

**REPORT TO THE  
MINISTER FOR PUBLIC EXPENDITURE AND REFORM  
FROM THE  
IGEES OVERSIGHT BOARD:**

**FIRST REPORT ON THE  
IRISH GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC AND EVALUATION SERVICE**

**2012-2014**



Irish Government Economic & Evaluation Service

**JANUARY 2015**

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<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE IGEEES MANAGEMENT BOARD</b>	



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 In June 2012, the Government established the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES). As part of the governance arrangements for the new Service, an IGEES Oversight Board was constituted later that year.

1.2 In this, its first report to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, the Oversight Board outlines progress to the end of 2014 in the establishment of IGEES and looks towards its further development into the future. This report looks in turn at a number of relevant areas - IGEES structure and participation by Departments, recruitment and mobility, continuous professional development, outputs, and relationships with outside bodies. It sets out the developments in relation to each and the Oversight Board's views and recommendations.

### IGEES

1.3 The Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES) is being developed as an integrated cross-Government service to enhance the role of economics and value for money analysis in public policy making. It demonstrates a strong commitment to a high and consistent standard of policy evaluation and economic analysis throughout the Irish Civil Service.

1.4 The goals of the new Service are to:

- develop a professional economic and evaluation service that will provide high standards of economic and policy analysis to assist the Government decision-making process;
- ensure application of established best practices in policy evaluation in support of better value for money and more effective policy and programme interventions by State authorities;
- facilitate more open policy dialogue with academia, external specialists and stakeholders across the broad socio-economic spectrum.

## OVERSIGHT BOARD

1.5 The Oversight Board was formed in November 2012. There are 7 members of the Board, drawn from the senior Civil Service ranks and from academia, and it is charged with reviewing the overall performance and development of the IGEES and advising on best practice and future direction.<sup>1</sup> The Board is also required to report to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform periodically about the Service. This is the first such report, and it covers the period from the establishment of the Service in June 2012 to the end of December 2014.

1.6 Since its inception, the Oversight Board has advised on the roll out and strategic direction of IGEES, including on proposed management structures, governance and reporting arrangements, membership criteria, professional development, economic and evaluation developments, and interaction with the wider economic and evaluation community.

1.7 The members of the Board are:

- Deirdre Hanlon (Chair), Assistant Secretary, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
- Dr Kevin Denny, School of Economics, University College Dublin
- Jennifer Banim<sup>2</sup>, Assistant Director General, Central Statistics Office
- Professor David Madden, School of Economics, University College Dublin
- John McCarthy, Chief Economist, Department of Finance
- Professor Frances Ruane, Director, Economic and Social Research Institute
- John Shaw, Assistant Secretary, Department of the Taoiseach

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<sup>1</sup> There are no fees or other payments made in respect of the Board.

<sup>2</sup> Jennifer Banim joined the Board in July 2014 replacing Dr Steve MacFeely, Assistant Director General, CSO.

1.8 As noted, the Oversight Board was appointed shortly after IGEES had been established by the Government. The Board has overseen and advised on the roll out of IGEES, including membership criteria, management structures and a programme of continuous professional development. A Management Board, responsible for driving development and performance of IGEES, is now in place, allowing the Oversight Board to turn its attention to advising on the strategic development of IGEES over the medium term. As outlined in its agreed terms of reference (Appendix I), the Oversight Board's future focus will be on advising on economic and evaluation developments relevant to IGEES, fostering better interaction between IGEES and the wider economic and evaluation communities, and reviewing the framework for training and development of IGEES staff.

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## 2. IGEES STRUCTURE AND PARTICIPATION BY DEPARTMENTS

2.1 Corporate and governance arrangements required to support IGEES as a shared resource across the Civil Service have been put in place.

### IGEES Units

2.2 The Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service is spread across the Central Government Sector. It operates within a large number of Government Departments which each have specific units or sections that are focussed on economic and/or evaluation work relevant to the remit of the particular Department.<sup>3</sup>

2.3 IGEES membership criteria are:

- Individuals who work in either an IGEES unit or in a specific economics or evaluative capacity in the civil service; and
- Individuals holding a minimum academic qualification such as a primary degree in a discipline directly relevant to the work of IGEES or a Master's degree with an economic, analytical, or public policy component and/or professional qualification with similar components.

