



# **Communicating Geoscience**

28<sup>th</sup> February, 2014  
Conall McDevitt

STRENGTH THROUGH PARTNERSHIP

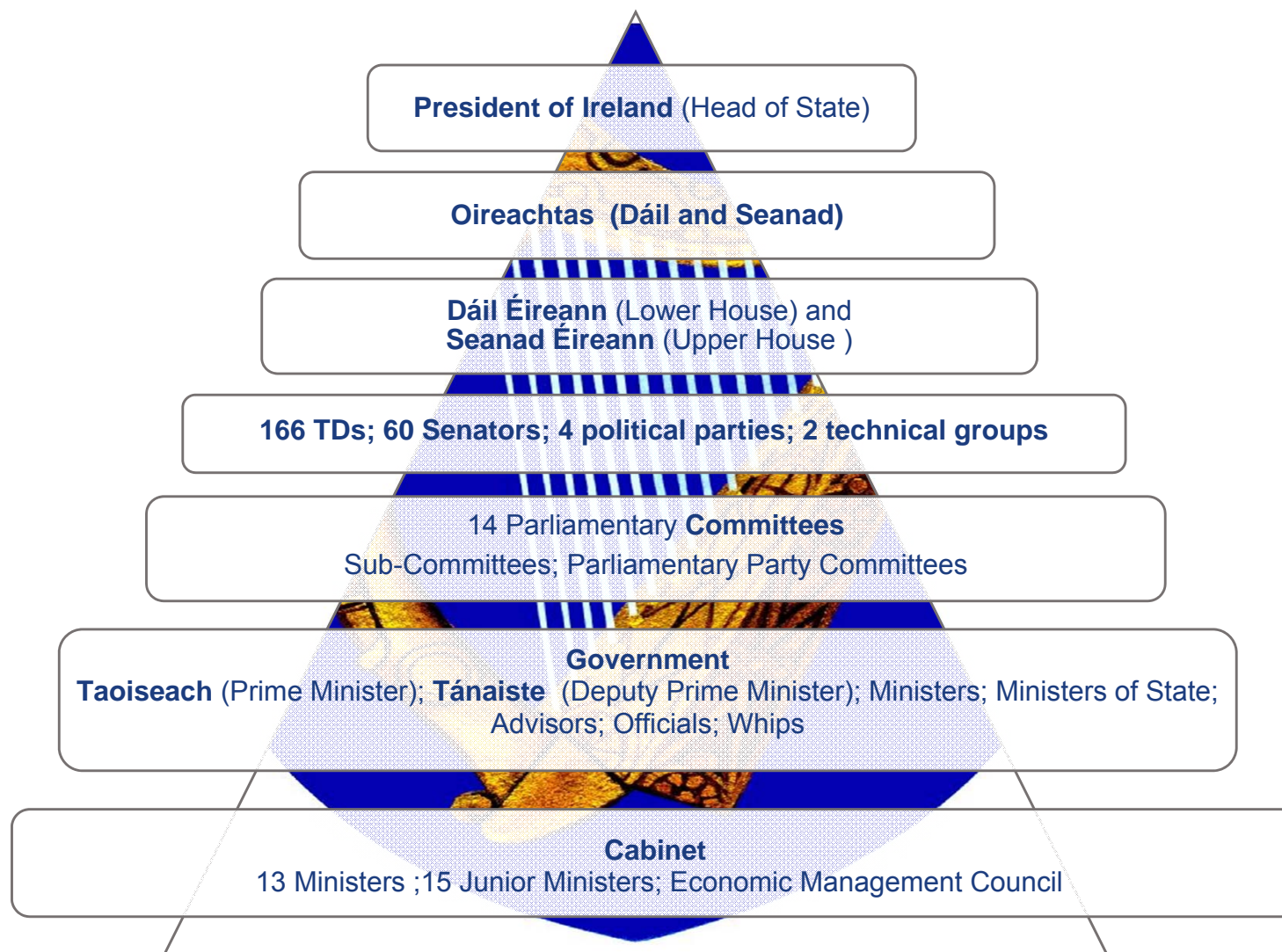


# IRISH POLITICAL LANDSCAPE

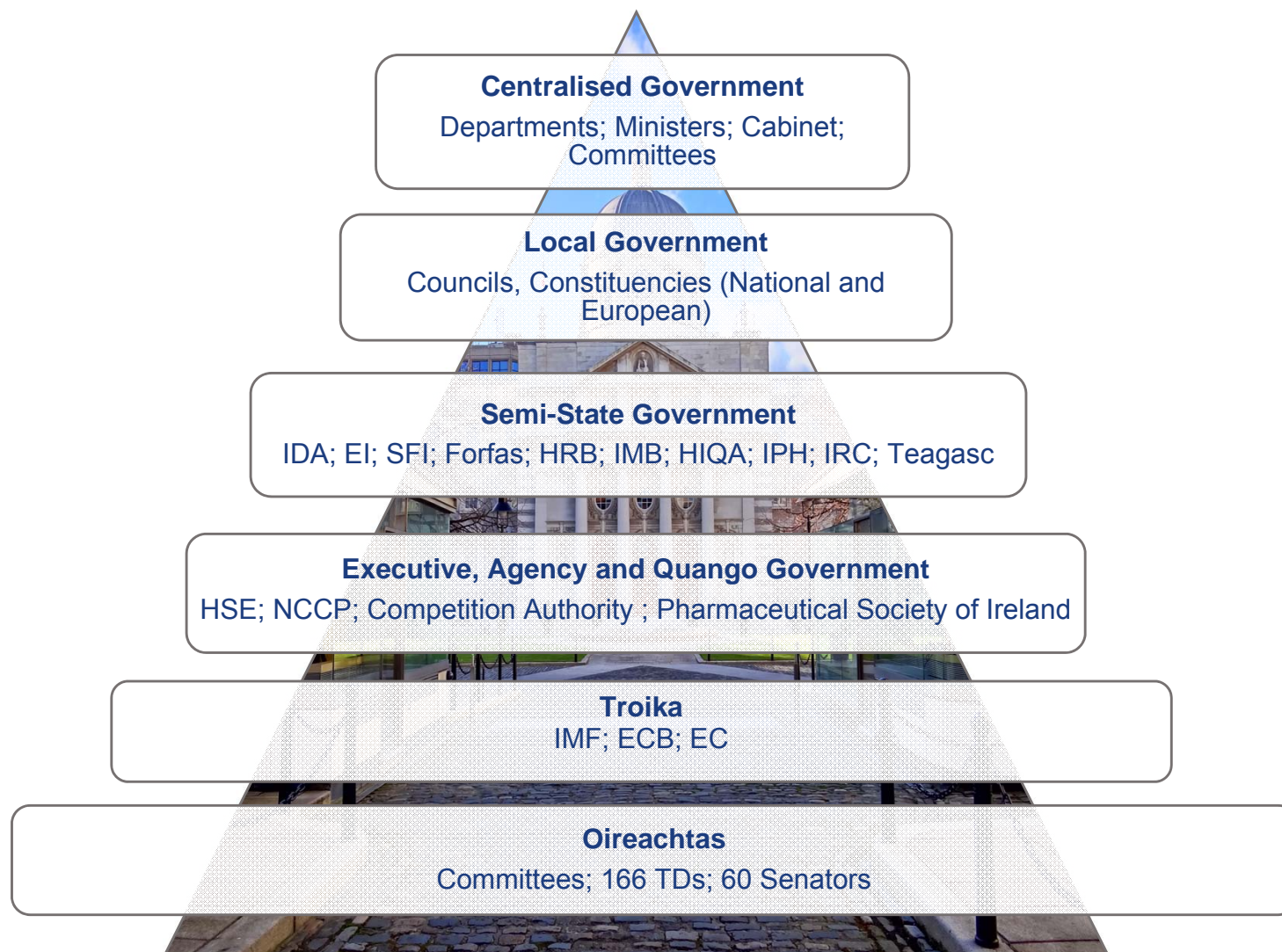




# IRISH POLITICAL STRUCTURES



# IRISH POLITICAL PLAYERS



# IRISH POLITICAL SYSTEM

- Bicameral **Parliamentary Democracy**
- Electoral system based on **Proportional Representation** through the Single Transferable Vote (STV)
- PR-STV → Often leads to a **Coalition Government**, unlike 'First Past the Post' System in Britain. No Majority Government since 1989 Election
- **General Elections** take place at least once every five years (most recent, February 2011)
- **Multi-Seat Constituencies** → Greater scope for more than just the 'heavy hitters' getting elected
- **Localised Politics** → Candidates tend to be rooted in the constituency, and champion local interests
- **Reform Programme** → Extra Dáil sitting days, fewer Committee places, fewer Committees, reform / abolition of the Seanad

# IRISH POLITICAL PARTIES / GROUPINGS

Party	Leader	Position & Ideology	Notes
<b>Fine Gael</b>	Enda Kenny	Centre-right, Christian democracy	Founded in 1933, made up of pro-Anglo-Irish Treaty groupings.
