



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Ireland's Second National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals 2022 – 2024

Draft for Public Consultation

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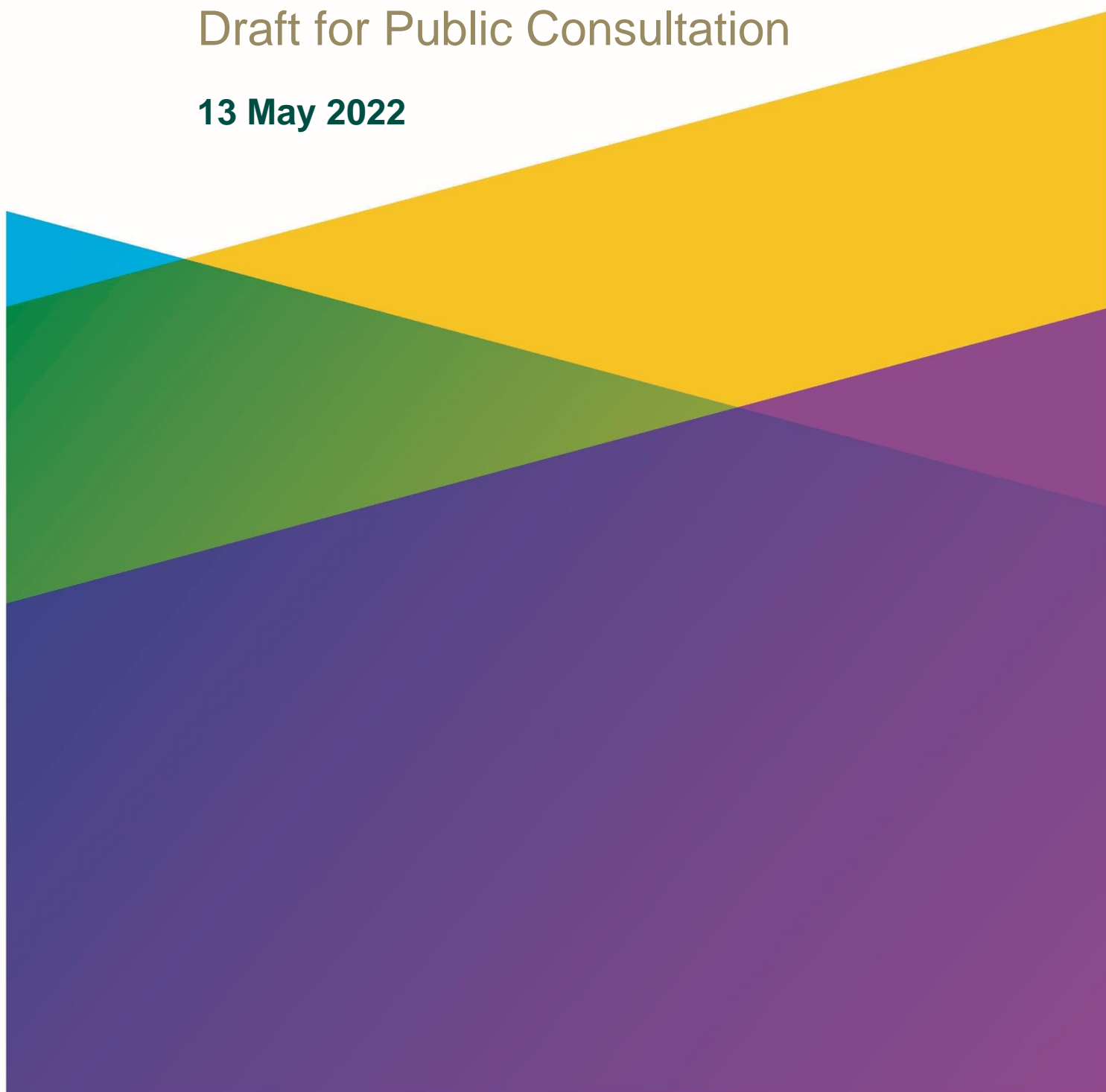


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Glossary of Acronyms

Acronym	Explanation
ArcGIS	Aeronautical Reconnaissance Coverage Geographic Information System
C&V sector	Community and Voluntary Sector
CAROs	Climate Action Regional Offices
CCDP	City and County Development Plans
CCMA	County and City Management Association
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CPD	Continuing Professional Development
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CSR	Corporate Social Responsibility
CTCHC	Collaborative Town Centre Health Check
D/Education	Department of Education
D/Taoiseach	Department of the Taoiseach
D/Transport	Department of Transport
DAFM	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
DCEDIY	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
DECC	Department of Environment, Climate and Communications
DEIS	Delivering Equality of Opportunity In Schools
DETE	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
DFHERIS	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
DHLGH	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
DP	Development Perspectives
DPER	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
DRCD	Department of Rural and Community Development
DSP	Department of Social Protection
DTCAGSM	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
EBLIDA	European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations
EC-JRC	European Commission Joint Research Centre
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESD	Education for Sustainable Development
ESDN	European Sustainable Development Network
ESRI	The Economic and Social Research Institute
EU	European Union
GAA	Gaelic Athletic Association
GCE	Global Citizen Education
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
HLPF	UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development
IDWG	Interdepartmental Working Group
IFLA	International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions
ILO	International Labour Organisation
ISO	International Organisation for Standardisation
LCDCs	Local Community Development Committees

LDCs	Local Development Companies
LECP	Local Enterprise and Community Plans
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender
LGBTI	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex
LGMA	Local Government Management Agency
NAP	National Action Plan
NDCA	National Dialogue on Climate Action
NDP	National Development Plan
NESC	The National Economic and Social Council
NFTL	National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning
NGOs	Non-Governmental Organisations
NMPF	National Marine Planning Framework
NPF	National Planning Framework
NPO	National Participation Office
NTRIS	National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy
NUI Galway	National University of Ireland Galway
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OGCIO	Office of the Government Chief Information Officer
OLDC	Offaly Local Development Company
OPS2020	Our Public Service 2020
OSi	Ordnance Survey Ireland
PCSD	Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development
PDF	Portable Document Format
PPNs	Public Participation Networks
RIA	Regulatory Impact Analysis
RSES	Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies
RSS	Really Simple Syndication
SBC	Sustainable Business Council
SDG-DGB	SDG data governance board
SDG-KIC	SDG Knowledge and Information Centre
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SDSN	Sustainable Development Solutions Network
SFI	Science Foundation Ireland
SICAP	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
SIDS	Small Island Developing States
SOG	Senior Officials Group
SSNO	Scheme to Support National Organisations
UCC	University College Cork
UCD	University College Dublin
UCLG	United Cities and Local Government
UN	United Nations
UNCRC	UN Convention on the Rights of the Child
UNDESA	United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNECE	United Nations Economic Commission for Europe
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

UNSD	United Nations Statistical Division
US	United States
VIOs	Volunteer Involving Organisations
VLR	Voluntary Local Reviews
VNR	Voluntary National Review
WPS	Women, Peace and Security
YPS	Youth, Peace and Security

Foreword from the Minister for the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications

[Placeholder]

Foreword from the Taoiseach

[Placeholder]

Chapter 1: Introduction

The international commitment to Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is to be achieved by 2030. The world overall is not, however, on track to achieve the global Goals by 2030. Internationally, before the COVID-19 outbreak, progress had been uneven and more focused attention was needed in many areas. The pandemic disrupted implementation towards a large number of the SDGs and, in some cases, turned back decades of progress. Progress towards the SDGs has been further hindered by recent conflicts and the climate and biodiversity crises facing our world.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations has called for renewed ambition, mobilisation and leadership for the SDGs to recover better, together. Ireland recognises that as we look forward, it is essential that we draw on lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and recall our commitment to the SDGs. The framework provided by these Goals will ensure a sustainable, inclusive recovery and an equitable future for all people, especially the most vulnerable. Our objective is to build back better and to align our economy for the digitalised and green future and make overarching structural changes to break the link between fossil fuels and economic progress.

As we enter the third year of the Decade of Action for the SDGs, it is urgent that Ireland moves into its next phase of implementation and the objectives and actions identified in this Implementation Plan are essential to this transition. Action is required at all levels and by all stakeholders in order to fulfil the vision and goals of Agenda 2030.

Vision:

Our vision is for Ireland to fully implement the Sustainable Development Goals at home, and to contribute to their achievement internationally through our role as a responsible global citizen, so that no one is left behind.

Ireland's first National Implementation Plan provided a framework for Ireland to work towards implementing the SDGs, including through the support of national policies which contribute to meeting the Goals, and the facilitation of multi-stakeholder participation. This new Implementation Plan aims to build on the structures and mechanisms from the first Plan and to develop and integrate additional approaches in areas identified through review and consultation as requiring further action. It sets out Ireland's SDG implementation strategy for 2022-2024 and forms part of a series of consecutive Implementation Plans, each building on the previous iteration, to work towards achieving the SDGs.

1.1 Strategic Objectives

Five Strategic Objectives have been identified as part of this Implementation Plan to further develop our SDG implementation structures and methods:

Strategic Objective 1: To embed the SDG framework into the work of Government Departments to achieve greater Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development

A whole-of-Government approach to implementing Agenda 2030 has been taken in Ireland assisted by cross-departmental coordination structures including the SDG Senior Officials Group, SDG Inter-departmental working group and the SDG policy map. This Implementation Plan intends to build on existing structures and raise the profile of the SDGs, better mainstream Agenda 2030 across Government Departments and enhance cooperation and coordination between national policy makers. A number of steps and related actions are included in this Implementation Plan to move Ireland into a position where national policies are being fully informed by Agenda 2030, including:

- i. Integration of the SDGs into public administration, including incorporation into administrative, planning and accountability frameworks
- ii. Capacity-building across Government Departments
- iii. Research, dialogue and partnerships at both national and international level to progress Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (SDG target 17.14)

The actions developed to progress strategic objective 1 are set out in Chapter 4 of this Implementation Plan.

Strategic Objective 2: To integrate the SDGs into Local Authority work to better support the localisation of the SDGs

The 2018-2020 SDG National Implementation Plan acknowledged that local government “has a crucial role to play in translating national policies into tangible practical actions that can help to concretise the SDG objectives into our individual and communities’ behaviours and goals.” This Implementation Plan intends to build on the role of local government in Ireland and incorporates specific actions to do so involving:

- i. Showcasing, sharing and building on existing initiatives
- ii. Capacity building and awareness raising
- iii. Embedding the SDGs in Governance and reporting frameworks
- iv. Incorporating the SDGs within local planning frameworks
- v. Community Engagement

The actions developed to progress strategic objective 2 are set out in Chapter 5 and Section 7.2.2 of this Implementation Plan.

Strategic Objective 3: Greater partnerships for the Goals

Reflecting the fact that the SDGs belong to everybody and Governments will need to work in partnership with society to achieve the Goals, this Implementation Plan places a large emphasis on partnerships for the Goals. Work towards achieving the SDGs will be carried out through international partnerships, partnerships across national and local government, with civil society and communities and with key sectors and groups. Existing partnerships will be further developed and new partnerships formed.

The Implementation Plan builds on existing national stakeholder engagement mechanisms. A new multi-stakeholder SDG Forum committee will be created to assist in the design and development of the SDG National Stakeholder Forum. The Implementation Plan includes a substantial new chapter relating to sectoral stakeholder engagement reflecting the contribution of key groups to the SDGs and identifying opportunities for greater partnerships. It is intended that this chapter and the groups included therein will be developed further in subsequent iterations of this Implementation Plan.

The actions developed to progress strategic objective 3 can be found throughout this Implementation Plan. Those relating to national stakeholder engagement and sectoral engagement can be found in Chapters 6 and 7.

Strategic Objective 4: To further incorporate the principle of Leave No One Behind into Ireland's Agenda 2030 implementation and reporting mechanisms

Opening a collaborative and inclusive dialogue to explore the concept of *Leave No One Behind*, a core commitment of Agenda 2030, and what it means in an Irish context, is a key objective of this Implementation Plan. Outcomes from this dialogue will inform the design of future implementation and reporting structures for Agenda 2030 in Ireland.

The actions developed to progress strategic objective 4 are set out in Chapter 8 of this Implementation Plan.

Strategic Objective 5: Strong reporting mechanisms

In order to facilitate an effective whole-of-Government approach to SDG implementation, the Implementation Plan includes actions to introduce robust reporting mechanisms to monitor progress on the SDGs and SDG targets as well as on the status of the actions in this Implementation Plan. Actions have been developed within this Implementation Plan which include clear timeframes for delivery and lead Department for the action identified. The Implementation Plan will be implemented jointly by Government Departments and stakeholders, led by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications. Progress will be monitored by the SDG Senior Officials group (the SOG) with periodic progress reports provided to relevant Oireachtas Committees. Ireland will present its next Voluntary National Review (VNR) to the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development in 2023 to review progress towards achieving the SDGs.

The actions developed to progress strategic objective 5 can be found in Chapter 3.

1.2 Background

[Transforming Our World: the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#) was adopted by all 193 United Nations Member States in 2015. It is a “plan of action for people, planet and prosperity” and aims to deliver a more sustainable, prosperous and peaceful future for the entire world. Agenda 2030 sets out a framework for a sustainable future. This framework is made up of 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets.



The SDGs represent the most ambitious agreement that the UN has ever reached. All 17 SDGs are integrated and indivisible and balance the three dimensions of sustainable development: the economic, social and environmental. The SDGs apply equally to every country, and are based on the idea that ending poverty, protecting the environment and strengthening human rights are mutually beneficial and reliant on each other for success, and cannot be achieved separately.

Sustainable development means meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Agenda 2030 uses a five-dimensional model of sustainable development, known as the “Five Ps”: which includes People, Planet, Prosperity, Peace, Partnership.

Agenda 2030 is a universal agenda, which takes account of the growing interconnectedness of development challenges which need to be addressed in a coordinated and coherent manner. It aims to meet the SDGs for all nations, people and all segments of society and it pledges that no one will be left behind.

Governments have primary responsibility for implementing the SDGs, but the Goals belong to everyone and Governments will need to work in partnership with society to achieve them. This collective approach was also taken during the negotiation of Agenda 2030.

Agenda 2030 and the 17 SDGs took three years to negotiate and the process involved not

only every member of the UN but also civil society groups, the private sector, academia, trade unions and other international organisations. Ireland is proud to have played a significant role in the development and adoption of Agenda 2030, as co-facilitator, together with Kenya, of the intergovernmental negotiations. Ireland will continue to show leadership as the SDGs are implemented, both at home and across the world.

Agenda 2030 is voluntary and not legally binding, but every country has agreed to implement the SDGs and every country is expected to develop a national framework setting out how they will be achieved. Ireland is fully committed to achieving the SDGs and this Implementation Plan represents our framework for the period 2022-2024.

1.3 Development of this Implementation Plan

A collaborative and participatory approach has been taken to developing this Implementation Plan [see Section 2.2 for more detail]. Achieving the SDG targets by 2030 is a collective task that cannot be accomplished without partnership. In recognition of the significant contributions being made across the country and across sectors, 20 case studies have been included and integrated throughout the Implementation Plan. These case studies showcase some of the valuable initiatives and examples of best practice projects and programmes being progressed by a variety of organisations, institutions and sectors. The case studies highlight a number of areas of work including SDG incorporation methods, tools and capacity building; research; awareness raising, engagement and advocacy; and the localisation of the SDGs.

Much of the work showcased in the case studies has been undertaken as part of multi-stakeholder partnerships and it is hoped that by including them in this Implementation Plan it will raise awareness of existing work/resources/groups and facilitate greater sharing of learnings and potential future partnerships.

Case Studies Included:

Research - Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development	
Case study 1	EPA and UCC – Research Project SDGs41on Policy Coherence opportunities for achieving the SDGs
Case study 2	UCD – Research project on PCSD
Localising the SDGs	
Case study 3	Dublin City Council– Incorporation of the SDGs into Dublin City Council's Corporate Plan 2020-2024
Case study 4	The Heritage Council – Collaborative Town Centre Health Check Programme
Case study 5	Meath County Council – URBTRACT project
Business sector and the SDGs	
Case study 6	Chambers Ireland – Toolkit for Business
Civil society and community engagement	
Case study 7	Coalition 2030 – Alliance of civil society organisations for the SDGs
Case study 8	Offaly Local Development Company – Mapping the SDGs
Case study 9	Kerry PPN – Awareness raising and linking work to the SDGs
Case study 10	Wicklow County Council and Wicklow PPN – Mapping the SDGs
Case study 11	The Wheel - Spark Change
Case study 12	Saolta SDG Roadshow
Case study 13	GAA Green Clubs
Universities progressing the SDGs	
Case study 14	University College Cork's SDG Toolkit
Case study 15	NUI Galway – Advancing the SDGs
Youth engagement with the SDGs	
Case study 16	ECO-UNESCO – Youth empowerment and engagement
Case study 17	The National Youth Assembly on Climate
Case study 18	An Taisce Green schools
Leave No One Behind	
Case study 19	National Disability Authority – Customer Communications Toolkit for the Public Service: A Universal Design Approach
Case study 20	Maynooth University and Microsoft Ireland – Achieving Gender Equality through the Just Digital Framework

1.4 Current national context for SDG implementation

The COVID-19 pandemic significantly disrupted the Irish economy with COVID-19 adjusted unemployment peaking at 31.5% in April 2020. During the second half of 2021, relaxation of COVID-19 related restrictions saw more positive economic momentum and in February 2022 COVID-19 adjusted unemployment fell to 7%. At the beginning of 2022, however, additional challenges arose including the cost of living developments arising from inflationary pressures and the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Over the past two years, we have seen globally how quickly important gains in the attainment of the SDGs have been eroded across countries. Specific challenges exist for Ireland including in respect of climate change, housing, health and cost of living increases. Agenda 2030 offers a framework to navigate beyond the COVID-19 pandemic, respond to current challenges and ensure an economic focus which fosters sustainable, inclusive growth and an equitable future for all.

Ireland's [Economic Recovery Plan](#), launched in June 2021, is focused on a jobs-rich recovery and supporting the transition towards a decarbonised and digital economy. It includes an overarching ambition of 2.5 million people in work by 2024, with an emphasis on more productive, innovative and resilient jobs, in new areas of opportunity.

The investment and reforms committed in [Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan](#) are also incorporated into, and closely aligned with, the Economic Recovery Plan. Three distinct priorities are identified as part of the National Recovery and Resilience Plan, including:

- Advancing the Green Transition;
- Accelerating and Expanding Digital Reforms and Transformation; and
- Social and Economic Recovery and Job Creation.

The National Recovery and Resilience Plan contains a set of 16 investments and 9 reform commitments, to a total value of just under €1 billion which will contribute to a sustainable, equitable, green and digital recovery effort in a manner that complements and supports the Government's broader recovery efforts.

The [revised National Development Plan](#) will support economic, social, environmental and cultural development across all parts of the country with more than €165 billion for public investment being allocated over the decade. The Plan has a particular focus on the all-of-Government priorities of housing and climate action ambition.

Significant steps have also been taken to fulfil Ireland's commitment to a 51% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions from 2021 to 2030 compared to 2018 levels, and carbon neutrality by 2050. The [Climate Action Plan 2021](#) marks a significant increase in our national ambitions to bring about the substantial changes needed to meet Ireland's climate ambition for 2030 and beyond. The Climate Action Plan identifies and sets out far-reaching policy changes across every sector to deliver the necessary emissions reductions to ensure that we deliver on the statutory commitments in the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, including the achievement of our 2030 targets.

1.5 Ireland's national approach to the SDGs

To meet the ambition of achieving the SDGs by 2030, Ireland adopted a 'whole-of-Government' approach, which means that every Government Department has a role in implementing the Goals, together with state agencies and local authorities. The framework for how Departments will work together to achieve the SDGs is set out in Chapter 3 of this Implementation Plan.

The overarching national governance, coordination and monitoring framework for the SDGs is set out in this document. The detailed policy approaches to progress individual SDGs and targets are addressed in relevant national policies, as captured in the SDG Policy map found in Annex X.

The following strategies are examples of Ireland's domestic SDG implementation during the lifetime of this Implementation Plan. A large number of these strategies are referenced throughout this Implementation Plan. Please note the below list is not exhaustive:

- [Economic Recovery Plan](#)
- [Project Ireland 2040: National Planning Framework](#)
- [Project Ireland 2040: National Development Plan 2021-2030](#)
- [Climate Action Plan 2021](#)
- [Water Services Policy Statement 2018 – 2025](#)
- [Ireland's River Basin Management Plan 2022 - 2027¹](#)
- [National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021](#)
- [Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy](#)
- [Housing for All – A New Housing Plan for Ireland](#)

¹ A new strengthened River Basin Management Plan is due to be published later this year.

- [The Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025](#)
- [Pathways to Work 2021-2025](#)
- [Healthy Ireland – A Framework for Improved Health and Well-being 2013-2025](#)
- [Wellbeing Framework](#)
- [Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities: 5 Year Strategy to Support the Community and Voluntary Sector 2019-2024](#)
- [Town Centre First: A Policy Approach for Irish Towns](#)
- [Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People \(0-24\)](#)²
- [The National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021](#)³
- [The National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020](#)⁴
- ESD to 2030: the Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development⁵
- Impact 2030 – Ireland's Research and Innovation Strategy⁶
- [Ireland's National Skills Strategy](#)
- [Our Rural Future: Rural Development Policy 2021-2025](#)
- [Agri-food 2030 strategy](#)
- [People, Place and Policy: Growing Tourism to 2025](#)
- [Harnessing Digital - The Digital Ireland Framework](#)
- [National Volunteering Strategy \(2021 - 2025\)](#)
- [Irish Aid Global Citizenship Education Strategy 2021-2025](#)

While highlighting the particular relevance of these strategies, Ireland nonetheless recognises the importance and interdependence of all the SDGs, and the resulting need for integrated, mutually supportive policies across the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

²This Framework expired at the end of 2020, along with many of its constituent strategies such as the National Youth Strategy 2015-2020. The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) is now developing a successor policy framework for the period up to 2028. This policy framework will focus on realising the rights of children and young people, and on delivering systemic change to how Government does business, ultimately to improve the lives of children and young people.

³ A new National Disability Inclusion Strategy is currently under development.

⁴ A new National Strategy for Women and Girls is currently under development.

⁵ This strategy is due to be published shortly and a hyperlink will then be added in this Plan

⁶ This strategy is due to be published shortly and a hyperlink will then be added in this Plan

1.5.1 The Well-being Framework for Ireland

A Well-being Framework is currently being developed on a phased basis to better understand and measure Ireland's progress as a country and align policy considerations with people's lived experiences.

The government's [First Report on a Well-being Framework for Ireland](#) was published in July 2021. It included a guiding vision and goals, an initial Conceptual Framework for Ireland, a static supporting dashboard of indicators and future work. The initial Conceptual Framework followed the OECD Model, adjusted for Ireland, based on consultation with stakeholders and experts carried out by The National Economic and Social Council (NESC). It covers 11 dimensions across issues such as housing, work, the environment, health community, safety, social connections and work.

Similar to the Framework provided by Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development, the Wellbeing Framework seeks to move beyond using solely economic measures in gauging Ireland's progress by considering different policy areas together (environmental, societal and economic) through a multi-dimensional framework and places a strong focus on sustainability and equality. Differing from Agenda 2030, however, it includes an emphasis on subjective well-being. It captures overall quality of life, across economic, social, and environmental factors, including health, housing and other important outcomes. It also retains a national focus unlike Agenda 2030 which is both international and national in scope.

The First Report on a Well-being Framework for Ireland highlighted that the Well-being initiative can serve as an important complement to work on progressing Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. It recognised that while there are conceptual differences between the two Frameworks, there is a significant degree of overlap in their objectives. The Report committed to mapping the SDGs to the Well-being Framework for Ireland and this work has now been undertaken and a second report will be published in the coming period which includes this work. Specific research and consultation has also been progressed including work to further develop and integrate sustainability into the Framework, fulfilling a separate commitment in the First Report around sustaining well-being for future generations.

As work on both these Frameworks progresses, it is important that the synergies between the two continue to be explored.

1.6 Ireland's international approach to the SDGs

A commitment to achieving the SDGs is an overarching goal of [A Better World](#), Ireland's policy for international development cooperation. This policy puts a focus on the central pledge of Agenda 2030 to reach the furthest behind first. It identifies four policy priorities:

gender equality, climate action, reducing humanitarian need and strengthening governance. These will be delivered through intensifying work in three clusters of intervention covering protection, people and food.

In global fora such as the United Nations, in other multilateral contexts and bilaterally, we will continue to use our influence to promote respect for human rights as means of bringing about sustainable development that leaves no-one behind. As a member of the UN Security Council during 2021 and 2022, Ireland continues to work in partnership with other States in line with our three core principles: Building Peace, Strengthening Conflict Prevention and Ensuring Accountability. Reflecting our commitment to Goal 13, Climate Action, in December 2021, Ireland and Niger, with the support of 131 other UN Member States, worked to bring the first ever draft Climate and Security Resolution to the UN Security Council. Although the resolution was not adopted by the Council, Ireland will continue to engage positively to find constructive ways forward on this agenda.

Ireland has been a longstanding champion of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda at the UN, reflecting our commitment to Goal 5: Gender Equality and to Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. We aim to demonstrate how women can be agents of change in conflict and post-conflict settings, by bringing those women to the table. At the UN Security Council Ireland has sought to ensure the voices of women on the ground are heard across the files on the Council agenda. Our goal is to advance the WPS agenda more broadly across all the work of the Security Council – including on country, thematic and peacekeeping files – as well as through ongoing engagement with civil society.

Ireland's third National Action Plan (NAP) on WPS has been afforded special recognition by the UN Secretary General for including women from conflict-affected contexts living in Ireland, those who have experienced conflict on the island of Ireland, and rural and minority women, in the design and development of the NAP. The NAP includes an ambitious set of actions across government in development, peacekeeping and diplomatic engagement. As a UN Member State with over sixty years of continuous peacekeeping experience, Ireland recognises the importance of integrating gender perspectives and empowering women in peacekeeping. The NAP forms a central element of our broader commitment to gender equality, which is a priority in Ireland's foreign policy, reflected in both [*The Global Island*](#) and our policy for international development, A Better World.

Ireland will use its membership of international financial institutions (IFIs) to advance progress on the SDGs in line with our international development priority of reaching the furthest behind first. In partnership with the Asian Development Bank, we will support Small Island Developing States (SIDS) to build their resilience to climate change and disasters.

Ireland joined the African Development Bank in 2020. We will develop that partnership by working in cooperation with the Bank to support climate adaptation and resilience in Africa.

Our international efforts to achieve the SDGs at country-level will continue to focus on a group of key partner countries, mostly in sub-Saharan Africa. Our bilateral aid programmes in these countries will contribute in particular to reducing poverty and hunger.

Ireland will continue to deliver humanitarian assistance that targets the most vulnerable individuals and communities in the most severe crises across the globe. Through a range of partnerships, we will provide timely, high quality life-saving protection and assistance. We will promote an approach that builds resilience and lays the foundation for equitable recovery and development.

Chapter 2: Ireland's implementation of Agenda 2030 to-date

2.1 A review of Ireland's SDG national implementation structures and measures

In June-July 2021, an internal review of Ireland's national implementation structures, engagement methods and the status of the priorities and measures set out in the 2018-2020 SDG National Implementation Plan was carried out. The objective of the review was to identify the achievements and challenges arising from the previous Implementation Plan and to inform the development of the consultation process and priorities for this Implementation Plan.

A number of steps were taken to carry out this review, including:

- Analysis of the 2018-2020 SDG National Implementation Plan and the methodology used to implement the priorities and measures contained within;
- Meetings held with the SDG Inter-Departmental Working Group to determine the status of the measures set out in the 2018-2020 National Implementation Plan and obtain feedback and recommendations for consideration for the next Implementation Plan;
- Consideration of stakeholder feedback, including that provided at National Stakeholder Forums and official meetings;
- Consideration of the approach taken by other UN and EU Member States; and
- Identification of any gaps in the information currently available and potential methods for addressing these gaps.