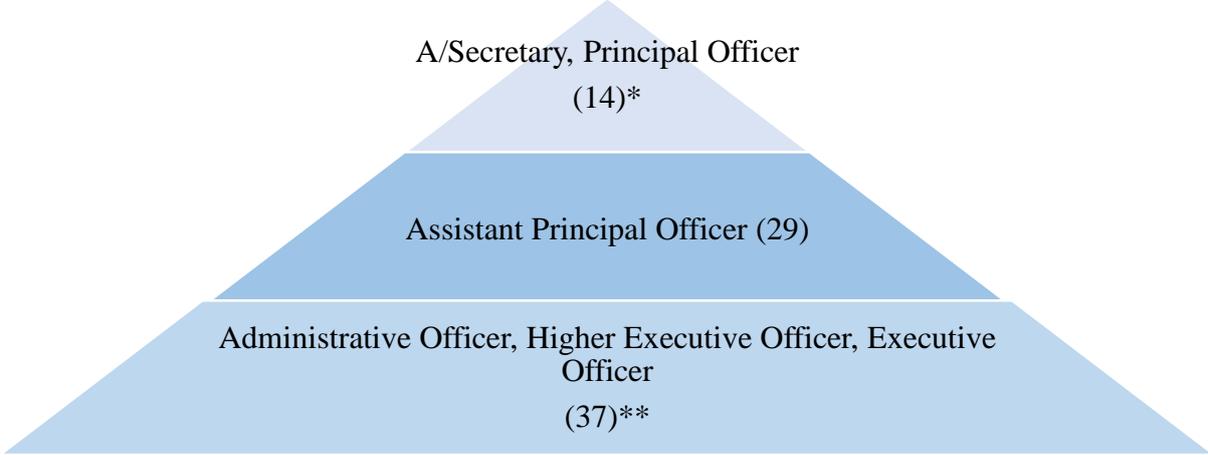
2.4 Each Department participating in IGEES identifies IGEES posts based on these criteria. Membership of IGEES brings access to shared expertise and specialist support, specialist recruitments, a standardised professional development framework and related training and development opportunities. In return, participating Departments are expected to agree to shared approaches to recruitment, promotion and mobility overseen by the IGEES Management Board. There are approximately 70 IGEES members across a range of Civil Service grades. Currently, recruitment into IGEES is at Administrative Officer grade and above.

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<sup>3</sup> In this report, references to "Departments" means Departments and Offices of Central Government.

2.5 The figure below shows the IGEES membership by grade mix.

**Figure 1. IGEES Membership by Grade Mix**



\* At Assistant Secretary and Principal Officer levels, the numbers only include those where over 50% of the individual’s time is spent on appropriate economic and evaluation work.

\*\* Over 90% of this group are at Administrative Officer which is the main recruitment grade for IGEES.

IGEES Management Board

2.6 The Head of the IGEES Unit in each Member Department sits on the IGEES Management Board which was established in the second half of 2013. The Management Board is charged with the day-to-day development of the Service. It is chaired by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform. The Management Board is responsible for driving the development and performance of the new Service. Its role is to coordinate recruitment, support training and career development, sponsor joint research projects and manage engagement with academia and other external expertise. It reports directly to the Oversight Board under clear and agreed terms of reference (Appendix II).

2.7 The members of the Management Board are:

- Laura Behan, Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport
- Ann Derwin, Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine
- Conor Falvey, Department of Arts, Heritage & the Gaeltacht
- Claire Finn, Department of Children & Youth Affairs
- Ronan Gallagher, Department of Public Expenditure & Reform (Chair)
- John Garry, Department of Justice & Equality
- David Hegarty, Department of Finance
- Tom Hennessey<sup>4</sup>, Department of Foreign Affairs & Trade
- John Keegan, Department of Health
- Evin McMahon, Department of Communications, Energy & Natural Resources
- Robert Mooney, Department of Defence
- Ronan Mulhall, Department of the Environment, Community & Local Government
- Patricia Murphy, Department of Social Protection
- Mary-Clare O’Sullivan, Department of the Taoiseach
- Keith Walsh, Office of the Revenue Commissioners

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<sup>4</sup> Tom Hennessey replaced William Carlos at the end of 2014.

