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Section 15

Introduction

1 Background

The Freedom of Information Act establishes three new statutory rights:

- 1 a legal right for each person to access information held by public bodies
- 2 a legal right for each person to have official information relating to him/herself amended where it is incomplete, incorrect or misleading
- 3 a legal right to obtain reasons for decisions affecting oneself

The Act asserts the right of members of the public to obtain access to official information to the greatest extent possible, consistent with the public interest and the right to privacy of individuals. This reference book has been prepared and published in accordance with the requirements of Sections 15 and 16 of the Act.

Section 15 of the Act requires each public body to publish general information on such issues as

- structure and organisation
- functions, duties and powers
- services provided to the public, and how these may be availed of
- classes of records held and arrangements for enabling the public to access such records
- rights of review and appeal against decisions made under the Act

Under Section 16, the Act requires that a general description of the rules and guidelines used by the public body in implementing its schemes and programmes be published. The aims of this Section may be summarised as

- to assist the public in understanding more fully their rights and entitlements in relation to particular schemes and programmes

Introduction

- to enhance public confidence in decision making
- to enable the quality and accuracy of the public body's interpretation and application of statutory provisions to be assessed

2 Routinely Available Information

Met Éireann currently makes information and data routinely available to the public in relation to its functions and activities. Such information will continue to be available without the need to use the Freedom of Information Act.

Information on the functions and activities of Met Éireann may also be found on the Web site www.met.ie

The Freedom of Information Act is designed to allow public access to information held by public bodies which is *not* routinely available through other channels. Access to information under the Act is subject to certain exemptions and involves specific procedures and time limits.

3 Meteorological Data

Under the Freedom of Information Act, records which may be inspected, or a copy of which may be taken away, either free or subject to payment, by a member of the public fall outside the scope of the Act.

Met Éireann makes meteorological data available either free of charge (in pursuance of its public service role) or at an agreed price (as when customised data are made available on request). Hence, all meteorological data are available either free or subject to payment, and are therefore outside the scope of the Freedom of Information Act.

Accordingly, Freedom of Information requests for such records will normally be refused, the requester having been advised that such 'standard access' to the records is already available.

Mission Statement

Our Mission is to meet the national requirement for high-quality weather forecasts and associated services, with optimum efficiency and value for money.

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

- help to ensure the protection and safety of life and property by issuing 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
- ensure customer satisfaction by carefully analysing end-user feedback, and by continually improving the range and quality of our forecasts, 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
- meet the State's obligations to provide meteorological services to the aviation sector
- enhance the quality of our climatological archives and provide easy and effective access to our databases

Mission Statement

- participate in the on-going development of meteorological science and its applications in collaboration with our European partners and with the wider international community
- contribute to the effective monitoring and good management of the natural environment

