REVIEW OF NATIONAL NON-COMMERCIAL STATE AGENCIES IN IRELAND: 2010 - 2015

Irish Fiscal Advisory Council   TUSLA – Child and Family Agency
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission   QQI – Quality
and Qualifications Ireland   An Bord Pleanála   Criminal Assets
Bureau   Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)   Charities
Regulatory Authority   Pobal   Health Information and Quality
Authority (HIQA)   Irish Research Council   Medical Council
Bord Bia   Microfinance Ireland   Office of Public Works   Office
of the Director of Corporate Enforcement   Insolvency Service
of Ireland   Workplace Relations Commission   COSC   Private
Residential Tenancies Board   Probation Service   Sustainable
Energy Authority Ireland   Office of the Refugees Applications
Commissioner   Central Bank of Ireland   Heritage Council
Pensions Council   Central Statistics Office   National Transport
Authority   Health Service Executive

RICHARD BOYLE

IPA

AN FORAS RIARACHÁIN
INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION

REVIEW OF NATIONAL NON-COMMERCIAL STATE AGENCIES IN IRELAND: 2010 - 2015

IPA

AN FORAS RIARACHÁIN
INSTITUTE OF PUBLIC
ADMINISTRATION

TABLE OF CONTENTS

FOREWORD

The Irish public service comprises a complex and multi-faceted system employing many thousands of people who are responsible for delivering countless services to citizens and communities on a daily basis throughout the country. Ensuring that our public service operates consistently to the highest standard is an ongoing challenge and also the subject of much debate. Over the course of its history the Institute of Public Administration has sought to contribute to, and inform, debate on the performance of our public service.

In this report, we examine changes in the landscape of national non-commercial agencies in Ireland. The role, performance, and corporate governance of agencies have been major topics for discussion and debate in recent times, as has the number of agencies involved in public service provision. The Institute has been to the forefront in providing evidence to inform this debate, being the first to map the state agency landscape in 2005, and again in 2010. This study provides the latest update, and brings much needed evidence from national and international practice.

In the *State of the Public Service* research series, we seek to provide evidence-informed research and commentary on key aspects of contemporary Irish public administration, including its organisational form, systems, people and processes. The authors of these reports bring their considerable expertise and practical knowledge to the topics selected so as to provide evidence, insights and recommendations to support future development. Our aim is that these reports will not only inform, but also challenge current thinking about how the Irish public service performs. It is intended that these short research reports will be of relevance and use not only to public servants, but also to policy-makers and the wider public.

Dr Marian O'Sullivan
Director General
Institute of Public Administration

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In 2004, the Institute of Public Administration's research division developed a database and carried out a survey of the complete state agency population, the first time the agency landscape had been systematically mapped. The database was updated in 2010 specifically with regard to national non-commercial state agencies. The current study further updates the national non-commercial agencies database and looks at trends from 2010 to 2015.

Changes in the agency landscape 2010 - 2015

As at the end of 2015 there were 257 national non-commercial agencies shared across the 16 government departments and the Office of the Attorney General.

62 agencies have been terminated since 2010. For the vast majority of these terminations, the functions previously carried out by the agency were transferred or merged into another organisation. Some were transferred into departments. Some agencies were merged to create new bodies or were absorbed into other agencies. Only 10 agencies ceased to exist altogether.

25 new agencies have been created since 2010. Of these, 14 are primarily the result of mergers of older agencies or transfer of functions to a new agency. 11 are completely new agencies.

Allowing for both the new agencies created and the agencies terminated, there has been a 13 per cent reduction in the number of national non-commercial agencies between 2010 and 2015.

In terms of the concentration of agencies within departments, the department which has by far the most national non-commercial agencies under its remit is the Department of Justice and Equality, with 46 agencies under its control. There are four other departments that each has between 20 and 30 agencies under their control.
Of the 257 agencies mapped, 143 (56 per cent) of them have a board, ranging in size from 3 to 37 members. The average size of their boards is 10.

The remaining 114 are a mix of organisations, some of which have other governing authorities such as councils, and many which operate within departmental structures but with some degree of autonomy over and above that normally afforded to other divisions of the department due to the nature of their work.

In terms of gender balance, on average just over one-third of board members are women. This varies considerably, from zero (for example the Mining Board) to 100 per cent (Pensions Authority).

The percentage of women board members varies significantly not only by agency, but also from department to department. The departments of Children and Youth Affairs and Education and Skills have the highest proportion of women on boards (50 and 46 per cent respectively). The departments of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and Agriculture, Food and Marine have the lowest proportion of women on boards (22 and 19 per cent respectively).

Survey of agency senior management on public sector reform

A survey of Irish senior managers in state agencies carried out as part of a wider European research study indicates that:

- Two-thirds of agency managers are male and one-third female.

- Almost half of the agency senior managers responding to the survey were in the 46 to 55 age range. 30 per cent were between 56 and 65, and just under a quarter between 36 and 45. There were none under 35.

- The majority of agency respondents have spent a long time working in the public sector. 84 per cent of respondents have worked in the public sector for over 10 years, with 62 per cent having worked in the public sector for over 20 years.

- Quite a high proportion of agency senior executives have some private sector experience. 72 per cent of respondents have spent some time working in the private sector.

- The level of management autonomy is perceived to be low, particularly with regard to hiring staff, promoting staff and dismissing or removing staff. However, agency managers see themselves as having more autonomy than senior civil servants.

- Almost two-thirds of respondents feel that politicians do interfere with routine activities. But there is a strong majority view that politicians do not influence senior level appointments.

- Agency managers on the whole feel that public administration improved over the five years to the end of 2013: 59 per cent feel that it has improved, and 41 per cent feel that it has disimproved.

- Areas where agency senior managers feel there has been the greatest improvement in performance over the last five years are in terms of cost and efficiency, external transparency and openness, innovation, and service quality.

- Areas where respondents feel that there has been the greatest deterioration in performance are in terms of citizen trust in government, attractiveness of the public sector as an employer, and staff motivation.

Developments elsewhere

The study also examines recent international experience with agency reform and governance, drawing on a study of experience in 30 countries, and a separate report on recent developments in the UK, which embarked on an agency rationalisation programme similar to Ireland.

1   INTRODUCTION: REPORT BACKGROUND AND METHODOLOGY

Agencies in Ireland: context and background[1]

Systems of public administration are always evolving in response to pressures – be they social, political, economic or environmental. The desire to reform administrative systems and to identify the 'correct' structures for governing and implementing policy is a constant theme of public interest, despite the strong evidence that such a structure is unlikely to be found and that there is rarely consensus as to the best way to organise government in any state. Since the latter part of the twentieth century, there has been particularly strong interest in the growth within public bureaucracies internationally of new organisational forms outside of traditional or core governing structures. This phenomenon has been felt quite acutely in Ireland. A number of terms have been used to capture these forms – including non-departmental public bodies, quangos, hybrids, and distributed public governance bodies. The most commonly used term is however 'agencies', and is used here as a catch-all term notwithstanding the variety of such organisations in Ireland.

In fact, since independence, agencies have tended to appear and accumulate in an ad-hoc manner in Ireland. Also, the Whitehall common law administrative tradition inherited in Ireland has scope for a range of types of public organisation – such as commissions, advisory bodies, tribunals, statutory and non-statutory corporations, and companies limited by guarantee. They also perform a wide variety of tasks (e.g. service delivery, regulatory functions, research or contracting for services) across a multitude of policy arenas (agriculture, environment, social welfare etc.). Therefore a defining characteristic of Irish agencies is their resistance to conceptual or formal classification.

Research identifies the development of Irish agencies over the last century as one of gradual acceleration from a slow start (Verhoest et al. 2010: 84-8) and it is only since the 1990s that a 'wave' of agency establishment has occurred in Ireland. Indeed, a study by McGauran et al. (2005: 51), which was the first systematic attempt to map the agency landscape in Ireland, estimated that over 60 per cent of national agencies were established post 1990 (the equivalent figure for this period for sub-national agencies rises to 80 per cent (MacCarthaigh 2007: 24)). In their analysis of state organisations, Hardiman and Scott (2010: 176) also identify this recent mushrooming in agency numbers. Briefly, a number of reasons can be attributed to this growth in numbers, including requirements of EU membership (particularly for regulatory bodies), public sector reforms and social partnership commitments. Political responsiveness also played an important role, as governments in an expanding economy wished to demonstrate their commitment to addressing new emerging policy issues and public tasks by creating agencies. State agencies have contributed much to Irish society and government. In its review of the Irish public service, the OECD states that:

> Agencies have given the Irish Public Service additional capacity and flexibility to deliver services during a time of major growth in public spending and increased citizen expectations. In addition, agencies have allowed governments to involve more stakeholders in participative management, to bring needed skills into the Public Service, and allowed the Government to increase the number of staff working in the Public Service without giving the impression of building up a "bureaucracy" (2008: 308).

However, the OECD also found that the process of agency creation in Ireland has not occurred as part of a structured programme of delegation and decentralisation of authority as has happened as part of public sector

---

[1]   This section and the following section on methodology are largely taken from MacCarthaigh (2010)

reforms in some other countries. Instead, reforms in the Irish administrative system have coincided with an ad-hoc expansion in the organisational complexity of the state.

In response to the OECD review, and particularly the subsequent economic and financial crisis that developed at the end of the 2000s, the ad hoc growth of agencies was put under scrutiny and calls for rationalisation of state agencies were common. Announced as part of the Public Service Reform Plan 2011-13 (DPER, 2011), an agency rationalisation programme was put in place aimed at making a contribution to the overall reform objective of delivering a public service that was more efficient and integrated.

The 2011 Public Service Reform Plan set out two specific commitments in relation to the rationalisation and reform of state agencies: to implement 48 rationalisation and reform measures; and to critically review proposals for a further 46 measures by end June 2012. On completion of these reviews, the Government decided in late 2012 to implement a further 25 measures. A study conducted by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER, 2014) sets out the agreed rationalisation measures and outlines progress with regard to implementation. The purpose of this paper is to provide evidence-informed commentary on these developments. To this end, we present here findings of a recent update of an Institute of Public Administration database of the national non-commercial state agency population and examine some recent trends and developments.

Methodology and population for the study

In 2004, the Institute of Public Administration's research division developed a database and carried out a survey of the complete agency population. This survey was updated in 2007. This database and these surveys, the first comprehensive mapping of the contemporary agency landscape in Ireland, formed the basis for a number of publications by the Institute[2]. Subsequently MacCarthaigh (2010) updated the database regarding national non-commercial state agencies. The current study further updates the national non-commercial agencies database.

As no strict or widely accepted definition exists as to what constitutes a 'state agency' in Ireland, considerable variety exists in terms of the basis for classification of public sector organisations, which results in often sharply conflicting views as to how many public service organisations there are under the aegis of Irish government departments. The difficulty of classifying state agencies in Ireland was noted by the OECD's (2008) report on the Irish public service, which drew attention to the consequences of this for their management and governance.

In reviewing the current landscape of agencies in Ireland we do not confine ourselves solely to those organisations that are formally statutorily independent of government, but include also those organisations that, by virtue of their remit and/or practical autonomy in the performance of their functions, are understood to be operating with various degrees of independence from central controls. This is in keeping with previous research conducted by the Institute into commercial and non-commercial agencies, which considered as state agencies those organisations that display the following characteristics:

- They are structurally differentiated from other organisations
- They have some capacity for autonomous decision making
- They have some expectation of continuity over time
- They perform some public function
- They have some personnel
- They have some financial resources

---

[2] See for example McGauran, A-M.; Verhoest, K. & Humphreys, P. (2005) The Corporate Governance of Agencies in Ireland: Non-commercial National Agencies (IPA: CPMR Research Report No.6); MacCarthaigh, M. (2007) The Corporate Governance of Regional and Local Public Service Bodies in Ireland (IPA: CPMR Research Report No.8) and MacCarthaigh, M. (2009) The Corporate Governance of Commercial State-owned Enterprises in Ireland (IPA: CPMR Research Report No.9)

The study therefore includes not only those organisations existing at 'arm's length' from their parent department (and who operate with or without a governing authority or board) - but also bodies that operate within departmental structures but who enjoy some forms of autonomy not shared by other divisions of the department. As they are funded directly by their parent department and many are staffed by established civil servants, some of the organisations included here would not be considered as 'agencies' in day-to-day terms by their funding department. There are also other special cases – for example, the Referendum Commission appointed by the then Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government is in practice independent and has an intermittent existence.

