Engineering and Maintenance Department

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The Engineering and Maintenance Unit within SCRI has a wide-ranging remit regarding site services and facilities.

The unit consists of fifteen engineering/technical posts along with six ancillary posts covering site security, stores and administration.

The unit has a reputation for providing quality work and this has resulted in its role evolving into not only one of dealing with maintenance and repairs but also managing and carrying out refurbishment projects. The unit is also involved in the installation and servicing of new equipment and undertook a large number of such projects following the provision of £2.48 million capital funding from SEERAD. It is also the policy of the Institute to allocate a significant proportion of these funds to maintain the infrastructure and basic facilities of the Institute and the unit is involved in developing, costing and implementing long-term strategies to maintain and develop the resources of the Institute.

Refurbishment projects undertaken during the year included the complete refurbishment of seven laboratory areas plus refurbishment of twelve offices. These projects were carried out mainly by our in-house staff who provided the electrical, heating, plumbing, data/telephony cabling, painting and joinery work. Where external contractors were required for other disciplines these resources were procured and thereafter managed by the Unit.

Laboratory Equipment Services form a major part of the work of the unit. Although as much as possible of this is carried out in-house the ever increasing sophistication of major pieces of equipment requires the services of external engineers. Again these resources are managed within the unit which also negotiates service contract costs and conditions.

With good quality craft and engineering skills becoming increasingly difficult to find the importance of carrying out sizeable projects using the skills base available within the unit have become ever more critical. The unit liases with the scientific staff to assess their requirements and thereafter effectively plans and manages the project through to completion.

The site continues to become more sophisticated in terms of the systems required to ensure it operates effectively and safely and the unit works closely with the Safety Co-ordinator and the Health, Safety and Welfare Committee to ensure that the Institute is able to provide a safe work place and promote safe working practices.



The on site systems that are managed and maintained by the unit include those for automatic fire detection, intruder alarm, closed circuit television, telephone exchange, door access, heating controls (including computerised glasshouse controls) and data networking throughout the site. The fire detection and alarm systems were significantly upgraded during the year as part of the continuous programme of improvement and have been linked to the new door access system to provide an enhanced control over what is a quite dispersed site.

The unit must also, through its farm workshop section, provide a repair and maintenance service to the institutes estate unit in order to keep its large fleet of farm vehicles and machinery in good order