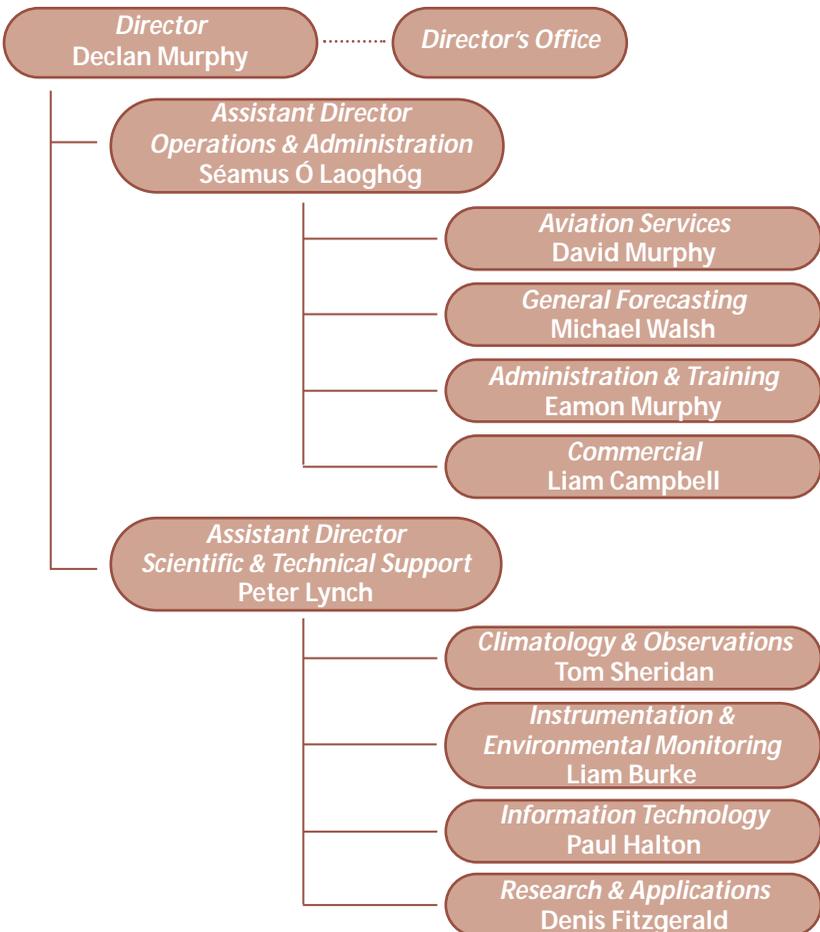
Statement of policy with regard to Freedom of Information & Confidentiality

In compliance with the Freedom of Information Act, 1997, it is the policy of Met Éireann to provide the greatest possible access to the records which it holds.

Where a person supplying information to Met Éireann wishes it to be kept confidential, for commercial or other reasons, s/he should inform Met Éireann of this fact and specify the reasons. Met Éireann will use its best endeavours to hold such information confidential, subject to its obligations under law, including the Freedom of Information Act. In the case of a request for the release of such information under the Freedom of Information Act, Met Éireann will consult with the supplier before making a decision on whether or not to grant it.

Organisational Structure

Met Éireann has a staff of approximately 235, working at 14 locations. It is organised in a divisional structure consisting of eight divisions as shown in the following diagram.



Description of Divisions

1 Director's Office

1.1 Role of Office

The Director's Office acts as an administrative centre for the highest management levels in Met Éireann.

1.2 Services delivered by Office

1 Administrative and secretarial support to the Director and Assistant Directors, including

- tracking of correspondence
- facilitation of meetings, including Management Committee (ManCom) meetings
- co-ordination of briefing material

2 Maintenance of staff personnel files

2 Commercial Division

Head of Division: **Liam Campbell**

2.1 Role of Division

The Commercial Division has two main responsibilities:

- to enhance the revenue earning potential of Met Éireann through professional marketing of its products and services
- to ensure that meteorological products of an appropriate range and quality are available to Met Éireann's public service customers

Description of Divisions

The Division seeks to broaden Met Éireann's customer base, while encouraging existing clients to increase their use of meteorological products and services. In co-operation with other Divisions it strives to improve the presentation and dissemination of existing products, to respond to customer demand for new services and to promote a high standard of customer care.

2.2 Services delivered by Division

- 1 Discussions/negotiations with customers, potential customers and third parties by telephone, fax, post and face to face
- 2 Liaison with other Divisions to make required products available to customers
- 3 Liaison with ECOMET
- 4 Advertising
- 5 All aspects of Met Éireann involvement in shows and exhibitions, with support as required from other Divisions
- 6 Publication of Annual Reports

2.3 Information Available

- 1 Copies of Annual Reports
- 2 Information leaflets
- 3 Details of standard forecast services
- 4 ECOMET procedures and charges

2.4 Where the information is available at present

Head of Commercial Division, Met Éireann, Glasnevin Hill, Dublin 9
Phone: 01-8064244 • Fax: 01-8064247

Description of Divisions

2.5 Classes of records held

- 1 Details of correspondence, agreements etc. with individual customers
- 2 Information on market sectors (market research etc.)

