

The .ie domain name system (DNS)
is recognised worldwide as
resilient, **secure** and **trusted**



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About .IE

.IE is an active participant in multi-stakeholder forums dedicated to protecting critical Internet infrastructure, and to protecting citizens and business from abusive use of the domain name system (DNS).

.IE is the **national registry** for .ie domain names, Ireland's official country code Top Level Domain (ccTLD) since 2000.



With .ie domains, we provide a **trusted pathway** to the Internet, helping people and businesses across Ireland to unlock the power of the Internet.



We are an Operator of Essential Services (OES) and manage a critical piece of Ireland's **technical infrastructure**.

We are dedicated to **tackling cybercrime** with established consumer protection protocols and monitoring services.



We use our **profit-for-good** and we are committed to **digital development** and **advocacy** for local towns, communities and SMEs.



We produce **fact-based research** and **data-driven reports** for the business community and policymakers.



Highlights 2023

.ie domain registrations growth and development of the .ie namespace

New registration growth was again flat for 2023. However, the growth in the database was up 6% over a three-year period, and up 25% over the five-year period.

Market share of hosted domains of 54.3% for .ie improved Vs .com share at 29%. Our ccTLD domains of '000 per capita is better than Italy, France and Spain.

Data analytics and visualisation

Continued investment in data analytics infrastructure and capabilities. Introduction of data driven decision-making tools, fuelled by the creation of multiple dashboards. Commenced DNS traffic data capture and data curation.

Cybersecurity

Developed cybersecurity scorecard and data profiles to identify entities critical for the operation of digital infrastructure in Ireland. A Netcraft monitoring service continued to notify partners and assist victims of cyber exploits on a .ie website.

Policy Advisory Committee

Through our multi-stakeholder industry advisory body (PAC), we continued our policy-related preparations for imminent EU regulations on cybersecurity (NIS2 and CER), with a focus on advocacy, awareness building and preparing impact assessments with stakeholders.

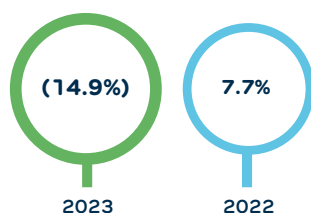
National Digital Development advocacy

We engaged with government programmes and TCF towns-focused groups to tackle the digital divides (socio-economic and urban-rural). The .IE digital readiness framework (Blueprint) was disseminated to 26 towns across Ireland, for inclusion in the town's TCF Master Plans funded by DRCD. The .IE Digital Town Awards recognised towns' digital projects and we published case study exemplars, to inspire others.

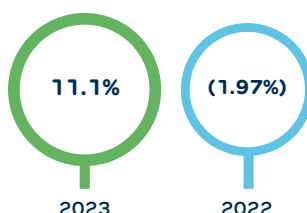
Staff Wellbeing and Talent Management

We retained Ibec's KeepWell Mark™, an evidence-based workplace wellbeing accreditation award, recognised as the business standard for health, safety and wellbeing in Ireland.

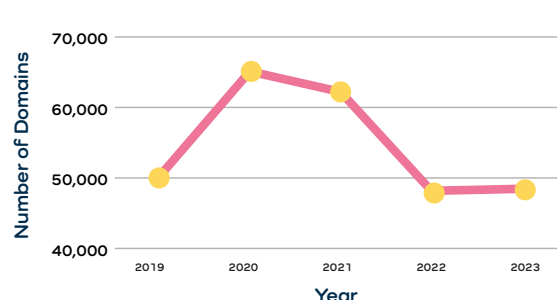
Operating profit/(loss) margin



Return on financial investment



New .ie domain registrations



Purpose and Strategic Priorities

Purpose

Our purpose is to enable and empower people, communities and businesses across Ireland to thrive online.

Vision

Our vision is that our organisation is recognised as a positive driving force in Ireland's digital economy, enabling Ireland's online community to thrive and prosper, and that the .ie domain name system (DNS) is recognised worldwide as resilient, secure and trusted.

Mission

Our mission is to elevate Ireland's digital identity by providing a trusted, resilient and accessible .ie Internet domain.

Strategic Priorities

Protect

To protect the integrity, confidentiality, availability and reliability of the registry's mission critical systems and processes.

Grow

To grow the registration base, by generating new registration growth greater than our competitors and maximise .ie renewal rates. We will incentivise, grow and develop our channel partners and we will create demand for .ie with indirect marketing and content marketing through our programmes and publications.

Create

To create a centre of expertise in three areas; providing data metrics and data visualisation; providing online self-assessment security tools; and supporting undergraduate applied research on Internet-related topics.

Develop

To develop a people-centred culture in a digital age – an inclusive working environment, where our people are fully engaged and where continuous personal and professional development is a strategic priority for all. Specifically, to develop, by 2024, new internal skill sets with an innovative mindset.

Chair's Statement

We are using our financial resources to invest in developing new sources of revenue to ensure that we have the long-term capability to fulfil our Purpose and Vision. Ensuring that the .ie namespace infrastructure is safe and secure for our Internet users and for Irish business is a critical priority for the Board.



Our Purpose is to enable and empower people, communities and businesses across Ireland to thrive online, and we assure our stakeholders of our continued commitment into the future. As we strive to achieve our strategic objectives, set out on the previous page, we are determined to elevate Ireland's digital identity by providing a trusted, resilient and accessible .ie Internet domain. In this context, as an Operator of Essential Services, designated by the Department of Communications, we are constantly improving our cyber defences and proactively building our recover capabilities.

We are a company limited by guarantee, so .IE's financial reserves are its only source of capital and it is therefore critically important that we maintain a capital base fully adequate to meet current and prospective business requirements. In recording a modest after-tax surplus of €86k (2022 – €217k) we improved our financial strength in 2023 and recorded new registrations of 48,458 (2022 – 48,168). At year end, net liquid funds were €1.2m and investments totalled €7.7m. It is these financial reserves which empowers us to invest: in setting up a new centre of expertise in data analytics; licensing the TITAN registration platform; and implementing a €1 million investment over four years in our national .IE Digital Town programme. The Company's financial position remains strong and in line with our financial objectives.

I would like to acknowledge the continued dedication and diligence of our multi-stakeholder Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) which was established eight years ago to advise the Board on policy matters. Balancing the rights, responsibilities and obligations of Internet multi-stakeholders is important to us. Representative of a broad range of stakeholders, the PAC continued in 2023 to play an important role in assisting us to respond to many new EU Directives, which brings a stricter regulatory cybersecurity environment. On behalf of the Board, I would like to thank the members for their contribution to the ongoing policy development process at the registry.

Within the Company, we are developing a people-centred culture in a digital age. To deliver on our ambitious plans set out in the Strategy 2024, it is vital that we continue to attract, nurture and retain talent. There is intense competition for talent in the digital economy, but .IE is acknowledged as a trustworthy organisation with a purpose and values which are attractive for highly motivated individuals who want to make a positive contribution to the Internet community. We are pleased to retain the KeepWell accreditation and remain among the Top 100 ranked companies Leading in Wellbeing.

Outlook

The outlook for the digital economy remains broadly positive, although there are headwinds in terms of online scams, deep fakes, and online abuse which result in lower consumer confidence and trust, particularly in certain social media platforms. These are drawing the attention of regulators across the globe. For .IE, offering high levels of infrastructure security in email and websites is more important than ever. Our challenge will be to ensure that Ireland's communities, towns and micro-businesses can leverage long-term benefits from new levels of productivity and e-commerce sales, including retaining the benefits of remote working.

While we welcome the EU regulatory focus on cybersecurity and its objective to harmonise standards across the EU, we are aware of the potential for short-term disruption and the challenges and implications of a higher cost base for our channel, and for SMEs.

We believe that our dedicated team will continue offering trustworthy, dependable, and efficient infrastructure and services, empowering the citizens and businesses of Ireland to flourish and succeed online.

Louise English

Chair

31 May 2024

Chief Executive's Report

In 2023, we certainly contributed to our mission to elevate Ireland's digital identity by providing a trusted, resilient and accessible .ie domain. During 2023, the team behind our rapidly developing centre of expertise in data analytics and data visualisation produced innovative cybersecurity risk-based tools and informative DNS data insights.



Operational losses

Operating losses of €629k for the year 2023 compared to a profit last year of €331k. The result for 2023 is predominantly explained by regulatory, compliance and policy development costs along with setup costs associated with implementing the Company's new strategic initiatives which are within the parameters of the corporate reserves management policy.

Administrative expenses increased by €865k (21.8%) from €3.98 million to €4.84 million in 2023, in line with the Company's Strategic Plan 2024 and its operational plans for 2023:

- ▶ Technical Services expenditure increased by €215k (32.7%) compared to the prior year, which reflected the ongoing costs of ISO compliance and improvements in cybersecurity defences along with preparations for EU regulatory expansion. The Company continued to provide funding for monitoring services as its policy response to technical abuse that uses the DNS. In addition, the Company made provision for cyber assistance funding to assist channel partners in enhancing their cybersecurity.
- ▶ Marketing and promotion expenditures increased by €132k (27%), largely attributed to a niche advertising campaign and general media coverage for our programmes and reports. Financial investment continued for the .IE Digital Town awards programme, as part of a four-year €1 million programme approved by the Board to help digitalisation in Ireland's towns.
- ▶ Employment costs increased by €469k (23%) in 2023 to €2.51 million reflecting: a 17% increase in the number of employees during the year; the recruitment of new skill sets to implement the Company's new strategic initiatives; increased market rates associated with staff churn; and inflation-related cost of living salary increases for all staff.

Prudent reserves management

Within the parameters of the Company's Reserves Management policy, we have Designated Funds which are set aside within reserves, to cover the Company's commitments to its multi-year programmes.

The programmes meet the Company's enterprise risk criteria. They are regularly reassessed to ensure they remain within the corporate risk appetite and risk tolerance levels, approved by the Board, and reviewed annually as part of the formal Risk Management process.

The programmes include the digital town initiative, our new centre of expertise in data analytics and our national digital development partnerships. These are closely aligned with, and support, the Government's national Digital Strategies and include addressing the digital data deficiency. The latter is essential to help national policy decision-makers to design and implement initiatives to close the digital divides – prioritising urban-rural and socio-economic divides.

The financial position of the Company at 31 December 2023 remains solid. Members' Funds (reserves) increased marginally from €5.3 million at December 2022 to €5.4 million by the end of December 2023.

Business Review

At the end of 2023, there were 328,248 .ie domains on the database. There were 48,458 new registrations in the year, a marginal increase of 0.6% on 2022 (48,168). These registrations were offset by 49,476 non-renewals/deletions which were up 1% on 2022 (49,010 domains). This combined effect means that the small net decrease of 1,018 in 2023 compares unfavourably to the net decrease in 2022 (842 domains). On a positive note, we continue to gain market share against .com with .ie at 54.3% of hosted domains – and our metric of domains per capita is respectable – as detailed on page 24.

Turnover decreased by €95k (2%) to €4.21 million (2022 – €4.31 million). The Company actively decided not to increase its prices immediately in response to surging inflation and interest rates, arising from war in Europe in 2022 and post-pandemic supply chains issues. Prices will be increased later in 2024 as domestic market conditions improve for channel partners (Chart 4).

The deferred income on the balance sheet increased by 2.2% in 2023, to €3.05 million (2022 – €2.99 million). This represents the future service obligation to provide registration service in respect of domains paid for in advance by customers.

New registrations are an indication of the digital intentions of business, individuals and entrepreneurs. Statistical agencies, including the Central Bank classify new domains as a forward economic indicator of digital activity. We commend our accredited Registrar community for their ongoing marketing and customer activities.

Contributing to national cybersecurity efforts

Again in 2023, there was a global increase in cyber-attacks, phishing and online fraud. The technical services team continues to protect the national DNS infrastructure against ongoing and new external cybersecurity threats, in particular in the face of the continuing global increase in ransomware, malware and DDoS attacks. The Company continues to make a positive contribution to the safety, security and resilience of our national critical Internet infrastructure.

The data escrow function continued to operate, whereby relevant data sets within the .ie database are extracted, encrypted and transmitted to a third-party, to be held in safekeeping and only released to appropriate authorities in the unlikely event of a catastrophic event occurring at the registry. This added layer of resilience, reliability and protection provides business continuity and peace of mind for Government, regulators and stakeholders.

EU Regulatory impact

In response to the ongoing level of cyber threats, the EU regulatory authorities have intensified their reach into the domain market, beyond data privacy into cybersecurity. The objective is harmonisation of cyber defences across Europe. It is clear that .IE will need to allocate increased resources and attention to manage the disruption and cost impact of a rapidly expanding regulatory regime, particularly with NIS2 and CER. During 2023, the substantive work of the .IE Policy Advisory Committee focused on understanding the implications of identity verification

regulations under Article 28 proposals within the NIS2 Directive, and the cybersecurity obligations of supply chain management.

