

BUSINESS CASE TEMPLATE

PART 1: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. Name of Allowance: Office Accommodation Allowance
2. Description: Expense
3. Number on Spreadsheet:

PART 2: BUSINESS CASE PROPOSAL

Please tick relevant box:

Maintain X
Modify □

In both instances, please provide a thorough and considered business case for maintaining the allowance either as is or in modified format. The modifications should also be detailed, and include information on any revisions of the headings outlined in the Allowances Template.

The Department should confirm that the allowances represent value for money and provide additional or higher value work which can not be considered as part of the normal responsibilities, flexibilities or duties expected of a person in such a post.

This information should be returned to Sighle.de.barra@per.gov.ie by 31 January, 2012.

SECTION (a) BUSINESS CASE FOR RETAINING ALLOWANCE

(Please complete headings below)

- (1) What does the employer receive in return for the allowance?

The Office Accommodation Allowance is paid to Officers who provide office accommodation in their own homes. The allowance is paid where the OPW cannot provide office accommodation. There are two rates of allowance, the high rate (currently €19.96) is used where a room suitable for meetings and open to the public at specified times is provided, and the low rate (currently €12.77) is used where officers do not provide a room for meetings.

In general Revenue regard the payment of this allowance as tax neutral. However, it is understood that the Revenue Commissioners has queried

the basis of the payment of these allowances for staff in Environment [forest rangers] and the Special Education Council [SEC].

- (2) Is the allowance cost effective/represent value for money?

The allowances are reviewed based on the costs per sq foot of renting office accommodation in the IAVI Annual Property Survey [but excluding Leinster]. Prior to 2000 the housing element of the CPI was used.

The current rates have been in place since Jan 2011 [rates were high rate €19.96 pw and a low rate €12.77 pw]. The 2011 rates represent a 30% reduction on the 2010 rates (reflecting the general fall in property prices).

The allowance represents good value for money provided it is only paid in accordance with the sanction.

- (3) Other Pertinent Issues (e.g. why duties cannot form part of grade/post; impacts/risks if duties/responsibilities not undertaken)