Roinn an Taoisigh
Department of the Taoiseach

# Digital Ireland

## Connecting our People, Securing our Future

**National Digital & AI Strategy 2030**
Prepared by the Department of the Taoiseach
**gov.ie**

# Contents

# Foreword

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Ireland stands at a pivotal moment in its digital transformation, with the rapid evolution of digital technologies and the transformative power of AI reshaping how we live, how we work, and how we interact as a society.

As we look towards 2030, Ireland has a strong digital foundation to build on: our well-established reputation as a digital hub, our exceptional talent base and our vibrant innovation ecosystem.

Through *Digital Ireland – Connecting our People*, Securing our Future, we will put in place the building blocks to harness digital and AI opportunities for competitiveness and continued economic growth; to enhance our digital public services; and to empower our people to thrive in a digital society.

We will continue to be a strong voice in Europe for a digital economy which supports competitiveness and innovation, while also protecting data privacy and fundamental rights.

Safety in a digital world is at the heart of our approach, in particular the safety of vulnerable groups, such as children and young people. As technologies continue to evolve, and new challenges and risks arise, we will ensure that these are addressed in a timely, robust and comprehensive manner.

A renewed commitment to inclusion and accessibility underpins all pillars of this Strategy and we will foster the literacy and societal trust necessary for a confident digital future, as well as ensuring widespread access and connectivity, so that no one is left behind in this digital and AI revolution.

We recognise that technological advancements will inevitably bring disruption, and we will support workers to navigate the impacts of potential job displacement, including through agile and accessible skills supports.

As we accelerate our digital transition across the economy and society, we will ensure a coordinated and outcome-focused approach across the whole of Government, working in partnership with industry and key stakeholders.

**Together, we will deliver a digital Ireland that is confident, connected, and inclusive.**

# Executive Summary

The Government recognises the importance of the digital economy, and the potential opportunities of AI in particular, and is committed to strengthening Ireland's position as a digital leader.

This is reflected in the Programme for Government, which commits to fully realising the economic potential of the digital and AI revolution to deliver effective and modern public services, and to grow the economy.

The Government will **enhance our strategic engagement at EU level,** including through our membership of the D9+ group of advanced digital Member States, ensuring Ireland is a strong voice in Europe for **well-designed digital regulation** which supports competitiveness and innovation.

We will also continue to advocate for an **ambitious and dynamic approach to digital simplification**, supporting the EU's strategic positioning as the location of choice for trustworthy digital innovation, while also protecting data privacy and fundamental rights of individuals.

With many of the global tech companies headquartered in Ireland, we are acutely aware of the inter-dependencies in digital technology. While we support efforts to increase resilience and decrease dependencies in critical digital value chains, we must pursue this in an open manner, maintaining access to critical markets, ensuring interoperability, and protecting international collaboration with like-minded global partners.

As part of Ireland's 2026 Presidency of the Council of the EU, **we will host an International AI and Digital Summit** to showcase Ireland as a digital and regulatory hub, as well as advancing a responsible and competitive AI ecosystem in Europe, reflecting our ambition to be at the forefront of digital innovation.

This updated National Digital & AI Strategy is structured across five strategic and mutually reinforcing ambitions – **Apply, Grow, Invest, Lead, and Empower** – reflecting the agile approach needed to succeed in a fast-evolving digital world.

# Ireland's Ambition
## - An AGILE approach to Digital & AI

The National Digital and AI Strategy will be operationalised across **five strategic and mutually reinforcing ambitions:**

**APPLY**

AI and digital solutions to drive better public services, in an inclusive, human-centric, open and safe manner.

**GROW**

our digital economy, and our profile as a location for investment & Global Hub for Applied AI, to drive competitiveness.

**INVEST**

in Ireland's digital future, including building secure, resilient and future-proofed digital and AI infrastructure.

**LEAD**

as a trusted, agile and forward-looking digital regulatory hub and centre of excellence, and through enhanced strategic engagement on the EU's digital agenda.

**EMPOWER**

our people, workers and businesses, through an inclusive approach, and with a priority on online safety, equipping our workforce with cutting-edge skills, and fostering societal trust and the digital & AI literacy needed to thrive in a digital society.

Together we're shaping Ireland's digital future – **confident, connected, and inclusive.**

# Ireland's Digital & AI Ambition

The Strategy sets out **20 high-level Objectives**, with **90 supporting Deliverables**, reflecting the breadth of activity right across Government to ensure we meet our digital and AI ambitions to 2030.

> We will ensure progress across all areas of this Strategy in order to deliver on our overall vision of strengthening our position as a digital leader and AI hub, maximising the potential of digital and AI technologies as a driver of growth and empowering all of society to succeed in a digital era.

High-level objectives, and key deliverables under each area are outlined below, with the full list of deliverables outlined at Appendix II:

## Apply:
## A Digital Public Service:

We will accelerate a transformational change in how we deliver public services, ensuring that by 2030, 100% of key public services are digitalised, with 90% consumed online. A Life Events approach will reorient service design around key moments in people's lives, with inclusion and accessibility as guiding principles, ensuring no one is left behind.

Responsible, transparent use of AI will play a growing role in public service delivery. Building capacity and driving responsible AI adoption across the public sector will be a key focus, in order to enhance responsiveness and efficiency, and personalise services.

**Key deliverables include:**

- Implementation of Better Public Services 2030 and Digital Public Services 2030
- Our commitment to Ireland's Digital Public Infrastructure; a new Public Service Data Strategy 2030; and ensuring the digital readiness of all new legislation
- A new AI Advisory Unit for the public service, a National AI Fellowship programme for the public sector, launching a new GovTech 2026 Challenge, and supporting all public servants to avail of AI training courses
- Accelerating the digital transformation of our health service through implementation of Digital for Care 2030 and a new AI for Care Strategy; a national electronic prescribing service by 2028; and digitisation of Irish healthcare records and information systems by 2032.

## Grow:
## A Digital, Innovative & Competitive Enterprise Sector & Location of Choice for AI

We are focused on growing our digital economy and remaining a location of choice for investment and AI / Digital startups, and a global hub for applied AI innovation. We will work with our industry partners to achieve our ambitions, strengthening Ireland's attractiveness as a location for global technology business, and driving productivity and competitiveness.

**Key deliverables include:**

- A new targeted strategy to drive AI adoption across key sectors of the enterprise base, with ambitious sectoral targets for AI adoption, and milestones for delivery
- An Enterprise Ireland AI Adoption Roadmap for its client companies, differentiated by sector, and the appointment of AI Sector Champions
- An Observatory for Business AI Readiness (OBAIR), developing intelligence on use of AI by enterprise in Ireland, and an AI and Digital awareness and literacy campaign for SMEs
- Establishing an AI Research Centre of Scale, expanding CeADAR, progressing access to advanced compute capacity, a new AI Regulatory Sandbox, an AI in Research transformation programme to support AI skills needs across the economy, and establishing a Quantum Centre of Excellence
- A new AI Office of Ireland, and continued stakeholder engagement, including hosting an International AI and Digital Summit during Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the EU to showcase Ireland as a digital and regulatory hub

## **Invest:**
## Digital and AI Infrastructure for a Digital Ireland

We are committed to investing in secure, resilient and future-proofed digital and AI infrastructure to grow and support Irish enterprise, to enhance quality of life in Ireland, to support Ireland as a location for investment and to enable world-leading RD&I in Ireland.

**Key deliverables include:**

- Delivering on our digital connectivity targets through an updated Digital Connectivity Strategy, and via the National Broadband Plan; enabling gigabit broadband connectivity to every premise, and strengthening Ireland's international connectivity by promoting and facilitating the creation of new subsea cable connectivity routes from Ireland to Europe
- Strengthening the security and resilience of our digital infrastructure across our networks and sub-sea cable infrastructure, as well as our preparedness and emergency response capacity
- Supporting the development and adoption of transformative digital infrastructure technologies through the sustained growth of our national Advanced Computing infrastructure, establishing Ireland's AI Factory Antenna, and CASPIr supercomputer, as well as supporting strategic pilot digital initiatives in 5G Standalone, quantum and advanced communication technologies

## **Invest:**
## Cyber Security to support our digital journey

We are focused on accelerating our cyber security capacity, skills and adoption, to keep pace with the significant increase in cyber-related risks, by fostering a proactive compliance culture, building our cyber security capacity, and engaging effectively at national and international level.

**Key deliverables include:**

- A new Cyber Security Strategy in 2026, delivering additional capacity for our National Cyber Security Centre, establishing a new Cyber Security Research Centre of Excellence, and providing targeted grant funding for EU NIS2 Directive obligations
- Supporting the secure use of AI in the public sector, though a National AI Cyber Risk Assessment and updated guidance
- Prioritising legislation to implement the EU NIS2 Directive and preparing for implementation of the EU Cyber Resilience Act

## **Lead:**
## Digital Regulatory Hub and Centre of Expertise

We are committed to Ireland's important role in enforcing digital regulation and to strengthening Ireland's position as an EU Centre of Excellence and digital regulatory hub. We will continue to be a strong advocate at EU-level for a balanced, proportionate and coherent approach to digital regulation, which supports competitiveness, innovation and the protection of fundamental rights.

**Key deliverables include:**

- Reinforcing Ireland's position as a trusted, agile, forward-looking digital regulatory hub by enhancing our strategic engagement at EU level to influence and advance the EU's digital simplification agenda, and strengthening cross-sectoral engagement to ensure balanced, coherent and future-proofed digital regulatory frameworks
- Ensuring effective, coherent implementation of the EU AI Act in Ireland, including through a new AI Office of Ireland, and AI regulatory sandbox
- Delivering a predictable, efficient, and responsive regulatory system by ensuring our regulators are sufficiently resourced, maximising timely recruitment and resourcing, encouraging an approach that enables innovation and competitiveness, and working with stakeholders to provide required skills initiatives
- Establishing a new Criminal Justice International Cooperation Office under the EU eEvidence Package
- Fostering collaboration and coordination across the digital regulatory landscape by supporting the enhancement of the Digital Regulators Group and its Secretariat, and reviewing our domestic digital regulatory structures and strengthening digital policy coordination across Government

## Empower:
## Online Safety

Online Safety is a priority for the Government, in particular the safety of vulnerable groups, such as children and young people, and the Government is supporting Coimisiún na Meán to implement our Online Safety Framework. New challenges and risks will continue to emerge with the advent of AI, and the Government will ensure that these are addressed in a timely, robust and comprehensive manner.

We recognise the importance of supporting teachers, parents and families to develop the necessary awareness and skills to protect themselves online. We will continue to build awareness of users' rights on reporting inappropriate, harmful and illegal content and the role of Coimisiún na Meán. Online safety will be a priority for Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2026.

**Key deliverables include:**

- Ensuring our Online Safety Framework is sufficiently robust to deal with emerging challenges and risks, including by adequately resourcing regulators, progressing enhancements to the EU Online Safety Framework, and engaging with the European Commission on additions to the list of prohibited practices under the EU AI Act
- Working actively with like-minded Member States to explore options to introduce age restrictions on the use of social media concentrating, in particular, on those under sixteen years of age, strongly advocating for a decision on the "digital age of majority" to be taken at EU level but taking action domestically if necessary
- Work ongoing through Ireland's National Counter Disinformation Strategy, and on media literacy, and educational supports, including awareness and skills resources to support online safety in schools and developing a national network of Digital Citizenship Champions

## Empower:
## Skills & Talent for a Digital Society & Economy

Through an inclusive approach, we will ensure all groups in society are supported and empowered to embrace AI adoption and thrive in a digital society. We will equip our workforce with cutting-edge skills and foster widespread digital skills, as well as building societal trust and literacy. We will support workers to navigate the impacts of potential job displacement, including through agile, accessible and fit-for-purpose upskilling and reskilling opportunities.

**Key deliverables include:**

- A new Roadmap for Technology Skills of the Future to ensure our skills ecosystem remains responsive and future-focused
- Expanding our research talent pipeline through a second wave of Research Ireland Centres for Research Training
- A new National Skills Observatory to analyse labour market dynamics and skills development across all skills needs, identifying gaps in provision, and enabling additional skills initiatives
- A new online one-stop-shop AI Skilling Platform for employers and individuals, and a nationwide Digital and AI skilling campaign to enhance awareness of opportunities
- The continued digital transformation of the tertiary education system
- A commitment to ensuring that all learners acquire foundational digital skills, digital literacy skills, and media literacy skills needed to thrive in a digital world, across curricula at all levels
- A National Conversation on AI in research to support public engagement and informed debate, and build public trust

# Key Digital Deliverables

01.
Redesign public services around Life Events

02.
All public servants supported to avail of AI training

03.
Ireland's Government Digital Wallet

04.
New Public Service Data Strategy

05.
Digital healthcare records & information systems

06.
National Accelerator Programme

07.
Complete National Broadband Plan

08.
Digital & AI Literacy Campaign

09.
Quantum Centre of Excellence

10.
National Strategy for Advanced Computing Infrastructure and Services

11.
New Cyber Security Strategy

12.
New Cyber Security Research Centre of Excellence

13.
New Criminal Justice International Cooperation Office

14.
Support enhancement of the Digital Regulators Group

15.
Enhance online safety, including a new age verification tool

16.
Nationwide Digital & AI Skilling Campaign

17.
Digital Citizenship Champions for Schools

18.
New Roadmap for Technology Skills of the Future

# Key AI Deliverables

01. **AI Advisory Unit** for public service

02. **National AI Fellowship Programme**

03. **'AI for Care' healthcare strategy**

04. **AI & Digital Summit**

05. **Sectoral AI Adoption Strategy for enterprise**

06. **AI Awareness & Literacy Campaign** for SMEs

07. **Oifig IS na hÉireann / AI Office of Ireland**

08. **AI Regulatory Sandbox -** focus on SMEs & Startups

09. **AI Research Centre of Scale**

10. **Observatory for Business AI Readiness (OBAIR)**

11. **AI in Research Transformation Programme**

12. **National AI Cyber Risk Assessment**

13. **Ireland's AI Factory Antenna & sustainable national HPC/AI infrastructure (CASPIr supercomputer)**

14. **AI Toolkits & CPD for teachers**

15. **National Skills Observatory**

16. **Communications campaign on reporting harmful AI content**

17. One-stop-shop **AI Skilling Platform**

18. **National Conversation on AI in research**

01

Introduction

# Vision & Ambition

# Ireland's vision is to strengthen our position as a digital leader and as a global hub for AI innovation and adoption; harnessing digital and AI opportunities for continued economic growth; and empowering our people to thrive in a digital world, while ensuring that digital developments improve quality of life for all.

The Government recognises the unprecedented pace and scale of recent technological developments, bringing significant opportunities, but also challenges and risks, right across the economy and society. Transformational change is taking place against a backdrop of heightened geopolitical uncertainty, regional rebalancing and wider competitiveness challenges.

Ireland has a strong record as a digital leader, with a high-performing talent base and a vibrant and established innovation ecosystem. This is enriched by the long-standing presence of many of the leading tech companies, and eight of the leading providers of foundation AI models, who have chosen Ireland as their European headquarters.

Ireland stands at a pivotal moment in its digital transformation, with the *Future Forty*[1] report, which sets out a long-term fiscal and economic assessment of Ireland's needs to 2065, signalling the importance of digitalisation as a key determinant of economic growth and productivity. Under a Central Scenario where digital investment continues on-trend over the coming decades, *Future Forty* shows that related productivity growth would result in an average GNI* growth rate of 1.6% between 2025 and 2065.

This Strategy sets out our strategic vision to 2030 to strengthen our position as a digital leader and puts in place the building blocks to harness digital and AI opportunities for competitiveness and continued economic growth; to enhance our digital public services; and to enable our people to thrive in a digital society.

We will build on the significant progress already achieved under *Harnessing Digital – The Digital Ireland Framework*[2], *AI – Here for Good*[3], *and Digital for Good – Ireland's Digital Inclusion Roadmap*, as well as in delivering on the EU Digital Decade Targets[4]. We will leverage our unique and well-established status as a European technology and innovation hub to ensure we maximise the benefits from technological advancement, including through deepening our partnerships with industry to enhance delivery across all pillars of this Strategy.

[1] https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-finance/campaigns/future-forty-a-fiscal-and-economic-outlook-to-2065/

[2] As set out in annual Progress Reports

[3] https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/publications/national-ai-strategy-refresh-2024.html

[4] Appendix I sets out progress to date against EU Digital Decade targets

# Competitiveness & Innovation

The Government is committed to a pro-competitiveness, pro-investment and pro-innovation agenda. We are focused on addressing infrastructure deficits and associated competitiveness issues. Accelerating housing and infrastructure delivery is a priority for the Government, including through implementation of the updated National Development Plan, Action Plan on Competitiveness and Productivity, and Accelerating Infrastructure Action Plan, which includes a commitment to utilise AI and Digital tools to support infrastructure rollout and assist in all stages of infrastructure delivery.

In accelerating our digital and AI ambitions, it is important to acknowledge the significant energy and infrastructure challenges Ireland faces. To address these challenges, and to maximise future opportunities associated with the twin digital and green transitions, the Government will pursue a strategic medium-term approach for large energy users, including data centres, as set out in the Large Energy User Action Plan. This will provide certainty for industries seeking to commit investments in the period beyond 2030 which are aligned with both the continued green energy transition, and growing Ireland's knowledge-based economy.

We welcome that our domestic focus on competitiveness is reinforced by EU-level strategic priorities, driven by the Draghi and Letta reports and the EU's Competitiveness Compass. A strong focus on competitiveness is central to the proposal for the 2028-2034 Multiannual Financial Framework, including the significant European Competitiveness Fund, with digital leadership as a key strategic focus.

We will continue to work closely with the European Commission and the European Parliament, as a priority of Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2026, to progress an ambitious and dynamic approach to digital simplification at EU level, leveraging the Country-of-Origin principle to maximise legal certainty for companies and support the effective functioning of the EU Single Market. This will support the EU's strategic positioning as the location of choice for trustworthy digital innovation, while also protecting data privacy and fundamental rights of citizens.

# International cooperation

It is essential that the EU continues to be a strong voice in the debate on global standards and governance of early-stage technologies. Continued engagement and cooperation on digital diplomacy through relevant multilateral fora is critical and we will continue to advocate strongly for the protection of human rights and a human-centric, multistakeholder approach to global digital governance.

With many of the global tech companies headquartered in Ireland, we are acutely aware of the inter-dependencies in digital technology and the critical importance of international collaboration.[5] [6] Ireland supports efforts to increase resilience and decrease dependencies in critical digital value chains. While we should foster homegrown solutions from innovative EU-based companies, we must pursue this in an open manner, maintaining access to critical markets, ensuring interoperability, and protecting international collaboration with like-minded global partners.

# Safety in a Digital World

As we approach 2030, we will ensure that all of society and our economy can safely and confidently enjoy the benefits of a digital and AI world. The Government is committed to enhancing online safety, in particular for children and young people, as a whole-system priority. Ireland is working closely with our European partners, industry, and other stakeholders, to ensure a coherent regulatory framework that protects consumers and vulnerable groups in particular. This includes supporting work on age verification tools, working with other EU Member States, and through Ireland's Government Digital Wallet, to support robust age verification in a way that protects users' rights, including privacy, while enhancing online safety. The Government will work actively with like-minded Member States to explore options to introduce age restrictions on the use of social media, concentrating in particular on those under sixteen years of age. Ireland will strongly advocate for a decision on the "digital age of majority" to be taken at EU level and that any decision take account of the forthcoming report of the European Commission's expert panel, but will

[5] In line with the D9+ Ministerial Declaration adopted in March 2025 in Amsterdam, Ireland has supported calls for increasing the EU's digital competitiveness and tech sovereignty in an open manner Amsterdam-declaration-d9_-ministerial-meeting-27-march-2025-opgemaakt.pdf

[6] Ireland signed the Declaration for European Digital Sovereignty adopted by all EU Member States in November 2025 https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-enterprise-tourism-and-employment/press-releases/ireland-signs-declaration-for-european-digital-sovereignty/

take action domestically if necessary. More broadly, with the advent of AI, new challenges and risks will continue to emerge, and the Government will ensure that these are addressed in a timely, robust and comprehensive manner. Ireland will hold the Presidency of the Council of the EU in the second half of 2026, and online safety will be a priority, including the protection of women and children, in particular, from the misuse of digital tools.

