Executive Summary

Chapter 1 - Overview

Voluntary activity is an essential sign of a society where people are concerned for each other. The Government recognises the worth of every type of volunteerism and voluntary activity and does not believe that it should seek to regulate or be involved with every type of activity. The specific purpose of this White Paper is to deal with the formal interaction between the State and Community and Voluntary sector. **(1.1)**

Voluntary activity spans the whole range of social activity and is a vital element of democracy. A strong democracy enhances and protects the capacity of citizens to participate. In a strong democracy people regard the State, not as the answer to every problem, but as just one player among others. All the others - the private Sector, trade unions, religious organisations, non-governmental organisations, sporting organisations, local community and residents' associations – play a pivotal role in democratic life and in continued economic and social progress. **(1.2)**

Voluntary activity has tremendous potential to foster reconciliation and mutual understanding between the two communities in Northern Ireland and between North and South. The Government will continue to support and encourage such work. Cross-border linkages have the potential to deepen our understanding of each other. **(1.3)**

In the Government's vision of society, the ability of the Community and Voluntary sector to provide channels for the active involvement and participation of citizens is fundamental. **An active Community and Voluntary sector contributes to a democratic, pluralist society, provides opportunities for the development of decentralised and participative** **(1.4)**

structures and fosters a climate in which the quality of life can be enhanced for all.

This is a key point. The Government regards statutory support of the Community and Voluntary sector as having an importance to the well-being of our society that goes beyond 'purchase' of services by this or that statutory agency. The Government's vision of society is one which encourages people and communities to look after their own needs - very often in partnership with statutory agencies - but without depending on the State to meet all needs. **(1.5)**

The importance and role of voluntary activity to the well-being of society and democracy underpins the Government's approach in this White Paper. **(1.6 - 1.7)**

2001 is UN International Year of Volunteers. The Government is particularly keen to encourage new volunteers to come forward and to foster a culture of support for volunteering in schools and third level institutions. As provided for in the **Programme for Prosperity and Fairness**, a National Committee on Volunteering will be established. **(1.8)**

Chapter 2 – Context and Background to White Paper

Introduction **(2.1 – 2.4)**

A Green Paper on Supporting Voluntary Activity was published in May 1997 with a view to initiating a consultation process with the Community and Voluntary sector.   A Steering Group was then brought together to advise and assist the Department on the consultation process. The membership of the Group is given in Appendix 1. An extensive consultation process took place. This led up to a National Consultative Seminar in March 2000.

Main Issues that have emerged in the consultation process. **(2.5)**

The following are the main issues that have emerged in the consultation process:

- ❑ Defining the Statutory, Community and Voluntary sectors and their roles

- Nature of the relationship between the sectors

- Principles and structures underpinning that relationship, including issues of consultation and representation

- Need for shared and defined vision on the parameters of the relationship between the two Sectors

- Role of volunteering

- Funding and support for the Community and Voluntary sector

- Implementation and monitoring of White Paper decisions

The White Paper seeks to formulate a coherent strategy and to identify the policy responses at national, regional and local level, which will most effectively address the issues raised during the consultation process. **(2.6)**

The aim of the White Paper is to (2.7)

- **Describe the current context in which the Community and Voluntary sector operates, and the range and diversity of the sector;**

- **Set out a cohesive framework of support for the Community and Voluntary sector across Government Departments and Agencies;**

- **Promote sound principles and best practice models for the effective functioning of the State/Community/ Voluntary Sector relationship; and**

- **Make recommendations across a number of areas relevant both to the support of voluntary activity generally and to the framework (e.g. funding, enabling, administrative) necessary to support and deepen the relationship.**

Social and economic context in which the Paper is being published **(2.8)**

At national and at international level, there is a major shift taking place in the way in which decisions are made and influenced (the term 'governance' is often used in this context). Far-reaching economic, technological and other changes are creating unprecedented opportunities for many people, but increased insecurity and inequality for others. In many countries pockets of affluence co-exist with areas of high unemployment, inadequate skills provision, low incomes, environmental deterioration etc.

Civil society is coming to play a more active role in shaping change and addressing needs. This is seen as follows: **(2.9)**

❑   A more active role for civil society in adopting innovative approaches and technologies to mobilise action at both the policy and practical level;

❑   More co-ordinated and efficient approaches within and between Government institutions (e.g. the drive for more integrated approaches);

❑   Increased dialogue and consultation between Governments and non-governmental organisations; and

❑   Greater transparency and accountability on the part of all the actors in terms of their activities, their priorities and outcomes.

Questions being asked about this process of change include the following: **(2.10)**

❑   Will civil society be enhanced or undermined by the growth in new forms of governance?

❑   Can the capacity of civil society be developed to play an effective role?

❑   How will these organisations evolve to ensure that they remain representative?

❑   Can the institutions of Government rise to the challenge of managing complex cross-Sectoral relationships?

A parallel development is a trend where Governments look to the Voluntary Sector and to **(2.11)**

volunteers to play a larger role in the direct delivery of welfare services. The United Nations World Summit on Social Development (Copenhagen, 1995) **Final Declaration and Programme of Action**, made reference to the importance of "*promoting socially useful volunteer work and allocating appropriate resources to support such work*".

A recent European survey showed that more than one quarter of people in Europe over 15 years of age engage in voluntary activity, over half of them on a regular basis. The study notes that there is a strong 'social welfare component' in volunteering in Ireland. There is also a high input of volunteer time in fundraising for organisations. **(2.12)**

In a number of European countries, the voluntary organisations have led the way in establishing programmes, identifying needs and setting much of the welfare agenda. A number of countries have legislation to govern regulation and organisation of the sector. This is largely not the case in Ireland, except in the case of recognition of charities for tax concession purposes. **(2.13 – 2.14)**

Some countries trace the origins of state recognition of volunteering back to the adoption of a constitution recognising the right of association. The Irish Constitution recognises the right to associate. **Overall, however, there is an underdeveloped legal and policy framework in Ireland for the support of voluntary work and the contexts in which it takes place.   The Government is committed to dealing with this situation and this White Paper is the start of such a process.** **(2.15)**

Despite a dramatic improvement in Irish economic performance, real economic and social issues remain to be resolved.   State agencies are increasingly aware of the need to consult with local groups in developing appropriate responses and to involve them in delivery of such responses.   The Integrated Services Process is a practical initiative to develop best practice in an integrated response to multi-dimensional problems of need. Other integration initiatives include the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs' Family Services Project and the Springboard initiative operated under the aegis of the Department of Health and Children. **(2.16 – 2.17)**

Re-thinking Our Vision

The rapidly changing economic and social situation in Ireland requires serious consideration on how to influence society to make it socially and economically inclusive, to make it a place where equality of treatment, opportunity and access, and respect for the autonomy of the individual are the norm. There is a need to create a more participatory democracy where active citizenship is fostered.

Key Principles Underlying the Vision

The process of providing a voice for all our people poses challenges both to the State and to the Community and Voluntary sector. Although the solution envisaged is not a centralised solution, it is based on the central allocation of resources within a facilitative and enabling framework which promotes the growth of 'civil society'. It requires commitment from Government to be an active partner in the process. But it also requires recognition that Government is only one of the players - all must play an active part. The following organising principles underpin the type of framework we envisage:

Active Citizenship
- Active citizenship refers to the active role of people, communities and voluntary organisations in decision-making which directly affects them. This extends the concept of formal citizenship and democratic society from one of basic civil, political and social and economic rights to one of direct democratic participation and responsibility.