<b>Labour Party</b>	Eamon Gilmore	Centre-Left	Founded in 1912, the oldest political party and only one which pre-dates independence
<b>Fianna Fáil</b>	Micheál Martin	Centrist, Republicanism	Founded in 1926, focussing on all-Ireland activities and worked to oppose the Anglo-Irish Treaty.
<b>Sinn Féin</b>	Gerry Adams	Democratic Socialism and Republicanism	Originated in 1905, took its current form in 1970 after a split within the party. Historically seen as the political wing of IRA.
<b>Socialist Party (Part of Technical Group)</b>	Collective Leadership	Left	An all-Ireland party active since the early 1970s, previously known as Militant Labour. It became the Socialist Party in 1997.
<b>People Before Profit Alliance (Part of Technical Group)</b>	Richard Boyd-Barrett	Left	Formed in 2005, made up of the Socialist Workers Party, the Community & Workers Action Group and members of the Campaign for an Independent Left
<b>Independents (Part of Technical Group)</b>	Various	Various	In the General Election 2011 a large number of independent candidates won seats. High profile individuals such as Shane Ross form part of this bloc.
<b>Reform Alliance</b>	Various	Centre-right, socially conservative, ex-Fine Gael parliamentarians	Formed in 2013 and comprising 5 TDs (L. Creighton, T Flanagan, P Mathews, D Naughten, B Timmins) and two senators (P Bradford and F Healy Eames) expelled from FG over abortion legislation.

# WHAT DRIVES POLICY

## ○ Political Manifestos

- Fine Gael; Labour

## ○ Programme for Government

- Agreed in February 2011

## ○ Legislative programme

- 124 items of legislation on agenda across all Government departments -- of which 12 are health bills
- Most significant -- Health Service Executive (Governance) Bill 2012, Health (Amendment Bill)
- Just over 100 bills been enacted since Government came into office - 9 from Health

## ○ Health Committee and Other Departments

## ○ Europe – Council, Commission, Parliament

## ○ Troika and Bailout obligations

## ○ Unexpected Crises

## ○ The Economy

## ○ The Public / Certain Media Outlets (Joe Duffy/Ipil, NCHD Hours, etc)





# WHO DRIVES POLICY





# WHAT INFLUENCES POLICY

- October 2013: Seanad Referendum

- National referendum to decide future of the Seanad (Government is proposing abolition)

- October 2013: National Budget

- Followed by requisite legislation, most important of which is the Finance Act

- End-2013: Bailout Exit

- Ireland's November 2010 bailout scheduled to come to an end in 2013.

