



Strategy Statement

2003-2005

Director's Foreword

The Strategy Statement for Met Éireann sets out a vision for the Service for the period up to and including 2005. It also addresses the way in which that vision will be implemented, with specific objectives listed and, where possible, time-tabled.

Met Éireann has a continuing long-term goal of providing weather services to the people of Ireland in order to safeguard life and property and to contribute to economic development and to quality of life. There are, however, particular factors which we must take into account at this particular time and which influence the strategic direction of the Service.

Among these factors are:

- The transfer of Met Éireann into the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in 2002, a move which will enable us to fit our activities into the wider national environmental framework and to contribute more effectively to the Government's objectives in this area.
- Met Éireann continues to maintain a mix of public service and commercial activities, with the public service role being our primary one. We have gathered sufficient experience of the competitive, commercial arena to facilitate a review of our commercial activities during the next two years and to determine our priorities in this field.
- Growing customer interest in weather products, in the variety of delivery mechanisms which modern technology make possible, and in presentation quality, will require a response from us that will concentrate in making our production systems more efficient and our delivery methods more versatile.
- There are particular challenges for our aviation services with pressure from the airlines to force costs down in the highly competitive, post 9/11, situation they are in, and with the implications of the European Commission's policy on a Single European Sky.
- The further roll-out of the Civil Service Modernisation programme will involve Met Éireann in finding appropriate ways to exploit the benefits of these initiatives and to contribute to Government plans for the Civil Service.

The participation of all stakeholders within Met Éireann (management, staff, Partnership Council and the members of the Steering Group on the Strategy Statement) in the preparation of this Strategy Statement was invaluable. The support and active engagement of all will continue to be crucial to the task of making this Statement a key

working document for Met Éireann and in translating its vision into Business Plans and personal Role Profiles. A mechanism for the systematic monitoring of the implementation of the Strategic Statement will be set up.

At all times the ultimate objective is to provide a better and more cost-effective service to the Irish people.

Declan Murphy
Director, Met Éireann

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Introduction

Under the terms of the Public Service Management Act (1997), each Government Department and Office is required to prepare and publish a Strategy Statement at specified intervals. Met Éireann is a Division of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government but, because of the specialist nature of Met Éireann's functions and the degree of autonomy with which it operates within the Department, it is desirable that Met Éireann produce its own Strategy Statement.

The production of this Strategy Statement continues the ongoing implementation of the Strategic Management Initiative (SMI) in Met Éireann. With the recent introduction of the Performance Management and Development System (PMDS), the landscape of Strategy Statement – Organisational Business Plan – Divisional Business Plans – PMDS is complete. The challenge now is to embed these processes in the culture and day-to-day thinking at all levels within the organisation.

Met Éireann, in common with society in general, is going through a time when the pace of change is increasing. We expect the environment in which we operate to be very different three years from now. This Strategy Statement sets out Met Éireann's expectations for change and planned responses. A great deal of flexibility and openness to new ideas will be required to achieve success and this includes a willingness to keep this Strategy Statement under continuing critical review and a preparedness to adapt our plans as required.

This Strategy Statement will be followed by Met Éireann's annual Business Plans for the years 2004 to 2005. Divisional Business Plans will then be produced in sufficient detail to allow each member of staff to identify his/her role in a thread running through the organisational Business Plan to the Strategy Statement.

Although the above represents the logical and time-sequenced production of the Strategy Statement and Business Plans, because of the high level of consultation and involvement of staff in the planning process and the size of the organisation, the reality is that there is a good deal of parallel evolution so that the completion of the Strategy Statement means that much of the work for the Business Plans is already done.

Mission Statement and Mandate

Mission Statement

Our mission is to monitor, analyse and predict Ireland's weather and climate, and to provide a range of high quality meteorological and related information to our customers.

Misean

Sé an misean atá againn ná, breathnú, miondealú agus réamhinsint a dhéanamh ar aimsir agus ar aeráid na hÉireann, agus chun raon seirbhísí meitéareolaíochta agus eolas gaolmhar den scoth a sholáthar d'ár gcustaiméirí.

Mandate

The Mission Statement implies that we, as the National Meteorological Service, will

- help to ensure the protection and safety of life and property by issuing timely public weather forecasts and warnings
- contribute effectively to national prosperity and to Government objectives by supplying relevant meteorological services to all sectors of the economy
- meet the State's obligations to provide meteorological services to the aviation sector
- ensure customer satisfaction by carefully analysing end-user feedback, and by continually improving the range and quality of our services, the cost-effectiveness of our operations and our overall standard of service
- foster a professional and supportive work environment which attracts, retains and develops committed employees
- ensure the maintenance of a high-quality and cost-effective meteorological infrastructure, consistent with national requirements and resources
- enhance the quality of our climatological archives and provide easy and effective access to our databases
- participate in the on-going development of meteorological science and its applications in collaboration with our European meteorological partners and with the wider scientific community
- contribute to the effective monitoring and good management of the natural environment

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The External Environment

Standing with the Irish public.

Met Éireann is the primary and authoritative source of weather information and services and is generally regarded as the provider likely to produce the highest quality output. A recent survey of users showed that Met Éireann's presence on RTÉ is a very important factor in this.

The changing nature of broadcasting poses challenges to Met Éireann to maintain its position and to communicate effectively with the public.

Economic Conditions.

In recent times there has been a slowdown in the rate of growth of the Irish economy. This is likely to lead to even more pressure on resources than has prevailed up to now. It may well lead to a decrease in funding. The Government plan to reduce the size of the Public Service may also have an impact.

Increasing Demands for new Services and new Delivery Methods.

The level of demand for specialised weather related services continues to increase, examples being flood risk assessment and forecasting, wind energy, pollutant transport, crop disease modelling, increasingly sophisticated media products, automated real-time or near-real-time weather data delivery, advice and assistance with weather monitoring for compliance with EPA licensing requirements. There is also a continuing and increasing interest in Climate Change and Variability issues.

There is also a demand for changes in the nature and methods of delivery of existing products and services (such as SMS services) and for the development of new services to exploit advances in technology.

The increasing popularity of the Internet as a means for weather users in general to access weather information offers Met Éireann a powerful tool to reach its customers and to provide attractive products. On the other hand, it provides a host of alternative options to customers and could reduce the profile of Met Éireann as the main supplier of weather information in Ireland.

Comparison with other European National Meteorological Services (NMSs)

Even allowing for the differences of the scale of population and of GNP, Met Éireann is one of the smallest and most stretched of Western European NMSs. The result is that Met Éireann finds it difficult to devote adequate attention to the development of new products and services and to cater for the full range of customer requirements.