3 Aviation Services Division

Head of Division: **David Murphy**

3.1 Role of Division

The Aviation Services Division provides a wide range of services to civil, military and general aviation, in accordance with ICAO standards and recommendations and national procedures decided on from time to time. It comprises the Central Aviation Office at Shannon Airport, at which the Head of the Division is normally based, together with the Meteorological Offices at Dublin, Cork and Knock Airports and at Casement Aerodrome. The Division is also responsible for services to a number of Regional Airports around the country. Aviation Services Division is the focal point for liaison between Met Éireann and the Irish Aviation Authority, the airport authorities, and the various international agencies insofar as their activities are concerned with aviation meteorology.

3.2 Services delivered by Division

- 1 Aviation specific weather information is provided at Shannon, Dublin, Cork and Knock Airport Meteorological Offices and at Casement Aerodrome
- 2 Self-briefing units for pilots are available at Dublin and Cork Airports
- 3 Operational Meteorological information is transmitted on international telecommunication networks and available by telephone and fax to general aviation users

Description of Divisions

3.3 Information Available

- 1 Details of available services may be found in the National Aeronautical Information Publication (A.I.P.)
- 2 User information is distributed in the form of Aeronautical Information Circulars (A.I.C.s) and Notices to Airmen (NOTAMs)

3.4 Where the information is available at present

Head of Aviation Services, Met Éireann, Shannon Airport, Co. Clare
Phone: 061-471542 • Fax: 061-472737

3.5 Classes of records held

- 1 Records of forecasts issued (in accordance with ICAO regulations)
- 2 Correspondence on aviation matters with Irish and international organisations
- 3 Correspondence regarding service requirements with airlines and air operators

4 Information Technology (IT) Division

Head of Division: **Paul Halton**

4.1 Role of Division

The Division is responsible for the provision and development of most of Met Éireann's computing and telecommunications facilities, and for the maintenance of agreed IT standards in relation to computing activities devolved to other Divisions.

4.2 Services delivered by Division

- 1 Operation of IT production systems

Description of Divisions

- 2 Maintenance of IT hardware, software and communications systems
- 3 Development of IT policy; planning for the future IT needs of Met Éireann
- 4 Procurement of IT equipment and software
- 5 Development and implementation of new IT systems
- 6 IT training and user support

4.3 Information Available

- 1 Statements of Strategy on IT issues relating to Information, Technical Architecture and Applications
- 2 Annual Work Plans

4.4 Where the information is available at present

Head of IT Division, Met Éireann, Glasnevin Hill, Dublin 9

Phone: 01-8064261 • Fax: 01-8064247

4.5 Classes of records held

- 1 Reports of IT work
- 2 Documents and correspondence related to IT planning, organisation and training
- 3 Correspondence on IT matters with Irish and international agencies
- 4 Information on procurement of IT equipment
- 5 Correspondence on technical matters connected with the supply of data to customers

Description of Divisions

5 General Forecasting Division

Head of Division: **Michael Walsh**

5.1 Role of Division

The Division supplies a wide range of forecast services and weather warnings through the Central Analysis and Forecast Office (CAFO) and the RTÉ Weather Office. Customers include the media, industrial and commercial concerns, Government and semi-State bodies, local authorities, the general public, and other users of such information. The Division is also responsible for liaison with customers as regards their day-to-day requirements.

5.2 Services delivered by Division

- 1 Weather forecasts and warnings for land and sea
- 2 Radio, television and newspaper weather services
- 3 Premium rate telephone and fax weather services
- 4 Consultancy weather forecast services
- 5 Warning service in relation to Ultra Violet Radiation and Ground Level Ozone
- 6 Weather-related advice to State Agencies in emergency situations - for example severe weather, nuclear accidents or toxic spillages

5.3 Information Available

- 1 Satellite and radar reference manuals
- 2 World Meteorological Organisation manuals
- 3 Forecasting techniques reference books

Description of Divisions

5.4 Where the information is available at present

Head, General Forecasting Division, Met Éireann, Glasnevin Hill, Dublin 9
Phone: 01-8064208 • Fax: 01-8064275

5.5 Classes of records held

- 1 Operational office notices
- 2 Records of forecasts issued

6 Instrumentation and Environmental Monitoring Division

Head of Division: **Liam Burke**

6.1 Role of Division

The Division has overall responsibility for the acquisition and maintenance of instruments and equipment. It is also responsible for operations at Valentia Observatory, and for Met Éireann's environmental monitoring activities.

