

## Board Meeting

Friday, 28<sup>th</sup> February 2025 at 10:30 am  
In-person at George’s Quay House

**Present:** Catherine Heaney, Ian Power, Seamus Smith, Stephen Lycett, Fiona Ward, Mary P Corcoran, Patrick Gibbons (left meeting at 12:00pm at Item 6(a)), Claire Byrne, Catriona Curtis, Mary Dorgan, Sean Sheridan, Orlagh Nevin

**In attendance:** Graham Long, Rachel Downes, Carmel Beirne, Elsa Flanagan, Caroline Mitchell (minutes), Gary Watters (for items 5(b), 6 and 7)

**Apologies:** Teresa Blake, Bríd O’Donovan, Sarah Harte

## Minutes

Item	Agenda Description
<b>1.</b>	<b>Declaration of Interests</b>
	<p>The Chair invited Board members to declare any relevant interests. No interests were declared.</p> <p>The Chair welcomed the new Head of Division, ICT, Digital and Data, Elsa Flanagan.</p>
<b>2.</b>	<b>Board Business and Approval of Agenda</b>
	<p>Apologies were received from Teresa Blake, Bríd O’Donovan and Sarah Harte. Patrick Gibbons will leave at 12:00pm.</p> <p><u>Notices</u></p> <p>Board member Sarah Harte welcomed a baby boy in January. The Board noted congratulations to Sarah. The Board agreed that Sarah’s absence will be treated as maternity leave, and she will be entitled to remuneration. The Department of Social Protection and the Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform will be notified of this decision.</p> <p>Ian Power will be stepping down from his position on the Board. Ian thanked the Chair and Board for their support and collegiality over the last nine years. The Chair thanked Ian for his excellent contribution to the work of the organisation.</p> <p>The agenda was approved.</p>
<b>3.</b>	<b>Minutes of Previous Meeting</b>

	<p>The minutes of the meeting held on 19 December 2024 were proposed by Fiona Ward and seconded by Claire Byrne.</p> <p>It was noted that minutes from the Special Board meeting on 23 January will be included in the March meeting pack.</p>
<b>4.</b>	<b>Reports of Acting Chief Executive and Chair (for discussion)</b>
	<p><u>Trusted Information and Programme for Government</u></p> <p>The Chair noted there is a new Government, a new Minister and a new Programme for Government (PFG) in place. The Board strongly welcomed the commitment the Government has made in the PFG regarding trusted public information sources, which is to “[c]ounter disinformation through regulation and support for trusted public information sources”. The website traffic on citizensinformation.ie proves the need the public have for this.</p> <p>The Board agreed, given our role and reputation as a trusted information voice, to formally write to the new Minister, setting out our willingness to work with the Government to deliver on the commitment.</p> <p>It was further agreed that the June 6<sup>th</sup> Board meeting will take place in the Minister’s constituency of Mayo, and that the Board would invite the Minister. It would also be possible to link in with the local CIS and MABS in the region.</p> <p><u>Strategy 2023 – 2026 Mid-point Review</u></p> <p>DSP senior officials have been invited to take part in the mid-point strategy review. This is a key review which will feed into the Board’s budget 2026 processes. It is envisaged that the review will be presented at the June meeting in Mayo.</p> <p><u>CEO</u></p> <p>The Board congratulated Graham Long on his successful appointment as CEO of the Citizens Information Board.</p> <p><b>The Acting CEO Report</b></p> <p>The Acting CEO provided high-level updates based on the report provided with the meeting documents, including updates on digital clinics, service activity statistics, the digital strategy and impact framework projects, the National Traveller MABS action plan, the National Financial Literacy Strategy, volunteering in CIS, a premises issue related to ownership of a property in Coolock where leases are held by both North Dublin MABS and North Dublin CIS, and a status update on industrial relations in the various Service Delivery Companies.</p> <p><u>Digital Strategy</u></p>