During 2023, there was no substantive progress on the Company's application to ICANN for the transfer from UCD of 'ccTLD Manager' status to IE Domain Registry, which was submitted to ICANN in February 2011, accompanied by letters of support from stakeholders in the local Internet community. In order to complete the transfer request ICANN will need a letter of support from the Irish government. The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) is still considering the matter. We remain hopeful that the designation of IE Domain Registry as an Operator of Essential Services (OES) in 2019 may provide a way forward for DECC.

Outlook for 2024

New domain registrations for the first quarter of 2024 at 12,628, is down by 11% compared to the same period in 2023 (14,186 domains). This moderated .ie domain growth in early 2024 is replicated in many ccTLDs across Europe. In the context of some economic deterioration across the EU economy, leading to the expectation of lower interest rates, the prospects for future domain growth is generally uncertain.

The work of the .IE Policy Advisory Committee is continuing into 2024, focused on building *Awareness* of the new regulations, *Alignment* with the transposed legislation and *Advocacy* for stakeholder protections.

Appreciation

As we complete our Strategy 2024 cycle, I look forward to working with our Board of Directors and thank the members and the Board sub-committees in particular for their ongoing support and guidance.

I would like to express my sincerest thanks and appreciation to our dedicated staff who deserve huge credit and respect for their outstanding contribution to the continued growth of the .ie namespace, the development of our policies and services and, of paramount importance, the protection of our mission-critical systems and the DNS. We look forward to working with our industry colleagues and partners as we face the future with optimism for digital development, but cognisant of the ongoing challenges facing the sector and the economy.

David Curtin
Chief Executive

31 May 2024



Cybercrime monitoring

“.IE funds Internet security monitoring services which help innocent victims, and SMEs, who might be unaware that they have been an accessory in cyberattacks against others.”

David Curtin
Chief Executive Officer, .IE

Board of Directors

Louise English ■ ▲



Anne-Marie Eklund
Löwinder



Jonathan Bate ● ▲



Gareth Dunlop ★



Jennifer Chamberlaine ●



Dan Flinter ■ ●



Eamonn Ceannt ■ ▲
(until 9 May 2024)



Owen O'Connor ■ ▲
(until 9 May 2024)



Bob Semple
(commenced 1 May 2024)



Tim Murphy
(commenced 1 May 2024)



Biographies of all Board Members can be viewed on: www.weare.ie/people

- ▲ Audit Committee member
- Investment Committee member
- Governance, Remuneration and Nomination Committee member
- ★ Boards' nominee on the multi-stakeholder Policy Advisory Committee

A new Business Development Committee was constituted on 9 May 2024

Corporate Governance

The Board of Directors fulfils its fiduciary responsibilities in accordance with best practice Corporate Governance Codes and principles with the objective of ensuring accountability, fairness, responsiveness and transparency in the conduct of the business of the Company.

.IE is the trading name of IE Domain Registry CLG, which is an independent company limited by guarantee, defined as a small company, and is therefore not required to comply with the provisions of Corporate Governance Codes. However, the Board of Directors is committed to ensuring that best practice Corporate Governance operates throughout the Company. Accordingly, the Board has adopted and applied certain provisions of the codes beyond what would normally be regarded as practical, relevant and appropriate for a company of our size and nature.

The Company's unitary Board of Directors is comprised of eight independent Non-Executive Directors, supported by four subcommittees: the Audit Committee; the Governance, Nomination and Remuneration Committee; the Business Development Committee (from 9 May 2024) and the Investment Committee. Directors are appointed to the Board for an initial term of four years: thereafter directors can seek re-election for a subsequent term of three years.

At the end of a continuous term of seven years, directors are required to retire and re-election can only be sought after a gap period of three years. The Board of Directors meets six times per annum to consider a range of Company matters, including reviewing the management accounts, monitoring domain registration and non-renewal rates, discussing strategy and agreeing on the future direction of the Company. The Board also receives regular updates, between meetings if necessary, on a range of business matters including .ie policy, financial, legal, risk, regulatory or corporate affairs.

The Chair ensures that the Non-Executive Directors are appointed to the Board from a range of different professional backgrounds. This ensures diversity of the Board which in turn means that members can effectively reach out to a broad range of stakeholder groups. Diversity of the Board also ensures a better understanding of the different requirements of various stakeholders.

The Chair is responsible for ensuring that all Non-Executive Directors have the necessary knowledge and experience required to discharge their responsibilities. Appraisal of the Board's performance is an important control, aimed at improving effectiveness, maximising strengths and identifying any changes necessary.

ComReg commissioned an independent third-party due diligence review of the Company's Corporate Governance, as an input into the process of developing a potential Regulatory Framework for .ie (Consultation Paper 08/48). The conclusions, published in its formal Response to Consultation 09/01, were very complimentary of the high standards of Corporate Governance at the Company.

Directors' responsibilities

The Board of Directors is the custodian of the Company's values and of its long-term vision. The Board provides strategic direction and guidance for the Company.

The directors of the Company carry out their fiduciary responsibilities in accordance with the best practice Corporate Governance Codes and principles. All of the directors are independent and Non-Executive. In accordance with the Company's Constitution, the directors do not have a beneficial interest in the members' funds, reserves or the annual profits of the Company.

The directors are responsible for ensuring that the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2014 and Financial Reporting Standard 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland", known as the "relevant financial reporting framework". The directors are also responsible for taking such steps as are reasonably open to them to safeguard the assets of the Company and to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities. Other material financial decisions reserved for Board approval include financial investments, capital projects, investments in new business activities and any bank borrowing facilities.

The directors are also responsible for other tasks including monitoring the performance of the Chief Executive Officer, overseeing strategy, monitoring risks (including Cybersecurity risks and Covid-related risks), control systems and governance, monitoring the human capital aspect of the Company (specifically, succession planning, training and remuneration), managing potential conflicts of interest and ensuring that there is effective communication throughout the Company.

The terms of reference have been formalised for each Board subcommittee and these are regularly reviewed and updated. The next formal review is scheduled for mid-2024. Updates on the activities of committees during the period between AGMs (the reporting period), are provided below.

The **Audit Committee** met twice during the reporting period and on these occasions:

- ▶ Met with the external auditors in the absence of the Executive, in accordance with governance best practice.
- ▶ Confirmed that the financial reporting framework that has been applied in the preparation of the financial statements is the Companies Act 2014 and FRS 102 “The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland”, issued by the Financial Reporting Council and promulgated by the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland.
- ▶ Approved the annual report and accounts for the year to 31 December 2023 under delegated authority from the Board.
- ▶ Considered the performance of the external auditors and provided feedback to them.
- ▶ Assessed the effectiveness of the .IE control environment to ensure appropriate attention and resources are in place to achieve risk management objectives, including considering the designation of the Company as an Operator of Essential Services.
- ▶ Reported to the Board on how it has discharged its duties and key responsibilities.

Standing agenda items at each committee meeting advise of any whistleblowing concerns (none reported during the year).

The **Investment Committee** met three times during the reporting period and on these occasions:

- ▶ Issued a series of quarterly reports to the Board.
- ▶ Monitored the investment returns and portfolio performance compared to pre-selected benchmarks, using reports provided by the Investment Portfolio discretionary manager and the Company’s Investment Adviser to assess the performance of the various asset classes held within the .IE investment portfolio.
- ▶ Monitored the implementation of the updated investment strategy in the context of the Corporate Strategy 2024.

- ▶ Reviewed compliance with the corporate Investment Risk Profile, the benchmark volatility level and the desired real rates of long-term returns required on the portfolio.
- ▶ Reported to the Board on how it has discharged its duties and key responsibilities.

The **Governance, Nomination and Remuneration Committee** was established pursuant to Articles 34 and 57 of the Company’s Constitution for the purpose of monitoring, considering and reporting on matters relating to the nomination and remuneration of Directors and officers, and the governance of the Company. The committee met twice during the reporting period to fulfil its responsibilities set out in its terms of reference and on these occasions:

- ▶ Governance – advised the Board on the effective governance of the Company with the overriding objective of ensuring accountability, fairness, responsiveness and transparency in the conduct of the business of the Company.
- ▶ Nominations – considered potential candidates and issued recommendations for nominations for appointment to the Board in respect of vacancies arising. One ongoing vacancy remained in respect of a seat reserved for an official of the Department to be nominated by the Minister for Communications, in accordance with Article 4 of the Constitution.
- ▶ Remuneration – issued recommendations in relation to the remuneration of the Directors for consideration by the board and recommendation to the members of the Company at the AGM, in accordance with Article 35 of the Constitution.
- ▶ Remuneration – issued recommendations in relation to remuneration of the chief executive for consideration by the board pursuant to Article 33 of the Constitution, and monitored the remuneration policies and framework for the senior staff to ensure they support the strategic objectives, culture and values of the Company.

The **Business Development Committee** was formally established on 9 May 2024 pursuant to Articles 34 and 57 of the Company’s Constitution for the purpose of pursuing new revenue opportunities and generating profitable business revenue from within the current core business.



Equality, excellence and endeavour

“We strive to be fair, equitable and transparent, and to balance the rights and responsibilities of all stakeholders.”

Patrick Bates

*Chief Finance & Operations Officer,
and Company Secretary, .IE*

Internet Governance

Now more than ever, the Internet needs guardians, guides and stewards.

We are promoting and encouraging national Internet Governance through multi-stakeholder engagement focused on consumer protection protocols, policies and security programmes that coordinate and shape national cyberspace, in line with international best practices.

At .IE, good Internet Governance permeates throughout our strategic priorities. We seek to protect stakeholders and to adopt policies, processes and procedures that take account of the need for balance, having regard to the respective roles and responsibilities of our registrants, Registrars and Internet users.

We operate the Managed Registry model, validating .ie domain holders in advance. We check out who's behind the .ie website making it safer for business and consumers. Our locking service prevents unauthorised changes to important .ie addresses and stops web hijacking. We adopted DNSSEC for the .ie top-level domain, thereby contributing to a more secure DNS.

We have adopted a range of policies and rules to protect consumers, safeguard registrants and promote good Internet governance. You can read about our range of policies on our dedicated policy page on our website, www.weare.ie/our-policies.

We have established consumer protection protocols with regulators to address online illegality and to permit 'take-down' of websites under certain circumstances. We operate a Regulatory Authority Protocol for dealing with illegal content on .ie websites. The regulatory authorities who we engage with include the CEA (formerly ODCE), the CCPC, the Central Bank, and ComReg.

We operate Governance systems, which are transparent and professionally run to the highest standards. The quality of our financial reporting and transparency has been acknowledged by the Leinster Society of Chartered Accountants, where we were shortlisted many times in their annual awards competitions.

We introduced an easy-to-use Dispute Resolution service (ADRP) "Fair play and a fair hearing". We use independent third-party dispute resolution agencies – WIPO and EU Net Neutrals. We have proactively introduced Anti-Abuse measures, in cooperation with stakeholders (via our Policy Advisory Committee) and our Registrar channel.

RFCs compliance – IETF standards and protocols – we adhere to RFCs which document the official Internet specifications, communications protocols and procedures published by the Internet Engineering Task Force, www.ietf.org.

We regard ourselves as one of the guardians of national critical Internet infrastructure. Like all country-code registries across Europe, we are designated as an Operator of Essential Services (OES) under the NIS directive.

Our programmes are dedicated to proactively fighting malware and phishing in the .ie namespace. Protecting consumers, our customers and SMEs is of the utmost importance to us and our Registrars.

We have a 24-year track record of investing in and managing the national domain DNS infrastructure, selecting good providers to ensure that it is robust, resilient and has operated within the uptime commitment of 99.999%.

We welcome stakeholder dialogue and consensus-building through our multi-stakeholder Policy Advisory Committee.

Global coordination

ICANN's role is to oversee the huge and complex interconnected network of unique identifiers that allow computers on the Internet to find one another. ICANN, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, was formed in 1998. Headquartered in Los Angeles, California, it is a not-for-profit partnership of people from all over the world. ICANN's primary principles of operation have been described as helping preserve the operational stability of the Internet; to promote competition; to achieve broad representation of the global Internet community; and to develop policies appropriate to its mission through bottom-up, consensus-based processes.

ICANN does not control content on the Internet. It cannot stop spam and it does not deal with access to the Internet. But through its coordination role of the Internet's naming system, it does have an important impact on the expansion and evolution of the Internet.

ICANN has external as well as internal accountabilities. Externally, ICANN is an organisation incorporated under the law of the State of California in the United States, so it can be sued in court. ICANN is also a non-profit public benefit corporation and its directors are legally responsible for upholding their duties under corporate law. Internally, ICANN is accountable to the community through its bylaws, and its representative composition of the ICANN Board from across the globe.

Governments can participate in ICANN's work programme via the Government Advisory Committee (GAC). At the ICANN 52 meeting in Singapore in February 2015, the GAC welcomed Ireland as a new GAC member (along with other late arrivals such as Kazakhstan and Mauritania). Membership of this influential committee was a major milestone for Ireland Inc in 2015, as it gives Ireland a voice on trans-national Internet policy matters.

In October 2016, ICANN was freed from U.S. government oversight and on 6 January 2017, an extremely important change in the governance of the DNS took place, with the completion of the transition of the IANA stewardship to ICANN.