6.2 Services delivered by Division

- 1 Provision of technical solutions to meet operational meteorological requirements
- 2 Procurement of equipment
- 3 Maintenance, repair and calibration of sensors and systems
- 4 Operation of Valentia upper-air station
- 5 Operation of geophysical and environmental monitoring programmes
- 6 Laboratory chemical analysis of air and rainfall samples

Description of Divisions

- 7 Quality control and analysis of data
- 8 Provision of data to World Databanks

6.3 Information Available

- 1 Guide to Meteorological Instruments and Methods of Observation (World Meteorological Organisation)
- 2 Other relevant World Meteorological Organisation Manuals
- 3 Meteorological Service for International Air Navigation - Annex 3 (International Civil Aviation Organisation)

6.4 Where the information is available at present

Head, Instrumentation and Environmental Monitoring Division
Met Éireann, Glasnevin Hill, Dublin 9
Phone: 01-8064259 • Fax: 01-8064247

6.5 Classes of records held

- 1 Correspondence, internal memoranda, discussion documents, reports, instrumentation documents, procurement documents, contracts
- 2 Geophysical and atmospheric chemistry data

7 Climatology and Observations Division

Head of Division: **Tom Sheridan**

7.1 Role of Division

The Division's main responsibility is to function as the national centre for climatological information.

Description of Divisions

7.2 Services delivered by Division

- 1 The inspection, maintenance and development of Met Éireann's climatological and rainfall station networks
- 2 Reception, logging, quality control and archiving of data received from these networks
- 3 Management of computer-based data archive
- 4 Responding to customer requests for climatological data
- 5 Liaison on climatological matters with the World Meteorological Organisation
- 6 Representing Met Éireann on relevant national and international bodies
- 7 Climatological publications

7.3 Information Available

- 1 Data on Irish weather and climate ranging from conditions at particular times to long-term averages and trends
- 2 A computer-based archive of weather data extending from 1941 onwards. Hourly and daily values of weather elements such as rainfall, temperature, wind and sunshine are stored. These are used to provide particular information required by clients as well as general descriptions of Ireland's weather and climate
- 3 Pre-1941 data are available mostly in original registers or in a range of publications. Data for the latter part of the 19th century as well as the 20th century are available

7.4 Where the information is available at present

Climate Enquiries Desk, Met Éireann, Glasnevin Hill, Dublin 9
Phone: 01-8064260 • Fax: 01-8064216

Description of Divisions

7.5 Classes of records held

- 1 Records of inspection of climatological and rainfall stations
- 2 Records of responses to requests for climatological data
- 3 Correspondence with national and international agencies on climatological and hydrological matters

8 Research and Applications Division

Head of Division: **Denis Fitzgerald**

8.1 Role of the Division

The Research and Applications Division undertakes fundamental and applied research within the context of Met Éireann's overall goals and responsibilities. The main driving force for selecting research projects is the need to provide weather forecasts and related services of ever-greater accuracy and detail. Current research efforts are directed towards (a) improving operational weather forecasts through the development of more accurate numerical weather prediction models and (b) deriving a range of meteorological application products for the general public, agriculture, environment, industry and the marine sectors. The Division also has responsibility for Met Éireann's library services.