# AI & Labour Market Disruption

The Government recognises the risk of potential job displacement due to the adoption of AI technologies. The impact of AI on future work remains uncertain, with potentially a broad reach across sectors, including, for example the arts, media and creative sectors. While it will undoubtedly create new opportunities, it also poses risks of jobs and skills displacement. Recent research[7] shows that Ireland is relatively more exposed to AI-related disruption than other advanced economies, with exposure and complementarity to AI increasing in line with educational attainment, and female workers and younger workers more likely to work in exposed roles.

The Government will support workers to navigate and mitigate the impacts of potential job displacement due to the adoption of AI technologies, including through the provision of appropriate skilling, upskilling and reskilling supports.

We will establish a **National Skills Observatory** as Ireland's centre for labour market and skills intelligence. This will be a valuable source of data and insights on key AI metrics, including labour market trends and skills needs. We will also establish an **Observatory for Business AI Readiness (OBAIR)** which will collect data and develop intelligence on use of AI by enterprise in Ireland. OBAIR, together with the National Skills Observatory, will inform Government in shaping future enterprise and jobs policy, and directing targeted investment in upskilling and reskilling initiatives, to ensure that our workforce is supported and empowered to adapt as roles evolve.

# Delivery across Government

The Strategy sets out **20 high-level Objectives**, with **90 supporting Deliverables**, reflecting the breadth of activity right across Government to ensure we meet our digital and AI ambitions to 2030.

Delivering on our digital and AI ambitions will require a whole-of-Government approach to address both key challenges and risks, as well as maximising opportunities. As we accelerate our digital transition across the economy and society, we will ensure a coordinated and outcome-focused approach, improving domestic coherence across government, the public service, and our regulatory framework.

We will work collaboratively to progress delivery across all pillars of the Strategy and in coherence with other relevant Government strategies. Implementation will be driven from the centre of Government by the Department of the Taoiseach, reporting regularly to the Cabinet Committee on the Economy, Trade and Competitiveness. Successful implementation and delivery will be informed by regular engagement with stakeholders, across all pillars of the Strategy.

In a fast-changing world, agility and flexibility becomes ever more important, and we will continue to review and adapt deliverables and ambitions over the lifetime of this Strategy.

[7] https://www.ssisi.ie/_files/ugd/463248_efa9e4cc6b2d4cc282363c71645dae51.pdf

## APPLY

We will **accelerate a transformational change in how we deliver public services**, ensuring that by 2030, every interaction with public services is **simpler, faster, and more intuitive.** We will transform the way services are designed and delivered through systemic innovation, widespread use of digital tools, and the responsible adoption of AI, to make services more accessible, responsive, inclusive and user-centred. Government will lead by example, helping to raise awareness, trust and confidence across society, to support wider adoption of AI and other technologies.

## GROW

We will make Ireland a **location of choice for AI and Digital startups and scale-ups,** and a **global hub for applied AI innovation**, building on existing sectors of strength, a strong skills and talent base, and research expertise and excellence. We will **accelerate our support for enterprise**, to enable them to fast-track adoption of Digital and AI tools in a safe and trustworthy manner, to deliver productivity and competitiveness gains.

## INVEST

We will future-proof our **Digital and AI Infrastructure**, to ensure it is **secure and resilient**, meeting the needs of its users. The Government is focused on **accelerating its cyber security capacity, skills and adoption**, to keep pace with the significant increase in cyber-related risks.

Research and innovation in academia, industry and the public service depends on **access to scalable accelerated computing and data environments**. Our participation in the EuroHPC AI Factory ecosystem, through an **AI Factory Antenna in Ireland**, as well as our **EuroHPC supercomputer, CASPIr**, will provide a robust foundation for our research and innovation communities to collaborate and thrive, and to iteratively expand our modular national High-Performance Computing and AI infrastructure.

## LEAD

Ireland will further strengthen our strategic engagement on the EU's digital agenda. We will continue to be a **strong advocate at EU level for a balanced and proportionate approach to digital regulation**, to enable Europe to close the innovation gap. This will ensure that the EU Single Market operates efficiently and fairly, allowing healthy competition, encouraging investment and innovation, and protecting consumers. We will **strengthen Ireland's position as an EU Centre of Excellence and digital regulatory hub** by delivering a collaborative, predictable and efficient digital regulatory framework that supports innovation through agile regulation, protects consumers and supports our reputation as a digital leader.

## EMPOWER

Our ambition is to **maximise the benefits** that digital technologies and AI can offer by **ensuring that all groups** in society and the workforce are **supported and empowered**, through agile and inclusive digital skills and literacy offerings, as well as accessibility supports.

**Safety in a digital world** is a priority for the Government, in particular the safety of vulnerable groups, such as children and young people, and we will ensure timely and robust responses as new challenges and risks emerge.

**We will support workers to navigate the impacts of potential job displacement,** including through agile, accessible and fit-for-purpose skilling opportunities.

02

Apply

# A Digital Public Service

# A Digital Public Service
## Chapter Summary

We will accelerate a **transformational change in how we deliver public services**, through digital tools and responsible AI adoption, ensuring that by 2030, every interaction with public services is **simpler, faster, and more intuitive.** We will **digitalise 100% of key public services**, with 90% consumed online by 2030.

**Inclusion and accessibility** will be guiding principles. A Life Events approach will reorient service design around key moments in people's lives, to deliver services that meet the complex needs of society in the decades ahead, while ensuring no one is left behind.

**Responsible, transparent use of AI** will play a growing role in public service delivery, enhancing responsiveness and efficiency, and personalising services. We are focused on **building capacity** and driving responsible AI adoption across the public sector, to enhance responsiveness and efficiency, and personalised services.

This chapter sets out how we will achieve these goals, including through:

- Implementation of *Better Public Services 2030*; *Digital Public Services 2030*; and our Digital Inclusion Roadmap
- Our commitment to Ireland's Digital Public Infrastructure; a new Public Service Data Strategy 2030; and ensuring the digital readiness of all new legislation
- A new GovTech 2026 Challenge, and supporting all public servants to avail of AI training courses
- Accelerating the digital transformation of our health service through implementation of *Digital for Care 2030* and a new AI for Care Strategy

## i Better, Digital Public Services

***Better Public Services 2030*** sets out **Ireland's ambition to deliver a modern, inclusive, and citizen-focused public service by 2030.** It outlines how Government will transform the way services are designed, delivered, and experienced, by tackling complex societal challenges through systemic innovation, widespread use of digital tools, and the responsible adoption of AI.

By **strengthening infrastructure, embedding a culture of innovation, funding experimentation, and building ethical safeguards**, Better Public Services 2030 establishes the conditions for AI and digital tools to become standard features of Ireland's public services and to make digital and AI adoption systemic, rather than piecemeal. It seeks to deliver not just efficiency gains, but more **accessible, responsive, inclusive and citizen-centred services that meet the complex needs of society** in the decade ahead.

**Key objectives include:**

- **A seamless, user-centred, and integrated digital experience for citizens**, through the expansion of interoperable systems, shared platforms, common data standards, and National Data Infrastructure and secure digital identities such as MyGovID. Such infrastructure is intended to eliminate duplication, reduce friction in service delivery, and enable a coherent whole-of-government approach to life events and key citizen interactions.
- **Responsible and ethical adoption of technology**, aligned with EU regulatory frameworks, to ensure that AI deployment in the public service protects fundamental rights and is transparent, accountable, and safe. The Guidelines for the Responsible Use of Artificial Intelligence in the Public Service (2025) provide clear guidance and toolkits to support public bodies in implementing AI responsibly, balancing the opportunities of automation, analytics, and service personalisation with the need to safeguard data protection, privacy, and public confidence. This ethical foundation is viewed as a prerequisite for sustained adoption. The use of AI in government services requires clear guidance and assurance mechanisms; the National Cyber Security Centre will provide **a national AI Risk Assessment** which will assist public bodies to assess and manage security and resilience risks in AI systems before acquisition and deployment.
- **Digital inclusion in Public Services:** The Government's aim is to make the digital transition a positive one for those who can engage digitally and to provide support or an alternative for those who cannot. By enabling and encouraging those who can use digital services to do so, we will redirect resources in a range of ways to provide a much better service to those who may need assistance. The Government recognises that **digital public services must be accessible, literacy-friendly, equitable, and inclusive, designed to reach all groups** in society, including those who are digitally disadvantaged and lack digital skills. Accessibility standards, inclusive and literacy-friendly design practices, multi-channel communications, consultation and feedback channels, and targeted supports are critical to ensuring that innovation enhances, rather than undermines, social equity. We will use digital to improve the off-line experience for those who are unable or do not wish to consume services digitally.
- **Embedding an innovation culture and widespread use of digital tools will require organisational and cultural transformation within the public service.** Public bodies will align their corporate strategies and business plans with the Better Public Services Framework, with oversight by the Public Service Leadership Board.
- Alongside governance reform, **significant investment in digital skills, training, and capacity-building** will ensure that public servants are able to engage confidently with new technologies, from cloud infrastructure and data analytics to AI applications. **All public servants will be encouraged to avail of AI training courses during 2026.**

### Digital Public Services 2030

*Digital Public Services Plan 2030* is a flagship initiative under *Better Public Services 2030* and sets out a **bold commitment to reimagine public services as seamless, inclusive, and human-centred, ensuring that by 2030, every interaction with public services is simpler, faster, and more intuitive**.

At the heart of the Plan is the ambition to advance key digitalisation targets, namely to **fully digitalise 100% of key public services and ensure that 90% of applicable services are consumed online**. These targets align with national priorities and EU Digital Decade objectives and reflect a growing public expectation for services that are as responsive and accessible as those in the private sector.

It adopts a **'Life Events' approach, which reorients service design around key moments in people's lives,** such as starting school, becoming a parent, starting a business, or retiring. This will replace fragmented, siloed service delivery with more integrated, user-focused journeys that anticipate needs and reduce administrative burden. It recognises that people do not experience government as a series of

departments, but rather as a single entity that should work together on their behalf, utilising their data in a "capture once share many" approach.

For individuals, this approach should mean **greater convenience, reduced bureaucracy, and improved access to entitlements and supports**. For society, it increases the focus on **greater inclusion**, particularly for those who have historically faced barriers to accessing services. For public services, it means more efficient use of resources, better data for decision-making, and increased public trust in institutions.

However, the path to 2030 is not without challenges, given the complexity of integrating services across multiple departments and agencies, each with their own systems, processes, and legal frameworks. The Government recognises the need to work collaboratively to overcome legacy infrastructure, standardise data practices, and build digital skills and confidence across the public service workforce.

Perhaps most critically, Government must address the digital divide, ensuring that no one is left behind in the transition to digital-first services. A digital-first approach to the design and delivery of public services recognises the significant benefits that digital channels can provide in terms of accessibility, efficiency and convenience. However, this commitment does not imply that individuals will be compelled to engage online. It remains equally important that people are able to access and use government services through more traditional channels where this better meets their needs. The Life Events approach is therefore focused on improving the quality, consistency and user friendliness of all service channels, ensuring that services are inclusive, accessible and responsive, regardless of how people choose to engage.

The *Digital Public Services Plan* also responds to the growing role of AI in public service delivery, recognising its potential to enhance responsiveness, personalise services, and enhance efficiency.

It also emphasises the importance of responsible and transparent use of AI, ensuring that innovation is always aligned with the public interest, human rights and democratic values.

***Digital Public Services Plan 2030* is a strong statement that Ireland will lead in building a digital government that is trusted, inclusive, and agile.**

**Key actions include:**

- **AI Building Blocks:** We will provide centralised tools, models, advice and guidance for Departments to support responsible and ethical AI adoption, so that all services optimise the use of AI and digitalisation tools to enhance efficiency and tailor deployment to the needs of the individual, and the environment within which the technology is being used. An **AI Advisory Unit will be established to provide advice and technical expertise** to help Departments and Public Sector Bodies implement AI solutions effectively and efficiently.
- **Digital Identity and Wallet:** The Government is committed to the implementation of the EU eIDAS 2.0 Regulation, which is designed to create a unified digital identity system, including the EU Digital Identity Wallet, and related services such as digital credentials. Work is ongoing across Government on **Ireland's Digital Wallet** including **incorporating a related age verification tool.**
- **Life Events & Digital Wallet Integration:** The Government's Digital Wallet will be supported by AI-powered features such as automated form-filling, personalised service recommendations and proactive reminders.

More broadly, Research Ireland will establish a **National AI Fellowship Programme** to embed researchers with advanced AI expertise within Departments and public bodies, to support public sector digital transformation and AI adoption efforts, fostering innovation, evidence-based policymaking, design and ethical AI adoption across the public sector.

## ii. Digital Inclusion

Building on ***Digital for Good: Ireland's Digital Inclusion Roadmap,*** which was developed under *Harnessing Digital*, Government has restated its commitment to digital inclusion to ensure no one is left behind by the move to a digital society. To **maximise the benefits and opportunities of the digital economy for all**, we will ensure that inclusion is embedded across all pillars of this Strategy, including:

- **Embed inclusion principles across all digital services** to ensure equitable access, improve digital literacy, and build trust in sustainable digital and AI transformation;
- **Provide inclusive, accessible and literacy-friendly digital public services** and enable and encourage those who can use digital services to do so, while **redirecting resources to provide better services to those who may need assistance,** in particular the most vulnerable in society;

- **Implement our literacy strategies** which will enable people of all ages, and those who are marginalised or under-represented, to engage meaningfully in our digital society;
- Further develop and promote the **Charter for Digital Inclusion, and recognition programme for business,** working with industry and representative groups to embed digital inclusion;
- **Progress our digital infrastructure programmes** including by completing the National Broadband Plan deployment which, in tandem with commercial investment, will ensure that every person, business, school and community across the country has meaningful access to affordable high-quality, high-speed broadband and safe and trustworthy online services; and
- Build greater **awareness** of, and **trust in, digital public services.**

## iii. Digital Public Infrastructure

Digital Public Infrastructure refers to a set of shared digital systems that are secure and interoperable and can support the inclusive delivery of and access to public and private services at societal scale.[8]

This strategy **recognises that strong, resilient and trusted digital public infrastructure (DPI) will be central** to how Ireland delivers services to its citizens, protect people's rights and integrates our digital eco-system into global networks. The Government is committed to **further developing Ireland's key DPIs to help empower citizens and build trust** in digital ecosystems. This will encompass workstreams on open data policies, National Data Infrastructure, digital IDs, payment systems, public service Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) and data exchanges and will necessitate not only a whole-of Government approach but also coordinated public-private action. These efforts will keep Ireland at the forefront of EU action in this space and can contribute to wider ambitions such as achieving the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals on reducing poverty, promoting inclusion, and strengthening institutions.

## iv. Strengthening Public Service Data

In line with the forthcoming **Public Service Data Strategy 2030**, the Government will establish an integrated data ecosystem where high-quality data is routinely used to inform policy, service design and delivery. A governance model will be put in place to bring about the transformational change required to ensure that data flows between public bodies, while ensuring data privacy is maintained.

> This step-change in how the State uses data as a strategic asset will deliver tangible benefits to individuals, who will benefit from seamless digital public services and increased transparency in how their data is being used.

Decisions on state investments and how they are evaluated will be made with the benefit of more data. Policies that impact people's lives will be developed through enhanced data use, leading to meaningful change in how we prioritise our efforts for public good.

Over the five-year period of the Data Strategy, measures will be introduced to address issues around the quality of data, how data is found, curated and accessed as well as the platforms and processes used to share data. The strategy will drive delivery through enhanced coordination as well as placing a strong focus on the effective use of data for public policy development and service delivery, utilising the National Data Infrastructure. It will ensure that we build on Ireland's strong foundation of data governance and maintain the exceptionally high level of public trust in data use and safeguarding.

Ensuring that the public service workforce is supported to engage with and use data for public good will also be a focus of the Data Strategy. The full potential of AI use in public service will only be realised if technological advancements are supported by high quality data.

## v . Digital Readiness of Legislation

We will adopt a coordinated cross-sectoral approach to digital readiness of legislation to proactively **ensure our laws and regulatory frameworks are designed to function in a digital society**, both in substance and in implementation:

- The Office of the Attorney General (AGO), in cooperation with sponsoring Departments, will work together to ensure that national legislation

[8] OECD (2024), "Digital public infrastructure for digital governments", OECD Public Governance Policy Papers, No. 68, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/ff525dc8-en.

is designed to function in an environment where digital and AI technologies are increasingly integrated in public services and Government procedures. This will also involve examining the process by which EU directives and regulations are transposed, and working to strengthen and streamline this process, and promote knowledge sharing and cooperation between all relevant Departments and Public Sector Bodies.

- The AGO and the Houses of the Oireachtas Service will develop LegalDocumentML ("Akoma Ntoso") schemas for primary and secondary legislation, with these XML schemas being made available to Departments and Public Sector Bodies. The AGO will publish new legislation on its website (eISB) in accordance with these schemas, facilitating the re-use and processing of the legislative text, including by AI.

## vi. GovTech 2026

GovTech is not solely about technology, it is about building an ecosystem where Government fosters innovation and supports our indigenous SME and startup community to address key challenges faced by the public service. The emergence of AI in recent years further adds to the potential for innovation opportunities for Government.

**Ireland's GovTech approach to government transformation will promote simple, efficient, and transparent government,** with the individual at the centre, **while also supporting the growth of our indigenous businesses** and offering opportunities to develop valuable and secure Intellectual Property Rights and exportable services.

In line with the Government's ambitions as a digital leader and to foster innovation and support the indigenous SME and startup community in delivering transformative public services, work on the **GovTech 2026 Challenge Programme** is underway. A shortlist of public service challenges suitable for GovTech collaboration will provide SMEs and startups with an opportunity to pitch their innovative approaches to specific challenges. Successful bidders will receive funding and mentorship from the relevant public service partner, guiding development through to implementation. All partnerships will utilise EU-compliant procurement mechanisms to maximise scope and impact.

## vii. Procuring AI in the Public Service

Ireland's forthcoming **National Public Procurement Strategy will consider the adoption of emerging technology such as AI where applicable,** and will make the public procurement process more transparent, reduce administrative burden, and work to ensure greater participation from SMEs in Ireland.

The Government is **committed to supporting the procurement of AI solutions by Public Service Bodies,**[9] including engagement with key Public Service Bodies and the AI market to determine the feasibility of establishing a **central procurement arrangement.** All public bodies procuring AI-enabled systems will be encouraged to integrate security, resilience and data protection considerations at the design stage, with technical support available from the National Cyber Security Centre.

## viii. Digital & AI for Health Services

The Government recognises that increased digitalisation and the application of AI can have hugely significant impacts on the efficiency and efficacy of Ireland's health services.

The digital transformation of the health service is proceeding at pace through implementation of **Digital for Care 2030**, including the launch of the HSE patient app, progress on the digitisation of health records and procurement of a national electronic prescribing solution. Together, these initiatives will enable significant reform of the health service, improve care for patients, and build a **trusted digital and data ecosystem** that supports AI deployment and innovation while safeguarding patient rights and health service integrity:

- The **HSE Health app** serves as the 'front door', providing individuals with access to their own health data, visibility of upcoming appointments, trusted sources of health information and advice, and a digital version of medical cards.
- The **National Shared Care Record** will connect patient information that is currently in digital format but managed in different healthcare settings. It is an essential building block for delivering integrated care and a precursor to

[9] Building on the Guidance Note on the Procurement of Cloud Services: https://www.gov.ie/en/office-of-government-procurement/publications/cloud-services-procurement-guidance-note-2025-update/

delivering a full **National Enterprise Electronic Health** record.