IANA is responsible for management of the DNS root zone. Its tasks include "evaluating requests to change the operators of country code domains, as well as day-to-day maintenance of the details of the existing operators ... and maintaining their technical and administrative details". The Root Zone Database represents the delegation details of top-level domains, including gTLDs such as .com, and country-code TLDs such as .uk. As the manager of the DNS root zone, IANA is responsible for coordinating these delegations in accordance with its **policies and procedures**.

The legislative framework in Ireland

The legislative framework in Ireland is well developed. The Communications Regulation (Amendment) Act, 2007 essentially transfers the powers previously available to the Minister for Communications under the Electronic Commerce Act, 2000 (but never exercised by him) to ComReg, with some limited but important amendments and additions.

As an input into the process of developing a potential regulatory framework for .ie, ComReg launched a public consultation process on the .ie namespace and published its formal Response to Consultation, Document 09/01. ComReg's related press release stated that:

- ▶ ComReg will, by way of regulation, appoint .IE as the authority authorised to register .ie domain names in accordance with Section 32(4) (a) of the Act of 2007.
- ▶ .IE will set up and maintain a Policy Advisory Committee representative of all stakeholders with a focus on more transparent policy development.
- ▶ .IE will continue to adopt the "managed approach" to .ie registrations to ensure continued protection for .ie domain name holders and consumers.

In this context, the Company looks forward to a continuing working relationship with ComReg.

International Internet Governance

The 18th IGF, under the overarching theme **The Internet We Want – Empowering All People**, was held in Kyoto, Japan in October 2023. The IGF was established by the United Nations following the World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS) in 2006. The UN's ten-year review concluded successfully with the adoption of the WSIS+10 Forum's Resolution on 16 December 2015. It reaffirmed three core elements of the 'Tunis compromise': **First**, it extended the IGF mandate for a further 10 years and reaffirmed its underlying architecture, meaning that Internet governance is addressed under the UN umbrella, but in a multi-stakeholder manner.

Second, it retained the roles and responsibilities of the stakeholders as outlined in the Tunis Agenda. **Third**, it maintained the element of ambiguity around an enhanced cooperation arrangement, which allows for different interpretations. While there is no negotiated outcome, the IGF informs and inspires those with policy-making power in both the public and private sectors.

The **WSIS+20 Forum** high-level event is scheduled to be held from 27 to 31 May 2024, co-organised by ITU, UNESCO, UNDP and UNCTAD and co-hosted by ITU and the Swiss Confederation, with the support of remote participation.

Policy Development

The Company mirrors the international multi-stakeholder philosophy and principles within its policy development structures and has adopted a bottom-up, consensus-driven, and consultative approach to all .ie namespace policy matters.

The Policy Advisory Committee

The Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) was established by the Company in July 2014, to provide a forum to consider and provide advice to the .ie Board of Directors on policy change requests. The PAC operates under its specific Terms of Reference and follows the published 10-step Policy Development Process (PDP). The PAC considers all policy change-requests submitted for review, and where consensus is reached for a change, it also advises on the implementation of such policy change-requests.

The members of the PAC are stakeholders with an interest in the .ie namespace and its policies. The membership includes representatives from eligible organisations. That list was extended in 2019, with the welcome addition of CyberSafeKids and IRISS (the Irish Reporting and Information Security Service), who joined the .ie accredited Registrars, the Department of Communications (DECC), Enterprise Ireland, the Small Firms Association (SFA), the Law Society, the Internet Service Providers Association of Ireland (ISPAI), the Department of Enterprise (DETE), the Irish Computer Society (ICS) and the Association of Patent and Trademark Attorneys (APTMA). Discussions with regulatory bodies or public consultations take place when these are considered useful by the PAC working group which is considering the topic.

The Committee convened on four occasions in 2023, using a mix of virtual and in-person attendance options. The PAC has maintained the strong levels of meeting attendance and engagement evident since its inaugural meeting in 2015.

This has been vital to the progression of the various policy change discussions, as has the diverse expertise, experience and knowledge of the Committee members. The commitment of the PAC in adhering to the bottom-up, consensus-driven, multi stakeholder-led PDP has been invaluable in the progression of the policy changes. Entering its tenth year of operation, the PAC will build on the achievements and milestones of previous years.

Unfortunately, 2023 was marked by tragedy with the sudden passing of PAC Member Ciarán Morris. Ciarán had served on the PAC as a Registrar Representative from 2019 and is greatly missed by his colleagues.

Major developments in 2023

In 2023, the PAC began to prepare for the upcoming transposition of the Network and Information Security Directive (NIS2) in earnest. The NIS2 Directive strengthens and harmonises cybersecurity obligations across EU Member States and was formally adopted in November 2022. It came into force in the early weeks of 2023, beginning a 21-month countdown for Member States to transpose its requirements into national law by 17 October 2024.

A dedicated PAC Working Group for NIS2 met each quarter to discuss developments and updates they had heard through their respective channels, as well as to discuss the strategic policy direction that .ie should take in response to NIS2.

The NIS2 WG developed a roadmap based on 3 strategic pillars to guide the PAC's work:

- ▶ **Alignment:** Ensuring that .ie's policies are aligned with NIS2 requirements;
- ▶ **Advocacy:** Presenting the concerns and needs of .ie Registrars to relevant policy makers; and,
- ▶ **Awareness:** Arranging information sessions and webinars, sharing analysis and impact assessments and other materials to inform Registrars.

The Policy Advisory Committee has been closely following NIS2's progression and is building awareness and advocating to insulate SMEs from adverse disruptive and costly effects of this legislation.

Besides preparing for NIS2, the PAC also continued to lead important discussions that guide .ie's approach to navigating legislation like the Digital Services Act, eEvidence Regulation, and Regulations on CIGIs – Geographical Indications for Craft and Industrial Products.

"The multi-stakeholder composition of the Policy Advisory Committee affords the possibility of making bottom-up, consensus-driven recommendations to the .ie Board on a range of key issues pertaining to Ireland's Internet Governance."

Fergal O'Byrne,
Chairman, .IE Policy Advisory Committee
IIA Internet Hall of Fame Inductee 2015

Cybersecurity: a key focus for the .ie namespace

.IE ensures the efficient and secure operation of the .ie domain with best practice security measures, including MDR, SIEM, 24x7 network monitoring, third-party risk management, MFA, restricted IP addressing, and ISO 27001 certification.

As one of the guardians of Ireland's national critical Internet infrastructure, the .ie namespace, we prioritise the protection of Irish consumers and SMEs from cyber criminals.

We have implemented several measures to ensure the safety of the .ie domain, resulting in a considerably lower level of security threats compared to other top-level domains like .com. The Badness Index for .ie, compiled by the SpamHaus Project – an international non-profit organisation tracking spam and related cyber threats – stands at 0.0%/0.00.

Pre-check applications

To maintain the integrity of the .ie domain, we pre-check new applications from individuals and businesses to confirm their connection to Ireland. This process helps prevent bad actors from registering .ie domains for illicit activities that might go undetected in unmanaged registries.

Consumer protection protocols

We have established protocols in collaboration with regulators to address online technical abuse and facilitate the takedown of .ie websites in specific circumstances. These protocols involve cooperation by our channel partners and regulatory authorities such as the Garda National Cyber Crime Bureau, among others.

Tackling technical abuse online

In our efforts to proactively respond to online abuse, we work with Netcraft, an Internet security services provider specialising in cybercrime disruption. Netcraft notifies our Registrars about websites hosting malware, phishing, or botnets, allowing the domain holders to take corrective action with the assistance of their Registrar or hosting provider. Netcraft continues to monitor the website after the fix to ensure the issue is resolved, benefiting innocent victims like SMEs who may be unaware of cyberattacks targeting them.

MDR and SIEM

.IE implements various other security measures to enhance the safety of its infrastructure and protect against cyber threats. We employ Managed Detection and Response (MDR) services to actively monitor and analyse network traffic, systems, and applications for signs of malicious activity. This, coupled with Security Information and Event Management (SIEM) solutions, allows us to collect, correlate, and analyse security event data, providing real-time monitoring, threat detection, and incident response capabilities.

Third-party risk management

As part of our comprehensive security strategy, we prioritise third-party risk management. We conduct thorough assessments, evaluate security controls, and establish contractual agreements to enforce security and data protection requirements with our vendors and service providers.

Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA)

To fortify access controls, .IE employs Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) as an additional layer of security for user accounts, both internal and external.

By requiring multiple factors such as passwords, tokens, or biometric data, MFA helps prevent unauthorised access even if credentials are compromised.

IP address restrictions

We implement IP address restrictions, allowing access to our network and systems only from trusted and authorised IP addresses. This restricted IP addressing reduces the attack surface by limiting potential entry points for malicious actors.

“.IE is designated as an Operator of Essential Services (OES) under the NIS Directive, and in this regard, reports to the National Competent Authority – the National Cybersecurity Centre (NCSC).

Mick Begley,
Chief Information Officer, .IE

Recognised globally as unique to Ireland

“A .ie domain name makes you or your company instantly recognisable as Irish; it tells the global community you are Irish, and tells the Irish community you are local.”

Oonagh McCutcheon
Chief Communications Officer, .IE



Technical excellence

We have a reputation for technical excellence, earned by always meeting or exceeding our SLA targets of 99.99% uptime for mission-critical services and applications.

High availability mission-critical systems

Operating the national registry for the .ie namespace requires the highest levels of security, stability and resilience of networks and infrastructure. Our Technical Services team manages and maintains the registry's high availability systems, mission-critical services and infrastructure in accordance with international best practices.

Managing the database of .ie domains

Our Technical Services team manages and maintains the national registry of .ie domain names. This database is the authoritative record of who has the "right to use" a particular .ie domain name. The database is updated, in real time, for changes requested by Registrars, acting on the instructions of their domain holder customers. Registrars' APIs can submit requests 24/7/365, so database uptime and resilience is of critical national importance.

Service provided

The .IE Technical Services team provides a range of services which underpin the .ie namespace, which is a critical part of Ireland's national Internet infrastructure. These services are important for every business, individual, community or government agency which uses the .ie Internet address, and include:

- ▶ Operating the national domain name system (DNS) for Ireland.
- ▶ Managing and maintaining the database of .ie domain names.
- ▶ Providing the WHOIS directory and online lookup service.
- ▶ Running the zone file update process, 12 times every day.
- ▶ Implementing and promoting Internet security and standards.
- ▶ Providing the DNSSEC infrastructure, for increased protection of domains.
- ▶ Providing a domain locking service, to protect valuable .ie brands.
- ▶ Adopting policies that proactively deal with technical abuse which uses the DNS.
- ▶ Working with partners who share our passion for cybersecurity.

World-class platform

2023 was the third full year of operation of our domain registry management platform, which we licensed and customised during 2020, in partnership with the Canadian registry. Codenamed **TITAN**, it provides our Registrars with powerful and flexible domain management tools as well as a modern, user-friendly interface. It uses the Extensible Provisioning Protocol (EPP standard) and has industry best in class functionality and flexibility. Standardisation of processes has future-proofed the core Registry platform.

It has a **Console** for Registrars, a Registry Console for .IE staff, complete with an email communications package and a data export facility for invoicing.

Deskpro has been integrated for ticket processing and provides a community hub feature for Registrars to request feature changes. These systems represent a significant financial and operational commitment by the Company to its Registrar customers.

WHOIS directory

Technical Services operates and manages the WHOIS directory, an online lookup service which provides valuable information on every .ie domain name.

This service is provided free of charge on our website, **www.weare.ie**. It is important to note that we do not show an individual's personal information, in accordance with GDPR principles and requirements. WHOIS access is controlled with daily limits and fair usage policies apply. The usefulness of the WHOIS service has been extended in the public interest, to include a contact address for reporting abuse using a .ie domain name.

Internet security and standards

We adhere to RFCs which document the official Internet specifications, communications protocols and procedures published by the **Internet Engineering Task Force** (IETF), an open international community of network designers, operators, vendors, and researchers concerned with the evolution of the Internet architecture and the smooth operation of the Internet.

Partners in keeping Ireland online

.IE works closely with key stakeholders and partners in keeping Ireland online and securely connected to the global DNS infrastructure.



National Cybersecurity Centre

The National Cybersecurity Centre (NCSC) was founded in 2011 and is an operational arm of the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC). The NCSC is responsible for advising and informing Government IT and Critical National Infrastructure providers of current threats and vulnerabilities associated with network information security. The NCSC are the designated National Competent Authority for the purposes of the EU Network and Information Security Directive (NIS).

HEAnet

HEAnet is Ireland's National Education and Research Network, providing high quality Internet services to Irish universities, Institutes of Technology and the research and educational community. HEAnet provides a high-speed national network with direct connectivity for its community to other networks in Ireland, Europe, the USA and the rest of the world. Established in 1984 to promote the interchange of information electronically within third level education, HEAnet plays a critical role in establishing Ireland as a global centre of excellence in Internet activity.

