

Deputy I Gardiner  
Chair of Public Accounts Committee

***Via Email***

28<sup>th</sup> March 2025

Dear Deputy Gardiner

**Re: Learning from previous IT implementations: A Thinkpiece**

Thank you for your letter of 25 February 2025, requesting our comments on the Comptroller and Auditor General's (C&AG) paper 'Learning from previous IT implementations: A Thinkpiece'. The Executive Leadership Team welcome the points raised in this Thinkpiece, which builds on the C&AG's previous reports.

Information about how the Government is going to take forward the suggestions around the key areas in the Thinkpiece is outlined below:

- **Development of an over-arching GoJ IT Strategy**

The IT Strategy is due to be published by the end of June 2025. This will provide the strategic plans and direction areas including: IT Applications, IT Infrastructure, Networking, Data & Analytics, IT Service Management and IT Asset Lifecycle Management.

- **Better articulating the business case**

This has received a lot of attention in recent years and is subject to continuous improvement. In my short time in Government, I have been impressed with the business plans for major proposed investments or capital projects and the appraisal of those projects. I reference this in relation to the Union Street Building and Relocation project when I appeared before the Committee.

- **Improved project and programme management capabilities and skills, including stakeholder and financial management**

The GoJ programme and project delivery frameworks are included in the Public Finances Manual and already provide a strong foundation for effective governance, management and control. Requirements include, but are not limited to:

- Stage-gated methodology to ensure projects meet certain control requirements

- Monthly project financial reporting, including updates to budget, expenditure, and estimated costs to completion.
- Project change control requests that set out estimated impacts to budget, benefits and risk ahead of approval.
- All project frameworks also require stakeholder engagement at relevant times throughout the project, including defined and documented communication plans.

From 2024, the Annual Report and Accounts will include costs for the whole of each Major Project to ensure that whole life programme costs are reported.

The CPMO are undertaking a review and refresh of the Delivery Frameworks during 2025 where the 'Learning for Future IT implementations' will be further considered, where not already in place, or planned.

The Corporate Portfolio Management Office will continue to support colleagues leading projects, including Senior Responsible Owners and Accountable Officers, in improving practice across the organisation. A number of specific cross-cutting actions with target dates are recorded in the C&AG and PAC tracker. An update is already provided to the Committee quarterly.

- **Procurement and Supplier Management**

An initiative is underway to assess the Commercial Services function current working practice against the principles of effective public sector procurement. Improvements to processes and service will include:

- Procurement strategy documents to include a risk-and-cost-based analysis of all available approach options for procurement, proportionate to the scale of project.
- Review points for procurement requirements, will be further included within the established CPMO and business case stages.
- A review of existing Procurement Routes to ensure proportionality: high value, high risk procurements will attract more scrutiny, whilst low-mid value, lower-risk, higher volume procurements will follow more streamlined processes.
- Terms and conditions defined within the Procurement Strategy and included within specification of requirements. Bidders will be invited to offer contractual observations at the outset stage.
- Contractual obligations to proactively transfer knowledge to make best use of internal staff resources in future technology programmes.

- **Tracking and Realising Benefits for strategic and major projects**

Several actions are already underway to improve tracking and realising benefits, which have been informed by the C&AG's previous reports. These are recorded in the C&AG and PAC tracker and an update is already provided to the Committee quarterly. Specific deliverables, which will remain focused on Major and Strategic Projects, include:

- A Benefits Management Framework, with supporting toolkit and training.
- CPMO support to programmes and projects in benefits identification measurement, monitoring and evaluation.
- Corporate Benefits Register and Benefits Owners Register

I hope the above is a helpful summary of how the Government intends to take forward the points identified in the Thinkpiece paper.

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Andrew McLaughlin', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Andrew McLaughlin  
Chief Executive and Head of the Public Service

D +44 (0)1534 440129

E [andrew.mclaughlin@gov.ie](mailto:andrew.mclaughlin@gov.ie)