- The **National Enterprise Electronic Health Record** (NEHR) programme will deliver a single, integrated healthcare record system that will be used by healthcare professionals in the acute and community healthcare setting. The preliminary business case for the NEHR is now complete.
- We are implementing a **multi-annual cyber transformation programme to enhance cybersecurity and resilience across the health sector, building on considerable** improvements since 2021, and in light of the increasing threat landscape.
- Digital for Care, and our implementation plan, provides our roadmap to meet our obligations under the **European Health Data Space (EHDS)** Regulation.

## AI for Care

We will launch **'AI for Care', Ireland's Artificial Intelligence Strategy for Healthcare, in Q1 2026,** grounded in real-world applications to support system-wide improvements, with direct benefits in patient care and the streamlining of service delivery. This will be supported by the **HSE Data Strategy**, as a foundational enabler for safe and effective AI deployment across health services.

An **Implementation Roadmap** for 'AI for Care' will focus on leveraging AI in four areas:

**AI for Clinical Care** - to enhance the quality of clinical care, empowering clinicians so patients receive faster treatment and care that meets their needs.

**AI for Operations** - to improve system efficiencies and boost productivity through shortening waiting times, streamlined patient pathways, and ensuring coordinated and responsive care.

**AI for Research & Innovation** – to develop targeted insights, supporting the development of new treatments, diagnostics and therapies that lead to better health outcomes. **AI for Public Health** – to strengthen public health initiatives, helping to detect health risks earlier, support healthier lifestyles, and deliver more targeted prevention efforts to improve wellbeing.

# Objectives & Supporting Deliverables

## APPLY: Public Services

| Objective | Digitalise 100% of key public services, with 90% of services consumed online by 2030 | Timeline | Lead Department |
|---|---|---|---|
| Deliverables | 1. **Redesign and integrate public services around Life Events,** delivering a seamless, user-centred, and integrated digital experience for citizens, across digital and non-digital service delivery | By 2028 | D/PER |
| | 2. **Customisable shared public digital infrastructure building blocks** to accelerate the delivery of seamless, interoperable public services that are robust, secure and provide value for money | From 2026 | D/PER |
| | 3. **Support all public servants to avail of AI training** courses during 2026 | In 2026 | D/PER |
| | 4. Launch Ireland's **Government Digital Wallet,** including progressing a related online age verification mechanism | End 2026 | D/PER; D/CSS |
| | 5. **All new legislation will be subject to a digital readiness check** to ensure that, where relevant, its required outputs can be delivered economically using digital products, and it is consistent with digital delivery of public services | Ongoing | AGO; All Depts |
| | 6. **Legislation will be published online in compliance with an open standard** | Ongoing | AGO; All Depts |
| | 7. **A review of transposition of EU directives and regulations** will be carried out to streamline this process to deliver more efficient and timely transposition that supports simplification and optimisation of our digital regulatory framework | Ongoing | AGO; All Depts |

## **APPLY:** Public Services

| Objective | Build capacity and drive responsible AI adoption across public sector | Timeline | Lead Department |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Deliverables** | **8.** Establish an **AI Advisory Unit** in 2026 to provide advice and expertise for public service bodies | In 2026 | D/PER |
| | **9.** New **Public Service Data Strategy**, to further develop a modern, AI-ready, fit-for-purpose public service data ecosystem providing timely access to standardised and interoperable data | In 2026 | D/PER |
| | **10.** Engage with key Public Service Bodies and the AI market to determine the **feasibility of establishing an appropriate central procurement arrangement for AI** | In 2026 (Q1) | D/PER; OGP |
| | **11.** Establish a **National AI Fellowship Programme** to embed AI research expertise in the public service and to support researcher mobility into the private sector | In 2027 (H2) | D/FHERIS; Research Ireland |
| | **12. Report on AI adoption across the public service;** catalogue sectoral use-cases to support cross-Government information-sharing, learning, and strategic and operational oversight | Annually | D/PER |
| | **13.** Launch a **GovTech Challenge** to match SMEs and start-ups with public service challenges, accelerating the use of AI and emerging technologies | In 2026 | D/PER |

## **APPLY:** Health

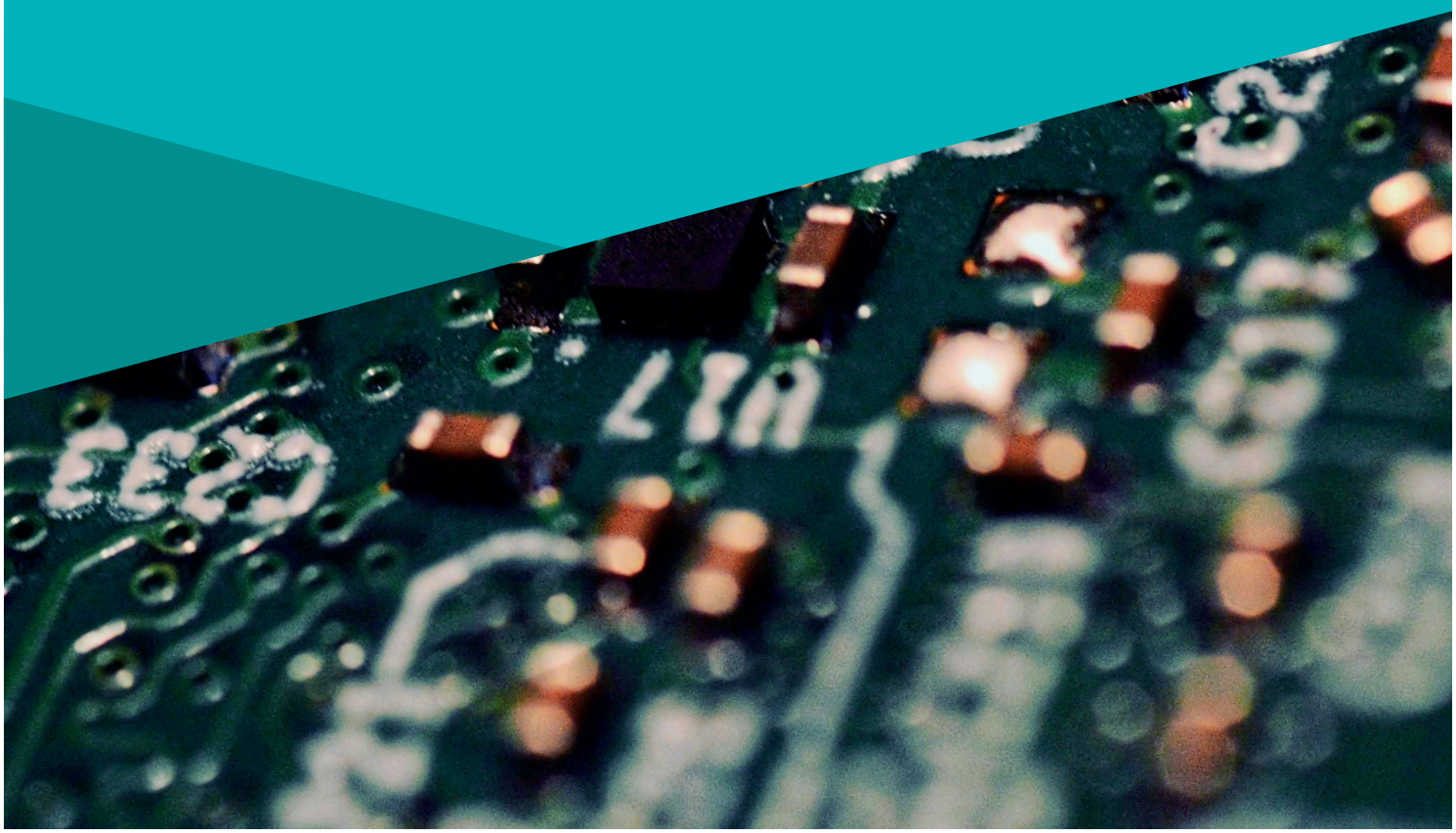
| Objective | Accelerate the digital transformation of the health service through 'Digital for Care 2030' | Timeline | Lead Department |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Deliverables** | 14. **Implement 'Digital for Care 2030'** to improve care for patients and build a trusted digital and data ecosystem | By 2030 | D/Health |
| | 15. Launch the **'AI for Care'** strategy focused on **leveraging AI in four areas:** AI for Clinical Care; Operations; Research & Innovation; and Public Health | In 2026 (Q1) | D/Health |
| | 16. Publish and maintain a **catalogue of AI solutions and benefits,** that are deemed suitable for use across the health service[10] | Ongoing | D/Health |
| | 17. **Deliver the digitisation of Irish healthcare records** and information systems, through delivery of the National Health App, National Shared Care Record and the National Electronic Health Record programme | By 2032 | D/Health |
| | 18. Establish a **national electronic prescribing service** as a key enabler for digitisation of health records to be deployed | By 2028 | D/Health |

[10] When following guidance from HIQA for the safe and responsible use of AI in health and social care

03

Grow

# A Digital, Innovative & Competitive Enterprise Sector & Location of Choice for AI



# A Digital, Innovative & Competitive Enterprise Sector

## Chapter Summary

We are focused on **growing our digital economy and domestic capabilities,** remaining **a location of choice for investment and startups,** and a **global hub for applied AI innovation.** We are committed to working with our industry partners to achieve our ambitions, and drive productivity and competitiveness.

This chapter sets out:

- A new sectoral **AI Adoption Strategy** for the enterprise sector in 2026; a new Enterprise Ireland AI Roadmap and AI Sector Champions; an awareness and literacy campaign for SMEs, and the establishment of an **Observatory for Business AI Readiness (OBAIR).**
- Our **approach to positioning Ireland as a location of choice for AI** and Digital **startups**, and **applied AI innovation;** building on sectors of strength and leveraging our research expertise by establishing an AI Research Centre of Scale, expanding CeADAR, progressing access to advanced compute capacity, a new AI Regulatory Sandbox, and a new Quantum Centre of Excellence.
- Our commitment to continuing to **strengthen Ireland's attractiveness as a location for global technology businesses to invest and grow;** through continued stakeholder engagement, a new AI Office of Ireland, a new Large Energy User Action Plan, and optimising funding at EU level.

# Our Ambition

The Government is committed to leveraging Digital and AI technologies as a central part of our wider approach to future-proof Ireland's competitiveness and deliver sustainable economic growth.

We will build on our strong track record as a vibrant and established innovation ecosystem, supported by a high-performing talent base and research expertise, to ensure we remain an attractive location to grow and invest, as well as positioning Ireland as a global hub for applied AI innovation.

Our core objectives include:

1. **Fast-tracking enterprise technology adoption, to boost productivity and competitiveness;**
2. **Positioning Ireland as a location of choice for AI and Digital startups, and a global hub for applied AI innovation, building on sectors of strength and research expertise; and**
3. **Strengthening Ireland's attractiveness as a location for global technology businesses.**

A central pillar of our ambition is to champion AI as a strategic transformative technology, supporting Ireland's commitment to harness AI for economic and societal benefit. We will develop **a targeted strategy to drive AI adoption across key sectors of the enterprise base** as a priority for 2026, with ambitious sectoral targets, and milestones for delivery.

The establishment of a new **AI Office of Ireland** in 2026, an independent statutory entity which will act as the central coordinating authority for the EU AI Act, will be a major milestone, providing clarity and regulatory certainty for enterprise. Working with key stakeholders, a critical function of the Office will be communications, education, and outreach, as well as a focal point for responsible AI innovation and adoption in Ireland.

The AI Office will establish an **AI Regulatory Sandbox**, to provide a safe, supervised environment for innovators to test new digital and AI solutions in partnership with compliance experts. Creating this secure space will enable the acceleration of responsible development, while identifying regulatory gaps at an early stage. This will facilitate the reduction of barriers to entry for startups, support innovation and experimentation, and strengthen Ireland's position as a forward-looking digital regulatory hub.

Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the EU during 2026 presents a significant opportunity to increase our strategic engagement on the EU's digital agenda. Ireland will host an **International AI and Digital Summit** as a key event of our Presidency, with a focus on advancing a responsible and competitive AI ecosystem in Europe, reflecting our ambition to be at the forefront of digital innovation.

# Enterprise Digitalisation & AI Adoption

While Ireland's performance on digitalisation of business compares relatively well compared to other EU Member States[11], we remain focused on accelerating action. Notably, Ireland ranks 5th among Member States for the number of unicorn companies[12] , with 13 Irish unicorns recorded in 2024, highlighting the strength and dynamism of our digital and innovation-oriented economy.

Recent research from the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN), *AI and the Irish Labour Market*[13], provides a comprehensive analysis of how **AI adoption** is accelerating in Ireland and its implications for employment, skills, and economic growth. Key findings include:

- Enterprise use of AI has surged, with adoption rates doubling in recent years, however a **strong digital divide is apparent,** with 51% of large enterprises using AI compared to just 12% of small enterprises;[14]
- AI-related jobs have doubled since 2023, with Ireland leading the EU in terms of demand; and
- Ireland ranks 3rd in the EU for basic digital skills, showing a relatively strong workforce readiness.

Overall, the findings highlight **Ireland's strong position as a European leader in AI talent and adoption.** Across several metrics, Ireland is close to the top of global rankings in relation to AI, with very strong demand for employees with AI skills and a robust pipeline of quality jobs in this field. However, the EGFSN Report also identifies our labour market as

[11] 2025 Annual Report on the State of the Digital Decade

[12] Private startups valued at over $1 billion

[13] https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/publications/how-ai-is-transforming-the-irish-labour-market.html

[14] Information Society Statistics - Enterprises 2024 - Central Statistics Office

among the most exposed to AI in Europe, with 63% of employment in Ireland exposed to AI technologies, a higher share than in many advanced economies. This underscores the importance of equipping the workforce with the right skills to thrive in an AI-driven economy (as set out in Chapter 9).

## I. Fast-tracking enterprise technology adoption, to boost productivity and competitiveness

Ireland's competitiveness is driven by innovation, agility, and high-value export performance. The Government's Action Plan on Competitiveness and Productivity[15] highlights AI as a frontier technology that underpins innovation, advanced manufacturing, and the broader digital transformation of enterprise. Enterprises with stronger digital and AI capabilities are better positioned to improve efficiency, to innovate, and to scale and compete in a rapidly evolving global economy.

**Our ambition is to drive increased enterprise adoption of AI** in the context of rapidly evolving AI technologies and opportunities. Reflecting the need for a differentiated approach across sectors, we will develop a targeted strategy to drive AI adoption across key sectors of the enterprise base as a priority in 2026, setting out ambitious sectoral targets and milestones for delivery.

**Enterprise Ireland** will develop a new **AI Adoption Roadmap for its client companies**, differentiated by sector. **AI Sector Champions** will be appointed to work with industry and Government to raise awareness of sectoral AI opportunities.

**Further business supports** to implement secure AI development practices, e.g. model validation, audit trails, and access controls for AI systems, will be delivered.

### Observatory for Business AI Readiness (OBAIR)

AI technologies are evolving rapidly, and this requires agility in policymaking. Government cannot rely on existing mechanisms for data gathering, which often involve significant time lags before data is available.

Continuous monitoring, research and analysis — including across company size, sectoral distribution, sophistication of use, and impacts – is required in the current fast-moving context. This intelligence is also vital for improving our understanding of how enterprises in Ireland use AI and will support ongoing policy development in this area.

To achieve this, **we will establish an Observatory for Business AI Readiness (OBAIR) which will collect up to date data and develop intelligence on use of AI by enterprise in Ireland.** OBAIR, together with the National Skills Observatory, will provide Government with essential information to inform future AI enterprise and jobs policy.

### Spotlight on Manufacturing - Digital Manufacturing Ireland

Launched in 2023, Digital Manufacturing Ireland (DMI) supports Irish-based manufacturers and their global manufacturing partners on their digital transformation journey. DMI's objective is to position Ireland's manufacturing base at the forefront of digital transformation and to ensure that Ireland is recognised internationally as having a vibrant, collaborative, competitive and digitally enabled industry base, ideally suited to delivering the next generation of manufacturing. DMI has delivered 50+ projects since 2023 across industries like MedTech, Pharma, Automotive, and Semiconductors.

### Supporting Smaller SMEs

The **Local Enterprise Office (LEO) network** provides consultancy advice, training and grants for digital adoption. A **review** of the full suite of LEO supports for digitalisation is underway to assess their effectiveness and provide an evidence-base to inform future changes.

To accelerate digital adoption in SMEs, we will launch a targeted **Nationwide AI and Digital awareness and literacy campaign for business**, working with partners including business representative groups and the European Digital Innovation Hubs.

### European Digital Innovation Hubs

Ireland's four European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs) are an important resource for SMEs. They drive digitalisation by providing technical support (including 'test before invest' opportunities), financing advice, training and networking opportunities. They have delivered over 1,400 individual services to almost 800 SMEs and over 160 public service organisations since their establishment in 2023:

- **CeADAR** focuses on supporting AI transformation;
- **FactoryxChange (FxC)** helps factories to

[15] https://enterprise.gov.ie/en/publications/action-plan-on-competitiveness-and-productivity.html

become 'Factories of the Future', embracing the ecological, digital, and societal challenges;
- **ENTIRE** focuses on process improvements from digital technologies such as IoT and sensors; and
- **DATA2SUSTAIN** focuses on circular economy, operations and sustainability.

Under Phase 2 of the EU EDIH Programme (2026 - 2029) all EDIHs, including Ireland's four Hubs, will **enhance their AI offerings**, with €23 million in additional funding announced in late 2025 to support the Hubs to significantly scale up digitalisation efforts among SMEs and public sector organisation.

### **Bridging the Gap** - Ireland's Charter for Digital Inclusion

Ireland's *Charter for Digital Inclusion* is focused on AI, digital literacy, and SME digitalisation. A key measure under the *Digital for Good* initiative, it emphasises the importance of access and affordability in ensuring that all individuals have equitable access to digital technologies, and the opportunities they bring.

The Charter is a set of commitments to which business and other organisations can sign up, to contribute to bridging the digital gap by promoting basic digital skills, building awareness and helping people and businesses to get online and adopt digital and AI technology. This initiative complements the Government's wider efforts to ensure no one is left behind in the digital transition.

An important focus of the Charter is a call to action for larger businesses to support SMEs in adopting digital technologies — and just as importantly, to work with communities and individuals to improve access to technologies and digital skills. The Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment will showcase best practice examples of digital inclusion by businesses and maximise the opportunity for collaboration and partnerships, at national and local levels. This will help Irish businesses to make new connections, access larger companies' expertise, and build their own digital capability.

## II. Positioning Ireland as a location of choice for AI and Digital startups, and a global hub for applied AI innovation, building on sectors of strength and research expertise

The Government remains focused on driving growth through innovation and is committed to incentivising enterprises — from startups to larger businesses — to harness the disruptive potential of digital and AI, making Ireland a location of choice for applied AI innovation.

### i. Attracting AI and Digital startups

Sixteen of the top twenty global tech companies and eight leading AI model providers have their main EU base in Ireland. This creates a strong gravitational pull for digital and AI talent which, combined with our range of startup, accelerator and incubation supports, and our established talent base and research and innovation ecosystem, makes Ireland an attractive hub for AI and digital startups.

**Ireland's competitive research and innovation system**, supported, among others, by Research Ireland, contributes to empowering startups and SMEs with IP and knowledge that enable them to differentiate themselves and compete in global markets. Research Ireland and partners are focused on progressing AI spinouts from the Higher Education ecosystem - one quarter of all Irish startups have PhD-qualified founders.

**Risk finance** is essential for a thriving startup and scale-up ecosystem. Enterprise Ireland provides investment programmes such as the Pre-Seed Start Fund, High Potential Startup Programme, Business Angels Network, and Seed & Venture Capital to attract funding for innovative startups. In Budget 2026, the Government committed a further €120 million to unlock financing support for high potential startup and scaleup businesses. Work is ongoing to develop proposals for **specific tax policy changes and complementary initiatives to incentivise retail and institutional investment for scaleups.** The **GovTech 2026 Challenge programme** is also aimed at stimulating the startup market, by using public procurement as a lever.