Some further clarifications are necessary. The study does not consider as agencies important constitutional offices such as the Office of the Attorney General and the Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General, and also excludes offices under the remit of ministers of state. Neither does it include those state-owned enterprises that are explicitly commercial in focus, nor individual hospitals or third-level institutions. Nor does it include a number of private bodies that operate under public authority. It also excludes local and regional organisations, cross-departmental teams, tribunals of inquiry, task forces, non-statutory advisory committees, the judiciary, defence forces, Garda Síochána, co-operative societies and voluntary organisations, European institutions and international organisations. We have also excluded quasi-autonomous units of agencies except where they are of particular national importance and enjoy some autonomy. The seven North/South bodies established as part of the 1998 Good Friday Agreement are included and allocated to the relevant responsible departments.

The database was developed using the previous database as a starting point, and also other authoritative secondary sources including Ireland A Directory[3]; the Irish State Administrative database (http://isad.ie); the Office of the Comptroller & Auditor General Index of Non Commercial State Agencies; the Central Statistics Office 2014 Register of Public Sector Bodies; the Revised Estimates for Public Services; and extensive searches of departmental and individual agency websites.

---

[3]   Up until 2016 this publication (published by the Institute of Public Administration) was known as the Administration Yearbook & Diary.

2. STATE AGENCY REORGANISATION: 2010 - 2015

Since a previous review of national non-commercial state agencies in 2010, there have been significant changes in the agency landscape. As at the end of 2015 there were 257 agencies shared across the 16 government departments and the Office of the Attorney General. Appendix 1 gives the details[4].

62 agencies have been terminated since 2010 (see Appendix 2). For the vast majority of these terminations, the functions previously carried out by the agency were transferred or merged into another organisation. Some were transferred into departments: for example, the functions of Culture Ireland were absorbed back into the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht; and the Children Acts Advisory Board functions were transferred to Department of Children and Youth Affairs. Some agencies were merged to create new bodies (see below) or to be absorbed into other agencies (for example Comhar merged into the National Economic and Social Council). Only 10 agencies ceased to exist altogether.

25 new agencies have been created since 2010. Of these, 14 are primarily the result of mergers of older agencies or transfer of functions to a new agency. For example the Irish Research Council merged from the research councils for science, engineering and technology and for the humanities and social sciences, and the Workplace Relations Commission merged from the Labour Relations Commission, National Employment Rights Authority, Equality Tribunal and Employment Appeals Tribunal. 11 are completely new agencies:
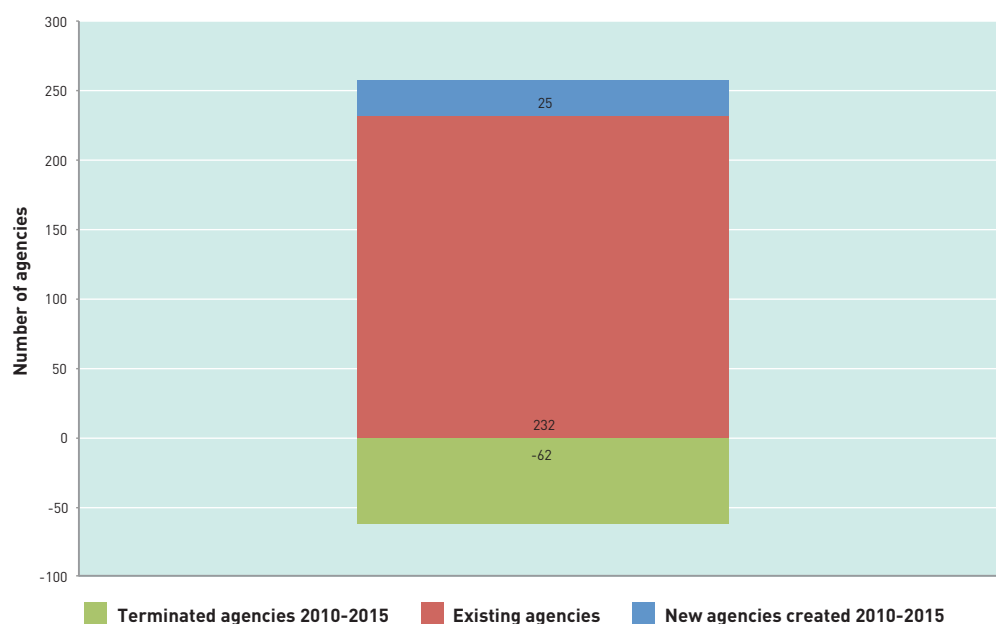
- Peatlands Council
- Residential Institutions Statutory Fund Board - Caranua
- National Oversight and Audit Commission
- Pyrite Resolution Board
- Credit Review Office
- Irish Fiscal Advisory Council
- ReBo - Credit Union Restructuring Board
- Microfinance Ireland
- Charities Regulatory Authority
- Insolvency Service of Ireland
- Pensions Council

These new agencies to a large extent indicate the priority issues facing government during the period in question. For example the establishment of the Credit Review Office, Irish Fiscal Advisory Council, ReBo-Credit Union Restructuring Board, Microfinance Ireland and the Insolvency Service of Ireland can all be said to have been strongly influenced by the economic and fiscal crisis of recent years.

The overall picture is summarised in Figure 2.1. Allowing for both the new agencies created and the agencies terminated, there has been a 13 per cent reduction in the number of national non-commercial agencies between 2010 and 2015.

[4] The number of national non-commercial agencies in existence in 2010 (294), differs from the 249 listed in MacCarthaigh (2010). This is because of a number of agencies identified in the course of this study which were not included in the 2010 review.

In terms of the concentration of agencies within departments, the department which has by far the most national non-commercial agencies under its remit is the Department of Justice and Equality, with 46 agencies under its control (see Figure 2.2). There are four other departments that each has between 20 and 30 agencies under their control: Health (28); Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (27); Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (25); and Education and Skills (24). At the opposite end of the spectrum there are three departments each responsible for five or less agencies: Taoiseach (5); Defence (4); and Foreign Affairs and Trade (3)[5].
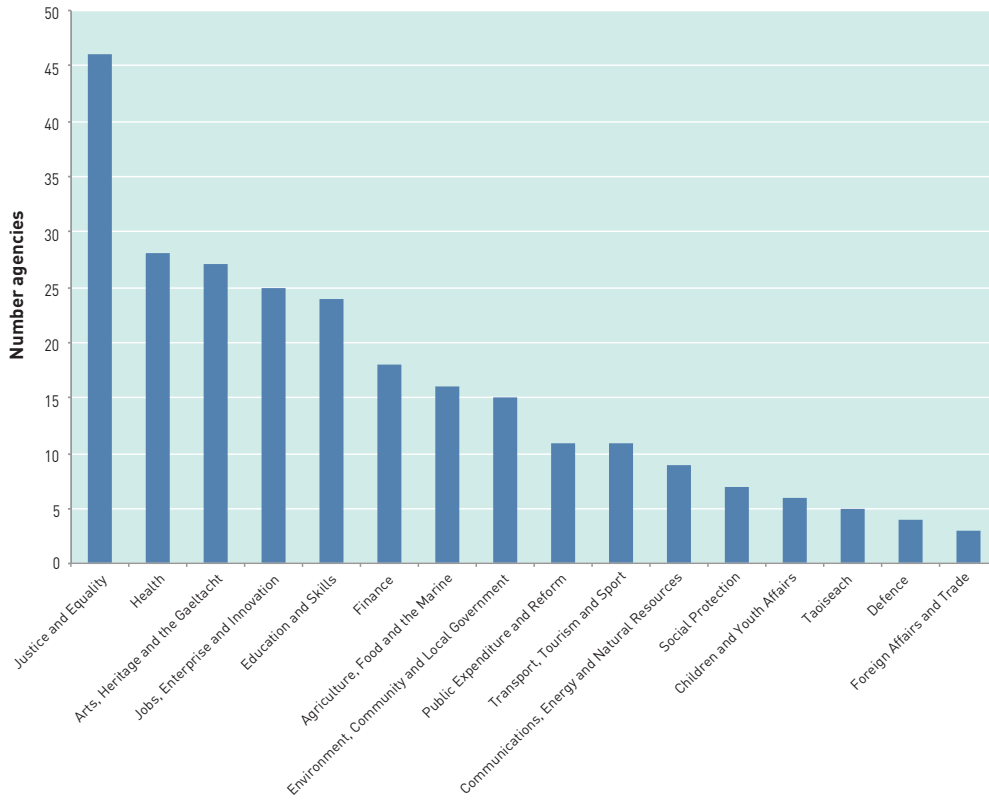
The department that had most agencies terminated over the period 2010 to 2015 was the Department of Education and Skills, which had 11 agencies terminated. Of these 11, 4 were merged into QQI – Quality and Qualifications Ireland and 2 into the Irish Research Council. The Department of Environment, Community and Local Government had 10 agencies terminated over the period under review, and the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation had 9 agencies terminated.

The departments that gained the most new agencies since 2010 are Education and Skills and Environment, Community and Local Government, with 4 new agencies each.

The number of agencies under the control of each department is one indicator of how responsibility is shared out between departments, but only one. For example, while the Department of Children and Youth only has responsibility for 6 national non-commercial agencies, one of these is Tusla – the Child and Family Agency. Tusla has approximately 4000 staff and a budget of €676 million. This is clearly of a completely different size and scale to many other agencies.

---

5   As noted, this study sets out the position at the end of 2015. As of 1st January 2016 The Minster for Justice formally assumed responsibility for the Valuation Office and Ordnance Survey Ireland. The purpose of this change was to ensure cohesion prior to their merger with the Property Registration Authority to form new property and land administration agency, Táilte Eireann, due to take place during 2016.

FIGURE 2.2   NUMBER OF AGENCIES BY GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENT 2015

3. AGENCY GOVERNANCE

There is no clear relationship in Ireland between an agency's legal mandate, size or function and the form of governance adopted. Of the 257 agencies presented in Appendix 1, 143 (56 per cent) of them have a board, ranging in size from 3 (including the Pensions Authority) to 37 (Teaching Council) members[6]. For those state agencies operating outside of departmental structures and with boards, the average size of their boards is 10.

The remaining 114 are a mix of organisations, some of which have other governing authorities such as councils, and many which operate within departmental structures but with some degree of autonomy over and above that normally afforded to other divisions of the department due to the nature of their work. Examples include the Inspectorate of the Department of Education and Skills, the Office of Chief Scientific Adviser to the Government, Met Éireann, and the Criminal Assets Bureau. As such, these agencies are mainly staffed by civil servants, though many must employ specialist or professional staff. They normally prepare accounts as a division of their department and are not audited separately from their parent department. Also, in most cases they tend not to have to present annual reports.

As announced in September 2014, all appointments to state boards must be advertised openly on the state boards portal at www.stateboards.ie, which is operated by the Public Appointments Service. In making any direct ministerial board appointment, the minister is not necessarily confined to those who make an expression of interest. The minister may also, from time to time, decide not to fill all existing vacancies.

In the case of a number of agencies, the board appointments, while made by the minister, are not made at the minister's sole discretion. In such instances, individuals are nominated for appointment by the minister by various organisations as specified in the relevant statute of the agency concerned.
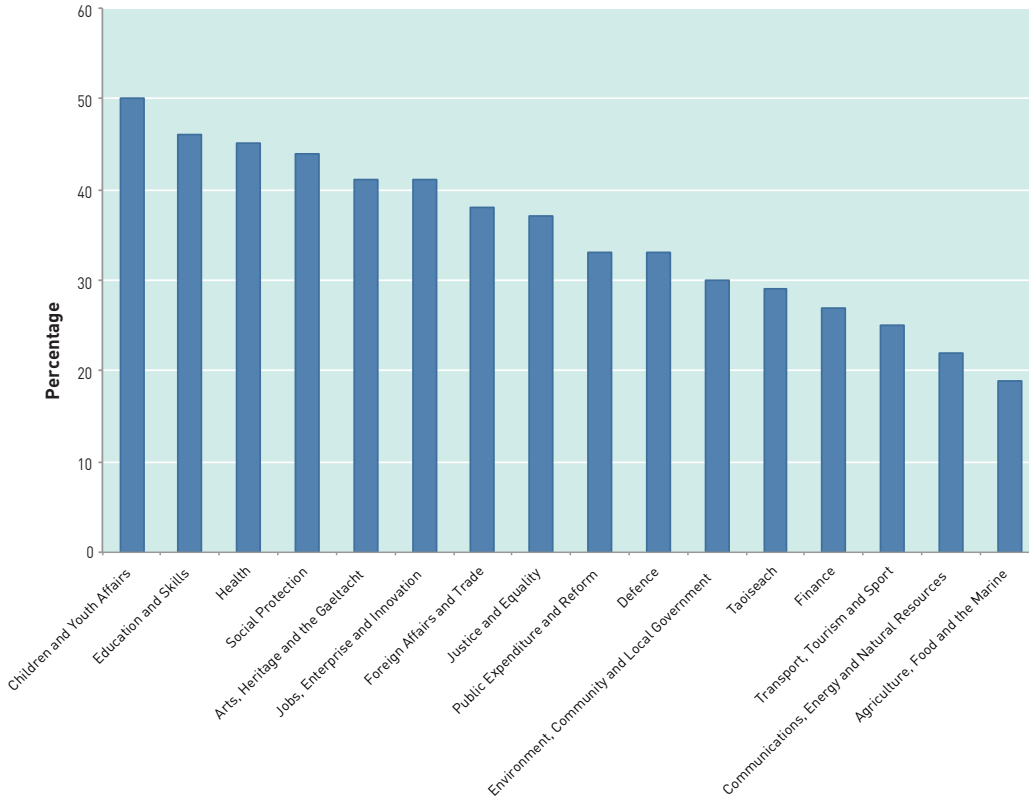
Those being proposed for appointment as chairpersons of agencies are required to appear before the appropriate Oireachtas committee prior to them being formally appointed.

