



Irish Government Economic & Evaluation Service

IGEES Medium Term Strategy (MTS) 2016 – 2019

What is the IGEES and what are its main aims?

The IGEES is an integrated, cross-Government service that aims to support better policy formulation and implementation in the civil service through economic analysis and evaluation. The aim of the IGEES is to contribute to the better design and targeting of Government policy and better outcomes for citizens. It does this by building on existing analytical work and playing a lead role in policy analysis.

IGEES is not a standalone service. IGEES staff are part of each Department adding their skill set to the varied expertise working on policy analysis and formulation as directed by Departmental business plans. By operating as a cross Government service, IGEES supports and builds economic and evaluation capacity and consistency across the civil service.

Where we want to be

Much of the focus for the IGEES since its inception has been on developing units in Departments and building capacity. The IGEES is building on and learning from existing economic and evaluation expertise and increasing levels of evaluation and analysis. This MTS seeks to enhance the level, consistency and quality of output across the IGEES. As such, the focus over the medium term will be:

- (1) To have a greater input into and impact on the policy analysis process; and
- (2) To generate an increased level of high quality IGEES output¹ to inform the policy debate.

The responsibility for achieving these aims will rest with the IGEES as a whole supported by a revised set of governance arrangements. With a view to fostering a coherent approach across the Service, an IGEES business plan will form the basis for the output of the Service year to year. Individual IGEES units will continue to work to their Department's business plan. However, in terms of future resource allocation across IGEES units, the onus will be on each unit to compile and implement business plans which focus on (1) generating high quality policy related output and (2) producing evidence of this output through publication. The rationale for this approach is to increase the level of output across the Service and to support output that is more policy focussed.

How we aim to do our work

Using the broad range of economic, evaluation and other analytical techniques, in addition to the best available data, the IGEES will contribute to the analysis, in an impartial and objective way, of policies, existing and new, across the civil service. This work will contribute to the policy debate by adopting an evidence informed approach to a variety of policy areas across a range of sectors. Feeding into policy analysis and formulation in this way will allow the IGEES to contribute to the achievement of better policy outcomes and better value for money for the public.

¹ IGEES output takes such forms as publications, advice, methodologies and knowledge transfer. Examples of IGEES output can be found in this strategy, in the IGEES 2016 work programme and on the IGEES website.

Key Challenges and Opportunities

Impact

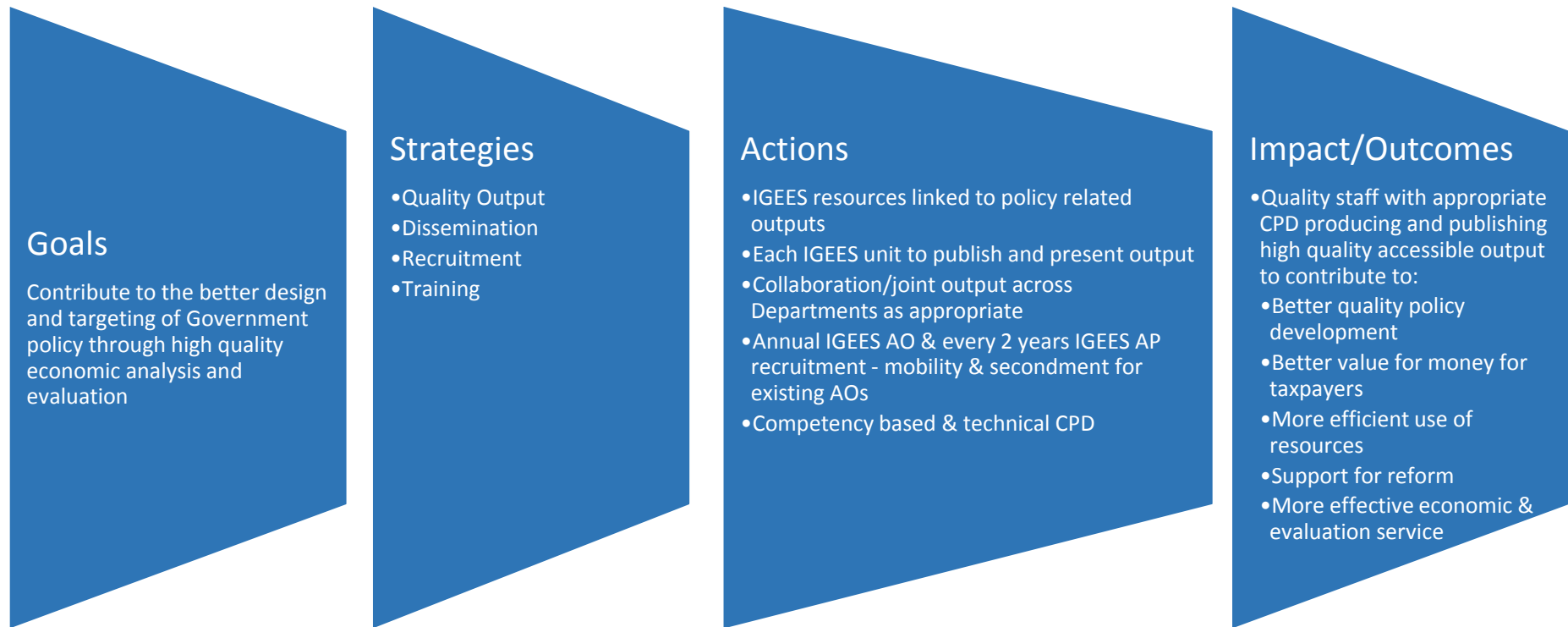
- **Improving Policy Outcomes:** This is both a challenge and an opportunity with scope to have a significant impact given the additional resources and skills available within the IGEES.
- **Helping to Drive Reform:** With finite resources and a range of expenditure constraints, the IGEES has a central role to play in providing additional analytical capacity to support decision making in partnership with and supporting policy experts in each Department.
- **Contributing to the Policy Debate:** Utilising an evidence informed approach to policy, the analysis and output generated by the IGEES will help to increase the level of information available to decision makers contributing to the debate on a range of issues. Progress in meeting these goals will be monitored through appropriate performance indicators.