Participating Departments

2.8 There are currently 15 Government Departments formally involved in the IGEES. In some Departments evaluation and/or economic units were already in place prior to the establishment of IGEES; typically these have now been expanded (or are planned to be expanded) as part of the development of the new Service. In other Departments, new units have been set up. In addition, IGEES has a strong working relationship with the Central Statistics Office.

**Figure 2. IGEES Member Departments**



### ***Views of the Oversight Board***

2.9 The Oversight Board notes the establishment of formal organisational and governance structures, which provide for a largely decentralised model for IGEES, with units located across Government Departments. The Oversight Board recognises the benefits and practicalities of this model, but it is also of the opinion that strong central direction needs to be retained in order to streamline decision making and ensure coherence to the setting and achieving of objectives.

2.10 The Oversight Board notes the IGEES membership criteria. It would like to stress the importance of building and maintaining a high calibre and relevantly qualified Service corps. In this context, the Board strongly encourages the Management Board to ensure that the focus of IGEES is not diluted by expanding membership beyond those who hold the necessary qualifications and are actively working in appropriate roles. The Oversight Board recognises the importance of building evaluation capacity and developing a strong economic core in the Service.

2.11 The Oversight Board welcomes the increasing numbers of Government Departments that are part of IGEES and expects to see all remaining Departments join the Service in 2015.

2.12 The Oversight Board would like to see consideration given in 2015/16 to building a relationship between IGEES and the wider Public Service.

### ***Recommendations***

2.13 The Board recommends the formalisation of IGEES's relationship with the Central Statistics Office. It notes the CSO statisticians assigned to serve in particular Government Departments have been placed within the IGEES Unit of that Department. It notes the success of this model and recommends it is adopted as best practice in all IGEES Units.

2.14 It is the Oversight Board's strong view that the remaining policy Departments, the Departments of Education and Skills and Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation, should have joined IGEES by end 2015.

### **3. RECRUITMENT AND MOBILITY**

3.1 There was centralised graduate recruitment in mid-2012 for IGEES and there was redeployment of qualified staff into specialist economic and evaluation policy units in a number of Government Departments during 2013. A further graduate recruitment process was carried out in the later part of 2013 from which successful candidates joined IGEES units in the first quarter of 2014. A graduate recruitment process is currently underway with successful candidates expected to join IGEES Units in the first quarter of 2015.

3.2 It is intended to conduct annual recruitment for IGEES.

3.3 The Management Board has prepared an IGEES mobility policy facilitating secondment between IGEES Units as part of career development, to build knowledge and links between IGEES Units, and to develop the overall Service.

#### ***Views of the Oversight Board***

3.4 The challenge ahead, in the view of the Board, is to nurture and develop this capacity to ensure that the Service becomes embedded in the Civil Service and has an increasing influence on policy formulation and evaluation.

3.5 Looking to the year ahead and indeed further into the medium term, the Oversight Board welcomes the further recruitment and believes that the Service needs to seek to recruit, in small numbers, the best available candidates on an annual basis.

3.6 Where specific needs are identified, the Board recommends some targeted recruitment at senior level to key positions to help develop the skill set held in IGEES. Recruitment should be timed so as to maximise the prospect of obtaining the best candidates.