With many changes taking place and differing responses in different countries to issues such as commercialisation, privatisation, public service and services to aviation, the notion of a “European Norm” for the status and mandate of the NMSs of western Europe, which had been easily identifiable in the past, has become more diffuse and less stable. Some important trends are

- Some NMSs have terminated, or are about to terminate, their commercial activities. Others appear to have become highly commercial.
- Many NMSs that have retained their commercial involvement are introducing a clear functional separation between commercial and public-service activities.
- By comparison with other NMSs Met Éireann is rather heavily dependent on income from Civil Aviation (27% of total cost in 2002).
- The level of automation (particularly of observations) is lower in Met Éireann than in most other Western European NMSs.
- The proportion of Meteorologists employed in forecasting is higher than in other NMSs.

A recent informal survey of European Meteorological Services in countries comparable in size to Ireland indicates that, by comparison, Met Éireann is seriously under-resourced, both financially and in staffing numbers. A summary is presented in the table below. It is recognised that these comparisons do not take into account the somewhat different ranges of activities and responsibilities undertaken by NMSs in different countries.

Survey results for other European National Meteorological Services

Country	Total Staff	Operations Staff	Budget (Millions Euro)
Denmark	433	290 (67%)	26.2
Finland	594	228 (38%)	38.9
Netherlands	553	283 (51%)	45.7
Portugal	470	400 (85%)	n/a
Ireland	241	149 (62%)	18.2

Increased International Co-operation

The degree of co-operation among the meteorological services of Europe continues to increase and to provide Met Éireann with opportunities for improving its services. Examples are the new EUMETSAT MSG satellite and SAF programmes; improved products from ECMWF, the EUMETNET EUCOS programme, HIRLAM and other programmes.

Scientific and Technological Advances

International and national research effort, allied to developments in high speed computing, continue to provide means of improving computer-based forecasts. Advances in meteorological instrumentation offer new or more effective ways of gathering primary meteorological information.

Increasing Commercialisation.

We have already seen the provision of weather forecasts by telephone move from being a public service to a commercial, competitive operation. The same is true of the provision of weather forecasts to the media. It is likely that this trend will continue.

As commercial activity increases in the general area of weather services, there is a greater need for Met Éireann to show transparency in relation to competition. This requirement will be more stringently enforced in the coming years because of pressure from private sector meteorological companies. Competition from private meteorological companies continues to grow. Two Irish companies and four companies from outside the state are actively competing in the market place. With technological developments and the global reach of powerful companies, resulting in their ability to service customers worldwide, competition for small NMSs such as Met Éireann will grow still more.

Services to Aviation.

The “Single European Sky” (SES) initiative of the European Commission will bring about profound changes in the way in which weather services are provided to aviation. The main likely consequences of this initiative are that:

- 1) The function of Meteorological Authority under the Chicago Convention will be separated from that of the Meteorological Service Provider. Currently, Met Éireann combines these two functions.
- 2) Adjacent national Flight Information Regions (FIRs) may be combined for the purpose of providing meteorological and other air-navigation services. This could lead to Ireland and the UK being treated as a single FIR with a single service provider.

The function of Meteorological Authority might be assigned to the Department of Transport or an independent regulator. Thus Met Éireann, as service provider, would report to an outside agency in relation to the effectiveness and efficiency of services to civil aviation. It is probable that the organisation would be required to implement a certified quality management system such as ISO9000. This is already a recommendation of Annex 3 to the Chicago Convention. It is also possible that the function of service provider could be privatised.

Apart from SES, a separate (Eurocontrol) initiative on charging for meteorological services to aviation has imposed new requirements on Met Éireann:

- 1) Calculation of charges must be on the basis of a “transparent cost-accounting system”.
- 2) It will be necessary to draw up a comprehensive inventory of facilities, services and products provided for civil aviation, with references to Annex 3 of the Chicago Convention and related documents showing that these are requirements under the Convention. Any other services to airlines must be provided on a commercial basis in competition with private suppliers.
- 3) It will be necessary to meet regularly with representatives of the airlines (IATA) to discuss the services provided and the methodology of cost determination. This is bound to result in increased scrutiny and pressure for cost reductions in the aviation area.

Taken together, these developments amount to a strong downward pressure on income from civil aviation.

Political Developments

The Northern Ireland Peace Process in particular continues to put a focus on opportunities for North-South collaboration and for British-Irish co-operation. Met Éireann is responding to this opportunity

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Opportunities and Threats

Opportunities

- The increasing demand for weather services and products presents Met Éireann with an opportunity to increase its customer base and its range of products and services.
- Continuing developments in technology and in meteorological science bring the possibility to develop new types of product, to improve the quality and usefulness of existing products, to deliver both existing and new products in a variety of ways which are more customer-friendly and to improve the efficiency of production.
- The presence in the market of other weather service providers means that Met Éireann can prioritise its areas of involvement in pursuit of its mandate.
- The implementation of better management systems and improved management information flow coming as a result of the Strategic Management Initiative provides an opportunity to more accurately focus resources in support of the organisation's strategic objectives.
- Increasing international co-operation offers the prospect of improving the quality of products through enhancements to the international meteorological infrastructure, of expanding the range of services and improving efficiency through bilateral or multilateral arrangements.
- The Irish market for weather monitoring systems as required by environmental licensing regulations has grown in recent years. Met Éireann has considerable experience and expertise in this area and is frequently the first port of call for companies seeking to set up a monitoring system. This is a potential revenue earning activity, but would require increased resources, both human and financial.

Threats

- Met Éireann must now compete with private commercial companies for the provision of many services which heretofore were made available on a near-monopolistic basis. Loss of position in market segments such as media, telephone/mobile services etc. could have a serious impact on Met Éireann's capability to deliver its basic mandate of providing public weather forecasts and warnings. Furthermore, Met Éireann overall visibility and standing in the community could be seriously affected.
- The continued slowdown in the growth of the economy represents an ongoing pressure on the funding and staffing of Met Éireann. Reduced, or even static funding levels, would have a negative impact on badly needed investment in new technology and infrastructure and on the continued delivery of a high standard of service.
- The continuing downward pressure on aviation revenue and the uncertainty associated with the future implementation of the Single European Sky policy pose particular challenges for Met Éireann's aviation activities.

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The Internal Environment

Operational Activities

Every day of the year Met Éireann produces and makes available to its customers a wide range of high quality meteorological services, delivered on time to a demanding schedule. The growth in the range and volume of services required, coupled with the staff reduction that Met Éireann has experienced over the past decade or so, has resulted in an overstretched situation, both in the operational divisions and in the support units which play an increasingly important role in helping the Service to meet its commitments.

However, opportunities for increasing efficiency have been identified and are being pursued. An example of this is the system of forecast production where a working group is currently exploring ways of improving efficiency and enhancing the capacity to increase the range of services.

Technical Infrastructure

To enable it to create its output products, Met Éireann, in common with all other National Meteorological Services, needs a high quality infrastructure of IT and meteorological facilities. Met Éireann's infrastructure, consisting of networks of synoptic and climatological stations, weather radar and satellite equipment, sophisticated IT hardware and software systems, laboratory analysis facilities, etc. positions it to produce outputs of a standard comparable with our European partners.

