



pobal

government supporting communities

Briefing Document

2015







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1 Pobal the company and its object

Pobal is a not for profit company limited by guarantee. It was established in 1992 as Area Development Management Ltd (ADM) by the Irish Government, with the agreement of the European Commission, as an intermediary company working on behalf of Government to support local social and economic development in Ireland.

Over time, our work has evolved with developments in Government policy and the needs of the groups and communities. The company name changed to Pobal in 2005.

The company is governed by a board of directors appointed by the Irish Government. They give their time and expertise on a voluntary basis. Pobal's work is guided by a strategic plan and annual business plans that reflect the requirements of the specific years in question.

The programme for government - Government for National Recovery 2011-2016, the Action Plan for Jobs 2012, Pathways to Work and the Comprehensive Review of Expenditure are the main policy contexts that frame the work of Pobal.

Pobal works on an all-island basis, with offices in Dublin, Monaghan, Cork, Clifden, Sligo and Letterkenny and at the end of 2014 there were 220 staff employed by the company. The company has a framework agreement with the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government and programme-specific service level agreements with a number of other Departments.

Reporting accounts are subject to audit by the Comptroller and Auditor General.

2 Programmes that we manage on behalf of Government

Currently, Pobal provides management and support services to 25 programmes for several Government Departments, EU and other bodies, as listed below.

The table shows Pobal costs as a percentage of grants paid to beneficiaries however this metric is a simple measure as the level of administration costs does not always vary in a purely proportionate way with total grants paid.

There can be a significant fixed element in administrative burden i.e. activities that must be carried out regardless of programme scale.

Programmes differ in terms of the administrative activities required depending on the nature of the scheme e.g. direct payment to beneficiaries/ payments to local implementation bodies or payments by other bodies but administrative work undertaken by Pobal and/or compliance functions.



Funding Distributed by		2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014 (based on draft accounts)
Number of Programmes		17	17	18	17	18	24	25
Amount distributed directly to beneficiaries	Pobal	€346.9m	€345m	€273.5m	€257m	€300m	€310m	€337.2m
PEACE III	SEUPB*	€5.2m	€3.0m	€3.1m	€3.6m	€4.6m	€3.3m	€3.0m
Early Child Care and Education (ECCE Scheme) – Compliance Function	DCYA**			€153.5m	€163.0m	€175.0m	€175.0m	€175.0m
Total grants		€352.1m	€348m	€430.1m	€423.6m	€479.6m	€488.3m	€515.2m
% Admin on funding administered by Pobal		5.01%	4.38%	4.70%	5.06%	4.40%	4.32%	4.16%
% Admin (total grants)		5.60%	5.13%	3.35%	3.33%	2.95%	2.90%	3.03%

Beneficiary Organisations

Pobal relationship with our beneficiary organisations depends on the service requirements of our funders. These include 'contract/case management' which includes application, appraisals, contract management, payments, finance and non-financial monitoring - service delivery, beneficiary support etc. Pobal on behalf of DCYA also provide a compliance function where Pobal carry out compliance visits to beneficiary organisation in receipt of DCYA funds.

Contracts / case management (circa)		4,000	4,000	3,500	3,000	2,400	2,400	2,600
Compliance (ECCE scheme)	DCYA**			4,000	4,300	4,400	4,400	4,400

* Special EU Programmes Unit

** Department of Children and Youth Affairs – Payments are made directly to beneficiaries by these organisations however Pobal has a management and verification role in respect of the programmes.



Department of Environment, Community and Local Government

Local & Community Development Programme; Dormant Accounts Fund; EU Programme for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE III); Scheme to Support National Organisations in the Community and Voluntary Sector (SSNO).

Department of Social Protection

Community Services Programme; Rural Social Scheme; Tús; Disability Activation Programme; Gateway.