Enterprise Ireland's **Commercialisation Fund supports the creation of deep-tech startups** by transferring research from Ireland's leading Higher Education Institutions and Research Performing Organisations to industry. Applied AI is now central to the majority of these startups, and the Fund plays a key role in bringing this technology to market through dynamic deep-tech companies.

We are establishing a new national programme, **Startup Ireland**, to provide a coordinated framework to boost Ireland's startup competitiveness. It will act as a central coordinating body to enhance alignment and collaboration across the national startup ecosystem. This will include a **National Accelerator Programme from 2026**, which will reflect the new and evolving needs of founders, and enhance sectoral diversification and international connectivity.

### Data as a critical asset

Data is the cornerstone of our digital future and a critical enabler of AI. To harness its full potential, we must treat data as a national asset—accessible, interoperable, and trusted. The principles set out in the EU Data Act provide a strong foundation for unlocking data from connected devices, ensuring fair access, and promoting interoperability. By aligning with these principles, we will stimulate innovation in data-intensive sectors such as manufacturing, technology, finance and healthcare, empowering businesses of all sizes.

Meanwhile, the European Health Data Space (EHDS), which is the first of several data spaces planned by the European Commission, will open opportunities for Irish-based industry to access large scale, standardised EU data, in a controlled environment. EHDS is expected to drive innovation, the provision of pan-European digital health services, and the training of AI models.

Together with strong privacy and ethical safeguards, this approach will foster a vibrant data ecosystem that positions Ireland to foster data-driven growth for our society and economy.

### Regulatory Sandboxes

We will **embed regulatory sandboxes to support ethical, compliant AI and digital innovation**. The Central Bank's Fintech sandbox is already successfully helping innovators in the financial services sector.

- The Government will begin development of an **AI Regulatory Sandbox** in 2026, providing a safe, supervised environment for testing digital and AI solutions with compliance experts, and further strengthening Ireland's position as a hub for ethical AI innovation.

## ii. Making Ireland a Global Hub for Applied AI Innovation

Ireland has a strong record as a European technology and innovation hub, and the Government is committed to leveraging this strength to **foster applied AI innovation in high-growth areas**, including:

- Emerging technologies (cyber, data, deeptech, enterprise tech);
- Fintech (regtech, insurtech, payments);
- Agritech;
- Health and wellness (digital health, food, nutrition);
- Smart cities; and
- High-tech construction and manufacturing.

AI research will drive progress in these areas by enabling new solutions and accelerating discovery.

Another significant strategic strength comes from the broad ecosystem of international businesses operating in Ireland, who make a sizeable contribution to fostering innovation in the development of applied AI. The Government will promote deeper collaboration between SMEs and MNCs, through mechanisms including the Disruptive Technologies Fund, the National Clustering programme and the Important Projects of Common European Interest Programme.

### Strategic Levers to Stimulate AI Innovation

The essential elements for AI Innovation include research and talent, access to advanced computing power, and finance / funding supports.

> The Irish economy benefits from a strong talent base, and the Government is committed to maintaining our reputation for a flexible and responsive skills ecosystem to meet demand for AI skills and talent.

As set out in Chapter 9, we will publish a **Roadmap for Technology Skills of the Future in 2026**, with regular updates, to ensure our skills offer remains future-focused and responsive to the changing needs resulting from emerging technologies such as AI.

As part of an **AI in Research transformation programme** we will:

- Develop a **pipeline of PhD-trained AI researchers** to support the needs of the private sector.
- Increase **the AI literacy of researchers**, across all disciplines, through a national training programme;
- Build a **National AI in Research Platform** that leverages AI to amplify the productivity of Irish research; and
- Leverage **our investment in research** to

accelerate the translation of AI technologies into startup companies.

Enterprise Ireland, in collaboration with IDA Ireland and Research Ireland, is **creating structures to strengthen collaboration** between research and innovation centres and their infrastructure across all technology readiness levels—from foundational research to applied innovation—**building a unified ecosystem to accelerate research, development and innovation (RDI), including AI development and deployment.**

## Early-Stage Research – Research Ireland Centres

Research Ireland Centres are a **national network of world-class research centres** designed to drive collaboration between academia, industry, and government. Their purpose is to deliver **internationally leading public-private partnership research at scale** in areas of strategic importance for Ireland, including AI[16]. They underpin the close-to-market research undertaken by Technology Centres, providing a full spectrum research, development and deployment service offering to enterprise. Key features of Research Ireland Centres include **collaboration; talent development; industry engagement; and a focus on impact.**

The commercial development of research supported through these important Centres will be accelerated through engagement with the Research Ireland **ARC Hub for ICT**. This Hub is dedicated to driving digital transformation in healthcare, education, infrastructure, sustainability and data governance by providing critical support to translate ideas into market-ready products and services, leveraging the cutting-edge research undertaken within Centres. With a collaborative team of researchers from 11 research institutions across Ireland, the Hub seeks to close the gap between academic ICT research and the goal of innovation and entrepreneurial activity.

This network will be further strengthened by the **establishment of an internationally leading AI Research Centre of scale.** The next phase of the Centres will represent a balanced portfolio of established strengths and emerging fields, ensuring Ireland remains competitive in next-generation technologies including AI, quantum science, and cellular therapeutics. Research Ireland Centres will train PhD students, creating a pipeline of highly skilled researchers and innovators to meet future needs. The Centres will deepen partnerships between academia and industry and across sectors, including pharmaceuticals, medtech, energy, and ICT, driving innovation and supporting Ireland's enterprise base. The Centres will strengthen Ireland's global research reputation, fostering collaborations with leading institutions and programmes worldwide, and positioning Ireland a location for research and innovation excellence and exceptional research talent.

## Applied Research - Government's Ambition to Scale the Technology Centres

Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland have established **nine sector-focused Technology Centres**, giving enterprise access to applied, industry-driven AI and tech research. These Centres **enable SMEs, MNEs, and research institutions to collaborate on market-focused innovation in strategic sectors.**

**CeADAR is the national centre for applied AI** in Ireland, hosted in UCD. CeADAR plays an important role in the delivery of cutting-edge applied AI innovation, talent and workforce development, and the development and deployment of market-ready solutions to SMEs, MNCs, public service organisations and early-stage companies.

The Government has allocated €190 million in funding[17] including **€50 million over 5 years to scale the Technology Centres**, with a focus on Irish Manufacturing Research (IMR) Technology Centre and CeADAR. This investment will significantly strengthen the capacity to drive innovation and commercialisation in Irish and FDI industry, partnering industry with academia in collaborative research, with a stronger focus on SMEs. CeADAR and IMR will also partner with the other seven centres to accelerate adoption and deployment of AI and advanced manufacturing technology across their particular sectors. The scaling of the technology centres focuses on three main areas:

- Driving enterprise competitiveness through collaborative R&D and driving economic growth;
- Fostering collaboration between indigenous and foreign firms; and
- Addressing emerging technological opportunities and threats by enhancing sectoral capacity to respond to technological disruption.

The delivery of this next generation of Technology Centres will be central to supporting companies to embrace a more digital and AI-enabled future as they scale and grow.

[16] The INSIGHT Centre for Data Analytics and the ADAPT Centre for AI-Driven Digital Content Technology are particularly focused on AI.html
[17] Under the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment's Sectoral Capital Plan 2026-2030

## Access to High-Performance Computing - AI (HPC-AI) Capacity

Through the EuroHPC AI Factory Antenna programme, **Ireland has secured participation in, and access to the European HPC-enabled AI Factory network, infrastructure and partnerships.** Led by the Irish Centre for High-End Computing (ICHEC), with CeADAR as a partner, this will enable university spinouts, high-potential startups, SMEs and public sector bodies to integrate advanced HPC-enabled AI into their products and processes efficiently, fostering productivity growth and innovation capacity within our digital ecosystem.

ICHEC will also lead on building Data Labs and actively engage in building thematic National Data Spaces for research and innovation, university spinouts, startups and SMEs, in order to develop technical data infrastructure with HPC for AI-ready data pooling, secure regulatory clearance and training capabilities. These Data Labs will be co-located with CASPIr, Ireland's upcoming EuroHPC Advanced Computing infrastructure, which will be operated by ICHEC.

## Quantum 2030

Ireland's research and innovation community has built a strong foundation in both fundamental and applied quantum technologies research. **Quantum 2030**, the National Strategy for Quantum Technologies, **sets out a path for Ireland to be an internationally competitive hub for quantum technologies by 2030,** focusing on areas of emerging growth where we can achieve a competitive advantage.

We will establish a **Quantum Centre of Excellence** to ensure coordinated investment, agile policy development, and international leadership in quantum technologies. Implementation of Quantum 2030 **will be a key enabler of Ireland's digital transformation**, driving investment, fostering agile policy frameworks, and strengthening Ireland's role in international quantum collaborations. Priorities include ecosystem development, talent growth, and research capacity to ensure Ireland remains competitive in next-generation technologies. Implementation will be supported through annual Action Plans, developed in partnership with key stakeholders, including HEIs, research performing organisations, SMEs, multinationals and public sector agencies

## Government Funding and Enablers

Our enterprise agencies offer grants for R&D, with larger funding for collaborative projects in experimental technologies. Additional government supports are also available for technology innovation, including:

- **Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund (DTIF)**

> The €500m Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund (DTIF) awards funding to collaborations between SMEs, MNCs and research performing organisations for large-scale RD&I projects involving disruptive and transformative technologies.

The use of AI in DTIF projects enables data-driven decision-making and accelerates product development across a range of sectors from healthcare and manufacturing to energy and transport. To date, €183 million has been invested by Government in 51 DTIF projects that place AI at the core of their solutions, with a further €196 million allocated to 2030[18].

A stakeholder engagement review of the DTIF was completed in 2025, which will inform future iterations of the Fund, to ensure it is meeting the needs of our research base and innovative industry partners, as well as positioning Ireland as a location for utilising AI to drive innovation.

- **Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEI)**

Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEIs) are large-scale, multi-country projects driving cutting-edge innovation in key sectors. Favourable EU State Aid rules apply to IPCEIs, which allows for the possibility of public-sector funding to be granted at national level for certain projects that significantly boost EU industrial growth and strategic objectives. The Programme for Government contains a target to boost participation in IPCEIs to increase competitiveness and productivity for Irish companies and create more jobs.

In December 2025, a Call for **Expressions of Interest in three new digital IPCEIs was launched**:

- **IPCEI AI** aims to develop a next-generation AI ecosystem for the EU providing latest AI training and development technologies.
- **IPCEI Compute Infrastructure Continuum** aims

[18] Under the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment's Sectoral Capital Plan 2026-2030

to develop a sovereign computing infrastructure in Europe, provided by a multi-provider architecture, not limited to, but focusing on the deployment of AI solutions.
- **IPCEI Advanced Semiconductor Technologies** will focus on key disruptive technologies such as AI chips and accelerators.

The Government has allocated €120 million in funding for participation in the IPCEI programme.[19]

## Tax Incentives for Innovation

The Government has committed to **increasing the R&D tax credit to 35%** from 30% in Budget 2026 to incentivise innovation. An "R&D Tax Credit Compass" will be published by the Department of Finance, which will provide stakeholders with information on potential future enhancements and areas of focus with regard to the R&D Tax Credit, to better align with industry practices. It will also set a pathway for development of innovation support.

## National Security Authority

Participation in EU initiatives and access to funding can, in some cases, require national security clearance, on a statutory basis. Currently, the National Security Authority (NSA) is supported by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade and operates on an administrative basis. The Government has committed to establish a **statutory National Security Authority** to enable private personnel and entities to secure necessary clearances for classified contracts and funding. Given the time needed for the establishment of the statutory NSA, an a**d hoc system for personnel security clearance to enable access to EU classified contracts/funding** will be put into operation.

# III. Strengthening Ireland's attractiveness as a location for Global Technology Businesses

Ireland has been a preferred location for multinational companies in technology-intensive sectors over many years. Our strong talent-base; supportive and collaborative innovation ecosystem; agile and stable policy environment, including strong regulatory expertise; and our location at the heart of the EU have been consistent pull factors. The Government remains committed to building on this solid foundation, and to continuing to strengthen our attractiveness as a location in which to invest and grow, as part of our overall pro-innovation and pro-competitiveness stance. This ambition resonates across the full breadth of this Strategy, through our commitments to:

- Support wider enterprise adoption of digital and AI tools, and to enable access to Advanced Computing Infrastructure;
- Prioritise digital connectivity and secure, resilient digital infrastructure, as well as broader infrastructure delivery across the economy;
- Improve our cyber security capacity;
- Provide a coherent, predictable and efficient digital regulatory framework;
- Ensure our skills and talent base remains agile and responsive to evolving needs; and
- Accelerate the adoption of digital and AI technologies more broadly across public services, the health sector, and society at large.

To drive delivery across all pillars of the Strategy, we will continue to foster and deepen our engagement with our industry partners and stakeholders, to ensure our approach is coherent, agile and responsive.

## An Established Technology Hub

Ireland's enterprise and innovation ecosystem has long been enriched by many of the leading technology companies, as well as eight of the leading providers of foundation AI models, who have chosen Ireland as their European headquarters. In 2025, IDA approved 323 investments; an increase of 38% on 2024. This included 80 R&D projects with associated spend of €2.5 billion and 66 talent development investments that will train 33,000 people over the coming years to increase the capability of IDA client operations and personnel in Ireland, in areas that include digitalisation and AI.

Activity across the multinational companies based in Ireland includes the integration of AI and digital solutions in production processes, the development of AI-enabling hardware in advanced manufacturing sectors, as well as a focus on consumer and business-facing generative AI products in services sectors. There are also cross-sectoral investments in areas such as cybersecurity, AI governance and safety, and digital and AI R&D. This existing expertise in digitalisation and AI has, in turn, helped Ireland secure new investments from 'next generation' companies at the digital and AI frontier.

## Adapt Intelligently

IDA Ireland's five-year strategy, *Adapt Intelligently*, identifies **Digitalisation and AI as one of four strategic growth-drivers for foreign direct investment (FDI) into Ireland** over the period to 2030. To increase the scale and impact of innovative FDI activity, IDA will:

- **Enhance and target RD&I supports for strategic sectors** such as health, fintech, digital services, **cybersecurity, cloud.**

[19] Under the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment's Sectoral Capital Plan 2026-2030

- **Drive engagement in collaborative RD&I** including through Research Centres and Technology Centres, and enhancements to the Innovation Partnership Programme and Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund.
- **Incentivise participation in collaborative RD&I opportunities internationally**, including through the Important Projects of Common European Interest mechanism and other EU funding programmes such as Horizon Europe, to ensure Irish-based companies play their part in solving the challenges Europe faces, and to facilitate access to an international network of experts.
- **Partner with Research Ireland on Centres for Research Training** to meet enterprise demand for high-level research talent and winning collaborative projects of scale.
- **Incentivise digital transformation in the manufacturing operations** sector to drive productivity, through investing in capital and upskilling life sciences, advanced manufacturing and engineering sectors. Examples of the impact of the application of new technologies on non-technology sectors include harnessing digitally enabled infrastructure, integrating industry 5.0 standards, and improving manufacturing efficiencies through the use of AI, "Smart Factory," and other emerging, disruptive technologies.
- **Prioritise developing new regional Tech Clusters**, close to sources of green energy. Targeted infrastructure near renewable energy sources will enable enterprise development such as sustainable AI and High-Performance Computing deployment where Irish universities, industry, and Government work together to drive innovation and economic development.

## Focus on Competitiveness

The Government is **strongly focused on addressing broader infrastructure challenges,** including housing and infrastructure delivery, through implementation of the updated National Development Plan, Action Plan on Competitiveness and Productivity, and Accelerating Infrastructure Action Plan.

We are particularly conscious of the **significant energy and infrastructure challenges** Ireland faces, in the context of our digital and AI ambitions, and we are **committed to addressing these to provide certainty for industries seeking to invest and grow** in Ireland. This includes ensuring we are positioned to attract the next generation of investment in strategic energy intensive sectors, like data centres and semi-conductors. In January 2026, the Government published its Large Energy User Action Plan, which sets out a strategic medium-term plan-led approach for very large and energy intensive investments. This will ensure medium-term industrial growth is aligned with Ireland's green transition, energy security of supply and energy affordability, while providing clarity on future industrial investment opportunities, including data centres and renewable energy opportunities.

Our **focus on competitiveness extends to our role and priorities in Europe.** We will enhance our strategic engagement at EU level, including through membership of the D9+ Group of advanced digital Member States. We will ensure Ireland is a strong voice in Europe for **well-designed, coherent digital regulation** which supports competitiveness and innovation as well as protecting fundamental rights. As part of Ireland's 2026 Presidency of the Council of the EU, we will host an **International AI and Digital Summit** to showcase Ireland as a digital and regulatory hub, as well as advancing a responsible and competitive AI ecosystem in Europe, reflecting our ambition to be at the forefront of digital innovation.

### The AI Office of Ireland

In 2025 Government announced it will establish the AI Office of Ireland, which will act as a focal point for responsible and compliant AI innovation and deployment in Ireland.

The Office will have several key functions. It will **support the regulatory system** in ensuring the effective implementation of the EU AI Act, it will **champion AI as a strategic technology and demonstrate Ireland's commitment to harnessing AI** for economic and societal benefit. It will provide clarity and regulatory certainty for enterprises and individuals.

It will also enable controlled experimentation with emerging technologies. Through the hosting of an **AI regulatory sandbox**, it will work with regulators and deployers to create an environment where AI technologies can be safely developed, tested, and deployed at scale. By providing a safe, supervised environment for innovators to test new digital and AI solutions in partnership with compliance experts, Ireland can accelerate responsible development while identifying regulatory gaps early. With this approach, Ireland can support agility in policymaking, reduce barriers to entry for startups, prevent stagnation of innovation and experimentation, and strengthen Ireland's position as a forward-thinking digital regulatory hub.

## Silicon Island: Ireland's National Semiconductor Strategy

Semiconductor chips are the backbone of modern digital infrastructure, powering everything from smartphones to industrial machinery. As digitalisation accelerates, the demand for semiconductors is expected to grow exponentially, making them critical to economic resilience and technological advancement.

**Silicon Island sets out a clear vision to elevate our status in semiconductor manufacturing, research and innovation.** Explicitly designed to support the European Chips Act, it aims to build a competitive and thriving ecosystem by capitalising on existing expertise, attracting strategic investment while further developing a skilled talent pool. The strategy also aims to secure investment across the full semiconductor value chain, including large-scale manufacturing, design and advanced packaging. With geopolitical pressures and supply chain vulnerabilities reshaping the industry, Ireland has a prime opportunity to enhance its reputation and become a highly desirable location for semiconductor innovation and production.

**Ireland has begun implementation of the European Chips Act with over €70 million in national and EU funding** earmarked for Tyndall National Institute's participation in three EU "Pilot Lines"; a National Semiconductor Cluster to be established under the National Clustering Programme; the establishment of I-C3 (Tyndall, UCD, MIDAS) as Ireland's National Competence Centre; and partnership with Analog Devices and 14 EU Member States in the IPCEI on Microelectronics and Communication Technologies, supported by the Government.

In January 2026, the **Government announced a €100 million allocation for the expansion of Tyndall National Institute** which will significantly advance Ireland's position as an international leader in semiconductor research, AI, quantum technologies, and advanced manufacturing. An **Advisory Council on Semiconductors**, chaired and driven by industry, will guide the implementation of Silicon Island, providing insights to ensure approaches can be adapted to optimise its potential for all sectors of the economy.

