



21 March 2022

Mr Sam Keenan  
Committee Secretariat  
Committee of Public Accounts  
Leinster House  
Dublin 2  
D02 A272

**Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (Vote 29)**  
**Ref: S0771 PAC33**

Dear Mr Keenan,

I refer to your letter of 24 February 2022 regarding information required following the PAC meeting on 10 February 2022. The information requested in the aforementioned letter is set out below.

**1. A DETAILED BREAKDOWN OF THE FEES PAID TO ANALYSYS MASON, EY BUSINESS ADVISORY SERVICES AND WILLIAM FRY LEGAL ADVISORY SERVICES FOR THEIR EXTERNAL CONSULTANCY SERVICES IN RELATION TO THE NATIONAL BROADBAND PLAN**

The Department's NBP team is supported by external expertise who assist with the governance of the NBP contract. At present, three companies are providing external advisory services to the NBP team: Analysys Mason, Ernst & Young (EY) and William Fry.

Since the contract was signed with Analysys Mason in 2020, payments of €6.95 million have been made in respect of technical advisory services. This figure is broken down as follows:

<b>Analysys Mason</b>	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total (incl VAT)
2020	€0	€598,481	€704,219	€901,173	€2,203,873
2021	€769,030	€1,030,719	€924,279	€1,227,645	€3,951,673
2022	€797,343	-	-	-	€797,343
<b>Total</b>	<b>€1,566,373</b>	<b>€1,629,200</b>	<b>€1,628,498</b>	<b>€2,128,818</b>	<b>€6,952,889</b>

Since the contract was signed with Ernst & Young in 2020, payments of €8.25 million have been made in respect of financial and commercial advisory services. This figure is broken down as follows:

<b>Ernst &amp; Young</b>	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total (incl VAT)
2020	-	-	€617,119	€1,812,846	€2,429,965
2021	€1,091,992	€2,254,778	€446,644	€1,541,321	€5,334,734
2022	€486,786	-	-	-	€486,786
<b>Total</b>	<b>€1,578,778</b>	<b>€2,254,778</b>	<b>€1,063,763</b>	<b>€3,354,167</b>	<b>€8,251,485</b>

**29-31 Bóthar Adelaide, Baile Átha Cliath, D02 X285**

29-31 Adelaide Road, Dublin, D02 X285

T +353 1 6782000 | 1890 44 99 00

[www.gov.ie/decc](http://www.gov.ie/decc)

Since the contract was signed with William Fry in 2020, payments of €1.32 million have been made in respect of legal advisory services. This figure is broken down as follows:

William Fry	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Total (incl VAT)
2020	-	-	€43,709	€253,029	€296,738
2021	€97,391	€280,098	€195,174	€273,770	€846,433
2022	€181,768	-	-	-	€181,768
Total	€279,159	€280,098	€238,883	€526,799	€1,324,939

## 2. THE NUMBER OF REPRESENTATIONS RECEIVED BY NBI FROM DEPUTIES AND SENATORS, THE NUMBER THEREIN THAT HAVE BEEN RESOLVED, AND THE PROPORTION OF THAT NUMBER THAT WERE RESOLVED WHEREBY A CONNECTION WAS MADE

There has been a total of 28,309 interactions with NBI's contact centre (receipt and reply to calls, email and social media queries) from its launch on 20 April 2020 to 28 February 2022.

The NBI contact center was set up in April 2020 to provide information to end-users and political stakeholders on the rollout of the National Broadband Plan. The contact center operates across several channels, including phone, social media channels and two dedicated email inboxes, one for Intervention Area end users ([contactus@nbi.ie](mailto:contactus@nbi.ie)) and another for political representatives ([reps@nbi.ie](mailto:reps@nbi.ie)).

Concerning the Political Representatives email channel ([reps@nbi.ie](mailto:reps@nbi.ie)), the volume of interactions from Senators and Deputies accounts for approximately 7% of interactions across all channels, totalling 1,982 interactions. For comparison, the total interactions for all email channels ([contactus@nbi.ie](mailto:contactus@nbi.ie) and [reps@nbi.ie](mailto:reps@nbi.ie)) for this time period was 12,032 interactions.

Of these interactions, all queries are marked resolved where a suitable response and information was provided within the NBI service level agreement (SLA). The contact centre's function is to provide as much information as possible in relation to the National Broadband Plan rollout. There is no correlation between queries and connections made as it is not possible to change the network design based on ad hoc queries received.

The NBI network rollout is divided into 227 Deployment Areas (DAs) across the country. These typically measure approximately 25km in radius and in total they cover 96% of Ireland's landmass. The architecture of the network design is specifically based on the design of the NBI network coming from the openair exchanges or the metropolitan area networks (MANs) managed by Enet. It is based on an engineering design that allows NBI to get to every premises as quickly and as efficiently as possible working within the confines of how fibre networks are built.

Each DA creates a 'fibre ring' which is essential to ensure reliability, robustness and resilience. Critical to the success of the network, NBI's fibre rings are built with back-ups, ensuring that in the event of one fibre cable being disrupted, the whole network continues to perform. Each fibre ring that NBI deploys is designed in a way that is non-discriminatory, meaning that as the rollout progresses, it may pass relatively urban areas at the same time as passing some of the most remote premises within the intervention area. The design will utilise existing infrastructure to a very significant degree.

**3. A NOTE OUTLINING WHAT THE DEPARTMENT IS DOING TO INCREASE ITS WORKFORCE IN ORDER TO REDUCE ITS RELIANCE ON EXTERNAL CONSULTANTS, INCLUDING THE NUMBER OF STAFF IT HAS ALREADY RECRUITED AND THE NUMBER OF STAFF WHOSE RECRUITMENT HAS BEEN SANCTIONED IN THAT REGARD**

The Department, as the contracting authority, manages all elements of National Broadband Plan contract governance. The Department currently has a core existing team of circa. 25 people, which is augmented by specialist external services (c. 20 people) to effectively manage the contract. These include technical, commercial advisory, financial and legal services. Arrangements are in place for effective knowledge transfer between advisors and the core team in order to mitigate the reliance on external advisors. However, there are some elements of this project which will require specialist advice on an ongoing basis relating to technical and specific commercial and legal issues arising.

The Department's core team has expanded over the past year with seven posts filled in 2021. A further fourteen additional posts are in the process of being filled to replace some of the external resources and bring more expertise in house.

**4. DETAILS OF ANY FEES PAID TO COMPANIES FOR THE USE OF THEIR INFRASTRUCTURE IN THE CONTEXT OF THE ROLLOUT OF THE NATIONAL BROADBAND PLAN**

National Broadband Ireland rents infrastructure from a number of providers including eir, enet, BT and Equinix. This relates to rental of poles, ducts, dark-fibre, wireless Strategic Connection Points, co-location facilities and data centres. Costs incurred by NBI in the years 2020 and 2021 totalled €9.4 million.

Should you require any clarification or additional information, please do not hesitate to contact Ms. Louise Carrigan in my Department, by email at [louise.carrigan@DECC.gov.ie](mailto:louise.carrigan@DECC.gov.ie) or by phone at 087 094 9532.

Yours sincerely,



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**Mark Griffin**  
Secretary General