  As provided for in the **Programme for Prosperity and Fairness**, the Government will institute a new Electoral Participation Initiative.

Resource Allocation and Promotion of Equality of Opportunity
- Some groups tend to be excluded from opportunities and resources available to the rest of society. Underlying structural causes for such exclusion (e.g. long-term unemployment, educational disadvantage) must be addressed.

Helping people to participate in issues which affect them
- There is a need to develop positive action programmes to target groups which are most marginalised and to support them to become involved in issues and

concerns affecting themselves and their communities.

Respect for individual freedom in the pursuit of social goals
- It is important to foster a culture and society which respects the autonomy of the individual. This means creating a climate which supports individuals and groups to make things happen rather than have things happen to them.

Promoting and Strengthening Social Dialogue
- Individuals and communities must be facilitated to speak about the problems affecting them and be part of the practical response.

- The promotion and strengthening of social dialogue across society involves the State developing partnerships with a wide range of bodies and organisations, including not only Community and Voluntary interests, but also employer representatives, trade unions and farming organisations.

EU Developments **(2.20 – 2.25)**

The importance of combating social exclusion is recognised at EU level, as is the role of the Community and Voluntary sector. A White Paper on the sector is to be published by the EU Commission. The European Social Fund regulations provide that Member States are required to make "a reasonable amount" of their overall Social Fund allocations to community groups and NGOs. The Communication **Promoting the Role of Voluntary Organisations and Foundations in Europe** refers to the increasingly important role that voluntary organisations play and recommended that voluntary organisations should be given the opportunity to be involved in planning services and policy-making with public authorities at all levels. It also states that:

> "*Relationships between voluntary organisations and public authorities should be clearer and new partnerships developed.*"

The impact of the considerable emphasis placed on the involvement of NGOs in the design, delivery and monitoring of EU funded programmes in Ireland is significant. The importance of this in contributing to the enhancement of social partnership cannot be underestimated. The vital contribution of civil society to solving social and economic progress is also recognised in the designation of 2001 as International Year of Volunteers by the United Nations. **(2.26 - 2.27)**

History and role of the Community and Voluntary sector in Ireland

Community and Voluntary sector - Historical perspective **(2.28)**

While recognising the diversity of groups and interests involved, the term 'Sector' is used as a convenient description and form of reference in this White Paper.

The Community and Voluntary sector has a long and valued tradition of meeting social needs in Ireland. The important role of the sector is reflected in the substantial amount of funding - almost **IR£ 1 billion** in 1999 (**EURO 1.267** billion) - which it received from the Irish State and EU sources. **(2.29)**

The sector is sometimes seen as comprising two discrete subsections - a community Sector and a voluntary Sector. In practice, the two are opposite ends of a continuum and many organisations combine features of both. **(2.30 – 2.31)**

In Ireland the sector not only complements and supplements State provision, but is the dominant provider in particular areas. The Church-based education system - at primary and secondary level - and voluntary hospitals predate the foundation of the State. Many services have been initiated and run by religious organisations. The Society of St. Vincent de Paul is one of the largest voluntary organisations, with 1,000 local branches comprising approximately 10,000 members, active not only in welfare services, but also enabling people to become self-sufficient and raising the structural inequalities in society. **(2.32)**

In the 1950s the State began to play a wider role in funding voluntary social welfare provision and voluntary activity. The Health Act 1953 introduced *Section 65* grants. **(2.33)**

Community development also has historical roots, as typified by the co-operative movement. Muintir na Tíre, founded in the 1930s, also stresses the importance of self-reliance and local initiative. The 1970s saw the development of community empowerment and involvement with self-help initiatives aimed at disadvantaged groups. EU funded **(2.34 - 2.37)**

anti-poverty programmes were instrumental in this regard. Community development is underpinned by a vision of self-help and community self-reliance. An impressive infrastructure of community and local development has been built up in Ireland. For example, the Community Development Programme now has a strong network of some 90 projects all over the country. Many community groups are issue-based, rather than area-based. Anti-poverty networks and other national level Community and Voluntary sector organisations have had a significant input into national social partnership agreements. At EU level, their equivalent NGO networks have been active in influencing the development of social policy.

Changing Role of Religious Organisations   **(2.38)**

The role of religious organisations in relation to the Community and Voluntary sector is changing. This has created gaps that are increasingly being filled by the statutory sector and other voluntary organisations. Religious personnel have increased their role in, for example, encouraging and advocating State expansion in provision and support for voluntary organisations.

Recent developments in the Community and Voluntary sector   **(2.39)**

The sector has changed considerably since the early 1990s. The Community and Voluntary sector is active in

- delivery of essential services

- advocacy and provision of information

- contributing to policy-making

- national and local partnership arenas

- undertaking research

- creation of opportunities for members and participants to access education, training, income and employment opportunities.

Recent decades have also seen growth in voluntary social service and independent information-giving organisations. **A key challenge for the future for these groups is to harness their collective energy in order to maximise their impact, both at policy development level (e.g. in relation to welfare/health issues), and at the level of their individual client base.** **(2.40 – 2.41)**

Definition **(2.42)**

Faughnan (1990) offers the following broad classification of Community and Voluntary organisations:

- ❏   Mutual support and self-help organisations;

- ❏   Local development associations;

- ❏   Resource and service providing associations;

- ❏   Representative and co-ordinating organisations; and

- ❏   Campaigning and advocacy organisations.

The EU Commission suggests that 'Voluntary' organisations have a number of characteristics, including that they are: **(2.43)**

- ❏   Distinguished from informal or *ad hoc*, purely social, or familial groupings by having some degree, however vestigial, of formal or institutional existence

- ❏   Non-profit distributing

- ❏   Independent, in particular of Government and other public authorities

- ❏   Must be managed in what is sometimes called a 'disinterested' manner - in the Irish context this particularly relates to containing some element of voluntary, unpaid participation.

- ❏   Must be active to some degree in the public arena and their activity must be aimed, at least in part, at contributing to the public good.

The Commission also makes a useful distinction between different types of organisations based on their primary activity: **(2.44)**

- ❑ Service delivery or provision to provide to their members or clients, services such as social services, health care, training, information, advice or support

- ❑ Advocacy: i.e. organisations whose purpose is to campaign, lobby and otherwise argue on behalf of some cause or group with the aim of changing public perception or policy

- ❑ Self-help or mutual aid: organisations typically formed by groups of individuals with some common interest or need in order to provide mutual help, information and support and co-operation

- ❑ Resource and co-ordination: so-called 'intermediary bodies' which co-ordinate the activities of, or provide information and support to, either individual organisations working in a particular field or to the sector in general. Such organisations fulfil the important function of providing an interface between the sector and public authorities.