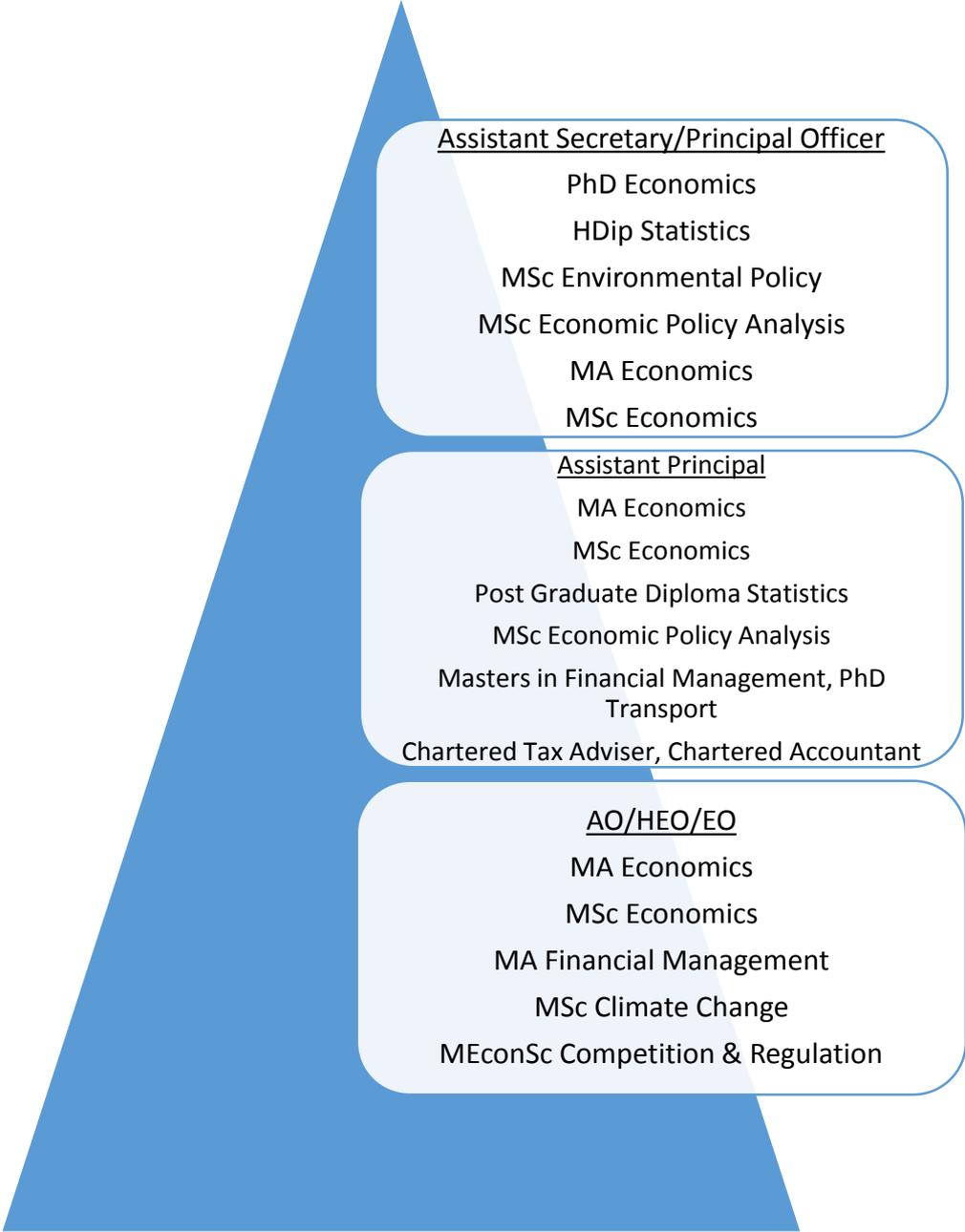
#### ***Recommendations***

3.7 The Board recommends the implementation of IGEES-wide mobility and promotion. It also recommends the introduction of mobility opportunities between IGEES and other economic and evaluative bodies within the broader Public Service.

**4. CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

4.1 IGEES members have a wide range of qualifications. Each member must hold a minimum academic qualification such as a primary degree in a discipline directly relevant to the work of IGEES or a Master’s degree with an economic, analytical or public policy component and/or professional qualification with similar components. The figure below shows some of the relevant academic and professional qualifications held by IGEES members at the different grade levels.

**Figure 3. Sample of Academic & Professional Qualifications held by IGEES Members**



4.2 A number of IGEES members are in the process of completing masters and doctorate level degrees in topics relevant to their current role and relevant to their status as IGEES members.

4.3 A programme of continuous professional development (CPD) continues to be developed, specifically designed for IGEES members. It will continue to evolve as new recruits join the IGEES and will reflect the changing skills and skill needs of IGEES members. While ongoing training was provided to IGEES members since the establishment of the Service in 2012, the formal CPD programme began at the start of 2014. The CPD programme consists of a series of integrated training and development streams, drawing on a mix of technical courses delivered in-house (from experts within the Service) and academic courses taught in the universities. The CPD Programme streams are:

- Policy Analysis and Microeconomics;
- Government Policy/Governance;
- Macroeconomics and Fiscal policy; and
- Econometrics, Data Analysis and Quantitative Methods.