8.2 Services delivered by Division

- 1 Fundamental research, mainly within the HIRLAM scientific programme
- 2 Operational maintenance of HIRLAM and WAM models
- 3 Graphics software systems development
- 4 Specialist product development to support the operational offices

Description of Divisions

- 5 Agrometeorological, environmental and marine support services
- 6 Operation and maintenance of Met Éireann's national meteorological library

8.3 Information available

- 1 Details of Met Éireann's participation in the HIRLAM project
- 2 User information on existing HIRLAM and WAM data, and on agro-climatological, marine and environmental studies undertaken by Met Éireann
- 3 Verification data on HIRLAM and WAM forecasts

8.4 Where the information is available at present

Head, Research and Applications Division

Met Éireann, Glasnevin Hill, Dublin 9

Phone: 01-8064204 • Fax: 01-8064247

8.5 Classes of records held

- 1 Correspondence relating to participation in national and international research initiatives
- 2 Correspondence with agricultural and marine interests
- 3 Library catalogues

9 Administration and Training Division

Head of Division: **Eamon Murphy**

9.1 Role of the Division

The Division has overall responsibility for financial, budgetary, personnel, supplies and accommodation matters. It exercises administrative

Description of Divisions

supervision of the network of synoptic observing stations, and has wide responsibilities in the context of liaison between Met Éireann and staff representative associations. The Division co-operates closely with the Personnel and Finance Units of the parent Department (Department of Public Enterprise). The Administration and Training Division also has responsibility for the training functions of Met Éireann. In consultation with the other Divisions it seeks to identify training needs and to plan for their fulfilment. The Division liaises closely in these matters with the Organisation and Development Unit of the Department of Public Enterprise. It also works closely with those in other Divisions of Met Éireann who from time to time may be engaged in providing training of various kinds, and with relevant staff at Casement Aerodrome.

9.2 Services delivered by Division

- 1 Liaison with the Department of Public Enterprise, particularly in the areas of personnel and budgetary matters
- 2 Overall administration of financial and accounting systems
- 3 General liaison with a range of international organisations (WMO, ECMWF, EUMETSAT)
- 4 Maintenance of Met Éireann's general filing system
- 5 Organisational planning, especially in relation to the Strategic Management Initiative
- 6 Maintenance of safe and suitable accommodation and furnishings
- 7 Supervising and monitoring the implementation of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989.
- 8 Planning and implementation, in consultation with Division Heads, of staff training and development programmes

Description of Divisions

- 9 Negotiations and agreements with staff representative bodies
- 10 General secretarial support services
- 11 Provision of general offices supplies and other consumables

9.3 Information available

- 1 Information on career opportunities in Met Éireann
- 2 Details of the synoptic observing station network
- 3 Staffing details

9.4 Where the information is available at present

Head, Administration and Training Division

Met Éireann, Glasnevin Hill, Dublin 9

Phone: 01-8064206 • Fax: 01-8064247

9.5 Classes of records held

- 1 Budgetary and financial records
- 2 General correspondence with various international organisations and other national meteorological services
- 3 Details of discussions and correspondence concerning accommodation matters

How to get information

1 Provisions of the Freedom of Information Act

Under the Freedom of Information Act, anyone is entitled to apply for access to information not otherwise publicly available. Each person may seek

- access to records held by Met Éireann
- correction of personal information relating to him/herself held by Met Éireann where it is inaccurate, incomplete or misleading
- reasons for decisions made by Met Éireann directly affecting him/herself

The following records come within the scope of the Act:

- all records relating to personal information held by Met Éireann irrespective of when created
- personnel records of serving staff created from 21 April 1995 and those created prior to that date where the records are being used or proposed to be used in a manner which adversely affects or may affect the person involved
- all other records created from the commencement date of the Act, i.e. 21 April 1998
- any other records necessary to the understanding of a current record, even if created prior to 21 April 1998

2 Applications under the Freedom of Information Act

In Met Éireann, applications under the Freedom of Information Act will be handled centrally and should be addressed in the first instance to

Mr. J. Bourke, Freedom of Information Officer,
Met Éireann, Glasnevin Hill, Dublin 9,
Phone: 01-8064246 • Fax: 01-8064247

How to get information

Freedom of Information requests will be dealt with by nominated officers (known internally as decision makers). Met Éireann's decision makers are Mr. Colm Faherty (Senior Meteorological Officer) and Mr. Séamús Daltún (Senior Meteorological Officer).

Note: In certain circumstances, charges may be levied in respect of the supply of information (See Section 8 below).