INEX

Founded in 1996, INEX is a neutral, industry-owned association that provides IP peering facilities for its 109 members. INEX's objective is to provide high-speed, reliable and resilient IP traffic exchange facilities for both Irish and international organisations, allowing them to route IP traffic efficiently thereby providing faster, more reliable and lower latency Internet access for their customers. The INEX switching centres are located in seven secure data centres in Dublin and Cork. The switches are connected by dedicated resilient fibre links.

DNS-OARC

The DNS Operations, Analysis, and Research Center (DNS-OARC) brings together key operators, implementors, and researchers on a trusted platform so they can coordinate responses to attacks and other concerns, share information and learn together. DNSOARC has five key functions: information sharing, operational characterisation, holding workshops, analysis, and providing tools and DNS services. DNS-OARC members include TLD operators, implementors such as ISC (BIND), NL NetLabs, researchers and security organisations.

RIPE Network Coordination Centre

RIPE is an independent, not-for-profit membership organisation which supports the infrastructure of the Internet through technical coordination. It is one of five RIRs that collectively serve the global Internet community. All RIRs are allocated blocks of Internet resources by the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN). These blocks are broken down into smaller blocks and allocated to members. Its most prominent activity is to act as the Regional Internet Registry (RIR) providing global Internet resources and related services (IPv4, IPv6 and AS Number resources) to members in its service region. It maintains a registry of all allocated Internet number resources in its service region, the details of which can be found in the RIPE Database. This helps to maintain a well organised and efficient Internet, and also helps safeguard the number resources in use.

ComReg

ComReg is the statutory body responsible for the regulation of the electronic communications sector and the postal sector. It is the national regulatory authority for these sectors in accordance with EU law which is subsequently transposed into Irish legislation. ComReg is responsible for promoting competition, protecting consumers and encouraging innovation. It was given regulatory responsibility for the .ie namespace in 2007 when the Oireachtas transferred powers which the Minister for Communications had previously obtained under the E-Commerce Act in 2000.

CENTR (Council of European National Top-Level Domain Registries)

CENTR is the association for exchange, dialogue and innovation of country code domain registries in Europe. The objectives of CENTR are to promote and participate in the development of high standards of Internet Country Code Top-Level Domain Registries (ccTLDs) for the benefit of its members and the Internet. The organisation has a European focus. Together with similar organisations which focus on other regions of the world, CENTR achieves its objectives through consensus building, coordination and collaboration; respecting cultural and historical variations amongst the ccTLDs and their Local Internet Communities.

Data analytics and visualisation

A consolidated team led to a productive 2023, where the Data Analytics Team, internally known as Xavier, focused on quality of data, making insights visible to internal and external stakeholders, innovating in Cybersecurity and extending the adoption of Predictive Analytics.

Data-driven decision-making

A great achievement of 2023 was the introduction of data-driven decision making fuelled by the creation of multiple dashboards, sharing visual insights of registry operations, financial data and performance indicators. The dashboards, created using Power BI and adopting a single source of truth, allow other teams in the organisation to quickly get a pulse of the core business of the organisation, leading to good and prompt decision making.

Team Xavier continued this progress and in collaboration with the Communications and Marketing Team, we implemented data-driven interventions with some of our Registrars, by early identification of potential domains at risk of non-renewal. This early warning system allowed us to provide timely, relevant analysis so that the Registrar channel can create tailored activation offers to domains that have not been in use.

Cybersecurity

Improving the adoption of security practices within the Irish Internet ecosystem remains a high priority status for our team. During 2023, our efforts included three initiatives:

1. Domain scorecard: as reported in the Annual Report 2022, we keep showcasing our methodology, tools and results to other peers and to relevant Ireland government departments and National Competent Authorities. We made improvements in quality and data availability, including attractive visual dashboards for stakeholders. With regular collection and reporting, we expect to see improvements in email security.
2. Critical Entities: at the end of 2023 we prepared a data-driven proposal to identify entities critical for the operation of digital Infrastructure in Ireland, using a risk-based approach. Our proposal aims to give better and more granular information to the Irish government when identifying entities that must be covered by NIS2 directives on critical infrastructure protection.
3. Academic Paper on phishing: at the end of 2023 our team joined forces with two other European ccTLDs to prepare and submit an academic paper, analysing detected cases of phishing observed across all three registries. As the paper is currently under review, no more details can be provided.

Visualisations

The letter “V” in the name XAVIER stands for Visualisation. Most of our efforts were focused on great visual insights for internal consumption, but at the end of 2023 the work to refresh the public-facing domain statistics started. At the time of writing, Phase 1 of that work was completed, with new graphics available at <https://weare.ie/domain-stats/>.

Predictive Analytics

In 2023, effort went into building an algorithm for website content classification into industries aligned with NACE codes and another to determine if a domain going into renewal will complete or drop the process. We are expecting to bring these models into normal operations during 2024, to provide our Registrar channel with upselling opportunities and data-driven interventions to increase renewal rates.

Reporting and publications

Team Xavier understands the value of data analysis, and this needs to be visible to others for inspiration and understanding. During 2023 we had three blog posts published covering “Domain Scorecard”, “New Patterns in Domain Registration” and “Address Accuracy within the Registry”, with the latter being a big hit in social media.

In collaborations with the Communications and Marketing Team, two signature publications were created with novel insights: the annual Domain Profile Report and the Retail Excellence Ireland (REI) Web Health Report.

Finally, our team attended international conferences such as RIPE, ICANN, DNS OARC and presented results and new ideas at industry forum such as CENTR. From these, we can draw inspiration and understanding by capturing and sharing emerging best practices in DNS management, in tackling DNS Abuse and in cybersecurity developments in our sectors.

“Our objective is to shift the needle towards better outcomes: high adoption of security features in the .ie namespace.”

Sebastian Castro, Principal Data Scientist, .IE

Insights – research and reports

The Company continues to deliver unique, valuable research with actionable insights to assist with evidence-based decision-making by national policymakers.

The Company submitted to government a pre-budget submission for Budget 2023. A key recommendation was “to address the post-Covid data deficiency”. We recommended that “A cohesive, whole-of-Government approach to data collection is essential to ensure the appropriate and effective identification, development and funding of programmes and national initiatives in 2023 and beyond.”

We reasoned that “While the National Remote Work Strategy, Our Rural Future and the Harnessing Digital strategy are critically important parts of the programme for government, their implementation may be hindered due to major gaps in our understanding of the full extent of digital transformation across the country during the two years of on/off lockdowns.”

As we develop our internal data analytics capability, we look forward to sharing empirical data and insights which contribute to a finer understanding of the digital landscape, and which measure how Ireland is thriving online. One example is our Explorer Overview dashboard, illustrated below, providing useful data

and insights on web security, and email security. Data on domains by web usage provides an overview of domain activation, a foundation for e-commerce.

.IE Domain Profile Report 2023

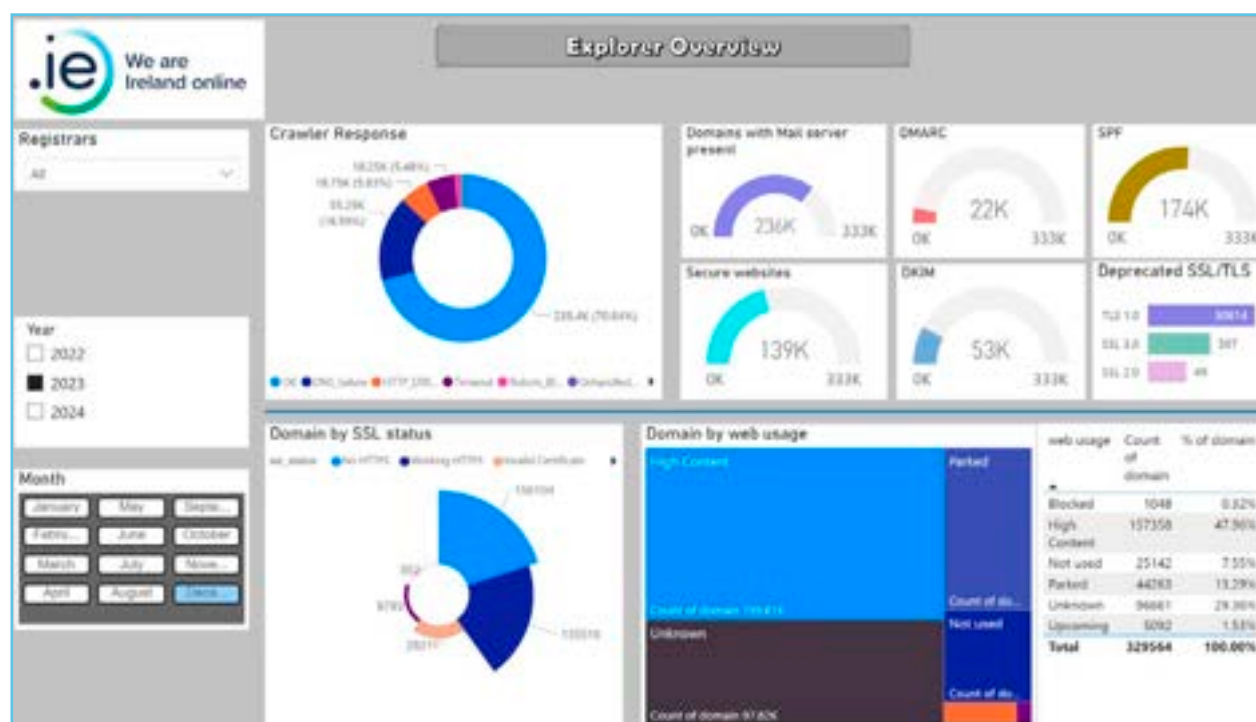
The annual .IE Domain Profile Report analyses the key trends and statistics in .ie domain registrations over time.

The 2023 edition contained a special chapter on how “EU cyber regulations may overwhelm Ireland’s regulators and service providers”, of interest to those affected by NIS2. Another chapter was “Covid period domain registrations – where are they now?”.

These reports provide insights into digital adoption and digital intent at a county level as the findings illustrate a definite narrowing of the urban-rural digital divide. This is a positive development, given that new .ie registrations are recognised as a forward economic indicator of economic growth.

Chart 2: Team Xavier’s proprietary Explorers

These generate informative and insightful dashboards which chart e-commerce activations and data indicators of web security and email security.



Growth and development of .ie

In 2023, efforts to help channel partners by creating demand for .ie domains via effective content marketing proved difficult, in the context of the sector's post-pandemic hangover.

Database growth

There were 328,248 .ie domains in the database at the end of 2023, a 0.3% decrease on 2022, reflecting registrations and renewals which were virtually unchanged compared to 2022. While this is the second year that we have seen flat growth since the end of the pandemic, the multi-year trend remains positive. By end-2023, the growth in the database was up by 6% over the three-year period since pre-pandemic 2019, and up by 25% over the five year period (Chart 3).

Chart 3: Total .ie database

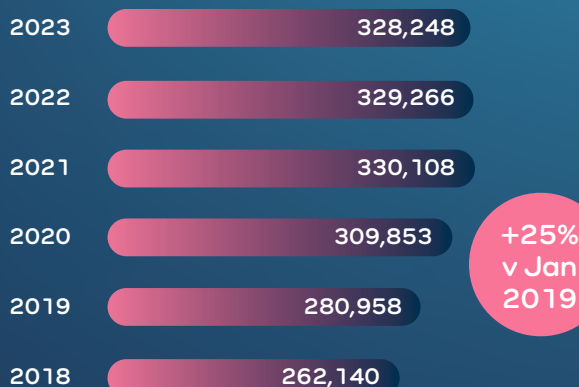


Chart 4: Registration and Renewal Fees



.ie domain activation and usage

SMEs continue to use websites as a core part of their business with the benefits far outweighing a social media 'shop front'. Interestingly, a large proportion of new registrations in 2023 came from existing .ie customers who were able to avail of our express registration process, as returning customers do not need to be re-validated.

Across the 32 counties, new .ie domain registrations in 2023 demonstrated a positive forward indicator of increased regional economic activity. Strong performers included Donegal, Waterford and Kildare who recorded increases of 35%, 17% and 13% respectively v 2022 – illustrated on page 24.

Having adopted omni-channel business models to include physical and digital strategies, the challenge now is to retain the productivity gains and other benefits from digitalisation, post-COVID. The wider context of geopolitical turmoil and local macroeconomic factors increases this challenge for SMEs as they represent additional downward pressures on profits and sales growth prospects.

Micro-SMEs digital divide – masked by EU DESI metrics

DESI metrics for Ireland can flatter to deceive, because micro-SMEs with less than 10 employees are excluded from the datasets.

.IE takes every opportunity to advocate for digital development. Micro-SMEs need assistance from government agencies to improve their digital skills. They also need financial supports to develop their websites and online sales potential. During this EU Digital Decade, Ireland has a unique opportunity to secure EU funding for this purpose.

Accredited Registrars

Accredited Registrars are an essential part of the .ie domain service delivery process.