4.4 The IGEES CPD Programme is based on a system of progress achieved against the goals/targets set in conjunction with the member's manager over a three year cycle. The CPD Programme will be reviewed annually by the Management Board and the Oversight Board. The Management Board will quality assure the CPD Programme and determine if the Programme is fit for purpose and effective.

#### ***Views of the Oversight Board***

4.5 The Oversight Board welcomes the progress made on putting in place arrangements for relevant continuous professional development, combining in-job training and further academic study. The Board places an important emphasis on the investment of effort in this area to ensure that the skills capacity of the Service is grown and updated over time.

4.6 The Board would like to express its gratitude to UCD for allowing access for IGEES members to the modules of its Economic Masters course. The Board would like to express its gratitude to TCD for allowing access for IGEES members to short courses on Economics. The

Board would also like to thank all those who gave their time and resources to provide in-house IGEES training.

***Recommendations***

4.7 The Board recommends that a quality assurance process for the IGEES CPD Programme should be developed and introduced to support the proposed annual review. That annual review needs to consider the optimum blend of learning opportunities across the learning streams, the standard of internal and external courses and of the providers, the impact of the training and learning outcomes, and the appropriateness of the learning targets and minimum CPD requirements.

## 5. IGEES OUTPUT

5.1 IGEES Units are involved in work such as economic planning and macroeconomic forecasting, tax and expenditure policy, competition policy, climate change, transport economics, green energy, agriculture, value for money reviews, and cost-benefit analysis. The IGEES website<sup>5</sup>, which was launched in 2014, presents a range of analytical and statistical outputs from the Service.

5.2 The inaugural IGEES Conference took place in Dublin Castle in September 2013. The theme of the Conference was “*Strategies for Sustainable Economic & Employment Growth*”. It was chaired by Professor Frances Ruane and was attended by those working in Government Departments, the wider public service, academia and various research institutes.



5.3 The second IGEES Conference took place in Dublin Castle in November 2014. The theme of the Conference was “*Delivering on socio-economic priorities while ensuring budget sustainability*”. It provided an opportunity for IGEES members working across the Civil

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<sup>5</sup> <http://igees.gov.ie/>

Service to debate key policy and economic issues with some colleagues in academia and the wider economic and evaluation community. It was chaired by Professor John Fitzgerald.

### ***Views of the Oversight Board***

5.4 The Board notes that this report covers a period which saw the development and initial implementation of IGEES. The Board is aware of the many outputs from individual IGEES units. It did not consider the individual outputs or examine outputs from an overall IGEES work programme. In future reports to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform, the Oversight Board expects to be in a position to examine and advise on the quality of IGEES outputs.

5.5 The Oversight Board supports the annual conference as a way to help raise the profile of the Service and provide a forum to engage with a wider audience on economic and evaluation issues.

### ***Recommendations***

5.6 The Oversight Board recommends that consideration is given to how the IGEES will evaluate its progress against its objective of aiming to support better policy formulation and implementation in the Civil Service through economic analysis and evaluation.

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## **6. RELATIONSHIP WITH OUTSIDE BODIES**

6.1 The Oversight Board has facilitated the development of a constructive relationship with the School of Economics in UCD which has facilitated access to modules of the Economic masters for IGEES members on a semi-formal and pro-bono basis. There has been contact with economists in other Universities to explore the development of complementary relationships, including access to TCD's short courses on Economics.

The Oversight Board has also facilitated a growing relationship with the ESRI.

6.2 IGEES has developed links with a number of international bodies such as the OECD, the European Institute for Public Administration and the World Bank. It has presented on various topics at events organised by these bodies such as performance budgeting, reviewing public expenditure and the Public Spending Code.

### ***Views of the Oversight Board***

6.3 The Oversight Board welcomes the developments to date and encourages the IGEES Management Board to raise awareness of the new Service through external engagement. It also stresses the good practice and best quality lessons that can be learned through engagement with other bodies.