It is, of course, always a challenge to maintain the infrastructure and to exploit new opportunities to develop it further. There are some particular developments in hand which have the potential to enhance Met Éireann's capability and to improve efficiency, such as the deployment of the TUCSON (The Unified Climate and Synoptic Observing Network) automatic weather stations, and the availability of images and products from the new MSG weather satellites of EUMETSAT. Among the issues that will have to be addressed in the future is that the meteorological exposure of some of our existing observing sites has deteriorated over the years due to local development.

Skills Base

Met Éireann benefits from a highly skilled staff, covering a wide range of meteorology and technology. The staff have contributed not only to the development and service delivery of Met Éireann's products, but also to international developments and to

meteorological science. A recent innovation has been the establishment of the C4I Project, which offers the possibility of greatly enhancing Met Éireann's capability in the area of climate change prediction.

Efforts to maintain skill levels in a rapidly changing world are as difficult for Met Éireann as for all organisations.

The Civil Service Modernisation Programme

In common with all parts of the Civil Service, Met Éireann has embraced the innovations stemming from the Strategic Management Initiative. These include the development of Strategy Statements and Business Plans, Partnership, Quality Customer Service and PMDS. While it takes time for the benefits of these initiatives to become apparent (and the resources committed to them can add to an already strained human resource situation), the positive impacts are already evident in many ways.

For example, the level of internal communications has improved and a variety of communications are being used to inform staff, such as the Met Éireann Intranet and the well-regarded staff magazine, SPLANC. The Met Éireann website has been the subject of favourable comment from our customers. The partnership concept has taken root very successfully in the Service, while the Strategy Statements and Business Plans offer a good framework upon which to develop corporate planning and reporting. The PMDS offers staff and managers the opportunity of reviewing roles and establishing performance targets in a more systematic way than before.

Funding and Revenue

As a line division of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Met Éireann's budget forms part of that Department's Vote. For over ten years, the financial allocation by the parent department has been made within the context of an internal Administrative Budget Agreement between the Secretary General and the Director of Met Éireann. This agreement sets out a baseline of financial allocations over three years and sets out the degree of devolved authority for expenditure. The arrangement has provided stability in funding, subject to the impact of government decisions.

In practice, given that most running costs such as salaries and other commitments have little scope for reduction year on year, the amount of discretionary spending is limited and the budget is tightly stretched.

Met Éireann earns revenue through its commercial activity and its cost recovery services such as aviation. Money earned – “appropriations-in-aid” – is returned to the exchequer, while investment in revenue earning activity must be taken from the Met Éireann budget. This results in a lack of incentive (in fact, a disincentive) to revenue earning. To

ameliorate this situation, some retention of revenue has been permitted in the past and this type of arrangement must be pursued for the future.

Financial-management services are provided to Met Éireann by its parent Department. Up to the present these have consisted of traditional cash-based Government accounting. However, largely as a result of its involvement in commercial activity, Met Éireann has special accounting requirements in addition to those of ordinary Civil Service divisions.

DoEHLG is currently implementing a Management Information Framework (MIF) as prescribed under SMI. This will provide accounts on both cash and accruals bases and will facilitate greater accountability and devolution of financial responsibility in accordance with SMI. Its implementation should also be capable of providing for all of Met Éireann's accounting requirements, so that the existing Accounts Receivable and Interim Accounts Systems can be discontinued. Met Éireann is directly involved in the implementation of the MIF with a view to assisting the Department and ensuring that our needs are fully met.

The new MIF will provide improved access by management to the accounts and will enable a much higher degree of analysis of the financial data. It is expected that this will greatly enhance the use of financial information by management.

Change of Department

The transfer of Met Éireann to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government in 2002 was the first time that the Service had been moved away from the transport function (and, in particular, the aviation function) since its establishment. As such it is a major change, involving an association with a department with a different remit and with different traditions. Although the severance of the link with aviation, a core activity of Met Éireann, may be a disadvantage, the association with the environment function represents a logical progression of the expanding role of Met Éireann and of the interactions between various strands of environmental activity. There are obvious synergies with certain parts of the Department's functions such as climate change, air quality and environmental monitoring.

A matter that has been concerning Met Éireann for some years is the lack of an official definition of its public service duties. This would help to differentiate clearly between public service activity and commercial operations and is an initiative that was recommended by a report of the Comptroller and Auditor-General in 2000. The new relationship with the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government will enable Met Éireann to pursue this objective in an up to date context.

Human Resource Issues

The prevailing ethos in Met Éireann is that of a strong commitment to public service, coupled with a growing appreciation and understanding of the role that commercial activity plays in defraying the net cost of the Service to the exchequer and in enabling the

Service to contribute to the economy and to quality of life in a manner that is consistent with competition law.

There is a very high retention rate of staff in Met Éireann, indicating that staff generally find that the work and the conditions are amenable. There is a good relationship between all categories of staff, including management personnel, as exemplified by the peaceful status of industrial relations and the manner in which the partnership approach was embraced.

As can be expected, there are a number of issues concerning which some improvement is sought. One is that of the grade structure. At present, there are two meteorological grade streams and a clerical stream also. While some advancement across the grade streams is possible it is too limited and can lead to inflexibility in the options available to management, and to limited career prospects. An initiative to address this matter has made rather slow progress.

Another area of concern is that the role of the support units (both technical and administrative) is growing and while some increase in staffing levels of these units has been achieved, it is difficult to keep pace with demand.

Staff mobility is very desirable but is inhibited by the geographical dispersion of staff and by the shift premium, which renders it financially unattractive for staff to make a lateral move from a shift position to a non-shift one.

The standard of accommodation in the Service is generally good and there have been some significant improvement projects undertaken, such as that in Valentia Observatory. However, some deficiencies are also evident; for example, the Met Éireann Headquarters building in Glasnevin needs a major refurbishment.

The ongoing requirement for new staff and for contract staff requires an efficient and responsive procedure for sanctioning and recruitment, and while notable improvement has been evident due to the good work of the Office of the Civil Service and Local Appointments Commissioners, delays and inflexibility can sometimes be encountered in the process. The acknowledgement in the Sustaining Progress Agreement of the need to utilise more flexible recruitment processes in the future is welcome.

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Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths

- Met Éireann is widely regarded as the “official” and authoritative source of meteorological services and expertise in Ireland. The Met Éireann “brand” carries great value.
- Met Éireann has a complement of staff who are highly skilled and experienced in the core business of weather services including modelling, computing and instrumentation.
- There is a very high level of staff commitment to the organisation with a very high staff retention rate.
- A good level of “esprit de corps” exists among staff at all levels, including management. An example of this is the success of the Partnership Council.
- Met Éireann has established an extensive weather observation network, including many stations run by other organisations and by voluntary observers. The completion of the TUCSON automatic weather station project will deliver a first rate, versatile station for use well into the future.
- Met Éireann maintains the national Climatological Database of weather observations going back over 60 years.
- The Directorate and Management are all expert in the core business.
- Met Éireann has good links with other European Meteorological Institutes.