Department of Children and Youth Affairs

Area Based Childhood Programme (ABC); Childcare Capital Programme 2014; Community Childcare Subvention (CCS Programme); Childcare Education & Training Supports (CETS Programme); The Learner Fund; 2014 National Free Pre-school Year in Early Childhood Care and Education (ECCE Programme - Compliance); City & County Childcare Committees; National Voluntary Childcare Organisations; National Childcare Investment Programme (NCIP Capital Programme); National Early Years Access Initiative (Co-funded by Atlantic Philanthropies and Mount Street Club); Youth Service Grant Scheme (YSGS); Comhairle na nÓg Development Fund; National Early Years Quality Support Service (Better Start); The Learner Fund.

Department of Justice and Equality

Equality for Women Measure; European Integration Fund; European Refugee Fund.

Programmes currently managed by Pobal are detailed in the appendix.



3 Pobal Services

At the heart of Pobal's services there is a common approach founded on:

- A principle of supporting partnership approaches to decision-making and coordination between communities, State agencies and other stakeholders;
- A rigour in transparency and accountability in the financial control and systems employed by Pobal and required of beneficiaries in receipt of funds;
- A recognition that individuals, groups and communities, who are not able to participate in the labour market or access and participate in a range of services, require additional supports to facilitate their participation;
- A commitment to resourcing Government Departments to respond to policy through the provision of data, analysis and good practice learnt from the programmes we manage;
- The ability to bring a store of related programme knowledge, experience and expertise to managing new business/programmes.

The exact nature of Pobal's programme management activities is determined by the objectives of each individual programme.

Examples of this diversity of programme purpose include:

Multi-annual revenue and actions funding

For local development and social inclusion measures undertaken by Local Development Companies (LDCs) and Urban Partnerships. To support community based local service delivery; Community Services; and Childcare provision.

Capital grants

Childcare Capital Programme; NCIP Capital Programme; Dormant Accounts; PEACE.

Project funding

Dormant Accounts and PEACE projects, for innovative and service integration/coordination; projects for Refugees and Migrants under European Refugee Fund/European Integration Fund; and innovative projects through the Equality for Women Measure.

Specialist support

Facilitation and coordination of public and voluntary service provision; Mentoring support to 14 Local Authority led Peace Partnerships on both sides of the Border.

Subvention funding

Community Childcare Subvention Programme (CCS).

Payroll services

For low income farmers on the Rural Social Scheme (RSS) and unemployed people on the Tús and Gateway Programmes.

The value of funding contracts can range from a few thousand Euros to capital and multi-annual revenue funding, ranging from hundreds to millions of Euros.

Garda vetting

Pobal is a Registered Organisation with the Garda Central Vetting Unit since 2009. Many of the organisations funded by Government through Pobal are involved in work with children, the elderly and vulnerable adults and do not have access to an Authorised Signatory. Pobal is well placed to fill this gap in the sector and currently has three authorised signatories. The service is offered free of charge to groups and organisations funded through the programmes we manage.



4 Recent Developments

New business

In 2014, The Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government asked Pobal to take on the management of the Support Scheme for National Organisations (SSNO) and a new call for applications was issued. The scheme provides multi-annual funding to national organisations towards core costs associated with the provision of services. Priority is given to supporting national organisations providing services to disadvantaged target groups.

Pobal worked in conjunction with DCYA, the Department of Education and Skills, and other stakeholders, towards establishing a national quality support service for early education and childcare services. The service, branded as 'Better Start' recruited a National Manager in July 2014. Three Service Coordinators and 30 Early Years Specialists were recruited in the last quarter of the year.

Another DCYA initiative which commenced during 2014 was the launch of a 'Learner Fund'. The Fund offered existing early years staff a subsidy towards the cost of early years courses at Level 5 or Level 6 in order to achieve the new minimum qualifications to be introduced from September 2015.

System development

Work began on developing a new online system, the Programmes Implementation Platform (PIP). The objectives of PIP are to reduce paperwork and duplication of effort, simplify administration and enable the three national childcare funding programmes to be managed more effectively and efficiently. Phase 1 was launched in 2014.

