



**Minutes of Audit and Risk Committee  
26 February 2025**

**Attendance**

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| Committee:        | Paul Dempsey (Chair), Emily Logan and James O'Boyle  |
| Secretary:        | Pauline Byrne  |
| Management/Staff: | Sheila McClelland (CEO Designate), Peter Whelan (Director of Operations)<br>Peter Hogan (Principal Officer of Administration), Amanda McLoughlin (Head of Finance), Mark O'Loughlin (Project Manager, Transition) (item 5), Alan Quinn (Project Manager, CMS) (item 6) Ellen Kenny (Data & Governance) |
| Apologies:        | Robert Burke (Mazars)  |

**1. Committee Chair Opening Statement**

The agenda was approved and no conflicts of interest were declared.

**2. Minutes and Matters Arising**

The minutes of the ARC meeting on 5 December 2024 were approved.

**3. Administration and Operations Updates**

**3.1 Administration Update**

The Principal Officer of Administration briefed the Committee on the main developments since the last meeting, including:

- The 2024 financial expenditure is currently below profile with regards to the pay allocation due to a number of vacant positions including Fiosrú's Deputy Ombudsman. Non-pay expenditure is slightly below profile.
- The position of Deputy Ombudsman is due to be advertised by the Public Appointments Service in March 2025.
- A total of 35 new staff members have joined GSOC since January 2024 and staffing levels have grown by 9.5%. There is an ambitious strategy for the recruitment of new staff. Currently, GSOC is running a number of internal competitions for Executive Officers (EO),

Assistant Investigation Officers (AIO) and Investigations Officers (IO) and there is currently a panel in place of Higher Executive Officers (HEO) from a recent internal competition.

- GSOC is actively engaging with PAS with regards to recruitment and there was strong interest in a recent competition for Digital Forensic Specialists. The Committee noted that second level security clearance still continues to impact recruitment.
- Fiosrú has acquired its own recruitment licence from the CPSA, which will improve capacity to resource ourselves.
- GSOC currently has 22 vacancies to fill, and 24 new posts to fill.
- The uptake of staff members for the professional accreditation programme exceeded expectations. Fifty-one staff members commenced module one on 28 January 2025.
- GSOC has established our first leadership programme which is targeted at HEO's, with training due to commence in March 2025.
- The development of the interim CMS is ongoing. The testing phase will commence in mid-March and deployment at the end of March.
- ICT Cyber Security Strategy has been submitted to the Senior Management Team (SMT). Work is continuing between GSOC's ICT Unit and the appointed service provider on policy development.
- The Communications Unit coordinated a Town Hall meeting on 13 February 2025, with a high turnout of staff. Staff were updated on the important issues surrounding the transition to Fiosrú and there was positive engagement from staff at a workshop on the development of Fiosrú's Statement of Strategy. The event was welcomed by all in attendance and feedback was positive.
- Media Communications for GSOC's transition to Fiosrú are in place and the Fiosrú website is ready for commencement date.

### **3.2 Operations Update**

The Director of Operations briefed the Committee on developments within the Operations Directorate:

- Work is ongoing for the CMS Reporting System, Diver which is currently in the validation phase.
- The Committee noted that 2024 was an extremely busy period in both the Casework Unit and Investigations Unit with a substantial increase in complaints received. It was particularly emphasised that significant work has been undertaken by the Investigations Unit, with the number of cases at the year-end in comparison to that of 2023, reflecting the work undertaken.
- The Committee noted the challenges faced by the Investigations Unit from the impact of the Tierney Judgment and the increase in case files to be submitted to the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions (ODPP). GSOC are currently engaged with the ODPP to agree a format for the submission of case files affected by the Tierney Judgement and it was agreed that the increase in files to the ODPP will need to be reflected in the Annual Report.
- The Committee noted that investigation files affected by the Tierney Judgement will be closely monitored.

- Work is continuing he Investigations Unit and the Legal Unit are currently working on the single investigation process.

The Activity Report was noted.

#### **4. Corporate Governance**

##### **4.1 Governance Framework**

The Committee noted that work on Fiosrú's Governance Framework is currently ongoing.

##### **4.2 Draft Terms of Reference Senior Management Team**

The Committee reviewed and discussed the draft terms of reference for the SMT. There was a discussion on the frequency of the meetings. The Committee noted that fortnightly meetings were required at the initial stages of GSOC's transition and it is the intention to revert to monthly meetings going forward. It was agreed that collaborative leadership to the executive should be considered. The Committee noted that evidence of meetings is documented through the minutes.