Processes

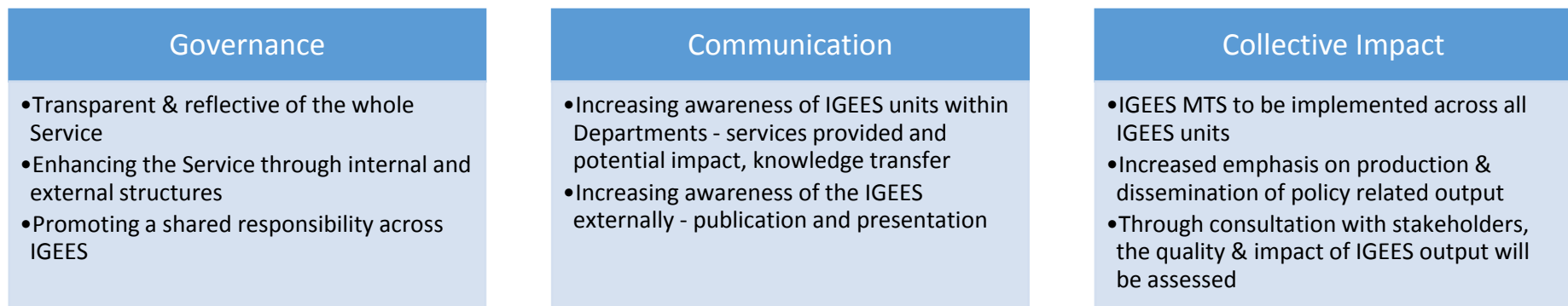
- **IGEES Governance and Management:** As the Service moves into its next phase of development, the responsibility for managing and implementing change will need to be shared across the IGEES.
- **Communication:** The IGEES will need to raise awareness of the Service internally and externally, publicising its output to a wide variety of stakeholders.
- **Departmental Buy In:** The novel structure of the IGEES, with units in each Department, has worked to a large extent thus far. However, with the mobility arrangements embedded in the Service, ensuring continued Departmental buy in to the IGEES and how it operates will be important. Each Department will need to consider the optimal governance arrangements for its IGEES staff and/or unit to ensure that it is getting the most from these resources.
- **Focus on Quality:** Having a central role in policy analysis across the civil service requires the work of the IGEES to be of the highest quality. There are many examples of this to date. However, this focus on quality needs to be strengthened. This will be done in a number of ways including through training, access to key resources/tools, internal quality assurance in each Department and cross Departmental support through the Internal Advisory Group.
- **Collaboration:** In understanding the value of multi-disciplinary teams and other forms of collaboration, the IGEES will strive to work across Departments, with other units and services, existing and new, including the Irish Statistical Service, in order to achieve common goals.
- **Data:** Exploit new and existing datasets (incl. microdata) to enhance policy analysis.

