



Department of Education and Skills

## ETB/SOLAS PROJECT MANAGEMENT OFFICE

*This newsletter provides an update to all staff on the progress being made by the ETB/SOLAS Project Management Office (PMO) on identified strategic priorities. The focus of the PMO in this period has been on the transfer of SOLAS staff to ETBs, particularly those moving on 1st January 2014. There has also been an emphasis on resolving operational issues, such as Revenue matters. In addition, Grainne Cullen, Programme Manager and Marion Edwards, Shared Services Advisor, have recently been appointed to the DES. These positions will provide crucial support and guidance to the reform of the education and training sector generally and the ETB/SOLAS sector in particular.*

### People

At the time of issue of the October newsletter, the PMO were embarking on the engagement with the Unions representing SOLAS staff. The first meeting took place on the 5th of November. To date five meetings have taken place with the most recent being on the 10th December.

The discussions have focused on issues such as grading, pay frequencies/divisor, HR policies and promotional outlets. Progress has been made on these and the engagement is ongoing. The deadline for any facilitation process through the Labour Relations Commission, should it be necessary, remains 31st January.

The PMO also attends the IR Forum at which IMPACT raise issues around ETB aggregation with ETBI and DES. At the most recent meeting with IMPACT held on the 26th November, IMPACT sought an update from the PMO on the reform programme. This update was provided at a meeting on December 6th.

The PMO also met with TUI on the 12th December and briefed them on the discussions.



## PROJECTS

### ***Payroll - Cost Benefit Analysis***

The PMO has been working to engage the services of consultants to lead a Payroll-focused Cost Benefit Analysis exercise. The evaluation process is at an advanced stage and it is expected that the preferred bidder will be identified before the end of December and that the consultants will begin their work early in the New Year. Input from payroll people in the sector from early in 2014 will be critical to the success of this project.

### ***Payroll - Project Team***

The expressions of interest process for the assignment of the payroll project team is at an advanced stage. It is hoped to have the project team identified early in the New Year. The Project Team will work closely with the PMO for a minimum period of 18 months in implementing the agreed ETB sector Payroll Shared Service.

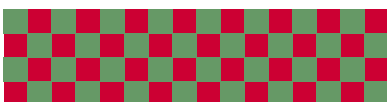
As part of its work planning for 2014, the PMO is in the process of identifying other shared services projects for 2014. Some of these are similar in nature to payroll, such as finance.



The PMO will seek to prioritise and sequence these in a way which makes most sense for the reform programme and those in the sector.

## ETB Organisation Design

In consultation with the sector, the PMO is continuing to work to develop a new organisation design for ETBs. The DES hosted a meeting with a number of CEOs in November to build on the input already received from the sector and to progress this work further. The new organisation design will give consideration to areas of work that would benefit from adopting a shared services approach. The PMO will be prioritising work on this issue in the first quarter of 2014 and engagement will intensify during this period.



# OPERATIONS

Since October the PMO has progressed issues relating to payroll, Revenue and connectivity.

## **Payroll -**

- Manser - Approval for merge was granted, testing is completed and payroll merges are expected to be completed by mid-December. The actual go live process will be executed once the respective 'end of year' payroll procedures are complete in each ETB.
- Core - Approval for the migration of Corepay payrolls to a managed payroll service was granted and a project initiation meeting was held on 10th December. Implementation of payrolls to the new service will commence in January 2014.

## **Revenue**

- The PMO worked with ETBs, SOLAS and the Revenue Commissioners regarding arrangements for transfer of ETB and relevant SOLAS Training Centre staff to the new ETB employer numbers with effect from 1st January. A guidance note was also recently issued to ETBs setting out the agreed arrangements in relation to some business tax issues.

## **Connectivity**

- The current picture of connectivity in the ETB sector is an extremely complex one. There are a number of service providers that all form part of the current mix. The complexities associated with this issue make it more difficult to reach a coherent position for the sector as a whole.
- The PMO met with D/PER in November on this issue and will engage further with D/PER in early 2014 with a view to progressing this issue across the sector.

## **Programme Governance**

The ETB/SOLAS Programme Board met on the 6th December last. In addition to updating the Board members on key strategic priorities, the meeting also discussed the progress being made in key areas, the ongoing supports required for ETBs from SOLAS and the broader public service reform agenda.

## COMMUNICATIONS

The PMO has issued the draft Communications Management Plan through ETBI and SOLAS. ETBs are requested to ensure that the plan is circulated to all staff members and that staff are encouraged to contribute to its shaping by providing feedback.

ETB/SOLAS PMO asked attendees at the recent ETBI Winter Staff Seminar to indicate in order of preference (1-8) their most preferred method of communication. The results indicated the following:

<b>Global email to all staff</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Dedicated location on website (ETBI/DES)</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>Information Sessions</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Bi-monthly Newsletter</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Bulletin Boards/Forum</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Focus Groups</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>Web Conferences</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Pay Slips Notification</b>	<b>8</b>

The PMO has been looking at ways to improve our communications and we will be seeking to enhance our approach in the New Year.

## Establishment of SOLAS

SOLAS has been established and FAS has been dissolved with effect from 27th October. The PMO has been in contact with SOLAS and the 4 Phase 1 ETBs to ensure that business continuity will be maintained for the 7 early moving training centres with effect from 31st December. The Minister is required under the Further Education and Training Act 2013 to designate the SOLAS staff for transfer to ETBs. The necessary arrangements are being made this month in order to ensure that the 1st of January date is met.