The number of registered children in ECCE held on PIP amounted to circa 66,000 at the end of 2014. In addition 10,000 contracts relating to the Childcare Programmes were also maintained on PIP.

The first phase of HUB, Pobal's central CRM database for beneficiary information and case management, went live in June 2014.

It represents a significant first step in achieving the long term objective of having a centralised common system platform for the management of all current and future funding programmes

Phase one of the CSP Online system went live in September. This allows for the completion and reviewing of the half yearly returns online. The June and December Community Services Programme (CSP) returns for 2014 were also submitted online.

External partners

Pobal continues to work in partnership with a number of Government Departments as members of the OECD Local Economic and Employment Development (LEED) and has most recently been involved in a project on Local Youth Employment Strategies. This was undertaken in co-operation with the Department of Social Protection, Department of Children and Youth Affairs, Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government, Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation and the Department of Education and Skills. The final report is available on Pobal's website.

Cost savings

In 2008 Pobal administered €346.9M in funding to beneficiaries and our administration fee was 5.81%. In 2014 we administered approximately €337.2m (from draft accounts) and our equivalent administration budget was 4.16%. Pobal's overall administration budget is a composite of individual programme management fees negotiated annually as part of our Service Level Agreement (s) with our respective funders.

Since the autumn of 2008 Pobal initiated and continues to implement a cost cutting programme to reflect our reduced administration budget and to ensure our organisation is delivering on the government's reform agenda. Our priorities are to:

- reduce costs;
- restructure the organisation in order to maintain efficient and effective services within reduced budgets; and
- to protect front line services to beneficiaries.



During this period, Pobal reduced staff numbers from 280 and introduced cost saving measures that included pay cuts. More recently we have implemented additional pay cuts for higher earners, increased working hours, reduced annual leave and other related productivity measures which are aligned to those in the Haddington Road Agreement. Our grading and pay structures are aligned to the Civil Service grading and pay structures. The company ensures that the salaries of all staff adhere to the recommended guidelines.

Change management

As part of our commitment to service improvements (while working within the parameters of our budget) Pobal initiated a comprehensive change management programme that continued into 2014. It resulted in the creation of a new Executive Management Team and a restructuring of our work into four Directorates underpinned by specialist units. As part of this programme, we also reviewed our business processes to ensure they are effective within our new structures and introduced standardisation where appropriate. The overall aim of our change programme is to:

- provide the best value for money for our service;
- enhance our interactions with both our funders and beneficiaries;
- make economical and resourceful use of available resources including technologies;
- support and develop our Board and staff as key resources in the successful delivery of our service and the sustainability of our organisation, and;
- ensure Pobal is fit for purpose within a fluid operating environment.

The key challenge for Pobal is to continue to remain true to our core values while keeping our cost base as reasonable as possible and continuously improving our service offer to our varied stakeholders.



Programme Appendix

A. Early Education & Childcare

Pobal provides a range of services and supports to and on behalf of the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), primarily across a range of early education and childcare related programmes listed below:

- Early Years Capital Programme 2014
- The Community Childcare Subvention (CCS) Programme
- The Childcare Education and Training Supports (CETS) Programme
- The Free Preschool Year in Early Childhood Care & Education (ECCE) Programme
- City and County Childcare Committees (CCCs)
- National Voluntary Childcare Organisations
- Comhairle na nÓg Development Fund

Further details on the above programmes can be found on the EEC section of Pobal's website at: www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/EarlyEducation-andChildcare/Pages/Home.aspx

B. Youth Affairs Programmes

Funding was for fit-out, refurbishment works or building enhancement projects for the start-up of new Youth Cafés. The youth affairs programmes are listed below:

- Youth Services Grant Scheme
- Youth Cafés

Further Details:
www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/youthcapitalprogrammes/Pages/default.aspx

C. National Early Years Access Initiative

The National Early Years Access Initiative (NEYAI) is a collaboration between a number of funding partners namely, the Department of Children and Youth Affairs (DCYA), the Department of Education and Skills (DES), the Mount Street Club Trust, The Atlantic Philanthropies and the Board of Pobal.