People

- **Recruitment:** Scarce resources have been allocated to build capacity throughout the IGEES. Continuing this effort and investing in the right skills mix, in a recovering jobs market, presents a challenge in the medium term.
- **Continued Professional Development:** The quality of Service provided by the IGEES is driven by the quality of people within it. As such, supporting staff and their skills development will be key to the long term success of the Service.
- **Career Development:** The balance between fostering career development while at the same time retaining key skills and staff within IGEES will be a challenge in the medium term.
- **Mobility:** Staff mobility remains a cornerstone of the Service. Managing this in an effective and transparent way, system wide, will be important. Mobility is key to the professional development of staff and knowledge transfer across individuals and Departments.



Enablers



IGEES Medium Term Strategy 2016 to 2019 – Governance Arrangements

The governance structures for the IGEES over the medium term will consist of four elements as set out in the graphic below. These structures reflect a number of considerations, including the proportion of staffing across IGEES units, the central role of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in developing the Service and the cross departmental nature of the Service. In addition, the IGEES will be supported by a corporate support team located within the D/PER IGEES Unit.

- The Secretary General of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform has overall responsibility for IGEES.
- He/She will be supported by a Policy Oversight Group, an External Advisory Group and an Internal Advisory Group.

Accounting Officer for IGEES

- This group will consist of Secretaries General from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, the Department of Finance, one other Department (on a rolling basis) and a representative from the CSO.
- The Group will be a forum for considering changes / proposals related to the Service.

Policy Oversight Group

- External stakeholders from Universities, Research Institutes and other relevant bodies will make up an External Advisory Group.
- The Assistant Secretary or Principal Officer with responsibility for the D/PER IGEES Unit will also sit on this group which will be chaired by an external member.
- It will support IGEES management in developing the Service including CPD, peer review, etc.

External Advisory Group

- This Group will be comprised of the heads of IGEES units.
- It will be chaired by the Assistant Secretary or Principal Officer with responsibility for the D/PER IGEES Unit.
- It will operate as a cross-departmental forum for development of the Service.
- It will assist the development and implementation of IGEES CPD and provide support on the production of policy related output at unit level, including joint outputs.

Internal Advisory Group

IGEES Medium Term Strategy 2016 to 2019 – Communication

For the IGEES Medium Term Strategy to be successful, a key enabler will be how the IGEES communicates so that there is a heightened awareness of the Service, its aims and objectives, what it does to achieve these, its output and how this can assist others. This will need to be done internally (both within Departments and across the IGEES) and externally.

Internally, the IGEES will need to communicate at various levels both within each Department, e.g., to other units, to management and to decision makers, and across the IGEES as a whole. Externally, the key task for the IGEES will be to communicate its work / output to relevant stakeholders and other interested parties in an effective way. The graphic below sets out how the IGEES will go about this task.