	<p>The Head of Division, ICT, Digital and Data provided a high-level update on the current progress. The consultation phase is almost complete and focus groups have been held with all key stakeholders. The public survey yielded almost 1000 responses. Emerging themes are data privacy, lack of resources and language barriers.</p> <p>The next phase is to combine all focus groups and data and analyse the results. A joint meeting of the ICT, Digital and Data and the Standards and Development Committee will take place on 7 March 2025.</p> <p><u>Correspondence from NAS</u></p> <p>The Acting CEO noted that two letters had been received from NAS, the first in relation to engagement with CIB following an external evaluation of the NAS Board, and the second related to the current evaluation of NAS commissioned by CIB.</p> <p>The Board discussed the matter of the NAS Board evaluation, and it was agreed to apprise NAS that this was discussed at the Board and that it was disappointing that CIB was not consulted in the evaluation.</p> <p><u>Citizensinformation.ie and Storm Éowyn</u></p> <p>On citizensinformation.ie, the news item <i>Getting help and support after Storm Éowyn</i> has had 39,346 views and 27,322 users. The <i>Humanitarian Assistance Scheme</i> page had 80,681 page views from 1 January 2025 to 20 February 2025 and 48,357 active users. Over the same period in 2024, the page had only 219 pageviews and 152 users.</p> <p>The Board acknowledged the achievement and commended the Executive for the excellent work on providing trusted information on the matter.</p>
<p><b>5.</b></p>	<p><b>Committee Reports</b></p>
	<p><b>(a) Report from the Governance Committee, 20<sup>th</sup> February</b></p> <p>The Chair gave a high-level overview of the Committee meeting, which focused on preparation for the upcoming Board meeting, updates from the Chair or the FAR Committee, discussion around approach to strategic budgeting and review of CIB’s draft Communication Strategy.</p> <p><u>External Board Evaluation</u></p> <p>The Chair reported that the contract was awarded to the Institute of Directors Ireland. The project will proceed in conjunction with the mid-point strategy review which will set out the focus for the remainder of the strategy. A key part of the evaluation will be a review of the effectiveness of the current Committee structure which has been in place for two years, potential duplication and implications for the Executive. In conjunction with the mid-point review of the strategy this will help set the focus for the remainder of the strategy period.</p>

	<p>As Ian Power is stepping down from his role on the Board, the Committee recommended the appointment of a temporary Chair to the ICT, Digital and Data Committee to be in place until the external evaluation is complete.</p> <p><u>Communication Strategy</u></p> <p>The Committee reviewed and discussed the draft Communication Strategy. The discussion included minor suggestions for improvement, and the Committee recommended the draft for Board approval.</p> <p><b>(b) Report from the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee, 28<sup>th</sup> January</b></p> <p>The FAR Chair provided an overview of the Committee meeting, which focused on finance and risk updates, proposed changes to the structure of the risk register, progression of the Fraud Risk Framework, review of internal audit reports, approval of procurement contracts, and the FAR work plan for 2025. The Comptroller and Auditor General attended for part of the FAR meeting. There was one low finding in the management letter. The FAR has requested that internal audit findings be brought to the CIB management team.</p> <p>A proposal for a new structure and management of the risk register was presented to and approved by the Committee, whereby strategic risks will be presented to FAR at each meeting and will be owned by the CEO &amp; Heads of Division. The Board noted this as a welcome development.</p> <p>The Chair emphasised that while each Board committee should consider risks, FAR is the primary body for risk management. The provisions are outlined in the Code of Practice. There was a brief discussion regarding a discretionary budget line for SDCs for volunteer recognition, which will be further explored by the Executive and FAR with input from the auditors.</p> <p>At its next meeting in March, the committee will review the current procurement approval processes.</p> <p><b>(c) Report from the Standards and Development Committee, 26<sup>th</sup> February</b></p> <p>A note of the meeting will be provided with the meeting documents for the next Board meeting.</p>
<p><b>6.</b></p>	<p><b>Finance Matters</b></p>
	<p><b>(a) Budget Monitoring Report, January 2025</b></p> <p>The Finance management presented the management accounts. The budget for 2025 is €66.796m, which represents an Existing Level of Service (ELS) budget of €61.748m and a budget for SDC pay Claims of €5.048m.</p> <p>By the end of January, income had totalled €15.995m, of which €15.978m was Government funding and €16,818 was “other income”. Total expenditure to the end of January was €15.713m, leaving an excess of income over expenditure of €282,463.</p>

