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Section 1 Introduction and Background

This report sets out the intended scope and delivery of the National Spatial Strategy to guide and structure its preparation and to determine the key steps, information and research needs that will be critical to its preparation.

The report sets out a descriptive schedule of the overall objectives of the National Spatial Strategy, the distinct stages of its preparation and of key information, research and work needs. These are set out in a timeframe scenario that meets the Government's requirement to produce the final version of the strategy by December 2001.

Background

Ireland enters the 21st Century experiencing an unprecedented phase of growth, development and economic opportunity. Having established a strong economic performance as a nation, attention is now turning to how that performance is maintained and geographically distributed within the country in a balanced and sustainable manner.

The maintenance and improvement of this performance through measures aimed at enhancing infrastructure, training and Ireland's competitive performance generally, is a fundamental principle of the National Development Plan 2000 – 2006. This plan progresses beyond previous plans in recognising the need to achieve this enhanced economic position in a more spatially balanced manner.

Within the National Development Plan, the Government's objective for regional policy is to achieve more balanced regional development in order to

- reduce the disparities between and within the Border, Midlands and Western Region and the Southern and Eastern Region,
- develop the potential of both regions to contribute to the greatest possible extent to the continuing prosperity of the country.

It is also stated that policies must ensure that this development is sustainable in terms of the quality of life, social cohesion and conservation of the environment and the natural and cultural heritage.

The National Development Plan and the National Spatial Strategy

The National Development Plan 2000 – 2006 is underpinned by a number of key national objectives such as

- Continuing sustainable national economic and employment growth,
- Consolidating and improving Ireland's international competitiveness,
- Fostering balanced regional development, and
- Promoting social inclusion.

These have been expressed in the form of *strategic elements*:

- Continuation of the stability orientated macroeconomic policies of recent years,
- A major investment programme in economic and social infrastructure,
- A commitment to a better regional distribution of public and private investment,
- The promotion of education and employment training policies attuned to the needs of the labour market and a special focus on those most at risk of unemployment,
- A multi-faceted approach to the promotion of social inclusion, including targeted interventions aimed at urban and rural poverty blackspots.

Sustainable Development

The overall aim of the Government's National Sustainable Development Strategy published in 1997 is "to ensure that economy and society can develop to their full potential within a well protected environment, without compromising the quality of that environment, and with responsibility towards present and future generations and the wider international community". The economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development are given recognition in the National Development Plan: *sustainable* economic growth, *balanced* regional development and social *inclusion* relate to the first two dimensions, while the contextual and integrative role of environmental quality is stressed. In particular, certain environmental challenges are identified:

- Halting the decline in the quality of rivers and lakes caused by excessive inputs of nutrients (eutrophication);
- Better management of solid waste;
- Meeting our Kyoto commitment to limit the growth of greenhouse gas emissions;
- Protecting the urban environment;
- Protecting flora and fauna in the countryside and along the coast.

International Competitiveness

Ireland's recent strong performance has been based on significant gains in competitiveness. This has been due in part to the fact that productivity in Ireland has grown at a much faster rate relative to wages than in most other countries.

However, with the economy now operating close to capacity, it is essential that the gains of recent years are not eroded. If wage increases outstrip productivity, the resulting loss of competitiveness will lead to an increase in inflation and ultimately an increase in unemployment and a diminution of the strong economic performance experienced over the last decade.

As outlined in the National Development Plan, Ireland's participation in the third stage of Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) poses new challenges to maintaining competitiveness. The option of adjusting exchange rates to counteract changes in competitiveness is no longer available. This requires greater flexibility in the economy – prices and wages must be more responsive to changing economic conditions. Fostering competition will help gain the economic flexibility required in EMU.

Regional Development

The Government's objective for regional policy, as expressed in the National Development Plan, has been stated above.

In particular it is recognised that, notwithstanding the substantial economic and social progress that has been made, the patterns of development and resultant urbanisation and centralisation of economic activity have raised issues in relation to -

- Imbalance between and within the regions in the distribution of national economic progress,
- The growth and expansion of the Greater Dublin area, giving rise to problems of congestion and housing shortage,
- Rapid growth of major urban centres outside Dublin and their role in driving the development of their hinterlands and providing a counter-balance to Dublin,
- The implications of these trends for smaller towns and villages and rural areas,
- The social, economic and environmental consequences of these trends,
- The role of infrastructure provision in facilitating and promoting development at regional as well as national level,
- How the investments needed to underpin sustained economic progress at the national level might, at the same time, more effectively advance balanced regional development, and
- The relationship between economic and social planning, physical planning and land use policies.

The National Development Plan identifies key determinants of sustained economic performance, both nationally and regionally, and these include -

- Ease of access to foreign and domestic markets,
- A modern telecommunications network,
- Back-up research and technology infrastructure which is accessible to enterprises in all sectors,
- A well developed educational system,
- A highly qualified and skilled workforce,
- High quality physical infrastructure, including inter-urban transport and energy transmission systems,
- An adequate supply of housing,
- A good overall quality of life, and
- A high quality and sustainable environment.

The areas that are best endowed with these characteristics are generally the larger urban centres which have a strategic location relative to their surrounding territory, possess good social and economic infrastructure and support services, and have the potential to open up their zones of influence to further development. The cities and towns with this capability are envisaged in the National Development Plan as developmental "gateways", able to drive growth throughout their zones of influence and generating a dynamic of development that, in an inclusive way, recognises and exploits the complementarity between city, town, village and rural area.

The central thrust of the Government's Regional Development Policy, as set out in the National Development Plan, is to facilitate the further development of the major urban centres that already function as gateways; and to develop a comparable role for other centres that have the potential both to achieve strong and sustainable growth and to promote growth within their regions.

Within the zones of influence of the gateways, existing and potential, the National Development Plan indicates that there is a crucial need for medium-sized towns to act as hubs of economic growth supporting, in turn, the development of smaller towns, villages and rural areas. These towns would have the potential to attract smaller-scale foreign direct investment and to develop indigenous industry and services, both in their own right and with linkages to enterprises based in the gateways. Investment in these towns is seen as a key factor in spreading the benefits of national economic development more widely across the country.