Internal Communication

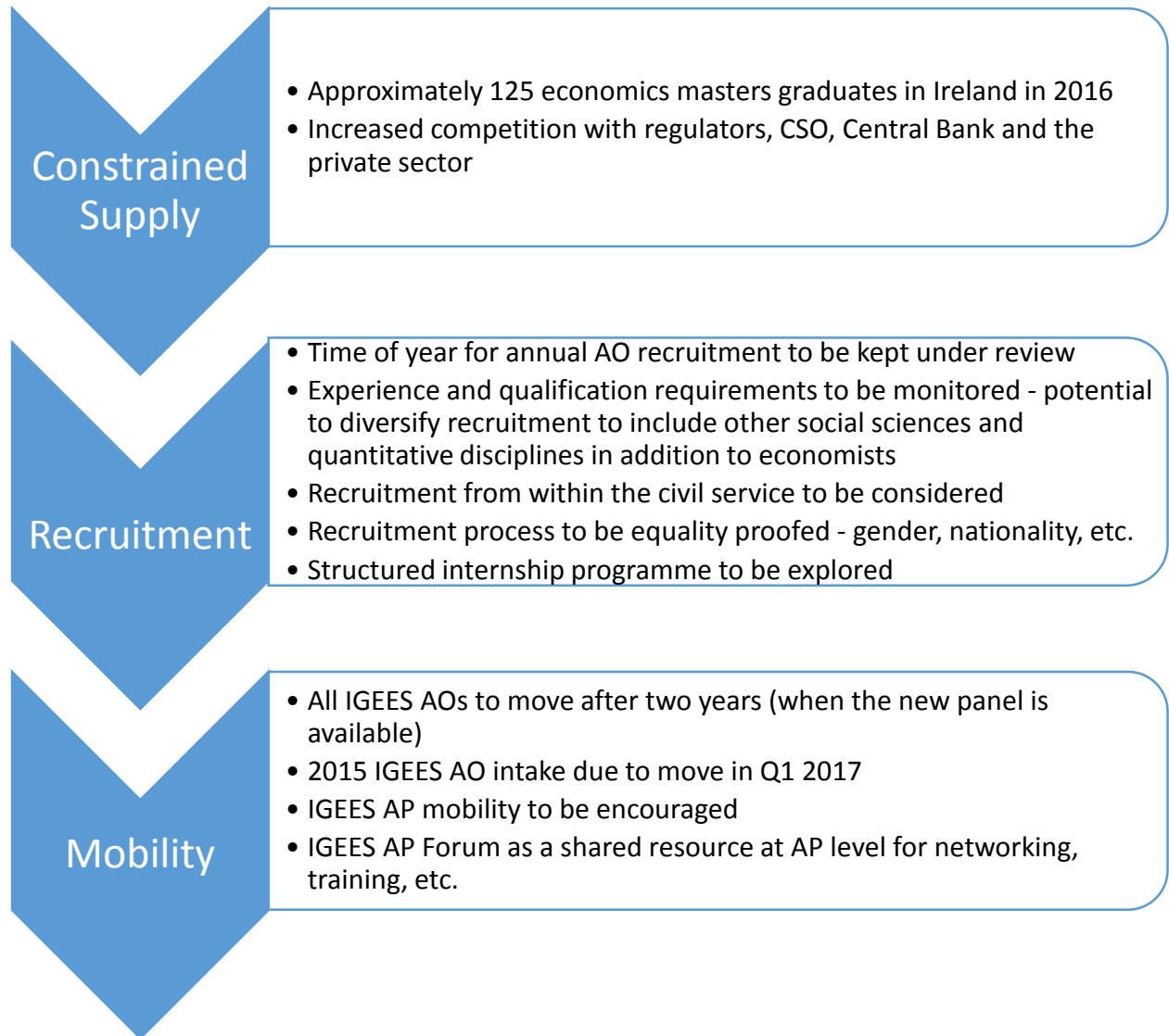
- Branding
- Peer review and publication
- Communication of output appropriately tailored to different audiences - policy analysts, policy makers, decision makers, etc.
- Presentations - formal and informal
- Collaborative project work
- Knowledge transfer
- Half yearly summary report on IGEES output
- Training & events
- Shared online forum/resource
- Collective access to resources, e.g., journals, library, etc.

External Communication

- Branding
- IGEES website - analytical publications, business plans, etc.
- Departmental websites - analytical publications
- Half yearly summary report on IGEES output
- Communication of output appropriately tailored to different audiences
- Conferences & events
- Graduate fairs
- Media - press releases, social media, etc.