In terms of gender balance, on average just over one-third of board members are women. This varies considerably, from zero (for example National Pensions Reserve Fund Commission and the Mining Board) to 100 per cent (Pensions Authority).

The percentage of women board members varies significantly not only by agency, but also from department to department as shown in Figure 3.1. The departments of Children and Youth Affairs and Education and Skills have the highest proportion of women on boards (50 and 46 per cent respectively). The departments of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources and Agriculture, Food and Marine have the lowest proportion of women on boards (22 and 19 per cent respectively).

---

[6] Information on boards is derived largely from http://www.stateboards.ie/stateboards/home.htm

FIGURE 3.1   PROPORTION OF WOMEN ON BOARDS OF NATIONAL NON-COMMERCIAL AGENCIES BY DEPARTMENT

The boards of state agencies are subject to the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, published by the Department of Finance. As well as detailing the requirements on board members and chairpersons individually and collectively, the code also recommends the development of performance frameworks between state bodies and departments. It proposes that such a framework provides an opportunity to:

• Define the expectations that Government and Ministers have of the State body (and the body's own expectations)
• Clarify the body's role in the policy sector
• Define the parameters surrounding the body's resources/income

(Department of Finance 2009: Section 11.1).

The Code is currently being updated to take account of a number of issues including:

• Oversight arrangements between government departments and bodies under their aegis
• Reporting requirements and guidelines to be observed by boards of state bodies in matters of internal governance
• New arrangements for the appointment of board members
• Recommendations of the Comptroller and Auditor General in his Special Report on the Effectiveness of Audit Committees in State Bodies (Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General, 2014)

Agencies and their boards are also subject to the Corporate Governance Standard for the Civil Service (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, 2015) published by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform in November 2015. This has a section on bodies under the aegis of departments. It states that departments and state bodies should have performance delivery agreements/service level agreements in place to act as a performance contract. Most, but not all, agencies come under the remit of Freedom of Information (FOI) legislation, the Office of the Ombudsman and audit by the Comptroller and Auditor-General. As noted above, parent departments also play a crucial role in monitoring performance, ensuring financial probity and assessing performance. While government departments have considerable responsibility for co-ordinating and monitoring agency performance, it must also be pointed out that the Houses of the Oireachtas also have a role to play in overseeing the wide range of state agencies in Ireland.

4. AGENCY MANAGEMENT: PROFILE AND VIEWS ON PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM

A study by Boyle (2014) provides information on the profile of senior management (defined as the top two or three levels of the organisation, encompassing chief executive, director and heads of division) in state agencies and on the views of senior state agency executives on public sector reform.

The basis for these findings was the Coordinating for Cohesion in the Public Sector of the Future (COCOPS) project, one of the largest comparative public management research projects in Europe. The COCOPS project aimed to provide a comprehensive picture of the challenges facing the public sector in European countries and to systematically explore the impact of New Public Management (NPM) style reforms in Europe. A cornerstone of the project was the COCOPS executive survey on public sector reform in Europe: an original, large-scale survey of public sector top executives, exploring executives' opinions and experiences with regard to public sector reforms in government.

The survey was implemented online. In Ireland, the survey was carried out in September and October 2013. For state agencies, 146 valid responses were received out of a total of approximately 800 invitations sent, giving a response rate of 18 per cent.

Unless otherwise indicated, the following categories are used to interpret the results: if a scale ranging from 1 to 7 is used, 1 means 'strongly disagree' and 7 means 'strongly agree', the percentage shares for scale numbers 1, 2 and 3 (vs. 5, 6 and 7) are added and interpreted as 'rather disagree' (versus 'rather agree'). In other cases, the percentage shares for scale numbers 1 and 2 (versus 6 and 7) are calculated and interpreted as 'agree' vs. 'disagree'.

Comparison is made throughout this section to the COCOPS sample of 10 European countries[7] and to the responses of senior Irish public servants. The COCOPS sample details can be accessed at http://www.cocops.eu/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/WP3-Comparative-Report.pdf and the Irish public service results can be found at www.ipa.ie/research.
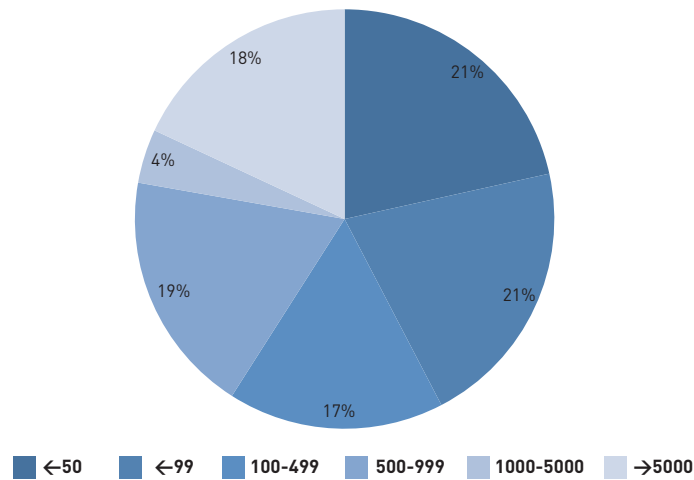
Profile of state agency senior executives

Before exploring respondents' opinions and attitudes towards their role and work in public administration, it is important to establish some of the key contextual features that set the organisational and socio-demographic background of the respondents.

Organisation size (Figure 4.1). There is a wide spread of organisation sizes amongst state agency respondents. The largest share of respondents (42 per cent in total) work in agencies employing fewer than 100 people. 18 per cent work in organisations of over 5000 people.
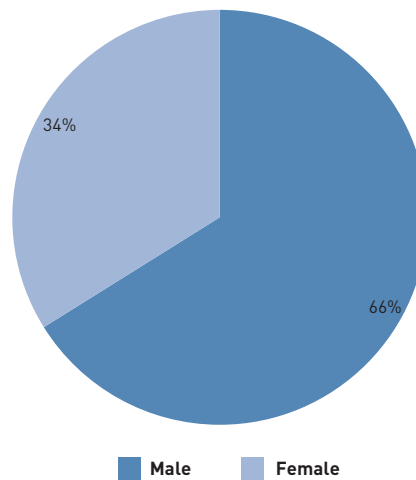
---

[7] The Netherlands, Germany, Norway, Italy, Spain, UK, France, Hungary, Belgium, Estonia

FIGURE 4.1   RESPONDENTS BACKGROUND: ORGANISATION SIZE

←50   **←99**   **100-499**   **500-999**   **1000-5000**   **→5000**
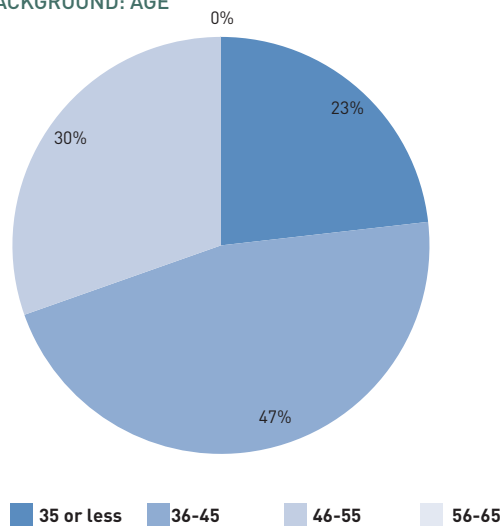
Gender (Figure 4.2). Two-thirds of agency managers are male and one-third female. This is in line with the COCOPS sample and with the general picture in the public service in Ireland at senior levels.

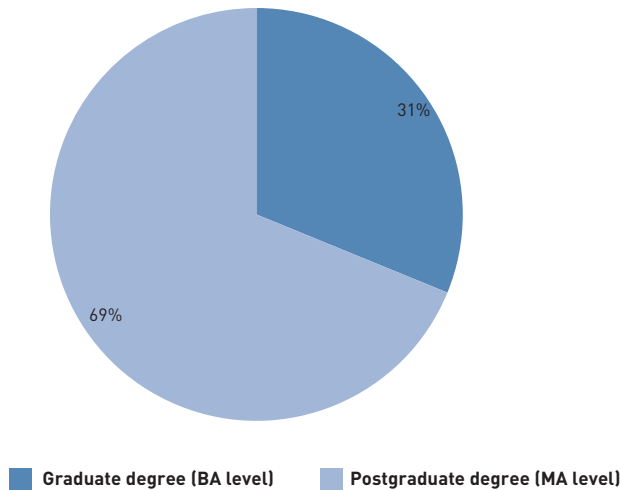FIGURE 4.2   RESPONDENTS BACKGROUND: GENDER

Male   **Female**

Age (Figure 4.3). Almost half of the agency respondents (47 per cent) are in the 46 to 55 age range. 30 per cent are between 56 and 65, and just under a quarter between 36 and 45. There are none under 35, in comparison to the COCOPS sample where there are around 6 per cent under 35. Also compared to the COCOPS sample there are slightly more aged between 36 and 55 (70 per cent as opposed to just over 61 per cent). This situation reflects in part the changes that have been taking place in the public service since the fiscal crisis in 2008. The restriction on recruitment into the public service and incentivised packages for early retirement, have meant that relatively few younger people have been coming through the system, and some more senior experienced staff have been leaving the public service.

FIGURE 4.3   RESPONDENTS BACKGROUND: AGE

Legend: 35 or less | 36-45 | 46-55 | 56-65

Education (Figure 4.4). Roughly two-thirds of agency respondents have a postgraduate degree at masters level and one-third have a graduate degree as their highest educational qualification. A significant difference with the COCOPS sample is the absence of any respondents with a doctoral degree, who make up around 15 per cent of the COCOPS sample.
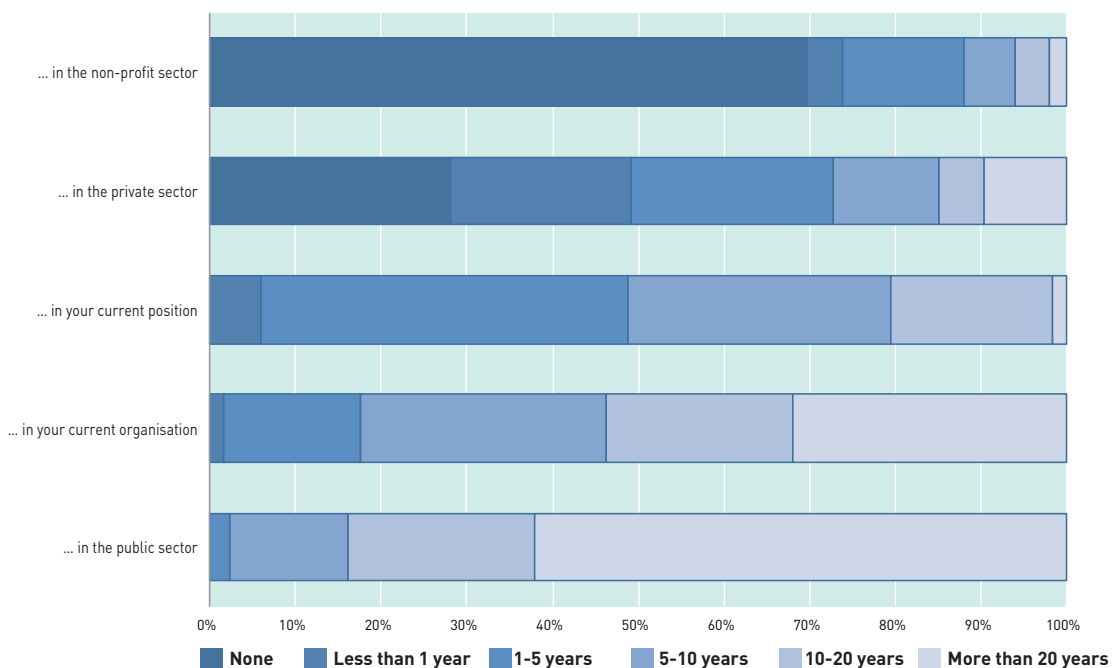
FIGURE 4.4   RESPONDENTS BACKGROUND: EDUCATION

Legend: Graduate degree (BA level) | Postgraduate degree (MA level)

Tenure (Figure 4.5). The responses show that the majority of agency respondents have spent a long time working in the public sector. 84 per cent of respondents have worked in the public sector for over 10 years, with 62 per cent having worked in the public sector over 20 years. This is broadly in line with the COCOPS sample, and slightly lower than in the Irish civil service, where 93 per cent have worked in the public sector over 10 years. Only 2 per cent of agency respondents have worked in the public sector for less than 5 years versus 14 per cent in the COCOPS sample.