The National Development Plan and Spatial Structure

Emerging from the National Development Plan, there are a number of elements relating to the spatial structure of Ireland:

- (1) A major objective for long term growth and development will lie in how to achieve balance on a regional basis – maximising regional contributions to national competitiveness.
- (2) There will be a major role for "regional gateways" such as existing major urban areas, as engines of growth, powering national competitiveness while diffusing growth within their zones of influence. The spatial distribution of these centres, what these roles are and the key dynamics of such centres, will be key matters to address.
- (3) There is an apparent role for a limited number of additional "regional gateways" whose identification is a key task for the National Spatial Strategy, subject to criteria related to ability and attractiveness to growth, location/accessibility and ability to diffuse growth within associated sub regions.
- (4) A key area will be to identify strategic or long-term infrastructure to facilitate the development of the "gateways" particularly in relation to the additional centres.
- (5) Related to these matters will be the setting out of a dynamic future for smaller linked centres and rural areas, by designating development clusters and building upon new positive urban-rural linkages. This would ensure the dispersal of economic benefits over the hinterlands of the identified gateways. It will be crucial to establish how this might work.
- (6) The key therefore to a new regional development perspective will be to set out a development brief that envisages continued economic growth for the S+E and B, M+W regions in terms of achieving greater national competitiveness within both the EU and a global context. This will involve the development of urban networks and positive linkages between various places, urban to urban, urban to rural and rural to rural.

The National Spatial Strategy

To address the future spatial structure of Ireland in the context of sustainable development, the Government has mandated the Department of the Environment and Local Government to prepare a National Spatial Strategy. This will be completed within two years and will translate the broad approach to balanced regional development into a more detailed framework for longer-term spatial development over a twenty-year horizon. The National Development Plan is a specific programme for investment and national competitiveness over the period 2000 – 2006. The National Spatial Strategy, in turn, will build upon the Plan's initiatives and set out a broader and more strategic framework that will structure the long-term strategic and spatial development of the State.

The National Spatial Strategy, like the National Development Plan, will be grounded in continuing sustainable economic and employment growth. The National Spatial Strategy will be developed in a way that will take full account of the competitiveness of Irish business and of the priority of developing key business infrastructure within a growth-supportive budget balance.

In particular the National Spatial Strategy will:

- Identify broad spatial development patterns for areas and set down indicative policies in relation to the location of industrial development, residential development, rural development and tourism and heritage, and
- Develop and present a dynamic conception of the Irish urban system, together with its links to rural areas, which recognises and utilises their economic and social interdependence.

The National Spatial Strategy will be a strategic spatial planning framework for the country as a whole. Rather than specifically addressing local issues, it will provide a basis for long-term co-ordination and co-operation in policy formulation and decision making on major investment in infrastructure including public and private transport infrastructure.

Characteristics of the National Spatial Strategy

In addition to the above, the strategy will need to be:

- *Relevant*: the Strategy must be seen to be relevant to people's real needs, now and in the future; and every part of the country, urban and rural, must be able to relate to it. This in turn will demand a highly participatory element to the Strategy's preparation and effective communications.

- *Feasible*: the Strategy must be realistic and capable of being implemented, with substantial progress being made on attaining its objectives before the National Development Plan expires in 2006 with the Strategy itself informing the mid-term review of this plan.
- *Flexible*: the Strategy must incorporate a degree of flexibility through a review mechanism that will enable it to be modified to meet changing circumstances.
- *Translatable*: the Strategy must structure policies at the national level so that they can be translated to, and elaborated at, regional, county and local levels by government departments, State or other agencies, public authorities and key economic sectors.

The European Spatial Development Perspective (ESDP)

The adoption of the ESDP in May 1999 represented the establishment of a non binding agreement by the EU Member States and the EU Commission on common objectives and concepts for the future development of the territory of the European Union. The document represents a policy framework within which Member States can move through local and multilateral actions towards a situation where the fundamental goals of EU policy are achieved equally in all its regions.

These goals include:

- economic and social cohesion,
- conservation and management of natural resources and the cultural heritage, and
- more balanced competitiveness of the European territory.

Aims of the ESDP

It is accepted that as a result of development disparities and the ways in which community policies affect individual regions, an automatic convergence towards a regionally balanced territory is not being realised. The ESDP argues that the undertaking of spatially differentiated policies to address these issues will, by taking the policy aims and objectives of the ESDP into account, ensure that spatial development guidelines for the territory of the EU are incorporated at an early stage.

The broad guidelines relate to:

- (1) Development of a polycentric or multi-centred and balanced urban system which strengthens partnership between urban and rural areas overcoming past competition and tension between these areas.
- (2) Promotion of integrated transport and communication concepts which support (1) and enable parity of access to infrastructure and knowledge.
- (3) Maintenance of natural and cultural diversity of regions and cities of the EU in the face of globalisation through development and conservation of the natural and cultural heritage through wise management.

Applying the European Spatial Development Perspective to Ireland

The policy aims and options in the ESDP have been employed to help in defining the scope and content of the National Spatial Strategy. Thus under *Polycentric Spatial Development*, relevant aims and options will guide consideration of Ireland's role both globally and within Europe; the economic and transport linkages with other parts of Europe; and trans-national and cross-border co-operation. In addition, an important task will be to translate the concept of polycentric urban development to national and regional levels in Ireland, expressing it in terms of "gateways" within their contexts of regional urban systems and rural areas. Diversified development strategies utilising the indigenous potential of rural areas and urban-rural linkages are among the other policy options that are relevant.

Parity of Access to Infrastructure and Knowledge deals not only with improved transport links, particularly secondary transport links, but also stresses the importance of telecommunications in compensating for disadvantages of distance and low population density in more remote areas. Access to knowledge is recognised as being important to competitive advantage, particularly the links between higher education and research centres and enterprise in economically weaker areas.

The *Wise Management of the Natural and Cultural Heritage* is seen as important in maintaining regional identity and contributing to the quality of life; and, increasingly, as an important factor in regional economic development in the location decisions of companies and as a basis for the development of tourism. Many of the policy options under this heading have relevance for Ireland.

Section 2: Objectives and Challenges

The purpose of the National Spatial Strategy is to set out the pattern of future development in Ireland in accordance with the Government's overall aim on sustainable development as set out in *Sustainable Development - A Strategy for Ireland* published by the Department of the Environment and Local Government in 1997 (see Section 1). To elaborate on this aim, *sustainable development* may be defined in the holistic sense of integrating concerns about:

- *Environmental sustainability* - living within the capacity of natural environmental systems,
- *Economic sustainability* - ensuring continued prosperity and employment opportunities, and
- *Social sustainability* - ensuring social inclusion, equity and personal well-being.