2.1.1 Achievements from the first SDG National Implementation Plan

The review highlighted a number of principle achievements and strengths in terms of Ireland's implementation and engagement structures set up under the first National Implementation Plan, including the establishment and development of:

- **Cross-Government SDG governance structures** in the form of the Senior Officials Group for Sustainable Development, the Inter-Departmental Working Group and the CSO Data Governance Board.
- **The SDG National Stakeholder Forum** as a key mechanism for discussing national implementation and for sharing learnings, examples of best practice and SDG relevant events from both a national and international perspective.

- **The SDG Champions programme** as an initiative to raise public awareness, showcase work being carried out by appointed organisations to progress the SDGs and illustrate practical ways in which organisations and individuals can contribute to achieving the SDGs.
- **The SDG Policy Map** as a means to identify lead Departments for each of the 17 Goals and 169 targets, map all SDG targets against national policies and identify contact details for each relevant policy area.
- **SDG data management processes and SDG data hub (Geohive)** with sourced information for UN, EU and National SDG indicators data, development of the [SDG data hub](#) where data can be accessed, visualised and downloaded; and the release of electronic SDG publications on UN SDG Goals 1-12 with a national focus⁷.

In relation to the National Stakeholder Forum and the SDG Champions Programme recommendations for building on the success and effectiveness of these initiatives have been received from participants and incorporated as part of this new Implementation Plan.

An additional achievement was Ireland's presentation of its first Voluntary National Review (VNR) on SDG progress to the UN High Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development HLPF in July 2018. The Review highlighted that at that time Ireland was performing well in relation to those SDGs related to the economy but that further work was required in order to become a truly sustainable society.

2.1.2 Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic on implementation structures

The Covid-19 outbreak stalled the SDG governance and stakeholder engagement structures and resulted in planned meetings and events for 2020 being deferred. The Senior Officials Group for Sustainable Development and the Inter-Departmental Working Group recommenced meeting regularly in 2021 and the tenure of the 12 SDG champions appointed in 2019 was extended to mid-2021 due to COVID-19. The SDG National Stakeholder Forum and a new SDG Champions Programme will be relaunched in 2022.

2.1.3 Areas requiring additional prioritisation

The key needs identified as part of the review to further progress Ireland's implementation and engagement structures are captured below in respect of (i) national and local government; and (ii) sectoral and stakeholder engagement.

⁷ As of 03/05/2022: this work is ongoing and publications will be released on all 17 SDGs.

i. National and Local Government

Given the relevance and cross-sector nature of the SDGs, a whole-of-Government approach to implementation of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development was adopted in Ireland. The 2018-2020 National Implementation Plan identified the key role that all Government Departments, State Agencies and Local Authorities must play in implementing the SDGs. It set out the objective that the SDGs would be mainstreamed across Government Departments, State Agencies and Local Authorities and increasingly incorporated into policies, plans and programmes.

Following a review of national policies, Departmental Statements of Strategy and Annual Reports, it was found that achievement of this objective and the extent to which the SDGs are being incorporated into work at national and local level is currently inconsistent. In order to move Ireland into a position where the SDGs are being meaningfully incorporated and considered in the work of national and local Government a number of key steps and needs have been identified:

- **Greater integration of the Sustainable Development Goals into public administration**

In order to ensure officials consistently make the links between their work and Agenda 2030 as well as consider the impact their work has on the progression of the SDGs, it is important that the SDGs are integrated into administrative, planning and accountability frameworks. This involves incorporating the impact on Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development as a consideration into the Regulatory Impact Assessments process, Memoranda to Government, Consultation processes and the Budgetary process. It also involves a more consistent incorporation into Statements of Strategy and Departmental Annual Reports and the introduction of stronger reporting mechanisms for tracking progress.

- **Capacity-building across national and local Government**

Secondly, for officials to incorporate the SDGs into their work in a meaningful way, capacity needs to be built. Knowledge and understanding of Agenda 2030 and how it relates to government work must be ensured so that work can be situated within the SDG policy framework and informed by it. The development of bespoke training and dissemination of guidance specifically relevant to Civil Service and Local Authority work are initiatives identified as requiring progression. In addition, the profile of SDGs needs to be raised and championed in each organisation so that a common ownership of the goals is assumed across national and local government.

- **Greater Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD)**

The overall objective is to move Ireland towards a position where national policies are fully informed by Agenda 2030 and greater dialogue is promoted between policy makers across

sectors in order to achieve Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (SDG target 17.14).

The first step identified as being required involves upskilling officials. Providing clear guidance to officials is necessary so that they can effectively consider their work in terms of the impact on economic, social and environmental dimensions, the principles set out under Agenda 2030 (for example the principle of *Leave No One Behind*) and the impact their work has on each of the goals and targets. This, in turn, will allow for greater dialogue and understanding of how national policies are interacting and contributing as a whole towards achieving Agenda 2030.

Following the identification of areas requiring greater prioritisation across national and local government, it was decided that a specific strand in the consultation process should be carried out with Government Departments, State Agencies and Local Authorities to determine current awareness and engagement levels and seek feedback on supports required. Feedback from this consultation process can be found at Section 2.2 below.

ii. Stakeholder and Sectoral awareness and engagement

Key strategic objectives of the 2018-2020 National Implementation Plan related to increasing public awareness of the SDGs, fostering and supporting public and community participation and providing stakeholders with meaningful opportunities to contribute to the development of the SDG national implementation framework and review processes. As referenced in Section 2.1.1 some strong achievements were made in this respect and it is important that these existing initiatives are continued and expanded on.

As part of the review carried out in June 2021 a number of initial areas were identified as requiring greater prioritisation in respect of stakeholder and sectoral awareness and engagement. Priorities were, however, to be informed by the SDG consultation process which launched the following month. A summary of the feedback provided in the consultation can be found at Section 2.2 below and more detail provided in the consultation report found in Annex 1.

The initial needs identified by the review included:

- **The introduction of a central repository to map, track and showcase SDG activities**

A huge amount of activity is currently taking place across the country to progress and promote the SDGs. Establishing a central repository where initiatives and best practices could be captured and linked by geographical area, sector and/or by engagement type was identified as an important priority to be considered as part of this new Implementation Plan.

This would allow for the sharing of ideas and learnings in terms of successful and innovative SDG-related activities, greater awareness in respect of the activities taking place in individual counties or areas, encourage and promote SDG activities and provide an important means to showcase the work and projects advanced by organisations, communities and individuals.

- **Enhance sectoral specific stakeholder engagement for key groups**

While the SDG National Stakeholder Forum offers an important mechanism to bring together all SDG stakeholders from across Irish society in one space, it was found that providing additional sector-specific opportunities for engagement would complement the approach. Bespoke engagement mechanisms have been sought specifically from the business, education and youth sectors. Consideration has been given as to whether new sector specific SDG fora were required or whether the SDGs could be incorporated into existing sectoral fora to avoid duplication of resources and placing a burden on individuals/organisation to attend multiple fora with overlapping objectives. In order to inform this consideration, feedback on engagement mechanisms was sought as part of the public consultation process, a summary of which can be found in Section 2.2.2 or for greater detail Annex 1.

- **Expand on methods used to raise awareness of and promote engagement with the SDGs**

In addition to the SDG National Stakeholder Forum and the SDG Champion's Programme, and to establishing a central repository to showcase best practices, the review found that further mechanisms for promoting awareness of and engagement with the SDGs were required. Actions considered included holding an annual SDG national awareness week in September to coincide with the anniversary of the launch of the SDGs, the development and publication of an SDG newsletter and to link government funding with the SDGs so that applicants are aware of the impact of their work on Agenda 2030. In order to inform these considerations, feedback was sought as part of the public consultation process, a summary of which can be found in Section 2.2.2 or for greater detail Annex 1.

2.2 Consultation feedback

Feedback received from the development of the first SDG National Implementation Plan was that stakeholders would like meaningful opportunity to input at an early stage in the development of the second Plan. Taking this feedback on board, it was decided that a consultation process would be held in advance of drafting the new Implementation Plan and that the outcomes of the consultation would inform the priorities and actions for the Implementation Plan.

In addition, the draft Implementation Plan, once developed and prior to publication would be circulated for a final round of feedback and form the basis for discussion at the relaunch of the SDG National Stakeholder Forum.

The initial consultation process was launched on the 9 July 2021 and ran until the 10 September. In order to reach a wide range of stakeholders the consultation process consisted of three different strands and reached over 5,000 individuals

Table 1: Consultation strands

Consultation strand	No. of responses
1. Market Research	1,000
2. Public Consultation	353 Online platform
3. National and Local Government surveys	2,972 Departments & State Agencies 894 Local Authorities
Total responses	5,218

The overall objectives of the consultation process included to:

- Gauge existing SDG awareness and engagement levels;
- Seek feedback on progress made to-date with SDG implementation and proposed actions for inclusion in the new Implementation Plan; and
- Assess support requirements to enhance engagement levels and progress in achieving Agenda 2030.

Feedback received from the consultation was predominantly in response to a mixture of open and closed questions in survey format. In addition, 27 detailed PDF submissions were received as part of the Public Consultation from a variety of sources including voluntary and civil society organisations, business representative networks, further and higher education bodies, trade unions and politicians.

A clear desire for greater ambition, communication and opportunity to engage with the SDGs was evident from the consultation feedback. Respondents felt there was a need for a more joined up approach to implementation and they emphasised the potential of the SDGs to overcome siloed policy development and as providing an important framework to ensure a 'Just Recovery' from the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Key findings from each of the strands of the consultation process are summarised below:

2.2.1 Market Research






In order to gauge SDG awareness and engagement levels across a nationally representative sample of individuals, market research was undertaken through Amárach Research. A total sample of 1,000 was achieved with quotas set on gender, age, social class and region to achieve a sample aligned with national population. Results of the market research found that 1 in 6 Irish adults (17%) are aware of the SDGs and familiar with their purpose. In addition, those under the age of 35 and from upper social class groups are most likely to be aware of and familiar with the SDGs. 1 in 4 Irish adults (25%) are aware of the SDGs but are not familiar with their purpose.

Table 2: Market Research - National SDG awareness Levels

Public awareness of the SDGs	
Aware of the SDGs and familiar with their purpose	17%
Aware of the SDGs but not familiar with their purpose	25%
Not aware of the SDGs or familiar with their purpose	58%

While recognising the interdependence and interlinkage of all 17 SDGs, respondents were asked to identify which of the SDGs they thought were most important at present. SDG 2 Zero Hunger, SDG 1 No Poverty, SDG 13 Climate Action, SDG 3 Good Health and Well Being and SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation were chosen by respondents as most important.

Table 3: Market Research - Top 5 SDGs chosen by importance

	SDG 2: Zero Hunger and Promotion of Sustainable Agriculture
	SDG 1: No Poverty
	SDG 13: Climate Action
	SDG 3: Good Health and Well Being
	SDG 6: Clean Water and Sanitation

Over 1 in 5 respondents (22%) report 'Zero Hunger and promotion of sustainable agriculture' as most important. Munster residents and those living in rural areas vs urban were more likely to rate this SDG as a first mention.

The majority of respondents indicated that they were not engaged in activities related to the SDGs, however, almost a quarter were unsure whether the activities they were involved with related to the SDGs. Given the wide breadth of the SDGs it is likely the activities being undertaken do relate to the SDGs in some manner but the links are not being made due to a lack of awareness.

Table 4: Market Research - National Public Engagement Levels

Engaged with activities related to the SDGs	
Yes	9%
No	68%
Not sure	23%

When relevant respondents were asked what prevented them from engaging with SDG activities, 31% indicated that they did not know where to find the relevant information on initiatives that they could join.

Table 5: Market Research - Obstacles Preventing SDG Public Engagement

Obstacles to public engagement	
I hadn't really thought about it	38%
I don't know where to find information on initiatives that I could join	31%
There are no local initiatives that I know of in my area	21%
I don't have enough time	8%
Other	3%

2.2.2 Public Consultation

353 responses were received from the public consultation. Respondents predominantly had existing knowledge of and involvement with the SDGs.

- 82% of respondents were aware of the SDGs, 84% understood their purpose and 87% indicated the SDGs were relevant to them
- 46% of respondents said they were actively involved in SDG activities and 24% said they were involved in some SDG related activities, but not on a regular basis.

While recognising the interdependence and interlinkage of all 17 SDGs, respondents were asked to identify which of the SDGs they thought were most important at present. SDG 13 Climate Action, SDG 3 Good Health and Well Being, SDG 1 No Poverty, SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities SDG 4 Quality Education were chosen by respondents as most important.

Table 6: Public Consultation - Top 5 SDGs by importance

	SDG 13: Climate Action
	SDG 3: Good Health and Well Being
	SDG 1: No Poverty
	SDG 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
	SDG 4: Quality Education

Respondents were asked to assess Ireland's progress in achieving the SDGs over the past 3 years, using a score between 0 and 10 where 0 is Ireland has made no progress at all, and 10 is Ireland has made complete progress toward achieving the SDGs. The average score assigned to Ireland's progress in the past 3 years was 3.

Table 7: Public Consultation – Progress score

Average score respondents gave to Ireland's progress in achieving the SDGs over the past three years:
3
Based on a score of 0-10, with 0 representing no progress at all and 10 representing complete progress towards achieving the SDG.

Respondents were asked to provide recommendations and feedback on a number of areas as part of the consultation process, including in respect of how to improve or further progress in the next Implementation Plan, ideas for the structure and objectives of the next Implementation Plan, stakeholder engagement mechanisms and supports required.

Greater detail on the recommendations and feedback provided as part of the public consultation can be found at Annex 1, below is a summary of the key points raised.

Key recommendations from the Public Consultation:

- The new Implementation Plan must be more ambitious, adequately funded, include tangible actions and key deliverables for achieving the aims of the SDGs.
- Greater collaboration and increased coordination between Departments, including a review of current governance structures and the make-up of the central coordinating authority.
- Implementation of accessible reporting and accountability frameworks with greater responsibility and reporting for all Departments and an enhanced role for the Oireachtas.
- Better and more meaningful incorporation of the SDGs into policies, strategies and programmes and reinforced publicly by repeated linking back of policy to the relevant SDGs.
- Policy design and implementation should fully consider social, economic and environmental consequences, the principle of 'Leave no one behind' and the connectivity and impact on all SDGs in order to ensure policy coherence.
- Incorporation of a tracking or tagging system for the SDGs in the Budget and funding streams.
- Greater integration of the SDGs into the work of the Local Authorities.
- Greater opportunity for public participation and meaningful engagement processes which are inclusive, accessible to all and adhere to the principle of 'Leave no one behind'.
- Review and relaunch of the SDG National Stakeholder Forum with greater stakeholder participation in its design and objectives, including a commonly agreed and shared work programme.
- Review and relaunch of the SDG Champions programme which should be well-publicised and include a clear communications plan and work plan with structured objectives, timeframes and outputs.
- Development and introduction of an SDG national awareness campaign and SDG roadshow.
- Development of a specific youth engagement and communication plan.
- Transformation of the Geohive into a clear, concise, and transparent website.
- Greater opportunities for coordinated sectoral engagement and input, including reporting mechanisms which capture and better evidence the actions and
- Impact being made by different sectors to progress the SDGs.

- Prioritisation of research.
- Alignment of the SDGs with local community action and provision of greater supports including funding, training and incentives

2.2.3 National and Local Government Surveys

The SDG survey for Government Departments and State Agencies received a total of 2,972 responses, with 75% of respondents working for Government Department and 25% belonging to State Agencies. The SDG survey for Local Authorities received 894 responses.

National and Local Government Awareness

Respondents to the surveys were asked to indicate their awareness of the SDGs and how they relate to their work and the results can be seen in Table 8 below. The general pattern of awareness was similar across Departments, State Agencies and Local Authorities with only small variances.

The majority of respondents are aware of the SDGs however only a minority are aware of how they relate to their work. Approximately 40% of all respondents were not aware of the SDGs at all.

Table 8: National and Local Government - SDG awareness Levels

	Government Departments	State Agencies	Local Authorities
Aware of the SDGs and how they relate to their work	24.7%	28.3%	24%
Aware of the SDGs but not how they relate to their work	35.4%	34.6%	33%
Not aware of the SDGs or how they relate to their work	39.9%	37.1%	43%

National and Local Government Engagement

Respondents were asked which of the methods listed in Table 9 below they used for incorporating the SDGs into their work. Again, very similar rates were received across Government Departments, State Agencies and Local Authorities. 26% of respondents indicated that they had worked individually or as part of a team to progress an SDG target or Goal, whereas approximately two-thirds of respondents indicated that they had not worked to progress an SDG target or goal or used any of the methods outlined to incorporate the SDGs into their work.

Table 9: National and Local Government - SDG Engagement

Engagement Methods	Government Departments and State Agencies	Local Authorities
Used SDG Branding	5%	6%
Used the SDGs to inform their engagement with stakeholders and the public	9%	10%
Used the SDGs to inform their decision making and/or policy development	10%	11%
Referenced the SDGs within their work	16%	12%
Linked their work with specific targets or goals	16%	15%
Worked individually or as part of a team to progress an SDG target or goal	26%	26%
Have not used any of the methods outlined above to incorporate the SDGs into their work	66%	64%

Recommendations to further incorporate the SDGs into the work of National and Local Government

Respondents were asked for their recommendations in respect of ways to further incorporate the SDGs into the work of national and local government. The most frequently recommended supports and actions are captured below:

- **The provision of bespoke training:**

The majority of respondents referenced the need for tailored and bespoke training which links the SDGs with their everyday work, provides tips on how they can be implemented, examples of best practice and which focuses on practical application.

- **Development and circulation of an SDG toolkit relevant to national and local Government work**

Respondents indicated that they would like the SDG toolkit to include examples of best practice, examples of policies and plans where the SDGs have been incorporated, templates and case studies to ensure the toolkit is meaningful and tangible in its application.

- **Greater communication and awareness raising about the SDGs and SDG-related work and initiatives being carried out**

A clear desire expressed by many respondents was for greater communication about the work being carried out within their organisation to help progress the SDGs.

Recommendations included greater promotion and visibility of SDGs across all levels of operations, showcasing of activity linking directly to the SDGs and regular internal communications and staff information sessions with SDG updates based on work being carried out within their organisation.

- **The appointment of a specific SDG officer or champion within each Department and Local Authority**

Respondents saw the appointment of a specific SDG officer/ champion within each organisation as crucial to ensuring the SDGs are kept at the forefront of the organisation's work and to drive initiative; coordinating practices and overseeing training and implementation of SDG objectives.

In addition, respondents from Government Departments recommended annual Departmental SDG plans and respondents from Local Authorities called for better incorporation and referencing of the SDGs into existing work and the establishment of an SDG network for the sharing of best practice. Most respondents indicated that a mix of the above supports and measures were required.

2.2.4 Translating consultation feedback into actions

The feedback provided as part of the 2021 SDG consultation process was used to directly inform the priorities and actions developed as part of this Implementation Plan. This is made clear throughout the document where chapters and sections are linked back to the feedback provided as part of the consultation process.

2.3 Progress on the SDGs

2.3.1 Ireland's approach to reporting on SDG Progress

To ensure reporting on SDG Progress is both comprehensive and relevant to national circumstances and level of development, the identification and management of national data is carried out by the Central Statistics Office (CSO). Ireland used the official EU SDG indicator set to assess its SDG progress in the 2018 VNR. The CSO, in conjunction with Ordnance Survey Ireland, have developed an online [SDG Data Hub](#) which provides spatially relevant information on Ireland's progress towards the SDGs. The CSO has also published a series of individual SDG Goal reports on UN SDG indicators data for Ireland. [Goals 1 – 12](#) are now available online at [CSO.ie](#), and the remaining SDG Goal reports will be published in the coming months.

2.3.2 Eurostat's Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context

The 2021 edition of Eurostat's Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context⁸ indicated that Ireland is above EU average in respect of 13 of the 15 SDGs for which there was sufficient data to calculate overall EU trends⁹ and continuing to progress 11 of those. The 2021 edition is based on a set of 102 indicators that have been selected taking into account their policy relevance from an EU perspective as well as their availability, country coverage, data freshness and quality. The data presented in the report were extracted in early May 2021, however it is important to note that many of the indicators in the report refer to the period up to 2019 only, which means that the findings sometimes refer to the situation before the COVID-19 pandemic and may not reflect the current situation.

The report indicates that Ireland continues to make significant progress towards achieving many of the economic and social SDGs. Where Ireland is performing particularly well include SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities; SDG 4 Quality Education; SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions; SDG 3 Good Health and Wellbeing and SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth.

Where further work is required is predominantly in relation to the environmental goals. While Ireland remains above the EU average for SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation and SDG 15 Life on Land, it is currently moving away from progressing those SDGs. The goals where Ireland's status is below EU average, but progress is continuing to be made, include SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production, SDG 13 Climate Action and SDG 17 Partnership for the Goals.

⁸ European Commission: 'Sustainable development in the European Union - Monitoring report on progress towards the SDGs in an EU context - 2021 edition', <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-statistical-books/>

⁹ Overall EU trends could not be calculated for SDG 6 'Clean water and sanitation' and SDG 14 'Life below water' due to a lack of sufficient data for the past five years.

Figure 18.8: Ireland



Source: Eurostat

2.3.3 Ireland's implementation of SDG targets

For information on Ireland's implementation of SDG targets and a policy update provided on each, see Annex X.

Chapter 3: International, National and Inter-Departmental Governance & Coordination

3.1 National Governance and Coordination

While Agenda 2030 belongs to everyone, Governments have primary responsibility for its implementation¹⁰. Agenda 2030 encourages each member state to develop practical and ambitious national responses to the SDGs and national ownership is recognised as being key to achieving overall implementation.

3.1.1 Ministerial responsibilities and coordination

Ireland has adopted a whole-of-Government approach to the SDGs, with each Minister having specific responsibility for implementing individual SDG targets related to their Ministerial functions. To ensure individual Departments take ownership of the SDGs most relevant to their work, each of the 169 SDG targets has been assigned to a lead Government Department [See Annex X for more information].

The Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications has overall responsibility for promoting the SDGs and overseeing their coherent implementation across Government, including the development of the National Implementation Plans and reporting frameworks. The Minister for Foreign Affairs has responsibility, along with other relevant Departments, regarding foreign policy and international development.

To support implementation and a whole-of-Government approach, the last National Implementation Plan saw the establishment of the SDG Senior Officials Group (SOG) and the SDG Interdepartmental Working Group (IDWG). Both groups have played a key role in identifying priorities, overseeing and monitoring progress, and ensuring officials from across Government Departments work together to incorporate the SDGs into their work and stakeholder engagements.

3.1.2 SDG Senior Officials Group

The Senior Officials Group (SOG) provides strategic overview of SDG Implementation, monitoring performance and reporting on progress at political level. The group is chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach and is supported by high-level representatives from each Government Department.

The Group meets as required, and directly supports the development of National Implementation Plans and Voluntary National Reviews.

¹⁰ Para 47, [Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development](#)

3.1.3 SDG Inter-Departmental Working Group

Comprised of representatives from each Government Department, the Inter-Departmental Working Group (IDWG) was established to complement the work of the SOG and facilitate effective Cross-Government SDG engagement and Implementation.

IDWG members play a crucial role in ensuring the SDGs are kept at the forefront of each organisation's work. The IDWG is responsible for considering detailed proposals for meeting the strategic goals of this Implementation Plan; coordinating strategic communication on the SDGs and Ireland's implementation; preparing national SDG progress reports; and developing the national implementation plans.

As part of the 2021 SDG consultation process, respondents to the survey for Government Departments indicated the need for:

- greater promotion and visibility of SDGs across all levels of operations
- regular internal communication and showcasing of SDG activity
- an SDG point of contact within each organisation

In response to the feedback received as part of the 2021 SDG consultation process, and in order to ensure the IDWG's functions accurately reflect the level of ambition required to deliver this Implementation Plan, a full review of the IDWG Terms of Reference will be carried. The review will allow for the identification of any issues, structural, or resource-based, which need to be addressed to ensure the IDWG can continue to play an effective role and is equipped to meet its operational objectives. As part of this review, reporting responsibilities and key competencies will be developed to support Government Departments when nominating IDWG members.

Full details of updated Terms of Reference for the group will be published on www.Gov.ie/SDGs

In addition, to support the work of the IDWG member a shared site will be set up which contains relevant materials and resources, including briefing, reporting templates, communications material and presentations to promote the SDGs and report on progress within their organisation.

A list of IDWG Members will be uploaded on www.Gov.ie/SDGs so the point of contact for each Government Department is easily identifiable.

Related Actions:

Action 1	Review of Interdepartmental Working Group practices			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
1(a)	Review current IDWG functions to ensure they are aligned with objectives of this Implementation Plan, and update groups Terms of Reference as necessary	Q3 2022	DECC	All Government Departments
1(b)	Request updated nominations for IDWG members from all lead Departments based on new TORs and position criteria	Q3 2022	DECC	All Government Departments
1(c)	Ensure all IDWG content on gov.ie including member lists, meeting agendas and minutes are published and up to date	On-going	DECC	All Government Departments
1(d)	Development of a Shared Site to support the work of the IDWG	Q3 2022	DECC	All Government Departments

3.1.4 SDG Data Governance Board

Agenda 2030 emphasises that access to timely and reliable data is of key importance when measuring implementation progress of the SDGs:

“Quality, accessible, timely and reliable disaggregated data will be needed to help with the measurement of progress and to ensure that no one is left behind. Such data is key to decision-making”

2030 Agenda, paragraph 45

To date, the United Nations Statistical Commission has approved a list of 244 global SDG indicators, to track worldwide implementation of the 17 SDGs and 169 targets, and countries are encouraged to develop supplemental indicators to enhance the relevance of their reporting to their national circumstances.

The identification and management of national data needed to meet Ireland’s SDG reporting requirements is undertaken by the Central Statistics Office (CSO). The CSO has direct responsibility for sourcing, developing and quality assuring the data for the Irish SDG Indicator set. To be effective in this role, the CSO assesses the availability of data for global indicators within Ireland, namely to:

- identify data providers and data sources for SDG indicators
- identify data and methodological gaps
- consider data disaggregation requirements

Due to their cross-cutting nature, the monitoring and reporting of SDG progress requires close collaboration between the CSO and national policy makers. Under the previous Implementation Plan, the SDG data governance board (SDG-DGB) was established to source, develop, and report on the statistical data for the Indicators in each of the SDGs and interlinked targets.

The SDG-DGB is chaired by the CSO, and membership comprises of representatives from each of the Government Departments and Agencies. The SDG-DGB meets quarterly.

Related Actions:

Action 2	Review of the SDG statistical reporting process			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
2(a)	Examine the current reporting process, and the development of reporting templates and guidance information, to ensure a consistent analysis of indicator data and consistent policy input from all Departments into SDG statistical progress reports	Q3 2022	CSO	DECC, IDWG
2(b)	Publications for each 17 UN SDG data	Q4 2022	CSO	All Departments
2(c)	Ensure SDG statistical progress reports are developed, updated and published annually	Annually	CSO	SDG-DGB, IDWG
2(d)	Continued Incorporation and use of EU and OECD indicators in the SDG statistical reporting process	On-going	CSO	
2(e)	Continued measuring of National indicators in the SDG statistical reporting process	On-going	CSO	

3.1.5 Monitoring role of Oireachtas Committees

Agenda 2030 recognises the important role of national parliament in ensuring accountability and a representative process:

‘We acknowledge also the essential role of national parliaments through their enactment of legislation and adoption of budgets and their role in ensuring accountability for the effective implementation of our commitments.’

2030 Agenda, paragraph 45

In addition, parliament plays a key role in respect of targets under SDG 16 *Peace Justice and Strong Institutions*¹¹. Feedback received as part of the 2021 SDG consultation process indicated a desire to see an enhanced role for the Oireachtas with regular reporting to the relevant Oireachtas Committees or through the creation of a dedicated Cabinet sub-committee on the SDGs.

Different approaches to parliamentary reporting and oversight have been taken across Europe with some countries:

- i) tasking a specific committee with sustainable development issues,
- ii) integrating the topic into other committees; or
- iii) establishing a specific committee to explicitly deal with sustainable development¹².