These classifications are useful in that they illustrate the diversity of organisational types making up the sector. However, any classification system only partially recognises the wide variations of size, structure, or culture embraced in each category. **(2.45)**

While the discussion in Ireland commonly refers to the Community and Voluntary sector, some sources prefer to look at the sector as a component part of a wider 'non-profit Sector'. The non-profit Sector can be defined as the sector that is non-market and non-state. It also spans a range of specialised organisations and institutions, such as voluntary public hospitals, major mental handicap organisations, major sporting organisations, credit unions, trade unions, political parties, employer organisations, educational institutions and church-based institutions. **The principles and decisions contained in the White Paper will apply to the support of voluntary activity and to developing the Relationship between the Community and Voluntary sector and the State generally. The specific recommendations will apply to specific parts of the Community and Voluntary sector,** **(2.46)**

as relevant. A pragmatic approach to the issue of the definition of the sector is necessary, given the range of Departments and agencies that engage in relationships with a wide variety of Community and Voluntary organisations at different levels.

Employment in Community and Voluntary sector

The constitution and scale of the non-profit Sector in Ireland is discussed in **Uncovering the Non-profit Sector in Ireland: Its Economic Value and Significance**, Donoghue et al NCI 1999. The study shows that, in 1995, paid employment in the Community and Voluntary sector amounted to 3 per cent of the non-agricultural workforce, i.e. 32,136 paid employees. Volunteering within the sector came to 31,919 full-time equivalents. Social services accounted for location of 42.3% of volunteers. Some 52% of the sector's funding comes from public (State and EU) sources. The report concluded that the Irish non-profit Sector is economically significant and compares favourably to non-profit Sectors of other countries.

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For the purposes of the White Paper, the Faughnan description (para. 2.42) is the working approach employed. However, there are huge differences in scale in the sector, from small community projects on the one hand to large organisations representing particular groups. Nonetheless, there are many shared values and identified needs, and the White Paper will set in train an agenda for change which will hopefully enable these values to be strengthened and meet a range of the needs.

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The Government will commission, during 2001, a programme of research which will include quantifying the full extent of Community and Voluntary activity in Ireland, its contribution to social development, to the economy and to employment. The Government is making an allocation of £400,000 available for this purpose. The research programme will also support work that examines the Irish Community and Voluntary sector in an international context and identifies best practice abroad in relation to governance and legal issues such as incorporation, registration and charitable status. The findings of the research programme will inform the debate on the relationship between the

(2.51 – 2.52)

State and the Community and Voluntary sector.

There is a need for a mechanism to oversee the detailed implementation of the decisions announced in the White Paper and to advise the Government on an ongoing basis in relation to other issues that come up for resolution. **An Implementation and Advisory Group will be established (see Chapter 6).** **(2.53 – 2.55)**

Additional funding for Community and Voluntary sector supports
The Government is committed to continued support for the sector. **The Government is allocating £7 million to enhance the capacity of the sector to organise itself at national level, to foster the development of additional support and training within the sector and to further support volunteering**. Detailed information on these additional funds is set out in Chapters 4 and 5 and summary details are contained in Table 2. **(2.56 - 2.57)**

Chapter 3 – Structures Underpinning the Relationship

The role of government
The basic law of the State is the Constitution, **Bunreacht na hÉireann**. In accordance with the Constitution, all powers of government derive from the people. It is the Government's responsibility to determine priorities in the allocation of resources. Ministers and civil servants are accountable to the Oireachtas and to the citizen. Public Servants in local authorities and other local or regional agencies are directly responsible to their elected representatives or boards. Ministers are accountable in a very direct and personal way for their decisions and the work of their Departments. Ministers have channels of communication and information direct from the citizen and thus are in an especially good position to reflect and distil a wide range of opinion and demands coming from grass roots level. **(3.2 – 3.5)**

It is the Government that is ultimately solely responsible for making key decisions on **(3.6 –**

social and economic policy issues – no matter how extensive a process of prior 3.7)
consultation that may have taken place. However, the context in which these
constitutionally-based powers and responsibilities are exercised is increasingly one of
social partnership. This White Paper develops and makes more explicit the participation of
the Community and Voluntary sector in partnership and consultation mechanisms, within
the overall constitutional and legal framework that governs public administration.

The changing face of the Statutory sector (3.8 –

The Public Service is undergoing major changes. The Strategic Management Initiative **3.12)**
(SMI) requires each Government Department to examine and review its performance under
three main headings:

- ❑ The contribution it could make to national development

- ❑ The quality of services provided to the public

- ❑ The provision of value for money to the taxpayer

This involves the production by each Department of a **Strategy Statement**, setting out its
Mission Statement, Values and High Level Goals. The Strategy Statements can be seen
as a link between Government policy and its implementation. The **Public Service
Management Act** deals with the provision of quality services, the establishment of the
performance management system, the implementation of revised financial management
systems and the business planning process. Other legislative changes with a profound
impact on our system of public administration include the Committees of the House of the
Oireachtas Act 1997 and the Ethics in Public Office Act 1995.

The role of the Community and Voluntary sector (3.13

The Government recognises that the Community and Voluntary sector plays a crucial role –
in a mature democratic society, quite separate to and independent of the institutions of **3.14)**
Government. The Community and Voluntary sector has a special role and potential to:

- ❑ Help create a vibrant civil and active society in which individuals are encouraged and enabled to participate fully. This is an essential component of a mature democracy;

- ❑ Respond to pressing social needs quickly, directly and effectively;

- ❑ Pioneer new approaches to service provision and local and community development;

- ❑ Improve the effectiveness of services through feed-back and monitoring of services by consumers and users;

- ❑ Provide opportunities for volunteers to participate and develop skills;

- ❑ Create employment opportunities through the provision of services and through the activities of community development projects, thus contributing to community infrastructure;

- ❑ Foster self-help and enable people to become active participants in shaping their future;

- ❑ Identify needs and appropriate responses tailored to the specific needs of local communities and neighbourhoods and specific communities of interests;

- ❑ Offer new solutions where conventional approaches have failed;

- ❑ Enable people who are excluded to become involved in the regeneration process in their own communities and at a wider societal level.

The relationship between the State and the sector

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The Government is not, of necessity, a player in voluntary activity and many voluntary organisations do not have a formal relationship with the statutory sector. The main areas where there is a working relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary sector include:

- Communicating consumers' views and requirements
- Developing new services to meet emerging needs
- Advocacy, lobbying and campaigning
- Inputs to policy development and the planning of economic and social policy or programmes
- Contracting delivery of services
- Establishing good practice
- Monitoring and evaluation of the work of specific programmes
- Negotiating and developing the sector's relationship with the State.

Participation can be defined as an exchange between citizens and government, between those who make policy and people affected by policy choices. Participation should lead to more successful outcomes. Its precise form is shaped by the problem at hand. It is important to balance the democratic base of elected governments, since no group other than elected representatives has a mandate to speak for the whole of society, with the benefits of participation in the achievement of a wider consensus.

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The goal of the relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary sector is to achieve the common aims of both Sectors, while respecting the separate roles and responsibilities of each and acknowledging the difference between consultation, negotiation and decision-making. Both flexibility and realism are required.