The year-to-date variance against profiled expenditure was €362,948, while income was €21,185 behind profile due to delays in receiving funding from the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the receipt of additional funding from the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).

**b) Budget Outturn 2024 (for review)**

CIB's outturn for 2024 was €61.865m, while income for 2024 was €62.372m, leaving an excess of income over expenditure of €506,815. This excess is made up of DSP funds of €436,396 and DCEDIY funds of €70,419.

**c) 2023 C&AG Management Letter (for review)**

This was reviewed by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee in January 2025. The letter contains one low finding, which relates to maintenance of purchase orders. The management letter will be sent to the DSP following this Board meeting.

It was noted by the Chair that this was a very good management letter to have received.

**d) 2023 Final Audit Certificate (for noting)**

The 2023 final audit certificate from the C&AG has been incorporated into the final signed accounts that were sent to the DSP on 2 January 2025.

**e) 2025 Budget Profile and Allocation Letter (for noting)**

The 2025 budget profile was approved by the Finance, Audit and Risk Committee in January 2025. A copy of the final allocation is included in the document library for reference.

**f) Procurement (for approval)**

The Executive sought the Board's approval to draw down from the Department of the Taoiseach's supplier framework agreement for media strategy, planning, and buying services for 2025 and subsequent years.

The previous contract expired in December 2024. The new contract duration is one year, with an option to extend for three additional 12-month periods. The estimated spend is €350,000, covering campaigns, radio, out-of-home advertising, and audiovisual media. This spend is expected to be under the Abhaile project. It was noted that, in drawing down from an existing framework, the Board's choices are limited.

The Board discussed procurement and value for money. The Executive informed the Board that, where suitable frameworks exist, CIB conducts tender competitions through the Office of Government Procurement (OGP).

The Board approved this procurement.

<b>7.</b>	<b>Risk Management</b>
	<p><b>(a) Risk Register</b></p> <p>The Finance Manager provided an overview of the top 10 risks on the CIB Risk Register. The Finance Manager provided an overview of the top organisational risks as well as risk changes and new risks added since January 2025.</p> <p>The risk register was approved.</p>
<b>8.</b>	<b>Budget 2026: Strategic Approach</b>
	<p>The approach to Budget 2026 estimates process is starting earlier this year, at today’s meeting.</p> <p>The Acting CEO gave a presentation on Budget 2026 and Strategy 2023-2026 which covered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Process and Timelines</li> <li>• Operating Environment</li> <li>• DSP Engagement</li> <li>• Key Areas for 2026</li> </ul> <p>The Board had a lengthy discussion regarding the presentation with particular focus on the Programme for Government, and the area of Protecting our Democracy, through trusted information being made available to the public. This is firmly connected to CIB’s purpose. The next strategy is due to focus on service delivery.</p> <p>The Chair pointed to the CIB response to Storm Eowyn and the related web traffic data. This is good evidence that shows CIB can mediate in a sea of disinformation. It is good validation in the current environment and a firm footing for the future Digital Strategy.</p> <p>The Chair noted it is important to get clarification from DSP on process regarding the estimates, in particular in relation to underspend.</p>
<b>9.</b>	<b>Closed Session – Acting CEO PMDS</b>
	<p>The Board met in a closed session to discuss Acting CEO PMDS. The Chair and Mary Dorgan, will oversee this.</p>
<b>10.</b>	<b>Date of next meeting</b>
	<p>The next meeting will be held in-person on <b>Friday, 21<sup>st</sup> March at 10:30am.</b></p>