Regardless of the approach adopted, an important aspect of effective SDG monitoring at parliamentary level, is the acknowledgement of the interdependency of the SDGs and identification of a mechanism to address and take into account the interlinkages between them.¹³

In Ireland, each Oireachtas Committee has a role in monitoring and overseeing the progress on the SDGs as underpinned by Standing Order 100(4) relating to the work programme of committees which states each Committee’s annual work programme include:

“(c) progress on the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals set out in the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, as are within the scope of the Committee’s orders of reference as set out in Standing Order”

¹¹ In particular, target 16.6 to develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels and 16.7 to ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.

¹² For further information See ESDN report developed by the ESDN Office and the Austrian Parliamentary Administration:

https://www.esdn.eu/fileadmin/ESDN_Reports/ESDN_Report_August_2021_Parliaments_and_SDGs_Final.pdf

¹³ For further information See ESDN report developed by the ESDN Office and the Austrian Parliamentary Administration:

https://www.esdn.eu/fileadmin/ESDN_Reports/ESDN_Report_August_2021_Parliaments_and_SDGs_Final.pdf

As part of the delivery of this Implementation Plan, regular and ongoing engagement with Oireachtas Committees is envisaged on SDG implementation.

All Oireachtas Committees will be consulted with on the draft of this Implementation Plan and feedback sought on the appropriate monitoring and reporting mechanisms to fulfil their oversight role.

Related Actions:

Action 3	Review reporting and oversight role of Oireachtas Committees			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
3(a)	Engage with Oireachtas Committees to review SDG reporting and oversight role	Q3 2022	DECC	Oireachtas Committees

3.2 International Governance and Coordination

3.2.1 High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development

Agenda 2030 recognises the importance of follow-up and review at the national, regional and global level to measure implementation progress of the SDGs¹⁴. The [United Nations High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development](#) (HLPF) under the auspices of the [United Nations General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council](#), is the main United Nations (UN) platform for sustainable development.

The HLPF has the central role in overseeing follow-up and review at global level. It also provides political leadership and facilitates the sharing of experiences and best practice.

The HPLF meets annually for eight days, including a three-day ministerial segment, and once every four years, Heads of State or Government take part in the Forum. Ireland will continue to ensure high-level political representation at the HLPF, including during those years when the Forum meets at Head of State or Government level. A National Statement on the SDGs will be made by Ireland annually at the HLPF.

The Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications will present Ireland's second Voluntary National Review [See Section 3.3 for more information] to the HLPF in 2023. The Minister will be supported in the UN processes of reporting and review by the Minister for Foreign Affairs. These arrangements will ensure that the Goals retain a high profile at the centre of Government in the period to 2030.

¹⁴ Para 47, [Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development](#)

Related Actions:

Action 4	Ireland's annual representation at the High-Level Political Forum for Sustainable Development			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
4(a)	Attendance and Ministerial representation at the UN High-Level Political Forum, including preparation of National Statement	Annually	DECC	IDWG

3.2.2 EU Working Party on Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development

The Working Party on Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development monitors and reviews implementation of Agenda 2030 at the EU level. The Working Party provides a forum for information exchange about implementation at member state level, and assists in ensuring a systematic, effective, participatory, transparent and integrated follow-up and review of the implementation of the SDGs.

The Working Party also looks to address overarching and cross-cutting issues related to the implementation of Agenda 2030, and takes stock of implementation progress in an integrated and coherent manner.

Ireland will continue to be an active member of the Working Party and provide national inputs and contributions to the Party's work.

Related Actions:

Action 5	Representation and input on behalf of Ireland at the EU Working Party on Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
5(a)	Attendance at monthly meetings of the EU Working Party on Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development.	On-going	DECC	IDWG

3.3 Global, EU and National Reporting

To support accountability and transparency and to ensure countries retain a consistent focus on the SDGs, Agenda 2030 provides a commitment to provide for regular follow-up and review at the national, regional and global levels.

“We commit to engage in systematic follow-up and review of implementation of this Agenda over the next fifteen years. A robust, voluntary, effective, participatory, transparent and integrated follow-up and review framework will make a vital contribution to implementation and will help countries to maximize and track progress in implementing this Agenda in order to ensure that no one is left behind.”

2030 Agenda, paragraph 72

3.3.1 Voluntary National Reviews at the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

The HLPF monitors global progress towards achieving the Goals. Voluntary national reviews (VNRs) delivered by member states constitute a key component of the regular reviews by the HLPF. Ireland strongly supports this robust reporting mechanism and has committed to present on SDG progress at the HLPF, at least three times by 2030.

A VNR is a voluntary, state-led review, undertaken by the member state and involves multiple stakeholders. VNRs aim to facilitate the sharing of experiences, including successes, challenges and lessons learned, with a view to accelerating the implementation of Agenda 2030. They also seek to strengthen policies and institutions of governments and to mobilize multi-stakeholder support and partnerships for the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals.

Ireland presented its [first VNR on SDG progress](#) to the HLPF in July 2018. The EU SDG indicator set was primarily used for the basis of the review and this ensured that Ireland’s reporting was both comprehensive and relevant to its national circumstances and level of development. The review found that Ireland was performing well in relation to SDG 1: No Poverty, SDG 2: Zero Hunger, SDG 3: Good Health and Well-being, SDG 4: Quality Education, SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 9: Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure, and SDG 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions. Performance against other SDGs, though in many areas positive, was more mixed, and specific challenges existed in relation to housing, levels of obesity, achieving sustainable consumption and production, biodiversity and habitat destruction, mitigating and adapting to climate change, addressing entrenched inequalities and mainstreaming a gender perspective into policy.

Ireland will be presenting its second VNR at the HLPF in 2023 and this will provide an assessment of progress achieved in the last four years.

Ireland strongly supports the role of stakeholders in the VNR process, and the development of the 2023 VNR will be open, inclusive, transparent, and involve the participation of stakeholders. In order to support stakeholder participation at the global level and to learn from the successful approach taken in Ireland's first VNR, it is intended that Ireland will:

- consult with the National SDG Stakeholder Forum on how best to reflect the views of stakeholders and their important contributions to achieving the SDGs in the report;
- Facilitate stakeholder attendance at the HLPF through the inclusion of stakeholder representatives in the official Irish delegation to the HLPF; and
- Facilitate the inclusion of a stakeholder representative in the delivery of Ireland's presentation of its 2nd VNR to the HLPF.

Related Actions:

Action 6	Preparation of Ireland's second VNR to take place in 2023			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
6(a)	Attend Global webinars and VNR workshops	Q4 2022	DECC	IDWG
6(b)	Develop VNR roadmap and consultation on VNR process	Q4 2022	DECC	IDWG
6(c)	Identify potential EU member states for peer review	Q4 2022	DECC	IDWG
6(d)	Develop draft VNR Structure and format for presentation to Stakeholder Forum	Q1 2023	DECC	IDWG
6(e)	Following stakeholder input, finalise Ireland's second Voluntary National Review for delivery at the UN High-Level Political Forum session in 2023	Q2 2023	DECC	IDWG
6(f)	Delivery of Ireland's 2 nd VNR at the UN High-Level Political Forum session in 2023	Q3 2023	DECC	

3.3.2 Reporting - European level

The [United Nations Economic Commission for Europe \(UNECE\)](#) is the UN regional commission for Europe and Ireland is one of its 56 members. UNECE supports countries in the implementation of Agenda 2030 through the development of statistical recommendations, and by undertaking performance reviews and studies related to the SDGs. Ireland will continue to work with UNECE to support implementation of, and reporting on, the SDGs in Europe.

Together with its member countries, the European Union adopted the [European Consensus on Development](#) in 2017, as part of its response to Agenda 2030. The consensus defines our shared vision and action framework for development cooperation. The EU and its Member States have committed to preparing a Joint Synthesis Report on the Consensus on Development as a contribution to EU reporting to the UN High Level Political Forum (HLPF) every four years. The second Joint Synthesis Report of the European Union and its Member States is to be presented at the HLPF in 2023. This report will build on other relevant EU reporting and monitoring of the SDGs in an EU context.

Ireland strongly welcomes the commitment to present the Second Joint Synthesis Report of the European Union in 2023 and will continue to work with other Member States as part of the EU Working Party on Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development to input and propose expectations and priorities for the key messages.

Related Actions:

Action 7	Support the development of the second Joint Synthesis Report of the European Union			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
7(a)	Provide input at preliminary discussions on the drafting of the Joint Synthesis report and member state support ahead of the presentation at the HLPF 2023	On-Going	DECC	IDWG

3.3.3 Reporting – National level

Agenda 2030 encourages all member states to conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels.

“We also encourage member states to conduct regular and inclusive reviews of progress at the national and sub-national levels which are country-led and country-driven. Such reviews should draw on contributions from indigenous peoples, civil society, the private sector and other stakeholders, in line with national circumstances, policies and priorities. National parliaments as well as other institutions can also support these processes”
2030 Agenda, paragraph 79

Regular reporting on national implementation of the SDGs is essential to measure and track progress. It also provides a foundation for all follow-up processes at global and EU levels.

To facilitate an effective whole-of-Government approach to SDG implementation, a key strategic objective of this Plan will be the introduction of robust reporting mechanisms to

monitor progress of Ireland's implementation of the SDGs and the timely delivery of actions within this Plan.

As with the previous Implementation Plan, stakeholder participation will remain a key aspect of Ireland's reporting arrangements.

3.3.3.1 Reporting on actions

46 actions have been developed to drive Ireland's second SDG National Implementation Plan. In addition, 24 relevant actions have been included from other Plans and Strategies for coherency and reporting purposes. With a strong focus on monitoring and reporting, these actions have been developed with clearly identified timeframes for delivery and designation of responsibility. A formal reporting mechanism will be developed within the first quarter after publication of this Plan to capture and measure progress on implementation of actions. An annual update on implementation of actions will be made available publicly on gov.ie.

Action 8	Develop formal mechanisms to monitor and drive implementation of Ireland's second National Implementation Plan			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder Support
8(a)	Develop and implement reporting mechanisms to capture progress achieved on all actions and measures within Ireland's second National Implementation Plan	Q3 2022	DECC	IDWG
8(b)	Develop reporting templates and central repository to simplify and streamline the reporting process	Q3 2022	DECC	IDWG
8(c)	Publish annual update on all actions and measures due for delivery within Ireland's second National Implementation Plan	Annually	DECC	IDWG

3.3.3.2 Reporting on SDG Progress at target level

A separate annual SDG-target reporting mechanism will be introduced under this Plan to centrally capture progress, and feed into the wider follow-up and review processes at EU and global level. This new reporting mechanism will build on Annex X: *Policy update on Ireland's Implementation of SDG targets* and over time combine policy and data-based updates.

It will be coordinated by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, with support from the SDG IDWG, CSO and SDG data governance board (SDG-DGB).

It is intended that a specific policy update will be provided annually by all Departments leading on an SDG target on the work that Department is undertaking to achieve the target,

any relevant action taken/planned and progress achieved to-date. This work will be complemented by the SDG statistical progress reports provided by the CSO to provide a comprehensive picture of progress by target. An annual update on progress at target level will be made available publicly on gov.ie.

Related Actions:

Action 9	Develop and implement reporting mechanism to capture SDG Implementation Progress at Target level			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
9(a)	Develop SDG-target reporting mechanism to capture SDG implementation progress at target level	Q3 2022	DECC	IDWG
9(d)	Reports completed by lead Departments linking work and activities to support high-level reviews of SDG target activity and prioritisation across Government	Annually	DECC	IDWG

Chapter 4: Embedding the SDG framework into the work of Government Departments

As set out in Chapter 2, a review of national implementation structures and measures identified that additional steps are needed to ensure the meaningful mainstreaming of Agenda 2030 across Government Departments, State Agencies and Local Authorities and to increasingly incorporate the framework it provides and the SDGs into policies, plans and programmes. The steps identified to better progress a whole-of-Government approach and promote ownership of the SDGs by all officers included:

- Greater integration of the SDGs into public administrative mechanisms;
- Capacity-building across national and local Government; and
- Greater Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD).

Similar feedback was provided as part of the 2021 SDG public consultation process [See Annex 1] with respondents seeking further incorporation of the SDGs into policies, strategies and programmes; greater policy coherence and the incorporation of the SDGs into budget and funding streams.

This chapter seeks to build upon the objectives of the previous National Implementation Plan and to provide the concrete steps and actions required to mainstream the SDGs across Government. A major component to ensure the success of the actions contained in this Chapter will involve the development of clear guidance to allow each individual civil servant determine how their work links with and contributes to Agenda 2030 and what principles and issues they must consider to ensure adherence to its objectives and the SDGs.

4.1 Incorporating the SDGs into existing governance, administrative and financial structures

In order to ensure Government Departments and civil servants consistently consider and make the links between their work and Agenda 2030, it is important that the SDGs are integrated into the principal administrative, planning and accountability structures used across the Civil Service, including:

- Statements of Strategy
- Departmental Annual Reports
- Regulatory Impact Analysis
- Memoranda to Government
- the Budgetary process
- Consultation processes

4.1.1 Statements of Strategy and Annual Reports

All Government Departments are obliged to prepare Statements of Strategy¹⁵ at regular intervals which set out the key objectives, outputs and related strategies of the Department and Annual Reports to report on their previous year's work programme. The previous National Implementation Plan included actions that each Government Department should:

- Set out how it intended to meet the SDG targets for which their Department was leading on (where relevant) in the Department's Statement of Strategy; and
- Provide information on how the Department is implementing the SDG targets in their Annual Reports.

While most Departments have now included reference to their commitment to the SDGs in their Statement of Strategy and in some cases to an overall goal that they are leading on, Departments do not generally address individual targets or set out how they are going to achieve them. As the Statement of Strategy is a high-level document, the current approach of reaffirming commitment and referencing any goals the Department is leading on, where relevant, is considered sufficient in that document.

In respect of Annual Reports, there is varied uptake in terms of providing information on how a Department is implementing the SDG targets it is leading on, with Departments oftentimes detailing policy developments and referencing the relevant SDG but not fully addressing the

¹⁵ Section 5 of the Public Service Management Act 1997

specific target or how it aims to achieve it. While it is proposed to retain the action on including SDG progress information in Annual reports, it will be complemented by a new SDG-target reporting mechanism introduced under this Implementation Plan as set out in Section 3.3.

This new reporting mechanism will be coordinated centrally by the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications and will seek specific annual updates on the work a Department is undertaking to achieve the target, any relevant action taken/planned and progress achieved to-date.

The material provided can also be included in Departmental Annual Reports to achieve Action 11 below but separate consideration and reporting initially ensures that the work is more consistently undertaken, maintains focus on the SDGs at target level and provides the required material centrally so a whole-of-government report on targets can be published annually.

Related Actions:

Action 10	In all new Statements of Strategy reaffirm the commitment of the Department to Agenda 2030 and reference any SDG/target the Department is leading on			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
10(a)	Include commitment to Agenda 2030 in all new Statements of Strategy and reference to the SDGs that Department is leading on where relevant	On-going	All Government Departments	

Action 11	Provide information in Departmental Annual reports on Departments' key activities to promote or progress the SDGs and how they are implementing targets where relevant			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
11(a)	Include update on SDG activities and progress including at target level where relevant in Departmental Annual Reports.	Annually	All Government Departments	

4.1.2 Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA) and Memoranda to Government

The Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA) is an assessment of the likely effects of a proposed new regulation or regulatory change. It involves a detailed analysis to ascertain whether or not the new regulation would have the desired impact and provides for consultation with stakeholders to ensure that their views and interests are understood during the regulatory process.¹⁶

A Memorandum to Government is put forward by a Minister, for information, or where proposals require a Government decision.

While many of the impacts that are currently considered as part of a RIA¹⁷ and a Memorandum to Government¹⁸ are important components of Agenda 2030, no specific consideration of how the regulatory change or new proposals impacts Ireland's implementation of the SDGs is currently required.

Incorporating the SDGs and the framework provided by Agenda 2030 into the RIA and Memoranda to Government, would ensure consistent consideration of sustainable development as part of the regulatory and policy/strategy development process. As all 17 SDGs are '*integrated and indivisible*', consideration needs to be given to how best the impact would be analysed. Officials must be able to identify to what extent the proposals align to particular SDGs and/or targets and how the proposals interact, positively or negatively, with the other SDGs and/or targets.

Further research will be undertaken to identify international best practice and consider how to apply these learnings in the context of the current Government decision-making process, including how to integrate with existing impacts considered. Proposals will subsequently be developed for Government approval to incorporate the SDGs into the RIA and Memoranda to Government.

¹⁶ [CABINET HANDBOOK \(assets.gov.ie\)](https://assets.gov.ie)

¹⁷ A full RIA should examine and measure costs, benefits and other impacts of the options being considered under the following headings: (a) national competitiveness including employment; (b) the socially excluded or vulnerable groups including gender equality, poverty, people with disabilities and rural communities; (c) the environment; (d) whether the proposal involves a significant policy change in an economic market including impacts on competition and consumers; (e) North-South, East-West relations; (f) the rights of citizens/ human rights; (g) compliance burden on third parties e.g. citizens and business and other criteria to be decided from time to time by Government.

¹⁸ A memorandum to Government which does not contain a RIA should consider the following impacts: (i) Jobs (ii) North-South, East-West Relations, (iii) Gender Equality (iv) Poverty Proofing (v) Competitiveness and Industry Costs (vi) Rural Communities (vii) Quality Regulation (viii) People with Disabilities and (ix) Climate Impact and Mitigation Potential.

It is intended that the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications will undertake this initial research and liaise with the relevant Departments with responsibility for the RIA (Department of Public Expenditure and Reform) and Memoranda to Government (Department of the Taoiseach) to develop proposals, before seeking Government approval, where relevant. Subsequent updating of guidance and online templates will be undertaken by relevant responsible Departments.

Should a Government decision be taken to introduce SDGs as an additional criterion to the Regulatory Impact Assessment and in Memoranda to Government, further action will be undertaken in respect of updating eCabinet and templates, providing a guidance note and ensuring training courses capture new amendments.

Related Actions:

Action 12	Assess potential to introduce the requirement to examine the impacts of proposals on the SDGs in the Regulatory Impact Analysis (RIA) process			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
12(a)	Research international best practice for incorporating the SDGs into the Regulatory Impact Analysis process	Q1 2023	DECC	DPER
12(b)	Develop a set of recommendations for incorporating the SDGs into the RIA process in an Irish context	Q3 2023	DECC	DPER
12(c)	Seek Government approval of the proposals to incorporate the SDGs into the Regulatory Impact Analysis process	Q3 2023	DECC	DPER

Action 13	Assess potential to introduce the requirement to examine the impacts of proposals on the SDGs in all Memoranda to Government			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder Support
13(a)	Research international best practice for incorporating the SDGs into Memoranda to Government	Q1 2023	Lead: DECC	Stakeholder: D/Taoiseach
13(b)	Develop a set of recommendations for incorporating the SDGs into Memoranda to Government	Q3 2023	Lead: DECC	Stakeholder: D/Taoiseach
13(c)	Seek Government approval of the proposals to incorporate the SDGs into Memoranda to the Government	Q3 2023	DECC	D/Taoiseach

4.1.3 Consultation processes

Public consultations are held by Government Departments and Local Authorities on wide-ranging issues to inform the development of policy, service and legislation. Consultation processes:

- enable the public to participate in policy development and in the design of public services;
- helps decision-makers to make better decisions
- increases the legitimacy of decision-making,
- improves the public's knowledge and awareness of policy challenges, and;
- can lead to improvements in the quality of service provision¹⁹.

Online consultations are uploaded and made available on [gov.ie - Consultations](https://www.gov.ie/consultations) (www.gov.ie)²⁰. An action under this Implementation Plan will be to incorporate the SDGs into the functionality of this online page so that Government Departments and Local Authorities must identify and tag which SDGs their consultation relates to. This will then allow for the public to search consultations by SDG to see what consultations are currently being held in relation to a specific SDG(s) of their interest.

Related Actions:

Action 14	Develop SDG tagging system on public consultations on gov.ie			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
14(a)	Review current consultation page functionality to determine an appropriate solution to capture SDG linkages within the public consultation process	Q3 2022	OGCIO	DECC

4.1.4 Budget

Agenda 2030 references the role and importance that national budgets play in the implementation of the SDGs:

“We acknowledge also the essential role of national parliaments through their enactment of legislation and adoption of budgets and their role in ensuring accountability for the effective implementation of our commitments.”
2030 Agenda, paragraph 51

¹⁹ Taken from the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform's [Consultation Principles and Guidance](#) 2016.

²⁰ As of 31/03/22 this consultations portal is in beta and not yet complete with all consultations.

A key objective of this Implementation Plan is to embed the framework provided by Agenda 2030 and the SDGs within the Irish policy environment including national policies and programmes, to support work towards achieving the SDGs. As part of this objective, it is also important to identify the resources that are allocated to these policies and programmes and use this information to outline how resource allocation decisions are supporting the achievement of the SDGs.

The United Nations Development Programme advise that:

“When SDGs become part of the country’s national policy framework, it is crucial that the process is then followed by SDG integration into the countries’ budgetary frameworks. This is essential to ensure that the policy prioritizations are expressed in budgets as the latter is the strongest domestic legal basis that reflects countries’ commitments to 2030 Agenda and its related SDGs. If not integrated into the budgets, then it is very likely to expect disconnects between the strategic planning frameworks that have made commitments to the 2030 Agenda on the one hand, and public budgets that remain driven by “business as usual” on the other”²¹

One of the key concerns expressed by respondents as part of the 2021 SDG consultation process was the lack of financing to deliver on the SDGs. An advantage of identifying resources that are currently being allocated and used to achieve the SDGs will allow for a distinction to be made between those SDGs that are resourced through existing policies and programmes and those that are not. This in turn will enhance transparency and identify any gaps where SDGs are not part of the focus of existing policies and programmes. This information could subsequently be used to inform the setting of priorities and deliberations about resource allocation.

In order to inform the decision about how and whether to incorporate the framework provided by Agenda 2030 and the SDGs within the budgetary process, research and evaluation will be undertaken. An assessment of the approach taken by other EU member states will be carried out to obtain any key learnings that could be applied in the Irish context and consideration will be given to existing performance budgeting including green budgeting and equality budgeting to determine the benefit of including the SDGs as an additional layer for consideration and best method for doing so.

²¹ [UNDP Budgeting for the SDGs - Guidebook Nov 2020.pdf](#)

Considering all 17 goals and potentially 169 targets poses particular challenges for incorporation. This has been acknowledged in the EU context where the EU budget retains the main focus on SDG 13 (climate action) as “*giving each SDG as much attention as the climate goal would pose administrative challenges due to the SDGs comprehensive nature*” however, the EU also acknowledges that “*all SDGs must be considered a priority in order to deliver a successful achievement of Agenda 2030.*”²²

Another important element for consideration is the complementary objectives between Agenda 2030 and the Wellbeing Framework [see Section 4.3.2 for further detail]. Chapter 4 of the 2021 Mid-Year Expenditure Report²³ outlines a number of approaches that seek to utilise the Well-being Framework to locate well-being within existing expenditure policy and build knowledge of well-being as a policy objective to inform the design and implementation of more effective public policies. Proposals developed in respect of Agenda 2030 and the budgetary process will take consideration of relevant developments on the Wellbeing Framework.

Related Actions:

Action 15	Consider the potential to integrate the SDGs into the budgetary process			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
15(a)	Examine international best practice for SDG budgeting	Q1 2023	DECC	DPER
15(b)	Review current green budging, equality budgeting and proposals re. wellbeing budgeting processes, and assess the potential for SDG expenditure tracking Nationally	Q1 2023	DECC	DPER

4.2 Capacity Building and awareness raising

4.2.1 SDG training and guidance

It is evident that in order for officers to engage meaningfully with and take ownership of the SDGs, as is required by a whole-of-government approach, knowledge and understanding of Agenda 2030 and how it relates to the work of the Civil Service and State Agencies must first be ensured. The capacity of officers must be increased so that work can be situated within the SDG policy framework and informed by it.

The results of the 2021 SDG consultation process with Government Departments and State Agencies demonstrated a low level of awareness and engagement with the SDGs [See

²² [The Sustainable Development Goals in the EU budget \(europa.eu\)](https://european-council.europa.eu/media/402074/image_cache/image_thumb.png)

²³ [gov.ie - Mid-Year Expenditure Reports \(www.gov.ie\)](https://www.gov.ie/en/publications-and-resources/publication/mid-year-expenditure-reports-2021/)

Annex 1 for more details]. On the other hand, it also highlighted a strong appetite from officers to build their capacity in this area. The top recommendations put forward by respondents were the development of:

- A bespoke training course for Government Departments and State Agencies that links the SDGs with the work of staff, clearly sets out obligations, examples of best practice and which focuses on practical application of policy coherence for sustainable development; and
- An SDG toolkit to supplement the training course which contains templates, checklists and case studies.

Developing training and guidance, specifically relevant to the Civil Service and State Agencies, is a key priority of this Implementation Plan. It is intended to develop a bespoke eLearning module which will be rolled out to all Departments and all civil servants through the Civil Service learning and development centre *One Learning*. Incorporating the SDGs into the One Learning Policy Makers Gen 2 course will be also explored as well as specific workshops for officers directly involved with developing national policies [See Section 4.3.1 below on Policy Coherence]. The potential to tailor this course further for roll out to State Agencies will be assessed and the best method for delivery.

Training will be complemented by the development of a Civil Service SDG toolkit and the issuing of a circular clearly setting out the specific responsibilities of Departments and civil servants in respect of the SDGs. The capacity building programme and toolkit will assist civil servants to meaningfully engage with and incorporate the SDGs into their work, be aware of their contribution to Agenda 2030 and take decisions and actions which are informed by Agenda 2030.

Related Actions:

Action 16	Development of a bespoke eLearning module for roll out to all civil servants			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
16(a)	Procure appropriate course developer to design SDG eLearning training for roll out across the Civil Service	Q1 2023	DECC	DPER
16(b)	Finalise course content and roll out across the Civil Service	Q2 2023	DECC	DPER

Action 17	Incorporate the SDGs into the One Learning policy making Gen 2 course			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder Support
17(a)	Engage with OneLearning to explore the inclusion of an SDG focused module as part of the development of the Policy Makers Gen 2 course	Q3 2022	DECC	DPER

Action 18	Development of a Civil Service SDG toolkit			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder Support
18(a)	Review current integration of SDGs into Departmental work, identifying existing examples of best practice, and prepare recommendations to support further SDG integration across Government	Q4 2022	DECC	SDG IDWG
18(b)	Procure toolkit developer to design bespoke toolkit to support training and engagement activities for roll out across the Civil Service	Q1 2023	DECC	SDG IDWG
18c	Finalise toolkit content and roll out across the Civil Service	Q2 2023	DECC	SDG IDWG

Action 19	Issue a circular setting out the responsibilities of Departments and civil servants in respect of the SDGs			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder Support
19(a)	Issuing of a circular clearly setting out the specific responsibilities of Departments and civil servants in respect of the SDGs	Q2 2023	DECC	SDG IDWG

Action 20	Assess potential to tailor the SDG training course and toolkit for State Agencies			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder Support
20(a)	Assess potential to tailor the SDG training course and toolkit for State Agencies and identify best method for delivery and roll out	Q3 2023	DECC and SDG IDWG	

4.2.2 Civil Service Excellence Awards



Established in 2015, the Civil Service Excellence and Innovation Awards recognises the work of civil servants and highlights innovations in policy and service delivery across the Civil Service. These annual awards are an opportunity to demonstrate the evolving work of civil servants and showcase best practice examples of policy making and implementation.

From 2022, it is intended to start incorporating the SDGs into the Awards. Introducing the SDGs will help to increase awareness of the SDGs, provide civil servants with an additional platform to align their work with the SDGs and offer an opportunity to showcase SDG best practice projects. Celebrating SDG best practice will also help to drive peer learning and further promote the integration of Agenda 2030 across Government.