# Deliverables

| **GROW:** Enterprise | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective** | **Fast-track enterprise technology adoption, to boost productivity and competitiveness** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | 19. **Develop a targeted strategy in 2026 to drive AI adoption across key sectors of the enterprise base,** with ambitious sectoral targets and milestones for delivery | In 2026 (Q4) | D/ETE |
| | 20. **Appoint AI Sector Champions** to work with industry and Government to spotlight sectoral AI opportunities | In 2026 (Q1) | D/ETE; Enterprise Ireland |
| | 21. **Enterprise Ireland** will develop a new **AI Adoption Roadmap for its client companies,** differentiated by sector | In 2026 (Q2) | D/ETE; Enterprise Ireland |
| | 22. Establish the **Observatory for Business AI Readiness (OBAIR),** an observatory which collects up to date data and provides intelligence on use of AI by enterprise in Ireland | In 2027 (Q1) | D/ETE |
| | 23. **Launch an AI and Digital awareness and literacy campaign** to drive AI literacy among SMEs | In 2026 (Q1) | D/ETE |
| | 24. Promote and support the **enterprise opportunity presented by the European Health Data Space** | Ongoing | D/ETE |

## GROW: Enterprise

| Objective | Position Ireland as a location of choice for AI and Digital startups, and a global hub for applied AI innovation, building on sectors of strength and research expertise | Timeline | Lead Department |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Deliverables** | **25.** Establish an internationally leading **AI Research Centre of scale** | In 2026 (H2) | D/FHERIS; Research Ireland |
| | **26.** Establish a **National Accelerator Programme** as part of **Start-up Ireland** to provide a coordinated framework to boost Ireland's start-up competitiveness | In 2026 | D/ETE |
| | **27.** Establish Phase 1 of an **AI regulatory sandbox,** with a particular focus on SMEs and startups | In 2026 | D/ETE |
| | **28. Scale CeADAR** to accelerate and deepen Ireland's R&I capability in applied AI and to drive and support adoption of AI across the entire enterprise base | Ongoing | D/ETE |
| | **29.** Establish a **National AI research, technology and infrastructure centre of scale,** to underpin a cohesive and integrated national AI ecosystem | By 2029 | D/ETE; D/FHERIS |
| | **30.** Establish an **AI in Research transformation programme** to:<br>• Develop a pipeline of **PhD-trained AI researchers** to support the needs of the private sector<br>• Increase the **AI literacy of researchers**, across all disciplines, through **a national training programme**<br>• Build a **National AI in Research Platform** that leverages AI to amplify the productivity of Irish research<br>• Leverage our investment in research to accelerate the translation of AI technologies into **start-up companies** | <br><br>Ongoing<br>In 2027 (H2)<br>In 2028 (H2)<br>Ongoing | <br><br>D/FHERIS; Research Ireland<br>D/FHERIS; Research Ireland<br>D/FHERIS; Research Ireland<br>D/FHERIS; Research Ireland |
| | **31. Establish a Quantum Centre of Excellence,** to ensure coordinated investment, agile policy development, and international leadership in quantum technologies, and support the implementation of the Quantum 2030 Strategy | In 2026 (H2) | D/FHERIS |

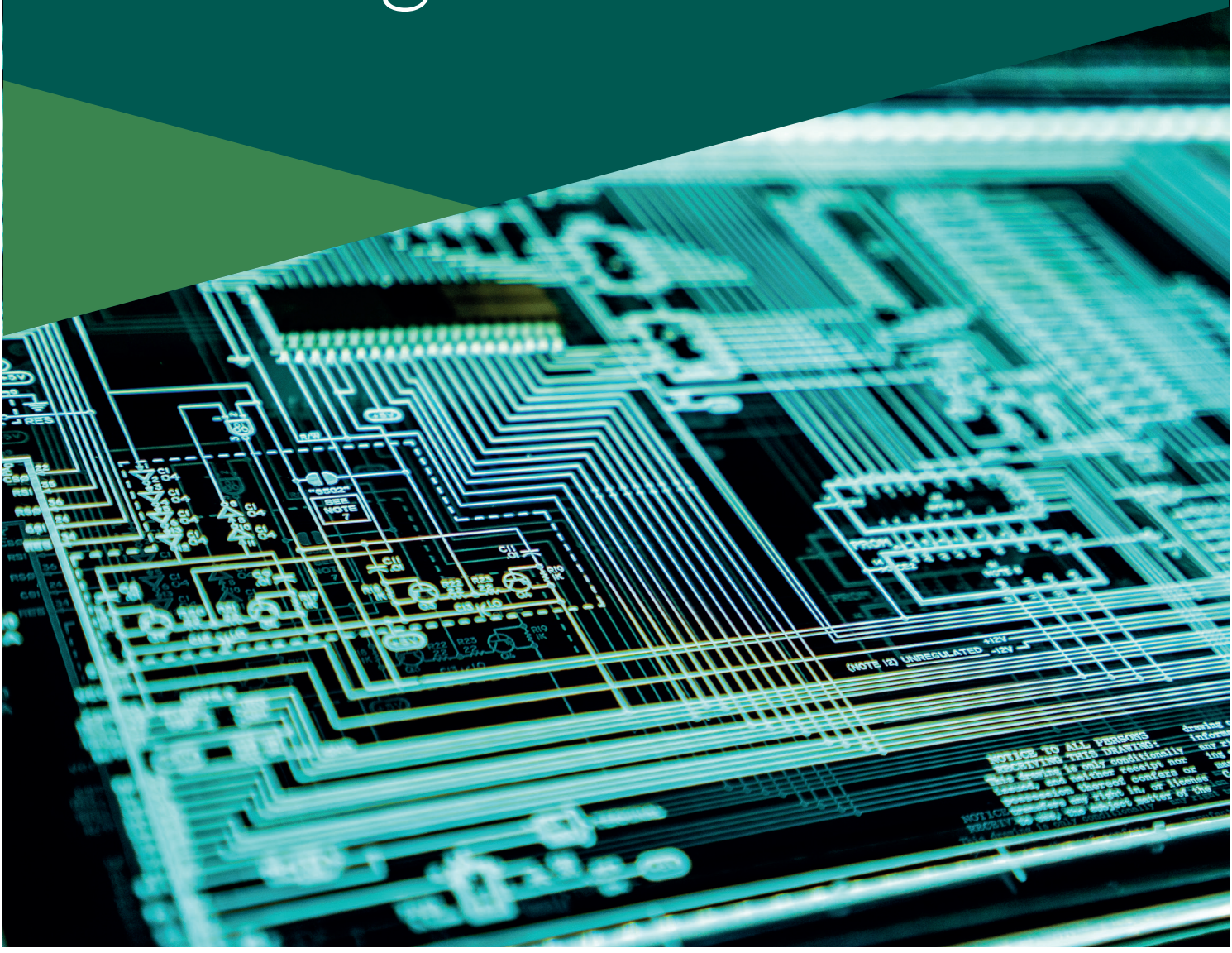
## GROW: Enterprise

| Objective | Strengthening Ireland's attractiveness as a location for global technology business | Timeline | Lead Department |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Deliverables** | 32. **Engage with industry and stakeholders,** across all pillars of the Strategy, to ensure that the digital policy and regulatory landscape is coherent and effective | Ongoing | D/ Taoiseach; All relevant Depts |
| | 33. Establish the **Artificial Intelligence Office of Ireland** as the focal point for AI regulation and innovation in Ireland | In 2026 (By August) | D/ETE |
| | 34. Host an **International AI and Digital Summit,** during Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the EU, to showcase Ireland as a digital and regulatory hub | In 2026 (October) | D/ETE |
| | 35. Advocate for and **prioritise digital connectivity and resilience** during negotiations of the 2028-2034 EU Multiannual Financial Framework | Ongoing | D/CCS; D/FAT |
| | 36. **Optimise funding under the new European Competitiveness Fund** to enable Irish-based firms to realise opportunities in EU instruments, such as IPCEIs in key digital sectors, including microelectronics, AI and quantum computing | Ongoing | D/ETE; All relevant Depts |
| | 37. **Implement the 'Large Energy User Action Plan'** to attract and facilitate investment in very energy intensive industrial developments | 2025-2030 | D/ETE, D/CEE |

04

Invest

# Digital and AI Infrastructure for a Digital Ireland



# Invest: Digital and AI Infrastructure for a Digital Ireland

## Chapter Summary

We are committed to **investing in building secure, resilient and future-proofed digital and AI infrastructure** to grow and support Irish enterprise, to enhance quality of life in Ireland, to support Ireland as a location for investment and to enable world-leading RD&I in Ireland.

We will achieve this by:

- **Delivering on our connectivity targets,** via the rollout of the National Broadband Plan; supporting the transition to faster, full-fibre broadband including 100% national coverage; addressing mobile connectivity challenges in rural areas; delivering on 5G targets by 2030; ensuring a fit-for-purpose fibre backbone infrastructure; and strengthening Ireland's international connectivity.
- **Ensuring the security and resilience of our digital infrastructure** across our networks and sub-sea cable infrastructure, as well as our preparedness and emergency response capacity.
- **Supporting the development and adoption of transformative digital infrastructure technologies** through our commitment to support the sustained growth of our national Advanced Computing infrastructure; Ireland's new AI Factory Antenna, and procurement of the CASPIr supercomputer; as well as supporting trials of new satellite technologies; and continuing to invest in the development of secure quantum communication network infrastructure.

To maintain a globally competitive position, Ireland's digital and AI infrastructure must keep pace with the latest advances in, and demands for, digital connectivity, computation, energy and storage. These demands are increasingly shaped by AI. **Ireland's strategic ambition to enable gigabit connectivity to all premises will ensure we leverage the full potential of new and emerging digital opportunities.** Significant multi-annual investment has been committed, including under the revised National Development Plan, across key digital infrastructure, such as telecommunications, high-performance computing, and cyber security, as well as energy and water.

Ireland has made **significant improvements in its digital fixed and mobile connectivity** in recent years. Commercial operators have invested over €5 billion in their networks over the past eight years, helping to expand their reach and improve performance, security and resilience. **Over €1.4 billion of State subsidy has been invested in the National Broadband Plan to date,** which is on track for completion by end-2026, providing transformative access to high-speed, future-proofed services for 1.1 million people across 560,000 premises, including remote and rural premises.

To advance Ireland's digital and AI ambitions, sustained and coherent investment is needed in in the **Advanced Computing portfolio**, bringing together high-performance computing (HPC), data management and federation and large-scale AI resources. Research and innovation in academia, industry and the public sector relies on access to scalable accelerated computing and data environments.

Through the **EuroHPC Joint Undertaking**, the EU is providing access to a network of AI Factories and soon Gigafactories offering advanced computing resources and expert support, tailored for AI startups and industry, and the research and scientific community, on an open and free-of-charge basis.

Ireland has secured participation in this ecosystem, through an **AI Factory Antenna**[20] (AIF IRL-Antenna), as well as our **EuroHPC supercomputer, CASPIr**. These national resources will be operated by the Irish Centre for High-End Computing (ICHEC) and will provide a robust foundation for our research and innovation communities to collaborate and thrive. Together, CASPIr and AIF IRL-Antenna bring HPC, AI and Data Infrastructure and services including platforms such as Data Labs[21] for secure, AI-ready and regulated data pooling and training, focused on supporting university spinouts and startups.

These facilities will enable the development of large-scale AI models, foster the adoption of AI technologies, and contribute to building AI skills and expertise in Ireland and across the EU.

With **sustained national investment**, we will iteratively expand our modular national HPC/AI infrastructure to ensure we keep pace with, and even move to the forefront of, evolving AI and advanced computing priorities, offering a **stable and continuous platform to support our ambitious R&I goals**.

The adoption of **new connectivity solutions** will be supported to allow for more equitable, inclusive and resilient access to digital and AI services, while we **also continue to build new capabilities in emerging technologies** like quantum communication, which provides for highly secure data transfers, such as the IrelandQCI project.

To attract the next generation of investment in strategic energy intensive sectors including data centres and semi-conductors, we must deliver energy infrastructure much faster than in recent decades, and plan better for these industrial developments. The Government recently published its Large Energy User Action Plan, setting out the medium-term plan-led approach to enable coordinated delivery of key enabling energy infrastructure.

All digital infrastructure **must ensure the preparedness, resilience and security of our systems** to withstand shocks from man-made and natural hazards, such as storms. **We will put the following enablers in place to ensure we realise our infrastructure ambitions** to allow Ireland to compete for Foreign Direct Investment, to grow and support Irish businesses, to enhance the quality of people's lives, and to support world-leading research, development and innovation.

## i. Delivering Digital Connectivity

We will publish an updated **National Digital Connectivity Strategy** in early 2026 detailing initiatives to enhance our **digital Infrastructure**.

### Delivering Gigabit Connectivity

- Continue rollout of the **National Broadband Plan (NBP)**, which is on track for completion by end-2026.

[20] EU AI Factories are dynamic ecosystems that foster innovation, collaboration, and AI development. They bring together computing power, data, and talent to create cutting-edge AI models and applications. AI Factory Antennas support established AI Factories from their respective country, extending and complementing its services to strengthen the national AI ecosystem. The Antennas will also ensure remote computing access to AI-optimised supercomputing resources from the linked AI Factory.

[21] https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/data-union-strategy-unlocking-data-ai

- As the NBP deployment nears completion, **move from a focus on service availability to advocating for strong service uptake** in preparation for the switch-off and removal of legacy networks, as we transition to faster, full-fibre broadband.
- Ensure any **areas with lower broadband speeds** are comprehensively addressed to ensure 100% national coverage.
- Ensure a **fit-for-purpose fibre backbone infrastructure** is in place across the country to enable the growth of high-bandwidth, low-latency, AI-focused data centres. Balanced regional industrial development may require targeted investments.
- We recognise the criticality of digital infrastructure and will support the **minimisation of planning friction** and creation of nationally consistent conditions and processes for accelerated deployment of high-speed broadband and low-latency mobile networks.
- Deliver **satellite** services to **provide resilience for critical services where appropriate.**

## Delivering Mobile Connectivity

- **Ensure operators meet their obligations** to reach 5G coverage and capacity targets by 2030.
- **Remove barriers to 5G Stand Alone (SA)**: We will ensure the delivery of a spectrum licensing framework for private networks that facilitates the needs of both national public services and the private sector, and encourage the uptake of that spectrum when it becomes available. We will leverage EU funding to establish large-scale pilots for new applications of 5G SA (including within the Public Service, including Health and Public Safety).
- **Identify and address rural mobile connectivity issues**, bearing in mind the entry into service of new satellite services over the coming years.

## Delivering International Connectivity

- Safeguard Ireland's existing position as a data and interconnectivity hub between North America and Europe, to maintain our position as a key intercontinental gateway, amidst growing competition. We will **continue to address non-market barriers to investment**, including through supporting regulatory simplification.
- To enable full participation in Europe's AI and trans-European digital backbone ambitions, direct, high-capacity and low-latency subsea connections, which carry data and internet traffic to the continent, are required. **We will partner with like-minded countries** and leverage EU funding mechanisms to **strengthen Ireland's subsea cable system.**
- In particular, we will maximise funding opportunities to support cross-border digital connectivity infrastructure under the MFF, including through the European Competitiveness Fund, and seek to maintain its focus on digital connectivity, security and resilience to enhance our competitiveness.
- **Ensure the planning and regulatory system facilitates the efficient development of subsea telecoms cable projects**, in appropriate locations, aligned with necessary environmental requirements.

### Rural Access & Connectivity

The next **phase of Our Rural Future** (2026-2031), is under development and will include **a continued focus on ensuring that rural areas can fully participate in the digital economy**. This will build on progress achieved under the Rural Development Policy 2021-2025, optimising digital connectivity to support vibrant, sustainable rural communities, ensuring equality of access to digital services.

**Broadband Connection Points** (BCPs), an initiative under the National Broadband Plan, have been **installed at 300 sites nationwide** to provide free high-speed Wi-Fi to some of the most isolated and rural communities throughout the country, including 11 on offshore islands. The BCPs are located in publicly accessible locations such as community centres, libraries, sports facilities, tourist locations and other public spaces.

**Digital skills and education projects**, as well as arts and culture, and remote working-focused projects have been developed in partnership with stakeholders and rolled out across the BCP network; this includes digital skills and education projects such as OurKidsCode, a community of family creative coding clubs; and VEX Robotics, an initiative to foster a lifelong interest in STEAM in children and teenagers.

Under Our Rural Future, **over 400 remote working hubs** have joined a comprehensive and integrated national network of **Connected Hubs**, supported by a central hub portal. In addition to providing remote work access and facilities, the Connected Hubs network facilitates training and skilling opportunities, such as an AI security masterclass for hub network members.

## ii Ensuring the Security & Resilience of Digital Infrastructure

- Both geopolitical shifts and climate change require a focus on the **security and resilience of our digital infrastructure**, which is increasingly challenged by malicious attacks and severe weather events.
- **Ensuring sufficient network diversity and redundancy** is in place across our critical digital infrastructure will mitigate hazards posed to networks and services.
- We will i**mprove the security and resilience of sub-sea cables** by supporting the development of more cables on new and diverse routes and partnering with neighbouring states to develop agile response and repair capacities.
- We will **build preparedness capacities across the digital infrastructure sector** to counter potential vulnerabilities. Improved preparedness and emergency responses, requiring closer cooperation and coordination between all stakeholders, will place Ireland on a better footing to absorb future challenges to our critical digital infrastructure. We will also strengthen consumer protections in service outage scenarios and develop improved systems to deliver public warnings and alerts.
- We will implement the updated **Communication Networks Sectoral Adaptation Plan** (SAP) to address the impact of climate change on digital infrastructure.
- Infrastructure resilience is essential to realising our Digital and AI ambitions. Secure cloud infrastructure, availability of compute resources, and energy sustainability are critical dependencies for national competitiveness and innovation. The Government will ensure **cybersecurity and resilience testing** are integrated into all major infrastructure programmes, in alignment with legal obligations set out in the NIS2 Directive and the forthcoming Cyber Resilience Act.

## iii. Supporting the Development & Adoption of Transformative Digital Infrastructure Technologies

Significant investments in Advanced Computing infrastructure are required to compete and cooperate with global peers. The EuroHPC Joint Undertaking (JU) is working towards establishing a world-leading supercomputer and data infrastructure for HPC, AI and quantum computing. In line with international developments, and leveraging EuroHPC JU awards for digital infrastructure in Ireland, we will:

- Develop a **National Strategy for Advanced Computing Infrastructure and Services**, to be launched at the end of 2026, in the context of the tertiary research system, by extension providing services and support to other public bodies and private entities.
- **Support the recently awarded Irish AI Factory Antenna**, AIF IRL-Antenna (under EuroHPC Joint Undertaking). The total value of the project is €10 million, evenly co-funded by Ireland and the European Commission. This will include **cross-Departmental advisory support** to AIF IRL-Antenna, to **enable SMEs, the public service and researchers to participate** effectively, and leverage its services. This means not only access to the relevant infrastructure but also provision of training and support.
- Prioritise the **procurement of CASPIr, the EuroHPC supercomputer in Ireland**, in partnership with the European Commission. The recent signature of a hosting agreement between the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking and University of Galway (to be operated by ICHEC) will pave the way to procurement. The new national supercomputer will enable a linked national HPC-AI-Data infrastructure and services for applications such as digital twins and federated data platforms.
- **Support the sustained growth of the national Advanced Computing infrastructure** and commensurate investments in platform engineering to ensure the competitiveness of our digital infrastructure to support the academic, public service and industry ecosystems.
- Subject to international developments, Ireland's participation in the EuroHPC JU AI Factories and supercomputing ecosystem **brings the opportunity to explore participation in public-private co-funded AI Giga Factories** which aims at ~100-1000x more AI-optimised HPC capability[22].
- **Progress a major programme of investment under the revised National Development Plan** between 2026-2031, supporting AI and Digital research. **Leverage the INSPIRE programme,** a €750 million research infrastructure investment package over the lifetime of the National Development Plan.
- Support **trials of new satellite technologies** with the potential to enhance connectivity to remote rural areas, to enable innovation in key indigenous sectors such as agriculture, and to bolster the resilience of emergency services.
- **Continue investing in the development of secure quantum communication network**

[22] European Parliament 2024-2029, Committee on Industry, Research and Energy, Amendments 1-122. Proposal for a regulation (COM (2025)0414 – 2025/0229(NLE)) https://www.europarl.europa.eu/doceo/document/ITRE-AM-779386_EN.pdf

**infrastructure**, to safeguard sensitive and critical data infrastructure by integrating quantum-based systems into existing communication infrastructures. This enables the development of new skills and capacities in Ireland.