An accredited Registrar is a company authorised to act as an agent on behalf of Registrants (customers) who need .ie websites and/or .ie email addresses. They are usually hosting providers who operate across a number of different business sectors, offering a wide range of services to their target markets. Most accredited Registrars will offer .ie domains as part of a bundle of services (hosting, email, storage, website builder, security products etc.) usually for an ongoing monthly fee. Links to many of our accredited Registrars' websites can be found on our website at www.weare.ie/accredited-registrar-list. At the end of 2023, the channel comprised 125 accredited Registrars.

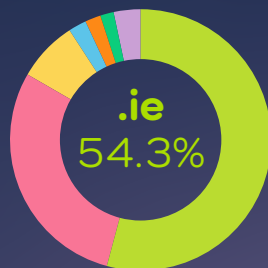


.ie – the domain of choice

The .ie domain now accounts for 54.3% of all top level domains hosted in Ireland, up 0.7 percentage point year-on-year, followed by .com (29.3%) and .uk (7.3%) – see below. It continues to be the domain-of-choice for Irish business, communities and citizens. The trustworthiness of a .ie domain is also internationally recognised by The SpamHaus Project, an international non-profit organisation that tracks spam and related cyber threats. A .ie website is a great way for Irish businesses to demonstrate their trustworthiness to customers.

Market share of Ireland's hosted domains, by top-level domain

- .com 29.3%
- .uk 7.3%
- .eu 2.3%
- .net 1.9%
- .org 1.8%
- Others 3.1%



Source: HosterStats Dec 2023

.ie is “Unique to Ireland” – an online digital identity

91% of all .ie registrations are from the Island of Ireland. The geographical analysis of the .ie database at the end of 2023 indicated that registrations were from: The Republic of Ireland – 293,136 (89%); Northern Ireland – 4,914 (2%); and international – 30,198 (9%).

As part of the .ie registration process, applicants for .ie domains in foreign countries will have provided evidence of a proven connection to Ireland and so the registered owner is always traceable, an important issue for consumers and authorities. They either have business operations and customers in Ireland or have provided evidence of another type of professional or personal connection to Ireland.

International ccTLD comparatives

There are more than 240 country code top-level domain extensions (ccTLDs) worldwide, including .ie. Compared to twenty-six other European countries, Ireland ranks 21st, with 66 country code .ie domains per 1,000 of population. Using this metric, Ireland ranks ahead of or is comparable to, European countries with larger populations, including Italy (59 .it domains per 1,000), France (58 .fr domains per 1,000), Spain (42 .es domains per 1,000). However, Ireland ranks behind several European countries

with similar populations, including Denmark (249 .dk domains) and Norway (153 .no domains). Our nearest neighbours in the UK have 166 .uk domains per 1,000 of population. Commentators attribute this to Ireland's slow start in building out early Internet infrastructure, compared to European neighbours, which had intense competition amongst Internet service providers and cable operators, which drove domain adoption during the .com boom timeframe.

Content Marketing – supporting the business community

Throughout 2023, we continued to support the business community in Ireland with a range of promotional initiatives. Our objective is to help them celebrate excellence in digital processes, e-commerce and digital marketing. Indirectly, this helps to promote the .ie domain name and to encourage Internet usage and digital development.

By providing useful, relevant and informative digital content, we continued to build and strengthen relationships with key SME and micro-enterprise representative bodies such as the Local Enterprise Offices, Retail Excellence, Digital Business Ireland, Guaranteed Irish, Hardware Association of Ireland and the All Ireland Business Foundation. By working with these representative bodies, we engage with their networks to promote the benefits of digital adoption and e-commerce.

Analysis of .ie domains by county

% difference in new .ie registrations 2023 v 2022



Donegal

Donegal recorded the largest percentage growth (+34.55%) in new .ie domain registrations compared to 2022.

Sligo

Amongst the border counties, Sligo has shown strong growth of 16.91% in .ie domain registrations 2023 vs 2022.

Westmeath

In Leinster, Westmeath leads the way with 18.72% YoY growth compared to 2022.

Monaghan

With 22.06% growth in new .ie domain registrations, 2023 vs 2022, Monaghan continues to build on its growth in 2022 (+8.4%).

Kildare

Kildare continues its strong growth of 13.14%. Kildare now makes up 5% of all .ie domains registered.

Waterford

Waterford features in the top performers with a 16.65% increase in new .ie domain registrations 2023 vs 2022.

Source: .IE Domain Profile Report 2023

Profit-for-good mandate

The Company operates a profit-for-good mandate, and one of its goals as a public benefit company is to support and serve the needs of the local Internet community.

The .IE Digital Town programme was developed to foster digital enhancement and adoption in Ireland, helping businesses, citizens and communities to harness the benefits of the Internet and to thrive online. We are committed to advancing Ireland's Internet ecosystem by working through multiple partnerships to enable this to become a reality.

The programme comprises three elements: Big Data for small towns, the .IE Digital Town Awards and the .IE Digital Town Blueprint. Two specific pillars of activity are currently underway – the Awards, and the Blueprint.

.IE Digital Town Awards 2023

The Awards promote awareness, knowledge, use and understanding of digital in Ireland by its citizens, businesses and communities. They also highlight the benefits and possibilities of digital, and celebrate the digital achievements of local towns, big and small.

Digitalisation offers the opportunity to create new ways of doing things. It promotes innovation and breathes new life into local communities, making them more attractive places to live and work, as well as contributing to a more sustainable future.



2023 was the third year of our awards and had a €100,000 prize fund. The independent judging panel selected Clonmel, Co. Tipperary as the winner of the top Award, which was presented by Sinead Bryan, Managing Director, Vodafone Business, at the Awards Gala event in Athlone, in May 2023. Case studies of the winners are here: <https://www.weare.ie/ie-digital-town-awards-winner-case-studies/> and a video of the Awards Gala is available here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LoAbQJcQUES&t=4s>

Digital Development advocacy

To help town leaders and policymakers embed their own digital town programmes and action plans in empirical data, .IE partnered with The Irish Institute of Digital Business at DCU to fully explore the concept and value of the “digital town” through a comprehensive research project. The resultant digital readiness framework is the first of its kind in Europe.

In 2022, the Department of Rural and Community Development made provision for funding a .IE Digital Town Blueprint assessment for the 26 towns selected to prepare Master Plans as part of the Town Centre First initiative. The Blueprint reports were disseminated to the 26 towns in December 2022, and formally issued in March 2023.

The Blueprint reports provide data and actionable insights for decision-makers in these towns, and others like them, as they consider digitalisation as part of their initiatives that positively impact the local economy, public services, town rejuvenation, social cohesion, and overall quality of life.

The local Internet community

The Company has provided free .ie domain names to thousands of registered charities, who have a valid CHY number issued by the Revenue Commissioners. This is done in co-operation with a number of our accredited Registrars.

Through our memberships and sponsorships of industry awards and events, the Company provides a modest level of financial support to the local Internet community. In 2023, we again sponsored the BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition, supported Cyber Ireland, IRISS, HEAnet and Digital Business Ireland, contributing to their events and committees.

Point your phone's camera here, to meet the 2023 winners on YouTube:-



Five Year Summary

Extract from the audited Financial Statements (financial figures only)

Profit and Loss	Year to 31 Dec 2023 €	Year to 31 Dec 2022 €	Year to 31 Dec 2021 €	Year to 31 Dec 2020 €	Year to 31 Dec 2019 €
Registration Revenue	4,213,117	4,307,836	4,117,918	3,773,326	3,605,404
Administration Expenses	(2,168,753)	(1,753,080)	(1,933,973)	(1,467,745)	(1,762,966)
Employment Costs	(2,505,154)	(2,036,562)	(1,672,759)	(1,842,939)	(1,631,745)
Depreciation & Amortisation	(168,285)	(187,008)	(134,946)	(130,322)	(125,897)
Operating (loss)/profit	(629,075)	331,186	376,240	332,320	84,796
Gain/(loss) on financial investment	745,471	(102,500)	213,861	87,694	193,974
Interest income	33,770	12,240	6,121	11,392	14,211
Other income	60,000	20,000	-	80,107	-
Taxation	(124,066)	(43,645)	(107,138)	(92,098)	(61,543)
Profit after taxation	86,100	217,281	489,084	419,415	231,438
Balance Sheet	At 31 Dec 2023 €	At 31 Dec 2022 €	At 31 Dec 2021 €	At 31 Dec 2020 €	At 31 Dec 2019 €
Fixed Assets	466,487	464,531	246,807	273,212	77,230
Investments	7,708,151	5,812,532	4,680,160	4,466,299	4,378,689
Current Assets	1,589,397	3,073,544	4,509,971	3,628,342	3,367,858
Creditors < 1 year, excluding Deferred Income	(1,026,162)	(1,030,340)	(1,239,185)	(893,648)	(1,099,400)
Deferred Income	(3,052,106)	(2,985,676)	(2,976,122)	(2,795,123)	(2,506,577)
Provisions/Creditors > 1 year	(328,279)	(63,203)	(167,524)	(114,059)	(72,192)
Members' Funds	5,357,488	5,271,388	5,054,107	4,565,023	4,145,608

5 Year Summary - Number of .ie domains	YoY % change	Year to 31 Dec 2023	Year to 31 Dec 2022	Year to 31 Dec 2021	Year to 31 Dec 2020	Year to 31 Dec 2019
At 1 January*		329,266	330,108	309,769*	277,831	259,815
New Registrations	0.6%	48,458	48,168	62,198	65,113	50,167
Less: Deletions/ Non-renewals	1.0%	(49,476)	(49,010)	(41,859)	(36,446)	(32,151)
Net (deletions)/additions	(20.9%)	(1,018)	(842)	20,339	28,667	18,016
At 31 December		328,248	329,266	330,108	306,498*	277,831*
Net – growth/ (reduction) in year		(0.3%)	(0.3%)	6.6%	10.3%	6.9%
New Reg – growth in year		14.7%	14.6%	20.1%	23.4%	19.3%
Deletion rate		(15.0%)	(14.9%)	(13.5%)	(13.1%)	(12.4%)

* Zone file data – adjusted in 2022 to include suspended domains and restated in 2021 for comparability purposes. The years 2020 and 2019 exclude suspended domains.

Financial Statements

For the financial year ended 31 December 2023

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Company Information

Directors

Ms. Louise English (Chair)

Mr. Jonathan Bate

Ms. Jennifer Chamberlaine

Mr. Gareth Dunlop

Ms. Anne-Marie Eklund Löwinder

Mr. Dan Flinter

Mr. Eamonn Ceannt (retired 9 May 2024)

Mr. Owen O'Connor (retired 9 May 2024)

Mr. Tim Murphy (appointed 1 May 2024)

Mr. Bob Semple (appointed 1 May 2024)

Secretary

Mr. Patrick Bates

Company Number

315315

Registered Office

4th Floor

Harbour Square

Dun Laoghaire

Co. Dublin

Auditors

Crowe Ireland

Chartered Accountants & Statutory Audit Firm

40 Mespil Road

Dublin 4

Bankers

Bank of Ireland

Montrose

Dublin 4

Solicitors

Arthur Cox

Earlsfort Centre

Earlsfort Terrace

Dublin 2

Eversheds Sutherland

One Earlsfort Centre

Earlsfort Terrace

Dublin 2

Directors' Report

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

The directors present their report and the financial statements for the financial year ended 31 December 2023.

Principal Activity

The company was incorporated on 16 November 1999 and commenced to trade on 1 July 2000. The principal activity of the company is the registry for .ie internet domain names. The company is the country code top level domain (ccTLD) Manager for the .ie namespace and is designated by the Irish government as an operator of essential services (OES).

Results and Dividends

The profit for the financial year amounted to €86,100 (2022 – €217,281), after providing for depreciation, taxation, the unrealised gains on financial investment and setup costs associated with implementing the company's new strategic initiatives, within the parameters of the corporate reserves management policy. No dividends are payable as the company is limited by guarantee and does not have a share capital.

Business Review

Administrative expenses increased by €865k (21.8%) from €3.98 million to €4.84 million in 2023, in line with the company's strategic plan and operational plans for 2024:

- ▶ Technical Services expenditure increased by €215k (32.7%) compared to the prior year, which reflected the ongoing costs of ISO compliance and improvements in cybersecurity defences and preparations for EU regulatory expansion. The company continued to provide funding for policy responses to technical abuse that uses the DNS.
- ▶ Marketing and promotion expenditures increased by €132k (27%), largely attributed to a niche advertising campaign and general media coverage for our programmes and reports. Financial investment continued for the .IE Digital Town awards programme, as part of a four-year €1 million programme to help digitalisation in Ireland's towns.
- ▶ Employment costs increased by €469k (23%) in 2023 to €2.51 million reflecting a 17% increase in the number of employees during the year, being: the recruitment of new skill sets to implement the company's new strategic initiatives; increased market rates associated with staff churn; and inflation-related cost of living salary increases for all staff.