Relatively low mobility in the sector is shown by the fact that 55 per cent of respondents have worked in their current organisation for over 10 years. There has been more movement in position over time. Half have been in their current position less than 5 years.
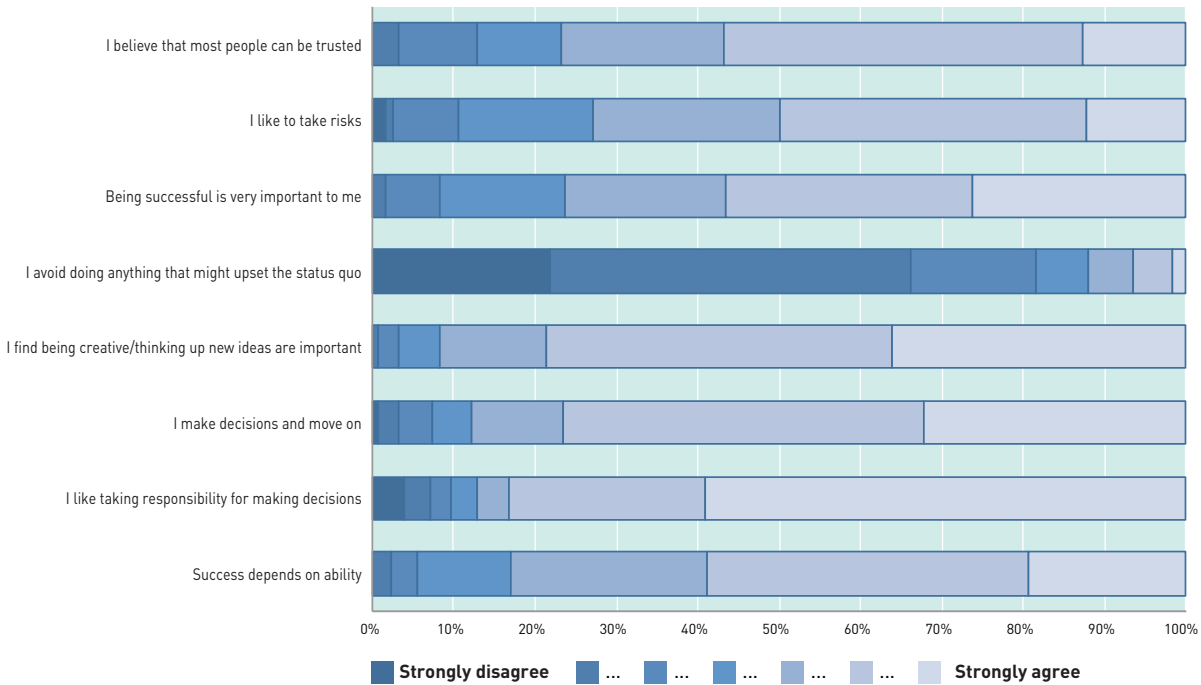
With regard to respondents experience outside the public sector, quite a high proportion of agency senior executives have some private sector experience. 72 per cent of respondents have spent some time working in the private sector, with the majority of these having less than 5 years' experience in the private sector. Previous experience in the non-profit sector is less frequent, with 70 per cent having no experience here, and those that have experience usually working there for less than 5 years. This is broadly in line with the COCOPS sample. Compared to the Irish civil service, there is slightly more experience of working in the private sector (60 per cent of senior civil servants have spent some time working in the private sector).

FIGURE 4.5   TENURE OF RESPONDENTS

Social value preferences (Figure 4.6). In a value oriented question officials were asked to what extent they agree, or disagree, with a number of statements that aims to assess their social value preferences. Agency managers are generally strongly in agreement with the statements as listed, apart from one – 'I avoid doing anything that might upset the status quo' (82 per cent rather disagree with this statement). The strongest preferences are in response to the statements 'I find being creative/thinking up new ideas are important' (92 per cent rather agreeing), 'I make decisions and move on' (90 per cent rather agreeing) and 'I like taking responsibility for making decisions' (87 per cent rather agreeing and 59 per cent strongly agreeing with this statement). The results are broadly in line with the COCOPS sample. They also contrast with the stereotypical view of the public servant as resistant to change, risk averse and unaccountable.

FIGURE 4.6 SOCIAL VALUE PREFERENCES (Q: PLEASE INDICATE HOW FAR YOU AGREE OR DISAGREE WITH THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS) (N=122-125)

Views on public sector reform

Agency senior executives were surveyed on their views as to the effect of public sector reform.
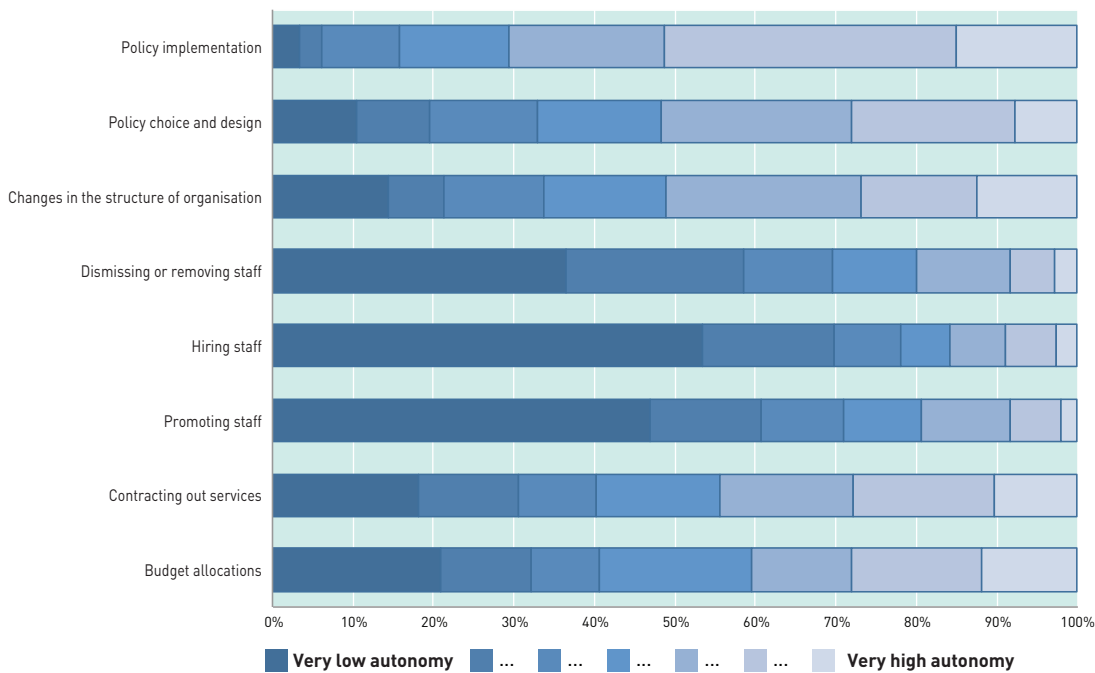
Management autonomy (Figure 4.7). The lowest degree of management autonomy is expressed with regard to hiring staff (78 per cent rather low autonomy), promoting staff (71 per cent) and dismissing or removing staff (70 per cent). Views on autonomy are more evenly split with regard to the contracting out of services and budget allocation. The highest level of autonomy is in regard to policy implementation (71 per cent rather agree they have high autonomy versus 16 per cent rather disagree).

These levels of management autonomy are generally lower than those expressed in the COCOPS sample. For example only 16 per cent feel they have a rather high degree of autonomy in hiring staff compared to 41 per cent in the COCOPS sample. A similar degree of difference is shown with regard to promoting staff (19 per cent expressing a rather high degree of autonomy compared to 38 per cent). The only exceptions are in relation to policy implementation and policy choice and design, where respondents express a higher degree of autonomy than the COCOPS sample. This reflects the fact that, historically, the management of the Irish public service has tended to be relatively highly centralised, and also that in response to the financial crisis, measures were introduced which further restricted the ability of managers with regard to issues such as staff recruitment or promotion.

Even though the levels of autonomy are lower than the COCOPS sample, they are higher than for the Irish civil service in all areas, apart from policy implementation and policy choice and design. For example 44 per cent of

agency managers feel they have rather high autonomy with regard to contracting out services compared to 28 per cent of senior civil servants.

DEGREE OF MANAGEMENT AUTONOMY (Q: IN MY POSITION, I HAVE THE FOLLOWING DEGREE OF DECISION AUTONOMY WITH REGARD TO ...) (N=143-146)
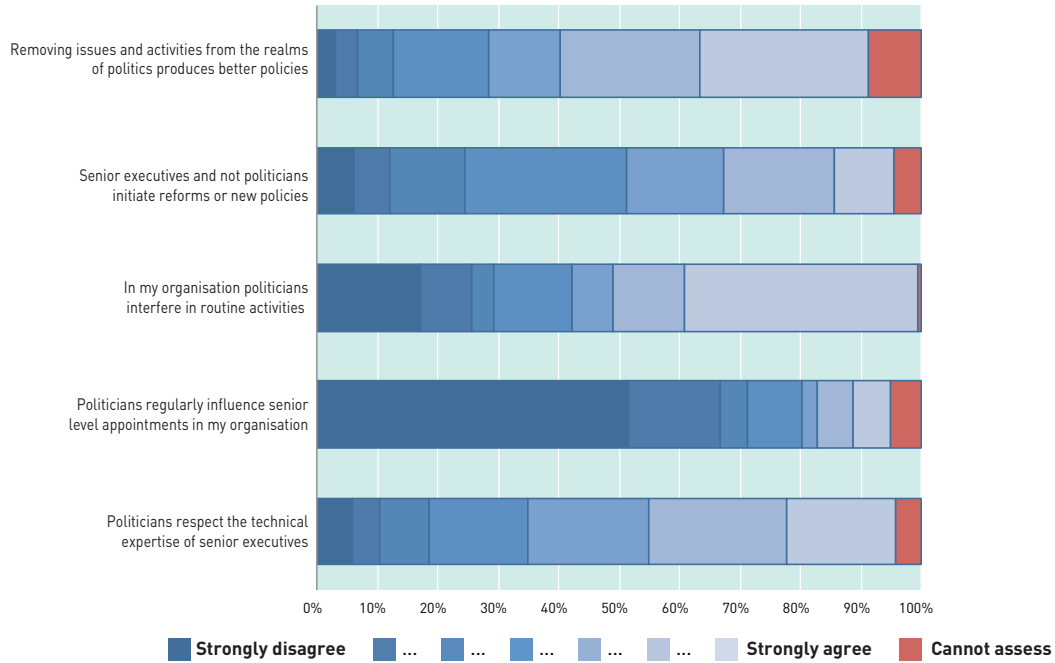

Degree of politicisation (Figure 4.8). Agency managers were asked about the degree of politicisation in their work, and the degree to which decisions are based on technical or political criteria. Roughly two-thirds (69 per cent) of respondents rather agree with the statement that removing issues and activities from the realms of politics produces better policies. At the same time, 64 per cent feel that politicians respect the technical expertise of the administration (as opposed to 19 per cent who rather disagree with this statement). More feel that the administration and not the political level initiate reforms or new policies (46 per cent rather agree with this statement versus 26 per cent who rather disagree).