IGEES Medium Term Strategy 2016 to 2019 – Workforce Planning

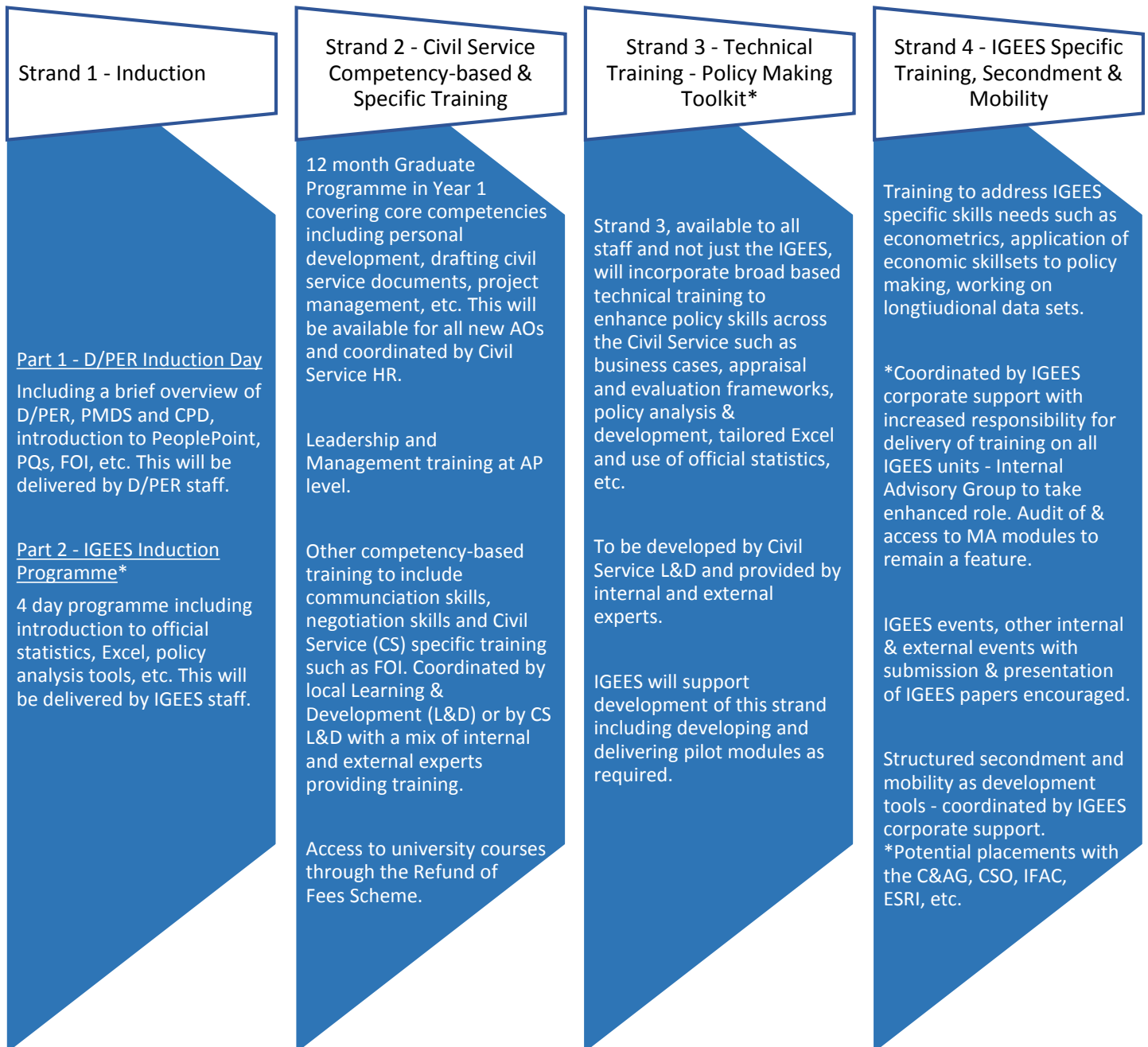
Workforce planning is key to ensuring that there is through put of IGEES staff with the desired skill set to build policy analysis capacity and output in the civil service. In a growing economy and tightening jobs market, supply will be constrained over the medium term. Maximising the impact of those recruited to the IGEES, and those already in IGEES roles, will be even more important in this constrained environment.



IGEES Medium Term Strategy 2016 to 2019 – Continued Professional Development

The proposed approach to IGEES CPD to be adopted over the course of the Medium Term Strategy is set out below. It encompasses elements of CPD arrangements that have already been rolled out to all staff (including IGEES) in addition to a number of new features that will be introduced. The model being adopted attempts to balance competency-based CPD with more technical and bespoke training. Both internal and external expertise will be harnessed in delivering the new CPD programme with increased input from all IGEES units driven by the Internal Advisory Group and learning from the broader public service evaluation community.

*Indicates new elements of the CPD Programme



Linking IGEES Output to Policy

This section provides high level examples of how IGEES output has fed into and/or impacted on Departmental and Government policy/strategy. These examples bring together the skills and experiences of a wide range of IGEES staff and reflect both the success of IGEES recruitment and CPD to date in addition to the potential impact of IGEES going forward. More information on the work of the IGEES, including recent publications, is available on the IGEES website.