Turnover decreased by €95k (2%) to €4.21 million (2022 – €4.31 million). Activity in domains returned to 2019 pre-pandemic levels, as digital transformation initiatives slowed following the removal in January 2022 of pandemic-related restrictions. Year-on-year new registration numbers increased by 0.6%, after record years of new registrations in 2020 and 2021. The sales channel is managed by the company's contracted accredited registrars, who are selected by individual domain holders to manage .ie domains on their behalf and provide other services such as hosting and email management. When non-renewals are considered, the net change in the number of .ie domain names registered in 2023/2022 was a reduction of 1,018 (-0.31%), compared to a net reduction of 842 in 2022/2021 and net growth of 20,339 in 2021/2020.

The deferred revenue on the balance sheet was largely unchanged, increasing by just 2.2% in 2023, to €3.05 million (2022 – €2.99 million). This is because the invoiced value of registration fees decreased by 1%, reflecting an 85% renewal rate on the opening database and an increase of 0.6% in newly created registrations to 48,458 in 2023 (compared to 48,168 in 2022).

The financial position of the company at 31 December 2023 is solid with Members' Funds of €5.4 million. The market value of financial investments at 31 December 2023 is €7.66 million (2022 – €5.76 million).

Future Developments

The company continues to monitor international developments impacting ccTLD registries, particularly: the consequences of the slowdown in the rate of new digital adoption after two years of digital acceleration brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic restrictions; new EC cybersecurity regulations which are designed to address the dramatic increase in cyber-attacks by bad actors; private equity driven consideration of service providers and; the ICANN proposals for ongoing international expansion in the number top-level domains, which may increase choice for consumers, but bring more intensive competition amongst registries. These developments may result in some disruption in the global domain name market, and will also represent a challenge for data protection managers, trademark and patents holders, brand managers and the owners of intellectual property rights.

Directors' Report (continued)

In technical terms, the company's infrastructure and portfolio of services is up-to-date, matching the top ccTLD's in the EU. Heretofore, the company has taken a national leadership role by introducing registry lock, secure DNS, secondary market, IDN's, rule relaxations for geographic and place names, and the liberalisation of rules for new .ie domains.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The company is exposed to risk and uncertainty arising from market fluctuations in its financial investments. These risks are managed by a combination of appropriate investment principles, advice from independent investment advisors and oversight by a Board subcommittee. The company's financial investments are managed by a discretionary investment fund manager, and are invested for the long-term in moderate risk funds diversified across multiple investment asset classes and geographies.

In common with other small and medium-sized enterprises, the company's performance is impacted by macro-economic growth, and the activity of the national economy, excluding the impact of FDI. The impact of new regulations remains uncertain, as the EU continues its EU Digital Decade initiatives to address cybersecurity threats, complete the Digital Single Market and implement ePrivacy initiatives. These risks continue to be managed prudently by the company.

In common with internet service providers, the company faces risks in relation to digital disruption and innovations from global internet giants, which offer new apps and free services financed by advertising revenues. The company faces risks with regard to the ever-increasing range and sophistication of cyber-attacks on internet infrastructure and businesses. The company also faces risks in relation to reliance on key computer systems and key staff. The company faces risks associated with its development of new services which may not become commercially sustainable.

The company's cybersecurity controls, active threat monitoring, business continuity plans and disaster recovery procedures address the risks associated with cyber threats, technical abuse using the DNS and reliance on key computer systems. The multi-stakeholder Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) continues to assist by providing advice and recommendations to the board on a range of policy responses for the .ie namespace. Staff training, cross-skilling and key process documentation mitigate the potential exposure arising from the loss of key staff members.

Post Balance Sheet Events

There are no material post balance sheet events.

Directors

In accordance with the Articles of Association, directors may serve a maximum of two Terms, whereby an initial term is a four-year period and a subsequent term is for a three-year period.

At the AGM in 2023, Mr Owen O'Connor retired as a director in accordance with the Articles of Association and offered himself for re-appointment in accordance with the Articles. Mr Owen O'Connor's re-appointment was approved.

Ms Louise English, Mr Eamonn Ceannt, Mr Dan Flinter, Ms Anne-Marie Eklund Löwinder, Ms Jennifer Chamberlaine, Mr Gareth Dunlop and Mr Jonathan Bate continued as directors in 2023.

Directors and their Interests

In accordance with the Articles of Association, the directors have no financial interest in the Members' Funds of the company. The company is limited by guarantee and does not have a share capital. Every member of the company undertakes to contribute to the assets of the company in the event of it being wound up. Members are liable for payment of debts and liabilities of the company contracted before ceasing to be a member, and for the costs, charges and expenses of winding up, such amount as may be required not exceeding €1.27 cash.

Directors' Responsibilities

The directors are responsible for preparing the Directors' Report and the financial statements in accordance with Irish law and regulations.

Irish company law requires the directors to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under the law, the directors have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with Companies Act 2014 and FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' issued by the Financial Reporting Council. Under company law, the directors must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the company as at the financial year end date and of the profit or loss of the company for the financial year and otherwise comply with the Companies Act 2014.

In preparing these financial statements, the directors are required to:

- ▶ select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- ▶ make judgments and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- ▶ state whether the financial statements have been prepared in accordance with applicable accounting standards, identify those standards, and note the effect and the reasons for any material departure from those standards; and
- ▶ prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the company will continue in business.

The directors are responsible for ensuring that the company keeps or causes to be kept adequate accounting records which correctly explain and record the transactions of the company, enable at any time the assets, liabilities, financial position and profit or loss of the company to be determined with reasonable accuracy, enable them to ensure that the financial statements and directors' report comply with the Companies Act 2014 and enable the financial statements to be audited. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The directors are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the company's website. Legislation in Ireland governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Accounting records

The measures taken by the directors to ensure compliance with the requirements of Sections 281 to 285 of the Companies Act 2014, with regard to the keeping of proper accounting records, are the employment of appropriately qualified accounting personnel and the maintenance of computerised accounting systems. The company's accounting records are maintained at the company's registered office at 4th Floor, Harbour Square, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin.

Statement on relevant audit information

In the case of each of the persons who are directors at the time this report is approved in accordance with Section 332 of Companies Act 2014:

- (a) So far as each director is aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the company's statutory auditors are unaware, and
- (b) Each director has taken all the steps that he or she ought to have taken as a director in order to make himself or herself aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the company's statutory auditors are aware of that information.

Auditors

Crowe Ireland have been appointed as auditors to fill a casual vacancy, being eligible, will be proposed for reappointment in accordance with Section 383(2) of the Companies Act 2014.

Signed on behalf of the Board

Director

Ms. Louise English

Director

Mr. Jonathan Bate

Date

9 May 2024

Independent Auditor's Report to the Members of IE Domain Registry CLG

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of IE Domain Registry CLG ("the Company"), which comprise the Statement of income and retained earnings, the Statement of financial position, Statement of cash flows for the financial year ended 31 December 2023, and the related notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies.

The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation of the financial statements is Irish law and FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and the Republic of Ireland' (Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland).

In our opinion, IE Domain Registry CLG's financial statements:

- ▶ give a true and fair view in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland of the assets, liabilities and financial position of the Company as at 31 December 2023 and of its financial performance and cash flows for the financial year then ended; and
- ▶ have been properly prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (Ireland) ("ISAs (Ireland)") and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the 'Responsibilities of the auditor for the audit of the financial statements' section of our report. We are independent of the Company in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of financial statements in Ireland, including the Ethical Standard for Auditors (Ireland) issued by the Irish Auditing and Accountancy Supervisory Authority ("IAASA"), and the ethical pronouncements established by Chartered Accountants Ireland, applied as determined to be appropriate in the circumstances for the Company. We have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the director's use of going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the Company's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from the date when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the directors with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

Other information comprises information included in the Annual Report, other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon, including the Directors' Report. The directors are responsible for the other information. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies in the financial statements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Matters on which we are required to report by the Companies Act 2014

- ▶ We have obtained all the information and explanations which we consider necessary for the purposes of our audit.
- ▶ In our opinion the accounting records of the Company were sufficient to permit the financial statements to be readily and properly audited.
- ▶ The financial statements are in agreement with the accounting records.
- ▶ In our opinion the information given in the Directors' Report is consistent with the financial statements. Based solely on the work undertaken in the course of our audit, in our opinion, the Directors' Report has been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2014.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

Based on our knowledge and understanding of the Company and its environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the Directors' Report.

Under the Companies Act 2014, we are required to report to you if, in our opinion, the disclosures of directors' remuneration and transactions specified by sections 305 to 312 of the Act have not been made. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of the management and those charged with governance for the financial statements

As explained more fully in the Directors' responsibilities statement, management is responsible for the preparation of the financial statements which give a true and fair view in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice in Ireland, including FRS102, and for such internal control as they determine necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the Company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the management either intends to liquidate the company or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the Company's financial reporting process.

Responsibilities of the auditor for the audit of the financial statements

The auditor's objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an Auditor's Report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs (Ireland) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs (Ireland), the auditor will exercise professional judgment and maintain professional scepticism throughout the audit. They will also:

- ▶ Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion. The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collusion, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- ▶ Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion of the effectiveness of the Company's internal control.

Independent Auditor's Report (continued)

- ▶ Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- ▶ Conclude on the appropriateness of management's use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the Company's ability to continue as a going concern. If they conclude that a material uncertainty exists, they are required to draw attention in the Auditor's Report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify their opinion. Their conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of the Auditor's Report. However, future events or conditions may cause the Company to cease to continue as a going concern.
- ▶ Evaluate the overall presentation, structure and content of the financial statements, including the disclosures, and whether the financial statements represent the underlying transactions and events in a manner that achieves a true and fair view.

The auditor shall communicate with those charged with governance regarding, among other matters, the planned scope and timing of the audit and significant audit findings, including any significant deficiencies in internal control that may be identified during the audit.

The purpose of our audit work and to whom we owe our responsibilities

This report is made solely to the Company's members as a body, in accordance with section 391 of the Companies Act 2014. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the Company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an Auditor's Report and for no other purpose.

To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the Company and the Company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Christopher Magill, FCA

for and on behalf of
Crowe
Chartered Accountants & Statutory Audit Firm
Dublin 4

Date

17 May 2024

Statement of Income and Retained Earnings

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

	Notes	Continuing Operations	
		2023 €	2022 €
Turnover	3	4,213,117	4,307,836
Administrative expenses		(4,842,192)	(3,976,650)
Operating (loss)/profit	4	(629,075)	331,186
Gain/(loss) on financial investment	11	745,471	(102,500)
Investment income	7	33,770	12,240
Other income		60,000	20,000
Profit on ordinary activities before taxation		210,166	260,926
Tax on profit on ordinary activities	8	(124,066)	(43,645)
Profit retained for the financial year		86,100	217,281
Statement of income and retained earnings			
Accumulated profit brought forward		5,271,388	5,054,107
Total recognised gains relating to the year		86,100	217,281
Accumulated profit carried forward		5,357,488	5,271,388

Statement of Financial Position

as at 31 December 2023

	Notes	2023 €	2022 €
Fixed Assets			
Intangible assets	9	35,111	70,221
Tangible assets	10	431,376	394,310
Financial assets	11	7,708,151	5,812,532
		8,174,638	6,277,063
Current Assets			
Debtors	12	380,942	297,550
Cash at bank and in hand	13	1,208,455	2,775,994
		1,589,397	3,073,544
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	14	(4,078,268)	(4,016,016)
Net Current (Liabilities)		(2,488,871)	(942,472)
Provisions for liabilities	15	(328,279)	(63,203)
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		5,357,488	5,271,388
Capital and Reserves			
Profit and loss account		5,357,488	5,271,388
Members' Funds		5,357,488	5,271,388

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 9 May 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Director
Ms. Louise English

Director
Mr. Jonathan Bate

Statement of Cash Flows

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

	Notes	2023 €	2022 €
Cash flows from operating activities			
Profit for the financial year		86,100	217,281
Adjustments for:			
Amortisation of intangible assets		35,110	35,110
Depreciation of tangible assets		133,175	151,898
(Gain)/Loss on financial investment		(745,471)	102,500
Investment income		(33,770)	(12,240)
Tax on operating activities		124,066	43,645
Increase in debtors		(25,262)	(62,980)
Increase/(Decrease) in creditors		262,277	(235,585)
Corporation tax paid		(117,145)	(127,955)
Net cash (outflow)/inflow from operating activities		(280,920)	111,674
Cash flows from investing activities			
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	10	(170,241)	(404,732)
Purchase (net) of financial assets	11(a)	(1,150,148)	(1,234,872)
Investment income received		33,770	12,240
Net cash used in investing activities		(1,286,619)	(1,627,364)
Cash flows from financing activities			
Net cash from financing activities		-	-
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents	13	(1,567,539)	(1,515,690)
Cash at beginning of year		2,775,994	4,291,684
Cash at end of year		1,208,455	2,775,994
Cash at bank	13	1,208,455	2,775,994

Notes to the Financial Statements

for the financial year ended 31 December 2023

1. General Information

These financial statements comprising the Statement of Income and Retained Earnings, the Statement of Financial Position, the Statement of Cash Flows and the related notes 1 to 24 constitute the individual financial statements of IE Domain Registry CLG for the financial year ended 31 December 2023.