64 per cent of respondents feel that politicians do interfere with routine activities. But there is a strong majority view that politicians do not influence senior level appointments (three-quarters rather disagree with the statement that politicians regularly influence senior level appointments in my organisation, as opposed to 15 per cent who rather agree).

Compared to the COCOPS sample, agency managers are much more likely to see the appointments process as independent of politicians (75 per cent rather disagree with the statement that politicians regularly influence senior level appointments versus 39 per cent in the COCOPS sample). On the other hand, respondents are more likely to agree that politicians interfere in routine activities (33 per cent rather agree versus 22 per cent). Agency managers are also somewhat more likely to agree that the administration rather than the political level initiates reforms or new policies. Compared to Irish senior civil servants, agency managers are more likely to view the appointments process as independent of politicians, but are also more likely to agree that politicians interfere with routine activities.
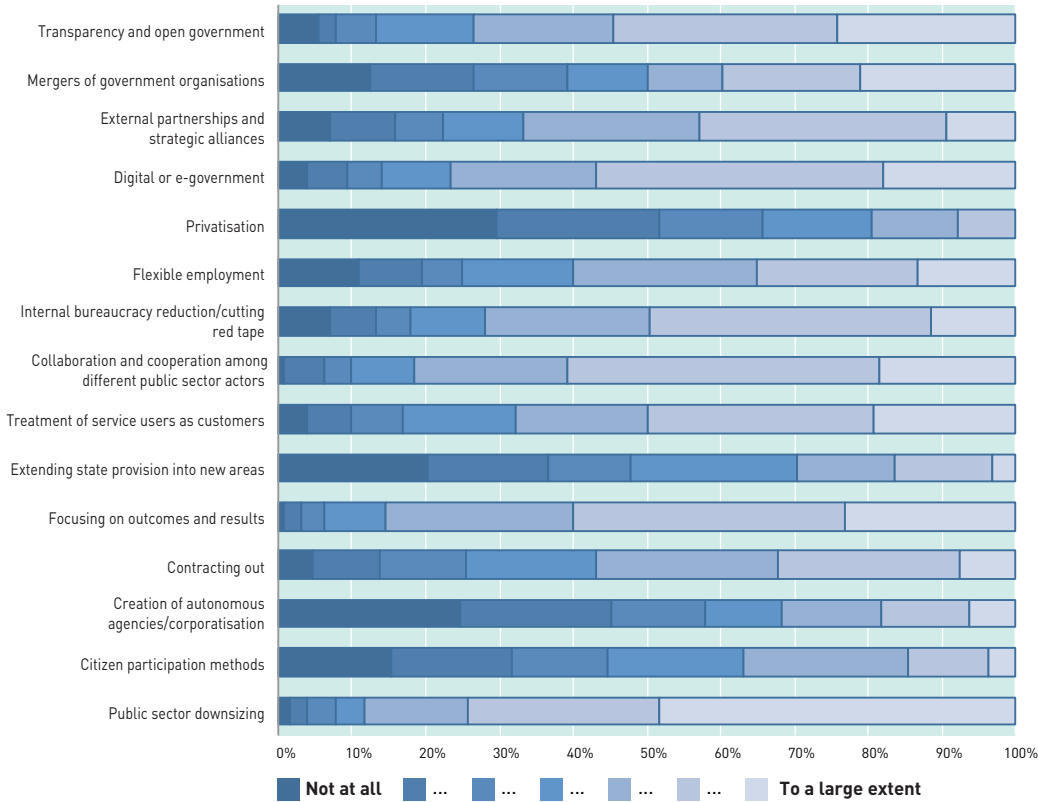
FIGURE 4.8   DEGREE OF POLITICISATION (Q: WHAT IS YOUR VIEW ON THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ...) (N=122-132)

Reform trends (Figure 4.9). 88 per cent of agency managers believe that public sector downsizing has been a rather important reform, while a similarly high percentage, 85 per cent, see focusing on outcomes and results as one of the most important reforms in their policy areas. Collaboration and cooperation among different public sector actors (82 per cent), digital or e-government (77 per cent), and transparency and open government (73 per cent), are the next three most important ranked reforms. The reforms that respondents thought least important are privatisation (66 per cent), the creation of autonomous agencies (58 per cent regard this as not important at all or only of limited importance), and extending state provision into new areas (48 per cent).

These rankings are broadly as might be expected, given the emphasis on budget cuts and staffing reductions in recent years. When compared to the average results from the COCOPS sample, agency managers rate contracting out, a focus on outcomes and results and transparency and open government as more important reform trends. Compared to Irish civil service respondents, agency managers are somewhat more likely to view the listed reform trends as more important, particularly flexible employment.
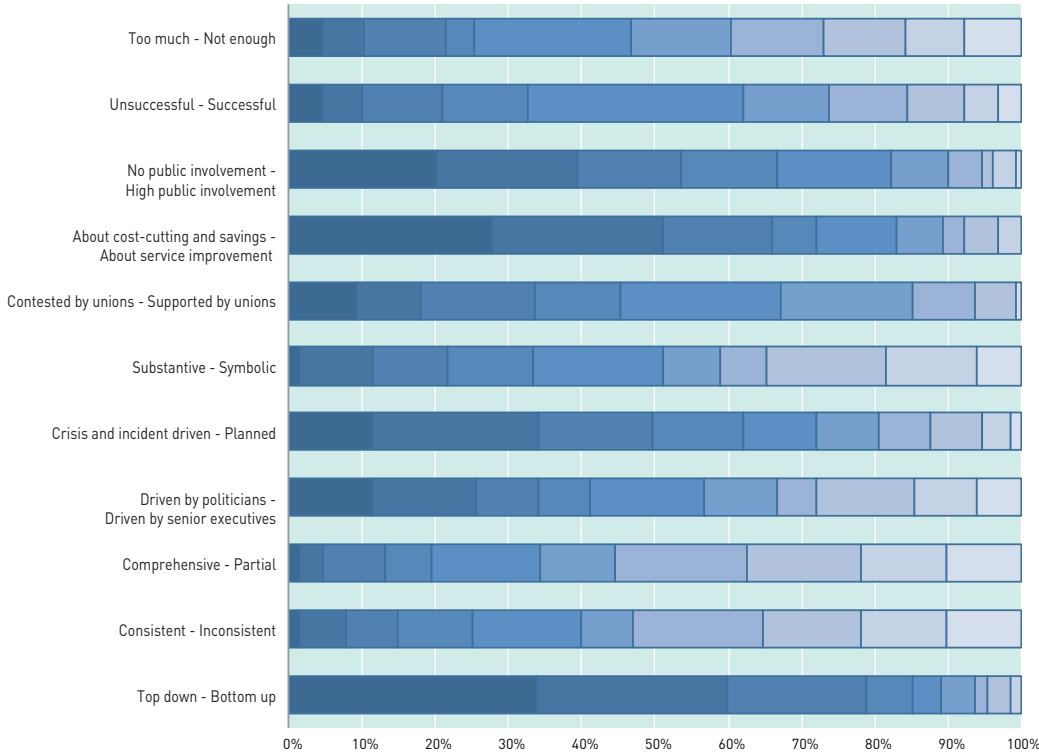
FIGURE 4.9 IMPORTANCE OF REFORM TRENDS (Q: HOW IMPORTANT ARE THE FOLLOWING REFORM TRENDS IN YOUR POLICY AREA?) (N=126-130)

Dynamics of public sector reform (Figure 4.10). The vast majority of respondents (89 per cent registering points 1-5 on the ten point scale) feel that the reforms have been more top down than bottom up. A high percentage also feel that the reforms have been more about cost-cutting and savings than about service improvement (83 per cent), and have had tended towards no public involvement rather than high public involvement (82 per cent). Respondents are also more likely to see the reforms as crisis driven, partial and contested by unions than planned, comprehensive and supported by unions. Views are relatively evenly split as to whether reforms are consistent or inconsistent, or too much versus not enough. A small majority (57 per cent versus 43 per cent) feel that the reforms are more driven by politicians than by senior executives. Respondents regard the reforms as more unsuccessful than successful (62 per cent versus 38 per cent).

The results are broadly in line with the COCOPS sample. Agency managers, however, are somewhat more likely to view the reforms as partial and symbolic. On the other hand they are somewhat less likely to say that there has been too much reform, and are somewhat more likely to see the reform process as being consistent. Compared to Irish civil service respondents, agency managers are more likely to see the reforms as unsuccessful (62 per cent versus 33 per cent), opposed by unions (67 per cent versus 40 per cent), driven by politicians (57 per cent versus 39 per cent), and crisis and incident driven (72 per cent versus 54 per cent).
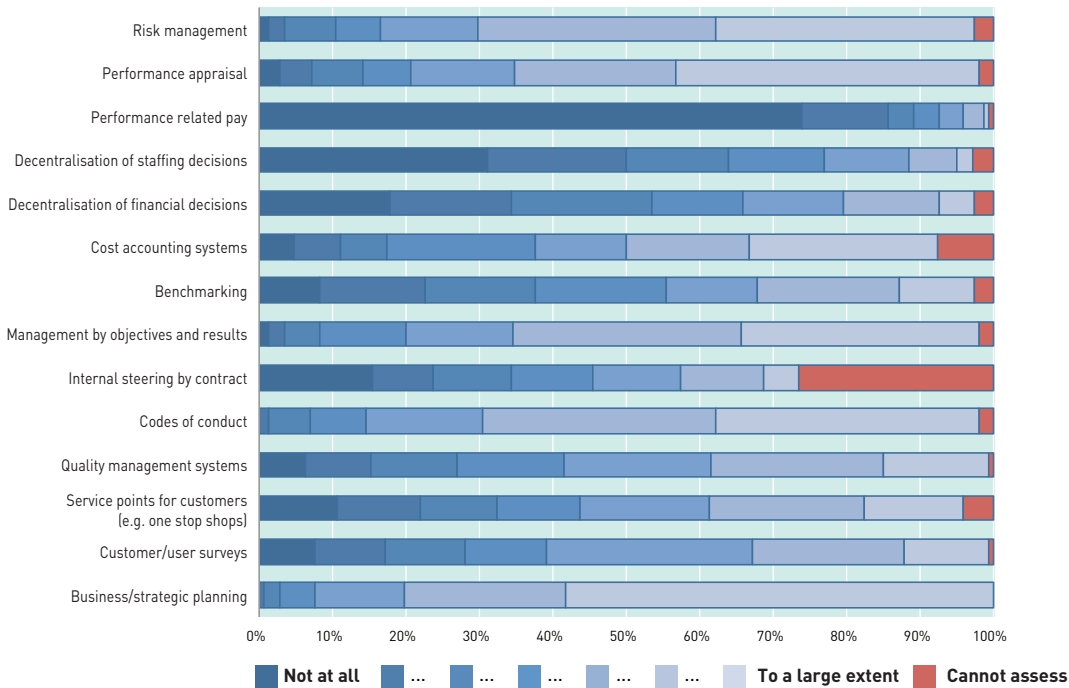
FIGURE 4.10   DYNAMICS OF PUBLIC SECTOR REFORM (Q: PUBLIC SECTOR REFORMS IN MY POLICY AREA TEND TO BE ...) (N=126-129)

Management instruments (Figure 4.11). Moving on to the organisational level, respondents were asked about the extent to which different management instruments are used in their organisation. The most commonly used of the listed instruments are business/strategic planning, codes of conduct, risk management, management by objectives and results, and performance appraisal (the percentage that indicate they use these to a rather large extent being 93, 85, 83, 80, and 79 per cent respectively). Those management instruments less frequently used include decentralisation of staffing and financial decisions (55 per cent and 66 per cent respectively indicate they use these not at all or to a limited extent). The instrument by far least frequently used is performance related pay, with 74 per cent of respondents indicating it is not used at all, and only 7 per cent indicating it is used to a rather large extent.

In comparison with the COCOPS sample, agency managers put a much greater emphasis on risk management as an important management instrument (83 per cent use it to a rather large extent compared to 50 per cent for the COCOPS sample). Respondents are also more likely to make use of business/strategic planning and codes of conduct. Conversely, respondents make less use of performance related pay (90 per cent versus 62 per cent do not use it at all or only use it to a limited extent). Compared to Irish civil service respondents, agency managers are somewhat more likely to make use of all the management instruments listed apart from performance appraisal. This is particularly the case with regard to cost accounting, customer/user surveys, and service points for customers.