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Mechanisms that facilitate consultation between the sector and State bodies

The developing and widening role of the Community and Voluntary sector has led to the

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establishment of a wide range of mechanisms for consultation and involvement in the **3.22)**
policy-making process:

1) National representative structures;

2) The Community and Voluntary Pillar, the mechanism created to participate in the negotiations leading to **Partnership 2000** and its successor, the **Programme for Prosperity and Fairness**;

3) Consultation mechanisms set up by individual Departments and agencies which involve the sector;

4) Local Development Agencies (e.g. Area-based Partnerships);

5) New arrangements emerging from the ongoing process of local government reform, including County Development Boards and local community fora;

6) Regional bodies;

7) National consultative bodies (NESF and NESC) on which the sector is represented alongside the other social partner and statutory interests;

8) The National Anti-Poverty Strategy.

National representative structures

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Sectoral organisations are now well developed in Ireland and there are many co-ordinating **–**
bodies, sometimes referred to as federations, umbrella bodies or networks. There has been **3.24)**
a debate about the possible need for a national organisation to represent the Community
and Voluntary sector as a whole. It may well be that given the diversity of the Community
and Voluntary sector it is appropriate for it to be organised along Sectoral lines. On the
other hand, there may be a case for an umbrella body which can pull the various strands
together. This is an issue for consideration and resolution by the sector itself, rather than
by Government.

The **Community and Voluntary Pillar** represents a wide range of Community and **(3.25**
Voluntary organisations which was brought together in the context of the need for a **–**
structure and voice for the sector in the **Partnership 2000** and the **Programme for** **3.27)**
Prosperity and Fairness discussions. The Pillar is a model of how the voice of

disadvantaged Sectors can be represented at national agreement level. There has been some debate within the sector about the possible widening of the range of Community and Voluntary sector participants in the national partnership arena, including the question of bringing together other platforms with a specific focus (e.g. housing, disability, environmental issues) for this purpose. Another recent development is the emergence of **The Wheel**. This is a movement for groups and individuals who wish to explore ways and means in which the Community and Voluntary sector might come together.

The question of representative structures is one for the sector itself. The Government recognises and welcomes the diversity of the sector and recognises the right of the sector to develop structures to reflect the diversity of the sector. This has clear strengths, but also poses some difficulties. Where generally-accepted representative groups exist, nominations to Working Groups, etc. will be called for, as relevant, from these groups. However, Government reserve the right to appoint individuals who have particular expertise, knowledge of an area, etc., particularly where it is clear that there is no representative structure, or where it is clear that there is no public agreement on a way forward on an issue. **(3.28)**

Consultation mechanisms set up by individual Departments and agencies which involve the sector

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A range of advisory and monitoring committees that give the sector a voice in relation to policy development or management of particular programmes exist at both national and regional/local level. However, not all voluntary organisations wish to work closely with the State in consultative fora. Some regard it as a mark of their independence to have little or no contact with State agencies. Mutuality of interest is a cornerstone in this whole area, with consultation and participation where necessary and desirable, rather than for its own sake. The Government will continue to encourage the independence of the sector – including by promotion of additional, non-governmental sources of funding, e.g. from the business Sector.

The Establishment of Voluntary Activity Units in Certain Government Departments

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It is important that Government Departments which have significant contact with the Community and Voluntary sector adopt an enabling approach and that they adopt community development principles of participation and inclusion in their work**. In this context, a Voluntary Activity Support Unit or Units will be designated in relevant Government Departments.**   Such Units already exist in the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs (Community and Voluntary Services section and the Family Affairs Unit). Units discharging similar functions also exist in other Departments. For example, a Unit has also been established in the Housing Division of the Department of the Environment and Local Government.

Local Development Agencies

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These opened up new opportunities and challenges for the Community and Voluntary sector. A key to their success is that they have been highly innovative in their working methods and in preparing flexible, targeted and integrated responses to local needs. However, there is a strong need for greater integration of structures and services and the Government has now commenced a move towards an integrated local Government and local development system.

Local Government reform/County Development Boards (3.37 – 3.39)

A broadly-representative Development Board (CDB) is being established in each city and county local authority. The CDB will develop a Strategy for Social, Economic and Cultural Development in full partnership with all local interests. A Director of Community and Enterprise and support staff have been appointed.

Community and Voluntary Fora have been set up to select the sector's representatives on the Board and supporting groups. These Fora also have the potential to link with State bodies outside the local government area. Financial resources are made available so that the full potential of the Fora can be developed. **A sum of £1 million per annum is being made available for this purpose.** Agencies will, where appropriate, be encouraged to consult with the local fora where seeking feedback or input in relation to their policies or initiatives. (3.40 – 3.43)

Regionally-Based Bodies (3.44 – 3.47)

These include the Western Development Commission and the new Regional Assemblies for the Border, Midlands and Western Region and the Eastern and Southern Region set up in the context of the National Development Plan (NDP). Regional bodies such as these have considerable potential to foster greater collaboration and consultation between statutory agencies and Community and Voluntary groups. The Western Development Commission is responsible for promoting the economic and social development of the Western Region (the Counties of Connacht, plus Clare and Donegal). The Western Development Commission has an important co-ordinating role in relation to public and private bodies operating in the Region.

National consultative bodies (NESF and NESC) in which the sector participates as a social partner (3.48 – 3.52)

The National Economic and Social Council provides a forum for discussion of the efficient development of the national economy, the achievement of social justice and also has a role in advising the Government. The National Economic and Social Forum contributes to the formation of a wider national consensus on social and economic policy initiatives,

particularly in relation to unemployment. Membership of both includes representatives of the Community and Voluntary sector. The Government has indicated our intention to put these two organisations on a statutory basis within a new Office for National Economic and Social Development.

National Anti-Poverty Strategy (NAPS) **(3.53**

Consultation with an involvement of the Community and Voluntary sector was a central **–** feature of the development of the NAPS. The NAPS targets are being reviewed at present **3.57)** and a number of developments in its implementation are being planned. The Government is committed to continuing this process of participation and consultation in the development, ongoing implementation and review of NAPS.

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Further mechanisms for broadening the consultation **–**

The Government is keen to widen the opportunities for individuals working in Community and Voluntary groups to participate in the process of influencing policy. In addition to the **3.60)** mechanisms outlined above, relevant Departments and agencies will undertake to hold regular policy fora in future to allow for wider consultation and participation in the policy-making process. It is proposed that such policy fora will be held on particular theme issues (e.g. childcare, the arts). The Government expects that relevant Departments and agencies will take the lead in organising such fora. An example is the series of Family Fora

for Community and Voluntary groups currently being undertaken by the Minister for Social, Community and Family Affairs.

Government Departments and State Agencies will ensure that there are administrative **(3.61)** arrangements in place to underpin the effective functioning of the working relationship. Each Department and Agency will outline its role and future plans that relate to the sector and publish information on a regular basis.

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Best Practice in consultation

Government Departments and agencies will adhere to the best practice guidelines in relation to consultation by statutory agencies with the sector set out in **Appendix 3**.

Principles that should inform the Relationship between the Community and   **(3.63)**
Voluntary sector and the State

The following are a set of principles or commitments that emerged from the wide-spread

consultation process leading up to publication of this White Paper. The Government

suggests that these should be seen as basic principles informing

the relationship between the State and the sector.