3 Compiling your Application

- 1 Your request must be in writing and should indicate that the information is sought under the Freedom of Information Act
- 2 If you require a reply in a particular format (photocopy, computer disk etc.) please mention this in your application
- 3 Please be as detailed and specific as possible when compiling your application, as this will assist Met Éireann in dealing with it. If you have any difficulty in preparing your application Met Éireann's staff will be happy to assist
- 4 You may be required to prove your identity, especially when seeking personal information (e.g. by production of birth certificate, passport, driving license etc.)
- 5 Please include a day-time telephone number so that you may be contacted if it is necessary to clarify details of your request

In normal circumstances, Met Éireann is obliged to respond to a request within 4 weeks.

4 Rights of Review and Appeal

The Act sets out a series of exemptions to protect sensitive information where its disclosure might damage key interests of the State or of third

How to get information

parties. Where Met Éireann invokes these provisions to withhold information, the decision may be appealed. Decisions in relation to deferral of access, charges, manner of access, etc. may also be the subject of appeal. Details of the appeals mechanisms (Internal Review and Review by the Commissioner) are given below.

5 Internal Review

You may seek internal review of the initial decision, which will be carried out by an officer at a higher level, if

- a) you are dissatisfied with the initial response received i.e. refusal of information, manner of access, charges, etc., or
- b) you have not received a reply within 4 weeks of your initial application. This is deemed to be a refusal of your request and allows you to proceed to internal review

Met Éireann has an Internal Review Board comprising three members: Mr. Liam Burke (Senior Meteorologist), Dr. James Hamilton (Meteorologist) and Mr. Peter Barry (Principal Meteorological Officer)

Internal review in relation to initial decisions taken on Freedom of Information applications relating to personnel records will be carried out by the Head of the Administration and Training Division.

All requests for internal review should be submitted in writing to:

Mr. J. Bourke, Freedom of Information Officer,
Met Éireann, Glasnevin Hill, Dublin 9
Phone: 01-8064246 • Fax: 01-8064247

How to get information

Requests for internal review must be submitted within 4 weeks of the initial decision. Met Éireann must complete the review within 3 weeks. Internal review must normally be completed before an appeal may be made to the Information Commissioner.

6 Review by the Commissioner

Following completion of internal review, you may seek independent review of the decision from the Information Commissioner. Also, if you have not received a reply to your application for internal review within 3 weeks, this is deemed to be a refusal and you may appeal the matter to the Commissioner.

Appeals in writing may be made directly to the Information Commissioner at the following address: Office of the Information Commissioner, 18 Lower Leeson Street, Dublin 2 Phone: 01-6785222 • Fax: 01-6610570

Fees

In relation to valid Freedom of Information requests, fees may be charged as follows:

- a) In respect of personal records, fees in respect of the cost of locating and copying the records will not apply, save where a large number of records are involved
- b) In respect of other (non-personal) information, fees may be charged in respect of the time spent in efficiently locating and copying records, based on a standard hourly rate to be prescribed by the Minister for Finance. No charges may apply in respect of the time spent by Met Éireann in considering requests.

A deposit may be payable where the total fee is likely to exceed IR£40. In these circumstances, Met Éireann will, if requested, assist in amending the request so as to reduce or eliminate the amount of the fee.

Charges may be waived in the following circumstances:

- a) where the cost of collecting and accounting for the fee would exceed the amount of the fee
- b) where the information would be of particular assistance to the understanding of an issue of national importance
- c) in the case of personal information, where such charges would not be reasonable having regard to the means of the applicant

Glossary of Terms

CAFO - The Central Analysis and Forecast Office in Glasnevin. This is the principal operational office of the General Forecasting Division.

CAO - The Central Aviation Office at Shannon Airport. This is the principal operational office of the Aviation Services Division.

ECMWF - The European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts, in Reading, England. Eighteen European states are members of ECMWF, which provides routine forecast guidance and conducts an extensive basic research programme.

ECOMET - European Co-operation in Meteorology (ECOMET) is an Economic Interest Grouping within the European Union.