Weaknesses

- There is no official statutory definition of Met Éireann’s role or of its public service responsibilities.
- Funding levels are constrained and inflexible. This can preclude involvement in projects, even where there is a reasonable prospect of cost recovery or profit, since most of the income thus generated does not go into Met Éireann’s budget.
- Delegation of authority within the organisation is less than might be considered appropriate.

- Public Service procurement, recruitment and decision-making procedures make swift responses to new or changing situations difficult or impossible.
- Met Éireann is reliant on third parties to disseminate its major public service products (weather forecasts and warnings). Principal among these is RTÉ.
- Met Éireann does not enjoy the same economies of scale as some of its competitors and other national meteorological services in the provision of products.
- Production costs are high relative to those of potential competitors partly due to production processes being more labour intensive and less efficient than they might be.
- Staff resources are overstretched. In some cases this is due to outdated working practices and insufficient deployment of up-to-date technologies and modern IT solutions. Re-deploying staff resources can be difficult and the dispersed nature of the organisation adds to this difficulty.
- Existing grading structures are inflexible and inappropriate to the current needs of the organisation while demarcations inhibit the best use of staff skills. The Divisional structure can make cross-Divisional projects difficult.
- Met Éireann is insufficiently informed of the user's perspective and its ability to respond to the users' changing needs is consequently impaired.
- There is an over-dependence on undocumented knowledge residing with individual staff members who have been in a particular work area for a long time.
- There has been an under-investment in training and development.

Organisational Objectives and Strategies

The foregoing sections have set out the environment in which we operate, the challenges we face and the factors affecting our ability to meet those challenges. We now set out the specific objectives which we will pursue over the three-year period and the strategies which we will employ in their pursuit.

The primary thrust is the fulfilment of the national requirement for Public Service weather forecasts, warnings, meteorological and environmental observations and climatology, along with the research and other functions necessary to support these. These are the functions which define a National Meteorological Service. In support of this, we will endeavour to bring about improvements in our relationship with our new Department, a clearer definition of our status, public service and commercial mandates and more relevant funding arrangements. We will work to retain our main product dissemination channels and improve communication channels with the media. Substantial changes will be set in motion in the use of staffing resources, coupled with increased levels of automation and greater use of technology. We will seek to make best use of available staff through changes in grading structures and the formulation of a new Human Resources Strategy. We will continue to pursue commercial opportunities in the area of weather related services while striving to deliver all our products and services in a cost-effective manner. The challenge is to maintain and improve on the quality of service provided to our many customers. We expect to see major changes, both in the “marketplace” for weather services and in the way Met Éireann operates.

A theme which must be emphasised in all that follows is that Met Éireann’s core business involves the provision of a large range of products and services to customers and that continuing to serve our customers is the first priority. While aspiring to improve the efficiency associated with the provision of these products and services and to introduce new developments, a great emphasis will be placed on maintaining the level of service to customers. This will require a close contact with our customers and an ongoing awareness of and response to their evolving needs. It will require feedback mechanisms through the Met Éireann web site and through direct contact with staff at the National Ploughing Championships and the Boat Show. A Customer Action Plan will be produced in 2003.

We now set out, under ten main headings, the organisational objectives and strategies over the 2003 to 2005 timeframe. Where possible, objectives and measures of success are well defined and specific. However, not all objectives lend themselves to such a formulation. This does not take from their importance and it would be wrong to omit such an objective merely because it was difficult or impossible to formulate it in a particular way. The lead Divisions have been identified for each objective. This does not mean that staff in other Divisions will not be involved, but that the initiative will come from the named Divisions. In this context, the Met Éireann Partnership Council has been named as playing a lead role in some objectives. This indicates the extent to which the Council is becoming embedded in the normal operations of the Organisation.

1. Public Service Forecasting Function

1. High Level Goal

To make available to the general public of Ireland an excellent service of high quality general weather forecasts, warnings of hazardous weather and other information helpful in the prevention or mitigation of environmental disasters.

1.1 Objective: Continue to cater for the national requirements for warnings of hazardous weather.

Strategies:

- Identify on an ongoing basis weather events which could endanger the safety of life or property and issue warnings through the established mechanisms.
- Review with the relevant public authorities the thresholds for defining weather warnings and the methods (particularly modern electronic methods) for their promulgation.
- Make use of the Met Éireann web site for the dissemination of warnings.

Key Performance Indicators:

- A warning system with well-defined and up-to-date definitions of warning thresholds coupled with an efficient system for warning dissemination.
- Accuracy of the warnings as measured by a rigorous verification system.

Lead Division(s) Involved: General Forecasting.

1.2 Objective: Continue to cater for the national requirements for general public forecasts.

Strategy:

- On an ongoing basis produce forecasts and disseminate via the media and the website.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Continued output of mainstream forecast products.
- Accuracy of the forecasts as measured by a rigorous verification system.

Lead Division(s) Involved: General Forecasting.

1.3 Objective: Provide appropriate meteorological input into national emergency planning and into the handling of actual emergencies.

Strategies:

- Maintain effective liaison with national agencies and local authorities on emergency planning.
- Carry out occasional checks of the operational meteorological services required for emergencies.
- Accord highest priority to assisting in actual emergencies.

Key Performance Indicator:

- Effectiveness of meteorological assistance provided.

Lead Division(s) Involved: *General Forecasting, Research and Applications.*

1.4 Objective: Contribute to national efforts to forecast floods and mitigate their effects.

Strategies:

- Provide comprehensive meteorological guidance to local authorities and the public in relation to flooding.
- Co-operate with the OPW Review Group on Flooding and implement any recommendations pertaining to Met Éireann.
- Update the Flood Studies Report.

Key Performance Indicator:

- Accuracy of guidance issued by Met Éireann in relation to floods.

Lead Division(s) Involved: *General Forecasting, Research & Applications.*

1.5 Objective: Maintain an informative and well-designed public website

Strategy:

- Introduce a re-designed, more powerful and comprehensive website.

Key Performance Indicator:

- Volume of usage of the site by the public.

Lead Division(s) Involved: *General Forecasting, Research & Applications, Commercial.*

1.6 Objective: Maintain a well-targeted meteorological research programme aimed at improving forecasts through further development of Numerical Weather Prediction systems and their application.

Strategies:

- Continue to play a very active part in the HIRLAM 6 research programme (2003-2005) in co-operation with the Nordic countries, the Netherlands, Spain and France.
- Ensure the benefits of the HIRLAM and ECMWF forecasting suites are fully exploited through collaboration between research and forecasting personnel.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Continued involvement with HIRLAM and ECMWF and continued exploitation of their products.
- Actual, verified improvement in the meteorological guidance provided to forecasters.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Research & Applications, General Forecasting, Aviation Services.

2. Aviation Programme

2. High Level Goal

To fulfil the State's obligations to provide meteorological services to aviation and to influence future developments in this area in order to achieve the best long-term result for the State and for the aviation sector.