Joint Principles applying to both the Statutory sector and the Community and
Voluntary sector.

1   Both Sectors value openness, accountability and transparency in the relationship between the State and the Community and Voluntary sector.

2   Services and programmes will be informed by the principles of respect for the individual's dignity, privacy and confidentiality. They will also be informed by the rights of users to quality services that are accessible to them, e.g. people with disabilities. Services and programmes should have regard for commitments under the Constitution, EU and International Treaties and Conventions.

3   There is a shared commitment by both the State and the sector to ensure the involvement of consumers and people who avail of services in the planning, delivery, management and evaluation of policy and programmes. This applies at all levels: national, regional and local.

4   There is a commitment by the State and the sector to focus on the needs of the most disadvantaged.

5   The sector and the State are committed to paying particular attention to the needs of groups experiencing discrimination, especially those named in Article 13 of the Amsterdam Treaty.

6   There is a commitment to achieving equality of opportunity, access, treatment by both the State and the sector and to the development of mechanisms to do this. This includes the commitment to affirmative action for particular target groups.

7   There is a joint commitment relating to fostering co-operation and the co-ordination within and across each Sector as well as between the State and the

Community and Voluntary sector.

8   There is a commitment on the part of both the State and the sector to provide access to, and to share, information relevant to the pursuit of shared objectives.

9   The State and the sector commit themselves to carrying out regular monitoring and evaluation of their individual actions and of the co-operation between them.

10   The State and the sector each recognise their mutual right to constructively critique each other's actions and policies.

11   There is a commitment on the part of both the State and the sector to create and support the appropriate mechanisms, institution and conduits to enable the State to relate to the sector and its component parts.

12   There is a commitment to developing mutual understanding of the culture and operating principles of each Sector and to take practical steps to achieve this. Both Sectors commit themselves to using working methods that are flexible and efficient in the context of the growing demands and range of tasks posed by modern society.

Principles Informing the State

1   The State recognises and validates the sector as a core component of a vibrant civil society and the effort to build a broader, more participative and more accountable democracy in Ireland.

2   The State commits itself to respect the autonomy and diversity of the Community and Voluntary sector and acknowledges its role as a legitimate social partner. This relates to a variety of partnership arenas. In particular, the State recognises that Community and Voluntary groups, who providing services or undertake community or local development work with statutory funding, have a right to be consulted about policy in relation to the design and delivery of services/programmes.

3   The State recognises and welcomes the diversity of the sector.

4   The State acknowledges the right of the sector to organise and represent itself.

5   The State acknowledges the role of the sector in inputting to policy-making and the pursuit of common objectives. This includes proposed legislation, development of relevant policies (i.e. policy areas of immediate interest and having an impact on the work of both), monitoring of existing policies and consultations with end-users of public services. The State will ensure that appropriate mechanisms are in place to give effect to this.

Principles informing the Community and Voluntary sector

1   The sector recognises and values its diversity as well as recognising and valuing its commonly held features. Appropriate structures to reflect this should be developed.

2   The sector will continually develop itself as a Sector, enhancing communication and building co-operation between its component parts.

3   The sector will maintain its ethos as a Sector distinct from the State, albeit acknowledging a role in supplying services on contract from the State.

4   The sector is accountable for any resources received from the Exchequer, EU or private sources.

5   The sector will engage in work and actions designed to impact at policy level.

6   The sector recognises that public authorities as statutory bodies have legal responsibilities in delivering services.

Chapter 4 – Enabling the sector

The Community and Voluntary sector is a very diverse Sector, made up of very many **(4.1 –** separate groups and organisations of widely differing size, constitution, resources and **4.3)** focus, working at local, regional or national level. This diversity demands a flexible and nuanced response**.** Aside from funding, which is discussed in Chapter 5, the task of **enabling the sector** encompasses the following distinct elements:

Technical Supports
❑ Provision of direct supports to the sector by Departments, specialised national agencies and local statutory agencies

❑ Provision of dedicated support structures for local groups and projects participating in certain funding programmes (e.g. the Community Development Programme regional and specialist support agencies) and the encouragement of the emergence of other voluntary Sector-based training and support services for the wider Sector

Volunteering
❑ Support and fostering of volunteering

Legal and regulatory issues

❏   A supportive legal and regulatory framework

The enormous growth in the Community and Voluntary sector in recent years has created **(4.4 –**
increased needs for training and other technical supports to enable groups to do their work **4.5)**
more effectively.   The precise technical support needs of individual voluntary
organisations and community groups will vary depending on the focus of the specific group
and/or its stage of development. The range of supports needed within the sector can be
categorised as follows:

❏   Management and organisational development and personal/professional
         development of staff

❏   Support for the relationships with statutory agencies

❏   Support for networking

❏   Support for the role of contributing to policy formation, including research

❏   Evaluation and review

❏   Support for volunteers and volunteering

❏   Training and support in community development skills and in the involvement and
         participation of the most marginalised

❏   Support for information dissemination, to the public, opinion and policy-makers
         and to membership, as may be relevant

❏   Production of resource materials and provision of technical advice

Primary responsibility for identification of training and support needs rests with individual **(4.6 –**
groups and organisations in the sector themselves. Just as not all voluntary activity will, or **4.7)**
should, be funded by the State, it follows that the training and support needs of all
Community and Voluntary sector organisations should not be met either by direct statutory
provision or by grant aid. However, the approach to funding set out in **Chapter 5** will
ensure that resources are available across a wide range of Community and Voluntary
organisations for training and support needs, including the vital area of training and
supporting volunteers.

Training of statutory personnel **(4.8)**

Both statutory agencies and Community and Voluntary groups should ensure that relevant staff have an understanding of the ways in which the sector works and the ethos and statutory framework that shape their roles.

Direct support **(4.9)**

Many Health Boards, Local Authorities, VECs and other agencies employ development staff to support voluntary organisations working in their respective fields. This direct support in kind and staff resources is enormously important.

In addition to the supports provided by local and regional agencies, two statutory agencies, Comhairle (formerly the NSSB) and the Combat Poverty Agency, as well as ADM, an EU-funding intermediary body, provide support, including training, advice, resource materials and assistance in development of policy responses, to the sector. The three organisations will be asked to come together to develop specific proposals for the further development of such supports in ways which will ensure clarity and definition in respect of the roles of each agency and which will maximise synergy between them. The Government is committed to strengthening the specialist technical supports that the State provides for the Community and Voluntary sector, including further supporting the services which have been developed by the above agencies. **(4.10 – 4.11)**

Structures set up to support projects participating in specific programmes (such as the Community Development Programme and the Women's Education Initiative) have proved to be a very successful model of providing training, organisational development and employment practice support to the local projects participating in that Programme. The model's features are: **(4.12 – 4.16)**

❑ A local and accessible service in response to the expressed needs of the projects themselves and the Programmes' strategic objectives;

□ A commitment to high standards and to key community development principles and practices and to on-going evaluation and monitoring in that regard; and

□ Support as an integral part of the funding programme, but delivered at one remove from the funder itself; thus support agencies work in partnership with the funding Department and the local projects, while maintaining their independence.