Set in this context of sustainable development, the *objectives* of the National Spatial Strategy are:

- Continuing national economic and employment growth,
- Continuing improvement in Ireland's international competitiveness,
- Fostering balanced regional development,
- Improving the quality of life for all sections of society, and
- Maintaining and enhancing the quality and diversity of the natural and cultural heritage.

In attempting to achieve these objectives through spatial planning, a number of *challenges* will emerge. These challenges will arise, not only from the process of addressing individual objectives, but also from reconciling elements of different objectives, which may be at variance or in conflict with each other. It is suggested, at this stage, that there are ten key challenges for the National Spatial Strategy to address:

- (1) To explore the definition of the concept of "balanced regional development" and varying approaches to what this constitutes. In particular, whether the concept might be based upon narrower considerations relating to equality in economic growth across the regions; or a broader approach based on equality of opportunity for the regions to fully utilise their resources, underpinned by appropriate supporting mechanisms while adhering to the broad principles of sustainable development.
- (2) To set out a strategy, which enables and facilitates the development of enterprise-including industrial, service and tourism activities-within

Ireland, in a manner that identifies, utilises and responds to the forces underlying sectoral investment patterns so as to maintain our competitive position internationally and assist the balanced and sustainable development of the regions.

- (3) Taking account of challenges (1) and (2), to develop the concept of "gateways" as a way of utilising the urban structure of Ireland in a manner which aims to maximise and distribute national performance by employing local potential to full advantage.
- (4) Taking account of (2), to identify strategic issues of the country in terms of transportation and telecommunications links internally and externally which optimise conditions for economic growth and sustainable development.
- (5) To strengthen our settlement pattern (including residential, commercial, social and cultural facilities) in a way which is environmentally sustainable, distributes economic growth and its benefits between and within the regions and creates resurgence in rural areas and smaller urban centres.
- (6) To ensure that the principles of sustainable development are incorporated into a strategy seeking balanced regional development and that the environment, including the cultural and natural heritage, is safeguarded in this process of regional development.
- (7) To identify ways in which deficiencies in accessibility relating to social infrastructure such as education, health and social services might be addressed by integrating the spatial dimensions of social and economic infrastructure in order to achieve social inclusion and balanced regional development.
- (8) To define mechanisms through which the approach to balanced regional development will address issues of social exclusion generally and, in particular, the spatial measures necessary to address areas of exclusion.
- (9) To ensure that the broad development strategy for the country builds upon dimensions, which include the relationship between the two political entities on the island of Ireland and between Ireland and its EU partners.
- (10) To identify the institutional and implementation arrangements necessary to realise the National Spatial Strategy.

Section 3: Stages of the Study

Addressing these key challenges in the preparation of the National Spatial Strategy will require that a wide range of interrelated and sometimes competing issues is explored. In terms of structuring the delivery of the strategy, the work of examining these issues and putting forward proposals falls into four main stages.

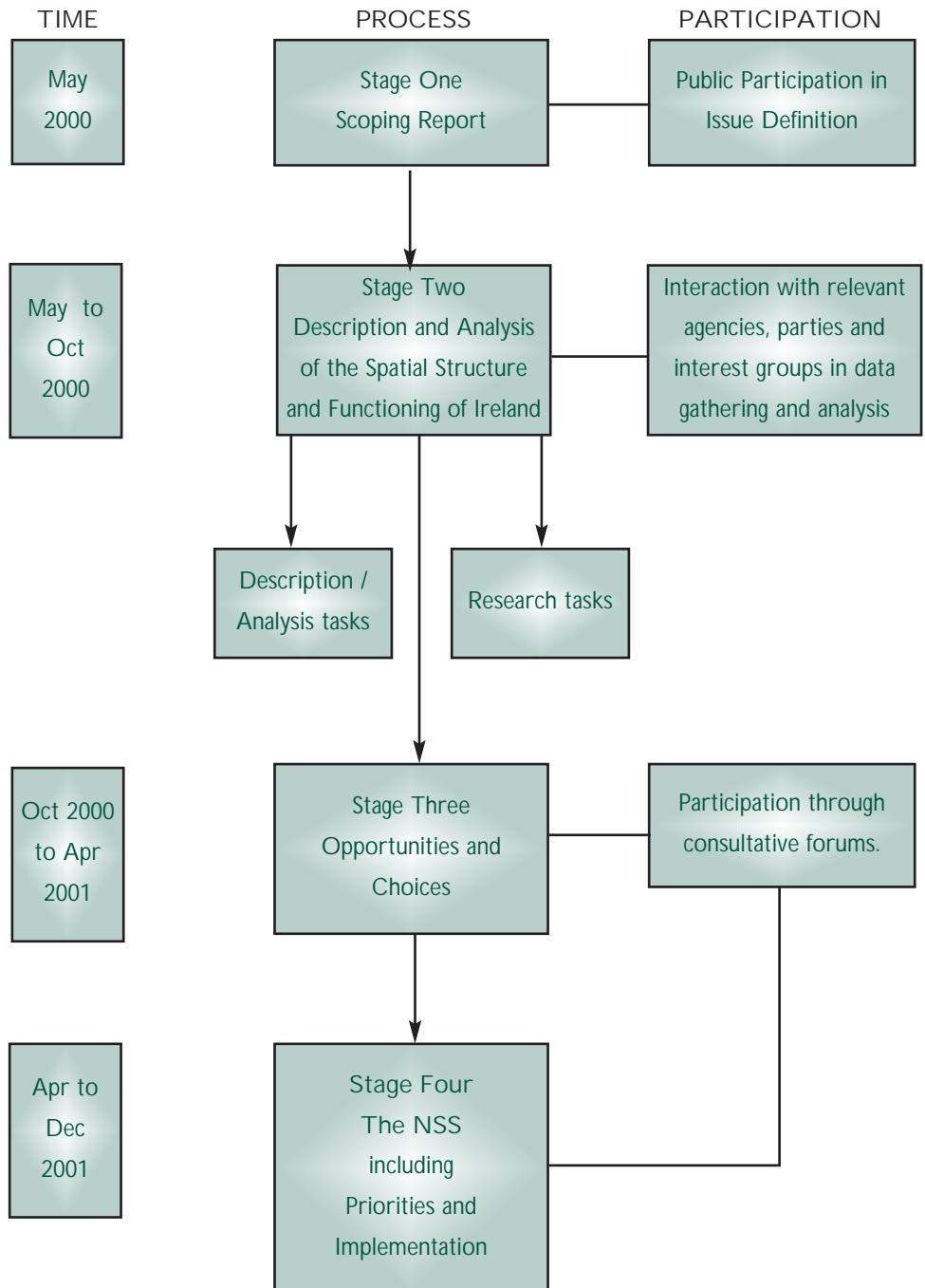
- Stage 1: Preparation of the report on the scope and delivery of the National Spatial Strategy.
- Stage 2: Providing a description and analysis of the spatial structure and functioning of Ireland, including trend scenarios.
- Stage 3: Developing opportunities and choices in patterns of development.
- Stage 4: Definition and choice of strategies, priorities and implementation mechanisms.