2.1 Objective: As the Meteorological Service Provider for aviation in Ireland, provide the services defined in Annex 3 to the Chicago Convention, Procedures for Air Navigation Services (PANS) and Air Navigation Plan Publications in an effective and efficient manner.

Strategies:

- Continually monitor the quality and nature of service provided and keep up to date with requirements as laid down by ICAO.
- Restructure the staffing of AS Division so as to achieve significant savings in operational staff numbers while strengthening technical support in that Division by the appointment of an additional, suitably qualified Senior Meteorological Officer.
- Continue the pursuit of efficiencies in order to reduce the cost of services to civil aviation.
- In line with the recommendation of ICAO, achieve ISO9001:2000 certification for the Aviation Services Division of Met Éireann by the end of 2004.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Continued provision of services to aviation as defined by ICAO.
- Accuracy of forecast information supplied.
- ISO9001:2000 achieved by end 2004.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Aviation Services.

2.2 Objective: Implement the recommendations of the Department of Transport Working Group on meteorological charges to aviation.

Strategies:

- Calculate charges to civil aviation on the basis of transparent accounts and in accordance with the agreed methodology.
- Arrange administrative matters regarding notification and collection of charges to civil aviation directly with the IAA.
- Employ a firm of accountants to examine the Interim Accounts System with a view to verifying that the system is fair and transparent in relation to the computation of charges to aviation.
- Engage with aviation user organisations as per Objective 2.3.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Aviation charges notified and collected on schedule.
- Accountants report provided to the Working Group by the middle of 2004.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Aviation Services, Administration & Training.

2.3 Objective: Maintain effective liaison with aviation users of Met Éireann services and use feedback obtained to improve services.

Strategies:

- Meet annually with IATA representatives in association with the IAA.
- Consult with managers of Regional Airports and other aviation interests and develop plans on service provision.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Meetings and consultations with aviation customers.
- An improved service to Regional Airports.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Aviation Services, Administration & Training.

2.4 Objective: Monitor the implementation of the Single European Sky initiative and ensure that the interests of Met Éireann and of meteorology are well understood so as to ensure the best service to the aviation users.

Strategies:

- Keep abreast of developments and attempt to influence outcomes at both national and international level and seek to ensure that Met Éireann's position as service provider to aviation is maintained.
- Maintain good relations and communications with the Department of Transport and the Irish Aviation Authority and co-operate with the Authority on issues of mutual concern.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Satisfactory outcomes to developments at both national and international levels.
- Continuation of Met Éireann's position as service provider to aviation.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Aviation Services, Administration & Training.

3. Climate Services

3. High Level Goal

To provide a comprehensive range of climate services to all sectors based on a high quality, up-to-date national climate archive, and, in collaboration with other centres of expertise, provide an authoritative voice on future climate trends in Ireland.

3.1 Objective: Provide an appropriate range of climate services to the public and to specialised users of such information.

Strategies:

- Continue to provide a range of climatological information and services to both Public Service and Commercial customers.
- Pursue improvements in the climate infrastructure by utilisation of the new TUCSON automatic weather stations in the climate network.
- Explore ways of making the processing of climate data and production of end products more efficient.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Response time to external requests.
- Timely availability and continued good quality of products and data.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Climatology & Observations.

3.2 Objective: Maximise the use of Met Éireann's climate data holdings.

Strategy:

- Make basic measured climate data available to the greatest extent possible while remaining consistent with commercial and cost-recovery policy and with general European practice.

Key Performance Indicator:

- High availability of appropriate basic data on the Met Éireann web site.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Climatology & Observations, Commercial.

3.3 Objective: Increase the level of involvement of Met Éireann in the area of climate change studies.

Strategies:

- Give full support to the C4I Project, and help realise the targets of that project.
- Allocate suitable staff and adequate training resources to the Climatology and Observations Division so as to enhance its capability in this area; one additional climatological expert to be assigned to the Division in 2004.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Annual targets of the C4I project achieved.
- Identifiable increased involvement by Met Éireann in climate change issues.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Climatology & Observations, Research & Applications.

4. Specialist Applications of Meteorology

4. High Level Goal

To maintain a high level of expertise and involvement in specialised areas such as agricultural, environmental and marine meteorology and to use this expertise to provide forecast guidance and decision support.

4.1 Objective: Provide guidance to the agricultural and environmental sectors on the impact of weather on operations.

Strategies:

- Provide specialised forecasts and other products tailored to the needs of the farming community.
- Provide information and guidance on current and past meteorological conditions and their effect on agricultural practices including modelling the development of crops and of crop and animal diseases.
- Maintain a high level of expertise in agricultural and environmental meteorology.

Key Performance Indicator:

- Availability of good quality guidance to decision makers in the agricultural and environmental areas.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Research & Applications.

4.2 Objective: Assist in the national preparedness for a potential outbreak of foot and mouth disease.

Strategies:

- Maintain sufficient information gathering and weather modelling resources to provide input for the foot and mouth disease dispersion model.
- Maintain expertise in the spread of weather-borne foot and mouth disease and maintain the capacity to model this spread.
- Maintain close co-operation with the Department of Agriculture and Food and participate in simulation exercises.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Ability to respond to an outbreak of foot and mouth disease by providing necessary guidance in a timely manner.
- Participation in exercises.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Research & Applications, General Forecasting.

4.3 Objective: Provide marine forecasts and guidance both for safety at sea and for commercial interests.

Strategies:

- Provide computer generated forecasts tailored to the needs of the Marine Community and the forecasters.
- Further develop the WAM wave model during the period and reduce the grid spacing to give more local guidance.
- The development and operational running of an ocean model for waters around Ireland is a high priority for the period. Met Éireann will continue its involvement in the EU-INTEREGG PRISM project and will co-operate in the planning of the next phase of the Irish Ocean Model project which will be developed among departments and agencies involved in marine monitoring in Irish waters.
- Flood warnings, storm surge and pollution monitoring/forecasting will also be further researched during the development of PRISM.

Key Performance Indicator:

- Timely issuance of useful, good quality guidance to marine and estuarine interests.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Research & Applications, General Forecasting.

4.4 Objective: Monitor the marine environment

Strategies:

- High priority will continue to be given to the Irish Marine Data Buoy Network and to fulfilling Met Éireann's part in this co-operative project.
- Ongoing commitment to collect marine observations from our voluntary observing ships – with Port Meteorological Officers training crews and supplying instruments as required.
- Commitment to increase the capacity to collect and quality control marine observations from agencies outside Met Éireann, namely the Commissioners of Irish Lights, Port and Harbour Authorities, and offshore wind and wave energy companies.
- Ongoing commitment to EGOS and EUCOS Surface Marine programmes.

Key Performance Indicators:

- All observations to be collected and made available in time for use by the forecasters and in NWP.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Research & Applications, General Forecasting.