Related Actions:

Action 21 Incorporation of the SDGs into the Civil Service Excellence awards				
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
21(a)	Incorporation of SDG branding into the Civil Service Excellence awards	Q3 2022	DPER	DECC
21(b)	Review awards application process and explore solutions on how to map applicant project work against the SDGs	Q3 2023	DECC	DPER
21(c)	Evaluate the potential for the inclusion of a specific SDG Award Category	Q4 2023	DECC	DPER

4.3 Working towards greater Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development

The 2021 review of Ireland's national implementation structures and measures highlighted the need for greater Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD). This requirement to progress PCSD was echoed in the 2021 SDG consultation process [See Annex 1 for more detail]. Agenda 2030 and the SDGs provide an internationally agreed mechanism to balance the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development.

Where decision making occurs without recourse to the framework provided by Agenda 2030, or without an understanding of how a decision assists or hinders the progression of the SDGs, that balance between the three dimensions can easily be lost. Agenda 2030 and the SDGs constitute a safeguard against incoherent and unequal progress which is particularly important during this period of recovery following the Covid-19 Crisis.

A commitment set out in the first SDG National Implementation Plan was to mainstream the SDGs across Government Departments into existing and new policies. This commitment has been achieved to varying degrees and it is clear that more consistency and more ambition is now required in respect of progressing PCSD in line with SDG target 17.14²⁴.

The overall objective is to move Ireland towards a position where:

- i. national policies are fully informed by Agenda 2030;
- ii. greater dialogue is promoted between policy makers across sectors;
- iii. a high level analysis of the principal national policies is possible to identify areas of strength, gaps, synergies and conflicts for progressing the SDGs.

As detailed above, a number of initial steps have been identified to lay the foundations upon which PCSD can be built, including the integration of the SDGs into public administrative mechanisms and building capacity across national and local government. Providing clear guidance to officials is essential so that they can effectively consider their work in terms of the impact on economic, social and environmental dimensions, the principles set out under Agenda 2030 (for example the principle of *Leave No One Behind*) and the impact their work has on each of the goals and targets. This in turn will allow for a greater understanding and analysis of how national policies are interacting and contributing as a whole towards achieving Agenda 2030.

PCSD is a concept and framework that is being actively considered and progressed. It is important that Ireland draws on existing research, knowledge and resources developed both nationally and internationally [See for example Case studies 1 and 2 below]. Ireland attends the OECD Network of National Focal Points for Policy Coherence (PCSD Network) which facilitates peer learning in enhancing PCSD. Ireland has also been working with the OECD to identify possible work packages to enhance PCSD in the Irish context. An application for TSI funding will be submitted this year with the objective of securing EU funding to obtain OECD support in this area. It is envisaged that the work packages identified would include, inter alia, workshops for national policy maker, be replicable and have potential for a multi-country approach.

²⁴ Target 17.14 aims to “enhance policy coherence for sustainable development”.

Consideration will also be given to existing policy mapping tools to see whether they would be appropriate for use and, if so, to review how they might be rolled out and integrated into government work e.g. the [SDG Mapper](#) developed by the European Commission's Joint Research Centre which uses a text-mining and natural language processing approach²⁵.

Related Actions:

Action 22	All new national policies to incorporate reference to relevant SDGs and targets			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
22(a)	All new national policies to incorporate reference to relevant SDGs and targets, and reflect how the policy interacts with Agenda 2030	On-going	All Government Departments	

Action 23	Identify and apply for funding to obtain OECD support in the areas of policy coherence			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder Support
23(a)	Apply for TSI funding for OECD support with Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD) SDG target 17.10	Q3 2022	DECC	
23(b)	Identify other relevant funding opportunities	Q4 2022	DECC	

Action 24	Consider applicability of existing policy mapping tools in the Irish context			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder Support
24(a)	Identify and review existing policy mapping tools to ascertain suitability for use in the Irish context	Q2 2023	DECC	
24(b)	Depending on outcome of X(a), develop guidance for national policy makers on available tools and how to use	Q3 2023	DECC	

²⁵ In recent years the EU Commission has carried out a large amount of work to progress PCSD. This work helps to (i) identify gaps in SDG implementation in the context of EU policies;(ii) recognize cross-cutting policies, most influential ones, with a strong connection to the SDGs;and (iii) highlight interlinkages between policies, in order to strengthen the policy coherence for sustainable development. The EC-JRC has made a suite of tools available, one of which is the EnablingSDGs tool developed as part of the EPA/UCC research project outline in case study 1, at <https://knowsdgs.jrc.ec.europa.eu/>

Case Study 1: EPA and UCC – Research Project SDGs41on Policy Coherence opportunities for achieving the SDGs

The novelty of the SDGs comes with the dual challenge of implementing Ireland's policy portfolio and legislative framework in an integrated and cross-cutting manner and interpreting global goals in a national context.

The EPA-funded research project '[Identifying Interactions for SDG Implementation in Ireland](#)' (SDGs4I) explored how understanding interlinkages between the 17 SDGs and their targets can contribute to a “whole-of-government” approach to policy implementation. The SDGs provide a valuable tool for policymakers to use the nature of interactions between SDGs and targets – both positive and negative – to plan and drive coherent and efficient policy design and implementation.

Working towards the SDGs provides an opportunity for governments to consider how an understanding of interlinkages between SDG targets can be used to break out of policy silos and to identify, understand and manage policy interactions and interconnections. This, in turn, can help align national policy with the SDGs and identify opportunities for policy coherence in the context of national planning and development initiatives, such as Project Ireland 2040 and other Government priorities to adapt to and mitigate against climate change.

In partnership with the International Science Council and the European Commission – Joint Research Centre, the project designed an [online toolkit](#) to assist policymakers, and other stakeholders, to engage across multiple areas of interest to better use evidence-informed approaches in decision making. The tool enables a user to map, visualize and analyse how the SDG targets of most relevance to their specific context influence each other. It guides the user through a learning process that supports the integration of science and ‘systems thinking’ in planning and policy-making for SDG implementation. In this way, the SDGs can be more than a reporting framework; they can also provide an action framework to inform enhanced policy coherence.





SDG PCSD toolkit created as part of the SDGs 41 project

Case Study 2: University College Dublin – Research project on enabling integrated policy making with the SDGs

The Irish Research Council and European Commission awarded a three-year Marie Curie CAROLINE fellowship to Dr. David Horan of University College Dublin to conduct research on data and governance frameworks to achieve SDGs. A focus of the research was the development of an integrated monitoring and evaluation tool to support government departments in Ireland with implementing a priority SDG in a coordinated manner.

Taking SDG14 as an example, the tool combines indicators of progress on the targets associated with the marine goal with the indicators for other SDGs – based on scientific evidence of those that are most highly interlinked with the primary goal. To express potential causal interrelations with SDG14 and country capacities to manage these relations, the 33 selected indicators are divided into four marine indicators (ocean health, fish stock status, protected area, fisheries revenue), and 29 “linkage” indicators: consisting of 10 pressures (e.g. nitrogen use in agriculture, wastewater treatment), 11 impacts (e.g. prevalence of obesity, subjective well-being) and 8 capacities (e.g. government spending, scientific and technical articles published). Using traffic light grading and radar diagrams, the tool offers an accessible, holistic assessment of a country’s strengths and challenges as it seeks to implement a particular priority.

Matching the country-specific challenges with the SDG responsibilities of government departments, the analysis can suggest that Ireland’s lead department on marine issues cooperate with 9 other government departments to address challenges in 15 policy areas connected to marine performance. In this way, the research demonstrates how government departments could use the SDGs to develop a cross-sectoral approach to implementation and to inform discussions on the coordination of strategies, the targeting of resources and the tracking of progress in connected areas. The paper setting out the assessment and coordination tool, titled [‘Enabling integrated policymaking with the Sustainable Development Goals: An application to Ireland’](#), is published in the peer-reviewed international journal of Sustainability.



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CAROLINE
Collaborative Research Fellowships
for a Responsive and Innovative Europe



Chapter 5: Local Government

Agenda 2030 emphasises the need for an inclusive and localized approach to the SDGs. While the SDGs are global, their achievement will depend on our ability to make them a reality locally. Localisation relates both to how the SDGs can provide a framework for local development policy and to how local governments can support the achievement of the SDGs through action from the bottom up²⁶.



SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities

SDG 11, to *make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable* was included in Agenda 2030 in response to the growing recognition of the importance of subnational approaches to sustainable development. Local authorities are recognised as one of Agenda 2030's nine "Major Groups", which play a crucial role in sustainable development²⁷ and Agenda 2030 also highlights the particular role of local authorities and communities in sustainable urban development:

We recognize that sustainable urban development and management are crucial to the quality of life of our people. We will work with local authorities and communities to renew and plan our cities and human settlements so as to foster community cohesion and personal security and to stimulate innovation and employment. We will reduce the negative impacts of urban activities and of chemicals which are hazardous for human health and the environment, including through the environmentally sound management and safe use of chemicals, the reduction and recycling of waste and more efficient use of water and energy. And we will work to minimize the impact of cities on the global climate system.

2030 Agenda, paragraph 34

²⁶ [Roadmap for localizing the SDGs: Implementation and monitoring at subnational level | UN-Habitat \(unhabitat.org\)](#)

²⁷ [About Major Groups and other stakeholders ... Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform \(un.org\)](#)

5.1 Local authorities in Ireland

The local government sector in Ireland is made up of 31 local authorities operating within geographical areas aligned with county and city boundaries, with 26 County Councils, three City Councils and two City and County Councils.

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) oversees the operation of the local government system, providing the policy framework within which local authorities work and deliver services to the communities that they represent and serve. The Department also supports local government in its role of promoting the well-being and quality of life of citizens and communities through the efficient performance of functions and delivery of good-value services at local level.

The [Local Government Act 2001](#) provides that local authorities are to represent the interests of the community and in such manner as it thinks appropriate²⁸. [Putting People First – Action Programme for Effective Local Government](#) sets out the vision for local government as – *“the main vehicle of governance and public service at local level – leading economic, social and community development, delivering efficient and good value services, and representing citizens and local communities effectively and accountably.”* Responsibilities in local authorities are divided into two areas, reserved functions for the elected council (e.g. policy decisions and passing an annual budget) and executive functions for the chief executive.

As outlined in more detail in Section 7.2.2, new local governance structures were introduced as part of the *Putting People First* programme including Local Community Development Committees, Local Economic and Community Plans and Public Participation Networks. Given the independence of each local authority, community engagement initiatives vary between local authorities.

Three Regional Authorities, consisting of members of local authorities within the region, aim to co-ordinate, promote or support strategic planning and sustainable development and promote effectiveness in local government and public services.

²⁸ Part 9 of the Local Government Act 2001 sets out the functions of local authorities.

5.2 Local authority response to the SDG consultation process 2021

The Local Authority focused survey, as part of the 2021 SDG consultation process, was circulated to all 31 City and County Councils on the 29th July 2021 and was open for a 6 week period. 894 responses were received from a wide variety of officers, including CEOs, Engineers, Librarians, Environmental Awareness Officers, Administrative Officers, Programme managers and Executive planners. The results of the 2021 SDG consultation process with local authorities demonstrated a low level of awareness and engagement with the SDGs [See Annex 1 for more details].

The top recommendations received from local authority respondents for better incorporating the SDGs into their work included:

- The provision of bespoke training
- Development and circulation of an SDG toolkit relevant to local authority work
- The establishment of an SDG network for the sharing of best practice between local authorities
- The appointment of a specific SDG officer or champion within each Local Authority
- Greater communication and awareness raising about SDG-related work and initiatives being carried out within each organisation
- The need for better incorporation and referencing of the SDGs within existing work

For further information on local authority returns as part of the 2021 SDG consultation, see Annex 1.

5.3 Integrating the SDGs into Local Authority work

In order to increase consistency in respect of incorporating the SDGs into the work of local authorities, a number of actions have been developed in direct response to the recommendations received in the local authority survey as part of the 2021 SDG consultation process.

5.3.1 Showcasing, sharing and building on existing initiatives

A number of local authorities are already leading the way to advance the SDGs, including through the incorporation of the SDGs into their Corporate and County Development Plans [See Case Study 3 below], joining/establishing local and/or international partnerships [See Case Studies 4 and 5 below], development of a mapping tool to map SDG-related actions in the Council area [See Case Study 10 in Section 7.2.2], provision of training and holding information events with external groups including universities, PPNs, Tidy Towns and Creative Ireland. It is important that these existing initiatives are highlighted, showcased and

learnings shared with other local authorities to build momentum and knowledge of the SDGs and how best to implement them at local level.

As part of the action to further develop the SDG Geohive, a local authority sector section will be developed to facilitate the sharing of SDG-related initiatives, materials and best practice. See Section 6.3 for further detail on the action relating to the Geohive. The development of an SDG newsletter [Section 6.4] will also serve as additional means to share news or details of upcoming events.

Case Study 3: Dublin City Council– Corporate Plan 2020-2024

The current [Dublin City Council Corporate Plan 2020-2024](#), for the first time includes a clear link from the City Council's goals and priorities to the UN Sustainable Development Goals and to the goals of the Dublin City Local Economic and Community Plan. The Corporate Plan 2020-2024 has seven goals:

1. To Work towards Achieving a Green Low Carbon City
2. To Build Safe, Thriving Neighbourhoods
3. To Continue to Grow a Strong, Diverse Economy
4. To Promote Compact Growth with Connected Infrastructure
5. To Support and Engage Active, Inclusive Communities
6. To Sustain a Vibrant Cultural Life
7. To Become a More Responsive Innovative City

The City Council is committed to creating a sustainable city which is environmentally bearable and socially equitable into the future. The SDGs provide a shared blueprint for such a future. As part of the plan-making process, 30 of the City Council's statutory and corporate plans and policies were mapped against the 17 SDGs to show areas where the Council is making a high, moderate or low contribution to the goals. The Council also mapped how the goals and priority objectives of this Plan will contribute to achieving the SDGs and how the Council can use them to frame and guide it's work over the 2020-2024 period.

The mapping exercise identified 12 SDGs to which this Plan will actively contribute. Over the course of this Plan, Dublin City Council will continue to develop ways to frame Council work in the context of the SDGs. Linking the goals and priority objectives of this plan to the SDGs is the first step towards this.



Dublin City Council
Comhairle Cathrach Bhaile Átha Cliath

Current level of Dublin City Council contribution towards the UN Sustainable Development Goals	
High contribution	       
Medium contribution	  
Low contribution	     

Image capturing Dublin City Council's contribution to the SDGs

5.3.2. Capacity building and awareness raising

A fundamental step to increase engagement with and ownership of Agenda 2030 is to ensure knowledge and understanding of the objectives and principles of Agenda 2030, how the Agenda relates to the work of local authorities and the important role local authorities play in its progression. As part of this Implementation Plan, bespoke training and SDG toolkits for local authorities will be developed which provide examples of best practice and focus on practical application.

As a number of local authorities indicated that they had already rolled out training within their own organisation, which was either developed internally or delivered by the local PPN/university, an initial scoping exercise will be carried out to identify existing resources and their potential for wider application and build on any learnings already gained rather than duplicate any relevant work.

In addition, consideration will be given to the establishment of a local authority SDG network. A quarter of respondents to the local authority survey were interested in the establishment of an SDG network. Some respondents focused on a network which included representatives coming together from all City and County Councils to share their experiences, learnings and initiatives. Other respondents expressed more interest in the sharing of best practice and actions within their own organisation by way of an internal network, seminars or town halls. As an initial step, a review will be carried out of existing networks to determine whether SDGs can be incorporated into the work/agenda of these networks or whether a specific SDG network is required.

A further recommendation received as part of the consultation process was for the appointment of an SDG champion/point of contact within each local authority to drive initiative, further consolidate the integration of the SDGs within Local Authorities and co-ordinate practices across the organisation. Different opinions were expressed regarding where the role should sit.

Related Actions:

Action 25 Local Authority SDG training				
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
25(a)	Identify and review existing training initiatives to assess potential inclusion of learnings/resources into overall local authority SDG training and identify areas which require further development	Q3 2023	DECC	DHLGH, LGMA, local authorities
25(b)	Develop SDG training to be made available to and rolled out across all local authorities.	Q4 2023	DECC	DHLGH, LGMA, local authorities

Action 26 Development of a Local Authority SDG toolkit				
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder Support
26(a)	Development of SDG toolkit for all Local Authority staff, tailored to specific areas of work and showcasing practical information on SDG incorporation and implementation	Q4 2023	DECC	DHLGH, LGMA, local authorities

Action 27 Establishment of an SDG network or incorporation of the SDGS into an existing Network(s)				
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder Support
27(a)	Liaise with the LGMA to review existing Local authority Networks to determine if SDGs can be incorporated or whether an SDG specific Network is required to assist with the sharing of ideas, knowledge and showcase best practice	Q3 2022	DHLGH	DECC, CCMA, LGMA, local authorities
27(b)	Based on the outcome of the assessment at 27a, liaise with the LGMA to implement local authority mechanism for SDG knowledge sharing	Q4 2022	DHLGH	DECC, CCMA, LGMA, local authorities

Action 28 Identify an SDG point of contact in each Local Authority				
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
28(a)	Liaise with the LGMA to consider where the role of SDG point of contact would best sit and at what level, and to identify the profiles and responsibilities attached to the role	Q 4 2022	DHLGH	DECC, CCMA, LGMA, local authorities

5.3.3 Governance and reporting frameworks

A common point noted by respondents in the local authority survey was that while much of the work being progressed in local authorities relates to and contributes significantly and directly to the SDGs, links between that work and Agenda 2030 are not being explicitly made. In order to use the framework provided by Agenda 2030 and identify which SDGs/targets are being prioritised, as well as any conflicts or gaps, it is important that local authority plans and policies are informed by Agenda 2030. It is also important that the work being progressed is reported on and captured centrally.

Six year Corporate Plans are currently in place for the period 2019-2024. The Corporate Plan serves as the local authority's strategic framework for action linking key elements such as policy, the organisation, operational activity, governance and performance. Guidelines were developed at the time for Local Authorities in the preparation of those Corporate Plans. The Guidelines called out a number of cross cutting issues which were to be kept in mind when drawing up the objectives for the corporate plan:

“social inclusion, equality, human rights, climate change mitigation and adaptation objectives and sustainable development must be kept in mind, as should issues of quality service and community leadership.”

While the commitment to Agenda 2030 was not specifically called out in the Guidelines, a small number of local authorities incorporated the SDGs into their corporate plans [See Case Study 3 as an example]. In the lead up to 2025, when new Corporate Plans will be required, it is important that the SDGs and Ireland's commitment to Agenda 2030 are incorporated into both the Guidelines and into the new Plans.

In addition, in order to begin capturing the contributions of local authorities in progressing and achieving the SDGs as part of the Annual National Progress Reports, an SDG local authority reporting mechanism will be introduced as part of this Plan. A review of existing reporting mechanisms will be carried out in order to determine suitability for SDG inclusion or whether a bespoke reporting mechanism is required.

Related Actions:

Action 29	Incorporate the SDGs into new Guidelines and the 2025 local authority Corporate Plans			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
29(a)	Audit of existing Corporate Plans to identify where and how the SDGs have been incorporated and highlight examples of best practice	Q1 2024	DECC	Local authorities, DHLGH, LGMA
29(b)	Develop guidance on key Agenda 2030 considerations and SDG inclusion in the 2025-2031 Corporate Plans	Q1 2024	DECC	Local authorities, DHLGH, LGMA

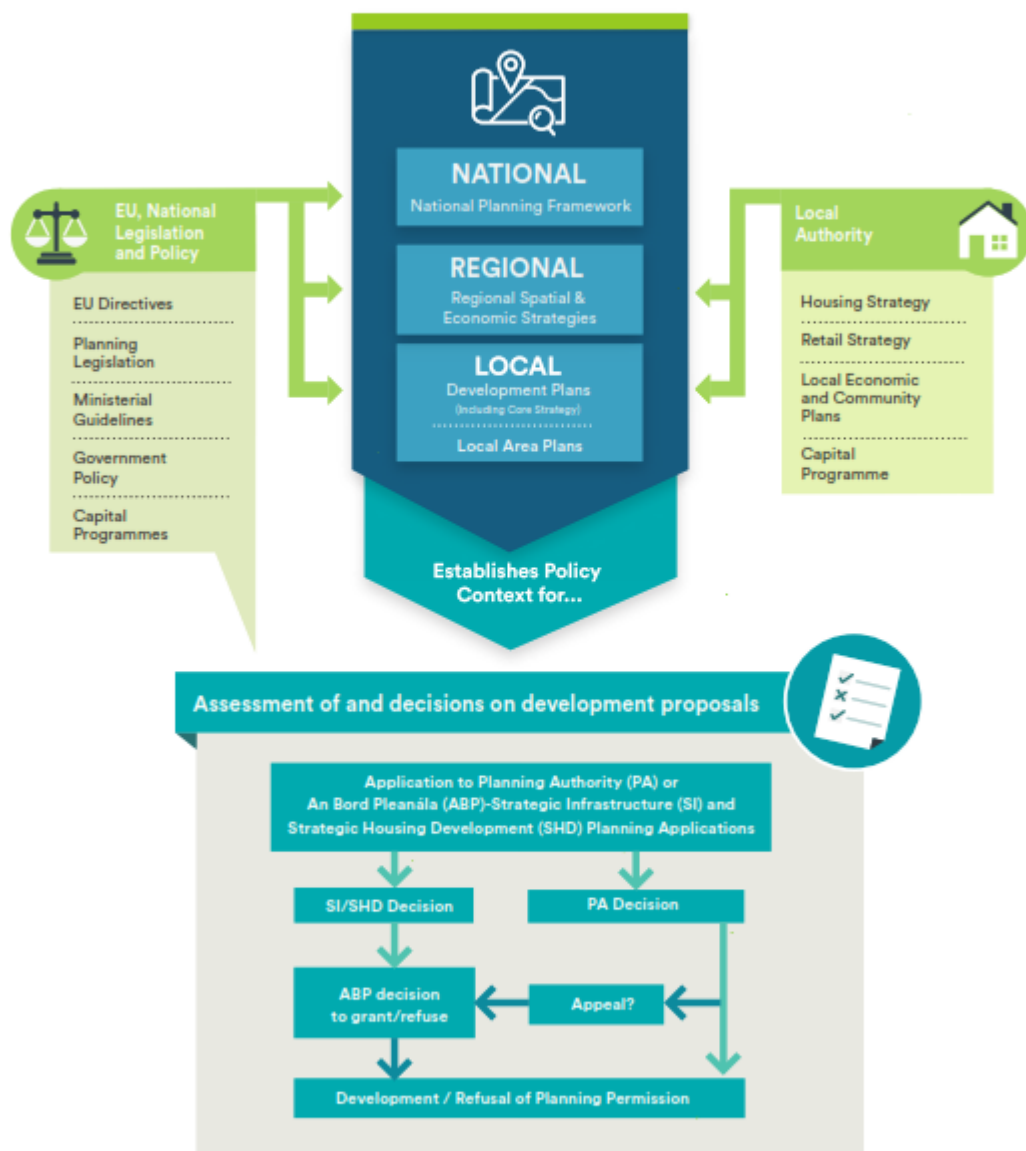
Action 30	Consider how best to report on work undertaken by local authorities which advances the SDGs			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder Support
30(a)	Liaise with the LGMA to review existing annual local authority reporting mechanisms across each local authority to assess solutions for the inclusion of the SDGs into the process	Q 2 2023	DHLGH	DECC, CCMA, LGMA, local authorities

5.3.4 SDGs within local planning frameworks

City and County Development Plans (CCDP) and the Local Enterprise and Community Plans (LECP) make up the local planning frameworks. The LECP reflects the important role of Local Community Development Committees and Public Participation Networks (PPNs) and is covered in greater detail in Section 7.2.2.

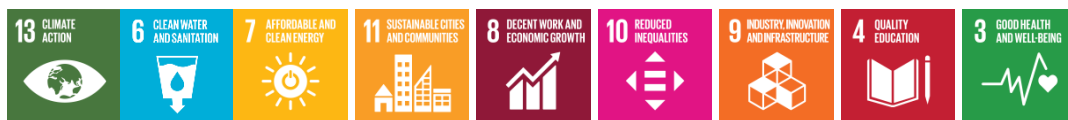
The CCDP and LECP processes are part of a multi-tiered approach reflecting the expanded role of Local Government in planning and in economic and community development spheres.

Irish Planning System An Overview



Under this multi-tiered approach, Project Ireland 2040 is the government's long-term overarching strategy to make Ireland a better country for all and to build a more resilient and sustainable future. It comprises the [National Planning Framework](#) (NPF) to 2040 and the [National Development Plan](#) (NDP) 2021-2030.

The NPF is the overarching policy and planning framework for Ireland's social, economic and cultural development and the NDP provides the enabling investment for its implementation. The NPF references significant alignment between the SDGs and the National Planning Framework's National Strategic Outcomes (NSOs), particularly in respect of SDG 13 Climate Action, SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation, SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy, SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities, SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth, SDG 10 Reduced Inequalities, SDG 9 Resilient infrastructures and innovation, as well as SDG 4 Quality Education and SDG 3 Good Health and Well-Being.



In addition, the [National Marine Planning Framework](#) (NMPF) feeds into Project Ireland 2040 and brings together all activities in Ireland's maritime area for the first time, outlining the government's vision, objectives and marine planning policies for each marine activity. The Framework details how these marine activities will interact with each other in our maritime area, which is under increasing spatial pressure, and ensures the sustainable use of our marine resources to 2040. SDG 14 relating to sustainable use of the oceans, seas and marine resources, is of particular significance to the NMPF as it applies across the maritime area and the Framework also references contributions to SDG 7 Affordable Clean Energy and SDG 13 Climate Action.



The objectives set out in the National Planning Framework are complemented by three Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies (RSES) prepared by the [Northern and Western](#), [Eastern and Midland](#), and [Southern](#) Regional Assemblies, each of which will be in place over this decade of action leading up to 2030. The RSES is required under the *Planning and Development Act 2000* to address employment, retail, housing, transport, water services, energy and communications, waste management, education, health, sports and community facilities, environment and heritage, landscape, sustainable development and climate change. Each of the three RSES reflect Ireland's commitment to Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development. As the regional tier of the national planning process, the RSES ensures coordination between the City and County Development Plans (CCDP) and the Local Enterprise and Community Plans (LECP).

CCDPs and LECPs provide the detailed and coordinated plans to guide and shape the development of communities over a 6-year period.

The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage is currently finalising Planning Guidelines to assist Local Authorities in the preparation of city and county development plans, which set out the international context for plan-making including the incorporation of SDGs into development plans. A certain number of local authorities have already incorporated the SDGs into their plans to varying degrees. As part of this Implementation Plan it is intended to begin capturing existing work, highlighting examples of best practice and build upon to ensure a more consistent approach to incorporation.

Related Actions:

Action 31	Incorporate the SDGs into all new City and County Development Plans (CCDP) and Local Enterprise and Community Plans (LECP)			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
31(b)	Incorporate the SDGs into all new CCDPs and LECPs reflecting how the plan interacts with Agenda 2030	Ongoing	Local Authorities	DHLGH, LGMA, DECC

5.3.5 Partnerships to localise the SDGs

While local authorities play a key role in localising the SDGs, they cannot do this alone and partnerships at local level and internationally will also play a key part.

The role of local authorities in community engagement is set out in more detail in Section 7.2 of this Implementation Plan but it is worth highlighting here the importance of promoting and engaging cross-sectoral partnerships at local level. It is clear from the case studies included in this Implementation Plan that effective partnerships are being formed and utilised as part of SDG initiatives and this should be built on and promoted further. Local authorities, working together with local communities, PPNs, universities, local businesses and organisations and sharing learnings with other local authorities offer a palpable force for change.

There is also great potential to draw from international learnings and for international peer learning. In recent years, the number of cities and communities that are carrying out Voluntary Local Reviews (VLRs) to assess their progress toward specific targets in Agenda 2030 has increased considerably across the globe²⁹.