The NEYAI is a four year initiative to improve access to and practice within early year's services through interagency collaborations. It is a tailored intervention to fund 11 local demonstration projects.

Further details on:
www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/NationalEarly-YearsAccessInitiative/Pages/default.aspx

D. Local & Community Development Programme

The Local and Community Development Programme (LCDP) is delivered on behalf of the Department of Environment, Community and Local Government. The programme aims to tackle poverty and social exclusion through partnership and constructive engagement between Government and its agencies with people in disadvantaged communities.

Further details on LCDP section of Pobal website at: www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/LocalCommunityDevelopmentProgramme/Pages/Home.aspx

E. Community Services Programme

The Community Services Programme (CSP) is delivered by Pobal on behalf of the Department of Social Protection (and was until 2010 under the aegis of the Department of Community Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs). The programme currently supports circa 400 community based enterprises to deliver practical local services to their communities and in so doing, provide employment to unemployed people, especially those 'far from the labour market'. The funding provided under CSP constitutes a contribution to the salaries of 289 managers and 1690 full-time-equivalent staff (FTEs).

Further details on CSP page of Pobal website: www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/CommunityServicesProgramme/Pages/CSP%20Home.aspx



F. PEACE III Programme 2007-2013

The Special EU Programmes Body (SEUPB) - the Managing Authority for the PEACE Programme - has contracted Pobal in consortium with the Community Relations Council Northern Ireland (CRC) to deliver within the following key area of the PEACE III Programme:

Theme 1.2 'Acknowledging and Dealing with the Past' – concerned with building upon the capacity of individuals to deal with the transition to peace and reconciliation and ensure that victims and survivors of the conflict are able to deal with the past on their own terms.

Further details on:
www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/Peace/Pages/default.aspx

G. Rural Social Scheme (RSS), Tús, & Gateway

RSS

The Rural Social Scheme (RSS) is sponsored by the Department of Social Protection (and was until 2010 under the aegis of the Department of Community, Rural & Gaeltacht Affairs). The scheme provides part-time employment to low-income farmers and fishermen (or their spouses) that are in receipt of social welfare payments. The employment provides services of benefit to rural communities. Pobal carries out a payroll function, on behalf of the Department, and operates a help desk facility for the Implementing Bodies.

Further details:
www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/RuralSocialScheme/Pages/RSS%20Home.aspx

Tús

Pobal administers Tús, the Government's new employment initiative for long-term unemployed people. Tús offers one year placements with community and voluntary organisations, co-ordinated and managed locally by local development companies, Udaras na Gaeltachta and other implementing bodies. It uses the same administrative systems and structures as the Rural Social Scheme allowing efficient delivery and avoiding reduplication.

Further details:
www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/TUS/Pages/default.aspx

Gateway

Gateway is an activation initiative of the Department of Social Protection, launched in 2013 and managed through City and County Councils. Gateway provides short-term quality and a suitable working opportunity for people who unemployed while at the same time are carrying out beneficial work within communities, and contributes to the management of the Live Register.

Further details:
www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/TUS/Pages/default.aspx

H. Equality for Women Measure 2010-13

The EWM is a positive action programme for women, which aims to foster greater gender equality. The strategic aim of the Measure is to advance the role of women in the Irish economy and in decision-making at all levels in accordance with the National Women's Strategy 2007-2016. The program provides grant funding to organisations on an annual basis for specific projects which foster gender equality under three strands:

Strand 1: Access to Employment
Strand 2: Developing Female Entrepreneurship
Strand 3: Career Development for Women in Employment

Further details:
www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/EqualityForWomenMeasure/Pages/default.aspx

I. Integration Funds

The 'Integration Funds' comprise the European Integration Fund (EIF) and the European Refugee Fund (ERF).