- **Support targeted research** to ensure the resilience of our digital infrastructure, such as fibre-sensing and advanced communication technologies, which will also create opportunities for indigenous innovation.
- **Broaden the mandate of the Impact 2030 Steering Group** to establish a cross-Departmental and Agency working group to prepare a national **ten-year roadmap for critical digital / AI public research infrastructure**, leveraging existing investments.

**Large-scale pilot digital infrastructures: Satellite-based quantum communication network** in partnership with EU Member States to extend existing fibre-based network.

We will support the TransEuroOGS project, a collaboration across Ireland, Luxembourg, Germany and Greece, and co-funded by the European Commission. It will build a Quantum Key Distribution (QKD) network across 8 Optical Ground Stations (OGS) that is fully interoperable and orchestrated. TransEuroOGS will address the European vision for secure and resilient communication infrastructures in QKD.

A key aim of the project is to link developments in OGS using QKD to local fibre networks across the participating Member States and increase alignment across the EU. The geographic spread of the sites of the participating OGS sites will allow tests on the operability of OGS across a variety of meteorological and environmental conditions.

Investing in EuroQCI pilot projects ensures that Ireland builds the skills and capacities needed for the next generation of secure communication networks. EuroQCI is a stepping stone to allow for the integration of quantum-based security into Europe's satellite system, IRIS$^2$.

## Compute, Analysis, Simulation Platform for Ireland (CASPIr)

CASPIr (Computation, Analysis, Simulation Platform for Ireland), planned to enter into service in 2027, will be a mid-range supercomputer capable of performing over 15 petaflops or 15 million billion operations per second. It will support cutting-edge AI and machine learning workloads, handling small-scale training and interference tasks as part of larger simulation and data analysis workflows. CASPIr will be operated by the Irish Centre for High-End Computing (ICHEC), based at University of Galway. It is being co-funded by the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking and the Irish Government.

CASPIr will support innovators across HEIs, Public service, startups/SMEs by acting as a national one-stop-shop concerning HPC, Data & AI Services, Training & Skills Development.

Together, CASPIr and AIF IRL-Antenna will create new opportunities for targeted upskilling and reskilling pathways in Advanced Computing (HPC, Data, AI, Quantum) for digital research and innovation. They will accelerate collaboration between higher education, research centres, and enterprise in the co-design of future skills initiatives.

CASPIr will align with the broader European AI Factories (AIF) strategy and strengthen our newly selected AIF IRL-Antenna, which will serve as Ireland's central hub for advancing and connecting the national AI ecosystem.

## iv. Enabling Infrastructure - Data Centres

Future economic opportunities will be underpinned by energy intensive digitalisation and associated large energy user developments. This includes significant growing demand for data centres, AI, and semiconductors. Ireland has a proven record in successfully attracting and developing high-value, cutting edge industry technology businesses to locate and invest across its regions. This includes energy-intensive industrial developments in areas such as data centres, which underpins our digital economy, drives innovation, attracts FDI at scale, and contributes to national prosperity. Data centres are an essential enabler for AI. Ireland's expertise in building and operating data centres and the resulting supply chains, position Ireland well to lead in hosting AI inference workloads. This has provided the essential foundation to underpin the future economy.

Increased energy consumption and infrastructure requirements associated with data centres and the 'mega-site' projects that may be required for future AI training data centres has become increasingly complex in recent years, with electricity demand from data centres outstripping the pace of key

infrastructure delivery required, to underpin a secure and increasingly low-carbon electricity system.

Electricity demand from data centres is forecast to exceed 30% of Ireland's total electricity consumption by 2034. To address these energy and infrastructure challenges, and to maximise future opportunities associated with the twin transitions, the Government will pursue a strategic medium-term approach for large energy users, including data centres. This will provide certainty for industries seeking to commit investments in the period beyond 2030 which are aligned with both the continued green energy transition and growing Ireland's knowledge-based economy.

The **Large Energy User Action Plan** (LEAP), published in January 2026, is the key industrial policy component of the Government's plan to accelerate renewable energy generation, connectivity, and planning processes. LEAP sets out a process to unlock opportunities from Ireland's future energy intensive industry, including through identifying the strategic development of a limited number of key locations which can facilitate large, energy intensive industrial developments and unlock indigenous renewable energy. LEAP includes new workstreams critical to implementation of a strategic spatially planned approach to facilitate investment in very energy intensive industrial developments such as hyperscale or AI data centres.

## National Connected and Autonomous Vehicles Strategy

Ireland's forthcoming Connected and Autonomous Vehicles (CAV) Strategy will set out a roadmap for the safe, ethical, and effective deployment of advanced vehicle technologies in Ireland.

CAVs represent a transformative shift in transport, leveraging digital connectivity, AI, and automation to enhance safety, efficiency, and accessibility. Human error is a significant factor in traffic collisions, and the appropriately regulated introduction of CAV technologies can play a role in substantially reducing risk and enhancing road safety.

The Strategy responds to rapid global advances in vehicle automation and connectivity, recognising the need to proactively manage the introduction of these technologies. Ireland has a vibrant ecosystem of technology companies, research centres, and public agencies engaged in CAV innovation. The Strategy aims to support and develop this ecosystem, ensure regulatory readiness, and facilitate the safe deployment of CAVs in line with international best practice and EU policy frameworks. Ireland's approach is guided by a "Safe Systems" philosophy, integrating people, vehicles, infrastructure, and data management to maximise safety and reliability.

CAVs offer significant potential to improve road safety by reducing human error, enhancing traffic efficiency, and increasing mobility for vulnerable groups, as well as opportunities for economic growth and sustainability through more efficient transport and logistics. However, the Strategy recognises challenges around public acceptance, ethical decision-making, liability, and equitable access, and addresses these through inclusive stakeholder engagement and robust ethical frameworks.

CAV is supported by initiatives such as Ireland's implementation of the EU Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) Directive, including a centralised National Access Point (NAP) for transport data, and Transport Infrastructure Ireland's Cooperative-ITS trial on the motorway network. CAV testing and trials will further strengthen national readiness, support research and skills development, and foster enterprise and economic growth.

# Deliverables

| **INVEST:** Digital & AI Infrastructure | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective** | **Prioritise digital connectivity to leverage the full potential of new and emerging digital opportunities** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **38.** Updated **Digital Connectivity Strategy** | In 2026 | D/CCS |
| | **39.** Complete **National Broadband Plan deployment** | In 2026 | D/CCS |
| | **40.** Enable **Gigabit broadband connectivity to every premises** | By 2028 | D/CCS |
| | **41.** Promote and facilitate the creation of **new subsea cable connectivity routes** from Ireland to Europe | By 2030 | D/CCS |
| **Objective** | **Strengthen the security and resilience of our digital infrastructure** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **42.** Support **development of more cables on new and diverse routes** and partner with neighbouring states to develop response and repair capacities | Ongoing | D/CCS |
| | **43.** **Facilitate satellite services to provide resilience** for critical public services where appropriate | Ongoing | D/PER |
| | **44.** **Build preparedness capacities** across the digital infrastructure sector to counter potential vulnerabilities, through:<br>• Measures to **protect the State's infrastructure from extreme climate events,** by 2030 including examining the use of satellite services to mitigate the risk of terrestrial backhaul outages<br>• **Strengthening consumer protections** in service outage scenarios<br>• **Enhancing our systems for public warnings emergency alerts** and Emergency Call Answering Services by 2027<br>• **Adding more resilience** to our emergency and critical public services' communications systems, and delivering next generation critical communications systems by 2030. | By 2030<br>Ongoing<br>By 2027<br>By 2030 | D/CCS<br>D/CCS<br>D/CCS<br>D/PER |

| **INVEST:** Digital & AI Infrastructure | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective** | **Support the development and adoption of transformative digital infrastructure technologies** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **45.** Develop a **National Strategy for Advanced Computing Infrastructure and Services** | In 2026 (Q4) | D/FHERIS |
| | **46.** Implement **sustainable national HPC/AI infrastructure (CASPIr)** to ensure the competitiveness of our digital infrastructure to support the academic, public sector and industry ecosystems | Ongoing | D/FHERIS |
| | **47.** Establish **Ireland's AI Factory Antenna** to support R&I in AI and enable Irish SMEs to access supercomputing resources in an AI Factory in the EU | In 2026 (Q2) | D/FHERIS |
| | Implement **strategic pilot digital initiatives:**<br>**48.** To exploit 5G capabilities through **5G Standalone pilots** including within the Public Service in Health and Public Safety | Ongoing | D/CCS |
| | **49.** To expand our **Quantum communication networks** in partnership with EU Member States | Ongoing | D/CCS |
| | **50.** To **foster experimentation** and **develop advanced communication technologies,** e.g. 6G | Ongoing | D/CCS |

05

Invest

# Cyber Security to support our digital journey

# Invest: Cyber Security to support our digital journey

## Chapter Summary

We are focused on **accelerating our cyber security capacity, skills and adoption,** to keep pace with the significant increase in cyber-related risks. We will do this by fostering a proactive compliance culture, building our cyber security capacity, and engaging effectively at national and international level.

- Publish a new **Cyber Security Strategy** in 2026, setting out a roadmap to deliver additional capacity for our **National Cyber Security Centre,** establish a new **Cyber Security Research Centre of Excellence,** and provide targeted grant funding for SMEs and organisations with obligations under the EU NIS2 Directive, to improve cyber resilience.
- Support the secure use of AI in the public sector, through a **National AI Cyber Risk Assessment** and **updated guidance.**
- Increase the capabilities of the **Joint Cyber Defence Command**, to defend against cyber threats and enhance national cyber defence resilience and capabilities.
- **Update the National Cyber Emergency Response Plan**, to respond to serious cybersecurity incidents that affect nationally important systems and networks.

**The Government is committed to ensuring that the development and delivery of next generation infrastructure is carried out in a secure manner**, to support future services; this is particularly pertinent in the current changing and heightened risk and threat landscape.

The next generation of cyber resilience will be shaped by AI, representing both opportunities and challenges. AI will transform how we detect, respond to, and recover from incidents, whilst introducing risks such as model manipulation, data poisoning, and adversarial use by threat actors. The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) will work with public bodies, industry, and researchers to understand and mitigate these emerging threats, ensuring that Ireland remains secure.

Cyber security and related regulation should encourage adoption of new technologies in a manner that is secure by design so that, as it becomes engrained into essential infrastructure and the fabric of society, there can be a certain, risk-based level of trust as to its security and resilience. **The Government is conscious of the importance of balancing challenges and new economic opportunities**, to ensure we can continue to reap the benefits of the digital revolution.

**Cyber security will be a key enabler of AI adoption across digital infrastructure and public service delivery**. The NCSC will publish updated **Cyber Security Guidance for Public Service Use of AI** in 2026, building on existing frameworks, to support the procurement and secure adoption of AI by public bodies, in line with the EU AI Act and **EU Network and Information Security Directive** (NIS2).

The Government will publish a **new Cyber Security Strategy** in 2026, setting out a roadmap for the delivery of key initiatives included in the NDP Review[23]. This includes **additional investment in the operational capacity of the NCSC** to monitor, track and identify incidents; establishing a **Cyber Security Research Centre of Excellence**; and **targeted grant funding** for SMEs and NIS2 entities to improve their cyber resilience.

## Applying AI to Improve Cyber Threat Intelligence Sharing

The NCSC is collaborating with University College Dublin (UCD) on a research project to improve how sensitive cyber threat intelligence is shared across Ireland's critical sectors. Sharing timely and actionable intelligence is central to the work of the Cyber Security Coordination and Response Network (Cyber-CORE), which brings together operators in energy, transport, healthcare and other essential services. However, organisations often face practical challenges when sharing detailed and voluminous technical information, particularly when it contains sensitive operational or security data.

UCD researchers are analysing common obstacles that arise during cross-sector intelligence sharing, including data-handling constraints, inconsistent formats, and the need to remove sensitive indicators before wider dissemination.

The research team will prototype an AI-supported solution to help automate aspects of the sanitisation, classification and transformation process. The aim is to support faster, more consistent, and more secure sharing of cyber threat intelligence within Cyber-CORE, while ensuring full compliance with legal, ethical, operational and security requirements.

This collaboration demonstrates how AI can be applied safely and responsibly in national cyber operations, providing a practical example of innovation aligned with security, trust and public-sector need.

## i. Securing our State against Emerging Digital and AI Threats

The Government is committed to securing the State and its people, including government systems, against cyber security threats by **fostering a proactive compliance culture, which enables and supports the deployment of digital technologies and AI** with a clear, predictable and effective regulatory framework

[23] https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-public-expenditure-infrastructure-public-service-reform-and-digitalisation/publications/national-development-plan-review-2025/

including:

- **Implementation of the EU Network and Information Security Directive (NIS2)**: The Government's National Cyber Security Bill will transpose NIS2, which will strengthen and harmonise cyber security across the EU, in the context of increased digitalisation and an evolving cyber security threat landscape. NIS2 establishes a unified legal framework in the EU to uphold cyber security across 18 critical sectors and requires Member States to define national cyber security strategies and collaborate with the EU for cross-border reaction and enforcement. The NCSC will be Ireland's National Competent Authority for the public administration sector and will provide technical support and guidance to other regulators, as the lead Competent Authority for NIS2.
- **Ireland is preparing for implementation of the EU Cyber Resilience Act (CRA)**: The CRA enhances cyber security standards of products that contain a digital component (e.g. baby monitors and smart watches), requiring manufacturers and retailers to ensure cyber security throughout the lifecycle of their products. The main obligations will apply from December 2027, with reporting obligations applying from September 2026.
- **We will obtain recognition for certification schemes, like Cyber Fundamentals, to facilitate a structured mechanism for entities to demonstrate compliance with the CRA and NIS2**.

## ii. Building our Cyber Security Capacity

The Government is committed to building the cyber security capacity, maturity and resilience of the public sector, research institutions, businesses, and society at large.

- The **NCSC will further invest in its operational capacity** to strengthen its service offering to the public, with funding via the revised National Development Plan. It will continue to carry out risk assessments. The **2025 National Cyber Risk Assessment** sets out a detailed cyber security-focused assessment of all critical national infrastructure and will be used as the foundation for the new National Cyber Security Strategy. The NCSC will publish a **national AI Cyber Risk assessment in Q1 2026 and updated guidance on the secure use of AI in the public service by Q2 2026** to support the secure use of AI and ensure that guidance is updated to reflect the current threat landscape.
- The NCSC will work with relevant Departments, Research Ireland, and other stakeholders to establish a **Cyber Security Research Centre of Excellence by 2030**, with funding under the revised NDP. This will serve as a focal point for researchers in the State to collaborate, including those in the private sector.
- The Defence Forces will continue **to increase the capabilities of the Joint Cyber Defence Command**, which was established to defend against cyber threats and enhance national cyber defence resilience and capabilities.
- The NCSC will **increase support for businesses to improve their cyber security maturity** by building on the pilot programme **Cyber Security Improvement Grant Scheme**, funded by the revised NDP with a focus on resilience and innovative cyber security solutions.
- The NCSC will lead on a **national level roadmap on post quantum cryptography**, to protect critical infrastructure operators in the face of new threats to data security. This is part of the EU-wide initiative, *A Coordinated Implementation Roadmap for the Transition to PQC*, which will set deadlines for when governments, critical infrastructure operators and other organisations should upgrade their data encryption technology. **Ireland's National Roadmap will establish a deadline for the transition of public service ICT systems**.

## iii. Effective Engagement

The Government is committed to engaging nationally to develop emergency response capacity, peer learning and information-sharing, and internationally to pursue Ireland's diplomatic goals in the realm of cyber security and responsible behaviour in cyber space, including:

- The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, and the Department of Defence, where appropriate, will work closely to engage in multilateral forums, and bilaterally **to advocate for Ireland's position on key issues in the cyber sphere**.
- The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade will explore opportunities for **sustainable international capacity-building** and training partnerships with third countries, with the support of the NCSC.
- The Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, and the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration will establish **regular meetings with the UK Government on cyber security** to facilitate exchanges of information.
- The NCSC will regularly **test, and coordinate on updating the National Cyber Emergency Response Plan**. The Plan sets out the national approach for responding to serious cyber security incidents that affect nationally important systems and networks.

# Deliverables

| **INVEST:** Cyber Security | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective** | **Securing our State against Emerging Digital and AI Threats** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **51. New Cyber Security Strategy,** to set out a roadmap for delivery of key initiatives in the NDP Review | In 2026 | D/JHAM |
| | **52. Prioritise legislation to implement the EU NIS2** Directive and prepare for **implementation of the EU Cyber Resilience Act** | Ongoing | D/CCS; D/JHAM |
| **Objective** | **Building our Cyber Security Capacity** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **53. New National AI Cyber Risk assessment,** and **updated guidance** on secure use of AI in the public service | In 2026 (NRA Q1; Guidance Q2) | D/JHAM; NCSC |
| | **54.** Establish a **Cyber Security Research Centre of Excellence,** to bring together Government, academia and industry | By 2030 | D/JHAM; NCSC |

06

Lead

# Digital Regulatory Hub and Centre of Expertise

# Lead: Digital Regulatory Hub and Centre of Expertise

## Chapter Summary

We will **build on our reputation as a digital leader** through a digital regulatory framework that supports innovation through agile regulation and protects consumers. We are committed to Ireland's important role in enforcing digital regulation and to strengthening Ireland's position as an **EU Centre of Excellence and digital regulatory hub**. We will continue to be a **strong advocate at EU-level for a balanced, proportionate and coherent approach to digital regulation**, which supports competitiveness, innovation and the protection of fundamental rights.

- We will reinforce Ireland's position as **a trusted, agile, forward-looking digital regulatory hub** for companies operating across the EU Digital Single Market.
- We are **committed to ensuring a modern, cohesive and well-resourced regulatory framework** that is responsive to the evolving digital age, and we are focused on delivering a predictable, efficient and streamlined regulatory environment.
- Given the cross-cutting nature of digital regulation, we will **strengthen collaboration and coordination across Government and regulators** to create a coherent and effective digital policy and regulatory landscape.

## A strong voice in Europe for digital and data regulation which supports competitiveness, drives innovation and protects fundamental rights

Ireland plays a key role in the effective application of the EU's digital rulebook. Under the EU 'Country of Origin' principle, Ireland is the lead regulator for many of the world's leading digital technology companies headquartered in the EU/EMEA. Through consistent delivery of these important regulatory functions, we have developed deep expertise and a strong track record of implementation.

Leveraging the regulatory experience and proximity of Member States to the companies they oversee ensures agile, informed, and proportionate enforcement. This approach strengthens trust in EU rules, maintains competitiveness, and avoids unnecessary duplication of effort, while preserving the coherence of the Single Market through close coordination at EU level.

Ireland will continue to be a strong advocate for harmonisation and coherence across the acquis of EU digital regulation and for an approach that fosters innovation, while ensuring effective and proportionate regulation of the EU digital economy.

The Country of Origin principle is fundamental in providing businesses with the necessary legal certainty and understanding when engaging in cross-border trade. This has enabled companies to grow and scale across the EU in an efficient and cost-effective way, especially for micro and small enterprises. This will continue to be the foundation on which we strengthen our engagement on the EU's digital agenda.

As a priority of our 2026 Presidency of the Council of the EU, we will work closely with the European Commission and the European Parliament to advance an ambitious and dynamic digital simplification package which supports the EU's strategic positioning as the location of choice for trustworthy digital innovation leveraging the role of lead regulators to provide increased legal certainty to companies, while also maintaining a central focus on protecting data privacy and fundamental rights of citizens.