VLRs are predominantly progressed by local authorities, but also by academia or civil society. A large number of actors have produced useful guidance, tools and reference materials aimed at supporting cities and regions in conducting their reviews of SDG

²⁹ By 2021, some 33 countries had made publicly available 114 VLRs or similar review documents and another 25 reviews are currently being finalised [Toolbox Voluntary Local Reviews, VLR \(unhabitat.org\)](https://unhabitat.org/toolbox-voluntary-local-reviews-vlr)

implementation³⁰, including United Cities and Local Government (UCLG), the European Commission's Joint Research Centre and UN-Habitat. As the European Union will present its Joint Synthesis report at the HLPF 2023 and Ireland will present its second Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the HLPF 2023, this would also be a good opportunity for Ireland to undertake its first VLR and to report at EU, national and local level. The below case studies showcase the potential that partnership at local and international level can offer:

Case Study 4: The Heritage Council - Collaborative Town Centre Health Check Programme

Ireland's award-winning Collaborative Town Centre Health Check (CTCHC) Programme, created by the Heritage Council and its Partners in 2016, aims to establish a collaborative and robust approach to undertaking town centre health checks in Irish Towns. This data-driven programme, which is included in the Programme for Government aims to guide the design, delivery, and evaluation of sustainable environmental management, socio-economic and cultural development, regeneration, and investment programmes - both public and private - at various levels.

The CTCHC Programme supports the implementation of the SDGs particularly Goals 3, 4, 7, 9, 11, 12, 13 & 15. In autumn 2021, EC ESPON selected the CTCHC Programme as a best practice case study, one of five best practice case studies selected across Europe.

Demand for the CTCHC Programme grew exponentially during the Covid-19 pandemic reflecting a growing awareness of quality of life and sustainability issues within the general population in Ireland. There are currently 15 towns in the CTCHC Programme with a further 45 towns on a waiting list to join.

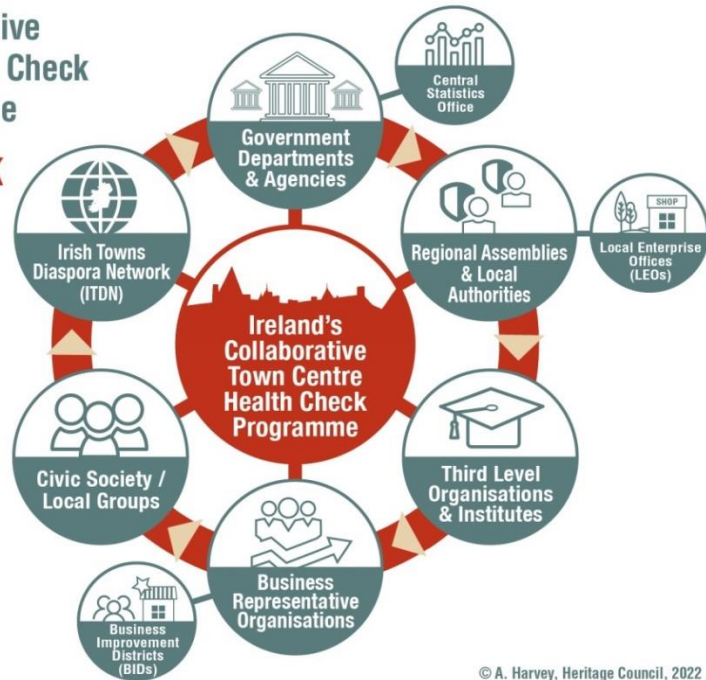
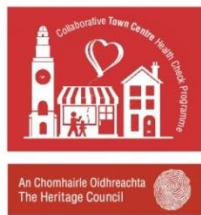
Six unique pillars are at the heart of the CTCHC Programme, including business groups/organisations, third-level institutes (north and south), government departments and agencies, regional and local authorities, plus others from the civic sectors, e.g. schools, along with the Irish Diaspora. This far-reaching collaboration currently involves over 70 partner groups and organisations in Ireland, plus programme partners in the EU, US/Canada, Australia, Scotland, etc.

Ireland's CTCHC Programme seeks to close existing geo-spatial data gaps and to create innovative partnerships and networks, that will ultimately build social capital, enable capacity building and create public value within Ireland's settlements. The CTCHC Programme includes a 15-Step CTCHC assessment process for Phase 1: CTCHC Baselines at the outset of the programme. A methodology for Phase 2: Town Centre & Building Renewal and Investment Plans of the CTCHC Programme has been agreed and is awaiting resourcing to be rolled out. For more information please see: [Collaborative Town Centre Health Check Programme - Heritage Council](#)

³⁰ These resources are available on the United Nations Department of Economic and Social Affairs (UNDESA) website: [Voluntary Local Reviews](#) | [Department of Economic and Social Affairs](#)

Ireland's Collaborative Town Centre Health Check (CTCHC) Programme

How We Work The 6 Pillars



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Stakeholders involved in the CTCHC Programme

Case Study 5: Meath County Council – URBACT project

In September 2020, on the 5th anniversary of the adoption of the SDGs, Meath County Council embraced the global goals. The Council gave a commitment to begin to integrate the goals into plans, policies and communications, create awareness externally and promote the ethos of the goals. This task was under the remit of the Climate Action Team.

A soft launch was undertaken and SDG visuals placed around the building, including in a glass atrium at the side of the building, so when visitors drive towards Buvinda House the goals are the first thing they see. SDG branding and hashtags are used in social media posts as well as SDG hashtags, to subtly create further awareness.

In February 2021, Meath County Council earned a place on an URBACT project to localise the SDGs. This co-funded project offered the opportunity to:

- promote Meath County Council, County Meath and the SDG work already undertaken;
- learn from the other 18 EU cities taking part in the project; and
- benefit from the experience of the Lead Experts assigned to the project.

The project, which focuses on Trim, seeks to create an Integrated Action Plan to localise the SDGs and works closely with a local group of citizens active in community work. Inclusivity is an important element to the group and includes people and representatives from different backgrounds and all ages. Once again the visuals were used to promote the SDGs with Trim Courthouse being lit up with the SDG wheel, which became a talking point!

The project aims to make the Global goals tangible and relevant to the local community by distilling them down to local actions bespoke to the relevant community. The learnings and actions from this project can be replicated in towns and villages across the country.





Trim courthouse lit up with the SDGs

Chapter 6: National Stakeholder Engagement

A fundamental feature of Agenda 2030 is the inclusive and active voice that stakeholders had in both the negotiation and adoption of the Agenda. Achieving sustainable development, and particularly the commitments set out in the 17 SDGs, will require not only action by Government but all individuals across society. Ireland strongly believes that partnerships between governments, civil society organisations, businesses and communities will be essential to achieving the SDGs.

Agenda 2030 recognises the “*collective journey*” progressing the SDGs will entail and highlights the importance of partnerships for the goals under SDG 17.



SDG 17 Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Target 17.17, in particular, aims to “*encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships*” reflecting the need for Governments and stakeholder in both the public and private sectors to work together to achieve the Goals.

Under the previous Implementation Plan, a number of successful national stakeholder engagement mechanisms and initiatives were established which sought to bring together Government and different key stakeholder groups, including civil society, supporting a collaborative partnership approach to achieving the SDGs in Ireland.

As part of the 2021 SDG consultation process, stakeholders were asked to review and provide input on existing mechanisms to ensure this new Implementation Plan is underpinned by an effective and inclusive engagement model which facilitates meaningful multi-stakeholder participation on an ongoing basis.

6.1 National SDG Stakeholder Forum

The ambitious and interconnected nature of the SDGs requires an unprecedented level of collaboration across different stakeholder groups, and appropriate methods of engagement are essential in ensuring all aspects of society have an opportunity to contribute.

The national SDG Stakeholder Forum was established to provide a mechanism for stakeholders to discuss innovative ideas and solutions to further development of the national SDG framework. Including representatives from civil society, NGOs, academia, business, community groups and Government, the Forum aims to facilitate open and inclusive engagement, and develop collaborative partnerships in support of Agenda 2030.

As part of the 2021 SDG consultation process, stakeholders viewed the Forum as an important initiative and engagement mechanism. Recommendations were also received to improve the Forum's structure and objectives, including the need for:

- wider representation and participation in support of a more 'whole of society' approach
- a clear project plan prepared with the Forum, that includes a commonly agreed and shared work programme.
- A greater level of communication and promotion of the Forum to increase awareness of the SDGs and allow opportunities for wider participation
- Action driven meetings, with outcomes more clearly reflected.

For more information on recommendations received in respect of the National SDG Stakeholder Forum, see Annex 1.

As part of this second Implementation Plan, an SDG Forum Committee will be established to redesign an improved Forum format based on Stakeholder feedback. Consisting of representation from all stakeholder groups, the committee will help identify the most appropriate forms of collaboration to ensure stakeholders feel a sense of ownership of the forum and can contribute to the successful implementation of Agenda 2030.

Related Actions:

Action 32	Supporting a 'whole of society' approach to achieving the SDGs through the National Stakeholder Forum			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
32(a)	Establish an SDG Forum Committee to design an improved Forum format based on Stakeholder feedback	Q3 2022	DECC	IDWG
32(b)	Ensure timely promotion of all upcoming Forum events including registration details	On-going	DECC	IDWG
32(c)	Ensure all Forum content is published in an accessible and timely manner, including participation lists, agendas, facilitator notes and details of any resulting actions	On-going	DECC	

6.2 SDG Champions Programme

Established in 2019, the SDG Champions Programme was developed to raise public awareness of the SDGs and to demonstrate, through the examples provided by Champions, that everyone in society can make a contribution to Agenda 2030.

Following an open call for expressions of interest in 2019, 12 Champions were chosen to take part in Ireland's first SDG Champions programme based on the significant public profile they were able to leverage to raise awareness of and promote the SDGs among both the general public and within their own sectors. The Champions, through their organisational practices, helped illustrate ways in which organisations and individuals can contribute to achieving the SDGs.

Originally intended as an annual programme, challenges arose from the COVID 19 pandemic and the tenure of the 2019-2020 Champions was extended to allow for the fulfilment of planned actions and activities as COVID 19 restrictions were lifted.

As part of the 2021 SDG consultation process, existing champions and interested stakeholders were asked to review the programme to ensure its potential was being fully utilised. Feedback indicated it was a popular and successful initiative but certain improvements could be made, including the need for:

- A well-publicised, accessible and inclusive recruitment campaign to attract a diverse range of Champions
- A more resourced Programme which include introductory workshops to support chosen Champions
- A well defined Programme structure, including a work plan setting out clear objectives and outputs for Champions
- More reporting and follow up to showcase Champion activities and allow for peer and industry learning

Ahead of relaunching the next Champions Programme, a dedicated sub-group will be established to develop an improved Programme format based on this important feedback.

Related Actions:

Action 33	SDG Champions Programme			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
33(a)	Establish an SDG Champions Programme sub-group to develop improved Programme format based on Public Consultation feedback	Q3 2022	DECC	IDWG
33(b)	Develop resources to support SDG Champions including a central repository for SDG brand assets, communication strategies and reporting templates to capture Champion activities	Q4 2022	DECC	
33(c)	Launch open call for applications to the 2023 Champions Programme	Q4 2022	DECC	
33(d)	Select chosen Champions and publish full details on Gov.ie	Q4 2022	DECC	
33(e)	Showcase Champion activities on the SDG GeoHive including end of programme review	On-going	DECC	CSO

6.3 SDG GeoHive

Agenda 2030 acknowledges the critical importance of knowledge sharing in achieving the SDGs. Under the previous Implementation Plan, the [SDG Data Hub](#) (hosted on the GeoHive) was developed as Ireland's official platform to collect, analyse and present data on Ireland's SDG implementation progress. Managed by the Central Statistics Office (CSO), in cooperation with Ordnance Survey Ireland (OSi), the SDG GeoHive is a valuable knowledge sharing resource which supports the dissemination of Ireland's SDG related data.

Stakeholder feedback received as part of the 2021 SDG consultation process identified the GeoHive as a welcome and valuable resource. However, respondents felt that some additional work was required to ensure:

- the content is clear, accessible and provides readily available data on all SDG indicators;
- a greater level of communication and promotion of the GeoHive; and
- Easier options to sign up to information alerts, including the publication of progress reports.

In addition, as part of the review carried out in June 2021 [see Section 2.1 for more detail], the requirement for a central repository to map, track and showcase SDG activities taking place across the country was identified. This finding was supported by stakeholder feedback as part of the 2021 SDG consultation process where respondents recommended the need for a mechanism to:

- share SDG-related initiatives, materials and best practice;
- showcase SDG initiatives including Community activity, the SDG Champions Programme, and SDG Forum events;
- facilitate reporting on actions taken; and
- provide information on SDG-related events taking place at the local, national and global levels.

The potential and capabilities of the GeoHive have been reviewed and an early action for delivery under this Implementation Plan will be the redevelopment of the GeoHive into a more collaborative information-sharing platform, allowing stakeholders to access and share SDG information and learnings.

For further information on the GeoHive, visit: www.irelandsdg.geohive.ie

Related Actions:

Action 34	Further development of Ireland's SDG GeoHive			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
34(a)	Carry out a full review of all content on the SDG GeoHive to ensure it is informative, accessible, and up to date	Q4 2022	DECC	CSO
34(b)	Explore opportunities to showcase SDG Community activity and highlight opportunities for individuals to take part and contribute, including details on SDG specific Tidy Town awards	Q4 2022	CSO	DECC
34(c)	Develop an events area, to provide an up to date calendar of events, highlighting news on SDG related events taking place at global, national, and local level	Q4 2022	CSO	DECC
34(d)	Develop a solution to showcase and include sector specific resources and case studies including for	Q1 2023	CSO	DECC
34(e)	Increase public awareness of the SDG DataHub including the publication of SDG Statistical progress reports and upcoming events	On-going	DECC	CSO
34(f)	Continued engagement with relevant stakeholders to develop and showcase SGD initiatives and activities	On-going	DECC	CSO
34(g)	Ensure all content on the SDG GeoHive is maintained, informative, accessible, and up to date	On-going	DECC	CSO

6.4 SDG Newsletter

Raising public awareness of the SDGs and their relevance to Ireland was a key priority in the previous Implementation Plan. As part of the 2021 consultation, we asked stakeholders for recommendations as to how we could better promote the SDGs and help all citizens have an opportunity to engage with the SDGs. The need for greater level of communication around the SDGs, related initiatives and events was the most frequently suggested recommendation, with stakeholders calling for more ways to engage with the SDGs and keep up to date on progress achieved. The development of an SDG newsletter will help keep Stakeholders engaged and up-to-date on progress and relevant developments.

Related Actions:

Action 35	Improve stakeholder communications and engagement			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
35(a)	Develop biannual SDG Newsletter and mailing list to improve stakeholder communications and engagement	Ongoing	DECC	
35(b)	Deliver up to date information on SDG implementation, engagement, and showcase community activities through the publication of an SDG newsletter and targeted mailing list	Ongoing	DECC	IDWG

Chapter 7: Sectoral Stakeholder Engagement

7.1 Business Sector

Business and industry is recognised as one of Agenda 2030's nine "Major Groups", which play a crucial role in sustainable development³¹ and the key role and importance that business has in progressing the SDGs is called out:

"Private business activity, investment and innovation are major drivers of productivity, inclusive economic growth and job creation. We acknowledge the diversity of the private sector, ranging from micro-enterprises to cooperatives to multinationals. We call upon all businesses to apply their creativity and innovation to solving sustainable development challenges. We will foster a dynamic and well-functioning business sector, while protecting labour rights and environmental and health standards in accordance with relevant international standards and agreements"
2030 Agenda, paragraph 67

The role of public-private partnerships, as envisaged under SDG target 17.17³², will be crucial in translating commitments into practical actions and the business sector is an essential partner for investment, job creation, innovation and transformational change. It also has a responsibility to avoid negative social and environmental impacts that threaten the achievement of the goals.

Certain SDGs link explicitly to the business sector, for example:



SDG 8 Decent Work and Economic Growth






SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production

³¹ [About Major Groups and other stakeholders :: Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform \(un.org\)](#)

³² Target 17.17 aims to "Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships".

The majority of the SDGs, however, are reliant on business sector contribution. A few examples are included below:

	SDG 3 Good Health and Wellbeing	For example, occupational health and safety, human rights in the workplace
	SDG 5 Gender equality	For example, equal pay, women in management
	SDG 13 Climate Action	For example, GHG emissions, sustainably sourcing resources

Agenda 2030 offers an overarching framework to the business sector, to inform business strategies, investments, activities, practices and goals and to connect this work with global priorities.

The feedback received from the business sector in the 2021 SDG consultation process, clearly indicated a desire for greater opportunity to engage with the SDGs and for the provision of a mechanism to showcase and report on the work that is being carried out by the business sector to promote and progress the SDGs.

Specific recommendations put forward by the business sector in the consultation process included:

- The establishment of a cross-Government Business Focused Stakeholder Group led by the Department of Enterprise and Trade to bring together fora with complementary objectives and to expand on the current mechanisms for business-sector SDG engagement;
- Coordination of activities relating to sustainability across Government Departments;
- The development of a reporting mechanism to capture actions being taken by stakeholders *outside* of government to progress the SDGs;
- Greater communication on how the SDGs can fit into daily business life; and
- Development of a list of suggested reporting systems for businesses to use when reporting on their sustainability progress.

The review of Ireland's national SDG implementation structures and engagement methods carried out in June-July 2021 [See Section 2.1 for further detail], also highlighted that a number of business-related fora and areas of work had overlapping objectives at their core. Relevant areas of work included the SDGs, Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), Business

and Human Rights and the National Contact Point for the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises³³.

It is important to note that Agenda 2030 recognises the links and requirement to adhere to “relevant international standards and agreements”³⁴, specifically referencing the Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights and the labour standards of the International Labour Organization (ILO). An analysis by the *Danish Institute for Human Rights* shows that 92% of the SDG targets can be linked directly to international and regional human rights instruments and labour standards³⁵.

In order to ensure a holistic and effective approach to SDG implementation, initiatives taken across Government and the business sector should reflect the work being carried out to progress and/or adhere to other relevant frameworks, principles and guidelines. This is especially true given that these principles and guidelines are often used by companies as the basis for their contribution to the SDGs, for example:

- ILO Tripartite Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy
- UN Global Compact Principles
- UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights
- the ISO 26000 Guidance on Social Responsibility; and
- The OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises.³⁶

Based on consultation feedback and analysis, the key objectives in relation to business sector engagement for inclusion in this Implementation Plan are to:

- Explore the most suitable mechanism or forum to better facilitate business sector input on the SDGs and which facilitates the linking of work where synergies and overlapping objectives arise;
- Develop a means to allow for the showcasing, reporting of and sharing of initiatives undertaken to promote and progress the SDGs in the business sector.

³³ [OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises - DETE](#)

³⁴ Para 67, United Nations, [Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development](#), A/RES/70/1, 2015, Preamble.

³⁵ The Danish Institute for Human Rights, [Human Rights and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development: Lessons Learned and Next Steps](#), 2018.

³⁶ This list was taken from the [SDG Compass: The Guide for Business Action on the SDGs](#) developed by the United Nations Global Compact, Global Reporting and the World Business Council for Sustainable Development. A comprehensive inventory of existing principles, standards and guidelines as well as other business tools can be found on www.sdgcompass.or

- Consider how best to include the business sector as a collaborating stakeholder in preparation for Ireland's next Voluntary National Review (VNR) at the High Level Political Forum.

As part of the action to revamp the SDG Geohive, it is envisaged that a business sector section will be developed to facilitate reporting on, sharing of SDG-related initiatives, materials and best practice in business. It will also allow for existing guidance developed by organisations nationally and internationally, relating to applying the SDGs to a business in a practical, tangible way, to be showcased and made easily accessible in one spot. See Section 6.3 for further detail on the action relating to the Geohive. The development of an SDG newsletter [Section 6.4] will also serve as additional means to share news or details of upcoming events. The expansion and relaunch of the SDG Champions Programme [Section 6.2] will provide an important mechanism for SDG engagement and promotion of best practice. Details in respect of stakeholder engagement in preparation for the VNR and relevant actions are captured in Section 3.3.

Section 4.3.1 details steps and actions in respect of Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development. Further progress in the area of policy coherence will be key to ensure that work taking place in different Government Departments on different Agenda and Guidelines is cohesive and that synergies are highlighted and utilised.

Related actions:

Action 36	Establish a suitable mechanism to facilitate business sector engagement with the SDGs which facilitates the linking of work where synergies and overlapping objectives arise			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
36(a)	Assess existing relevant business sector fora and engagement mechanisms for most appropriate means of continuing SDG engagement with business	Q4 2022	DETE	DECC, DFA
36(b)	Based on the outcome of the assessment at 1(a), integrate SDGs as a fixed agenda item in an existing business forum or through an alternative engagement mechanism	Q2 2023	DETE	DECC

Case Study 6: Chambers Ireland – Toolkit for Business

In 2019, Chambers Ireland and their network of local Chambers placed the SDGs at the heart of its long-term strategy recognising that if Ireland is to achieve Agenda 2030 it needs business to get active on building sustainability into their operations and strategy.

Chambers Ireland and the local Chambers have released an extensive SDG Toolkit for Business to encourage employers of every size to advance their sustainability journey by integrating the goals into their day-to-day activities. The Toolkit for Business provides advice on simple ways businesses can incorporate small changes into how they operate to engage with sustainability, gender equality and how they engage their staff in the process.

The SDG toolkit highlights how each SDG links to different aspects of our everyday lives – both within and outside of the workplace – and how the smallest of changes we make can be linked to numerous Goals. The toolkit gives ideas on how everyone can make an impact and is aimed at both those with a good understanding of the SDGs and those who are just beginning to learn about them.

Chambers Ireland is committed to promoting the benefits that come from aligning business with the SDGs, including:

1. Boosting profit margins and making savings across business
2. Gaining greater trust among customers
3. Winning new contracts by appealing to businesses looking to implement a more sustainable supply chain
4. Improving employee retention by working towards a common goal
5. Increasing feelings of stability by developing sustainable plans for the future
6. Growing their customer base by attracting sustainably-minded consumers
7. Improving performance as management and staff work with a greater sense of purpose
8. Strengthening relationships with staff, key stakeholder and partners

The toolkit was based on significant contributions from the Sustainable Business Council (SBC), a Chambers Ireland-led group of experts in the areas of sustainability, citizenship and diversity from across the NGO and corporate sectors.

The Chambers Ireland SDG Toolkit for Business is available from your local chamber.



**Chambers
Ireland**
Advancing business together



Image of Chambers Ireland Toolkit for Business

7.2 Civil Society and Community Engagement

Progressing and achieving the SDGs will only be possible as a “*collective journey*”³⁷. Agenda 2030 recognises that the journey to 2030 will require engagement from across all sectors and all people.

“It is an Agenda of the people, by the people, and for the people – and this, we believe, will ensure its success.”

2030 Agenda, paragraph 52

Ireland is committed to ensuring civil society and the voices of the community continue to be heard as we approach the 2030 deadline for achieving the SDGs.

7.2.1 Civil Society

As set out in Section 6.1 the SDG National Stakeholder Forum and SDG consultation processes encourages and facilitates the participation of all sectors, including civil society as a means to provide feedback and input into Ireland’s approach, implementation methods and reporting structures for Agenda 2030.

Civil society played an active role throughout the negotiation process for the SDGs and this engagement helped to shape Agenda 2030. Ireland recognises that civil society must continue to be meaningfully involved in the implementation of Agenda 2030.

In addition to the SDG National Stakeholder Forum, the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications continues to engage on a regular basis with civil society representatives in relation to developments, plans and measures and to seek feedback and input into next steps as well as developing the agenda for the Stakeholder Forum.

At Ireland’s first Voluntary National Review in July 2018, Ireland included civil society representatives in the official Irish delegation to the High Level Political Forum (HLFP) and part of Ireland’s presentation was delivered by civil society. It is intended that this inclusive and participative approach will be taken again in Ireland’s second Voluntary National Review in July 2023.

³⁷ Para 4, preamble to [Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development](#)

Related Actions:

Action 37		Develop and build effective civil society partnerships for the implementation of Agenda 2030		
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
37(a)	Continue to meet regularly with civil society representatives in order to develop effective partnerships and build on experience and knowledge	Ongoing	DECC	
37(b)	Include civil society representatives as part of the VNR process and in the Irish delegation to the HLPF	Q2 2023	DECC	

Case Study 7: Coalition 2030 – Alliance of civil society organisations for the SDGs

Coalition 2030 is an alliance of civil society organisations working to ensure that Ireland keeps its promise to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, both at home and abroad. Its mission is to transform our world through collaborative partnerships that will free the human race from the tyranny of poverty and want, and to heal and secure our planet. Showing solidarity with those marginalised in society is a key value and organising principle of Coalition 2030, with the goal of ‘leaving no-one behind’, both in Ireland and throughout the world.

Coalition 2030 typifies SDG 17, Partnership for the Goals, as its membership comprises civil society organisations from the international aid, environmental, domestic equality and anti-poverty sectors, as well as trade unions and academic institutions. The issue-based expertise across the Coalition includes themes such as humanitarian relief, youth rights, disability rights, education, volunteering, health and environmental sustainability, to name but a few. Coalition 2030 engages across all 17 SDGs. Its activities include policy and advocacy, research, education and training, public engagement, and communications.

2030 engages with the Irish public and policy-makers to increase their awareness of and engagement with the SDGs. Given that the SDGs are integrated, interdependent and indivisible, Coalition 2030 advocates for a coherent approach in policy-making underpinned by a whole-of-government approach and strong political leadership.

Membership is open to all civil society organisations across the domestic anti-poverty and equality, international and environmental sectors, trade unions and academic institutions. Organisations and institutions that wish to join can find membership details in the Coalition’s Terms of Reference, which can be found on <https://www.ireland2030.org/>.





Photo credit: Friends of the Earth

7.2.2 Community Engagement

We are now in the ‘decade of action’ and community organisations will be vital players in achieving the SDGs. The call to ‘think global, act local’ highlights the fact that universal challenges can only be met through local action. The SDGs allow local action to be placed within a broader global context and become a vital part of the framework to achieve Agenda 2030.

The Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD), in partnership with other Government Departments, promotes community engagement and aims to work across Government to strengthen and build understanding and capacity in local government and the community and voluntary sector to support the delivery of current and future SDG National Implementation Plans.

The [Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities: 5 Year Strategy to Support the Community and Voluntary Sector 2019-2024](#) was co-produced by Government and the community development, local development, community and voluntary and local government sectors. The Strategy recognises the importance of the community and voluntary sector to a healthy, just and prosperous society, and sets out how Government will support the sector over the coming years and beyond. It also seeks to create a vibrant and active civil society, developing opportunities for all communities to contribute, engage and participate in decision-making and policy implementation.

The Strategy highlights that the “SDGs provide a critical framework for community development as they reflect the social justice, economic justice and environmental justice concerns of community work and community workers and designate the processes of participation, empowerment and collective action required to achieve change.”

A number of local and community development governance structures and processes were introduced on foot of the local government reform process and were identified in the previous SDG National Implementation Plan as having the potential to play an important role in the progression of the SDGs at local and community level, namely:

- the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs),
- the Public Participation Networks (PPNs); and
- Local Economic and Community Plans (LECPs).

7.2.2.1 Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs)

LCDCs are groups established in each local authority area and draw on the expertise and experience of public and private people and organisations. The purpose of the LCDC is to develop, co-ordinate and implement a coherent and integrated approach to local and community development.

LCDCs include elected members of the local authority, local authority officials,, representatives of public authorities having responsibility for the provision of services to or within the area of the LCDC and representatives of local community interests.

LCDCs manage the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) at a local level with support from Local Authorities and actions are delivered by Local Development Companies (LDCs).

The previous SDG National Implementation Plan highlighted the LCDCs as having a crucial role to play in helping to concretise the SDG objectives into our individual and communities' behaviours and goals. Under objective 8, the Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities Strategy introduced an action to develop a training programme to raise awareness of SDGs within Local Community Development Committees.

Case Study 8: Offaly Local Development Company – Mapping the SDGs

Offaly Local Development Company (OLDC) is a partnership of agencies and groups representing the community, statutory and private sectors that has been delivering a range of programmes throughout county Offaly since 2009. It is funded by a number of Government Departments and Agencies to deliver a variety of programmes and supports to individuals, communities and businesses in Co. Offaly. Like many other organisations, achievements had been recognised across the vast majority of the 17 SDGs but not recorded or acknowledged formally in any of its programmes.