#### **5. Transition**

The Programme Manager briefed the Committee on the Fiosrú Transformation Programme. In particular, it was noted that:

- The overall Transition Programme is currently set as status amber, workstreams have been condensed, with nine of the ten workstreams reporting either green or amber. Outstanding tasks are tracked and managed weekly. There are currently 28 outstanding tasks and of these, 6 are external dependencies, which GSOC have no control over.
- Transition tasks which are critical for the new commencement date, which is envisaged for March 2025 are 91% compliant and 93% adjusted.
- The Transition Team are evaluating impact to Fiosrú Cutover Plan activities if given a 1-week or 2-week notice of commencement date. ICT outlined various scenarios and obtained critical cutover decisions. Suppliers and critical staff needed for cutover have been lined up and contingencies are in place.
- The Committee noted the RAG status of the different business units within GSOC and it was acknowledged that external dependences was a significant factor in the overall status. The Committee noted the RAG status of Operations as red, which will be recategorized as amber of completion of outstanding policies.
- A significant amount of work has been completed by GSOC's Finance Unit and GSOC's Head of Finance is liaising with the National Shared Services office (NSSO) regarding the transfer of staff payments.
- The Director of Operations advised the Committee that there is ongoing weekly training for investigative staff. The Committee was informed that an initial core team of Investigators

would be established to deal with all investigations designated under the Policing Security and Community Safety Act, 2024. This team would become champions of the new standards and procedures and it is intended that the team would roll out their expertise throughout the Investigations Unit.

- GSOC continue to actively participate in all scheduled meetings and matters relevant for the transition to Fiosrú: The Department of Justice (DOJ) Policing Security and Community Safety Act, 2024 (PSCS) Implementation Programme and Governance Structure, the PSCS Programme Board, PSCS Implementation Steering Group, Project Group (New Operating Model, Process Reform) and subgroups (including Communications).
- The Committee noted that cutover plans are in place, including the ICT Migration & Cut-Over Plan and Fiosrú Day 1 Cutover Plan.
- The P2 Transition residual risk score has reduced from High to Medium on the Risk Register and continues to trend downwards.

The Committee acknowledged the hard work undertaken by the Transition Project Team.

## **6. Case Management System Project**

The CMS Project Manager briefed the Committee on the main developments with the new CMS Project, it was noted that:

- The new CMS is currently at status red to the Department of Justice (DOJ) as the original timeline and budget is no longer achievable.
- GSOC submitted a project change request to the DOJ on 28 January 2025 which will be considered by the DOJ P3 group on 27 February 2025.
- An additional Business Analyst has joined the CMS project team and is focusing on business requirements capture.
- The CMS Design Authority met on 19 February 2025 with 12 new process maps and 3 amended maps were reviewed. The CMS Steering Group continue to meet on a monthly basis.
- Phase 1 of the interim CMS is complete and the development of Phase 2 is due for completion by the end of March 2025. GSOC have experienced staff, a testing team has been identified and user testing has commenced.

The Committee noted that the work undertaken by the CMS Project Team.

## **7. Organisational Capacity**

The Committee was briefed by the Principal Officer of Administration on GSOC's organisational capacity:

- GSOC's current staffing levels are 171 and there are currently 51 outstanding vacancies to fill. A total of 35 new staff have joined GSOC since January 2024. A total of 20 staff have left GSOC since January 2024. The Committee noted that of the staff who left GSOC, some went on mobility, promotions and retirement. There was a discussion on mobility and it was

acknowledged that it can be a challenge to retain staff, it is also advantageous to the organisation.

- The Committee noted that GSOC experienced challenges in recruiting staff in 2024. The main drivers for this were the need for second level of security vetting, which can delay appointment by a period up to six months.
- GSOC are currently running internal promotion competitions for the positions of Assistant Investigations Officers (AIO), Investigations Officers (IO) and Executive Officer (EO).
- GSOC submitted an application to the Commission for Public Service Appointments (CPSA) for a recruitment licence, which has been granted to Fiosrú. This will enable Fiosrú to run its own open competitions and recruiting staff directly.
- The accreditation programme for staff and the AIO apprenticeship programme are significant advantages when going to the market for staff. The Government led ICT apprenticeship programme has been beneficial to GSOC in quality and contributions to the organisation.

There was a discussion on workforce planning. The Committee noted that there is plans in place to deal with vacant positions in 2025. It was agreed that a three-year view of future projections should be considered, including, a three-year forecast for upcoming retirements.

## **8. Governance**

### **8.1 ARC Self -Evaluation of ARC Effectiveness**

The Committee completed their self-evaluation form, in line with the Code of Practice for Governance of State Bodies.

### **8.2 ARC Annual Report**

The Committee reviewed their third Audit & Risk Committee Annual Report, some amendments to the report was agreed. It was also agreed that the Annual Report would be updated to reflect this meeting.

## **9. AOB**

There was a discussion on the available dates for the next meeting and it was agreed that the ARC Secretary would revert with a final date.

## **10. Closed Session**

The Committee and CEO Designate held a closed session.