IE Domain Registry CLG is a company limited by guarantee, under registration number 315315 and does not have a share capital (registered under Part 2 of Companies Act 2014), incorporated in the Republic of Ireland. The Registered Office is 4th Floor, Harbour Square, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin, which is also the principal place of business of the company. The nature of the company's operations and its principal activities are set out in the Director's Report on pages 29 to 31.

1.1 Statement of Compliance

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" ("FRS 102") and Irish statute comprising of the Companies Act 2014.

The preparation of financial statements in compliance with FRS 102 requires the use of certain critical accounting estimates. It also requires management to exercise judgment in applying the Company's accounting policies (see note 2.10).

1.2 Currency

The financial statements have been presented in Euro (€) which is also the functional currency of the company.

2. Accounting Policies

2.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared on the going concern basis and in accordance with the historical cost convention modified to include certain items at fair value. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is the Companies Act 2014 and FRS 102 'The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland' issued by the Financial Reporting Council.

2.2 Consolidation

The company and its subsidiary combined meet the exemption criteria for a group and the company is therefore exempt from the requirement to prepare consolidated financial statements by virtue of Section 297 of the Companies Act 2014. Consequently, these financial statements deal with the results of the company as a single entity.

2.3 Turnover

Turnover represents the total invoice value, excluding value added tax and rebates, of sales for the financial year ended 31 December 2023. The Company's policy of deferring revenue results in income being recorded in the period to which the fee invoice relates, rather than the period in which the fee invoice was raised. This policy has been maintained during the year ended 31 December 2023.

2.4 Intangible assets and amortisation

Intangible assets are initially recognised at cost. After recognition, under the cost model, intangible assets are measured at cost less any accumulated amortisation and any accumulated impairment losses. All intangible assets are considered to have a finite useful life. If a reliable estimate of the useful life cannot be made, the useful life shall not exceed ten years.

Amortisation is provided on the following basis:

Computer software – 20% Straight Line

2.5 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Tangible fixed assets are stated at cost less accumulated depreciation. The charge for depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life from date of acquisition as follows:

Leasehold Improvements	- over the life of the underlying lease
Fixtures and Fittings	- 25% Straight Line
Computer Equipment	- 33% Straight Line
Company Vehicles	- 20% Straight Line

The carrying values of tangible fixed assets are reviewed annually for impairment if events or changes in circumstances indicate the carrying value may not be recoverable.

2.6 Pensions

The pension costs charged in the financial statements represent the contributions payable by the Company during the year to a defined contribution pension scheme for the benefit of all eligible employees. The Company is compliant with the IORP II Directive which was transposed into Irish Law on 28 April 2021

2.7 Taxation

Tax is recognised in profit or loss except that a charge attributable to an item of income and expense recognised as other comprehensive income or to an item recognised directly in equity is also recognised in other comprehensive income or directly in equity respectively.

The current income tax charge is calculated on the basis of tax rates and laws that have been enacted or substantively enacted by the balance sheet date in the countries where the Company operates and generates income.

Deferred tax balances are recognised in respect of all timing differences that have originated but not reversed by the Balance Sheet date, except that:

- ▶ The recognition of deferred tax assets is limited to the extent that it is probable that they will be recovered against the reversal of deferred tax liabilities or other future taxable profits; and
- ▶ Any deferred tax balances are reversed if and when all conditions for retaining associated tax allowances have been met.

Deferred tax balances are not recognised in respect of permanent differences except in respect of business combinations, when deferred tax is recognised on the differences between the fair values of assets acquired and the future tax deductions available for them and the difference between the fair values of liabilities acquired and the amount that will be assessed for tax.

Deferred tax is determined using tax rates and laws that have been enacted or substantively enacted by the balance sheet date.

2.8 Provisions

Provisions are recognised when the company has a present legal or constructive obligation as a result of past events; it is probable that an outflow of resources will be required to settle the obligation; and the amount of the obligation can be estimated reliably.

Where there are a number of similar obligations, the likelihood that an outflow will be required in settlement is determined by considering the class of obligations as a whole. A provision is recognised even if the likelihood of an outflow with respect to any one item included in the same class of obligations may be small.

Provisions are measured at the present value of the expenditures expected to be required to settle the obligation.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

2.9 Financial Instruments

Unlisted Investments

The company's directly held investments in the shares of its unlisted subsidiary undertakings are stated at the lower of cost and net realisable value. The company may indirectly hold unlisted investments through its financial investments in managed funds. It is considered by the directors that the fair value of these shares can be measured reliably. The accounting policy is to record investments at mark to market prices.

Listed Investments

Investments in listed company shares are remeasured to market value at each reporting date. Gains and losses on remeasurement are recognised in the Statement of Income and Retained Earnings for the period.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash consists of cash on hand, securities in German Bills and demand deposits. Cash equivalents consist of short-term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to known amounts of cash that are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value.

Other financial assets

Other financial assets are recorded at mark to market prices. Other financial assets include trade debtors for services sold to customers on short-term credit, which are initially measured at the undiscounted amount of cash receivable from that customer, which is normally the invoice price, and are subsequently measured at amortised cost less impairment, where there is objective evidence of an impairment.

Other financial liabilities

Trade creditors are measured at invoice price, unless payment is deferred beyond normal business terms or is financed at a rate of interest that is not a market rate. In this case the arrangement constitutes a financing transaction, and the financial liability is measured at the present value of the future payments discounted at a market rate of interest for a similar debt instrument.

Impairment of financial assets

At the end of each reporting period, the company assesses whether there is objective evidence of impairment of any financial assets that are measured at cost or amortised cost, including unlisted investments, loans, trade debtors and cash. If there is objective evidence of impairment, impairment losses are recognised in the Statement of Income and Retained Earnings in that financial year.

2.10 Judgments and key sources of estimation uncertainty

The directors consider the accounting estimates and assumptions below to be its critical accounting estimates and judgements:

Going Concern

The directors have prepared budgets and cash flows for a period of at least twelve months from the date of the approval of the financial statements which demonstrate that there is no material uncertainty regarding the company's ability to meet its liabilities as they fall due, and to continue as a going concern. On this basis the directors consider it appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis. Accordingly, these financial statements do not include any adjustments to the carrying amounts and classification of assets and liabilities that may arise if the company was unable to continue as a going concern.

Useful Lives of Tangible and Intangible Fixed Assets

Long-lived assets comprising primarily of property, plant and machinery and intangible assets do not represent a significant portion of total assets. The annual depreciation and amortisation charge depends primarily on the estimated lives of each type of asset and, in certain circumstances, estimates of residual values. The directors regularly review these useful lives and change them if necessary to reflect current conditions. In determining these useful lives management consider technological change, patterns of consumption, physical condition and expected economic utilisation of the assets. Changes in the useful lives can have a significant impact on the depreciation and amortisation charge for the financial year. The net book value of tangible Fixed Assets subject to depreciation at the financial year end date was €431,376 (2022 – €394,310). The net book value of intangible assets subject to amortisation at the financial year end date was €35,111 (2022 – €70,221).

3. Turnover

	2023 €	2022 €
Turnover	4,213,117	4,307,836
Analysis of turnover by country of destination:		
Republic of Ireland	3,755,346	3,873,518
Europe	208,747	195,196
North America	171,497	165,655
United Kingdom	64,313	60,922
Rest of the World	13,214	12,545
	4,213,117	4,307,836

4. Operating profit

	2023 €	2022 €
The operating profit is arrived at after charging:		
Amortisation	35,110	35,110
Depreciation	133,175	151,898
Auditors' remuneration		
- Audit	20,500	15,200
- Tax advisory services	2,150	10,445
Directors' remuneration	112,500	112,500
Pension costs	84,109	80,833
Operating lease charges	163,076	163,076

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

5. Remuneration

5(a). Directors' and key management remuneration

Included in employment costs are the following in respect of directors and key management personnel of the company:

	2023 €	2022 €
Emoluments in respect of qualifying services	784,489	751,014
Company contributions in respect of qualifying services to Pension Scheme Fund, a defined contribution retirement scheme	46,284	44,699
	830,773	795,713

The number of management to whom retirement benefits are accruing under Pension Scheme Fund in respect of qualifying services is 4 (2022 – 4). Other than as shown above any further required disclosures in sections 305 and 306 of the Companies Act 2014 are €Nil for both financial years.

5(b). Transactions with directors and officers

Loans to directors

There were no loans made to directors during the financial year.

5(c). Material interests of directors in contracts with the company

Nothing was outstanding at the financial year end date or the previous financial year end date.

5(d). Total remuneration costs (including directors and key management)

	2023 €	2022 €
Employment costs		
Wages and salaries	2,031,787	1,677,694
Social security costs	216,983	166,888
Other pension costs	84,109	80,833
Other compensation costs	30,600	-
Contractor costs	141,675	111,147
	2,505,154	2,036,562

5(e). Employees

Number of employees (excluding directors)

The average monthly numbers of employees during the year were:

	2023 Number	2022 Number
Administration	26	24

6. Pension costs

The company operates a defined contribution pension scheme for the benefit of all eligible employees. The assets of the scheme are vested in independent trustees for the sole benefit of those eligible employees. The other pension costs charge represents contributions payable by the company to the fund and amounted to €84,109 (2022 – €80,833).

7. Investment income, other interest receivable and similar income

	2023 €	2022 €
Dividends from listed investments	20,898	7,570
Investments interest receivable	12,668	4,568
Bank interest receivable	204	102
	33,770	12,240

8. Taxation

8(a). Current year taxation

	2023 €	2022 €
Current year taxation		
Corporation tax on the profit for the year on ordinary activities	(59,777)	56,924
Capital taxes arising on realised investment gains	6,611	170,528
Adjustment in respect of prior year	(4,127)	-
Deferred taxation		
Origination/(Reversal) of timing differences	181,359	(183,807)
	124,066	43,645

8(b). Factors affecting tax charge for year

	2023 €	2022 €
Profit on ordinary activities before tax	210,166	260,926
Profit on ordinary activities multiplied by standard rate of Corporation Tax in Ireland of 12.5%	26,271	32,616
<i>Effects of:</i>		
Capital allowances for period greater than depreciation	3,404	679
Income at higher rates of taxation	10,083	173,980
Expenses not allowable for tax purposes	5,410	58,524
Movement in financial investment valuation unrealised – so not chargeable for tax purposes	(90,680)	8,142
Income tax withheld	(7,654)	1,766
Income not taxable	-	(48,255)
Adjustment in respect of prior year	(4,127)	-
Origination/(Reversal) of timing differences	181,359	(183,807)
Current tax charge for year (Note 8(a))	124,066	43,645

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

9. Intangible assets

	Computer software €
Cost:	
At 1 January 2023	175,552
Additions	-
At 31 December 2023	175,552
Amortisation:	
At 1 January 2023	105,331
Charge for the year	35,110
At 31 December 2023	140,441
Net book values	
At 31 December 2023	35,111
At 1 January 2023	70,221

Amortisation of intangible fixed assets is included in administrative expenses. The accounting policy for the amortisation of intangible assets is outlined in Note 2.4.

10. Tangible assets

	Leasehold Improvements €	Computer Equipment €	Fixtures and Fittings €	Company Vehicles €	Total €
Cost:					
At 1 January 2023	309,400	1,022,660	103,247	49,394	1,484,701
Additions	-	158,503	11,738	-	170,241
Write-out of retired assets	-	(17,553)	(9,834)	-	(27,387)
At 31 December 2023	309,400	1,163,610	105,151	49,394	1,627,555
Depreciation:					
At 1 January 2023	82,243	938,081	40,430	29,637	1,090,391
Charge for the year	28,888	71,407	23,001	9,879	133,175
Write-out of retired assets	-	(17,553)	(9,834)	-	(27,387)
At 31 December 2023	111,131	991,935	53,597	39,516	1,196,179
Net book values					
At 31 December 2023	198,269	171,675	51,554	9,878	431,376
At 1 January 2023	227,157	84,579	62,817	19,757	394,310

The accounting policy for the depreciation of tangible assets is outlined in Note 2.5. There are no assets held under finance leases or hire purchase contracts at 31 December 2023 (2022 – €Nil).

11. Financial assets

		2023	2022
	Note	€	€
Financial Investments at fair value to profit or loss	(a)	7,658,051	5,762,432
Shares in subsidiary undertakings	(b)	50,100	50,100
		<u>7,708,151</u>	<u>5,812,532</u>

11(a). Financial investments

	Note	Unlisted 2023 €	Unlisted 2022 €
At 1 January 2023			
Fair value		5,762,432	
Realised accounting gain on financial investments	(c)	20,032	
Unrealised gains arising in 2023		725,439	
		<u>745,471</u>	
Sales of financial assets during the year		(1,400,581)	
Purchases of financial assets during the year		2,550,729	
Net purchase of financial asset		<u>1,150,148</u>	
At 31 December 2023		<u>7,658,051</u>	
Mark to Market Value:			
At 31 December 2023		7,658,051	
At 31 December 2022		5,762,432	
	Note		Unlisted 2022 €
At 1 January 2022			
Fair value			4,630,060
Realised accounting loss on financial investments	(c)		(37,368)
Unrealised losses arising in 2022			(65,132)
At 31 December 2021			<u>(102,500)</u>
Net sale of financial asset			(4,592,692)
Net purchase of financial asset			5,827,564
			<u>1,234,872</u>
At 31 December 2022			<u>5,762,432</u>
Mark to Market Value:			
At 31 December 2022			5,762,432
At 31 December 2021			4,630,060

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

Other financial investments represent the investment for the long-term in conservative managed funds, diversified across multiple investment managers.