Developing other support availability within the sector, including enhancing the capacity of other Federations and Networks   **(4.17 – 4.19)**

There are many national networks and umbrella bodies and local networks that provide support to their member groups - many of which are in receipt of statutory funding. A number of other, specialised training and support organisations have also emerged in recent years from within the sector. While a prime function of many umbrella bodies is representation, they also undertake significant work in providing support systems and services for member organisations, or for organisations doing like work. The main kinds of support service offered include:

□ Provision of information and guidance for member groups

□ Provision of education and training programmes for volunteers and staff

□ Assistance with organisational and management development, standards development

□ Specialist assistance in areas such as recruitment and legal incorporation.

An additional fund of £2 million will be provided to develop other support and training availability within the Community and Voluntary sector. This new allocation will foster the availability of additional training and other support services to Community and Voluntary sector groups from within the sector itself.   **(4.20)**

(4.21)

Links with Third Level and other educational Institutions
Many third level institutions have developed education and training courses or research initiatives directed at meeting the specific needs of the Community and Voluntary sector.

The Implementation and Advisory Group will monitor developments in this area and act as a catalyst in ensuring that good ideas 'find a home'.

Accreditation of learning in the Community and Voluntary sector (4.22

Issues relevant to developing **accreditation** appropriate to the needs of the Community and –

Voluntary sector include: **4.23)**

- ❑ The Ethos of the Community and Voluntary sector
- ❑ The demand and type of accreditation
- ❑ Accreditation models and options
- ❑ Reference to National Standards/mainstream structure/s
- ❑ Resources/support required.

A review of the content and delivery of training to those in the Community and Voluntary **(4.24** sector should be undertaken. The value of this training should be verified and – appropriately rewarded. A priority for the National Qualifications Authority will be to put **4.25)** in place appropriate accreditation arrangements for the Community and Voluntary sector. The Implementation and Advisory Group will monitor progress in this area.

Accessing the capacity within the sector and within other Sectors (4.26

A number of ways in which the members of groups and organisations can access the – capacity within the sector and within other Sectors were suggested in the consultation **4.27)** process, including a 'skills exchange' bureau, an 'Investors in People' programme and mechanisms to facilitate networking and co-ordination of information on training needs and resources in the sector. These will be encouraged by the National Committee on Volunteering and the White Paper Implementation and Advisory Group.

(4.28

Fostering of volunteering –

There is a need to promote the active involvement of people in Community and Voluntary

groups as an essential component of a democratic society. Volunteering can be defined as *the commitment of time and energy, for the benefit of society, local communities, individuals outside the immediate family, the environment or other causes. Voluntary activities are undertaken of a person's own free will, without payment (except for reimbursement of out-of-pocket expenses).* Volunteers make an enormous contribution to the well-being of society.

4.30)

Supporting volunteering

A key determinant of the health of society is the degree to which individuals are prepared to come forward to give of their own time on a voluntary basis. Measures that promote active participation by people in the community will be promoted. These will recognise the contribution of volunteers who are disadvantaged and the particular obstacles they face and support needs they have. Volunteer centres can be a vital ingredient of support for Community and Voluntary organisations at local level.

(4.31 – 4.33)

Next year, 2001, is UN International Year of Volunteers. As provided for in the **Programme for Prosperity and Fairness**, a National Committee on Volunteering will be established. The Committee, with participation from all the relevant interests and stakeholders, will devise strategies and actions for supporting and developing volunteering, not just during the International Year, but for the longer term. **The Committee will have a budget of £1 million for initiatives to further support and develop volunteering.**

(4.34 – 4.35)

The work of the committee will include examining and making recommendations on:

(4.36 – 4.37)

❑ The possibilities for recognition and accreditation for voluntary work and for training undertaken as a volunteer

❑ Measures to widen pool of volunteers

❑ The range of supports needed in order to promote, sustain and develop volunteering

The Government is committed to encouraging individual volunteering. A range of

(4.38)

interesting proposals to that end have been put forward in the course of the White Paper consultation process. As well as being addressed by this Committee and the White Paper Implementation and Advisory Group, these will be examined by the relevant Departments and practical action will be taken.

Legal status and regulation

(4.39 – 4.44)

As a group grows and takes on more responsibilities, the question of having a legal status independently of the members of the group becomes relevant. There are three main structures which give a group separate legal status:

❑ Limited Company;

❑ Industrial and Provident Society;

❑ Incorporation under the Charities Act.

The advantages of having a legal status are:

(4.45)

❑ The individual members of the group are not generally responsible for the group's activities, including any debts which may arise;

❑ The group can own property, enter into contracts and employ people in its own name;

❑ The group can bring and defend court proceedings in its own name;

❑ The group can apply for charitable recognition (although this applies to some unincorporated groups).

It is strongly recommended that Community and Voluntary organisations should adopt an appropriate legal framework; in most cases this will - under the legal arrangements at present available - involve registering as companies limited by guarantee. The Government accepts the need for a more modern legal framework of law governing the sector. These and related charitable recognition issues will be also priorities for examination by the Implementation and Advisory Group.

(4.46 – 4.47)

Charitable recognition and Regulation of Charities (4.48 –

For tax purposes, under existing law, a charity is a body established for charitable purposes only. Charitable recognition does not confer any legal status on an organisation. The Revenue Commissioners are responsible for the administration of the applicable tax exemptions. *Charitable purposes* in this instance can be:

4.49)

- ❑ The advancement of education;

- ❑ The advancement of religion;

- ❑ The relief of poverty; or

- ❑ Other works of a charitable nature beneficial to the community.

(4.50)

Regulatory framework

The Government has decided that responsibility for charity regulatory matters and the Commissioners of Charitable Donations and Bequests will transfer to the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs. The Government is committed to ensuring that comprehensive legislation on regulation of charities and their fundraising is produced as a priority. The sector will be consulted in the development of the legislation through the Implementation and Advisory Group.

Chapter 5 - Funding Issues

Key principles with regard to funding (5.1 –

The following key principles will apply to statutory funding of the Community and Voluntary sector:

5.2)

- ❑ Not all Community and Voluntary activity should be funded by the State. Statutory funding will be available to the sector for mutually agreed programmes of activities and where these programmes are consistent with Government policies and objectives, or where other public interest criteria apply.

- ❑ The form the State's support will take varies across Departments/agencies and will

depend on the particular circumstances and needs involved, including where relevant, the different needs and circumstances in individual counties and regions. It includes:

- Funding of services provided by the sector (e.g. services for the elderly, childcare facilities, respite care services, information services);

- Support for grass-roots community development initiatives;

- Support for community-led enterprise and job creation initiatives;

- Support for participation by the sector in local development and other social partnership initiatives; this also involves support for umbrella bodies and representative structures for the sector at local, regional and national level as well as advocacy work; and

- Provision of dedicated support and development units for the sector.

❑ The priorities for statutory funding are activities undertaken by the Community and Voluntary sector that enable individuals facing disadvantage or discrimination to access and realise their rights and potential as members of society, or that provide key services required by groups with special needs.

❑ The sector has a special role in developing innovative responses to social needs. Not all pilots are successful or should receive ongoing funding, but the Government is keen to mainstream the lessons from successful pilot initiatives, as resources allow, by

- Providing continuing support for the innovative work of the sector;

- State agencies taking on direct provision of previously piloted services;

- Incorporating the lessons of pilot projects into local and national policy development.