FIGURE 4.11   RELEVANCE OF DIFFERENT MANAGEMENT INSTRUMENTS (Q: TO WHAT EXTENT ARE THE
FOLLOWING INSTRUMENTS USED IN YOUR ORGANISATION?) (N=105-146)

Use of performance indicators (Figure 4.12). At the individual level, around three-quarters of agency managers note that they use performance indicators to assess whether they reach their targets, identify problems that need attention, and monitor the performance of their subordinates. The categories where least respondents agree they use performance indicators is in communicating what their organisation does to citizens and service users and engaging with external stakeholders (52 and 53 per cent rather agree respectively).

For all of the statements listed, agency managers say they use performance indicators to a rather large extent to a much higher degree than the COCOPS sample average. For example, 78 per cent say they use performance indicators to assess whether they reach their targets to a rather large extent compared to 57 per cent for the COCOPS sample. 53 per cent say they use indicators to a rather large extent to engage with external stakeholders compared to 32 per cent. Compared to Irish civil service respondents, agency managers are somewhat more likely to use performance indicators, particularly with regard to managing the image of the organisation (64 per cent rather agree versus 49 per cent).

FIGURE 4.12   USE OF PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Q: IN MY WORK I USE PERFORMANCE INDICATORS TO ...)
(N=144-146)

Overall assessment of public administration (Figure 4.13). Agency managers on the whole feel that public administration has improved over the five years to the end of 2013: 59 per cent feel that it has improved, and 41 per cent feel that it has deteriorated. The majority of respondents (41 per cent marking boxes 7 or 8 on a 10 point scale) feel that public administration has somewhat improved. This finding needs to be interpreted in the context of the scale of cutbacks applied to the public service over this period. Also, it reflects more positive views on the reform process than the COCOPS sample (where 54 per cent feel it has improved versus 46 per cent who feel it has deteriorated) where in most countries cutback measures have not been applied to the same extent. So to some extent this might be seen as a rather positive assessment by agency managers. The result is in line with that of Irish civil service respondents.
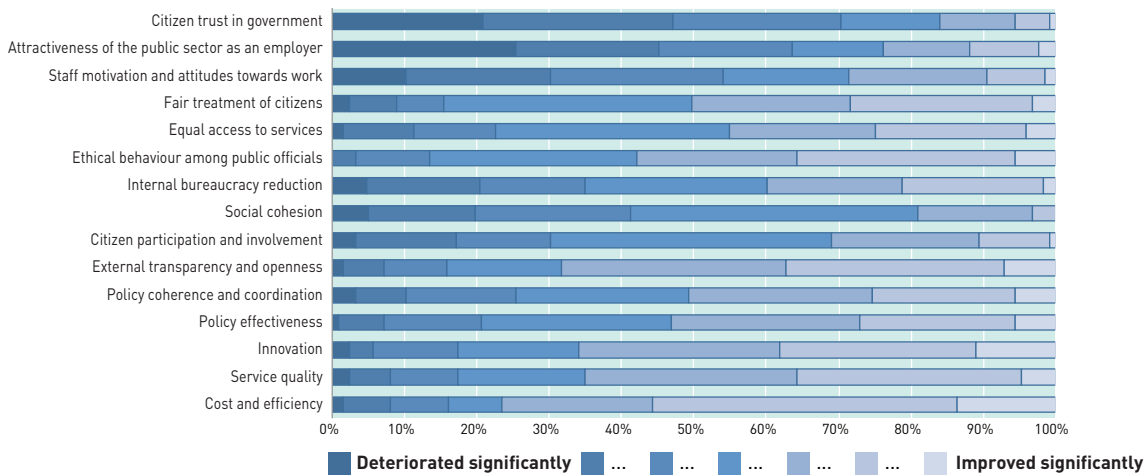
FIGURE 4.13 **OVERALL PA ASSESSMENT (Q: COMPARED WITH FIVE YEARS AGO, HOW WOULD YOU SAY THINGS HAVE DEVELOPED WHEN IT COMES TO THE WAY PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION RUNS IN YOUR COUNTRY?) (N=167)**

Developments in public administration (Figure 4.14). The dimensions where agency managers feel there has been the greatest improvement in performance over the last five years are in terms of cost and efficiency, external transparency and openness, innovation, and service quality (77, 68, 66 and 65 per cent respectively rather agree that things have improved significantly). Dimensions where respondents feel that there has been the greatest deterioration are in terms of citizen trust in government, attractiveness of the public sector as an employer, and staff motivation (70, 64 and 54 per cent respectively rather feel that things have deteriorated significantly).

Compared to the COCOPS sample, agency managers tend to be somewhat more positive in their assessment of how public administration has performed over the last five years. Notably, with regard to policy coherence and coordination, external transparency and openness, cost and efficiency, policy effectiveness, and ethical behaviour, a larger share of respondents feel things have improved (51 per cent versus 35 per cent, 68 per cent versus 53 per cent, 77 per cent versus 64 per cent, 53 per cent versus 41 per cent, and 58 per cent versus 47 per cent respectively). Conversely, agency managers are more likely to feel that things have deteriorated with regard to citizen trust in government, the attractiveness of the public sector as an employer and staff motivation (70 per cent versus 48 per cent, 64 per cent versus 45 per cent, and 54 per cent versus 41 per cent respectively).

FIGURE 4.14   **DIFFERENT PERFORMANCE DIMENSIONS (Q: THINKING ABOUT YOUR POLICY AREA OVER THE LAST FIVE YEARS HOW WOULD YOU RATE THE WAY PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION HAS PERFORMED ON THE FOLLOWING DIMENSIONS?) (N=121-126)**

5.   DEVELOPMENTS ELSEWHERE

Lessons from a study of 30 countries

In 2012 a summary of practices and lessons learned about government agencies from 30 countries was published (Verhoest et al, 2012). This report was the culmination of a four-year examination of state agencies supported by funding from the EU[8]. This section of the report is largely taken from and based upon the summary of findings from the summary report.

Creation of agencies

tudy found that there is no one best agency model that can be applied across countries. There are different reasons why agencies are created. Though in most countries agencies have commonly been set up to free or exempt specific units or services from strict regulations and procedures regarding the use of resources and management that apply to core government departments. Other reasons for agency creation include to group and build specialised expertise on a specific topic or to integrate expertise scattered across departments; to foster expert decision making independent of political interference; or because of pressures from international bodies.

In most countries, agencies, even of a similar type, differ substantially in terms of autonomy, control and governance arrangements. The creation of agencies happens in an ad hoc way, often following a case-by-case approach rather than a systematic approach based on clear criteria and checklists.

To a degree, such variety reflects the reality of differing organisational and political life within and between countries. But a more systematic policy towards agency creation is seen as necessary to support transparency and manageability of agencies. To do this governments could take a number of steps including:

- Develop an integrated vision of the structure of the public sector that outlines what the position and role of agencies should be in the wider public sector
- Develop a framework for agencification, incorporating a continuum of a limited set of agency types, with corresponding levels of autonomy, control and accountability arrangements
- Stipulate for which tasks or under which preconditions agencification in specific forms is deemed appropriate
- Build and cluster expertise about agencification processes within and across parent departments in order to enhance learning from previous initiatives for future agency creation
- Develop central registries or databases for agencies that list and categorise new and existing agencies
- Consider organising a regular review of agency status or include sunset clauses in the establishment legislation for agencies

Steering and control of agencies

In return for a degree of autonomy (including legal, managerial, policy and financial autonomy) agencies should have clear mechanisms for steering and control. There is a choice to be made between the reliance on ex ante controls (oriented to inputs and procedures) and ex post controls (oriented to results and formal and informal contracts).

In many countries ex ante controls are still predominant. Ex post and results based steering is neither widespread nor well developed. In incomplete results control systems, the formulation and evaluation of objectives and targets is done by the agency itself, or performance indicators are absent or of poor quality. Even in countries seen to be at the forefront of results control such as the UK and Sweden, problems are reported about too detailed, too inflexible and too many targets, sometimes with perverse effects, or a lack of evaluation and benchmarking of results.

Despite the limitations of results control, many researchers support the use of performance contracting. Based on experience however, contracting is most effective when used as an instrument to improve communication, exchange, negotiation and mutual learning between departments and agencies rather than contracts in a legal sense. In other words a relational form of contracting (Boyle, 1993). Targets should be selective and focused more on outcomes than outputs alone, but also enduring and consistent over time. Contracting should be combined with regular performance dialogue allowing for mutual learning and adjustments of expectations. Performance related pay or financial sanctions should only be used where performance can be clearly defined and targets used without the risk of goal displacement to the detriment of other valued goals.

Other steering instruments include formal consultation forums, performance contracts for agency directors, and informal means such as the development of personal contacts and trust. Research shows that both a lack of interest and too much interest by parent departments in agencies can negatively impact on agency trust: there is a need to balance autonomy and control in order to foster mutual trust.

Control arrangements may be tailored based on a risk assessment approach. Agencies posing high risk to government (politically sensitive, large budgets, strategically important objectives etc.) should be subject to more intensive control and reporting arrangements. Agencies that are more mature and perform well could be subject to less intensive control mechanisms.

Agency management and governance
The quality of the leadership and management skills of agency chief executives and their board members is crucial to agency performance. Governments should pay attention to the development of agency senior management and foster exchange and mobility between senior management of agencies and departments.

In many countries there is growing scepticism about the accountability of agencies towards parliament and citizens, endangering their legitimacy. Parliaments and parliamentary committees should be better equipped to hold agencies to account, for example by better planning, budgeting and reporting documents including performance information, and also by better training of parliamentarians and their support staff on how to use such documents to scrutinise performance.

Rationalisation, coordination and collaboration
Rationalisation of agencies is a common recent trend in many countries. The most important reason given for rationalisation is that agencification has led to policy fragmentation and a loss of coordination in some cases. In the climate created by the economic and fiscal crisis, cost saving was a key objective of rationalisation.

Agencies have been reshuffled, re-named, merged or transferred from one category to another. Such rationalisation has led to changes in the absolute numbers of agencies but often not so much in the variety of organisational types and governance arrangements, or the dissolution of organisations. Most agencies continue to exist, albeit under a different name or in a different configuration. Problems with continual structural reform of agencies are that the costs of change are often not factored in to the equation, and structural reform does not necessarily lead to better performance.

A number of process-based strategies have been identified that governments may use to improve coordination amongst agencies or between agencies and other organisations:

- Develop a system vision on the connections between agencies and other organisations. Make clear how policy goals are translated into implementation objectives, which can then be translated into performance agreements with agencies.
- Consolidate financial and performance reporting across agencies and departments, per policy sector or policy objective. This can be done without merging organisations. If performance information and financial information are coordinated it is easier to steer and control agencies.
- Create incentives for collaboration amongst agencies and between agencies and other organisations on a bottom-up, voluntary basis.
- Develop cross-cutting targets for agencies where appropriate to strengthen policy coherence.

Changes to the agency landscape in the UK

The UK has gone through a period of agency rationalisation since 2010 very similar to that in Ireland. Reference was made in the media to a 'bonfire of the quangos'. A summary review of the changes that have taken place has been produced by the Institute for Government (Pearson, Gash and Rutter, 2015). This section of the report is largely taken from their analysis.

Since 2010, the number of agencies (commonly referred to as arms-length bodies or ALBs) has been substantially reduced. By the end of the reform programme, it is planned that there will be 598 ALBs, 306 fewer than in 2010. The majority of ALBs that have been abolished to date are small advisory agencies, many of which have simply been reclassified. The rest of the reduction in numbers has been achieved mainly by merging existing bodies and by taking functions previously delivered by agencies back into departmental structures.

As in Ireland, new bodies such as the Office of Budget Responsibility have been set up and the NHS has been reconstituted as NHS England, an enormous executive non-departmental public body. Two new non-ministerial departments the National Crime Agency and the Competition and Markets Authority superseded existing bodies that had either been abolished or merged.

The reform programme was given statutory backing via the Public Bodies Act 2011. The act granted ministers the authority to reform, merge and abolish certain public bodies, many of which had been created via parliamentary statute, through a ministerial order. Parliament was also given the power to consider these ministerial orders.

In April 2011 the Cabinet Office launched a triennial review programme intended to scrutinise and reform the bodies which remained after the initial rationalisation exercise. The triennial review programme required that departments review all their executive non-departmental public bodies every three years with two aims: to ascertain whether the body should continue to operate at arm's length; and to evaluate the body's governance arrangements to ensure compliance with good corporate governance. The programme does not cover the entire landscape. Certain types of body are exempt from the reviews, most notably non-ministerial departments and public corporations.

