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Dear Ms Cremin

Further to your letter dated 3rd November 2021 the EPA response to the PAC query Ref: S0575 PAC33 is set out below.

Background

The EPA and An Taisce are working in partnership to deliver two citizen science projects, the GLOBE project since 2017 and the Clean Air Together project since 2020. A short synopsis of each of the projects is set out below:

1. An Taisce is the coordinator of **GLOBE** (Global Learning & Observations to Benefit the Environment) citizen science programme in Ireland. This programme trains school teachers to collect environmental information with their students. The work raises awareness among students about the environment, particularly air quality. Students learn about the scientific process and contribute to the understanding of air pollution by gathering data and subsequently analysing and presenting their results. There have been 6 Nitrogen Dioxide Air Quality campaigns, and despite the pandemic, there has been a sustained increase in the number of schools participating: 31 schools took part in the inaugural campaign with this number increasing to 150 schools in Autumn 2021. To date, almost 300 Irish schools have taken part in GLOBE Air Quality campaigns, with a total of 3,908 observations uploaded to the GLOBE website.
2. **Clean Air Together** is a citizen science project that engages members of the public in carrying out nitrogen dioxide measurements outside their homes or businesses. The objectives of this project include the collection of air quality data, increasing public knowledge and engagement with the topic of air quality and assessing impacts of the project on awareness, attitudes, behaviour change and policy. The first phase of the project is ongoing in Dublin with over 1,000 citizen scientists recruited to take measurements between October and November 2021. Further phases in other cities are being considered for 2022 and beyond.

1. What level of oversight does the EPA have over the funding it provides to An Taisce?

The EPA and An Taisce meet regularly (weekly for Clean Air Together and monthly for GLOBE) to plan joint work and ensure the two citizen science projects are on track. An annual report is provided by An Taisce to the EPA setting out the work delivered for preceding year.

2. Is there a service level agreement in place between An Taisce and the EPA?

The EPA and An Taisce have Grant-in-Aid agreements relating to the projects. These agreements are reviewed periodically (normally annually). These Agreements set out the payments to be made to An Taisce and the work to be carried out in the delivery of the two citizen science projects in partnership with the EPA. The Agreements are signed following approval of the proposed expenditure under the projects by the EPA Board.

3. Is the EPA aware of the restatement to the 2018 figures within the 2019 financial statements?

The EPA was not aware of the restatement to the 2018 figures within An Taisce's 2019 financial statements.

4. Has the EPA made any enquiries into how these adjustments came about? If so, what were the findings?

As stated in response to question 4, the EPA was not aware of the restatement of the 2018 figures within An Taisce's 2019 financial statements. The EPA has had an initial meeting with a representative of An Taisce's Environmental Education Programme to confirm the allocation of EPA funding was restricted to the agreed work on Globe and Clean Air Together projects. The EPA will be seeking further details from An Taisce in relation the restatement of An Taisce's accounts.

5. How does the EPA satisfy itself that grant funding it provides to An Taisce is used for the intended purposes?

Progress in implementing the projects is tracked through regular (monthly and weekly) meetings between the EPA staff and An Taisce's Environmental Education Programme staff. The EPA also evaluates the annual report provided by An Taisce setting out the work completed during the preceding year. An Taisce also presents the results of this work at EPA and other events including EPA conferences.

Should you have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely,



Laura Burke
Director General