We will also continue to actively support the Commission's broader review of the digital rulebook – the "Fitness Check" - to ensure that it enhances competitiveness. We will advocate for a dynamic, ambitious and risk-based approach, focused on removing any regulatory overlaps, or unnecessary administrative burdens that may exist, and supporting compliance.

Continued engagement and cooperation on digital diplomacy through relevant multilateral fora is critical and we will continue to advocate strongly for the protection of human rights and a human-centric, multi-stakeholder approach to global digital governance.

As the high-level centrepiece of our '*Digital Week*' during Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the EU, we will host an **International AI and Digital Summit** in October 2026. The Summit will leverage Ireland's position as a digital and AI technology hub, as well as showcasing Europe as a location of choice for responsible AI and applied AI Innovation.

### Digital Regulators Group

Ireland's **Digital Regulators Group (DRG)** was established in 2022. Its strategic objectives are to support a coherent and cohesive approach to digital regulation in Ireland, to share expertise and engage with Government, and to support a wider regulatory cooperation framework.

The DRG membership comprises of Coimisiún na Meán, the Data Protection Commission, the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission and the Commission for Communications Regulation. The DRG will keep its membership under review, to ensure it continues to reflect the allocation of digital regulatory functions.

### i. Ireland as a trusted, agile, forward-looking Digital Regulatory Hub

In the context of Ireland's central role in the enforcement of EU-wide digital regulation, we will **further strengthen our strategic engagement on the EU's digital agenda,** recognising the importance of an **effective and coherent digital rulebook** as a critical lever in boosting competitiveness.

We will continue to play an **active role in the D9+ Group** of digital front runner EU Member States, to advocate for well-designed digital regulation and a Digital Single Market which underpins EU competitiveness and innovation, while protecting fundamental rights and ensuring effective competition and consumer protection:

- Recognising Ireland's position as a regulatory hub for companies operating across the EU Digital

Single Market, we will identify opportunities to **strengthen stakeholder engagement**, to help ensure digital regulatory frameworks are balanced, coherent and future-proof.
- We will foster **agile, enabling and supportive governance models** to facilitate innovation, including the establishment of a national **AI regulatory sandbox** commencing in 2026, to enable innovators to test new digital and AI solutions in partnership with compliance experts.
- We will establish an **AI Office of Ireland** to reinforce Ireland's reputation as a forward-thinking digital economy committed to responsible AI development and governance. A sectoral model of enforcement for the EU AI Act, with the AI Office of Ireland at the centre, will provide the regulatory and legal certainty needed to develop, deploy, and use AI technologies with confidence.
- We will prioritise negotiation and delivery of proposals to enhance Europe's competitiveness through measures such as the **Digital Networks Act**. In doing so we will deliver a regulatory framework that places a strong emphasis on end users and consumer protection.

## ii. Delivering a predictable, efficient and streamlined regulatory environment

As a regulatory centre of excellence, we are committed to ensuring a modern, cohesive and well-resourced regulatory framework that is responsive to the evolving digital age.

We will **ensure that our digital regulators are sufficiently resourced** to support the efficient and effective discharge of their regulatory responsibilities, reflecting the expansion of the EU's digital regulatory framework over recent years. We will also ensure that **new regulatory functions are designated and resourced in a timely manner**, to provide certainty for industry and wider stakeholders.

All relevant Departments will explore ways to adopt a **more streamlined and coordinated approach to the recruitment and resourcing of specialist digital regulatory skills**, working with regulators, to support them to maximise timely planning and delivery mechanisms. Where beneficial, we will explore options to maximise efficiencies and the sharing of expertise across digital regulators, as well as to facilitate mobility and secondments.

We recognise the critical importance of ensuring our regulators are highly skilled and the need to build capacity in specialised skills. We will work with the DRG, in partnership with education and training providers, to deliver the **requisite regulatory skills initiatives** to support Ireland's role as a Centre of Regulatory Excellence.

Recognising the importance of clarity and certainty for industry, we will support initiatives to **streamline digital regulatory processes**, particularly where two or more competent authorities are involved:

- We will establish a **Criminal Justice International Cooperation Office**, under the **EU eEvidence Package**. This will provide a cohesive approach to digital regulation in the criminal justice space by centralising the necessary skills and expertise, and ensuring a streamlined regulatory framework based around a single regulator. This approach will be further strengthened by the incorporation of other international co-operation instruments, such as the **European Investigation Order Directive**, into the implementation of the EU e-Evidence Package.
- In line with the Action Plan on Competitiveness and Productivity and the Accelerating Infrastructure Taskforce Report, we will **engage with the DRG,** while fully respecting the statutory independence of the DRG's constituent members, to encourage an **approach that enables innovation and competitiveness**.
- We will encourage regulators to explore options to streamline digital regulatory processes where appropriate, including through **single-reporting mechanisms** or central coordination mechanisms for end-users.[24]
- We will **provide clear and accessible guidance** to support compliance with the AI Act, as well as a 'dashboard view' of the responsibilities assigned to competent authorities designated under the AI Act.
- We will endeavour to ensure that the process **for levy funding** arising from national legislation and EU digital regulatory frameworks is clear and transparent, as appropriate.

## iii. Collaboration and coherence across the digital regulatory landscape

We will strengthen collaboration and coordination across Government and regulators to create a coherent and effective digital policy and regulatory landscape.

Given the cross-cutting nature of digital regulation, we will **review our domestic digital regulatory**

[24] Such as the 'Tobar' reporting platform developed by the National Cyber Security Centre for cyber security incidents.

**structures** to ensure they are fit-for purpose in this evolving regulatory landscape. We will also strengthen coordination of digital policy files across Government, to maximise **domestic coherence and cross-sectoral impact analysis** on the development of policy positions on digital regulation to enable Ireland to influence and shape critical global digital issues.

- We will **continue regular engagement** between the Senior Officials' Group on Digital Issues and the DRG, to ensure a coherent and effective domestic approach to digital policy and digital regulatory structures.
- We will **support the enhancement of the DRG and its Secretariat** to deepen cross-agency collaboration, including shared communications campaigns to raise awareness of the wider regulatory landscape, as well as to enable regular engagement with stakeholders to support horizon scanning.
- We will consider the introduction of mechanisms **to enable information sharing across DRG members**, consistent with the statutory remits of the regulators. A recent example of cross-agency cooperation is the Cooperation Agreement and Joint Statement between Coimisiún na Meán and the Data Protection Commission on advancing the safety of children and protection of their personal data online.

# Deliverables

| **LEAD:** Digital Regulatory Hub and Centre of Expertise | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective** | **Reinforce Ireland's position as a trusted, agile, forward-looking digital regulatory hub for companies operating across the EU Digital Single Market** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **55. Enhance our strategic engagement at EU level** to influence and advance the EU's digital simplification agenda, leveraging the Country of Origin principle to maximise legal certainty for companies, to future-proof the EU digital regulatory framework and improve its coherence and effectiveness | Ongoing | D/Taoiseach; D/FAT; All Depts |
| | **56. Strengthen cross-sectoral engagement** to help ensure digital regulatory frameworks are balanced, coherent, and future-proof | Ongoing | D/ETE |
| | **57.** Ensure the **effective and coherent implementation of the EU AI Act** in Ireland | Ongoing | D/ETE |
| | **58. Establish the AI Office of Ireland** as the central co-ordinating body for the AI Act | In 2026 (August) | D/ETE |
| | **59.** Foster **agile, enabling and supportive governance models** to facilitate innovation, including the establishment of an **AI Regulatory Sandbox** | Ongoing | D/ETE |

| **LEAD:** Digital Regulatory Hub and Centre of Expertise | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective** | **Deliver a predictable, efficient, well-resourced and streamlined regulatory environment responsive to the evolving digital age** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **60.** Establish a **Criminal Justice International Cooperation Office,** under the **EU eEvidence Package** | In 2026 (August) | D/JHAM |
| | **61.** Support Ireland's role as a Centre of Regulatory Excellence by **ensuring our digital regulators are sufficiently resourced and maximising timely recruitment and resourcing** | Ongoing | D/PER; All Relevant Depts |
| | **62.** Engage with the DRG, while respecting the statutory independence of its constituent members, to encourage an **approach that enables innovation and competitiveness** | Ongoing | D/Taoiseach; All Relevant Depts |
| | **63.** Work with the DRG, in partnership with education and training providers, to provide the requisite **skills initiatives** to build capacity and support the delivery of digital regulatory functions | Ongoing | D/FHERIS; All Depts |
| | **64.** Explore options to streamline the digital regulatory process, including through **single-reporting mechanisms** and **guidance toolkits**, where appropriate and as outlined in the Digital Omnibus proposal | Ongoing | D/Taoiseach; All Relevant Depts |
| **Objective** | **Foster collaboration and coherence across the digital regulatory landscape** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **65.** **Review our domestic digital regulatory structures a**nd strengthen coordination of digital policy files across Government, to maximise domestic coherence | Ongoing | D/Taoiseach; All Relevant Depts |
| | **66.** Support the enhancement of the **Digital Regulators Group** and its Secretariat to deepen cross-agency collaboration across the digital regulatory landscape | Ongoing | D/Taoiseach; All Relevant Depts |
| | **67.** Explore the introduction of measures to enable **information-sharing** across the Digital Regulators Group, to increase efficiencies | Ongoing | D/Taoiseach; All Relevant Depts |

07

Empower

# Online Safety

# Empower: Online Safety

## Chapter Summary

**Online Safety is a priority for the Government**, in particular the safety of vulnerable groups, such as children and young people. The Government is supporting **Coimisiún na Meán to implement our Online Safety Framework** to ensure designated online platforms meet their obligations. New challenges and risks will continue to emerge with the advent of AI, and the Government will ensure that these are addressed in a timely, robust and comprehensive manner.

We recognise the **importance of supporting teachers, parents and families** to talk about online safety, and develop the necessary awareness and skills to protect themselves. We will continue to **build awareness of users' rights** on reporting inappropriate, harmful and illegal content and the role of Coimisiún na Meán. Online safety will be a priority for **Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2026**, and we will ensure that voices of children are heard in developing online safety measures.

Specific measures outlined below include:

- **Our commitment to supporting work on age verification solutions**, working with EU Member States, and through the implementation of Ireland's Government Digital Wallet
- Our commitment to work actively with like-minded EU Member States to **explore options to introduce age restrictions on the use of social media**
- Advocate with the European Commission **to ensure the list of prohibited practices under Article 5 of the EU AI Act remains fit for purpose** in the context of growing capabilities of AI.
- **Educational supports**, including awareness and skills resources to support online safety in schools

## i. Ireland's Online Safety Framework and broader EU context

**Online Safety, in particular for children and young people, is a whole of Government priority.**

Coimisiún na Meán, established in March 2023, is Ireland's online safety and media regulator, at the heart of our Online Safety Framework[25]. The Framework equips An Coimisiún with tools to address the availability of illegal content, inadequate protections for children on social media and the harmful impacts of recommender systems. The Government is supporting Coimisiún na Meán to implement the Framework to ensure platforms meet their obligations to protect users, particularly children and young people, from online harm [26].

Online Safety is a cross-cutting issue and features at EU level in the forthcoming Digital Fairness Act, the Democracy Shield and the upcoming evaluation of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive, as well as the AI Act and the GDPR. We will work to ensure that robust online protections are maintained as part of the European Commission's approach to digital regulatory simplification, as well as strengthening regulatory alignment and progressing enhancements in the online safety regulatory framework.

The Government will **work actively with like-minded EU Member States, to explore options to introduce age restrictions on the use of social media** concentrating, in particular, on those under sixteen years of age. Ireland will strongly advocate for a decision on the "digital age of majority" to be taken at EU level, and that any decision take account of the forthcoming report of the European Commission's expert panel, but will take action domestically if necessary. In parallel, Ireland will continue to work nationally on robust age verification tools. At a national level, the recommendations of the Online Health Taskforce will be considered across Government. We recognise the importance of supporting teachers, parents and families to talk about online safety, so that children and parents develop a critical understanding of the risks, as well as the skills to protect themselves. We will continue to build awareness of users' rights on reporting inappropriate, harmful and illegal content and the role of Coimisiún na Meán.

Online safety will be a priority for Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the EU in 2026, including the protection of women and children in particular, from the misuse of digital tools, and we will ensure that the voices of children are heard in developing online safety measures.

## ii. Age Verification

Ireland's Online Safety Code (October 2024) sets out binding obligations on designated video-sharing platforms established in Ireland. This includes implementation of effective age assurance measures to ensure that, for example, adult-only content cannot be seen by children. An essential component of online safety is **robust age verification** and work is ongoing across Government, through the implementation of Ireland's Government Digital Wallet, to support robust age verification in a way that protects users' rights, including privacy, while enhancing online safety.

### Case Study – Coimisiún na Meán awareness campaigns

As Ireland's online safety and media regulator, Coimisiún na Meán are committed to raising awareness of significant developments in online safety and options available to people, should they encounter harmful or illegal content online. In 2024, An Coimisiún ran the **"See it, Flag it, Stop it"** campaign raising awareness of how to report inappropriate, harmful or illegal content.

An Coimisiún has also produced materials for schools and has run further **campaigns to improve awareness of Ireland's Online Safety Framework and the importance of reporting harmful content**.

## iii. AI-generated harmful and illegal content

With the advent of AI and other new technologies, we are conscious that new challenges and risks will continue to emerge, and the Government will place protection of individuals at the heart of our legislative, policy and regulatory responses. We must ensure that

[25] Ireland's Online Safety Framework is currently made up of three laws which are targeted at online platforms. These are the: Digital Services Act; the Online Safety and Media Regulation Act 2022 (which is the basis for our Online Safety Code); and the EU Terrorist Content Online Regulation.

[26] The European Commission is lead regulator under the Digital Services Act for the monitoring and enforcement of obligations applying to Very Large Online Platforms (VLOPs) and Search Engines (VLOSEs), such as the measures to mitigate systemic risks.

challenges and risks are addressed in a timely, robust and comprehensive manner. This includes keeping under review our legislative frameworks to ensure they are sufficient to address these new risks and that our digital regulators are sufficiently resourced to support the efficient and effective discharge of their regulatory responsibilities.

We will engage with the European Commission to ensure the list of prohibited practices under Article 5 of the EU AI Act remains fit for purpose in the context of growing capabilities of AI.

We will support Coimisiún na Meán in leading an information and awareness campaign, to support public understanding on reporting of harmful and illegal content, as well as the role of Coimisiún na Meán in relation to online safety. Building on existing taxonomies, Coimisiún na Meán will work with the AI Advisory Council to review existing taxonomies of online harms and update, as appropriate, with regard to AI-enabled harms.

## iv. Disinformation & Media Literacy

A core principle of **Ireland's National Counter Disinformation Strategy** (April 2025) is to counter disinformation through building resilience and trust at individual and societal levels. The Strategy contains a range of cross-sector actions to help address the complex and ever-evolving issue of disinformation, including the implementation of a Digital Citizenship Champions primary-school programme.

Media literacy is at the heart of the Government's approach, providing people with critical skills and knowledge to navigate complex information and disinformation environments, which is particularly important given the speed of technological developments.

The National Counter Disinformation Strategy includes public libraries as part of a lifelong approach to empowering citizens with media literacy, training, and awareness. Public libraries are highlighted as key players in ensuring public access to trustworthy, reliable information in the public interest.

### An Coimisiún Toghcháin

An Coimisiún Toghcháin, Ireland's Electoral Commission, was established in 2023, and it supports electoral integrity through the regulation of online political advertising during electoral periods, as well as combatting online mis/disinformation and manipulative or inauthentic behaviour online during election campaign periods.

To support enhanced transparency in our democratic processes, the European Union (Political Advertising) Regulations 2025 facilitate the implementation in Ireland of Regulation (EU) 2024/900 on the transparency and targeting of political advertising. Since 10 October 2025, all political advertising, irrespective of the media used, must be clearly labelled and must be accompanied by a transparency notice. Proposals to amend Part 5 of the Electoral Reform Act 2022, which will provide An Coimisiún Toghcháin with powers to protect our elections and referendums against the dissemination or publication of online electoral process disinformation, are being advanced to ensure that its provisions fully align with the EU's Digital Services Act.

## v. Online Safety in Schools

The Department of Education and Youth is engaging with Coimisiún na Meán, in particular on **how social media companies can support measures to prevent and address bullying** among children and young people online. This includes supporting An Coimisiún in **raising awareness of new educational resources** about users' rights under Ireland's Online Safety Framework.

**Webwise** is the Irish Internet Safety Awareness Centre, and provides free information, advice and resources for schools, families and young people on online safety and digital citizenship. With the help of the Webwise Youth Advisory Panel, Webwise develops youth-oriented awareness-raising resources and training programmes.

As part of the Government's commitment to online safety for children and young people, **comprehensive national guidance on the use of, and access to, personal mobile phones by students during the school day** was published in June 2025. It aims to enhance student wellbeing, reduce risks such as cyberbullying and exposure to inappropriate content, and promote more focused school environments, with greater peer interaction and socialisation. Grants are available to post-primary schools towards secure mobile phone storage solutions.

At primary school level, the Wellbeing specification includes outcomes focused on Media and Digital Wellbeing, supporting safe and ethical use of technology and understanding media influence. It equips children to navigate media and the digital world safely and responsibly, helping them to develop a balanced and informed relationship with media and technology.

Updated Social, Personal and Health Education (SPHE) curriculum specifications were published in 2023 for Junior Cycle and in 2024 for Senior Cycle. These specifications, developed after extensive consultation, include a range of learning outcomes that relate to online safety and the online world. The focus is on the development of the skills and understanding to assist them in dealing with both the benefits and difficulties. To support teachers in teaching the specifications, Oide is providing teacher professional development, while online toolkits have also been developed.

## Snapshot of resources to support Online Safety

- **Media Literacy Ireland** is an informal alliance of over 250 members working together on a mainly voluntary basis to promote media literacy. Funded by Coimisiún na Meán, Media Literacy Ireland manages the ***Be Media Smart campaign***, which encourages us all to '**Stop, Think and Check**' that the information we are consuming is from a trustworthy source.
- The **HTML Heroes programme for primary pupils** is aimed at developing critical thinking skills, finding reliable information and practicing safe communication.
- A new **Digital Citizenship programme for primary pupils** is currently in development with the support of Coimisiún na Meán and will be available in early 2026.
- The **Connected Programme for Junior Cycle** explores online wellbeing, mis/disinformation, rights and Big Data, and is being updated to include emerging technologies such as Generative AI.
- **Free online courses are available for educators** on digital citizenship, cyberbullying and online safety in the classroom. Lessons on Generative AI have been developed for primary and post-primary schools and a **parents' guide on Generative AI by Webwise** will be launched in February 2026 for Safer Internet Day.

