

Ref: F7/01/010

15 January 2010

Circular 02/10: Revised Presentation Format of the Appropriation Accounts

A Dhuine Uasail

1. I am directed by the Minister for Finance to refer to the existing arrangements for the preparation of Appropriation Accounts and to say that the Account for 2009 and subsequent years should be prepared in the revised format outlined below. The changes are based on recommendations made by the C&AG which have been discussed with the Committee of Public Accounts. These instructions supplement those contained in Department of Finance Circular 01/95. For illustrative purposes the presentational changes outlined below are shown in the recast version of the 2008 Account for Vote 6, Office of the Minister for Finance in Annex A.

Revised Format of Appropriation Accounts

2. Introduction

Each Appropriation Account will start with an introductory note by the Accounting Officer which incorporates the ambit of the Vote, the statutory basis of the Account and a formal statement by the Accounting Officer tying the Account to the standard Statement of Accounting Policies and Principles as well as to the standard Statement on Internal Financial Control (SIFC). Any exceptions to the standard accounting policies or enhancements to internal financial controls will also be included here.

3. Audit Certificate

The Audit Certificate will follow the Accounting Officer's introductory note.

4. Appropriation Account

- a) The Appropriation Account itself will be presented without the ambit text in the heading (now in the introductory note).
- b) The Appropriation Account will be presented with the inclusion of the outturn for the prior year in the third column of the Account. This will be in place of the existing accrual column. Comparative data will also be introduced in the notes where appropriate.
- c) Block capitals will no longer be used for the presentation of subhead titles.

5. Re-ordering of the Notes to the Appropriation Account

There will be a re-ordering of the Notes to the Account so that related information is presented together and similar information appears in the same place in the Account of each Vote. There will be 6 main notes as follows:

- a) **Note 1** will be the Operating Cost Statement, amended to show up front subtotals of expenditure on administration (generally the sum of the A Subheads) and expenditure on services and programmes.

- b) **Note 2** will deal with the Statement of Assets and Liabilities and will be followed by a number of sub-notes which will give details of the main components, such as, capital assets, assets under development, stocks and stores, commitments, outstanding matured liabilities, etc.
 - c) **Note 3** will show the usual explanations of variations on outturn versus provision for each subhead. Departments are reminded that the explanations should be concise and meaningful, and should supplement rather than reiterate the information contained in the Appropriation Account.
 - d) **Note 4** will deal with Receipts in two sub-notes: 4.1 - Appropriations-in-Aid and 4.2 - Exchequer Extra Receipts. The usual exemption of variations will be provided in respect of Appropriations-in-Aid. A breakdown/explanation is to be provided also where the Extra Receipts are material in nature.
 - e) **Note 5** will deal with Employee Numbers and Pay. The first part of the note will give an overall view, providing figures in respect of total number of staff at year end, total pay, as well as total allowances, overtime and employer PRSI. This will be followed by sub-notes giving the usual details of allowances and overtime, performance and merit pay and other remuneration arrangements.
 - f) **Note 6** – Miscellaneous Items will bring together the remaining Vote specific notes for example write-offs, compensation payments, EU funding, cost of Commissions and Enquiries, Late Payment Interest, National Lottery funding etc.
 - g) Detailed lists of National Lottery funded grants will no longer appear with the Appropriation Account. Instead, a short sub-note should appear under note 6 giving the total amount(s) provided from the National Lottery (by subhead) and indicating that the detail list(s) of grants provided are available on the relevant Department website.
 - h) If additional notes are required with an Account, for example, miscellaneous accounts or grant-in-aid accounts, these should in future appear as Note 7, etc.
 - i) Where the Appropriation Account of a Vote does not have a requirement for one or more of the main notes, for example, Note 1- Operating Statement, the note reference should remain (to maintain the number sequence across Votes) but with a comment to the effect that the note is not applicable.
6. Queries regarding the application of this circular should be directed to joan.curry@finance.gov.ie or ronan.o'reilly@finance.gov.ie in Government Accounting Section, Department of Finance.

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Carmel Keane
Head of Finance Directorate

To: All Accounting Officers

Vote 6: Office of the Minister for Finance