The European Integration Fund (EIF) is a European Union (EU) programme that supports the integration of 'Third Country Nationals' in Member States. In Ireland, the EIF provides funding to organisations to deliver local, regional and/or national integration, intercultural and inter-faith projects that support the active participation of Third Country Nationals in Irish society.

Further details:
www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/EuropeanIntegrationFund/Pages/default.aspx



The European Refugee Fund (ERF) is a European Union (EU) programme that provides funding to Member States to support the reception of asylum seekers, and the reception and integration of refugees.

In Ireland, the ERF provides funding to organisations to deliver local, regional and national initiatives with a focus on areas such as information provision, education, health, community development, promoting access to services and provision of training for service providers.

Further details on:
www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/EuropeanRefugeeFund/Pages/default.aspx

J. Disability Activation Programme

The Disability Activation Project (DACT) is targeted at people with disabilities in receipt of disability/illness welfare payments residing the Border, Midlands and Western Region. It is a project in the Human Capital Investment Operational Programme (2007 – 2013) funded under the European Social Fund.

The aim of the Disability Activation Project is to increase the capacity and potential of people on disability/illness welfare payments to participate in the labour market, based on a case management approach.

Further details on:
www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/dap/Pages/default.aspx

K. Area Based Childhood Programme (ABC)

The Area Based Childhood Programme (ABC) is being delivered as part of the current Programme for Government and is co-funded by the Irish Government and the Atlantic Philanthropies from 2013 to 2016. The aim of the initiative is to build on the learning to date from the previous Prevention and Early Intervention Programme cofounded by the Department of Children & Youth Affairs and the Atlantic Philanthropies.

It aims to provide interventions that break the cycle of child poverty in areas where it is most deeply entrenched and to improve the outcomes for children and young people where these are currently significantly poorer than they are for children and young people living elsewhere in the State.

The programme has a particular emphasis on improving the alignment and effectiveness of services within areas benefitting from the programme.

Further details on:
[www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/Area%20Based%20Childhood%20\(ABC\)%20Programme/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/Area%20Based%20Childhood%20(ABC)%20Programme/Pages/default.aspx)

L. Dormant Accounts Programme

The Dormant Accounts Programme came about as a result of the Dormant Accounts (Amendment) Act (2005). This allows for the use and disbursal of Dormant Accounts funding to tackle disadvantage.

Funding is targeted at three specific areas:

1. Economic and Social Disadvantage
2. Educational Disadvantage
3. Supports for People with Disabilities

Further details on Pobal's website:
www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/DormantAccountsFund/Pages/default.aspx

M. Scheme to Support National Organisations (SSNO)

The primary aim of the Scheme to Support National Organisations is to provide funding to support the core costs of a broad range of national organisations in the Community and Voluntary sector, around a number of strategic priorities.

Priority is given under the SSNO to supporting national organisations who work directly, or indirectly, with disadvantaged target groups

Further details on:
www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/SSNO/Pages/default.aspx

N. Better Start (National early years quality support service)

Better Start is a national initiative established by DCYA to promote and enhance the quality of early childhood education and care (ECEC) for children from birth to six years, in Ireland. It provides a Quality Development Service to ECEC providers in implementing Síolta (the National Quality Framework for Early Childhood Education) and Aistear (The National Early Years Curriculum



Framework) the Quality Development Service is one of a range of state funded supports aimed at enhancing the quality of early childhood education and care. Recruitment of a National Manager took place in June of 2014. Three Service Coordinators and 30 Early Years Specialists were recruited in the last quarter of 2014.

Further details on:
www.betterstart.ie

O. The Learner Fund

The Learner Fund offers existing early years staff a subsidy towards the cost of early years courses at Level 5 or Level 6. This funding supports staff working in early years services to achieve the new minimum qualifications to be introduced from September 2015.

Further details on:
www.pobal.ie/FundingProgrammes/learnerfund/Pages/default.aspx







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