A diagrammatic representation of these stages is shown in Figure One, linked to the structure for public participation, and this should be interpreted in conjunction with sections 4 and 5.

The following pages set out the main elements to be addressed in each stage including individual tasks, research needs and a timeframe for substantive completion. Also indicated are estimates of any "specialist skills" needs, which may require expert consultant assistance. These are identified on the basis of skills which are not available within the study team or where such assistance would be required in terms of the timely completion of the strategy.

Figure One

Stages in the Preparation of the National Spatial Strategy



3.1 Stage 1: The Scope and Delivery of the National Spatial Strategy

This report essentially represents the first stage of the strategy preparation where, building upon Consultation Paper 1, *What Are the Issues?* the scope, structure and approach in the preparation of the National Spatial Strategy are set out. In this stage, the objective is to establish a consensus on these matters and on the programme of work.

The responses to the consultation paper have been of great assistance in the production of this report – generally, in terms of approach and emphasis and, specifically, in relation to challenges and issues. In addition, much of the material that has been received that related to matters of policy will be utilised in later stages of the preparation of the strategy.

Timeframe

The deadline for submissions was 21st March. In as far as was practicable, submissions received after this date were also considered.

Specialist Skills

No specialist needs.

3.2 Stage 2: Description and Analysis of Spatial Structure and Functioning of Ireland

This stage represents the point at which key information is collected and analysed. The tasks in this stage fall into two separate categories: (a) assembling and analysing available information and (b) specific matters, which will require research and/or focused analysis. In each, the overall aim will be to establish clear spatial perspectives and baseline studies on:

- Current developmental trends including where appropriate trend scenarios,
- Areas where spatial intervention appears necessary, and
- Issues that require ongoing research and monitoring.

Timeframe

To be completed by Autumn 2000. For individual timetabling of task completion see Section 7 – Work Programme.

Specialist Skills

The issues which the strategy will address, together with the related information and research needs, envisaged at this time are set out below. As work progresses, additional issues may emerge and it is anticipated that the Expert Advisory Group will be able to advise on such matters. Where specialist skills are required, this is indicated in the tasks set out below.

Discussion of, and responses to, the issues will be undertaken in Stage 3 in the form of "Policy Papers".

Urban Ireland and Balanced Regional Development

- *The likely scale of development in the context of demographic trends, including migration patterns, and housing issues.*
- *Identifying where balanced and sustainable urban growth is feasible.*
- *The role of Dublin in Europe - and its infrastructure needs in this context.*
- *The relationship between Dublin and the rest of the country – applying development restraints and the form this might take.*
- *Developing other major urban centres with the critical mass that can attract inward investment and the infrastructure necessary.*
- *The development of positive linkages between major urban areas to aid competitiveness.*
- *The development of a spatial structure of smaller urban centres with links to major urban centres and rural hinterlands and the infrastructure to sustain this.*
- *Creating positive linkages between urban and rural areas to achieve self-sustaining rural and village communities.*

Task No.	Description	Comments
(1)	Population, Labour Force Projections (a): Forecasts for (1) Ireland, (2) Dublin and main cities, and (3) Regions - on the basis of existing trends for 2010, 2015, 2020, 2030.	CSO or specialist demographer assistance required
(2)	Population, Labour Force Projections(b): Developing Population forecast ranges linked to certain economic growth and net migration trends for similar key dates as task 1.	As above
(3)	Household Formation/Housing Demand: To identify likely scales of housing demand in terms of regional spread and key dates that would result from the projections made in tasks 1 and 2.	May require new analysis to take account of new migration assumptions
(4)	Dublin in Europe: How it compares to other "centres of excellence" in terms of infrastructure portfolio, investor confidence, returns, etc. Including an analysis of Euro Corridors, transit performance, information transfer capacity and early warnings of deficits.	Will require external analysis
(5)	Dublin in Ireland: A description and analysis of Dublin's role in Ireland in terms of the existing situation and continuance of existing trends.	Can be prepared in-house upon delivery of demographic information
(6)	Enterprise Development, Employment and Productivity: A spatial overview of recent economic performances on a regional basis.	To be prepared jointly between Spatial Planning Unit (SPU) and Forfás/IDA
(7)	Regional and Urban Infrastructure Profiles: (i) To identify areas of deficit that can be addressed or that must be addressed to sustain confidence and potential for counterpole development in the Regions.	A consequential development from task 6 and to be pursued by SPU building upon the Forfás regional database

Task No.	Description	Comments
	(ii) To establish key issues through analysis of the infrastructure profiles of major urban centres in terms of transport, water services, energy and environmental improvements.	with technical assistance from ESB, telecoms, CIÉ, Local Authorities etc
	(iii) To quantify the capacity of land banks in major urban centres.	
(8)	The Irish Urban System and its Dynamics: To define and describe the Irish urban system, the economic and social functions of different sized settlements, the linkages between them (hierarchical, complementary or competitive); and to define fields of influence in various sectors.	A key research need to be initiated by the SPU in association with Consultants
(9)	Development Restraint: Exploring the various mechanisms of development restraint – positive discrimination, physical development limits, population targets, avoiding national competitive disadvantage, achieving transferral of competitive performance on a regional basis.	For Consultants

Rural Ireland and Balanced Regional Development

- *Identifying key economic and social changes in differing types of rural areas and the spatial planning implications, such as developing off-farm employment and distinguishing between rurally generated problems as opposed to urban generated development pressures.*
- *Offering a development strategy which takes account of the links between town and country and which sets out strategies for rural development including dimensions such as agriculture, tourism, forestry, fisheries and other sectors.*
- *The provision of infrastructure measures in terms of transportation and communication services to sustain and enhance rural development prospects.*
- *Utilising the resources of rural areas, such as land, landscape, natural and cultural heritage and water resources, by defining their potential and setting out the necessary management requirements.*
- *Ensuring a vibrant future for areas of linguistic distinctiveness such as the Gaeltachts and recognising the contribution of culture to economic development.*
- *Defining the distinct yet complementary roles for urban and rural areas and maintaining the respective social and physical integrity in the sustainable development of each.*

Task No.	Description	Comments
(10)	The Irish Rural Structure: Utilising demographic, economic and geographical data to construct an analytical framework that identifies the individual components of the Irish rural structure – areas suffering structural decline and linkages to existing urban structures and opportunities for enterprise. It will also be necessary to examine the needs and future for Gaeltacht areas as a distinct cultural entity. In addition, to define areas under metropolitan influences.	For Consultants with multi-disciplinary skills.
(11)	Rural Enterprise: Developing from task 10, to examine particular case studies of successful rural enterprise in all its senses, tourism, agri-business, employment generally, forestry and fisheries and to establish a systematic approach to the countering of structural rural decline through positive urban and rural linkages, generating	A key research area for consultants perhaps examining successful Integrated Rural Development models – Ballyhoura, Kiltimagh.