❑ 100% funding will only be provided for projects with a specific focus on tackling poverty and disadvantage, where an element of self-financing could not reasonably be expected.

❑ Core funding (i.e. funding towards the core staff and administrative costs of the organisation) will only be provided for services to meet agreed priority needs and for priority development work, especially work focused on tackling poverty and disadvantage.

❑ Particular attention will be given to supporting volunteering; this will include clarifying the eligibility of volunteer expenses (out-of-pocket costs etc.) for

funding under individual schemes where necessary.

❑ Funded organisations and groups will be expected to adhere to standards of good practice - **see appendix 2 below.**

❑ Each Department and agency providing funding will publish a statement of its objectives in providing such funding and a description of its specific schemes and programmes, to include clear eligibility, selection criteria and funding procedures; Statutory agencies will adhere to the proposed statement of good practice - **see appendix 3 below.**

❑ Improved co-ordination and clarity in relation to roles and responsibilities amongst Departments and agencies is a priority.

Overall amount of funding available (5.3 –

The Government is committed to continued support for the sector. This support is set to **5.4)** rise very significantly over the period to 2006, under the National Development Plan and other commitments. In addition, the Government is providing £7 million to enhance the capacity of the sector to organise itself at national level, to foster the development of additional support and training within the sector and to further support volunteering.

Access to funding/eligibility/transparency (5.5 –

The Government is committed to ensuring that there should be published schemes, with **5.6)** clear and objective eligibility criteria, clear application and assessment procedures for ALL statutory grant schemes (i.e. as distinct from once-off special grants). Application forms and information leaflets will be as simple and clearly-written as is possible and consistent with the need to obtain sufficient information to make a proper assessment of any application. When groups apply for funding, they will be given a clear timescale for decisions.

Continuity of funding (5.7 –

There is a distinction to be made between: **5.9)**

❖ Non-governmental organisations that provide social services funded by and on behalf of a statutory agency. These are mainly large service providers in the health and social service area, whose services are funded by the Health Boards. The relationship

between statutory agencies and organisations in this category has been reviewed and reformed insofar as the Health and Social Services area is concerned in **Enhancing the Partnership**.

❖ Community and Voluntary organisations that provide other services and undertake development activities to meet social need – without being delivery agents on behalf of a statutory agency – but which statutory agencies wish to fund and support as ancillary and complementary to their own services or aims and objectives.

This Chapter is of more concern to the second category. Much statutory funding of groups in this second category has heretofore been provided on an *ad hoc* annual basis. This is unsatisfactory.

The system of three year funding commitments that operates in the case of community development and money advice projects funded by the Department of Social, Community and Family Affairs is a model that will be applied in other comparable areas. In addition, new statutory provisions are currently being introduced for the funding of Community and Voluntary agencies in the Health Services area, starting with the Eastern Health Board region with the establishment of the new regional health authority. It is intended to extend this provision to all health boards in due course. **(5.10 – 5.11)**

Multi-annual funding allows for a more rational approach to planning service delivery and to processing of funding applications. Adopting this approach does not of itself involve any increase in expenditure. **The Government has decided that multi-annual funding commitments should, in appropriate cases, be made available by all funding agencies to organisations providing services or undertaking development activities that are agreed to be priorities, with the budget for each specific year to which the agreement applies to be reviewed in the light of the resources available and taking into account the legal position that the Dáil votes public monies on an annual basis.** **(5.12 – 5.13)**

The Dáil determines the level of taxation and expenditure in any particular year. This may involve decisions to reduce expenditure in particular areas. Multi-annual funding commitments in specific areas will be complemented by explicit understandings in relation to service standards, performance indicators, evaluation and review. **(5.14)**

Types of funding (5.15)

Core funding of an organisation, or 100% funding of a specific project or service, is appropriate only for priority services or development activities with disadvantaged groups, where an element of self-financing would not be possible, or appropriate. Funding Departments and agencies will henceforth state clearly the cases where 100% funding can be provided or where a lesser percentage is envisaged as the norm. They should also distinguish between:

❑ Multi-annual 'core' funding for agreed priority services that are an ongoing requirement;

❑ Project funding for time-limited services or activities and pilot projects (but **NOT** for funding of ongoing services);

❑ Once-off grants for equipment, premises and other items that require occasional funding;

❑ Training (staff & management), evaluations, organisational reviews and other work to enhance the effectiveness of the group.

In keeping with the spirit of partnership which informs the White Paper process, the Community and Voluntary sector groups directly affected will be consulted and will have an input into decisions as to which are to be regarded as 'priority' services or programmes. (5.16)

Payment mechanisms and systems (5.17

Unnecessary problems and costs are created for Community and Voluntary groups when grants that have been committed do not come through in reasonable time. The following good customer service guideline will henceforth apply in this regard: –

5.18)

Individual once-off grants - once approved - will in general be paid within one month of all the necessary supporting documentation being submitted by the group concerned - the exception will be larger grants, where staged payments may be appropriate. In the case of ongoing core (or 'revenue') funding, payments will ordinarily be made in advance (quarterly, or as appropriate to the particular grant or funding scheme) and not in arrears. All Departments and agencies will use the calendar year as their financial year.

The obligations imposed by statutory funders in relation to financial accountability can be too complex. There will be an agreed protocol setting out standard requirements and good practice in relation to financial management. This will be developed under the aegis of the Implementation and Advisory Group. **(5.19 – 5.20)**

Multiplicity of funders **(5.21)**

There are a large number of individual funders and programmes. This maze of agencies and funds leads to frustration and delays for community groups. It leads to a lack of clarity amongst agencies themselves. The County Development Boards will have the lead role in bringing about greater synergy and co-ordination at local level between statutory agencies within the parameters of existing policies and programmes and in highlighting priority needs and gaps in provision for attention. The Directors of Community and Enterprise are well placed to facilitate a planned and co-ordinated response.

At national level, the Implementation and Advisory Group will have responsibility for reviewing areas of overlap or gaps in statutory responsibility with regard to support for the sector and making recommendations to resolve such situations. **This is a key institutional innovation in this White Paper. It involves creation of a mechanism that, over time, will allow Departments and agencies collectively, and working with the Community and Voluntary sector itself, to review existing programmes and schemes so as to ensure continued relevance and value for money and the provision of cohesive support to the sector. This reform process will facilitate the allocation of additional resources, as provided for in the Programme for Prosperity and Fairness and within the financial parameters laid down in the agreement, to meet new and emerging needs and to strengthen existing programmes and schemes where appropriate.** **(5.22)**

The long-term aim is to change from the existing highly-fragmented funding and support system to one based on the concept of single line funding and single line reporting mechanisms. **(5.23)**

The establishment of the County Development Boards will enhance the scope for structured co-operation and co-ordination of statutory agencies on the ground, including putting in place joint funding of projects that span the remit of more than one agency. A designated local information point to provide comprehensive information about the funds that are available across Departments and agencies might be placed within the revised local government/local development structure, or could be agreed locally by relevant State agencies.

