**Reference No:** E167/4/86 ; **Date:** 27/07/87

**Circular 8/1987:- Management of Communications Facilities in the Civil Service**

A Dhuine Uasail

I am directed by the Minister for Finance to bring the attention of Departments/Offices to the need for adequate organisational arrangements for the management and co-ordination of their communications facilities. The Minister is concerned that the cost of communications, which is now very large for Departments collectively, should be minimised. Rapid developments are taking place in the technology of telephony, providing new opportunities for improved service, rationalisation of facilities and cost reductions. Moreover with the growth of computerised office systems, non-voice communications, i.e. of data, textual material and image (e.g. fax and graphics), are becoming more important and in some instances both voice and non-voice communications will share an organisation's PABX and wiring systems. This circular sets out the necessary organisational arrangements and provides for related procedures for the procurement and management of the voice (telephony) facilities.

2. Organisational Arrangements

Each Department/Office is responsible for planning, procuring (subject to the approval of the proposed facilities and sanction of the expenditure involved by this Department), managing and co-ordinating its own communications systems. The organisational arrangements, both departmental and central, needed to put communications management in the civil service on a proper footing and to pursue the opportunities for cost savings are set out below:-

(1) Each Department/Office should decide where responsibility lies for the communications function covering both voice and non-voice (data, text, image) communications. Where voice and non-voice communications are at present being dealt with separately, Departments/Offices should ensure that management of them is combined or co-ordinated, e.g. at the level of the Organisation Officer or, where such post does not exist, the Personnel Officer. The responsibilities of this function include:-

* management of PABX and other communications facilities;

* planning and co-ordinating the use of PABX facilities for data communications;

* planning and procuring new PABX systems or system components in accordance with the PABX Procurement and Management Guidelines (these have been compiled by the Information Management Advisory Service of this Department and are being issued separately).

(2) This Department will assist Departments/Offices in the area of voice communications by:-

* maintaining the written Guidelines;

* advising on the required training for staff in communications functions within Departments/Offices;

* providing support to communications function staff within Departments/Offices in planning, procuring and commissioning voice facilities;

       \*        monitoring technological developments and issuing guidelines to Departments/Offices as appropriate:

       \*        investigating, in conjunction with the inter-departmental liaison group (below), possible additional services or economies from networking PABXs within the Civil Service, introducing advanced facilities etc. and advising on the conduct of any consequent negotiations with Telecom Eireann or others.

This Department will establish also an inter-departmental voice communications liaison group which it will chair. The group will have as its main function the pursuit of service improvements, cost saving and rationalisation measures which require inter-departmental co-ordination.

3.      Authorisation of Expenditure

The prior sanction of this Department must be obtained for expenditure on PABX systems and equipment. Proposals for such systems and equipment, therefore, must be prepared in accordance with the PABX Procurement and Management Guidelines and submitted to this Department for prior approval.

4.      Enquiries

Enquiries concerning this circular should be addressed to the Computer Control Section of this Department.

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R J Curran
Second Secretary