- January 2014: Health Service Executive (HSE) Service Plan

- Monthly / Quarterly: Central Statistics Office (CSO) and Exchequer figures published

- June 2014: Local Irish (Councillors; Mayors) and European (for MEPs) elections

- June 2014: New College of European Commissioners

- 2014: Expected Cabinet Reshuffle

- Mid-way through Government's likely lifecycle and post-Irish Presidency of EU and Budget 2014

- 2016: Likely next General Election



# INFLUENCING



# LOBBYING – WHAT IS IT?

- **Convincing someone of the merits of your argument.**
- **You will (generally) know more about the issue than they do.**
- **A largely unchanged process down the years:**
- **Key starting point: Know who exactly the decision-makers are (not everyone involved in politics is in this position!):**
  - Decision-makers
  - Gatekeepers
  - Influencers



# LOBBYING – WHAT TO DO / AVOID

- Ask before shouting;
- Emphasis positive solutions to the problem;
- Become associated with finding a solution rather than merely presenting the problem;
- Demonstrate the many ways something can be solved rather than concentrating on the ways something is wrong;
- Government is divided into three branches:
  - The Executive decides what policies happen;
  - The Legislature debates how these might be best configured;
  - The Judiciary makes decisions on the law.

# LOBBYING TACTICS

- **Correspondence**
- **Phonecalls**
- **Events**
- **Oireachtas monitoring**
- **Committees**
- **Parliamentary Questions**
- **Meetings**
- **Intelligence-gathering**



# LOBBYING – THE SET-PIECES

- **Government Departments draft ‘Heads of the Bill or Scheme of the Bill’ - circulated to other Departments for comment and brought to Cabinet for approval**
- **Department of Taoiseach (Chief Whip) issues Government legislation programme.**
- **Once Cabinet signs off, bills wait to be allocated time in the Oireachtas schedule.**
- **All bills go through five stages, in both houses, as follows:**
  - 1. Permission to publish (first stage)
  - 2. Debate stage (second stage)
  - 3. Committee stage (third stage)
  - 4. Report stage
  - 5. Final stage



# WHAT POLITICIANS WANT

## ○Partners

- ‘Go to’ contacts within their sectoral and constituency networks
- Solutions
- Entities and people that they can help - and be helped by – in a range of situations



## ○An understanding and appreciation of their limitations and operational framework

- A busy, crowded, noisy and demanding territory where people have short memories!

## ○Demystification / De-coding

- What is this device/corporation and what can it do for me/my constituents/my department

## ○Contextualisation of niche / specialist industries into the “real world”

- Grounding all activities in day-to-day applicability / Ireland’s economic recovery

## ○Constituency fora and access

- All politics is local

## ○Ownership of an issue / space / sector

- Affording them the ability to champion it in parliament/media.

# WHAT STAKEHOLDERS WANT

## ○ To know you

- What your core areas of expertise are
- What your ethos as a business is – how has this developed over the years
- Who the personalities within the organisation are – nationally and internationally, if applicable)



## ○ To have all angles considered

- Assuredness that interaction is professional, accurate and up-to-date
- Clarity on how the various parts of the business interact on a day-to-day basis
- Confidence that actions/approach are part of an implementable strategic vision
- Access to multi-faceted expertise under one roof

## ○ To be part of the process

- Certainly that they are being kept in the loop
- Opportunities for cross-pollination / collaboration
- Engagement = business!

# WHAT THE MEDIA WANTS

- BIL needs to ensure the operating environment in Ireland remains optimal and the firm's long-term presence can be assured.

- BIL needs:

- Relationships

- A sustained and trustworthy relationship both on and off the record.
    - Easy access to company experts across the entire media landscape.
    - Regular high-level meetings and briefings across the editorial spectrum.

- Information and Stories

- An on-going understanding of the Corporate environment refreshed regularly.
    - A sustained flow of stories and information for medical, business, national and local media (traditional/online), especially in regions where BIL are employers.
    - A programme that de-mystifies and decodes complex issues and developments.
    - Expertly-written material from a highly-professional communications team.

- Contextualisation

- Stories that reflect BIL's ambitions from the outset and how those ambitions are part of a more extensive 'partnership' process involving Government, the wider health arena, academia, local communities and other important stakeholders.
    - Stories that reflect the times and wider developments.