The market value of the financial investments at 31 December 2023 was €7,658,051 (2022 – €5,762,432). In accordance with the accounting policy for other financial investments outlined in Note 2.9 the value of other financial investments is recorded at the market value.

In 2022, the Board approved a series of recommendations from the Investment Committee. These included the transfer of €7 million into a new fund to be managed by a Discretionary Manager, comprised of the proceeds from the disposal of the previous investment funds and amounts previously held on Deposit. By 31 December 2022, €5.83 million had been transferred for investment by the new Discretionary Manager. The remaining €1.17 million was transferred for investment in March 2023.

11(b). Shares in subsidiary undertakings

The company holds 100% of the share capital of the following company:

Name of subsidiary	Country of Registration or incorporation	Shares held class	Principal Activity
IENUM Limited	Ireland	Ordinary and Preference	ENUM Registry

IENUM Limited is an Irish registered company with a registered office at 4th Floor, Harbour Square, Dun Laoghaire, Co. Dublin. The aggregate amount of capital and reserves and the results of this undertaking for the year ended 31 December 2023 were as follows:

	Capital and Reserves	Result for the year
	€	€
IENUM Limited	50,100	Nil

11(c). Gains/(Losses) on Financial Investments

	2023 €
Realised gain on sale of other financial investments	20,032
	20,032
	Unlisted 2022 €
Realised gain on sale of financial investments during the year	637,915
Release of 1 January accumulated unrealised gains on disposals in 2022	(676,345)
Net realised accounting loss on sale of financial investments	(38,430)
Realised gain on sale of other financial investments	1,062
Total realised accounting loss on financial investments	(37,368)

12. Debtors: amounts falling due within one year

	Note	2023 €	2022 €
Prepayments and accrued income		312,779	281,267
Corporation Tax recoverable		68,163	-
Deferred Tax	15	-	16,283
		380,942	297,550

13. Analysis of changes in cash at bank

	Opening balance €	Cash flow €	Closing balance €
Current accounts	655,574	(51,132)	604,442
Deposit accounts	2,120,420	(1,516,407)	604,013
Cash at bank	2,775,994	(1,567,539)	1,208,455

14. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Note	2023 €	2022 €
Trade creditors	(a)	194,444	90,466
Customer advance deposits accounts		505,670	499,847
Other creditors		27,849	26,833
Corporation tax payable		-	107,708
Other taxes and social security costs		20,162	2,405
Accruals	(b)	278,037	303,081
Deferred income	(c)	3,052,106	2,985,676
		4,078,268	4,016,016
Other taxes and social security costs include:		€	€
VAT		20,162	2,405
		20,162	2,405

14(a). The payment terms of trade creditors vary between on demand and ninety days. No interest is payable on trade creditors. Tax and social insurance are subject to the terms of the relevant legislation. Interest accrues on late payment at the rate of 0.0219% for each day or part of a day for which payment is overdue. No interest was due at the financial year end date.

14(b). The terms of the accruals are based on the underlying contracts. Other amounts included within creditors not covered by specific note disclosures are unsecured, interest free and repayable on demand.

14(c). The accounting policy for deferred income is outlined in Note 2.3.

Notes to the Financial Statements (continued)

15. Provisions for liabilities

	Other provisions €	Deferred Tax €	Total €
At 1 January 2023	63,203	(16,283)	46,920
Utilised during the year	-	-	-
Charged in the year	100,000	181,359	281,359
At 31 December 2023	163,203	165,076	328,279

	Other provisions €	Deferred Tax €	Total €
At 1 January 2022	63,203	167,524	230,727
Utilised during the year	-	-	-
Charged in the year	-	(183,807)	(183,807)
At 31 December 2022	63,203	(16,283)	46,920

15(a). The deferred tax charge/(credit) relates to the origination/(reversal) of timing differences that arise between the recognition of unrealised gains and losses between the cost and MTM valuation of investments during the year.

15(b). Other provisions include funds for worthy internet causes of €63,203, which are to be approved for disbursement in due course by the Board. It also includes a provision for €100,000, being the total amount committed to a Cyber Assistance fund. This fund which will assist Registrars with the implementation costs of new Cyber Regulations over the coming year. It is expected that both of these funds will be disbursed within 12 months of the year end.

16. Guarantee

Parent Company Guarantee

On 18 December 2006, the company's subsidiary IENUM Limited signed an agreement with the Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) to provide the national ENUM registry service for Ireland. At 31 December 2023, the company is the sole Guarantor of the obligations of its dormant subsidiary IENUM Limited.

17. Commitments

Operating lease commitments

Total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases are calculated at €210,882 (2022 – €373,958), payable as follows:

	Premises 2023 €	Premises 2022 €
Within one year	163,076	163,076
Between two and five years	47,806	210,882
More than five years	-	-
	210,882	373,958

These figures represent total future minimum lease payments up to the break clause in the lease agreement.

Capital commitments

The company has capital commitments totalling €101,854 for a firewall upgrade project at 31 December 2023 (2022 – €Nil).

18. Post balance sheet events

There are no material post balance sheet events.

19. Contingent liabilities

There are no contingent liabilities at 31 December 2023.

20. Company structure

The company is limited by guarantee and does not have a share capital.

21. Controlling parties

The company is controlled by its members. At 31 December 2023 the eight directors are the members.

22. Comparative information

Certain number of the comparative figures have been amended to conform with presentation in the current year.

23. Financial instruments

The analysis of the carrying amounts of the financial instruments of the company required under Section 11 of FRS 102 is as follows:

	2023 €	2022 €
Financial assets at fair value through profit or loss		
Unlisted investments	7,658,051	5,762,432
Financial assets that are debt instruments measured at amortised cost		
Cash at bank and in hand	1,208,455	2,775,994
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost		
Trade creditors	194,444	90,466

24. Approval of financial statements

The financial statements were approved by the Board on 9 May 2024.

Glossary of Terms

.ie accredited Registrar

An .ie accredited Registrar is a company that has signed an agreement with IE Domain Registry, authorising it to act as agent for registrants who require a .ie web address. Accredited Registrars include HSPs, ISPs and web development companies. The list of .ie accredited Registrars can be found at www.weare.ie/accredited-registrar-list.

Anycast

Anycast is a methodology for addressing multiple servers with the same IP address. Data is transmitted to the closest or best receiver in line with predetermined criteria. One benefit is that a denial of service attack can be “localised” and therefore contained.

ccTLD

Country code top-level domains (ccTLD), are national top-level domains based on the International Organisation for Standardisation’s (ISO) country codes. National top-level domains comprise two letters, for example .ie for Ireland or .de for Germany.

CENTR

CENTR (Council of European National Top-Level Registries). CENTR is a not-for-profit organisation dedicated to supporting the interests of country code TLD managers. The objectives of CENTR are to promote and participate in the development of high standards and best practices among ccTLD Registries. See www.centro.org.

DESI

A dashboard of indicators summarising Europe’s performance across the four dimensions of the EU Digital Decade policy programme: digital skills, digital infrastructure, digitalisation of business and digitalisation of public services. See <https://digital-decade-desi.digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/datasets/desi/charts>.

DNS

The Domain Name System (DNS) is an international hierarchical distributed database used to translate alphanumeric domain names, as understood by humans, into IP address, which computers use to find other computers on the Internet e.g. www.weare.ie is translated to IP address 77.72.75.172.

DNSSEC

DNSSEC (DNS Security Extension) is a supplementary service to domain names that makes it possible to check that the DNS information stems from the correct sender and has not been altered during its transmission. When DNSSEC is in use, the computer submitting a query (e.g. an Internet browser) is able to determine whether the reply provided for an Internet address in the DNS actually comes from the server that is registered with .IE as being the authoritative server.

Domain name

A domain name is a unique alphanumeric name, which is often linked to a website or e-mail. The domain name is translated in the DNS to an IP address before any Internet communication can occur. A registered domain name is a domain name held by a specific registrant following an application process.

DRCD

Department of Rural and Community Development – its Town Centre First (TCF) initiative provides funding for town regeneration – recognising the importance of having vibrant towns, which are places to live in, work in, visit, and raise a family in. Town teams are key to rural regeneration.

GAC

ICANN receives input and advice from governments through the Governmental Advisory Committee (GAC). The GAC’s key role is to provide advice to ICANN on issues of public policy and especially where there may be an interaction between ICANN’s activities or policies and national laws or international agreements.

gTLD

Generic top-level domains (gTLDs), such as .com, .net and .org are top-level domains.

ICANN and IANA

ICANN (Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers). An international not-for-profit, private sector organisation created to co-ordinate four key functions of the Internet: managing the domain names system, allocating IP addresses, assigning protocol parameters and managing the root server system.

IANA (Internet Assigned Numbers Authority) is responsible for the global coordination of the DNS Root, IP addressing, and other Internet protocol resources. It is one of the Internet’s oldest institutions, with the IANA functions dating back to the 1970s.

Today the services are provided by Public Technical Identifiers, a purpose-built organisation for providing the IANA functions to the community. PTI is an affiliate of ICANN.

IGF

The Internet Governance Forum (IGF) was established in 2006 by the United Nations to create a forum for discussion of Internet governance policy issues. Multi-stakeholders represent countries, commerce and society in general.

IPv4 and IPv6

Internet Protocol version 4 (IPv4) is the fourth version of the communications protocol that provides an identification and location system for computers on networks and routes traffic across the Internet. (IE Domain Registry's IPv4 address is 77.72.75.172).

In response to a global shortage of addresses, a successor protocol, IPv6, became an Internet Standard on 14 July 2017. IPv6 uses a 128-bit address, theoretically allowing 2^{128} addresses – enough for every Internet-connected fridge and toaster on the planet – for now at least. (IE Domain Registry's IPv6 address is 2a01:4b0:0:8::ac).

Nameserver

Nameservers are computers with software that stores and/or distributes domains (zones) and which accept and answer domain name questions. When a user wishes to visit **www.weare.ie** for example, the user's computer sends a question to a nameserver asking for an IP address for a computer on which information regarding **www.weare.ie** is located.

NIS Directive

The Directive on security of network and information systems (NIS Directive) is the first piece of EU-wide legislation which provides legal measures to boost the overall level of cybersecurity in the European Union.

Specifically, it requires that Member States ensure they each implement certain national cybersecurity capabilities, facilitate cross-border engagement, and supervise the cybersecurity of critical market operators in their country (including energy, communications, transport, health and finance). Member States were required to have transposed the Directive into their national laws by 9 May 2018 and identify Operators of Essential Services (OES) by 9 November 2018.

NIS2 modernises the existing legal framework to keep up with increased digitisation and an evolving cybersecurity threat landscape.

PAC

The Board of .IE established a Policy Advisory Committee (PAC) in 2014 to consider and provide advice on policy issues concerning Ireland's Internet top-level domain, .ie. The Policy Advisory Committee operates in line with the 10-step Policy Development Process (PDP).

PDP

.IE's Policy Development Process (PDP) for the .ie namespace is a 10-step process used to formulate, evaluate, and generate consensus on proposed policy changes and its implementation. The formal process is consensus-driven, transparent and allows for bottom-up proposals from the wider multi-stakeholder Internet community. See **www.weare.ie/policy-development-process**.

Registrant

The individual or legal entity registered in the .ie database, with the legal right to use the .ie domain name.

Registry

A registry is a company or organisation responsible for the administration and operation of a top-level domain. .IE is the active registry operator responsible for administration, management and technical operation of the .ie domain and ensures that all registered .ie domains are included in the zone file and accessible via the Internet.

Registrar

Please see ".ie accredited Registrar" on page 50.

Reserves Management Policy

The company's internal Reserves Management Policy reflects the classification of its Reserves (its Member Funds) as follows:-

The **Strategic Sustainability Reserve** – "sufficient reserves to safeguard the company's long-term financial position and ensure continuity of operations in the event of unexpected circumstances".

Designated Funds in free reserves – "the initiatives committed to specific company objectives, agreed with the Board" during the annual review process, and based on its Strategic Plan.

The **Undesignated Funds** in free reserves – are therefore the residual.

Zone and zone file

A zone is the delimitation of the administrative responsibility for a domain tree. A zone file is a data file comprising the necessary zone information to enable the use of DNS addressing. The zone files are stored on authoritative nameservers that are distributed throughout the Internet.

Notes



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.IE is the trading name of IE Domain Registry CLG,
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