(5.24 – 5.25)

Comprehensiveness of funding lines

(5.26 – 5.27)

The 'package' of funding supports under particular schemes is often incomplete. Where statutory agencies fund the delivery of particular services or activities, individual schemes should also make provision to meet essential needs – over and above the core service dimension – such as training and development needs, including support for volunteers. It needs to be made explicit that funding schemes provide a comprehensive funding package - and not just funding for direct service provision – for any activity for which a statutory funder accepts responsibility.

Information Technology

(5.28 – 5.31)

Community and Voluntary organisations have an important role in making the benefits of new technologies accessible to all. IT can also have a very positive impact on the work of organisations and groups in the sector, especially in the areas of communication, information sharing and research. The **Information Society Commission** has recommended that a structured programme of support be put in place for the Community and Voluntary sector. As provided for in the **Programme for Prosperity and Fairness**, there will be increased investment, to include additional funding to enable the Community and Voluntary sector to realise the potential of IT in its work and in meeting the needs of the members, customers and local communities it serves.

Taxation issues

(5.32 –

The Government is committed to keeping the existing tax reliefs on donations to charities

under review in the light of experience of their operation. The VAT treatment of charitable organisations is a direct consequence of EU VAT law, with which Irish VAT law must comply.

5.35)

Community Employment

(5.36

Consultations on funding of essential services currently provided through Community Employment will take place in a **Programme for Prosperity and Fairness** Special Working Group. Without prejudice to the Group's findings, it would appear that, **where Community Employment continues to be used as a means of support for such services, it would be more appropriate that this be the three year Job Option rather than the one year Integration Option. Ideally and as resources allow, alternative funding should be put in place (via the appropriate social Departments) to provide long-term funding of staff for such essential services. In addition, initiatives such as the Social Economy Programme should provide an opportunity through which such services (where they fall within the 'framework' agreed for the Programme) can be provided. These options will be pursued.**

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5.38)

It is intended that the **Social Economy Programme** will have a strong emphasis on the economic and social development and regeneration of disadvantaged communities by supporting imaginative, locally-based initiatives. The programme will provide for an annual investment of £41 million. The programme will be funded primarily through a reallocation of funding currently committed to CE.

(5.39

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5.42)

National Lottery funding

(5.43

A Review group was established in November 1996 to examine the method of disbursing grants from the National Lottery surplus. The Group made a number of recommendations to ensure greater transparency in the use of Lottery money, that the Lottery surplus is used exclusively in future for support of Community and Voluntary activity in the eligible areas and involve the sector itself in the decision-making process in the allocation of grants. These recommendations are very much in line with the thrust of the White Paper conclusions and were accepted by the Government.

–5.44)

The White Paper Implementation and Advisory Group will advise on issues relating to National Lottery allocations. This will allow the sector to raise issues about the allocation of Lottery funds between the eligible areas and to raise other issues of concern that might arise in relation to the Lottery from time-to-time. **(5.45)**

National Anti-Poverty Networks **(5.46 –**

Future funding of the national anti-poverty networks will be by means of a programme to be administered by the Combat Poverty Agency. Up to 10 networks will be funded as part of this Programme, which will have a budget of £1 million (up from the existing allocation of *circa* £400,000). Criteria will be developed by which applications for funding to meet new emerging needs will be assessed. Funding will be on the basis of a three-year workplan to be negotiated and agreed. Criteria will be developed for ongoing assessment of achievement by the existing national networks and by which applications for renewed funding at the end of any three-year contractual period will be determined. **5.51)**

Key criteria in this regard will include: **(5.52)**

- ❑ A membership base that ensures the voice of disadvantaged, marginalised groups finds expression in relevant national for a;

- ❑ Individual networks should be genuinely representative and avoid unnecessary overlaps *vis-à-vis* each other;

- ❑ Mechanisms to ensure that members are informed and consulted about activities and policy when presenting a case to Government; and

- ❑ The capacity to inform policy at local, regional and national levels.

Outcomes from an EU study "*to develop ways to involve groups representing excluded persons in the development, implementation and evaluation of national anti-poverty strategies*" will feed into these criteria and will inform the future development of policy in this area. **(5.53)**

Funding of other networks and representative bodies (5.54)

Funding is also provided (for example via the Health Services and Department of Education and Science) to support representative bodies in other segments of the Community and Voluntary sector. **The Government is now providing an additional £2 million for such other representative bodies and federations**.

Non-statutory sources of funding (5.55 – 5.59)

Community Trusts or Foundations play an important role in other countries. A number are already operating in Ireland. The Foundation for Investing in Communities was launched in November 1998 as an employer-led initiative supported by Government. One of the functions of the Foundation is to build up an endowment fund. These funds will be additional to existing State funding. The Foundation will develop its links with and participation by the Community and Voluntary sector. The Government is committed to developing additional community funds or trusts, especially at local level. The Local Government Bill 2000 contains a provision to enable local authorities to establish a local community initiative fund.

Accessibility of information about funding (5.60)

A comprehensive manual of funding available from all Sectors will be published and regular updated reports on funding availability should also be published from time to time.

Chapter 6 – Implementation

Terms of reference of Implementation and Advisory Group (6.1 – 6.2)

The Implementation and Advisory Group will be co-chaired by the Departments of Health and Children and Social, Community and Family Affairs. In keeping with the principles in the White Paper, it will be a matter for the sector itself to agree on mechanisms to ensure appropriate representation from the sector on the Group. The Group will oversee the implementation of the decisions contained in the White Paper and identify unresolved issues arising in a national context and pursue a resolution of such issues as far as possible. Its detailed terms of reference are to:

- Advise on a programme of research which will include quantifying the full extent of Community and Voluntary activity in Ireland ;

- Agree standard protocols for financial accountability in respect of State funding of the sector;

- Monitor administrative mechanisms to underpin the effective functioning of the working relationship and discuss and agree proposals that promote integrated approaches at national level;

- Monitor developments in accreditation of training for the sector;

- Formulate practical proposals to further enhance support and training capacity within the sector and within other Sectors;

- Advise on the development of a regulatory framework for the sector;

- Examine areas of overlap or gaps in statutory responsibility with regard to support for the Community and Voluntary sector at policy and programme level and make recommendations to resolve such situations;

- Advise on the distribution of the £2 million allocation for other Federations and Networks across the eligible areas/Votes;

- Advise on issues relating to allocations from the National Lottery surplus;

- Oversee the publication of a comprehensive manual of funding and regular updated versions;

- Undertake a formal review of the workings of Group after a three-year period.

Conclusion (6.3)

The formal review of the workings of the Group after three years will provide an opportunity to revisit the main conclusions and decisions in the White Paper. As the overall social and economic context changes, so too must the framework for statutory support for volunteering and voluntary activity be developed and adapted from time-to-time.

The National Committee on Volunteering, being established in the context of UN (6.4)
International Year of Volunteers 2001, will also play a significant role in developing

support for voluntarism, not just during the International Year, but for the longer term.

Voluntarism and communal activity are at the heart of our democracy and a vital element in **(6.5)** social progress. The objective is to ensure that communities and individuals are facilitated to identify and meet their own needs. The Government will continue to ensure that our policies and programmes in this area are appropriate and supportive and that individuals and communities are enabled to reach their full personal and social potential.