

**R0907 PAC33**

Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland  
Hatch Street Upper  
Dublin 2

**Ref: SO581 PAC33**

**12 November 2021**

Dear Sarah,

I refer to your query regarding the use of funds by An Taisce, considered at the meeting of the Committee of Public Accounts on 7 October 2021, on foot of correspondence from Deputy Sean Sherlock. I set out below the context in which SEAI operates and details of its current contractual relationship with An Taisce.

- SEAI is Ireland's national energy authority. We are funded by Government and work with citizens, communities, businesses, industry, and public bodies to help achieve Ireland's clean energy ambitions. Our services include a broad mix of advice, education, financial supports, networks, research and innovation, and policy insights.
- Among those services, SEAI delivers a sustainable energy education programme to primary and secondary schools including *inter alia* curriculum aligned teaching resources, student and teacher workshops and children's books.
- The programme is funded by the Exchequer through SEAI, and all services are provided free of charge to the schools, teachers, and students.
- Following a public procurement tenders (eTenders RFT 134313, Delivery of SEAI's School Workshop Programme, published on 22 May 2018), An Taisce was awarded a contract by SEAI to deliver SEAI designed and developed workshops in primary and secondary schools. The value of the contract was up to a ceiling of €746,000 over a maximum four year period, contingent upon satisfactory delivery of services, continued need and available budget.
- There is a formal contract / services agreement in place between SEAI and An Taisce which reflects the required deliverables and the sums payable upon delivery. Regular reporting, review meetings, and teacher survey feedback are the key mechanisms to ensure consistent high-quality delivery of workshops.
- Workshop activity naturally reduced substantially during 2020, due to public health restrictions and subsequent closure of schools. During this period, An Taisce worked with SEAI to provide online virtual alternatives for some of the workshops.
- Separately, SEAI has entered a sponsorship agreement with An Taisce to fund a pilot programme in relation to the Energy Green Flag. This pilot was to specifically explore how existing SEAI teaching assets (mentioned above) could be more deeply incorporated into the Energy Green Flag requirements. The sponsorship agreement included clear project deliverables including updating the Energy Flag Handbook, recruitment of schools, development of the programme, school

engagement and intervention, comprehensive evaluation, and reporting. This pilot, with 20 schools, was initially for a 2-year period. Due to the school closures arising from the public health emergency, this pilot was extended for a third year to give schools time to complete their Energy Green Flag. The sponsorship value was for €42,000 over the originally envisaged two-year period. Delivery is monitored through a combination of meetings and progress reports. Payments to date have all been made on basis of satisfactory completion of specified deliverables.

I trust this satisfactorily addresses the Deputy's and the Committee's questions. If you need any further information, then please do not hesitate to revert to me directly.

Yours sincerely,



William Walsh  
CEO