EUMETSAT - The European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites, based at Darmstadt in Germany.

HIRLAM - The High-Resolution Limited-Area Model. This is a sophisticated short-range weather prediction model, developed by a consortium of the Nordic countries, Spain, the Netherlands and Ireland.

ICAO - The International Civil Aviation Organisation, an agency of the United Nations, sets international standards and regulations for civil aviation.

SYNOPTIC NETWORK - The network of weather observing stations (manned and automatic) which produce hourly weather reports.

WAM - A high-resolution wave model run operationally by Met Éireann.

WMO - The World Meteorological Organisation, an agency of the United Nations which regulates and co-ordinates international collaboration in meteorology.

Met Éireann is a service provider, and does not implement schemes or programmes which may be availed of by the public. This section is accordingly limited to describing some general features of Met Éireann's operations.

Background

Met Éireann was established by the State in 1936 to meet the requirements of the new transatlantic air services from Foynes. While the initial ten to fifteen years of its existence were mainly devoted to providing services to the expanding aviation sector, Met Éireann gradually broadened its forecasting activities to meet the needs of a wide spectrum of users of weather information - including agriculture, marine, industry and the communications media.

A core activity of Met Éireann has been the collection of climatological data from around the country - from the full-time meteorological stations operated by Met Éireann itself, and from small rainfall and climatological stations run by co-operating public service agencies and by private individuals - so as to build up an archive of data sufficient to describe the climate of Ireland.

Since the late 1950's Met Éireann has maintained an increasing involvement in environmental monitoring - for example, measuring radioactivity levels in air and rainfall and assessing concentrations of acid rain. The monitoring of stratospheric ozone and ultra-violet radiation are the latest additions to these environmental activities.

Met Éireann has always been an integral part of the Civil Service and has always been a part of the Government Department responsible for transport, because of its historical association with aviation. Currently it is attached to the Department of Public Enterprise.

Tendering procedures

The award of contracts by Met Éireann is in accordance with the guidelines published in 'Public Procurement', 1994 Edition, obtainable from the Government Publications Sales Office. IT contracts are additionally subject to procurement norms contained in Department of Finance advisory notes, guidelines and templates, as updated from time to time.

Operations

Met Éireann's operations are regulated or influenced by its membership of several international organisations:

1 World Meteorological Organisation (WMO)

The World Meteorological Organisation is a specialised agency of the United Nations. Based in Geneva, it provides the authoritative scientific voice on the state and behaviour of the Earth's atmosphere and climate.

The purposes of WMO are to facilitate international co-operation in the establishment of networks of stations for making meteorological, hydrological and other observations; and to promote the rapid exchange of meteorological information, the standardisation of meteorological observations and the uniform publication of observations and statistics. It also furthers the application of meteorology to aviation, shipping, water problems, agriculture and other human activities, promotes operational hydrology and encourages research and training in meteorology.

All Met Éireann's weather observing systems, and its procedures for the routine exchange of weather data, operate in conformity with WMO regulations.

2 International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO)

ICAO was created in 1944 to promote the safe and orderly development of civil aviation in the world. A specialised agency of the United Nations, it sets international standards and regulations necessary for the safety, security, efficiency and regularity of air transport and serves as the medium for co-operation in all fields of civil aviation among its 187 contracting States.

Operations

Among its other functions, ICAO

- 1 develops, adopts and amends international standards in all matters related to the operation of aircraft, airworthiness and the numerous facilities and services required in their support
- 2 establishes, with the co-operation of States, regional air navigation plans
- 3 creates standards for and helps States with aviation security
- 4 assists, through technical co-operation activities, resource-scarce States to meet ICAO standards
- 5 collects and publishes world aviation statistical data and economic studies
- 6 drafts international air law conventions
- 7 monitors the impact of civil aviation operations on the environment and develops relevant standards

All of Met Éireann's services to civil aviation are governed by ICAO regulations.