4.5 Objective: Provide a climatology of Irish Waters.

Strategies:

- Develop a data-base of marine observations as part of the basis for a marine atlas of Irish Waters and the provision of marine weather reports.
- Marine observations collected by either Met Éireann or outside agencies will be quality controlled and stored in Met Éireann's climate data-base.
- Funding will be sought during the period for the production of an Irish Marine Atlas.
- Reports and statistics of current and past meteorological conditions in the Irish Marine Area will be provided as required.
- Support the continued long-term storage of radar and satellite imagery.

Key Performance Indicators:

- More comprehensive archive of marine data.
- Timely response to requests for reports on marine meteorological conditions.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Research & Applications.

5. Commercial Services

5. High Level Goal

To undertake commercial meteorological activity in a way that is consistent with competition law and with our other mandates so as to reduce the overall cost of Met Éireann to the exchequer.

5.1 Objective: Maintain continuing involvement in profitable commercial activities in the field of meteorology.

Strategies:

- Retain existing commercial customers and seek to recruit new customers.
- Grow revenues and profitability through better product development, improved marketing and more efficient production / delivery systems.
- Promote a customer-centred ethos in all aspects of Met Éireann's activities.

Key Performance Indicator:

- Average annual increase of 5% in real terms in commercial revenue over the period 2003-2005.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Commercial, General Forecasting.

5.2 Objective: Review commercial strategy

Strategy:

- Examine current and potential commercial activity and identify activities which should be given highest priority in the period and devise an implementation plan.

Key Performance Indicator:

- Production of implementation plan by mid 2004.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Commercial.

5.3 Objective: Agree and sign a new Premium-rate Weather System (PRWS) contract with a service provider.

Strategy:

- Issue invitation to tender and negotiate new contract.

Key Performance Indicator:

- PRWS revenue over the period.

Lead Division(s) Involved: *Commercial.*

5.4 Objective: Continue to expand on the range of products and services delivered electronically to customers.

Strategy:

- Offer new services through electronic means where possible. Expand the range of products available via e-mail, web, SMS, MMS and FTP.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Identifiable new services provided electronically.
- Growth of revenue from new e-media channels.

Lead Division(s) Involved: *General Forecasting, Aviation Services, Climatology & Observations, Information Technology, Commercial.*

5.5 Objective: Explore co-operative arrangements with other European meteorological services on commercial activity.

Strategy:

- Investigate suitable commercial projects for collaboration with the UK Met Office and other European services and pursue any opportunities identified.

Lead Division(s) Involved: *Commercial.*

6. Environmental and Geophysical Monitoring

6. High Level Goal

In association with our meteorological functions, carry out an appropriate and relevant set of environmental monitoring and geophysical programmes.

6.1 Objective: Carry out appropriate environmental monitoring programmes.

Strategies:

- Review current environmental monitoring programme with EPA and other bodies and amend programme as necessary.
- Continue to develop the laboratory analysis aspect of the programme in line with national requirements and international guidelines.

Key Performance Indicator:

- Level of interest among national and international users of the data.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Instrumentation & Environmental Monitoring.

6.2 Objective: Carry out a programme of geophysical monitoring.

Strategies:

- Continue the measurement programmes of solar radiation, earth magnetics, seismology and phenology.
- Keep abreast of national and international developments in these fields.
- Seek appropriate collaborative arrangements with other centres.

Key Performance Indicator:

- Level of interest among national and international users of the data.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Instrumentation & Environmental Monitoring.

7. Meteorological Infrastructure

7. High Level Goal

Maintain and enhance a technical infrastructure for Met Éireann that supports the production of its outputs.

7.1 Objective: Maintain and improve the quantity, quality and cost-efficiency of atmospheric measurements carried out by Met Éireann's network of observing stations in support of the requirements of real-time forecasting and of climatology.

Strategies:

- Maintain the progress of the TUCSON project with the deployment of 5 Met Éireann automatic weather stations per year and with all data handling and quality control procedures in place by the end of 2004.
- Where exposure at a current synoptic station is unsuitable, an alternative site in the same general area will be chosen.

Key Performance Indicator:

- Rollout of 5 automatic stations per year and availability of quality-controlled data.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Instrumentation & Environmental monitoring, Climatology & Observations.

7.2 Objective: Continue the automation of the manned weather observing network.

Strategies:

- Produce, by mid 2004, in consultation with all stakeholders, a timetabled and costed plan for the automation of the manned synoptic network (excluding the airports and Valentia Observatory). This plan will take account of all relevant scientific, technical and human resources issues. Options will be investigated for the utilisation of staff in their current locations on other types of work.
- Staff resources released through the automation programme will be used to provide necessary resources to support Divisions.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Existence, by mid 2004, of an automation plan that will also release staff to the support Divisions.
- Implementation of the plan begun in 2005.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Directorate.

7.3 Objective: Conduct a major review of IT policy within Met Éireann.

Strategies:

- Define the objectives of such a review and establish the review body with clear terms of reference by mid 2004.
- The review will place strong emphasis on the views and requirements of IT users and on the role of IT as a service to both internal and external customers.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Objectives set and review body established by mid 2004.
- Review complete by end 2004.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Information Technology.

7.4 Objective: Implement a programme of updating the IT infrastructure of Met Éireann.

Strategies:

- Devise and implement a capital expenditure programme for IT, based on the current deficiencies and the outcome of the IT policy review mentioned in 7.3 above.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Programme devised by mid 2005 with implementation begun by end 2005.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Information Technology.

7.5 Objective: Implement a programme of updating the meteorological and geophysical instrumentation infrastructure of Met Éireann.

Strategy:

- Devise and implement a capital expenditure programme for meteorological, environmental and geophysical instrumentation in Met Éireann.

Key Performance Indicator:

- Demonstrable contribution of the programme to the effectiveness and efficiency of Met Éireann.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Instrumentation & Environmental Monitoring.

8. Met Éireann's Mission, Status and Relationship with DoEHLG and Government

8. High Level Goal

To position Met Éireann so as to make the most effective contribution to the achievement of Government objectives in the general environmental area.

8.1 Objective: To ensure that Met Éireann contributes effectively by providing required information and advice to the Government and by operating in support of Government policies.

Strategy:

- Take steps to ensure that the implications of all relevant Government policies are understood and incorporated into planning processes.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Directorate.

8.2 Objective: Ensure that Cross-Departmental issues pertinent to Met Éireann are identified and addressed.

Strategy:

- Review overlap of functions and services provided to or received from other Departments and agencies. On the basis of this review, draw up an implementation plan to contribute more fully to the achievement of relevant Government objectives.

Key Performance Indicator:

- Completion of the review and implementation plan by the end of 2004.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Administration & Training.

8.3 Objective: Establish an effective working relationship with DoEHLG.

Strategies:

- Seek to agree a clear definition of the relationship at the highest level.
- Establish close co-operation at all levels on matters such as Human Resource Management, Finance and Accounts, IT and the approach to environmental issues.
- Seek to establish synergies in appropriate areas such as climate change and environmental monitoring.