Task No.	Description	Comments
	replacement off - farm employment and rural training needs.	
(12)	Rural Resource Potential and Management Issues: Building upon existing datasets such as landscape analyses, county plans, water resource mapping and heritage records, to comprehensively map the distribution and pattern of sensitive assets as a development parameter.	For SPU but will require dedicated cartographic expertise.
(13)	Rural and Urban Roles: Building upon task 10, to comprehensively address the question of rural settlement and the issues surrounding this question.	For SPU building upon research from task 10 and "best practice" development plan approaches.

People and Balanced Regional Development

- *Providing an everyday living environment for people that is safe, pleasant and healthy, with ease of access to educational, healthcare, social services, cultural and leisure facilities. This can also be an important factor in attracting inward investment and retaining population.*
- *Utilising the linkages between human resources, skills and spatial development patterns in order to employ education, training and research infrastructure as an integral component of balanced regional development.*
- *Identifying ways in which a spatial development strategy can deal with key needs in terms of education and training to address regional imbalances.*
- *Achieving greater equity in terms of accessibility for people to the mechanisms of self-development, education and training and thereby aiding balanced competitiveness.*

Task No.	Description	Comments
(14)	<p>Quantifying Quality: Defining through quantitative techniques, benchmark definitions of what "quality of life" means to Irish people e.g. tradeoffs between accessibility and congestion.</p>	For Consultants
(15)	<p>Social Infrastructure: <i>(i) Education Roles</i> Building upon data collected in the regional reports and in association with the HEA/ESRI, to comprehensively map trends and patterns in relation to the location and input of higher education establishments. Also to look at the concept of lifetime learning and current trends in Ireland in terms of developing this service. <i>(ii) Health and Social Services</i> To establish strategic requirements for health and social services in response to demographic and developmental trends.</p>	<p>For SPU in association with (i) HEA/ESRI/Department of Education and Science. (ii) Dept. of Health and Children – Dept. of Social, Community and Family Affairs.</p>
(16)	<p>Bolstering Parity of Access to Education: Conducting a preliminary review of how emerging spatial development patterns could support a more spatially equitable distribution of educational facilities through creating the critical mass to support and/or justify their development with a particular focus upon targeting spatial concentrations of social deprivation.</p>	For SPU

Communications Infrastructure and Balanced Regional Development

- *The co-ordination of development strategies with transport needs assessment to predict key needs and arrive at efficient, effective transport systems.*
- *The case for efficient public transport linkages between the regions and linking the regions to Dublin and other points of entry and the most appropriate settlement structure needed to sustain them.*
- *The opportunities for releasing development potential in more remote areas utilising communication networks, e-commerce - and key actions needed.*
- *The spatial development patterns and infrastructure that would permit enterprises to overcome logistical difficulties where these result in competitive disadvantage.*
- *Ensuring effective accessibility links to international markets as an integral component of national competitiveness.*
- *Identifying parallel infrastructure needs in other related sectors such as the production and distribution of energy.*

Task No.	Description	Comments
(17)	Transport Demand: Utilising data from tasks 1-3 to estimate traffic demands along key inter-urban corridors in relation to various demographic assumptions and growth trends for regional centres coupled to modal split assumptions in order to determine key needs.	For Consultants in association with NRA CIÉ, Aer Rianta, Port Authorities and transport operators
(18)	Region to Region, Time and Distance: An examination of the performance of public transport linkages between regions and certain nodes and strategic competitive needs in the light of improved road infrastructure and desirable modal shifts for both passenger and freight traffic taking into account CO ² emissions and impact factors within urban destinations. Also to analyse the potential for a more deeply developed interregional system of linkages in the light of potential development scenarios for regional centres.	For Consultants in association with CIÉ/NRA

Task No.	Description	Comments
(19)	Information Technology Infrastructure: The position of different areas in terms of benefiting from the theoretical potential of the information society, and particularly the capacity of existing telecoms infrastructure to sustain this. In particular to examine the broadband communications network and the danger of further disadvantaging regions through concentration of investment.	For expert e-commerce consultants in association with SPU and Telecom providers.
(20)	Transport Corridors in Europe: To examine from a time – distance and logistics perspective, how transit performance from Ireland to key markets compares to our main competitors and to establish necessary infrastructural interventions – a new RoRo port? Integrating intermodal rail access, landbridges, air transit times and a future for regional airports. Will include timetabling analysis to establish performance benchmarks.	For expert logistics consultants in association with IDA, Transport operators.
(21)	Energy and other Infrastructure Issues: Mapping energy transfer, telecommunications and any other relevant infrastructure types and interlinking these to spatial patterns of development to highlight key deficiencies for potential demographic and enterprise trends.	For SPU supported by Technical and Steering Groups

The Management of the Environment and Regional Development

- *The identification of spatial development patterns that would contribute to efficient energy usage and waste minimisation; and would reduce the impact of traffic and maximise opportunities for sustainable transportation.*
- *Integrating the capacity of the environment to accommodate development and settlement into spatial planning strategies and selection of options.*

- *Maintaining and enhancing the quality and diversity of natural and cultural heritage, including landscape.*
- *Ecological networks as a resource to develop and a heritage to conserve.*
- *Matching the requirements of extensive and intensive land uses in rural areas with landscape and environmental considerations. Such land uses might include renewable energy, forestry and intensive agriculture.*
- *Integrating coastal management considerations into the Strategy including identification of vulnerable areas, protection needs and flooding risk factors.*

Task No.	Description	Comments
(22)	<i>Sustainable Travel Demand Management:</i> To identify development patterns that would support highly sustainable travel arrangements and to test these spatial patterns against other factors.	For Consultants.
(23)	<i>Environmental Carrying Capacity:</i> Utilising water resource and service databases in addition to local plans, to establish the viability in capacity terms of various urban centres to accept additional development and the scale of this including consideration of potential impacts on public health. Taking environmental thresholds that may arise, to then establish the possibilities of moving these and local implications.	For SPU supported by regional authorities, EPA and will require research.
(24)	<i>Coastal Management:</i> To identify coastal areas with special policy and management requirements in relation to coastal erosion, sea level changes and amenity, tourism and aquaculture activities.	For SPU utilising the National Coastal Zone management strategy.
(25)	<i>Extensive and Intensive Rural Land Uses:</i> To identify and map rural land uses with spatial implications and capacity for significant environmental effects and policy or management issues; e.g. renewable energy, afforestation, peat extraction, intensive agriculture.	For SPU in association with relevant organisations and Steering/Technical Working groups.