In order to provide evidence of the delivery on SDGs, OLDC undertook research on three programmes; SICAP, Leader, Tus and RSS from 2018 – 2020 and mapped the outcomes to show the progress across Offaly. The CRM systems of the four programmes were used and a labour intensive process resulted in the matching of programme outcomes to SDGs.

The resulting Report, ['Mapping our Sustainable Goals – an Offaly Local Development Company perspective 2021'](#) highlights the journey undertaken to arrive at the comprehensive map of outcomes and SDGs achieved and includes a number of recommendations for funders, OLDC as a company, communities in Offaly, Just Transition in an Offaly context, stakeholders and other participants in Offaly.

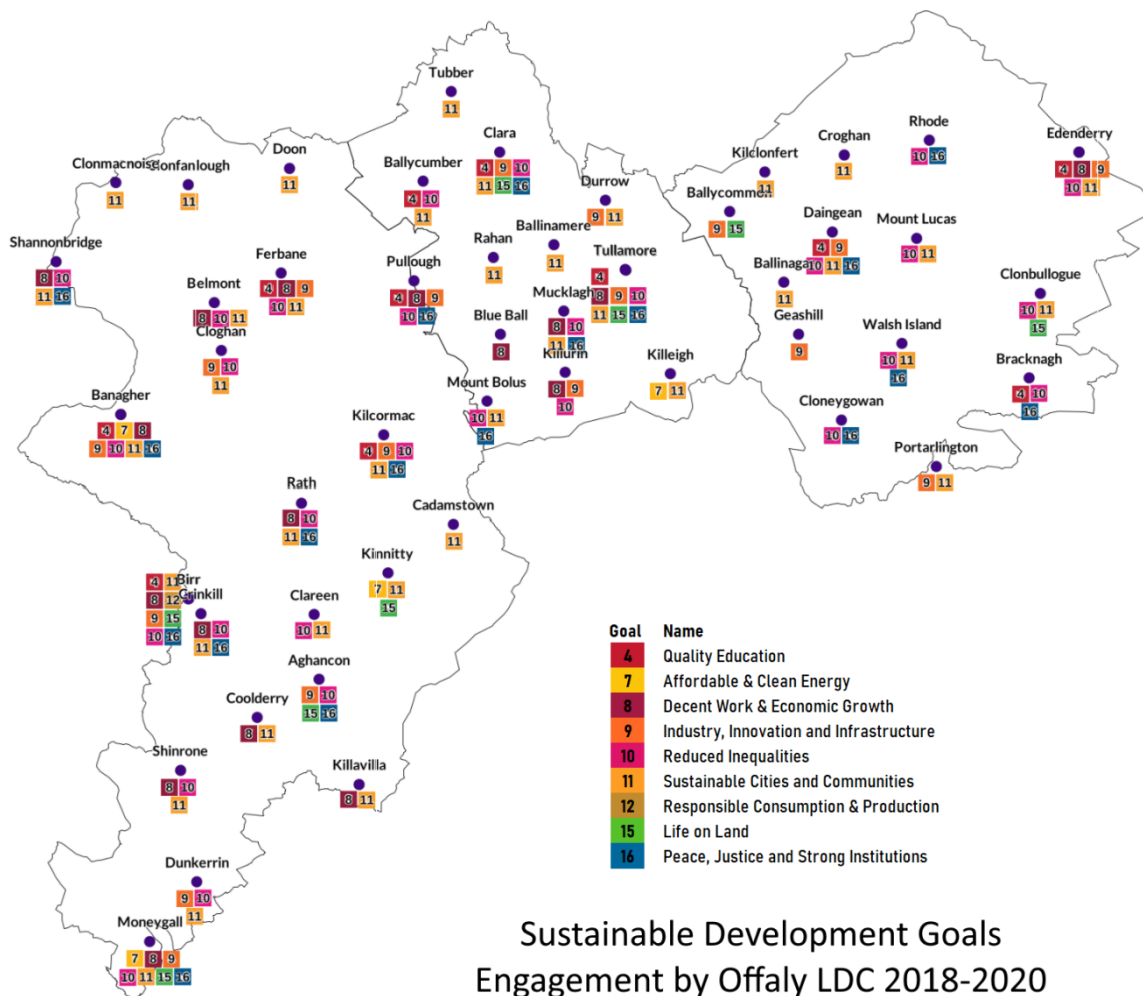
The recommendations include:

- Exploring and prioritising five key SDGs that could be reported on at overall OLDC level;
- Awareness programmes for communities, stakeholders and participants in programmes that could target a single SDG and recognise the progress achieved;
- Ability of funders to map the SDGs through the existing CRM systems used to track and record progress; and
- Recording of SDGs in support programmes involved in or developed from Just Transition.

The Report also includes two case studies which focus on a sustainable future for Offaly and highlight SDG achievement in action in Offaly on the Development of Community Wetlands – Tullamore River and Green Offaly. These projects demonstrate that in-depth, collaborative work is underway in Offaly to innovate and provide platforms for further achievements against SDGs.



Offaly Local Development Company



Mapping outcomes from 'Mapping our Sustainable Goals – an Offaly Local Development Company perspective 2021'

7.2.2.2 The Local Economic and Community Plan (LECP)

The LECP sets out, for a six-year period, the objectives and actions needed to promote and support the economic development and the local and community development of the relevant local authority area, both by itself directly and in partnership with other economic and community development stakeholders.

As specified in article 66B5 of the Local Government Reform Act 2014, each LECP will be developed within the context of the principles of sustainable development.

The [Local Economic and Community Plans Guidelines 2021](#) provide support to Local Authorities and relevant local partners to help them to develop and implement comprehensive and flexible 6-year plans that will support the sustainable development of their areas over the lifetime of the plan. The LCDC in preparing the economic and community elements of a Plan, should have regard to the need to integrate sustainable development considerations into the Plan.

7.2.2.3 Public Participation Networks (PPNs)

Public Participation Networks (PPNs) are established in all 31 Local Authority areas and there are over 18,500 community groups nationwide currently registered with a PPN. Their function is to represent volunteer-run groups from the Community & Voluntary, Social Inclusion, and Environmental sectors in local policymaking. PPNs have huge importance in terms of integrating the SDGs into the work of this sector and many PPNS have already carried out projects related to the SDGs.

Related Actions:

Action 38	Support and facilitate the promotion and integration of the SDGs into the work of the PPNs			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
38(a)	Consult with PPNs regarding the types of tools and knowledge sharing mechanisms that would support the further integration of the SDGs into their work.	Q4 2023	DRCD, DECC	PPNs
38(b)	Based on the outcome and recommendations at 38(a), develop relevant supports	Q1 2024	DRCD, DECC	PPNs

Related actions from the Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities Strategy:

Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities Strategy	Objective 8. Strengthen and build understanding and capacity to support the implementation of the SDGs National Implementation Plan	
8.1	Develop a programme to implement and raise awareness of SDGs for Local Community Development Committees, local authorities, Government Departments and agencies, community and voluntary organisations and local development bodies.	Lead: DRCD DECC C&V sector
8.2	Develop toolkits to develop and proof programmes and plans against SDGs	Lead: DRCD DECC C&V sector
8.3	Support capacity in community and voluntary organisations in relation to SDGs.	Lead: DRCD DECC C&V sector
8.4	Provide supports, including funding, to all sectors to implement SDGs.	Lead: DRCD DECC C&V sector

Case Study 9: Kerry PPN – Awareness raising and linking work to the SDGs

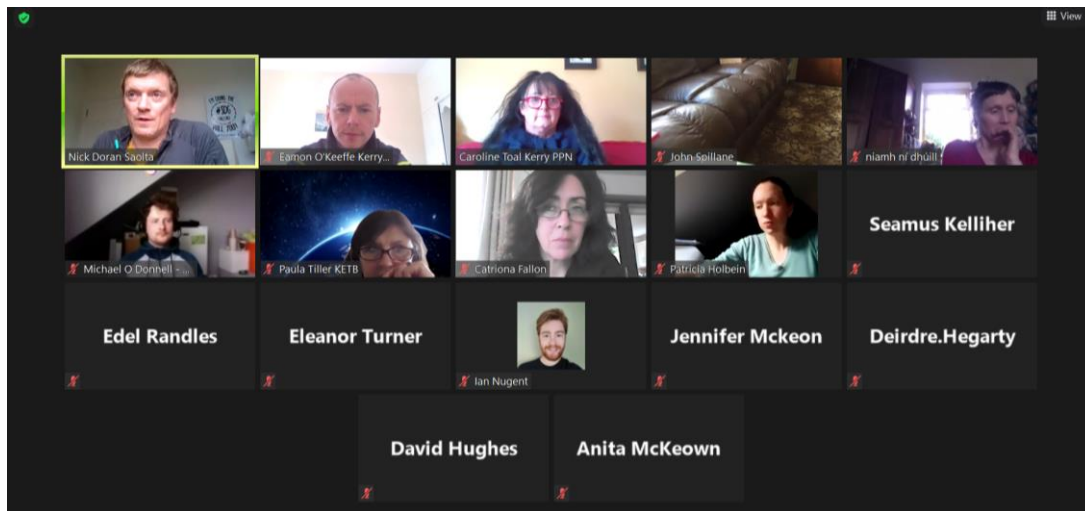
Kerry PPN recognises that the SDGs are effectively a roadmap for creating healthy, resilient, sustainable communities for us and for future generations. Over the past few years, the Kerry PPN has hosted various workshops to inform and educate the community voluntary and statutory sector regarding the SDGs and how to connect and build global to local into any developments that are taking place and to be mindful of them at each action.

In November 2019 Kerry PPN hosted an SDG workshop titled *“Bringing the Global Goals to Life in your community”* in collaboration with the Irish Environmental Network and Cultivate, the practical sustainability organisation focusing on education and community resilience in County Kerry. This interactive workshop enabled attendees to:

- Become familiar with the SDGs and map them to local issues.
- Look at how to align their organisation or group’s plans and strategies to the SDGs.
- Explore how the SDGs connect to goals and targets in the Kerry’s Local Economic and Community Plan.
- Find out more about upcoming funding opportunities relating to the SDGs
- Receive free resources on the SDGs.

In 2021, the Kerry PPN also supported an SDG online workshop for groups and organisations titled *“Introduction to the SDGs with Kerry PPN”*. The training highlighted the relevance of the SDGs in a local-specific context and also the potential that Development Education has in creating transformative change in communities.

Kerry PPN has also adopted and applied the SDGs and integrated them in to plans and into the Community Wellbeing Vision that was developed in the county, both at Municipal and County level. The completed Community Wellbeing Vision Digest integrated the SDGs in each of the vision statements and recognised them as a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity. The SDGs are also highlighted in the Kerry PPN Community newsletter and website and the SDG material and the toolkit are made available to groups and organisations to apply to their areas of work.



Participants at Kerry PPN's SDG workshop

Case Study 10: Wicklow County Council and Wicklow PPN – Mapping the SDGs

Wicklow County Council developed a mapping tool for actions which deliver on the Sustainable Development Goals. The aims are to:

- Share information on projects and actions delivering on targets.
- Make people more aware of the individual SDGs.
- Demonstrate how the local authority delivers on the goals itself and also partners with communities.
- Allow community groups to demonstrate their work on the goals.
- Allow people to see what's being done in their area.

Any type of actions can be mapped including projects, policy development, campaigns or educational initiatives once it can be demonstrated that it is delivering progress for one or more of the targets set for the seventeen goals. Actions can be delivered by local government services, by local community groups or through partnership.

The map displays the action tagged to a location. A unique tag of the relevant SDG is used to map the action to the goal it addresses. All 17 SDGs are displayed on the sidebar to the right and users have the option to select specific goals for display on the map. The side bar to the left shows a project photo and a description of the action for a selection of actions currently viewed on the map. The mapping project was developed in partnership with the Wicklow PPN to ensure it would facilitate use by members of the network. The PPN led on disseminating information on the map to its members and a webinar was held to launch the map.

The application itself is based on a three-phase method; submit, review and publish. To accomplish this ESRI's ArcGIS Online infrastructure and applications were used. A web form for the map was created using Survey123 Connect. The form itself is embedded within the wicklow.ie website and the information collected is password protected. The form collects brief details on the action along with a photo and location, with the primary and secondary goals tagged. An administrator approves each submission before it publishes and can remove an action if needed.



Image taken from Wicklow County Council's SDG Mapping tool

7.2.2.4 Community Engagement in the Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development

The Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development³⁸ (ESD) includes “Accelerating local and community level actions” as one of the five key priority action areas. The principal objectives under this priority area include:

- **Community linking and collaboration:** Foster, support and expand links and collaboration between education providers and their local communities, NGOs, local authorities to educate, raise awareness and understanding of the need for action and engagement on sustainable development.
- **Local authority engagement:** Local authorities, in coordination with enterprise and all concerned stakeholders in the community, should consider and develop an action plan for how the whole community can become a learning laboratory for sustainable development and an important element of ESD for 2030 country initiatives, providing opportunities for all citizens to become change agents.

A number of community engagement initiatives from the Second National Strategy for ESD have been included below for coherency and reporting purposes.

Related actions from the Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development:

ESD Action	Create opportunities for young people to engage, upskill and use their voice for sustainable development, through Youth-led and youth-focused groups, organisations and networks.	
5.1c	Placeholder – until <i>ESD to 2030</i> published	
5.2a	Placeholder	
5.3a	Placeholder	
5.3b	Placeholder	
5.3e	Placeholder	

7.2.3 Voluntary Sector

The [National Volunteering Strategy \(2021 - 2025\)](#) recognises supports and promotes the unique value and contribution of volunteers to Irish Society. The objective of the Strategy is to expand and reinforce the role of volunteers, and at the same time, assist Ireland’s wider commitments to

³⁸ Include a link once one becomes available

Sustainable Development. The Call for Input for the Strategy highlighted the need for additional investigation and research regarding the role of volunteering and the achievement of the SDGs.

As part of the development of the Strategy, the SDGs were integrated into Strategic Objectives 4³⁹ and 5⁴⁰. An action set out under Strategic Objective 5 is to provide supports for all Volunteer Involving Organisations (VIOs) to implement and raise awareness of the SDGs over the next 5 years. This will be achieved through the development of toolkits to develop and proof plans against SDGs and supporting capacity in VIOs in relation to the delivery of the SDGs.

This is an important action. Ireland's community, voluntary and charity sector makes a substantial contribution to society in general and form a critical part of Ireland's social infrastructure. It is important this work is linked to and forms part of Ireland's contribution to the SDGs. Feedback from the market research carried out as part of the 2021 SDG consultation process for this Implementation Plan indicated that approximately a quarter of respondent engaged in activities were unsure whether the activities they were involved in were related to the SDGs. Given the comprehensive nature of the SDGs this is highly indicative of a lack of awareness of the SDGs. Similar to raising awareness and understanding of the SDGs across national and local government, so that work being undertaken can be linked to the SDGs and subsequently informed by them, this is also an important step across the volunteer sector.

The Department of Rural and Community Development also encourages voluntary activity through the [Scheme to Support National Organisations](#) (SSNO). SSNO provides multiannual funding towards core costs of national organisations in the community and voluntary sector across Ireland.

Related actions from the National Volunteering Strategy

National Volunteering Strategy Action	5. This Strategy affirms the contribution of volunteering at local and national level and commits to developing a cooperative approach between public bodies and volunteering representatives in the advancement of coherent policy. This Strategy also acknowledges the importance of ongoing research into the volunteering community in developing informed, evidence-based policy beyond the lifetime of this document	
55	Develop toolkits to develop and proof	Lead:

³⁹Strategic objective 4: Ethical and skills-based international volunteering can play an important role in delivering results for beneficiaries and in fostering Global Citizenship. A global citizen is someone who is aware of and understands our rapidly changing, interdependent and unequal world - and their place in it. They take an active role in their community, and work with others to make the world more equal, fair and sustainable in the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goals.

⁴⁰ Strategic Objective 5: This Strategy affirms the contribution of volunteering at local and national level and commits to developing a cooperative approach between public bodies and volunteering representatives in the advancement of coherent policy. This Strategy also acknowledges the importance of ongoing research into the volunteering community in developing informed, evidence-based policy beyond the lifetime of this document.

	plans against SDGs	DRCD
55	Support capacity in VIOs in relation to deliver of the SDGs	Lead: DRCD

Case Study 11: The Wheel - Spark Change

The Wheel, Ireland's association of charities and community organisations, partnered with Trinity College Dublin for an Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) project titled "Piloting innovative approaches in sustainable communities towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals in Ireland". The project issued a call to community and voluntary organisations across Ireland to take up the Spark Change Challenge. This involved linking their work to relevant SDGs and tracking their progress through a series of surveys. In return, they were offered mentorship, information and access to The Wheel's Sustainable Communities Toolkit. Throughout the challenge, 55 success stories were documented on a dedicated web platform www.sparkchange.ie.

A total of 39 communities completed the Spark Change challenge, recording impacts on SDGs related to global human welfare, rights, solidarity and environment. The biggest impact was recorded in SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 11 (Sustainable Cities and Communities), SDG 14 (Life below Water) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

Eighteen of the projects were nominated for the Spark Change Awards, which were modeled on the UN SDG Action Challenge Awards and six awards. The winners in each of the six categories were: Mobilizer Award (Go Greener Grangecon); Storyteller Award (St. Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin); Campaigner Award (Belturbet Zero Waste Town); Creative Award (Galway Cheshire House); Includer Award (Family Addiction Support Network, Northeast); and, Connector Award (Community Wetlands Forum).

Spark Change highlighted the importance of community as one of the key factors promoting SDG action, and it provided a platform for communities to connect, share their stories and celebrate their successes. The organisational support and progress provided through the programme were recognised by the participants as key to their success. We believe these lessons can be applied in every community to drive sustainable development from the ground up.

The full EPA report can be read [here](#) and a [guide to the key lessons from the project](#) for community and voluntary organisations is also available.



Participants at the inaugural Spark Change Awards. Photo credit: The Wheel



Students from Scoil Naomh Mhuire in Belturbet at the Spark Change Awards. Photo credit: The Wheel

Case Study 12: Saolta SDG Roadshow

5 days, 2 bikes, 800km, 11 counties, 8 workshops, and 8 meetings with 170 people engaged in person and 657 online views.

Saolta is a Global Citizenship Education strategic partnership programme for the Adult and Community Education sector in Ireland funded by Irish Aid at the Department of Foreign Affairs. Saolta believes that for the SDGs to be successful, the public needs to be aware of and crucially involved and active in realising them.

In June 2021, two team members of the Saolta consortium embarked on an SDG Road Show. The tour consisted of Development Perspectives CEO, Bobby McCormack and the Saolta programme officer Nick Doran, setting off from opposite sides of the country visiting towns and communities along the way while highlighting the importance and relevance of the Global Goals to localities around Ireland.

Outdoor trainings were facilitated throughout the bike tour, introducing the SDGs to communities at each stop. These workshops were based on participatory, experiential learning methods and explored the relevance of the SDGs to local communities and their impact, both locally and globally.

Bobby McCormack set off from Drogheda with a cargo bike full of exciting workshop resources visiting towns across the East coast. At the same time, Nick Doran set off from Sligo and toured the West Coast. Throughout the Road Show, our intrepid SDG cyclists delivered workshops in the likes of Navan, Athenry, Tullamore, while, midway, coming together in Moate the home of Saolta partner Irish Rural Link.

“This bike tour presented the perfect opportunity to convert some of the challenges presented by COVID19 into opportunities. An opportunity to be creative, an opportunity to engage Irish communities and an opportunity for change.” - DP CEO Bobby McCormack.

SDG Road Show 2021 Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sJ1OEx0MYJM>

The team will mount their bikes again in May 2022 and bring the SDG Road Show to communities across Ireland.





Major Frankie Keenan, along with Irish Rural Link staff members James Claffey, Maria Pettit and Mary Keyes welcomed Bobby and Nick from Saolta to Dun na Si Amenity and Heritage Park in Moate as part of the Saolta SDG Roadshow.

7.2.4 SuperValu Tidy Towns Competition



Commencing in 1958, the [Tidy Towns competition](#) has become Ireland's best-known sustainable and environmental initiative, with the primary focus of encouraging communities to improve their local environment and make their area a better place to live, work and visit.

Administered by the Department of Rural and Community Development, the competition has been sponsored by SuperValu since 1991.

2021 saw the introduction of the SDGs into the overall competition process, and the inclusion of the 'Sustainable Development Goals Special Award' aimed at acknowledging the critical role our local communities play in achieving the SDGs by 2030.

From 2023, it is intended to further incorporate the SDGs into the Awards process, with further development of the SDG Special Award, and the development of a centralised area on the SDG Geohive which will give applicants an opportunity to learn from previous Tidy Towns initiatives that have embraced the SDGs.

Related Actions:

Action 39	Further integration of the SDGs into the SuperValu TidyTowns Competition			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
39(a)	Further integrate the SDGs into the awards process	Q1 2023	DECC	DRCD
39(b)	Further develop the SDG Special Award	Q1 2023	DECC	DRCD
39(c)	Development of a centralised 'TidyTowns' area on the SDG Geohive providing applicants with resource material and opportunities to showcase SDG initiatives	Q4 2022	DECC	CSO

7.2.5 Sport and Agenda 2030

Agenda 2030 recognises the importance sport plays in sustainable development:

“Sport is also an important enabler of sustainable development. We recognize the growing contribution of sport to the realization of development and peace in its promotion of tolerance and respect and the contributions it makes to the empowerment of women and of young people, individuals and communities as well as to health, education and social inclusion objectives.”

2030 Agenda, paragraph 37

Sport plays a strong role in Irish society, inherently promoting sustainable development principles and having the potential to:

- Promote youth empowerment, social inclusion and participation, peace, mutual respect and tolerance
- Counter social barriers
- Enhance physical and mental health
- Promote gender equality and reduce gender stereotypes.

The [National Sports Policy 2018-2027](#) recognises sport's positive contribution to many aspects of Irish life including health and wellbeing, social and community development, economic activity, educational performance and life-long learning. One of the high level goals of the Policy is to increase active and social participation of children and adults from all sectors of society in sport.

Sport Ireland, the Statutory Agency for sport in Ireland, is currently undertaking a research project that involves “*Mapping the Irish National Sports Policy (2018-2027) to the United Nations Agenda 2030 Sustainable Development Goals*” in order to capture and highlight the contribution of the National Sports Policy towards the Sustainable Development Goals.

Related actions:

Action 40	Map the Irish National Sports Policy (2018-2027) to Agenda 2030 and the SDGs			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
40(a)	Map the <i>Irish National Sports Policy (2018-2027)</i> to the Agenda 2030 and the SDGs to capture and highlight its contribution.	Q3 2022	Sport Ireland	D/Transport, DECC

Case Study 13: GAA Green Clubs

The GAA is Ireland's largest sporting organisation with almost 600,000 registered members, over 350,000 registered players and over 2,000 affiliated Clubs. When combined with our sister associations, the Ladies Gaelic Football Association and the Camogie Association, the number of Clubs swells to 3,375 with 1,700 club grounds in active use. The Gaelic Games family has more than 400 overseas units.

The GAA Green Club Programme was developed in response to a demand from Gaelic Clubs and grounds for leadership and direction in terms of improving sustainability and climate action. The programme is founded in the GAA's status as a National SDG Goal Champion for SDG 3 (Good Health & Wellbeing), SDG 4 (Quality Education), SDG 15 (Life on Land) and SDG 17 (Partnerships for the Goals).

The GAA Green Club Programme has been designed to transform Gaelic Games clubs into centres of sustainability in their communities, broadening their positive influence beyond the physical benefits accrued by those who play competitive Gaelic Games. It champions the GAA's values of community identity, teamwork, and respect in terms of our place within the natural environment and reinforces our values of inclusion, welfare, and amateur status/ volunteerism, and supports clubs in bringing to life the GAA's vision that 'everyone is welcome to participate in our games and culture, that they thrive and develop their potential, and be inspired to keep a lifelong engagement with our Association.'

The programme is a collaboration with our sister associations the Ladies Gaelic Football Association and the Camogie Association, and the County & City Management Association (CCMA) and the Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs) representing the local authority sector. Formal partnerships with expert organisations have been established across five themes of activity: Energy, Waste, Water, Biodiversity and Travel & Transport.

Through the current pilot phase (Phase 1) of the programme we have engaged 45 Clubs across the island, as well as a number of regional grounds, with whom we are developing a Green Club Toolkit for use by all of our clubs and communities. The successes of Phase 1 indicate the potential of this programme to mobilise the Gaelic Games network and reach communities across the island, to drive implementation of the SDGs.



• **ENERGY** • **WATER** • **WASTE**
• **BIODIVERSITY** • **TRANSPORT**



GAA and Local Authorities at the launch of a partnership to support sustainable communities

7.3 Libraries

Recognising and strengthening the role of public libraries as key stakeholders of Agenda 2030 in Ireland is an important objective of the SDG National Implementation Plan 2022-2024.

With 330 libraries across the country, and present in almost every town and city, Irish public libraries offer significant potential as a means to raise awareness of and promote Agenda 2030 and the SDGs at local and community level. The library as a location for information, knowledge, and facts is one feature. The library as a proactive player who can contribute to concrete actions and changes through initiatives, facilitation, and citizen involvement is another⁴¹.

In addition, libraries can support many specific aspects of the vision of Agenda 2030, including universal literacy, inclusivity and national ownership. They play a crucial role in respect of Access to Information which is captured under SDG 16:

Target 16.10 Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements

Ensuring public access to information is also a key component to foster participation and support the principle of 'Leave No One Behind'. Libraries can promote a range of other targets and goals, including in respect of culture (target 11.4⁴²), climate literacy (target 13.3⁴³) and ICT (targets 5b⁴⁴, 9c⁴⁵, 17.8⁴⁶).

⁴¹ [Sustainability in Danish Public Libraries \(degruyter.com\)](https://www.degruyter.com/doc/sustainability-in-danish-public-libraries)

⁴² Target 11.4 aims to “strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage”.

⁴³ Target 13.3 aims to “Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaption, impact reduction and early warning”.

⁴⁴ Target 5b aims to “Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women”.

⁴⁵ Target 9c aims to “Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020”

⁴⁶ Target 17.8 aims to “Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology”.

The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), of which the Library Association of Ireland is a member, advocates for libraries to be recognised as essential partners for inclusive, sustainable development, through their work to provide meaningful access to information for all:

“Access to information is essential for the empowerment of individuals, the effectiveness of policies, and the accountability of governments. When everyone can enjoy it, it is a driver of sustainable development across all of its dimensions. When it is absent, insufficient or unequal, opportunities are missed, decisions are poorer, and progress is stifled. Libraries are vital in ensuring that everyone can benefit from access to information, making stronger, fairer societies a reality for all.”⁴⁷ [IFLA, 2019]

As part of the consultation process to inform the development of this Implementation Plan, work being carried out by individual libraries to support and promote the SDGs was highlighted. Some of the initiatives mentioned included:

- The creation of an SDG book list and showcasing a goal and the relevant books each month
- Activities and events to highlight the goals to the public and schools
- Participation in campaigns such as “Right to Read”, the “Keep Well” campaign, the “Grow It Forward Campaign”, and “Healthy Ireland”.
- Promotion of events such as PRIDE month and biodiversity week, organising related activities and providing relevant materials.
- Workshops on climate action, fast fashion and sustainability, and building a social economy ecosystem
- An annual Global Women’s Conference hosted in association with Waterford Integration Services

Libraries are sustainable institutions which play a big part in helping to provide knowledge, understanding, and resources to our communities. Building on the work already taking place in individual libraries in respect of the SDGs and promoting the uptake and sharing of best practices across national library systems, as facilitated by The European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations (EBLIDA⁴⁸), offers real potential to promote and localise the SDGs. Libraries, through their various activities, can have a major impact on raising awareness of sustainable development.