3 The European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts (ECMWF)

The European Centre for Medium-Range Weather Forecasts is an international organisation based in Reading, England. It is supported by eighteen European States: Belgium, Denmark, Federal Republic of Germany, Spain, France, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Yugoslavia (inactive since 5 June 1992), the Netherlands, Norway, Austria, Portugal, Switzerland, Finland, Sweden, Turkey, United Kingdom. The Centre has concluded co-operation agreements with Croatia, Iceland, Hungary and Slovenia.

Operations

The principal objectives of the Centre are:

- 1 the development of numerical methods for medium-range weather forecasting
- 2 the preparation, on a regular basis, of medium-range weather forecasts for distribution to the meteorological services of the Member States
- 3 scientific and technical research directed to the improvement of these forecasts
- 4 collection and storage of appropriate meteorological data

In addition, the Centre:

- 1 makes available a proportion of its computing facilities to its Member States for their research
- 2 assists in implementing the programmes of the World Meteorological Organisation
- 3 provides advanced training to the scientific staff of the Member States in the field of numerical weather prediction
- 4 makes the data in its extensive archives available to outside bodies

ECMWF output is received daily by Met Éireann, and forms the basis of all medium-range forecasts (i.e. 3-7 days ahead).

4 European Organisation for the Exploitation of Meteorological Satellites (EUMETSAT)

EUMETSAT is an inter-governmental organisation created through an international convention agreed by 17 European States : Austria, Belgium, Denmark, Finland, France, Federal Republic of Germany, Greece,

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Ireland, Italy, The Netherlands, Norway, Portugal, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey and the United Kingdom. These States fund the EUMETSAT programmes and are the principal users of the systems. EUMETSAT also has co-operation agreements with many other States. EUMETSAT's primary objective is to establish, maintain and exploit European systems of operational meteorological satellites. EUMETSAT is responsible for the launch and operation of the satellites and for delivering satellite data to end users as well as contributing to the operational monitoring of climate and the detection of global climate change.

Established in 1988, EUMETSAT's headquarters are located at Darmstadt, Germany. Within a decade it has become a well-established organisation with direct responsibility for the operation of its satellites in orbit and with new programmes to ensure the continuity of observations. At the same time it has become one of the major partners in satellite systems for observing the entire planet, enabling Europe to play its proper role in monitoring global weather and climate. Its success has not only ensured the availability of key satellite data for Europe but also for many developing countries which now rely on its data and systems.

In Met Éireann, satellite data are an essential aid to the human forecaster in the routine diagnosis of weather developments, and also form an important input to the numerical weather prediction systems.

5 The international HIRLAM (High-Resolution Limited-Area Model) project

The international HIRLAM project is a co-operative venture between the Nordic countries, Spain, the Netherlands and Ireland. Its aim is to develop and maintain a numerical short-range weather forecasting model for operational use by the participating institutes. The HIRLAM project is controlled by the HIRLAM Council, which consists of the directors of the

Operations

participating institutes, and the project is managed by a Management Group. The HIRLAM model is run four times daily on Met Éireann's computer systems in Glasnevin. Each model run provides the forecasters with guidance for 48 hours ahead.

6 European Co-operation in Meteorology (ECOMET)

ECOMET is an Economic Interest Grouping (EIG) under EU law. The objectives of the EIG are

- to improve the free exchange of data sets and products between members
- to assist members to maintain and improve their infrastructure
- to expand the availability of meteorological information within the ECOMET territory
- to maintain and improve the quality, increase the use and improve the distribution of data, products and services of members of the grouping
- to create the conditions for members of the grouping to develop their economic activities

Met Éireann is a member of ECOMET and its commercial activities are in accordance with ECOMET rules.

Operations

7 European Meteorological Network (EUMETNET)

EUMETNET is a relatively recent development, and is intended to be a loose network of co-operation between European national meteorological services (NMSs). The NMSs will identify topics on which they might usefully collaborate and will, on a voluntary basis, agree to participate in specified projects. For each project one NMS will act as the co-ordinating and administrative centre and may also do the development work. The fruits of the co-operation will be available to all the participating NMSs.

