isteach córas nua airgeadais, MS Dynamics, a thacóidh tuilleadh leis na rialaithe airgeadais go háirithe chomh fada agus a bhaineann sé le buiséid tionscadail. Sa tréimhse eatramhach, tá céimeanna glactha chun feidhmiú de láimh a dhéanamh ar an bhfeidhmiúlacht bhreise a bheidh in áit nuair a thabharfar isteach an córas nua.

Conclúid

Bhí an chéad scóip tionscadail chun athchóiriú a dhéanamh ar an monarcha i mBaile Ghib réasúnta simplí. Bhí sé i gceist go ndéanfaí uasghrádú ar sheanmhonarcha chun é a thabhairt go dtí caighdeán réamh-mhonarchan. Cheadaigh an Bord buiséad €1.2m chun na costais a bhí i gceist a chlúdach. Mar gheall ar chostais tionscadail gan choinne de €0.6m agus riachtanais shonracha mheasta cliant de €1.7m, (le fáil ar ais ón gcomhlacht thar thréimhse chomhaontaithe) tháinig méadú suntasach ar an mbuiséad don tionscadal. Táthar tar éis an costas deiridh do riachtanais shainiúla an chliaint a mheas go neamhspleách anois ag níos lú ná €1m agus beidh laghdú ar an gcaiteachas buiséadaithe athbhreithnithe mar thoradh air sin. Is é an caiteachas iomlán ar an tionscadal go dtí seo ná €2.8m. Táthar ag súil gur timpeall €3.0m a bheidh caite ar an tionscadal ar deireadh agus táthar ag tuar nach rachadh an caiteachas thar €3.2m.

Tá sé aitheanta ag Údarás na Gaeltachta go raibh easpaí sa chumarsáid inmheánach agus seachtrach tionscadail mar aon le tuairisciú ar an tionscadail a d'fhág go raibh moill ag tuairisciú chuig an mBord ar an ardú a bhí tagtha ar an gcaiteachas agus na socruithe a bhí aontaithe leis an gcomhlacht. Tugadh chun solais easnaimh eile i rialachas an tionscadail, i réimsí amhail pleanáil, tuairisciú agus maoirseacht, mar aon le saincheisteanna maidir le comhlíonadh iomlán Chreat Bainistíochta

Oibreacha Caipitil agus soláthar poiblí. Mar a leagtar amach thuas, glacadh céimeanna chun aghaidh a thabhairt ar na saincheisteanna sin.

Cé nach bhfuiltear á úsáid mar leithscéal do na heasnaimh a sainaithníodh, bhí an togra á chur chun cinn ag am ina raibh dúshláin mhóra foirne laistigh d'Údarás na Gaeltachta, chomh maith le riachtanas cliaint go gcuirfí an togra i gcrích laistigh de thréimhse ama an-docht. Tá go leor dul chun cinn déanta le roinnt míonna anuas chun na rioscaí ar leagadh béim orthu a mhaolú. Táimid sásta go bhfuil céimeanna cuí glactha chun a chinntiú nach raibh aon chaillteanas á fhulaingt ag an gcáiníocóir agus go bhfuil na hoibreacha atá curtha i gcrích tar éis cur go mór le luach an fhoirgnimh. Is ceart a aithint go bhfuil stair fhada ag Údarás na Gaeltachta i seachadadh tograí caipitil suntasacha in am agus laistigh den bhuiséad. Ní léargas é bainistíocht an tionscadail áirithe seo ar a mbealach a sheachadann an eagraíocht tionscadail de ghnáth.

Maidir leis an gcliantchomhlacht, chuir sé tús le hoibríochtaí i mBaile Ghib in 2019 agus tá a ionchais ghnó sáraithe go dtí seo. Ag deireadh na bliana 2019, bhí 20 ball foirne lánaimseartha fostaithe ag an gcomhlacht agus tá sé sin ardaithe go dtí 34 ball foirne anois, le pleananna chun méadú tuilleadh. Tá sé ag obair le comhpháirtithe tionscail agus le hinstitiúidí tríú leibhéal chun tionscal na bplaisteach a athrú ó bhonn trí thionscadal ar ceadaíodh deontas dó níos luaithe i mbliana faoi Chiste Nuálaíochta na dTeicneolaíochtaí Suasacha de chuid an Rialtais. Le déanaí, roghnaíodh tionscadal dá chuid faoin gcéad Scéim Deontais Nuálaíochta don Gheilleagar Ciorclach (CEIGS) de chuid an Rialtais. Tá sé mar aidhm leis an tionscadal seo teicneolaíocht a fhorbairt a bheadh in ann bruscar muirí agus líonta iascaireachta a aischuirtear/a úsáidtear a athchúrsáil ar bhealach inbhuanaithe.