⁴⁷ [Development and Access to Information 2019 \(ifla.org\)](https://www.ifla.org/publications/development-and-access-to-information-2019)

⁴⁸ [SDG-KIC: Knowledge and Information Centre - European 2030 Agenda for libraries - European Bureau of Library Information and Documentation Associations \(EBLIDA\)](https://www.eblida.eu/)

As a new 5-year National Public Library Strategy is currently being developed, now represents a timely opportunity to make those links to realise libraries as a key stakeholder and active partner in Ireland for Agenda 2030.

The objective of this Implementation Plan in respect of the role of the libraries is to:

- Raise the profile and understanding of the SDGs across public libraries;
- Build on initiatives currently being held by libraries and share best practice; and
- Launch an annual SDG week to be held in September in libraries across the country to mark the anniversary of Agenda 2030.

A smaller scale SDG week will be launched in 2022 which will be built on and expanded for 2023 and going forwards.

Related Actions:

Action 41	Raise the profile and understanding of the SDGs across public libraries			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
41(a)	SDG Webinar for librarians to introduce the SDGs and Ireland's national approach, share existing initiatives taking place in libraries and learn from international counterparts	Q4 2022	DECC and LGMA	
41(b)	Explore potential to align Ireland's new 5-year library strategy with the SDGs	Q3 2022	DRCD / LGMA	DECC
41(c)	Explore the potential to begin mapping library activities to the SDGs and mapping related data	Q1 2023	DRCD / LGMA	DECC
41(d)	Libraries as a key stakeholder to feed into the VNR process	On-Going	DECC, DRCD and LGMA	

Action 42		Launch an annual SDG week to be held in September in libraries across the country to mark the anniversary of Agenda 2030		
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder Support
42(a)	Send resources and materials for use by libraries during SDG week	Q3 2022	DECC	DRCD, LGMA
42(b)	Plan and hold SDG events to mark SDG week	Q3 2022	All libraries	LGMA, DECC, DRCD
42(c)	Development of a national communications strategy and communication tools for use during SDG week	Q3 2023	DECC	LGMA, DRCD
42(d)	Plan and hold SDG events to mark SDG week	Q3 2023	All libraries	LGMA, DRCD, DECC
42(e)	Report on and showcase activities and events held	Q3 2023	LGMA, DRCD	DECC

7.4 Youth Engagement

Agenda 2030 emphasises the important role that young people have in relation to the SDGs:

“Children and young women and men are critical agents of change and will find in the new Goals a platform to channel their infinite capacities for activism into the creation of a better world.”

2030 Agenda, paragraph 51

“The future of humanity and of our planet lies in our hands. It lies also in the hands of today's younger generation who will pass the torch to future generations.”

2030 Agenda, paragraph 53

As the objective of “sustainable development” is to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs⁴⁹, it is clear that young people, as inheritors of society and future leaders, are key stakeholders of Agenda 2030.

Children and youth are recognised as one of Agenda 2030's nine “Major Groups”, which play a crucial role in sustainable development.⁵⁰ While there is no agreed international definition of the youth age group, the United Nations defines *youth* as including young people between the ages of 15 and 24 with all UN statistics based on this range⁵¹.

The universal nature of Agenda 2030 means that youth should be considered across all Goals and targets. However, there are also a number SDGs with youth-specific targets, including for example:



SDG 4 Quality Education



SDG 5 Gender equality



SDG 8 Decent Work



SDG 13 Climate Action

⁴⁹ Para 27, [Report of the World Commission on Environment and Development: Our Common Future](#), (Brundtland Report), 1987

⁵⁰ [About Major Groups and other stakeholders ... Sustainable Development Knowledge Platform \(un.org\)](#)

⁵¹ [Youth | United Nations](#)

7.4.1 Contribution of youth activism and youth organisations

With youth activism rising and increased connectivity through social media, young people have great power to mobilise, communicate, bring about change and act as a dynamic force for social transformation. Young people are playing a key role in tackling climate change, gender biases and inequalities and youth organisations are leading the way on promoting and facilitating inspiring and innovative projects. Continued support and funding of youth projects and initiatives is an important element for empowering young people to engage and contribute to Agenda 2030.

Case Study 14: ECO-UNESCO – Youth empowerment and engagement

ECO-UNESCO has been working for over 35 years to channel the passion and energy of young people in Ireland into positive environmental action. Working with over 10,000 people annually, ECO-UNESCO is a leading environmental education and youth organization affiliated to the World Federation of UNESCO clubs, centers and associations. In 2015, UNESCO selected the organisation to be one of 80 Key Partners internationally to support the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development, in particular, in the field of Youth empowerment and engagement.

The Sustainable Development Goals have been embedded into the organisation's programmes and awareness is raised of all 17 goals, with particular emphasis placed on the environmentally focused goals. ECO-UNESCO run a range of youth programmes, including:

- **Young Environmentalist Awards Programme** is Ireland's all-island environmental awards programme for young people (10-18) recognises and rewards the work of young people who take environmental action. Working with over 4000 young people, the programme aims to empower young people to build awareness of issues related to sustainability in their schools and locality and promotes actions to improve our environment. It encourages young people to consider the global implications and linkages of local issues and actions.
- **ECO-UNESCO Youth for Sustainable Development Global Youth Leaders for change programme** (funded by Irish Aid) provides opportunities for 200 young people annually to engage in quality development education /education for sustainable development activities to strengthen their capacity to take action on global justice issues by empowering them to act as youth leaders and peer educators.
- **Learning2Change our World** is a secondary schools' programme funded under the World Wise Global Schools Programme providing student training, student council training, teacher training and action project work.

In addition, ECO-UNESCO develop and run youth events and workshops for schools, youth services, youth groups, VECs, community groups, local authorities, youth organisations and others around the environment and environmental issues. A range of training and support programmes are also offered in the area of sustainable development and educational resources and tool kits have been developed over the years. For more information see:

[ECO-UNESCO - Ireland's Environmental Education and Youth Organisation \(ecounesco.ie\)](http://ecounesco.ie)



Young people from across Ireland and Europe with the SDGs at ECO-UNESCO's Youth Summit. The 3-day event saw groups of young people learning more about SDGs 11, 12 & 13 and how they can take more action on them.

7.4.2 Partnerships between youth and national and local government

Achieving Agenda 2030 will require strong partnerships between national and local government and young people to ensure that the challenges and ideas that young people identify are taken on board and their participation in decision-making is facilitated.

International practice⁵² points to a number of key methods for promoting youth participation and empowerment in sustainable development:

- **A strong and effective youth policy**
The creation and implementation of a strong and effective youth policy taking a whole-of-government approach.
- **Involvement of youth in national and local policy design and implementation**
Youth participation in informing policy design, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Recognition of the diversity of young people's experiences and finding ways to engage young people typically left out of participation mechanisms in line with the principle of "leaving no one behind".
- **Involvement of youth in delivering on national and local policies**
Youth participation in engaging with national and local government in delivering on policies and programmes on the ground.
- **Creating formal spaces for youth engagement**
Creation of formal spaces for youth engagement, such as national youth platforms, to provide opportunities for young people to be at the table, bring evidence, inform decisions and influence priorities
- **Youth-led campaigns and initiatives**
Youth-led campaigns which facilitate collaboration and partnership with other young people and stakeholders

In Ireland, a number of key steps have been taken in recent years to increase youth participation across national and local government.

[Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: the National Policy Framework for Children and Young People \(0-24\)](#) expired at the end of 2020, along with many of its constituent strategies such as the National Youth Strategy 2015-2020.

⁵² https://www.un.org/development/desa/youth/wp-content/uploads/sites/21/2018/12/Executive-Summary_World-Youth-Report_07.12.18-1.pdf; and

Restless Development, United Nations Inter-Agency Network on Youth Development and UNDP (2017), pp. 2-3.

The Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY) is now developing a successor policy framework for the period up to 2028. This policy framework will focus on realising the rights of children and young people, and on delivering systemic change to how Government does business, ultimately to improve the lives of children and young people.

It is intended to be a single, composite policy framework, comprising the material previously diffused through different constituent strategies. It will build on the strengths of Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures, such as the focus on 5 National Outcomes and elements of the implementation structure, while addressing issues which have persistently affected children and young people, as well as new issues which have recently emerged. The successor framework will be strongly aligned to the European Child Guarantee, and coincide with the reporting cycle under the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). It will also be informed by youth strategies such as the EU Youth Strategy 2019-2027 and Council of Europe Youth Sector Strategy. It will recognise the specific challenges young people face realising their rights, as set out in a Recommendation from the Council of Europe in 2016.

In addition, the Department of Foreign Affairs now has a dedicated focal point on Youth, Peace and Security (YPS) and has consistently advocated for the YPS Agenda, as well as for children's rights, during our tenure on the UN Security Council.

Child and youth participation in decision making in Ireland

Ireland is a world leader in participation practices, being the first country in Europe to have a dedicated Participation Strategy for Children and Young People, the [National Strategy for Children and Young People's Participation in Decision making](#) for the years 2015 – 2020. Underpinned by Article 12 of the UNCRC, the Strategy set out actions for all Government Departments and Agencies who provide or oversee services which have an impact on children and young people, to ensure that their voices are heard and influence decisions of relevance to their lives.

Structures and supports for participation

DCEDIY has overall responsibility for ensuring that children and young people have a say in matters that affect them. The National Participation Office (NPO), established within DCEDIY, manages and coordinates the activities of the National Youth Assembly of Ireland, Comhairle na nÓg, Dáil na nÓg and the Comhairle na nÓg National Executive, as well as related youth participation initiatives.

- The National Youth Assembly of Ireland is an overarching structure to allow young people (12 – 24 years) to consider issues of national importance and to feed their views into Government policy. The inaugural National Youth Assembly on Climate took place on March 2nd 2022 and a Rural Youth Assembly is planned for later in 2022.
- Comhairle na nÓg are child and youth councils (12 – 17 years) that operate in each of the 31 Local Authority areas across Ireland.
- Dáil na nÓg is a biennial national youth parliament for young people (12 – 17 years), with 200 delegates elected through local Comhairlí. Each Comhairle na nÓg elects representatives to the Comhairle na nÓg National Executive to take action at a national level on young people's vote at Dáil na nÓg. At Dáil na nÓg 2022, which took place on March 26th, young people around the country voted on Equality as the theme for the current National Executive to work on over their term of two years.
- The outgoing National Executive was supported by DCEDIY to examine sustainable transport solutions to the climate crisis, identifying affordability as a barrier to young people's use of public transport, successfully achieving Government commitment to a Youth Travel Card in Budget 2022, at an annual cost of €33m.
- Ireland also supports youth participation on the international stage, appointing two UN Youth Delegates annually to represent the views of Irish youth at a UN level.

Hub na nÓg provides support to Government departments, State Agencies and Non-Governmental Organisations in giving children and young people a voice in decision-making. Hub na nÓg is the national centre for excellence and best practice on children's participation and on the participation of seldom heard children and young people.

DCEDIY, Hub na nÓg and NPO provide advice and support across Government to include the voice of children and young people in decision-making.

The National Participation Framework, was launched in 2020 by DCEDIY to support departments, agencies and organisations to improve their practice in listening to, and including, the voice children and young people in decision-making. Based on the Lundy model of participation, the framework provides guidance for decision-makers on the steps to take in giving children and young people a meaningful voice in decision-making.

As regards international action, the Department of Foreign Affairs works with the National Youth Council of Ireland to provide the opportunity for young Irish people to participate in the UN Youth Delegate Programme. The UN Youth Delegate programme engages with young people, youth organisations, NGOs, government departments and academia in Ireland and further afield. Each year, two young people are selected as Ireland's UN Youth Delegates and participate as members of Ireland's official delegation to the United Nations General Assembly, as well as attending other international events throughout their term. The aim of this public diplomacy initiative is to provide a platform for young people from Ireland to be represented at the United Nations, and to facilitate greater engagement with Irish youth on national and foreign policy issues.

Case Study 15: The National Youth Assembly on Climate

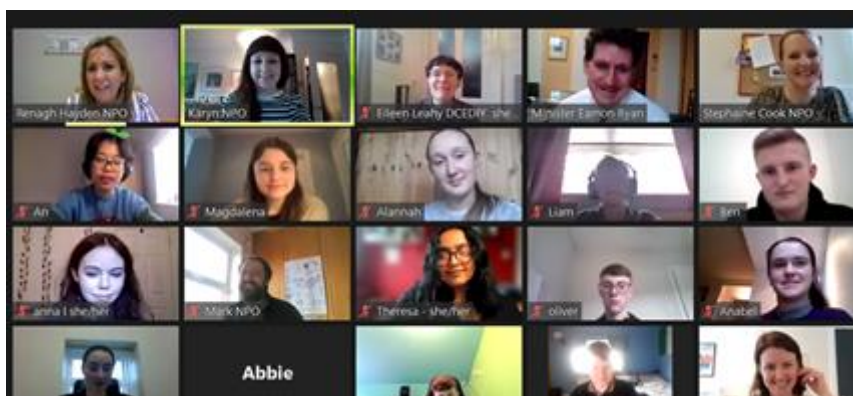
The National Youth Assembly of Ireland was established by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY). The inaugural National Youth Assembly on Climate was a joint initiative led by DCEDIY and the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) under the National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA) and convened online on the 2 March 2022. The NDCA is the central vehicle supporting stakeholder and public engagement on the Climate Action Plan. The Assembly was opened by Roderic O'Gorman, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth and hosted by three members of a youth advisory group. A total of 38 young people attended, including 29 sitting National Youth Assembly of Ireland members and 9 guest delegates who have a special interest in climate action.

Delegates, aged between 12 and 24 years, came from across the country and represent a wide range of youth organisations, climate organisations and Comhairle na nÓg (Youth Councils). In advance of the Assembly the delegates attended a preparation session with Climate experts which allowed them prepare questions to ask the policy makers in DECC. DECC prepared and circulated responses to these questions before the day of the Assembly itself, providing the basis for an informed discussion.

Delegates at the Assembly discussed the climate areas of greatest concern to young people and agreed on four key priority areas to make recommendations for the Climate Action Plan 2022. These were Community Engagement, Transport, Just Transition and Government Goals and Policies. Two recommendations for each of the priority areas were presented to Eamon Ryan, Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications and Minister for Transport who engaged actively in an open discussion with delegates about these recommendations.

The recommendations include the creation of a platform to disseminate climate information and calls for consultations, an increase in subsidised schemes to promote safer cycling, support and education for sustainability for farming and fishing communities and the introduction of eco-labels for food and clothing to help the public make informed climate conscious decisions. A report on the National Youth Assembly on Climate will be issued in the coming months which will be included as an interim report under the NDCA, and be included for consideration by policy makers and sectoral leads under the Climate Action Plan 2022.

Four representatives from the Assembly participated in the National Climate Stakeholder Forum in Dublin Castle on the 22nd of March 2022 and are looking forward to continuing to contribute to this forum.



Young people and the Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications participating in the National Youth Assembly on Climate.

As a number of effective mechanisms are currently in place to promote and facilitate youth engagement and participation in government policy and implementation design, it is important to start explicitly making the links between those existing mechanisms work and the SDGs. Ideas for making those links will be raised with the young people involved in the youth participation structures and further recommendations sought by way of consultations through the Comhairle na nÓg (local youth council) networks.

Initial ideas to situate the work of the Youth Assemblies within the framework of Agenda 2030 for sustainable development would include consideration of the relevant SDGs and targets related to the topic and whether the ideas and recommendations being put forward would:

- Be in line with the principles of Agenda 2030;

- Impact SDGs/targets positively or negatively (or both); and
- Move Ireland closer or further away from achieving Agenda 2030.

7.4.3 Greater engagement of young people in Ireland's Agenda 2030 implementation mechanisms

As Ireland has taken a whole-of-Government approach to Agenda 2030, and as youth participation is a key element of Agenda 2030, it is intended to incorporate guidance on effective youth engagement practices into the SDG training course and toolkits for civil servants and local authority officers [See sections 4.2.1 and 5.3.2].

DCEDIY will support youth engagement as part of agenda 2030 in line with its commitment to promoting the voice of the child in decision-making. DCEDIY is responsible for cross government implementation of the *National Implementation Framework for the Participation of Children and Young People in Decision Making*. Through the use of the Framework, policy makers at national and local level as well as practitioners across all public sectors are supported and understand how to enable the meaningful participation of young people in decision-making processes that have impact on their lives.

In addition, a key objective as part of this Implementation Plan is for greater youth involvement in the implementation and review mechanisms for Ireland's national implementation of Agenda 2030 going forward, including future Implementation Plans, the Voluntary National Review (VNR) process and the National Stakeholder Forum.

To initiate this process, it is intended to hold a bespoke youth consultation process as part of the VNR process to seek feedback, recommendations and ideas from young people which will shape and inform next steps going forward in respect of youth engagement across the SDGs.

Related actions:

Action 43	Incorporate the framework of Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development as a consideration for the work of the Youth Participation structures			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
43(a)	Consult with young people on how they would like the SDGs to be incorporated and linked with their work	Q3 2022	DCEDIY	DECC
43(b)	Based on the outcome and recommendations of the consultation at 1(a), commence using methods to incorporate the SDGs into work of youth participation structures	Q4 2022	All Departments	DCEDIY and DECC
43(c)	Updates from the youth participation structures to be provided to feed into SDG Annual Progress Reports	Ongoing	All Departments	DCEDIY and DECC

Action 44	Bespoke youth consultation process to inform Ireland's next Voluntary National Review Process			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder Support
44(a)	Develop consultation questions and objectives to seek feedback and recommendations	Q3 2022	DECC	DCEDIY
44(b)	Design consultation process	Q3 2022	DCEDIY	DECC
44(c)	Launch consultation process	Q4 2022	DCEDIY	DECC

7.4.4 Youth empowerment in Education for Sustainable Development and Global Citizenship

ESD to 2030 is the Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development aims to support the achievement of SDG target 4.7⁵³, as well as being a key enabler for the achievement of all other SDGs. The new strategy and accompanying Implementation Plan recognises young people as key contributors to sustainable development and aligns with UNESCO's Framework for ESD for 2030 which includes Empowering and Mobilising Youth as one of the five key priority action areas.

A wide variety of actions have been developed to recognise the youth role in sustainable development, support training and development opportunities and tools for young people, create opportunities for young people to engage in youth-led initiatives and to increase

⁵³ SDG 4.7 aims to "ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture's contribution to sustainable development."

awareness and uptake of volunteering opportunities among young people. In addition, as part of the roll out of the [Global Citizenship Education Strategy \(2021-2025\)](#), Irish Aid (DFA) supports the Youth 2030 programme led by the National Youth Council of Ireland, which aims to increase the number and spread of young people learning about sustainable development and global citizenship with a focus on diversity, gender balance and equitable geographic distribution across urban and rural areas. The programme aims at “engaging people from the broadest possible range of backgrounds, including those marginalised from mainstream education”, working with partners to ensure young people from a range of backgrounds are reached, including from migrant backgrounds as well as traveller youth, LGBT young people, young people from faith communities, disabled young people and youth wings of political parties.

All actions supporting the empowerment of youth and youth engagement set out in ESD to 2030 and the Global Citizenship Education Strategy contribute to and are complementary to the objectives of this Implementation Plan. A number of the actions relating to youth-led initiatives have been included below as part of this Implementation Plan for coherency and reporting purposes.

ESD Action	Create opportunities for young people to engage, upskill and use their voice for sustainable development, through Youth-led and youth-focused groups, organisations and networks.		
4.3a	Placeholder - until <i>ESD to 2030</i> published		
4.3b	Placeholder		
4.3c	Placeholder		

ESD action	Raise awareness and understanding of ESD and its centrality to lifelong learning among key stakeholders		
1.3g	Placeholder - until <i>ESD to 2030</i> published		

GCE Action	Increase the number and spread of young people the Global Citizen Programme reaches and work with partners to ensure young people from a range of backgrounds are reached	
	Increase the number and spread of young people the Global Citizen Programme reaches with a focus on diversity, gender balance and equitable geographic distribution across urban and rural areas	Lead: DFA
	Work with partners to ensure young people from a range of backgrounds are reached, including from migrant backgrounds as well as traveller youth, LGBT young people, young people from faith communities, disabled young people and youth wings of political parties	Lead: DFA

7.5 Education

Agenda 2030 recognises the important role that education plays in achieving sustainable development and commits to providing:

“inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels – early childhood, primary, secondary, tertiary, technical and vocational training. All people, irrespective of sex, age, race, ethnicity, and persons with disabilities, migrants, indigenous peoples, children and youth, especially those in vulnerable situations, should have access to life-long learning opportunities that help them acquire the knowledge and skills needed to exploit opportunities and to participate fully in society.”

2030 Agenda, paragraph 25

This commitment is elaborated under the targets of SDG 4 and SDG 4 is recognised as an essential enabler for the achievement of all other SDGs.



SDG 4 Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

In addition, to education playing a key role as part of Agenda 2030, education entities are recognised as relevant stakeholders for sustainable development by the UN under resolution [67/290](#). The Department of Education (DoE), the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth support the contribution that the education sector is making and will continue to make towards Agenda 2030 and the SDGs.

7.5.1 Collaboration for SDGs, ESD and GCE

Through their unique positions in society, schools and further and higher education institutions can foster student leadership for the SDGs which can have a far-reaching and positive influence and impact on their surrounding communities. The SDGs can be used as a framework and tool to support students to develop their research, critical thinking, problem solving, teamwork, and communication skills. The global Goals can also facilitate dialogue and partnerships on sustainable development with other bodies and educational institutions across the country and the world.

ESD to 2030, the Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development, contains a significant number of ambitious actions to further incorporate sustainable development into the curricula and settings of the Irish education system at early childhood, primary, post-primary, further and higher education levels. This includes through:

- Developing existing and new frameworks and tools to monitor and evaluate progress on ESD and enhance accountability;
- Promoting and supporting the use of ESD pedagogies among educators;
- Developing ESD capacity in pre-service and in-service training and assessment of educators at all levels of the education system;
- Further embedding ESD in curricula and programmes to ensure learners acquire knowledge, skills, values and dispositions to promote and advance and take action for sustainable development;
- Ensuring that ESD competencies are core to learning outcomes;
- Developing leadership for ESD;
- Ensuring high quality resources for ESD; and
- Transforming Early Childhood Settings, Schools and Campus environments into places and educational spaces for sustainability

The strategy also aims to strengthen international, inter-departmental and multi-stakeholder coordination, to facilitate information sharing, accountability and engagement on ESD.

Collaboration is recognised as being essential to embed and normalise ESD practice up to 2030. A cross-departmental advisory group will assist in driving and monitoring progress across the five priority areas over the course of the strategy. A number of sub-groups will also be established on particular themes / aspects of ESD, as appropriate, to support the advisory group and facilitate information sharing and exchange of good practice. Fostering and expanding links between education providers and their local communities is essential to the ESD Strategy, which aims for increased dialogue and partnerships throughout the decade to 2030. The strategy also recognises civil society as key contributors to ESD and appropriate representation will be included in structures established to monitor and oversee delivery of the strategy.

Through its Global Citizenship Education Strategy (2021-2025), Irish Aid (DFA) works with a wide range of partners in both the formal and non-formal education sectors, with schools and school networks, higher education institutions, NGOs, youth groups and adult and community groups across the country. Through these partnerships, the public are encouraged to act, individually and collectively, to help build a fairer and more sustainable world for all. A wide range of global issues are covered from climate change to hunger, peace, global inequality and injustice.

There is also a strong focus on raising awareness and understanding amongst the Irish public of the global dimensions of the SDGs.

This strategy supports delivery of high quality curriculum-linked GCE to primary and post-primary school students through the WorldWise Global Schools programme, the Global Village programme and other initiatives. This programme also intends to engage early years learners in global justice issues, engage a more diverse range of primary and post-primary schools and educational settings, including DEIS3 schools and Youthreach, and develop Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and resources for the Leaving Certificate Applied and Leaving Certificate Vocational Programmes. The capacity of educators working across formal and non-formal education will also be built through support to Initial Teacher Education and Continuous Professional Development as well as targeted resource development and building communities of practice within and between sectors. A new strategic partnership will be established with the third level sector, the approach to which will be informed by mapping current levels of integration of GCE in Higher Education Institutions.

Huge work is also being carried out in the area of student SDG leadership and education for sustainable development by environmental and youth organisations to enhance awareness of and progress sustainable development and the SDGs in schools and higher education institutions. Examples can be found in case study 14 relating to the work of ECO-UNESCO and case study 16 below relating to the Green-Schools and Green- Campus programme.

Case Study 16: An Taisce – Green-schools and the SDGs

Green-Schools is Ireland's leading environmental management and education programme for schools operating in over 94% of schools nationwide. The Green-Schools programme provides an ideal way of fostering environmental awareness and action in schools and their wider communities. The programme works on the themes of

- i. Litter and Waste
- ii. Energy
- iii. Water
- iv. Travel
- v. Food and Biodiversity
- vi. Marine Environment

The Green-Schools programme links to and delivers on all of the SDGs, but in particular SDG target 4.7 *“to ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development”*. Through education for sustainable development, the programme can help create a school community that will strive to combat climate change (SDG13) and use aquatic and terrestrial environments sustainably with a focus on protecting them (SDG6; SDG14; SDG15).

AND THE 17 SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS



GOAL 12



GREEN-SCHOOLS STUDENTS GAIN THOUGHTS OF THINGS OF WASTE FROM LANDFILL ANNUALLY. THE GLOBAL CITIZENSHIP THEME PROMOTES RESPONSIBLE CONSUMPTION, ENCOURAGING STUDENTS TO FOCUS ON WHERE THEIR PRODUCTS COME. STUDENTS RECOGNISE THE DANGERS OF GLOBAL POVERTY IN LESSER DEVELOPED COUNTRIES, WHERE THE BASIC NEEDS OF PEOPLE ARE NOT ALWAYS MET.

GOAL 6 & 14



GREEN-SCHOOLS STUDENTS AND TEACHERS TAKE HOLDING OF LITTER OF PROCESSION WATER EACH YEAR AS WELL AS ACTIVITY WORKING TO CONSERVE LOCAL WATERWAYS AND OUR TEACHERS FROM POLLUTION. STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT LIFE BELOW WATER AND WHAT ACTIONS WE MUST TAKE TO ENSURE THE HEALTH OF OUR OCEANS IS NOT DEGRADED FURTHER.

GOAL 7, 8 & 9



GREEN-SCHOOLS STUDENTS ON THE ENERGY THEME UNDERSTAND THE NEGATIVE EFFECT BURNING FOSSIL FUELS TO CREATE ELECTRICITY HAS ON OUR ENVIRONMENT. STUDENTS IMPROVE THE EFFICIENCY OF ENERGY IN THEIR SCHOOLS AS WELL AS LEARNING ABOUT THE INNOVATIVE POSSIBILITIES OF RENEWABLE ENERGY.

GOAL 1, 3, 5, 11



GREEN-SCHOOLS STUDENTS ON THE TRAVEL THEME ACTUALLY TRAVEL TO SCHOOL BY BICYCLE CYCLING OR STOPPING THIS POSITIVE ACTION IMPROVES HEALTH AND WELL-BEING AS WELL AS REDUCING THE AMOUNT OF CARBON EMISSIONS. ON OUR SCHOOLS GREEN-SCHOOLS ACTIVITIES THE GREEN TRAVELLERS OF STUDENTS CYCLING TO SCHOOL AND ARE TO ENSURE ALL LOCAL PEOPLE WILL CONSIDER AND TAKE THE ACTIVITY TRAVEL TO SCHOOL.

GOAL 2 & 15



GREEN-SCHOOLS RECOGNISE OUR NATURAL WORLD TO BE FRAGILE AND ENCOURAGE STUDENTS TO RESPECT AND CARE FOR NATURE. STUDENTS ON THE BIODIVERSITY THEME LEARN ABOUT BIODIVERSITY AND HOW TO PRESERVE LOCAL WILDLIFE INTO THE SCHOOLS, INSPIRED BY GROWING PRODUCE. STUDENTS LEARN THE VALUE OF FOOD AS A RESOURCE, WHICH CREATES AN UNDERSTANDING OF GLOBAL FOOD SECURITY.