### ***Recommendations***

6.4 The Oversight Board recommends that the Service continues to develop close and strong ties with external organisations – in Ireland and overseas – including among the Universities, economic bodies and the economic and evaluation services of other States. Where appropriate, the Oversight Board considers that relationships with some organisations could be put on a formalised basis, involving joint work programmes, staff exchanges etc.

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## 7. CONCLUDING COMMENTS

7.1 The Oversight Board welcomes the progress to date (as outlined in this Report), which provides a sound foundation for the new Service. The Board would stress that substantial continued progress is needed in order that IGEES can be successful in achieving its key objectives over the next few years in:

- developing a professional economic and evaluation service which will provide high standards of economic and policy analysis to assist the Government decision-making process;
- ensuring application of established best practices in policy evaluation in support of better value for money and more effective policy and programme interventions by State authorities;
- facilitating more open policy dialogue with academia, external specialists and stakeholders across the broad socio-economic spectrum.

7.2 In pursuit of these objectives, the IGEES Oversight Board advocates the pursuit of excellence in all endeavours undertaken by the new Service and its members.

7.3 To date, the Board has concentrated its attention on reviewing and advising on issues pertinent to the establishment and early development of IGEES, particularly around training and learning, and also recruitment and structures. As the new Service moves on from its initial phase, the Board looks forward to widening its own focus and in the years to come the Board expects to fully engage with its terms of reference. In particular, the Board envisages that with the firm establishment of the new Service, its views will evolve on the vision for IGEES and on how, over time, the impact of IGEES could be assessed and measured.

The Oversight Board presents its first report to Mr Brendan Howlin, T.D., Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform.

*Deirdre Hanlon (Chair)*

*Dr Kevin Denny*

*Jennifer Banim*

*Professor David Madden*

*John McCarthy*

*Professor Frances Ruane*

*John Shaw*

*January 2015*

**IGEES Oversight Board  
Terms of Reference**

The purpose of the IGEES Oversight Board is to review overall performance and development and advise on best practice and the future direction of IGEES. The terms of reference of the Oversight Board are to:

- advise on developments in relation to economics and evaluation that are relevant to IGEES;
- assist in fostering better interaction between IGEES and the economic and evaluation community;
- review the framework for training and development of IGEES staff;
- consider reports from the Management Board;
- advise on the strategic development of IGEES; and
- make a report to the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform annually on the progress of IGEES which the Minister will bring to Government.

The Oversight Board will have a maximum membership of nine (including the Chair). Membership of the Oversight Board will be for a period of two years. It will be chaired by the Assistant Secretary responsible for CEEU in D/PER. In the normal course, the membership of the Board will be drawn from among the following organisations:

- the Economic Social Research Institute (ESRI);
- the Central Statistics Office (CSO);
- IGEES Departments; and
- academic institutions.

As positions become vacant, the Oversight Board membership will be reviewed to ensure that it is appropriately resourced to advise an evolving IGEES.

The Board will meet on a regular basis, generally quarterly. The Secretariat will be provided by the CEEU in D/PER.

**IGEES Management Board  
Terms of Reference**

IGEES is to be managed by a Management Board made up of the heads of IGEES units in participating Departments. The purpose of the Management Board is to create and support an economic and evaluation service which will support better policy formulation and implementation in the Civil Service, operate in line with best practice, and be able to develop and evolve as it identifies the changing economic and evaluative needs of its client base.

The terms of reference of the Management Board are to:

- drive the strategic development of IGEES;
- report regularly to the Oversight Board through the Chair;
- approve the scope and membership of IGEES;
- explore work programme symmetries and support peer review;
- approve the Continuous Professional Development (CPD) Programme for IGEES;
- oversee the recruitment of IGEES staff;
- oversee the operating model for deployment and mobility of IGEES staff; and
- promote engagement with external economic and evaluation community.

The Secretary General of each participating Department will nominate a representative to the IGEES Management Board; it is expected that this will continue to be the head of the IGEES unit in the participating Department.

It will be chaired by the Head of the CEEU in D/PER.

The Chair of the Management Board will report on a regular basis to the Oversight Board.

The Board will meet on a regular basis, generally quarterly. The Secretariat will be provided by the CEEU in D/PER.