Department of Public Expenditure and Reform - Pharmaceutical Costs

- Analysis of Irish state pharmaceutical expenditure demonstrated the need to deliver greater value for money and a range of levers which could be developed to achieve this outcome.
- Expenditure forecasting and savings scenario analysis informed the foundation of a new cost containment strategy.
- Working alongside other stakeholders, a new pricing and supply agreement with the pharmaceutical industry was negotiated. The agreement is estimated to save €750m over the next 4 years with the strategy ensuring the sustainability of this significant area of expenditure in the medium term.

Department of Finance - Guidelines for the Evaluation of Tax Expenditures

- Tax expenditures (incentives, reliefs, exemptions, etc.) are a form of Government spending which takes place through the tax system. In line with the overarching desired policy objective of a wide tax base and limited use of tax expenditures, evaluation guidelines were developed based on a variety of sources including the economic literature on tax expenditures, previous tax expenditure evaluations by the Department, and the evaluation methodologies used in other countries.
- The guidelines, which were researched and co-authored by IGEES economists, set out the approach of the Department in evaluating new or existing tax expenditures. The guidelines were adopted as policy and published alongside Budget 2015.

Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport - Investment in Land Transport

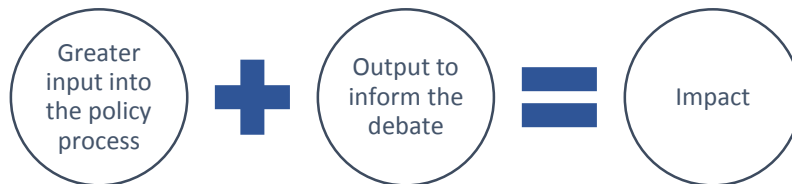
- The DTTaS IGEES unit worked on the Strategic Framework for Investment in Land Transport (SFILT), published in August 2015. The SFILT established the necessity of investing in the transport system to deliver Ireland's economic and environmental goals and also set out a series of high level principles to guide future investment decisions.
- The first priority for investment identifies the need to appropriately fund maintenance of the existing "steady state" transport network; the second is to invest in managing congestion in urban centres, and the third is to improve access to international gateways and to poorly served parts of the country.
- The SFILT formed the basis of the DTTaS submission to the 2016-21 Capital Plan, and assisted in securing an increase in the levels of capital investment, particularly for maintaining the existing network.

Department of Education and Skills - Special Needs Assistants (SNAs)

- An FPA of data on the SNA Scheme, undertaken by the DoES IGEES unit, provided an evidence base of the main drivers of SNA demand over the last five years, it developed a method to identify a range of potential demand for SNAs over the short term and agreed an annual reporting framework.
- The trends identified in the FPA have stimulated a further review of the scheme to identify the most appropriate form of support options to provide better outcomes for students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) or disability, having regard to the significant amount of State investment in this area.
- The outputs were key evidence to inform negotiations between the DoES and the DPER in relation to the recent increase in SNA numbers and the model will also support decision making into the future.

D/PER IGEES Unit – Supporting and Contributing to Better Policy Formulation and Implementation²

This section sets out the dual role of the D/PER IGEES Unit within the Medium Term Strategy. On the one hand, the Unit will support the development of IGEES through a corporate support function. In addition, through learning and development, production of high quality policy related output and informing the policy debate, the Unit will assist in delivering on the goals of the IGEES.



Output	Informing the Debate	Corporate Support	Learning & Development
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide internal consultancy within D/PER • Provide external (ad hoc) consultancy for Depts. with limited IGEES resources • Identify cross-sectoral priorities and collaborate with other Depts. • Develop policy framework for Behavioural Economics • Monitor VFM / FPA 2015 - 2017 round • Develop sectoral repositories - e.g. <i>UK's What Works Network</i> • Develop IGEES key performance indicators (KPIs) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate Strategic Policy Discussions • Deliver IGEES Network events • Manage IGEES website • Produce newsletters on economic and evaluation topics 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide administrative support for IGEES • Coordinate recruitment and secondment • Support mobility • Support implementation of the IGEES Medium Term Strategy incl. coordinating the development of KPIs • Coordinate and support IGEES CPD including developing/ acquiring technical training • Consider internal IGEES website to support collaboration and central access to resources/tools 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support economic and evaluation capacity across the Civil Service • Deliver elements of AO graduate programme & other training - evidence based policy making • Assist in the development of policy analysis course curriculum for Civil Service L&D • Support and assist in delivery of Departmental in-house training

² This template will inform future IGEES work programmes.