Delivery Mechanisms and Balanced Regional Development

- *The identification of the most appropriate political, legislative and administrative arrangements and or changes as appropriate between government departments, State agencies and regional and local authorities, which would ensure the development and co-ordination of policies and activities to promote balanced regional development in the context of the National Spatial Strategy.*
- *The identification of new or the improvement of current structures which would promote the full and effective implementation of the National Spatial Strategy across the country at local, national and regional level.*
- *The recommendation of appropriate changes to, or consolidation of, current administrative areas and boundaries, where necessary, to facilitate a more effective co-ordination of policies relevant to spatial strategy.*
- *Consideration of mechanisms for adoption of the Strategy and ongoing monitoring, review and updating.*

Task No.	Description	Comments
(26)	Legislative and Structural Frameworks: To determine the appropriate legislative, approval and institutional arrangements to ensure the establishment of an effective and efficient implementation platform for translation of the Strategy into reality.	For SPU and Steering Group and for completion in Stage 4 upon delivery of other information in these tasks.
(27)	Implementation of Strategic Spatial Vision: To investigate the practical issues surrounding the eventual implementation of the NSS in terms of clear establishment of responsibility and direction, the need to avoid duplication of effort and timely responsiveness	As for (26)
(28)	Boundaries: To examine the prospect for a unified regional approach for all planning and infrastructure providers in terms of better regional co-ordination. To be achieved by mapping the boundaries of relevant agencies and establishing areas where the principles of co-ordination would not be best served by present arrangements and to set out alternative approaches.	As for (26)

3.3 Stage 3: Opportunities and Choices

Stage 3 will utilise the results of stage 2 and will integrate the various primary information groups in a structured way to generate responses to the identified issues. These in turn, will be grouped into *Policy Papers* starting with defining the nature of "Balanced Regional Development". Headings which might be considered at this stage, include:

- Approaches to Balanced Regional Development and a preferred structure.
- Spatial Dimensions in key Economic Sectors:
 - (i) Industry and associated employment activities,
 - (ii) Foreign Investment and Internationally Traded Services,
 - (iii) Tourism, and
 - (iv) Natural Resources.
- The needs of People and Communities in terms of access to Social Infrastructure including:
 - (i) Education training and research,
 - (ii) Health and social services, and
 - (iii) Cultural and amenity facilities.
- The Prospects and Capacity for Regional Growth.
- Development Dynamics and the creation of Positive Linkages, the roles of physical, social and cultural infrastructure, environmental quality, and economic vitality.
- The Strategic Development of Dublin in the context of Balanced Regional Development.
- Sustainable Rural Communities.
- Transportation and Communications needs for Balanced Regional Development.
- The Natural and Cultural Heritage in Balanced Regional Development.
- Options for the Implementation of Balanced Regional Development.

These papers will evaluate development options against defined criteria for balanced regional development to arrive at a series of recommendations. Such defined criteria would include matters relating to:

- Population distribution and sustainable settlement patterns,
- Patterns of enterprise and employment, and
- Achieving Sustainable Development.

- as defined in the "Objectives" and "Challenges" for the National Spatial Strategy.

Various techniques will be applied in this process to establish compliance with criteria derived from these objectives.

The papers and the compliance testing model will be prepared by the Spatial Planning Unit, building upon the contributions of external consultants and researchers.

Development scenarios could be constructed which would offer alternative approaches ranging between those which could reach a highly balanced level of development but which might be highly impracticable and other options which would represent significant shifts in balance but would be more achievable.

In stages 2 and 3, it will be critical that there is an objective and quantitative methodology of approach so that as the preparation of the National Spatial Strategy moves into its final phase there is widespread confidence in the thoroughness and impartiality of approach. This will be particularly necessary, as these stages will contain widespread consultation.

The appraisal framework, therefore, needs to be capable of application in a rational and consistent manner including the assessment of impacts in alternative scenarios.

Timeframe

Autumn 2000 – Spring 2001

Specialist Skills

Technical requirements will generally be met from within the Spatial Planning Unit. It is envisaged at this stage, that the preparation of certain development issue papers will be undertaken by consultants. Substantial cartographic and mapping capability will be required to graphically depict the content of the emergent policy options.

3.4 Stage 4: Strategy, Priorities and Implementation

At this stage, the drafting of the Strategy would commence beginning with "Working Documents" and supporting Technical Appendices.

In turn, the preferred options would enter a decision making process overseen by the Steering Committee and involving sectoral participation in the manner envisaged for the structures supporting the preparation of the National Spatial Strategy.

Accordingly, in this stage there will be an integration process, which will draw together and reconcile the emerging strands of policy developed in Stage 3.

This would conclude with the adoption of the Strategy.

It is intended that the Strategy will identify mechanisms through which broad policies and specific actions will be implemented including an outline of where legislative, institutional, operational or other reforms are necessary to avoid obstacles or rigidities in the translation of the National Spatial Strategy into reality.

Timeframe

Spring 2001 – End 2001

Specialist Skills

Technical requirements can be met from within the SPU. However, substantial cartographic and mapping capability will be required to convey convincingly in a graphic manner, the nature of the National Spatial Strategy.

Section 4: Organisational Structures and Study Team

Many different bodies and organisations, including various sections within the Department of the Environment and Local Government, other government departments, various State bodies, regional and local authorities and other development bodies, both national and local, need to be involved, in a consultative or in an operational capacity, in the preparation and implementation of the National Spatial Strategy. Linkages to spatial development initiatives at European level and in Northern Ireland will also be necessary.

The structures needed to support the involvement of various interests, nationally and internationally, must be reasonably comprehensive and, at the same time, manageable.

