

Corporate Governance for the Civil Service

Chapter 3 - Management Board and Other Governance Structures

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1. Introduction

Under the provisions of the Valuation Office Act 2001, the Commissioner of Valuation bears responsibility for the conduct and performance of the Valuation Office. The role of the Management Board is to support the Commissioner in reaching decisions on the strategic direction of the VO, the development and implementation of appropriate strategies and in meeting the corporate governance responsibilities for the Office. This document sets out the Management Board's objectives and remit, membership, responsibilities and operating procedures.

2. Board Objectives

The objectives of the Management Board are to:

- Ensure the Office achieves its strategic vision and aim;
- Ensure accountability for the Office's performance; and
- Provide assurance that the organisation is managed effectively.

3. Board Remit

The Remit of the Management Board is to:

- Set the strategic direction of the Office through providing clear corporate strategic priorities and objectives;
- Approve and publish business plans;
- Approve the VO's Annual Reports and Voted Accounts of Expenditure;
- Set the Office's standards and values;
- Ensure good governance, adequate internal control and compliance systems are in place and are supported by an effective risk management strategy;
- Lead and oversee the process of change to enhance the Office's capability to deliver on its mandate;
- Monitor the use of resources and the achievement of performance objectives as specified in the business and project plans;

- Approve all major projects and strategic initiatives and policies impacting on corporate and business plan objectives, ensuring that there is alignment with existing budgetary and resource plans;
- Approve all expenditure decisions over a limit of €100,000.
- Take corporate decisions on high level operational issues.

3. Membership of Board

- Commissioner of Valuation (Chair)
- Head of Valuation Services
- Head of Corporate Services
- Chief Information Officer
- Managing Valuers

The Management Board is chaired by the Commissioner of Valuation and in his absence by the Head of Valuation Services. The Board ordinarily meets weekly following a set agenda. Occasionally, non-members are invited to attend Board meetings to discuss particular policies and strategies and for the purpose of presenting business and operational plans.

4. Role of Board

The Management Board is responsible for the development of organisational strategy and for supporting the delivery of that strategy. This includes taking appropriate steps to ensure that business is prioritised and decisions implemented in accordance with the objectives set by the Board. While the ultimate decision making responsibility remains with the Commissioner, the Management Board shall seek to reach agreement on a consensus basis.

Ethical Behaviour

All Board members have a responsibility to act in accordance with the Civil Service Code of Ethics.

Role of the Chair

The role of the Chair is to:

- Facilitate Board meetings;
- Ensure that systems are in place to provide Board members with accurate, timely and good quality information to allow the Board to consider properly all matters before it;
- Ensure Board adherence to the principles set out in Corporate Governance Standard for the Civil Service:
- Ensure that a Board effectiveness review is carried out periodically (at least annually) and that the results of such reviews are acted upon.

Role of Management Board Members

The individual role and responsibilities of each Board member are clearly defined and agreed with the Commissioner of Valuation.

In addition, Board members have a responsibility, in association with their fellow Board members for the management and governance of the Valuation Office as a whole and should attach the highest priority to attending Board meetings and contributing constructively to the business conducted at such meetings.

In undertaking their role, each Board member must:

- Discharge the responsibilities of their particular position, taking full account of the interests of, and implications for the remits of other Board members and the Office as a whole;
- Adopt a corporate approach in participating in all Board decisions and discussions, in particular those concerned with the development of strategic and business plans and the allocation of resources.
- At Board meetings, members are expected to take a corporate view of issues whether or not they have responsibility for the area concerned and to examine and challenge all proposals before the Board in a constructive and objective manner.
- Participate fully in the process of monitoring the Office's progress towards meeting agreed objectives and targets;
- Participate in the process of policy formulation for the Office;
- Participate in, and approve the planning of budgets and financial decisions.
- Be available to participate as a member of the Audit Committee and of other committees as agreed by the Board;
- Represent the Office at external meetings and participate in inter-Departmental networks as required.

5. Board Sub Committees

Delegation of Function

The Management Board may decide to delegate certain matters for consideration by sub committees of the Board. In such an event, each committee may be chaired by a Board member with clear terms of reference, including the scope of any decision making and the reporting requirements for the Board.

6. Board Operating Procedures

Attendance

In the event that a Board member is unavailable to attend a Board meeting, there is no requirement for a deputy to attend. Other members of staff from within the Valuation Office may be requested to attend Board meetings on an *ad hoc* basis. The Board Secretariat will be in attendance to support all meetings (see below).

Support to the Management Board

The Board is provided with a Secretariat by the Management Support Services Unit.

Business of the Board

The Management Board of the Valuation Office generally meets on a weekly basis, or more often as the need arises. Meetings will normally take place on Tuesday of each week.

An agenda will be prepared by the Secretariat following consultation with the Chair, with input from individual Board members as required. The Commissioner of Valuation, as Chair, approves the agenda prior to final circulation to members.

The main categories of information considered at Board meetings will include:

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- Progress against business plan milestones;
- Performance against key performance and efficiency measures;
- Key financial data, including performance against budget, monthly monitoring and consideration of future spending plans;
- Risk Management Policy – oversight of the Risk Register;
- Strategic Human Resource issues; and
- Progress and status of major projects.

All papers for consideration by the Board are required to be with the Board Secretariat at least one day prior to a meeting for distribution to members. If papers are not sent to the Secretariat in a timely manner or are incomplete they may be held over for discussion to the following meeting.

Where urgent decisions are required between Board meetings, the relevant issue may be dealt with by correspondence.

Board Minutes

The business conducted at the Board, together with decisions reached and actions required, are recorded in minutes prepared by the Board Secretariat.

Draft minutes are normally available for approval by the Board within five working days of the Board meeting. The approved minutes of Board meetings are made available to staff internally through the Office's Intranet.