Key Performance Indicator:

- A clear, agreed definition of the relationship. This must be achieved as early as possible, but is impossible to timetable.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Directorate, Administration & Training, Climatology & Observations, Information Technology.

8.4 Objective: Establish, by agreement with DoEHLG, a clear definition of Met Éireann's public service responsibilities.

Strategies:

- Initially, the Met Éireann proposals as put to the Department of Public Enterprise will be used as the "working assumption" for definition of public role.
- Bring the above-mentioned proposals up to date where necessary no later than mid 2004 and seek to have them agreed with DoEHLG by the end of 2004.

Key Performance Indicator:

- The existence of an authoritative definition of Met Éireann's public service role.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Directorate, Administration & Training.

8.5 Objective: Review the appropriateness of the current status of Met Éireann as a line Division of a Government Department.

Strategies:

- Based on analysis already conducted in this area, produce a report containing an up to date view by the middle of 2004.
- Engage with DoEHLG, as necessary, on the outcome of the above exercise.

Key Performance Indicator:

- The production of a report by the middle of 2004.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Directorate, Administration & Training.

8.6 Objective: Make the funding arrangements for Met Éireann more reflective of the fundamental differences among the three main areas of activity (public service, civil aviation and commercial) with a clearer relationship between levels of funding and expenditure on services within each category.

Strategy:

- Formulate, by the end of 2004, proposals on this and attempt to have such agreed with DoEHLG. A key feature of any proposal would be the notion that, within the commercial category, Met Éireann must be permitted to gain financially from profitable ventures.

Key Performance Indicators:

- The existence of a proposal by the end of 2004.
- An agreement on new budgetary arrangements concluded by the end of 2005.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Directorate, Administration & Training.

8.7 Objective: Establish an “administrative budget” arrangement between Met Éireann and DoEHLG.

Strategy:

- Engage in discussions with a view to bringing this about for the 2005-2007 period.

Key Performance Indicators:

- An “administrative budget” arrangement in place by the end of 2004.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Directorate, Administration & Training.

9. North-South Issues and International Co-operation

9. High Level Goal

Actively seek collaboration with UK and other European meteorological services in order to improve the effectiveness of Met Éireann and to pursue Government objectives in relation to the British-Irish Agreement.

9.1 Objective: Continue the close level of co-operation which exists between Met Éireann and the UK Meteorological Office.

Strategies:

- Maintain existing links and data exchanges and exploit any new opportunities where further co-operation might bring benefits.
- Complete the work on the production of an Irish Baseline Climatology, a British-Irish Council project in co-operation with the UK Met Office.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Continued good relations and co-operation with our colleagues in Northern Ireland.
- All gridded fields of the Irish Baseline Climatology available to climate change researchers by the end of 2003.

Lead Division(s) Involved: All.

9.2 Objective: Investigate the possibilities for bilateral collaboration with the UK Met Office and other European meteorological services.

Strategies:

- Explore opportunities for collaborative projects.
- Promote a joint approach by European National Meteorological Services towards implementation of the Single European Sky initiative.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Commercial, Aviation Services.

9.3 Objective: Benefit from and contribute to international collaboration and co-operation in the field of meteorology.

Strategies:

- Maintain active membership of WMO, ECMWF, EUMETSAT, EUMETNET, HIRLAM and other international initiatives which may be appropriate.
- Work actively to secure the success of the EUMETSAT MSG and EPS satellite programmes.
- Help to bring the redrafting of the ECMWF Convention to a successful conclusion.
- Contribute to the successful implementation of the EUMETNET EUCOS programme.

Key Performance Indicator:

- Continued involvement in the mainstream international meteorological organisations and initiatives and continued benefits from such involvement.

Lead Division(s) Involved: All.

10. The Civil Service Modernisation Programme and Building Internal Capacity

10. High Level Goal

To utilise the Civil Service modernisation programme in all its aspects to improve the efficiency of Met Éireann and to develop the potential of its staff.

10.1 Objective: Implement, by agreement with the unions, a new “unified” grading structure within Met Éireann, to include both Departmental and General Service grades.

Strategy:

- Seek agreement with the unions to explore this issue through all possible methods including the normal IR channels and Partnership Council.

Key Performance Indicator:

- Agreement on a new structure.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Administration & Training, Partnership Council.

10.2 Objective: Continue the development and implementation of modernisation initiatives.

Strategies:

- Enhance the efficient and effective use of staff resources to further the objectives of Met Éireann through the formulation of a Human Resources Strategy. This will be produced by a sub-group of the Partnership Council and will be largely based on the Human Resources Strategy recently produced by the DoEHLG, customised to account for any special circumstances or differences relating to Met Éireann.
- Continue to develop the PMDS system by streamlining the associated forms and introducing upward feedback as an integral part of the process at the interim review stage by mid-2004. The continued evolution and implementation of the process will be overseen by the PMDS Project Team.
- Keep the Met Éireann Strategy Statement and Business Plan up to date as circumstances change and produce annual Business Plans for the organisation as a whole and for the individual Divisions.
- Continue to develop the Partnership concept in Met Éireann so that it contributes to the effectiveness of the organisation. Maintain a vibrant Partnership Council, working within the partnership framework in

DoEHLG and involve the partnership process in all key areas of Met Éireann's development.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Production by mid 2004 and progress in the implementation of the HR strategy.
- Full participation by all staff in the PMDS process.
- A Strategy Statement and Business Plans which truly reflect the up-to-date situation and are available to all staff.
- Recognition that time devoted to the Partnership Council represents a useful contribution to the organisation.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Administration & Training, Partnership Council.

10.3 Objective: Continue to improve communications, both externally and within Met Éireann.

Strategies:

- Strengthen the communications function within Met Éireann so as to improve the effectiveness of internal and external communications.
- Improve the co-ordination of Met Éireann contact with the media and with the outside world in general and become more pro-active in such contacts where weather information is of relevance.
- By the end of 2004, establish a single Met Éireann web service for the dissemination of information to all staff.
- Maintain and update the Met Éireann library facilities as a valuable research, information and communications asset to staff and as a National Meteorological Library for Ireland.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Improved communications with the media and improved presentation of Met Éireann's output.
- The existence of an actively managed internal web service for the flow of information.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Administration & Training, Research & Applications, Information Technology.

10.4 Objective: Re-organise the General Forecasting Division with a view to improving the quality and efficiency of public service forecast production and dissemination and achieving a profitable commercial forecasting operation.

Strategy:

- A working group, established at the beginning of 2003, will examine the operation of the General Forecasting Division, examining the organisation of the office, forecast production, forecaster workstation requirements and training.

Key Performance Indicator:

- Production of plan for Central Analysis Forecast Office by spring 2004.
- Implementation of the above plan according to its own defined timescale.