GOAL 4, 10, 13, 17



ALL GOAL OF THE GREEN-SCHOOLS THEMES CONTRIBUTE TO ACHIEVING THE SUSTAINABLE GOAL. EVERY SCHOOL SHOULD BE EQUALLY WITHIN THEIR RIGHT TO STRIVE FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE. GREEN-SCHOOLS STUDENTS IMPROVE THE BEST EDUCATION THAT ARE ACTUALLY WORKING TOWARDS MEETING THE GLOBAL GOALS FOR THE HEALTH OF OUR WORLD ENVIRONMENT.

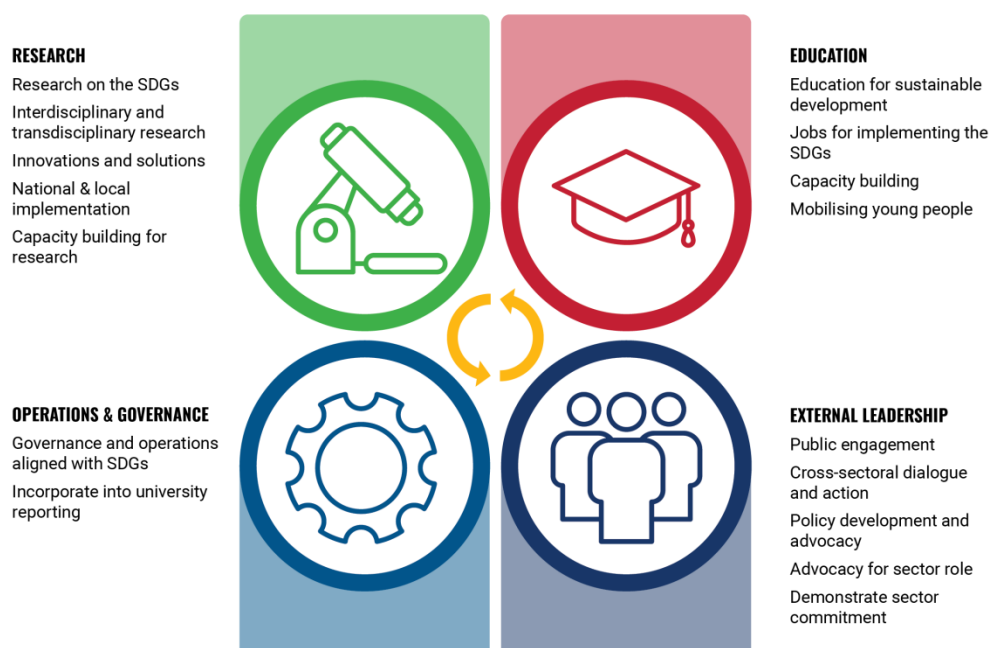
7.5.2 Further and higher education institutions

Growing recognition is being given to the significant impact that further and higher education institutions can make to the progression of the SDGs both as individual organisations and as part of multi-stakeholder partnerships. It is clear from the case studies included in this Implementation Plan alone, that third level institutions are forging ahead and making clear contributions both at national and international level to the SDGs.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Solutions Network (SDSN) emphasises the critical role that universities and other higher education institutions have in helping society achieve the SDGs through their research, learning and teaching, campus operations and leadership⁵⁴. Engaging with the SDGs is also beneficial for third level institutions as part of demonstrating their impact, building new partnerships and accessing new funding streams.

Overview of university contributions to the SDGs

2



Source: SDSN Report on “Accelerating Education for the SDGs in Universities: A guide for universities, colleges, and tertiary and higher education institutions”

Irish higher education institutions are contributing to all four of the above areas. Feedback from the 2021 SDG consultation process highlighted the need for greater collaboration and

⁵⁴ See [Accelerating Education for the SDGs in Universities: A guide for universities, colleges, and tertiary and higher education institutions \(unsdsn.org\)](https://unsdsn.org/publications/accelerating-education-for-the-sdgs-in-universities-a-guide-for-universities-colleges-and-tertiary-and-higher-education-institutions/). The guide includes 5 steps for universities to start and deepen their engagement with the SDGs. Irish universities overall are already progressing a number of these steps. The steps include: 1. Mapping what they are already doing 2. Building internal capacity and ownership of the SDGs 3. Identifying priorities, opportunities and gaps 4. Integrating, implementing and embedding the SDGs within university strategies, policies and plans 5. Monitoring, evaluating and communicating their actions on the SDGs

engagement between Government policy makers and further and higher education institutions on the SDGs. Further information on recommendations received as part of the 2021 SDG consultation process can be found in Annex 1.

7.5.2.1 Research

A key role that higher education institutions play is in respect of identifying evidence-based solutions, building tools and expertise, and developing technologies required for the implementation of the SDGs. Irish higher education institutions have made valuable contributions to the global knowledge and resources developed to assist SDG progression [See for example Case studies 1, 2 and 20].

The 2021 Final Report of the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development 2014-2020, which will be published alongside *ESD to 2030*, noted a variety of SDG-related funding sources including through the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education⁵⁵; the COALESCE⁵⁶ and CAROLINE⁵⁷ programmes of the Irish Research Council; and through the Science Foundation Ireland (SFI).

ESD to 2030 identifies a crucial role for research-led policy development and will support the creation of an enabling environment for research related to ESD and the SDGs. This is in line with UNESCO's recommendations that research at country level ought to underpin and examine the impact of policy advancement across the decade.

⁵⁵ While the Emphasis of NFTL funding is not specifically on research and is often aimed at capacity building etc., it has supported a number of research projects related to the SDGs including: the UCC project "Developing a connected curriculum: integrating the UN SDGs within the UCC curriculum" [See case study 13], the GMIT project "Embedding Sustainability across the curriculum and beyond – stimulating active citizenship for possible sustainable futures"; and the UCD project "Students as partners in a social justice learning environment."

⁵⁶ The COALESCE Programme aims to cultivate new knowledge, evidence, collaborations, and links that enhance the role and impact of Ireland's research community in contributing to the achievement of national challenges and wider global goals, including the SDGs. In 2018-2019, an investment of €6.4m was made in 23 COALESCE projects linked with the SDGs. A further 21 projects are being funded from the 2020 COALESCE call, to the value of €5.4m.

⁵⁷ The CAROLINE Programme has funded a total of 49 researchers under Calls 1-3 (2017-2019), all of whom have undertaken research related to the Sustainable Development Goals agenda. Due to the impact of COVID-19, a new cohort of fellows was not recruited in 2020, however the work of existing fellows is progressing.

7.5.2.1 Exploring further engagement opportunities for higher education institutions in Ireland's Agenda 2030 implementation mechanisms

As part of the project to revamp the SDG Geohive, it is envisaged that a higher education section will be developed to facilitate reporting on and sharing of SDG-related initiatives, best practice and projects. This platform will also allow for existing guidance and resources to be showcased and made easily accessible. See Section 6.3 for further detail on the action relating to the Geohive.

Overall engagement will continue to be facilitated through the SDG National Stakeholder Forum and academic representation will be sought as part of the new SDG Forum Committee. See section 6.1 for more information on the action relating to the SDG National Stakeholder Forum, including the establishment of an SDG Forum Committee.

Consideration will also be given to sector-specific engagement mechanisms, which facilitate the harnessing of expertise in the higher education sector to inform public policy and which allows for the sharing of learnings and approaches in respect of whole of institution approaches to ESD and the SDGs across the sector.

Related Actions:

Action 45	Consider appropriate mechanisms to harness the expertise of higher education institutes to inform public policy in respect of implementation measures for Agenda 2030			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
45(a)	Placeholder	TBC	DFHERIS	DECC, D/Education, DFA
45(b)	Placeholder	TBC	DFHERIS	DECC, D/Education, DFA

Actions to promote incorporating the SDGs into campus operations, supporting the creation of an enabling environment for research related to ESD and the SDGs and promoting leadership for ESD and SDGs are set out in the Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development. These actions contribute to and are complementary to the objectives of this Implementation Plan and a number have been included below for coherency and reporting purposes.

ESD actions relating to: Operations and Governance in Higher Education Institutions			
1.4h	Placeholder - until <i>ESD to 2030</i> published		
2.1d	Placeholder		

ESD actions relating to: Creating an enabling environment for research to inform effective policy and best practice for ESD and the SDGs			
1.5b	Placeholder - until <i>ESD to 2030</i> published		
1.5c	Placeholder		
1.5e	Placeholder		
1.5f	Placeholder		

ESD actions relating to: Leadership			
3.1q	Placeholder - until <i>ESD to 2030</i> published		

Case study 17: University College Cork - SDG Toolkit

University College Cork's SDG [Toolkit](#) was developed as a resource for academic staff to better integrate the SDGs within their teaching practice. The project was funded through the National Forum for the Enhancement of Teaching and Learning in Higher Education. It was developed to support the implementation of the University's Academic Strategy, which includes sustainability as one of six themes within a new "Connected Curriculum", aimed at enhancing the student learning experience through participation.

The toolkit is an open-source web-based resource available to all higher education institutions and is easily adaptable. It features a self-assessment tool and a resource library which includes primary literature, videos, case studies and interactive tools to enhance teaching and learning in both the Irish and planetary context.

The development of the toolkit was a cross university collaborative process. It took a "students as partners" approach, with two members of the student body sitting on the projects multidisciplinary advisory group. To inform toolkit development, 1:1 and small group focus sessions were conducted with over 40 staff and 25 students. Techniques and resources were piloted in 20 lectures across several disciplines at UCC. Six professional development workshops and one intensive professional development design sprint events were also undertaken. Staff who took part in the process commented that 'It was a springboard for course redesign'.

The project team have also developed a Digital Badge, micro credential course, for staff who are interested in taking a deeper look at how their discipline and courses relate to the SDGs. "UCC's SDG toolkit embodies our "student-led, research-informed, and practice-focused" Green Campus programme, which has seen the University consistently rank in the top ten universities globally for sustainability." Professor John O'Halloran, UCC President and chair of the University's Green Forum.





UCC Project team members Dr Maria Kirrane, Dr John Barimo and Dr Catherine O'Mahony

Case study 18: NUI Galway – Advancing the SDGs

NUI Galway recognises the critical role that universities play in advancing the SDG agenda and are committed to sustainability at an institutional level. Sustainability is one of their four core values and a key pillar in the [NUI Galway Strategic Plan 2020-2025](#). NUI Galway has linked the ten Flagship Actions from their strategic plan to the SDGs to shine a light on the role of the university in global efforts for sustainable development and to increase understanding of how the strategic plan relates to the SDGs.

For the launch of the Strategic Plan, University President, Professor Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh, signed the [UN SDG Accord](#) on behalf of NUI Galway; a public statement of the university's intent to align all its major efforts to the SDGs and to share the learnings.

[NUI Galway Annual Sustainability report](#) provides examples of how the university's teaching, research, operations and engagement activities are progressing each of the 17 SDGs. The annual [SDG Research Output paper](#) summarises NUI Galway's performance across the 16 SDGs to identify which SDGs NUI Galway is performing well in and which present an opportunity for further development. NUI Galway is an active member of [UN Academic Impact](#), an initiative that aligns institutions of higher education with the United Nations in supporting and contributing to the realisation of UN goals and mandates.

The university's SDG vision is implemented using a [Learn-Live-Lead](#) model as detailed in our [NUI Galway Sustainability Strategy 2021-2025](#). From a **learn** perspective, the university is striving to embed the SDGs into all aspects of university practice, learning and research so that students gain the knowledge and skills to foster and demonstrate SDG thinking and decision-making even after graduation. From a **live** perspective, the university implements the principles of the SDGs through its campus operations, and from a **lead** perspective, the university is committed to demonstrating leadership in the achievement of the SDGs by promoting sustainability scholarship, social justice, human rights and global citizenship as graduate and staff attributes, by embedding sustainability in operations and investments, and building sustainable partnerships with local communities.



NUI Galway
OÉ Gaillimh



For the launch of NUI Galway's new Strategic Plan 2020-2025, University President, Professor Ciarán Ó hÓgartaigh, signed the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals Accord on behalf of NUI Galway.

Chapter 8: Leaving no one behind

The pledge to leave no-one behind is a core commitment of Agenda 2030.

“As we embark on this great collective journey, we pledge that no one will be left behind. Recognizing that the dignity of the human person is fundamental, we wish to see the Goals and targets met for all nations and peoples and for all segments of society. And we will endeavour to reach the furthest behind first.”

2030 Agenda, paragraph 4

The themes of inclusion, tolerance and empowerment run throughout Agenda 2030 and particular focus is placed on ensuring the needs of the most vulnerable are met. A commitment is given that *“People who are vulnerable must be empowered”*⁵⁸ and Agenda 2030 affirms that it reflects the needs of:

- Children
- Youth
- Persons with disabilities
- People living with HIV/AIDS
- Older persons
- Indigenous peoples
- Refugees and internally displaced persons and migrants

Agenda 2030 also refers to specific areas where no one should be left behind, including:

- Inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels, including access to life-long learning opportunities⁵⁹;
- Promotion of physical and mental health and well-being and access to quality health care⁶⁰; and
- Decent work for all including promoting youth employment and women’s economic empowerment⁶¹.

In addition, given the global objective of Agenda 2030, the Agenda recognises that a ‘*Global Partnership*’ and ‘*spirit of global solidarity, in particular solidarity with the poorest and with people in vulnerable situations*’ are required to ensure its implementation⁶².

Actions which support leaving no one behind can include Advocacy

⁵⁸Paragraph 4, [Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development](#)

⁵⁹ Paragraph 25, [Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development](#)

⁶⁰ Paragraph 26, [Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development](#)

⁶¹ Paragraph 27, [Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development](#)

⁶²Paragraph 39, [Agenda 2030 for Sustainable Development](#)

- The creation of enabling environments,
- Capacity development and supporting civil society,
- Community empowerment,
- Enhancing quality and accessibility of services; and
- Partnerships, including civil society⁶³

Ireland is committed to ending discrimination and exclusion, and reducing inequalities and vulnerabilities that leave people behind. In order for Ireland to successfully implement Agenda 2030, the principle of Leave No One Behind must be embedded within our work practices. Meaningful participation and ensuring a voice for those left behind is key.

Ireland's policy for international development cooperation commits to reaching the furthest behind first in our efforts to support the achievement of the SDGs in developing countries, in particular to tackle extreme poverty and inequality.

8.1 Social Inclusion and meaningful participation

Critically important to the principle of Leaving No One Behind is to ensure social inclusion and the inclusive participation of marginalised groups. Ireland promotes social inclusion and participation through a wide number of strategies and programmes, including:

- [The Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025](#) delivers a new Integrated Framework for Social Inclusion, to tackle inequality and poverty. The Roadmap aims to reduce the number of people in **consistent poverty in Ireland to 2% or less** and to position **Ireland within the top five countries in the EU** under a number of leading social inclusion measures. It contains seven high-level goals, including:
 - Extend Employment opportunities to all who can work
 - Ensure work pays – fair pay, fair conditions for workers
 - Provide income security for older people
 - Support families – reduce child poverty
 - Reduce poverty among people with disabilities – help them to maximise their ability
 - Build inclusive communities – encourage active citizenship
 - Ensure that all people have access to quality services

⁶³ [Interim-Draft-Operational-Guide-on-LNOB-for-UNCTs.pdf](#)

The goals are driven by 66 commitments covering welfare rates, wages, employment creation, education and training, employment supports, family and early learning and care supports, services for people with disabilities and community development.

- [Pathways to Work 2021-2025](#) is the government's national employment services strategy; the government's overall framework for activation and employment support policy. Pathways to Work's goal is to ensure that as many job opportunities as possible are filled by people who are unemployed. A key strand of the strategy 'work for all – leaving no one behind' is designed to support those who were unemployed before the pandemic, those looking to return to work or join the workforce and those facing additional barriers to work, in order to promote better job opportunity outcomes for all.

In addition, Pathways to Work commits to providing targeted employment supports to groups facing additional challenges accessing work such as people with disabilities, lone parents and minority groups, including Travellers.

This strategy also forms part of the Government's response to international and EU policy developments and commitments, including the European Pillar of Social Rights and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.

- [Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities: A Five Year Strategy to Support the Community and Voluntary Sector in Ireland 2019-2024](#) sets out a long-term vision for communities in Ireland and a general direction of travel for Government policy in relation to community development, local development and the community and voluntary sector for the coming years. The Strategy has a strong focus on the inclusion of marginalised communities and sets out that it:

“will support communities in danger of being left behind by the economic recovery. It will secure a voice for the most marginalised communities, providing them the opportunity to identify the needs of their communities and to inform local and national responses that impact them and their well-being”.

Objective 3 of the Strategy is to develop and strengthen processes and mechanisms to secure meaningful consultation, inclusion and participation in local, regional and national decision-making structures, particularly by non-engaging and marginalised communities and their representative organisations. Seven actions were included under this objective with the intended outcome being to increase the level and quality of participation, particularly by marginalised communities, in national and local decision-making structures.

- [The National Disability Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021](#) is the key framework for policy and action to address the needs of people with disabilities. Some of its primary objectives are in the space of participation including the objectives that:
 - The participation of persons with disabilities in political and public life is improved.
 - Public services actively engage with people with disabilities and their representatives in the planning, design, delivery and evaluation of public services.
 - Public sector information is available in accessible formats that are easy to understand. Public services are universally designed and accessible to all citizens.
 - The participation of persons with disabilities in the everyday life and activities of their communities.
 - The active citizenship of persons with disabilities.

A new National Disability Inclusion Strategy is currently under development.

- The [Migrant Integration Strategy](#) is the central policy framework adopted by Government to promote the integration of all migrants who are legally residing in the State. It envisages a whole-of-government approach to enhance diversity, inclusion and equity for migrants across all aspects of Irish society through increased focus on social inclusion measures, improved access to public services and targeted action to address racism and xenophobia.

The Strategy contains 76 actions under a variety of themes, including access to public services and social inclusion, integration in the community, political participation and promoting intercultural awareness and combating racism and xenophobia. Implementation of the Strategy is overseen by a Monitoring and Coordination Committee chaired by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth. The Committee is comprised of senior officials from government departments and agencies and representatives from Civil Society Organisations who are tasked with examining and reporting on issues concerning integration.

A new Migrant Integration Strategy is currently under development.

- The [National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy 2017-2021](#) is a cross-Departmental initiative to improve the lives of the Traveller and Roma communities in Ireland. The Strategy contains ten strategic themes with high level objectives and

actions developed for each. A number of high level objectives relate to increased participation including for example:

- Traveller and Roma children should be consulted appropriately in the development of policy, legislation, research and services.
- Traveller and Roma people should be supported to participate in political processes at local and national levels.
- Targeted supports for Traveller and Roma women to engage effectively with stakeholder groups, including children and young people, which are consulted in the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of actions under the Strategy.

A Review is underway which will inform the development of a new National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (NTRIS). The successor strategy will have a particular focus on implementation and measurement. The current NTRIS Steering Committee which brings government departments and agencies together along with representatives of both Traveller and Roma communities, is remaining in operation during the Review process. Work will continue on implementing NTRIS's actions, many of which remain highly relevant.

The Strategy Committee's role will also be pivotal in developing the consultation process and the content for the successor strategy. The advice provided by Traveller and Roma organisations will directly shape the scope and focus of the next strategy.

- [The National Strategy for Women and Girls 2017-2020](#) is the framework through which the Government pursues actions to advance the rights of women and girls and to enable their full participation in Irish society. The Strategy's vision is to work towards "*an Ireland where all women enjoy equality with men and can achieve their full potential, while enjoying a safe and fulfilling life*". Six overarching objectives are set out in the Strategy including Objective 3 which is to ensure the Visibility in Society of Women and Girls, and their Equal and Active Citizenship and Objective 4 to Advance Women in Leadership at All Levels. Implementation of the Strategy is overseen by a Committee chaired by the Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, and which includes women's groups, civil society actors, the trade union movement and business representatives, and the [Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission](#), the national equality body.

A new National Strategy for Women and Girls is currently under development.

- [The National LGBTI+ Strategy 2019-2021](#) constitutes a comprehensive framework for action on LGBTI+ equality. It includes 108 actions that are directly aligned to concrete outcomes intended to transform the lives of LGBTI+ people across Ireland.

The Strategy takes a whole of Government approach and provides a structure in which Government Departments, public agencies, business groups, employer and employee representatives and civil society can work together collaboratively to develop solutions to such issues. The Strategy contains four thematic pillars including i. Visible and Included; ii. Treated equally; iii. Health; and iv. Safe and Supported.

The Strategy was extended for a further year till the end of 2022. A review will take place in late 2022 which will inform the development of a successor strategy.

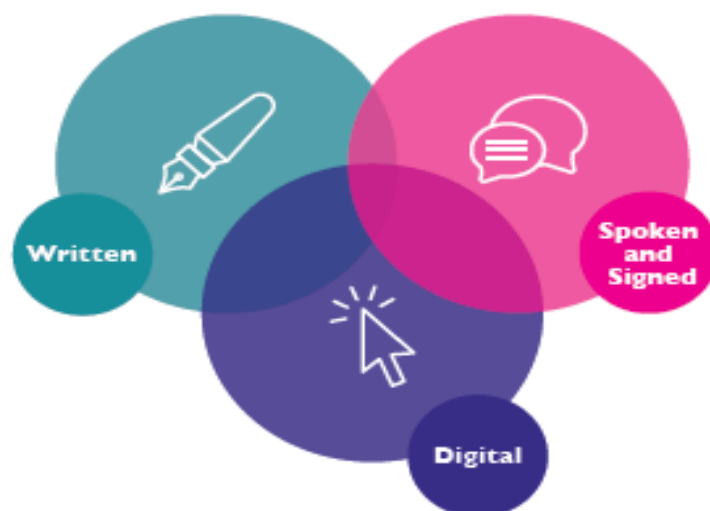
- The [Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme](#) (SICAP) aims to reduce poverty and promote social inclusion and equality. It does this through local collaboration between the Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) in each Local Authority and the Local Development Companies (LDCs) who deliver the programme locally. The LDCs work with the most disadvantaged and the hardest to reach people in communities to help improve their life opportunities and access services such as personal development supports, life learning opportunities and to access employment.
- Supporting the elderly is a major part of social inclusion. The objective of the [Seniors Alert Scheme](#) is to encourage community support for vulnerable older people in our communities, so they can live securely in their homes with confidence, independence and peace of mind.
- A pilot project on participation and engagement of marginalised and disadvantaged communities in the Local Economic and Community Planning (LECP) process was launched this year by the Department of Rural and Community Development. Funded under the Dormant Accounts Fund, the strategic objective of this project is for LCDCs to share knowledge and build capacity to meaningfully engage target marginalised groups and reflect this engagement in their Local Economic Community Plans. Two national-level events will be held (the first at the commencement of the pilot in mid-2022 and the second to share learnings at project end) to ensure LCDCs have increased knowledge on strategies and mechanisms that promote engagement of marginalised groups in LECPs at all stages and in their work more generally. The Project will see 4 pilot LCDCs developing and applying engagement strategies and mechanisms, garnered from national events and project supports, in their LECPs and associated structures. It is intended that as part of this pilot a set of practical tools will be developed, applied and disseminated *for use at national and local level to support engagement and participation by marginalised communities that are flexible and adaptable to the needs of those communities and local circumstances.*

Case Study 19: National Disability Authority – Customer Communications Toolkit for the Public Service - A Universal Design Approach

The [Customer Communications Toolkit for the Public Service - A Universal Design Approach](#), provides guidance to inform the design and procurement of customer communications across the Public Service. The Toolkit is based on a Universal Design approach that enables people of all age, size, ability or disability to access, understand and use any product, service, technology or building promoted by the Centre for Excellence in Universal Design at the National Disability Authority.

Since its publication in 2017, the Toolkit has been widely used across a variety of organisations in the Public Service. The Toolkit is recognised for offering clear and common sense advice. It earned the award for ‘Best use of Plain English by an Organisation’, at the National Adult Literacy Agency Plain English awards in 2019.

The revised version reflects updates in legislation and terminology, and connects to [Our Public Service 2020](#) (OPS2020), the Government reform framework for development and innovation. This Toolkit is now linked to the work of actions two and three of OPS2020, which refer to improving services for our customers and making services more accessible to all. It is intended that the Toolkit be used in the Public Service for planning, training and informing staff and contractors. It contains information that will be useful to many organisations, both public and private. In the Toolkit you will find sections on the design of Written, Spoken & Signed and Digital Communication. The Toolkit sections contain selected statements, examples, tips, checklists and links to learn more.



An Roinn Caiteachais
Fhoiblí agus Athchóirithe
Department of Public
Expenditure and Reform



8.2 Embedding the principle of Leave No One Behind into Ireland's Agenda 2030 implementation mechanisms

Respondents from the 2021 SDG consultation process urged that steps should be taken to ensure that marginalised and under-represented groups or communities are targeted and prioritised in their participation and ownership of SDG implementation.

In order to better explore the concept of *Leave No One Behind* and what it means in an Irish context, an SDG National Stakeholder Forum will be held dedicated to the topic. Broad and inclusive dialogue will be facilitated from a wide representation of groups and communities to develop a shared understanding of the principle and to ensure its further incorporation into SDG planning and reporting structures.

Knowledge gained from this initiative will be used in conjunction with any relevant resources, tools and guidance progressed under the strategies, programmes and projects detailed in Section 8.1 to inform the development of over-arching guidance on the principle of *Leave No One Behind* which will be incorporated as part of the SDG training course and toolkits for civil servants and local authority officers [Sections 4.2.1 and 5.3.2] and considered as part of progressing policy coherence for sustainable development [Section 4.3.1].

In addition, with Ireland's next Voluntary National Review (VNR) for the UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development approaching in July 2023, it is intended that the knowledge and objectives developed as part of the dedicated Stakeholder Forum will help inform and shape the VNR review process. This will help ensure the VNR process will promote active and meaningful participation by all stakeholders and to ensure that those not usually heard, not organised or not empowered to participate are included in the process.

Related actions:

Action 46	Embedding the principle of Leave No One Behind into Ireland's Agenda 2030 implementation mechanisms			
Measure no.	Measure Details	Delivery Date	Lead Department	Stakeholder(s)
46(a)	Hold an SDG National Stakeholder Forum dedicated to the topic of <i>Leave no one behind</i> , capturing learnings and next steps	Q4 2022	DECC	
46(b)	Develop guidance on the principle of <i>Leave no one behind</i> based on the outcomes of the National Stakeholder Forum, research and existing relevant tools and resources	Q2 2023	DECC	DRCD, DCEDIY, DEASP
46(c)	Incorporate guidance into training and toolkits for civil servants and local authorities	Q2 2023	DECC	

Case study 20: Maynooth University and Microsoft Ireland - Achieving Gender Equality through the Just Digital Framework

Researchers in Maynooth University and Microsoft Ireland have developed the 'Just Digital Ethical Framework' in response to the threat posed to the collective achievement of the SDGs by technological advancements, where such advancements are not progressed equitably and inclusively. A point highlighted by the UN Secretary-General in [2019](#).

Conceptualized by Dr Katriona O'Sullivan and published in [Nature Communications](#), this framework sets out that the four strategic drivers of digital - capabilities, technology, infrastructure, and governance- are imperative to achieving equity, education, employment, and full engagement in society. The idea of an 18th SDG is presented which aims to ensure [Digital Connection](#).

A working case study which demonstrates the value of the Just Digital Framework is the [STEM Passport for Inclusion](#). This SFI funded project used the framework to develop a digital intervention through a programme of key activities to support socioeconomically disadvantaged girls obtain the digital capabilities required to engage in the digital workforce. The programme, recently included in national recommendations for [STEM gender balance](#), includes a university accredited digital qualification, a mentoring programme and a digital platform which supported the digital inclusion of 1000 girls from DEIS schools across Ireland. The programme progresses achievement of SDG 5 reducing gender equality and demonstrates the value of the Just Digital Framework as a mechanism for reconsidering how to achieve all 17 SDGs.

As a digitally-advanced country, Maynooth University and Microsoft Ireland believe that Ireland is in a unique position to promote digital equality and ensure that no one is left behind as part of the 2030 Agenda and by utilising digital connection the Just Digital Framework can help this.





Participants of the STEM Passport programme

Chapter 9: Looking Ahead

[This chapter will be developed based on feedback as part of the Consultation process and National SDG Stakeholder Forum on the draft Implementation Plan]