To facilitate the consultative process it is intended to seek the support of existing partnership structures such as NESC and COMHAR.

It will also be necessary to make specific arrangements to support the development and implementation of the Strategy. The following arrangement of structures is being put in place:

- (1) A policy level Steering Group made up of high-level representatives of government departments whose policies and functions are relevant to the strategy, will lead and oversee its preparation. The departments involved are:

Agriculture and Rural Development	Finance
Enterprise, Trade and Employment	Marine and Natural Resources
Environment and Local Government	Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands
Tourism, Sport and Recreation	Education & Science
Health and Children	Public Enterprise
Taoiseach	Social, Community and Family Affairs

Housing, roads and water services are the main functions within the remit of the Department of Environment and Local Government, which will have to be covered.

Regular reports will be furnished to the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Infrastructure.

The Steering Group is chaired by the Assistant Secretary (Planning and Development).

- (2) At operational level, a Technical Working Group, will assist in the preparation of the Strategy by providing advice and information on relevant policy and technical matters.

The Technical Working Group is chaired by D. Hegarty, Principal Planning Adviser.

- (3) Five Consultative Forums are also being established to facilitate the participation of various interests:
- A Consultative Forum for each of the B, M+W and S+E Regions to include:
 - (i) The Regional Assemblies,
 - (ii) Regional Authorities,
 - (iii) Western Development Commission,
 - (iv) Council for the West,
 - (v) Local Authorities,
 - (vi) County and City Development Boards, and
 - (vii) Health Boards.
 - A Consultative Forum representing the social partners, facilitated by NESC.
 - A Consultative Forum concerned with sustainable development, which will consist of COMHAR.
 - A Consultative Forum representing the various professional and technical bodies with a particular focus on the planning, design and construction professions.

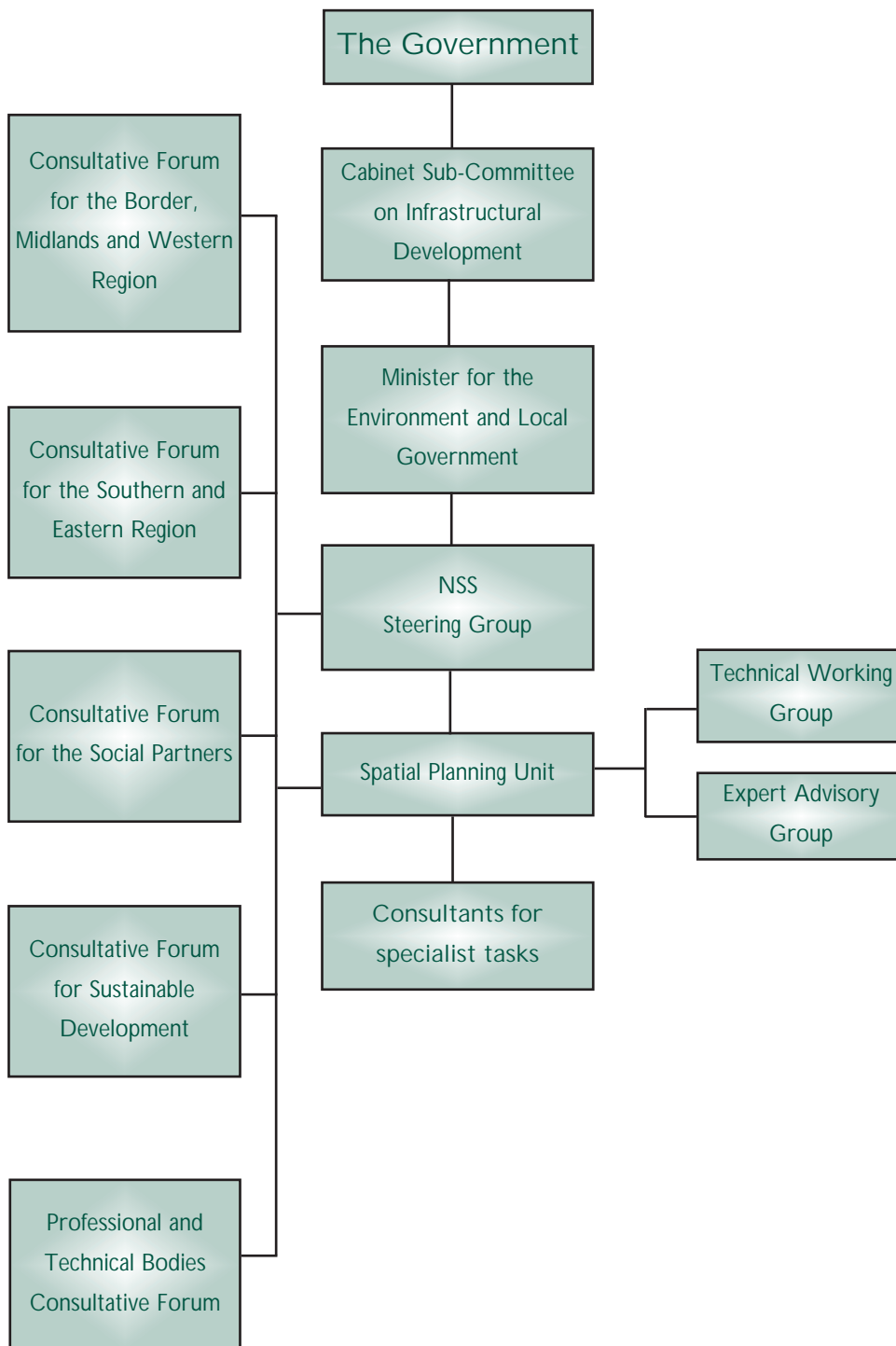
Further details on public participation are provided in Section 5.

- (4) It is also proposed to establish an Expert Advisory Group to take an overview of the process as it develops and advise on its approach and content. This Group will include national and international experts in the fields of regional development and spatial planning.
- (5) These organisational structures will be serviced by the Spatial Planning Unit in the Department, which will provide a secretariat and services such as drafting discussion papers, and overseeing arrangements for the employment of consultants.

Figure Two sets out the various elements of the overall structure.