Lead Division(s) Involved: *General Forecasting, Information Technology, Research & Applications.*

10.5 Objective: Introduce up-to-date technology in the financial and staff management areas.

Strategy:

- Co-operate with DoEHLG on the introduction of new financial management and Human Resources management systems, ensuring that Met Éireann's particular requirements in these areas are met.

Key Performance Indicator:

- Transparent accounts and Accounts Receivable fully ported to the DoEHLG MIF by June 2004.

Lead Division(s) Involved: *Administration & Training, Information Technology.*

10.6 Objective: Ensure a suitable standard of staff accommodation at all Met Éireann locations.

Strategies:

- By mid 2004, establish a set of standards covering the working environment in terms of cleanliness, décor, comfort and safety levels.
- Produce, by end of 2004, a timetable for the achievement of these standards and a plan for ongoing adherence to them.
- Produce, on an ongoing basis, an annual plan for accommodation improvement.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Standards defined by mid 2004.
- Timetable produced by the end of 2004.
- Production of annual plans.
- Measurable progress on implementing the timetable.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Administration & Training, Partnership Council.

10.7 Objective: Match training effort to the requirements of the organisation and widen both the availability and the awareness of training and development opportunities.

Strategies:

- The PMDS will provide information on required skills, qualifications and competencies. A full training budget, including provision for course fees, travel and subsistence and any overtime generated, will be set aside each year. The T&O Officer, in conjunction with the Training & Development Committee, will produce an annual training plan taking account of this budget, as well as the training requirements received through the PMDS process. This process will include appropriate “refresher” training for staff who have been in the same work area for some time. Training may include both the possibility of visits to or attendance at courses in other meteorological institutes and modules delivered by Met Éireann staff. All training should be relevant to the business needs of Met Éireann.
- Introduce a wider awareness of training possibilities for Met Éireann Staff by circulating information on the availability of training and how to access it.

- Establish a formal acceptance that training, ongoing self development and an increased level of participation in the organisation generally are a normal part of the work of all staff and establish defined mechanisms for the allocation of time which may be devoted to participation in formal training, workshops, conference attendance, self development or participation in initiatives such as Partnership Council or its subgroups.
- The Programme for Prosperity and Fairness (PPF) contained a commitment to strive towards a target of allocating a sum of 4% of the annual payroll cost towards training and development by 2003. This was re-affirmed in Sustaining Progress. Met Éireann is, therefore, committed to achieving the 4% figure.

Key Performance Indicators:

- Ongoing training plans which reflect the requirements of the organisation and a good level of implementation of these plans.
- Awareness among all staff of training possibilities.
- The existence of a mechanism for allocating time for training, self-development or increased participation.
- Training and development expenditure at 4% of payroll.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Administration & Training.

10.8 Objective: Establish a link with a University with a view to ensuring a better supply of people with an academic background in meteorology, both for recruitment to Met Éireann and for collaborative projects.

Strategies:

- Engage in discussions with suitable institutions with a view to concluding an agreement that would meet Met Éireann's objective.
- Continue to employ undergraduate students on short-term projects through schemes such as the DCU INTRA programme.

Key Performance Indicators:

- A memorandum of understanding signed with a university.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Directorate, Research & Applications.

10.9 Objective: Ensure that Met Éireann provides equality of treatment for all staff and customers.

Strategy:

- An equality sub-group of the Partnership Council will, by autumn 2003, review all relevant guidelines and bring forward proposals in this area.

Key Performance Indicators:

- An atmosphere which promotes equality and embraced diversity.
- Production of an Equality/Diversity policy for Met Éireann by the end of 2003.

Lead Division(s) Involved: Administration & Training, Partnership Council.

Critical Success Factors

Several factors are critically important to the successful pursuit of the above strategies and to the achievement of the key performance indicators.

The maintenance of appropriate staffing numbers and funding levels is an important requirement as is the continued efficient management of these resources. In the current economic climate, the probability of any increase in staff or financial resources is very small and it is the job of Met Éireann management to optimise the use of those resources which are available. Any new unresourced demands on the organisation will have a negative impact.

Achievement of objectives will be hampered if clear and officially accepted definitions of Met Éireann's Public Service role, commercial role and organisational status are not forthcoming within a reasonably short timescale.

Effective liaison with customers and an ability and willingness to respond to their requirements will be essential if quality and relevance of outputs are to be maintained.

Increasing efficiencies in the generation of products and services will be necessary, along with high quality commercial information if the growth in commercial revenues is to be achieved.

In order for the TUCSON project to proceed as planned, a continuing availability of suitable sites for the automatic weather stations will be necessary. Favourable outcome of planning permission applications will also be required. Additional staff resources will be required for a once-off period for pre-installation work and for the installation of AWSs at the sites and the development of automatic systems for the collection and Q/C of the data. Additional resources will be required on an on-going basis for the maintenance of the network and the calibration of its sensors. Additional staff resources in the technical support areas will be essential to achieve the automation of the network and the quality control of the data.

Part of this strategy involves improvements in communications, both external and internal and the continued implementation of the PMDS process. These will require a willingness at all levels in the organisation to accept the need for greater information exchange and will require support for PMDS at the higher levels.

Many of the above strategies will require good levels of communication and co-operation with other organisations, ranging from the DoEHLG and other Government Departments to international meteorological organisations such as WMO and ECMWF. Their success will require that people within these other organisations are open to consideration of co-operative ventures and different ways of operating

As important as maintaining staff numbers is the maintenance and enhancement of skills levels. This will require a willingness on the part of staff and management both in pursuing various ways of acquiring new skills and in helping to pass on their skills to others.

One strategy is to change the existing grading structure within Met Éireann. This notion has been around for some time and has made little headway. To bring it to a successful conclusion will require a willingness on the part of management, unions and staff to explore new ideas openly in a spirit of partnership.

Met Éireann Strategy Statement 2003 – 2005

Glossary of Acronyms

C4I	Community Climate Change Consortium for Ireland
DoEHLG	Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government
ECMWF	European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts
EGOS	European Group on Ocean Stations
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EU INTERREG	EU Inter-Regional Funding
EUCOS	EUMETNET Composite Observing System
EUMETNET	The Network of European Meteorological Services
EUMETSAT	European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites
FIR	Flight Information Region
FTP	File Transfer Protocol
HIRLAM	High Resolution Limited Area Model
IAA	Irish Aviation Authority
IATA	International Air Transport Association
ICAO	International Civil Aviation Organisation
INTRA	Integrated Training
MGS	Meteosat Second Generation (satellite)
MIF	Management Information Framework
MMS	Multi-Media Messaging
NMS	National Meteorological Service
NWP	Numerical Weather Prediction
PMDS	Performance Management and Development System
PRISM	Predictive Irish Sea Model
PRWS	Premium Rate Weather Service
SAF	Satellite Application Facility
SES	Single European Sky
SMI	Strategic Management Initiative
SMS	Short Message System
TUCSON	The Unified Climatological and Synoptic Observing Network
WAM	Wave Model
WMO	World Meteorological Organisation