Each Whitehall department has 'sponsorship' teams who manage the relationships between the department and its agencies. The reform programme placed a strong emphasis on improving the quality of sponsorship across Whitehall and the resources available to those in sponsorship roles. The Cabinet Office published guidelines on effective sponsorship and appointed a Director-General in the Ministry of Justice as sponsorship champion, charged with raising the profile of sponsorship as a specialism and promoting the spread of best practice across departments.

6. CONCLUSIONS

Agency rationalisation featured heavily in the debate on public service reform following on from the effects of the economic and fiscal crisis at the end of the 2000s. There was a strongly articulated view at political level and in the media that there were too many state agencies, acting in an uncoordinated fashion, and that there was a need for serious 'pruning' of the number of agencies and for greater efficiency and effectiveness in the governance of agencies.

This study has shown that there were notable changes in the national non-commercial state agency landscape between 2010 and 2015. 62 agencies were terminated and 25 new agencies created. The functions associated with most of the terminated agencies have continued, either within government departments or subsumed within a merged agency.

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform report on agency rationalisation published at the end of 2014 indicated that 'in essence there were two main objectives of the (rationalisation) programme: to deliver a simplified administrative landscape – with greater democratic accountability and less duplication of effort – and in doing so realise administrative efficiencies of the order of €20 million' (DPER, 2014: 1). DPER found that when the measures are fully completed there will be 181 fewer bodies operating in the Irish public service than in 2011[9]. And that in total over €24 million in annual savings will be achieved in central government when the programme is fully implemented by 2018.

This raises the question as to whether or not the initiative was worth the effort. At the macro level, the changes made and savings accruing have been relatively small in scale. To put the projected €24 million saving in context, according to the Revised Estimates for Public Services 2016, the 42 non-commercial agencies listed in the Estimates spent €786.5 million on administration costs in 2015[10]. Agencies in turn make up a small fraction of overall government expenditure and activity (for example, non-commercial state agencies accounted for 4 per cent of the public service workforce in 2015). Thus savings of €24 million, while welcome in the context of the economic environment at the time, are at best marginal with regard to overall government expenditure.
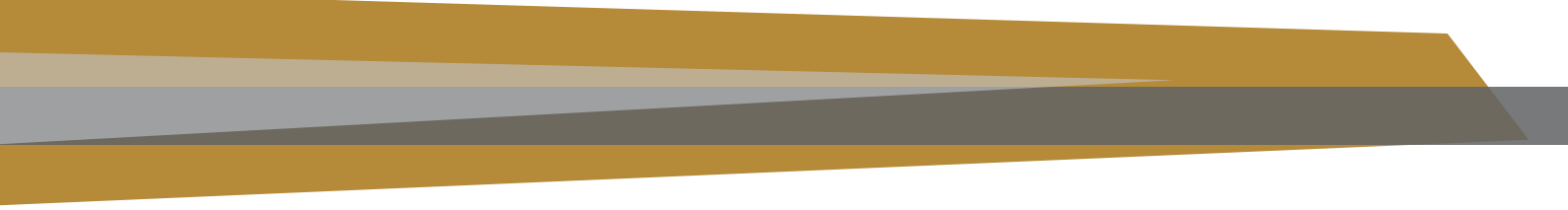
The objective of delivering a simplified agency landscape with more transparency and less duplication is hard to assess at this stage, due to limited evidence on these fronts and the fact that the changes are only in the early stages with regard to potential impact. It is likely that at the more micro level of individual organisations, some improvements have been achieved through streamlining and better coordination, and anecdotal information from some agency and departmental managers suggests this is the case.

In many ways such results are not unexpected. Agencies are often established for good reasons and the functions that they perform often need to be continued, even if a decision to terminate the agency is made. The amount of savings arising from agency rationalisation, while welcome, is always going to be small in the context of general government expenditure. And the demand for new agencies to be created to address particular issues or problems will continue. There is an understandable discussion in the media and amongst the public as to how many state agencies we should have. But to ask such a question is to ask the wrong question.

To focus the public debate simply on the number of agencies runs the danger of repeating the mistakes that led to the rapid and uncoordinated creation of agencies in recent years. Research at the Institute of Public Administration and internationally shows that agencies have often been set up in an ad hoc manner and with little thought as to

---

[9] DPER included a wider range of state bodies than just national non-commercial agencies, hence the reason for the difference with the figures produced in this report.

[10] This includes pay and non-pay administration costs but excludes pensions where these are listed separately in the Estimates.

their linkage with other parts of the public service. The lessons from European and UK practice set out in section 5 of this report outline a number of actions that can be taken to better inform decisions on agency creation and termination. What is needed is a formal, transparent and consistent framework for informing decisions on abolishing, amalgamating, setting up, resourcing and monitoring agencies. This would help create the climate for a more reasoned debate on state agencies.

REFERENCES

Boyle, R. (1993). Managing By Contract in the Public Sector. *Administration.* 40 (4): 333-346

Boyle, R. (2014). *Public Sector Reform in Ireland: Views and Experiences from State Agency Senior Executives.* IPA COCOPS Working Paper No. 2. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration

Department of Finance. (2009). *Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.* Dublin: Department of Finance

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. (2011). *Public Service Reform.* Dublin: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. (2014). *A Report on the Implementation of the Agency Rationalisation Programme.* Dublin: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. (2015). *Corporate Governance Standard for the Civil Service.* Dublin: Department of Public Expenditure and Reform

Hardiman, N. and Scott, C. (2010). 'Governance as polity: An institutional approach to the evolution of state functions in Ireland'. *Public Administration.* 88 (1): 170-89

MacCarthaigh, M. (2007). *The Corporate Governance of Regional and Local Public Service Bodies in Ireland.* Committee for Public Management Research Report No.8. Dublin: Committee for Public Management Research

MacCarthaigh, M. (2009). *The Corporate Governance of Commercial State-owned Enterprises in Ireland.* Committee for Public Management Research Report No.9. Dublin: Committee for Public Management Research

MacCarthaigh, M. (2010). *National Non-Commercial State Agencies in Ireland.* State of the Public Service Research Paper No. 1. Dublin: Institute of Public Administration.

McGauran, A-M., Verhoest, K. & Humphreys, P. (2005). *The Corporate Governance of Agencies in Ireland: Non-commercial National Agencies.* Committee for Public Management Research Report No.6. Dublin: Committee for Public Management Research

OECD. (2008). *Ireland: Towards an Integrated Public Service.* Paris: OECD)

Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General. (2014). *Effectiveness of Audit Committees in State Bodies.* Special Report 87. Dublin: Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General

Pearson, J., Gash, T. & Rutter, J. (2015). *Out of the ashes: Priorities for reforming arm's-length government in the UK.* London: Institute for Government

Verhoest, K., Roness, P.G., Verscheure, B., Rubecksen, K. & MacCarthaigh, M. (2010). *Autonomy and Control of State Agencies.* Basingstoke: Palgrave

Verhoest, K., Van Thiel, S., Bouckaert, G., & Laegreid, P. (2012). *Government Agencies: Practices and Lessons from 30 Countries.* Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan

APPENDIX 1
NATIONAL NON-COMMERCIAL AGENCIES AS AT END DECEMBER 2015

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (16)

- Agriculture Appeals Office
- Animal Remedies Consultative Committee
- Aquaculture Licences Appeals Board
- Bookmakers Appeal Committee
- Bord Bia
- COFORD
- Farm Animal Welfare Advisory Council
- Irish Sea Fisheries Board (Bord Iascaigh Mhara)
- Licensing Authority for Sea-fishing Boats
- Marine Institute
- Milk Quota Appeals Tribunal
- National Milk Agency
- Office of the Controller of Plant Breeders' Rights
- Sea Fisheries Protection Authority
- Teagasc
- Veterinary Council Ireland

Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht (27)

- Abbey Theatre
- An Coimisinéir Teanga
- An Foras Teanga/Foras Na Gaeilge
- Archbishop Marsh's Library
- Arts Council (An Chomhairle Ealaíon)
- Censorship of Publications Board
- Censorship of Publications Appeals Board
- Chester Beatty Library
- Council of National Cultural Institutions
- Crawford Art Gallery Cork
- Discovery Programme Ltd.
- Heritage Council
- Hunt Museum
- Irish Genealogy
- Irish Heritage Trust
- Irish Manuscripts Commission
- Irish Film Board
- Irish Museum of Modern Art
- National Archives of Ireland
- National Concert Hall
- National Gallery of Ireland

- National Library of Ireland
- National Museum of Ireland
- Peatlands Council
- Údarás Na Gaeltachta
- Ulster Scots Agency
- Waterways Ireland

Department of Children and Youth Affairs (6)

- Adoption Authority Ireland
- Gaisce – The President's Award
- Irish Youth Justice Service
- National Youth Work Advisory Committee
- Office of the Ombudsman for Children
- TUSLA - Child and Family Agency

Department of Communication, Energy and Natural Resources (9)

- Broadcasting Authority of Ireland
- Commission for Communications Regulation
- Commission for Energy Regulation
- Digital Hub Development Agency
- Geological Survey of Ireland
- Inland Fisheries Ireland
- Loughs Agency - Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission
- Mining Board
- Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland

Department of Defence (4)

- Army Pension Board
- Council of Defence
- Defence Forces Canteen Board
- Office of the Ombudsman for the Defence Forces

Department of Education and Skills (24)

- An Chomhairle um Oideachas Gaeltachta agus Gaelscolaíochta
- Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse
- Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies
- Grangegorman Development Agency
- Higher Education Authority
- Inspectorate (Education)
- Irish Research Council
- Léargas- The Exchange Bureau
- National Centre for Guidance in Education
- National Council for Curriculum and Assessment
- National Council for Special Education
- National Educational Psychological Service

- PDST Technology in Education
- QQI – Quality and Qualifications Ireland
- Residential Institutions Redress Board
- Residential Institutions Statutory Fund Board - Caranua
- Royal Irish Academy
- Royal Irish Academy of Music
- Skillnets Ltd.
- SOLAS - An tSeirbhís Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna
- State Examinations Commission
- Student Grants Appeal Board
- SUSI - Student Universal Support Ireland
- The Teaching Council

Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government (15)
- An Bord Pleanála
- Building Regulations Advisory Body
- Designated Area Appeals Advisory Board
- Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)
- Housing and Sustainable Communities Agency
- Irish Water Safety
- Local Government Management Agency
- Met Éireann
- National Oversight and Audit Commission
- National Traveller Accommodation Consultative Committee
- Office of the Commissioner for Environmental Information
- Pobal
- Private Residential Tenancies Board
- Pyrite Resolution Board
- Referendum Commission

Department of Finance (18)
- Central Bank of Ireland
- Credit Review Office
- Credit Union Advisory Committee
- Disabled Drivers Board of Appeal
- Economic and Social Research Institute
- Financial Services Ombudsman
- Houses of the Oireachtas Commission
- Irish Financial Services Appeals Tribunal
- Irish Fiscal Advisory Council
- National Development Finance Agency
- National Pensions Reserve Fund Commission
- National Treasury Management Agency
- Office of the Appeal Commissioners
- Office of the Revenue Commissioners

- ReBo - Credit Union Restructuring Board
- Social Finance Foundation
- Special European Union Programmes Body
- Top Level Appointments Committee

Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (3)

- Government Emigrant Services Advisory Committee
- The Ireland-United States Commission for Educational Exchange (The Fulbright Commission)
- North-South Ministerial Council – Joint Secretariat

Department of Health (28)

- An Bord Altranais- Nursing and Midwifery Board of Ireland
- Consultative Council on Hepatitis C
- Dental Council
- Dublin Dental Hospital Board
- Food Safety Authority of Ireland (FSAI)
- Health Information and Quality Authority (HIQA)
- Health Insurance Authority
- Health Products Regulatory Authority
- Health Research Board
- Health Service Executive
- Health and Social Care Professionals Council (CORU)
- Institute of Public Health in Ireland
- Irish Blood Transfusion Service Board
- Irish Expert Body on Fluorides and Health
- Medical Council
- Mental Health Commission
- National Advisory Committee on Drugs and Alcohol
- National Cancer Registry
- National Children's Advisory Council
- National Haemophilia Council
- National Paediatric Hospital Development Board
- National Treatment Purchase Fund
- Office of the Chief Medical Officer for the Civil Service
- Office of the Disability Appeals Officer
- Pharmaceutical Society of Ireland
- Poisons Council
- Pre-Hospital Emergency Care Council
- SafeFood- Food Safety Promotions Board

Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (25)

- Advisory Council for Science, Technology and Innovation
- Companies Registration Office
- Company Law Review Group
- Competition and Consumer Protection Commission

- Design and Crafts Council of Ireland
- Enterprise Ireland
- Expert Group on Future Skills Needs
- Health and Safety Authority
- IDA Ireland
- Injuries Board
- Intertrade Ireland
- Irish Auditing and Accounting Supervisory Authority
- Irish National Accreditation Board
- Irish Patents Office
- Irish Takeover Panel
- Labour Court
- Microfinance Ireland
- National Competitiveness Council
- National Consumer Agency
- National Standards Authority of Ireland
- Office of the Chief Scientific Officer to the Government
- Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement
- Office of the Registrar of Friendly Societies
- Science Foundation Ireland
- Workplace Relations Commission

Department of Justice and Equality (46)

- Charities Regulatory Authority
- Circuit Court Rules Committee
- Classification of Films Appeal Board
- Comhairle na Míre Gaile
- Commission for the Support of Victims of Crime
- Committee for Judicial Studies
- COSC
- Courts Service
- Criminal Assets Bureau
- Criminal Injuries Compensation Tribunal
- Criminal Law Codification Advisory Committee
- District Court Rules Committee
- Forensic Science Ireland (Eolaíocht Fhóiréinseach Éireann)
- Garda Síochána
- Garda Síochána Arbitration Board
- Garda Síochána Complaints Board
- Garda Síochána Inspectorate
- Garda Síochána Ombudsman Commission
- Insolvency Service of Ireland
- Inspector of Prisons
- Irish Film Classification Office (IFCO)
- Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission

- Irish Legal Terms Advisory Committee
- Irish Prison Service
- Judicial Appointments Advisory Board
- Legal Aid Board (Incl. Refugee Legal Service)
- Mental Health (Criminal Law) Review Board
- National Disability Authority
- Office of the Confidential Recipient
- Office of the Data Protection Commissioner
- Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions
- Office of the State Pathologist
- Office for Internet Safety
- Office of the Refugees Applications Commissioner
- Parole Board
- Private Security Appeal Board
- Private Security Authority
- Probation Service
- Property Registration Authority
- Property Services Appeal Board
- Property Services Regulatory Authority
- Reception and Integration Agency
- Refugee Appeals Tribunal
- Registration of Deeds and Titles Rules Committee
- Superior Courts Rules Committee
- Victims of Crime Office

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (11)
- Institute of Public Administration
- Office of the Information Commissioner
- Office of the Ombudsman
- Office of Public Works
- Office of the Regulator of the National Lottery
- Outside Appointments Board
- Public Appointments Service
- Standards in Public Office Commission
- State Laboratory
- Valuation Office
- Valuation Tribunal

Department of Social Protection (7)
- Citizens Information Board
- General Register Office
- Pensions Authority
- Pensions Council
- Pensions Ombudsman
- Social Welfare Appeals Office
- Social Welfare Tribunal

Department of the Taoiseach (5)

- Central Statistics Office
- Government Information Service
- National Economic and Social Council
- National Economic and Social Development Office
- National Statistics Board

Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport (11)

- Commission for Aviation Regulation
- Commissioners of Irish Lights
- Fáilte Ireland – National Tourism Development Authority
- Marine Casualty Investigation Board
- Medical Bureau of Road Safety
- National Transport Authority
- Railway Safety Commission
- Road Safety Authority
- Sport Ireland
- Tourism Ireland (N/S body)
- Transport Infrastructure Ireland

Office of the Attorney General (2)

- Chief State Solicitors Office
- Law Reform Commission

APPENDIX 2
AGENCIES TERMINATED BETWEEN 2010 AND 2015

Agency	Transfer/Merger from:	Department
An Foras Orgánach		Agriculture, Food and the Marine
Culture Ireland	Culture Ireland absorbed by the D/Arts, Heritage & Gaeltacht	Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
Placenames Commission	Placenames Commission functions transferred to Placenames Committee	Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
Adoption Board	Adoption Authority Ireland replaces the Adoption Board	Children and Youth Affairs
Children's Act Advisory Board		Children and Youth Affairs
Family Support Agency	Family Support Agency functions transferred into TUSLA	Children and Youth Affairs
Central Fisheries Ireland	Central Fisheries Ireland replaced by Inland Fisheries Ireland	Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
Board of Civil Defence	Board of Civil Defence transferred back into the Department of Defence	Defence
Commission on School Accommodation		Education and Skills
Education Finance Board	Education Finance Board remaining functions transferred into Caranua	Education and Skills
FÁS	FÁS has been dissolved and its functions transferred to a number of bodies, including SOLAS, Education & Training Boards, and the Department of Social Protection.	Education and Skills
FETAC – Further Education and Training Awards Council	FETAC merged into QQI	Education and Skills
HETAC - Higher Education and Training Awards Council	HETAC merged into QQI	Education and Skills
IRCHSS - Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences	IRCHSS merged into the Irish Research Council	Education and Skills
IRCSET - Irish Research Council for Science Engineering and Technology	IRCSET merged into the Irish Research Council	Education and Skills
Irish Universities Quality Board	Irish Universities Quality Board merged into QQI	Education and Skills
National Centre for Technology in Education	National Centre for Technology in Education subsumed into PDST Technology in Education (a part of PDST hosted by Dublin West Education Centre)	Education and Skills
National Education Welfare Board	National Education Welfare Board functions transferred into TUSLA	Education and Skills
National Qualifications Authority of Ireland	National Qualifications Authority of Ireland merged into Quality and Qualifications Ireland	Education and Skills
Affordable Homes Partnership	Affordable Homes Partnership merged into the Housing and Sustainable Communities Agency	Environment, Community and Local Government
An Comhairle Leabharlanna - Library Council	An Comhairle Leabharlanna - Library Council merged into LGMA	Environment, Community and Local Government

Agency	Transfer/Merger from:	Department
Centre for Housing Research	Centre for Housing Research merged into the Housing and Sustainable Communities Agency	Environment, Community and Local Government
Comhar – National Sustainable Development Partnership	Comhar merged into the National Economic and Social Council	Environment, Community and Local Government
Dormant Account Fund Disbursements Board	Dormant Account Fund Disbursements Board functions absorbed into Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government	Environment, Community and Local Government
Fire Services Council	Fire Services Council functions absorbed into Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government	Environment, Community and Local Government
Local Government Computer Services Board	Local Government Computer Services Board merged into LGMA	Environment, Community and Local Government
Local Government Management Services Board	Local Government Management Services Board merged into LGMA	Environment, Community and Local Government
National Building Agency	National Building Agency merged into Housing and Sustainable Communities Agency	Environment, Community and Local Government
Radiological Protection Institute Ireland	Radiological Protection Institute Ireland merged into the EPA	Environment, Community and Local Government
Commission for Public Service Appointments	Commission for Public Service Appointments transferred into the Office of the Ombudsman	Finance
Financial Regulator	Financial Regulator merged into Central Bank of Ireland	Finance
NDP/CSF Evaluation Unit		Finance
NDP/CSF Information Unit		Finance
NDP/CSF IT Unit		Finance
Development Education Advisory Committee		Foreign Affairs and Trade
Drug Treatment Centre Board	Drug Treatment Centre Board absorbed into the HSE	Health
Health Repayment Scheme Appeals Office		Health
National Council for the Professional Development of Nursery and Midwifery	National Council for Professional Development of Nursery and Midwifery functions absorbed into An Bord Altranais	Health
Office of Tobacco Control	Office of Tobacco Control subsumed into the HSE	Health
National Social Work Qualifications Board	National Social Work Qualifications Board functions transferred to Health and Social Care Professionals Council	Health
Children Acts Advisory Board	Children Acts Advisory Board functions transferred to Department of Children and Youth Affairs	Health
National Consumer Agency	National Consumer Agency merged into the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission	Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
Competition Authority	Competition Authority merged into the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission	Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation

Agency	Transfer/Merger from:	Department
Employment Appeals Tribunal	Employment Appeals Tribunal replaced by Workplace Relations Commission	Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
Equality Tribunal	Equality Tribunal replaced by Workplace Relations Commission	Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
Forfás	Forfás merged into the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation	Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
Irish Council for Bioethics		Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
Labour Relations Commission	Labour Relations Commission replaced by Workplace Relations Commission	Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
Management Development Council		Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
National Employment Rights Authority	National Employment Rights Authority replaced by Workplace Relations Commission	Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
Commissioners of Charitable Donations and Bequests for Ireland	Functions taken over by Charities Regulatory Authority	Justice and Equality
Equality Authority	Equality Authority merged into the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission	Justice and Equality
Equality Tribunal	Equality Tribunal functions transferred to Workplace Relations Commission	Justice and Equality
Human Rights Commission	Human Rights Commission merged into the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission	Justice and Equality
Independent Monitoring Commission		Justice and Equality
Independent International Commission on Decommissioning		Justice and Equality
Judicial Studies Institute	Judicial Studies Institute replaced by Committee for Judicial Studies	Justice and Equality
Pensions Board	Pensions Board transformed into Pensions Authority	Social Protection
Commission for Taxi Regulation	Commission for Taxi Regulation functions transferred to National Transport Authority	Transport, Tourism and Sport
Irish Sports Council	Irish Sports Council functions transferred to Sport Ireland	Transport, Tourism and Sport
National Roads Authority	National Roads Authority merged with the Railway Procurement Agency to form Transport Infrastructure Ireland	Transport, Tourism and Sport
National Sports Campus Development Authority	National Sports Campus Development Authority functions transferred to Sport Ireland	Transport, Tourism and Sport
(Valuation Office is due to be merged into Tailte Éireann)		Public Expenditure and Reform
(Pensions Ombudsman is due to be merged with Financial Services Ombudsman)		Social Protection
(Property Registration Authority due to be merged into Tailte Éireann)		Justice and Equality

APPENDIX 3
NEW AGENCIES CREATED BETWEEN 2010 AND 2015

Agency	Transfer/Merger from:	Department
Peatlands Council		Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
TUSLA - Child and Family Agency	TUSLA merged from Family Support Agency and National Education Welfare Board	Children and Youth Affairs
Irish Research Council	IRC merged from IRC for Science, Engineering and Technology and IRC for the Humanities and Social Sciences	Education and Skills
QQI - Quality and Qualifications Ireland	QQI Merged from FETAC, HETAC, National Qualifications Authority of Ireland, Irish Universities Quality Board	Education and Skills
Residential Institutions Statutory Fund Board - Caranua		Education and Skills
SOLAS - An tSeirbhis Oideachais Leanúnaigh agus Scileanna	SOLAS took on some of the functions arising from the dissolution of FÁS	Education and Skills
Housing and Sustainable Communities Agency	Housing and Sustainable Communities Agency merger from Affordable Homes Partnership, National Building Agency, Centre for Housing Research	Environment, Community and Local Government
Local Government Management Agency (LGMA)	LGMA merger from Local Government Computer Services Board, Local Management Services Board and An Chomhairle Leabharlanna	Environment, Community and Local Government
National Oversight and Audit Commission		Environment, Community and Local Government
Pyrite Resolution Board		Environment, Community and Local Government
Credit Review Office		Finance
Irish Fiscal Advisory Council		Finance
ReBo - Credit Union Restructuring Board		Finance
Health Products Regulatory Authority	Health Products Regulatory Authority re-named – formerly the Irish Medicines Board	Health
Competition and Consumer Protection Commission	Competition and Consumer Protection Commission merger from National Consumer Agency and Competition Authority	Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
Microfinance Ireland		Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
Workplace Relations Commission	Workplace Relations Commission merger from Labour Relations Commission, National Employment Rights Authority, Equality Tribunal and Employment Appeals Tribunal	Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation
Charities Regulatory Authority		Justice and Equality
Insolvency Service of Ireland		Justice and Equality
Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission	Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission merger from the Human Rights Commission and Equality Authority	Justice and Equality

Agency	Transfer/Merger from:	Department
Office of the Regulator of the National Lottery		Public Expenditure and Reform
Pensions Authority	Pensions Authority used to be Pensions Board	Social Protection
Pensions Council		Social Protection
Sport Ireland	Merger of Irish Sports Council and National Sports Campus Development Authority	Transport, Tourism and Sport
Transport Infrastructure Ireland	Merger of National Roads Authority and Railway Procurement Agency	Transport, Tourism and Sport