Figure Two

National Spatial Strategy Organisational Structure



Section 5: Public Participation

Spatial Planning is a concept with which Irish society is unfamiliar and this poses several challenges for the preparation of the National Spatial Strategy and its implementation. Apart from overcoming the issue of unfamiliarity, these include:

- The fact that spatial planning as a concept embraces interrelated issues with a high degree of complexity,
- The fact that there are differing degrees of awareness and understanding of the issues in spatial planning between different groups and segments of society,
- The fact that participation in the development of the National Spatial Strategy by social partners, community groups and the individual citizen is central and vital to ensuring that the strategy is relevant to people's needs as required by the National Development Plan, and
- The fact that developing a high degree of ownership amongst the various stakeholders affected by spatial planning is vital to the strategy's successful development and implementation.

A core objective of the preparation of the strategy will therefore be to ensure that all relevant groups and individuals are contacted and encouraged to contribute to the process of the strategy's preparation.

Participation Structures and Stages

Given the necessity for a structured approach to the preparation of the strategy and the need to make meaningful, informative and timely contributions to its preparation, it is critical that the consultative process is also structured to engage effectively with the preparation process. For this reason, opportunities for the general public to make contributions will be supplemented by a broad based participatory process designed to embrace all government departments, local and regional authorities (through the Regional Assemblies) the social partners, relevant non governmental organisations and professional bodies.

Figure One illustrates the broad structure for participation arrangements, which comprise two main sectors and three main points of interaction.

The two main sectors through which the participatory elements of the Strategy will be channelled are:

- *The Consultative Forums*, which will draw the perspectives and experience of (1) public authorities in both B, M+W and S+E Regions, (2) the social partners, (3) sustainable development interests, and (4) professional bodies, into the preparation process. Details of these have been elaborated upon in Section 4 and Figure Two.
- *The Steering Group and Technical Working Group* will draw together the perspectives, advice and contributions of government departments, State agencies, statutory undertakers and other relevant bodies involved in supporting and delivering aspects of the Strategy.

In terms of the points of contact and interaction for participatory elements of the process, it is envisaged at this stage that these will occur principally at four key points.

- Participation and engagement with the public and relevant authorities and bodies in *defining the issues* which should be addressed in the preparation of the Strategy in the first instance.
- Interaction with a wide range of agencies and bodies *in terms of assembling key groups of information, assistance in conducting research* and generally in terms of establishing the nature of the spatial functioning of Ireland.
- Participation in a structured manner in relation to preliminary or interim findings in the various "*Policy Papers*" proposed.
- Participation in the *formulation* of the National Spatial Strategy, through integration of the various approaches in the policy papers.

Section 6: *Business Case for Consultants*

The need for external consultants referred to in the task tables, to assist in the preparation of the Strategy, is determined by three key factors:

- The timeframe given for completion of the National Spatial Strategy,
- The need for specialist skills not readily available within the public sector, and
- The need to develop new skills within the Department and transfer of skill from consultants.

The substantive work in preparing the Strategy will be carried out by the SPU. However external consultants will be utilised to provide the Spatial Planning Unit with specialist advice and undertake expert studies in areas which the SPU has limited experience or knowledge.

It is intended that the various studies will be prepared by joint teams of consultants and the SPU to ensure proper understanding by the consultant of the project needs and to ensure transfer of knowledge and development of new skills within the Department.

It is proposed to form a panel of consultants to provide specialist input into various aspects of the National Spatial Strategy as identified in the Task List in Section 3.

The following table sets out the tasks that are envisaged at this stage as requiring the assistance of Consultant advice and assistance. This will be reviewed in the light of ongoing experience in preparation of the Strategy.

Preliminary List of Tasks involving External Consultants.

Task	Task description
(1)	Population/Labour Force Projections (a)
(2)	Population/Labour Force Projections (b)
(3)	Household Formation
(4)	Dublin in Europe
(8)	The Irish Urban System and its Dynamics
(9)	Development Restraint
(10)	The Irish Rural Structure
(11)	Rural Enterprise
(14)	Quality of Life
(17)	Transport Demand
(18)	Time/Distance Region-Region
(19)	Information Technology Infrastructure
(20)	Transport Corridors in Europe
(22)	Sustainable Travel Demand
(23)	Environmental Carrying Capacity

The deliverables from the consultants will be in the form of reports and studies which will assist in both stages 2 and 3 of the project in terms of research tasks and the synthesis and integration of certain policy papers.

Given the time constraints for the preparation of the Strategy and the innovative nature of the project a combination of work methodologies is to be used:

- Tasks which the Spatial Planning Unit can carry out,
- Tasks which the SPU & public bodies/ State departments can carry out, and
- Tasks which can best be carried out with the help of external consultants.

The Task List in Section 3 identifies which tasks will be carried out and by whom.

Where the use of consultants is proposed, they will be required to demonstrate:

- A thorough knowledge of relevant socio-economic and spatial planning issues as they relate to their particular discipline,
- The ability to identify the regional disparities,
- The ability to quantify (if possible) those regional disparities, and
- Present their finding in a manner which will enable them in conjunction with the SPU to formulate Stage 3 of the study.

Consultancies will be generally required to comply with the requirements set out in *Engaging Consultants: A Code of Practice for the Civil Service* published by the Department of Finance in 1999.

Section 7: Work Programme

The following table sets out indicative details of the work stages, key target dates in delivering this work and other relevant details. It is envisaged that this will be applied in a manner, which allows for the evolution and adjustment of the preparation of the strategy as this unfolds.

STAGE	DATE	Work of Spatial Planning Unit	Work of Consultants
1.		Preparation of Consultation Paper No.1.	
	21/03/00	Deadline for Responses to Consultation Paper No.1.	
		Preparation of Scoping Report.	
2.	5/04/00	Scoping Report to Steering Committee.	
		Allocation of 30+ Tasks between SPU & Consultants.	
		Preparation of Consultants' Briefs.	
3.		Invitation to Tender	
	20/06/00	Selection of Consultants.	
		Data assembly/Description/ Analysis Supervision/Liaison with Consultants	Research and Other Tasks (see Section 6 for Indicative List)
3.	5/10/00	End of Stage Report,	
		Allocation of <i>Policy Papers</i> between SPU & Consultants.	
		Preparation of PPs Consultants' Briefs.	Preparation of PPs
4.		Supervision/Liaison with Consultants.	
	05/02/01	PPs issued for Consultation.	
		Presentation to various bodies.	
4.	5/04/01	Deadline for Response to PPs.	
		End of Stage Report.	
		Analysis of <i>PP</i> Response.	
4.		Policy Choices.	
		Reconciliation & Integration of Choices and expressed as the NSS.	
		Identification of priorities.	
4.		Recommendations on Implementation.	
	5/10/01	Final consultation.	
	5/12/01	<i>National Spatial Strategy</i> .	