# Deliverables

| **EMPOWER:** Online Safety | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective** | **Ensure our Online Safety Framework is sufficiently robust to deal with emerging challenges and risks** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **68. Continue to support and adequately resource regulators** tasked with preventing harm to the public, especially children, in particular Coimisiún na Meán in implementation of the Online Safety Code | Ongoing | D/CCS, All Relevant Depts |
| | **69. Progress enhancements to the EU Online Safety Framework,** working with Member States, in particular through the **review and any resultant proposal for the revision of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive** during Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the EU | By end-2026 | D/CCS, All Relevant Depts |
| | **70.** Engage with the European Commission **to ensure the list of prohibited practices under Article 5 of the EU AI Act remains fit for purpose** in the context of growing capabilities of AI | Ongoing | D/ETE |
| | **71. Support Coimisiún na Meán to lead an information and awareness campaign,** in conjunction with other relevant bodies, to support public understanding and reporting of AI-generated non-consensual intimate images | Ongoing | D/CCS |
| | **72.** Building on existing work, Coimisiún na Meán and the AI Advisory Council will **review existing taxonomies of online harms** and update, as appropriate, with regard to AI-enabled harms | Ongoing | D/CCS |
| | **73. Implementation of the National Counter Disinformation Strategy,** through effective allocation of funding for media literacy, fact-checking expertise and continued research on disinformation | Ongoing | D/CCS, All Relevant Depts |

| **EMPOWER:** Online Safety | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective** | **Enhance online safety, in particular for children and young people, as a whole of Government priority** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **74.** Develop a national network of **Digital Citizenship Champions** to support and implement online safety and digital citizenship education in primary schools | By 2028 | D/Education |
| | **75.** **Support robust age verification across the European Union** and through Ireland's Government Digital Wallet, **implement an age verification tool,** protecting users' rights including privacy, and enhancing online safety<br>• **Pilot of the age verification tool** in the Government Digital Wallet | Ongoing<br>In 2026 (H1) | D/CCS<br>D/CCS; All Relevant Depts |
| | **76.** Work actively with like-minded Member States to explore options to **introduce age restrictions on the use of social media concentrating, in particular, on those under sixteen years of age** | Ongoing | D/CCS |
| | **77.** **Align educational and professional learning supports** with national online safety and regulatory frameworks, and **update our resources for schools** on online safety, cybersecurity, digital citizenship and AI | Ongoing | D/Education |
| | **78.** **Embed digital media literacy** across teacher professional learning and curriculum supports | Ongoing | D/Education |

08

Empower

# Skills & Talent for a Digital Society & Economy

# Empower: Skills & Talent for a Digital Society & Economy

## Chapter Summary

Through an inclusive and transparent approach, we will **ensure all groups in society are supported and empowered** to embrace AI adoption and thrive in a digital society. We will **equip our workforce with cutting-edge skills**; we will **foster widespread digital skills, and deep societal trust and literacy;** and we will support workers to navigate the impacts of potential job displacement, including through **agile, accessible and fit-for-purpose upskilling and reskilling opportunities**.

We will achieve this through:

**A new Roadmap for Technology Skills of the Future** to ensure our skills ecosystem remains responsive and future-focused

- A **new National Skills Observatory** to analyse labour market dynamics and skills development across all skills needs, enabling the identification of gaps in provision, and development of additional skills initiatives
- A new **online AI Skilling Platform**, and nationwide **Digital & AI skilling campaign** to enhance awareness of opportunities available
- A focus on the **continued digital transformation of the tertiary education system**
- A commitment to **ensuring that all learners acquire the basic digital skills, digital literacy skills, and media literacy skills needed** to thrive in an AI-driven world, across curricula at all levels
- **A National Conversation on AI** and research to support public engagement and informed debate and build public trust.

The Government is committed to **enabling and empowering our people, workers and businesses to develop and embrace new technologies,** supporting a positive digital transformation of the economy and society. Inclusion and accessibility will be at the core of our approach, and we will ensure that all cohorts of society are supported to thrive in a digital Ireland, including through **flexible, agile and fit-for-purpose digital skills provision**.

This approach will **span the full spectrum of skills needs**, from specialist technology skills to wider workforce development, across curricula at all levels, and for society more widely, **to ensure that everyone in society is equipped with the skills needed for a digital world**.

We will publish a **Roadmap for Technology Skills of the Future** in 2026, with regular updates, to ensure our skills ecosystem remains future-focused and responsive to the changing needs resulting from emerging technologies such as AI.

Ireland has a **strong record on digital skills, in particular specialist technology skills**[27]. We currently rank 5th amongst EU Member States on the percentage of ICT specialists in the workforce; Ireland has consistently exceeded the EU average on this metric since 2018. The number of ICT graduates in Ireland increased by almost 40% in the period 2018 to 2024. We rank 5th on gender parity amongst ICT specialists at EU level, although we are conscious that improvement is needed here, with limited growth seen since 2018.

This strong performance is encouraging and demonstrates the flexibility and capacity of our higher education system, and the importance of a coherent and joined-up approach across the full education and skills system. The promotion of STEM and digital learning for all learners, at all levels, is a key priority.

The **STEM Education Policy Statement 2017–2026** aims to improve STEM experiences and outcomes, emphasising nurturing skills such as curiosity, inquiry, problem-solving, creativity, persistence, and ethical behaviour to prepare learners for an increasingly digital world. Further steps to boost technical capability at post-primary level include the development of refreshed Maths and Computer Science curricula, in recognition of the importance of setting students up for success at the next level. Relatedly, the recent introduction of tertiary programmes in ICT disciplines that offer initial qualifications in local Further Education and Training Colleges, with additional pathways to degree qualifications, is designed to support student retention and degree completion.

Encouraging **female participation in STEM** is a priority. Women are still underrepresented in STEM fields, and by fostering diversity and innovation we can inspire young women to pursue these careers with confidence through early engagement and strong role models.

The Government also recognises the fundamental importance of **digital as a transversal skill** and the need to **equip all graduates, irrespective of their level and field of study, with digital skills,** including AI skills. Our Tertiary providers[28] are working to address this issue, which will be reflected in a new **Statement of Ambition** in 2026. This is part of a **broader ambition to ensure all cohorts are supported to skill, reskill and upskill** for a digital society and economy, as well as navigating and mitigating the impacts of potential job displacement due to the adoption of AI technologies.

Under the **Roadmap for Technology Skills** of the Future, we will:

- **Optimise the pipeline of specialist technology skills** to meet industry and public sector needs and diversify the profile of digital specialists, including by encouraging underrepresented groups to become technology specialists, including gender diversity.
- **Provide skilling and upskilling opportunities** for businesses, NGOs and public service organisations required to support their digital transformation.
- Embed the **development of digital skills** and the use of digital technologies **across tertiary education and training**, including the use of AI for teaching and learning.
- Enhance **digital literacy and basic skills** for society and for the economy, including AI Literacy.

## i. Specialist Technology Skills, including Research Talent Skills

For Ireland to remain a leader in the adoption of the newest technology and the development of the next wave of technology, we need to continuously adapt our skilling, upskilling and reskilling opportunities. To this end, we will:

- **Expand our research talent pipeline by attracting more students into PhD programmes** in areas aligned with emerging industries, including in relation to AI and national research priorities. PhD candidates will be supported

[27] **https://digital-decade-desi.digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/datasets/desi/charts**
[28] Higher Education institutions and Further Education and Training providers

with programmes informed by best practice in professional development.

- **Enhance to understanding of the changing skills requirements** for digital technology specialists across the skills ecosystem. One of the reports commissioned [29] will be informed by stakeholder engagement and consultation with industry, the public service, and academia. It will examine the drivers of demand for digital specialists across the economy, including a spotlight on demand for AI and cyber security specialists, and forecast demand.
- **Enhance the skilling and upskilling opportunities** required to meet skills needs in relation to automation, AI, data, cloud, cyber security, internet of things, quantum, semi-conductors, product design, and digital creative technologies. Micro-credentials, conversion courses and post-graduate programmes will continue to be developed in partnership between industry and the tertiary sector. For instance:
  - **Skillnet Ireland** will support the development of high-level digital and AI skills in new and emerging technologies (e.g. AI, blockchain, immersive technologies, fintech); and
  - **SOLAS**, working with the Education and Training Boards and industry, will continue to develop specialist technology skills through traineeships, apprenticeships, eCollege and micro-qualifications. These will be delivered through the development of special skills centres, e.g. the Advanced Manufacturing Training Centre of Excellence (AMTCE) SMART Factory and robotics micro-qualifications to enable AI applications in business processes.
- **Diversify the talent pipeline**, including in relation to gender balance. We will continue to encourage the enrolment of women in ICT undergraduate and graduate courses, seek to increase the number of female ICT apprentices and encourage the return to ICT careers of specialists returning to the workforce with programmes such as Skillnet's ReBOOT AI and ReBOOT AWS for ICT.
- Work with signatories to the **Digital Inclusion Charter for Business**, to promote digital and ICT careers as part of career guidance in secondary schools, with the aim of promoting higher levels of progression from Leaving Cert to Further and Higher Education technology programmes.
- **Further develop the Research Ireland National Challenge Fund (NCF)**, which is tackling Ireland's most pressing challenges in green transition and digital transformation, with AI as a core enabler for innovative solutions. The NCF funds projects that apply AI to real-world problems, ensuring technology adoption aligns with national priorities. The programme, which is funded by the EU Recovery and Resilience Fund, brings together academia, industry, and government to co-create AI-driven solutions. This collaborative model accelerates AI adoption across sectors, from climate action to digital resilience, and fosters a strong innovation ecosystem.

## ii. Skills to lead and support the digital transformation of the economy

We will establish a **National Skills Observatory** looking at labour market dynamics and skills development across all skills needs.

With the support of the **National Skills Council**, and the **National Skills Observatory**, we will:

- **Identify any gaps in existing provision** to enable the digital transformation of the economy, and to support the upskilling of those in roles which are likely to change as a result of AI.
- **Further develop skilling, upskilling and reskilling initiatives** to enable the digitalisation of enterprise, including SMEs, and the public sector, including skills to accelerate the use of AI, such as:
  - **SOLAS will offer a range of new opportunities** for individuals and enterprise to **increase AI literacy and agility**, and to **enable the uptake of AI by SMEs**. A range of courses will be offered by eCollege. Building on existing work, other opportunities will develop courses leading to AI micro-qualifications, ranging from enhancing productivity with AI, to managing legal, ethical, and strategic considerations. SOLAS will also develop a suite of data analytics courses.
  - **Skillnet Ireland will deliver upskilling and talent development initiatives to accelerate digital literacy** and meet the upskilling needs of SMEs, as well as developing a national initiative to **support advanced digital and AI specialist skills** within the enterprise sector.
- Establish an **online AI Skilling Platform**, a one-stop-shop offering AI learning opportunities for employers and individuals, **to enhance awareness of AI skilling, upskilling, and reskilling provision**, including free programmes.
- Launch a **nationwide Digital and AI Skilling campaign for SMEs** to encourage digital and AI skilling and upskilling for this specific cohort.

[28] In particular, forthcoming reports by the ESRI on *Changing Competency Requirements in Irish Digital Occupations* will be relevant and by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) on *Understanding and Forecasting Demand for Specialist Technology Skills*, and on Future Skills Needs of the Semi-conductor industry; the EGFSN advises Government on future skills requirements and associated labour market issues that impact on the national potential for enterprise and employment growth.

- **Enhance awareness of the skilling, upskilling and reskilling opportunities available**, for employers and individuals, including free AI Regulation and Ethics training opportunities, working with the National Skills Council and stakeholders.
- Facilitate the establishment of a Working Group, working with stakeholders, to encourage the **development of skills initiatives**, as part of the Government's commitment to Ireland as a **Centre of Regulatory Excellence**.
- **Leverage funding opportunities** available under **Horizon Europe** and the **Digital Europe Programme** and their successor, the **European Competitiveness Fund**. This includes the National Cyber Security Centre which, through its role as the National Cyber Security Coordination and Development Centre (NCC-IE) will encourage and support applicants for upcoming calls relating to AI and cyber security.

## iii. Digital transformation of the tertiary education sector

Digital technologies, including AI, are transforming the subject matter of education, as well as the experience of learners and educators. To ensure the continuous adaptation of the tertiary sector to changing technology needs, we will:

- Oversee the **continued digital transformation of the tertiary education sector** which will contribute to the sector's response and engagement with AI.
- **Strengthen digital and AI capabilities of tertiary educators** through the provision of flexible professional development opportunities, supported by existing mechanisms including Higher Education Authority (HEA) Open Courses for Professional Development.
- Promote awareness of the **Policy Framework on Generative AI in Teaching and Learning**, developed by the HEA. The Framework sets out principles for values-based integration of AI and supporting shared practice on AI literacy and academic integrity.
- **Evaluate the impact of AI adoption** to inform policy, build capacity and ensure that AI adoption enhances, rather than undermines, academic standards and student wellbeing.

## iv. Basic Digital Skills & AI Literacy

As new digital technologies reshape the way Ireland lives, works, and learns, we must ensure that **our digital transition is positive, accessible and inclusive, across all cohorts and ages, and in recognition of the changes to jobs and sectors** that technologies like AI can bring. Foundational digital skills and digital literacy skills are the baseline essentials to engage fully and safely in a digital society, to navigate related changes, as well as for understanding how AI works, interpreting its outputs critically, and using it responsibly. Without a strong foundation in digital literacy, learners may struggle to engage ethically, safely, responsibly and effectively with AI tools in both educational and real-world contexts. Curriculum frameworks at all levels, and national strategies such as the Adult Literacy for Life Strategy, and Literacy, Numeracy, and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024-2033, are actively working towards ensuring learners acquire the digital literacy skills needed to thrive in an AI-driven world. Curricula at each level offer multiple opportunities for the development of digital skills and digital literacy. **Media literacy skills** are also an essential element of engaging in and benefiting from a digital society, with initiatives including those through Coimisiún na Meán and Media Literacy Ireland (as detailed in the chapter on Online Safety above).

The Government is conscious that **action is required on multiple fronts to ensure that all in society have the necessary skills**; at community level, through the education system, and through our commitment to life-long learning.

We will ensure an inclusive approach, including from a rural and regional perspective, and recognise the **central role of public libraries** to promoting digital access and inclusion. Public Libraries serve as vital community hubs that offer free access to technology, extensive online resources, and essential digital skills training. Part of the Public Library Strategy, the **Skills for Life programme** is a nationwide initiative aimed at equipping individuals with essential skills to navigate modern life. Available across all 30 local authority library services in Ireland, the programme offers support across six key areas, including Basic Digital Skills and Media Literacy. To support public engagement and informed debate on AI, Research Ireland will launch a **National Conversation on AI** to ensure that societal values and concerns can directly inform AI research and wider adoption of AI technologies.

### Basic Digital Skills for all levels

**The Literacy Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024-2033: Every Learner from Birth to Young Adulthood** spans early childhood to post-primary school. The Strategy recognises that literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy are interconnected and essential for successfully and safely navigating the digital world. By fostering critical digital skills, alongside traditional literacy and numeracy, we are preparing students for the challenges of the digital age and equipping them to be active, informed citizens.

The **Digital Strategy for Schools to 2027** and its associated Implementation Plan sets out the approach to embedding digital technology across the curriculum and in all aspects of teaching, learning and assessment. The **National Development Plan provided €200 million to support implementation** of the Strategy, with €170 million allocated to date. High-speed broadband connectivity is also provided to schools, at a cost of €15 million annually.

At **primary and post-primary level, digital skills are embedded across all levels**, recognising that such skills are no longer optional. This is reflected in curricula at all levels, from the redeveloped primary school curriculum to curricular subjects and short courses at Junior Cycle and subjects, modules and programmes at Senior Cycle.

The Framework for Junior Cycle provides multiple opportunities for the development of digital skills, setting out the expectation that the student uses technology and digital media tools to learn, communicate, work and think collaboratively and creatively in a responsible and ethical manner. across subjects. In addition to this cross-curricular focus on digital skills, schools may choose to offer short courses which explicitly focus on digital skills, for example Digital Media Literacy.

Additionally, under the Leaving Certificate Computer Science specification, students learn about AI technologies, including when and what AI algorithms might be used in certain contexts. More generally, digital skills are embedded within the Senior Cycle competencies, from thinking and problem solving to communication, with learning supported by digital resources and technology.

For the tertiary education sector, a **new Statement of Ambition** will be published in 2026. It will clarify the priorities of the tertiary sector and the wider skills eco-system with regards to the acquisition of Digital and AI skills.

More broadly, we will continue to implement the digital literacy component of the **Adult Literacy for Life Strategy**, which aims to increase the percentage of the population with basic digital skills from 72.91% in 2023 to 80% of the population by 2030 [30]. To reflect the commitments, and the rapidly evolving digital literacy landscape, including the advances in AI, a mid-term review of the ALL Strategy is planned for 2026. We will take stock of the progress to date, update the actions needed to meet the literacy needs of our population, and work to ensure that the necessary resources are in place to meet our targets.

## Guidance on AI for Schools

The Department of Education and Youth, with the support of Oide Technology in Education published **Guidance on AI for Schools**, designed to support teachers and school leaders in their planning for the potential use of AI in teaching and learning, and to ensure that, where AI is deployed, it is used safely, ethically and appropriately. It is a living document and will be regularly reviewed and updated to take account of ongoing changes, emerging practices and research, both national and international, as well as feedback from the school system.

Ireland is also participating in a multi-country Technical Support Instrument **Project Futureproof Education: Supporting Schools in the AI Evolution**, with six European partners. The project will be implemented by UNESCO, in cooperation with the European Commission, over a period of 24 months (mid-2025-mid-2027). It will support the development of strategies and tools for AI implementation in school education, providing guidance and tools to schools for ethical AI usage, enhancing digital literacy and inclusivity.

### National College of Ireland AI and Future Pathways Pre-Apprenticeship Programme

- The National College of Ireland A*I and Future Pathways Pre-Programme* is a 12-month, **industry-supported initiative** designed to **improve employability and progression outcomes for underemployed and unemployed young people** aged 16–24 from Dublin's North Inner City.
- Supported by a consortium of leading technology and financial services companies, the programme **equips participants with foundational and applied skills in AI, fintech, and digital enterprise** through a structured four-phase model combining classroom learning, project-based work, paid industry placements, and tailored progression support.
- Over two programme cycles, **200 learners will benefit from industry-recognised training, mentoring, internships, and comprehensive academic and pastoral supports** aimed at removing barriers to participation and promoting well-being. The programme targets at least 75% progression to employment, apprenticeships, or further/higher education, while strengthening financial literacy, confidence, and social mobility, and offers a scalable, sustainable model for inclusive workforce development aligned with regional regeneration and skills needs.

# Deliverables

| **EMPOWER:** Skills & Talent | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective** | **Optimise the pipeline of specialist technology skills to meet industry and public sector needs** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **79.** New **Roadmap for Technology Skills of the Future** | In 2026 | D/FHERIS |
| | **80.** Progress **the second wave of Research Ireland Centres for Research Training,** to expand our research talent pipeline and attract more PhD students in areas aligned with emerging industries | In 2026 | D/FHERIS |
| **Objective** | **Skills to lead and support the digital transformation of the economy** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **81.** Establish a **National Skills Observatory** that delivers data and insights on labour market dynamics and skills development, including in the field of AI | In 2026 | D/FHERIS; D/ETE |
| | **82.** Launch a **nationwide Digital and AI Skilling campaign** | In 2026 | D/FHERIS |
| | **83.** **Develop new digital and AI skills opportunities** for enterprise, SMEs, and the public sector through SOLAS and Skillnet Ireland | Ongoing | D/FHERIS |
| | **84.** Deliver an **online AI Skilling Platform,** a one-stop-shop offering AI learning opportunities for employers and individuals | In 2026 (Q2) | D/FHERIS |

| **EMPOWER:** Skills & Talent | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective** | **Digital transformation of the tertiary education sector** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **85.** New **Statement of Ambition on Digital Skills** | In 2026 (Q2) | D/FHERIS |
| | **86.** Support the HEA in the rollout of the new **Policy Framework on Generative AI in Teaching and Learning** | Ongoing | D/FHERIS; HEA |
| | **87.** Provide flexible **professional development opportunities** in digital and AI for tertiary educators | Ongoing | D/FHERIS |
| **Objective** | **Enhance digital literacy and basic skills at all levels, for society and for the economy** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **88.** Launch a **National Conversation on AI in research** to support public engagement and informed debate, build public trust, and ensure that societal values and concerns directly inform AI research and wider adoption | In 2027 | Research Ireland |
| | **89.** **Update Guidance on AI in Schools** to take account of latest research, evaluation and feedback from the school system | Bi-annually | D/Education |
| | **90.** **Develop AI toolkits for teachers** and school leaders; **CPD resources** to support teacher training and capacity building; and r**ecommendations for policymakers** on developing and implementing AI in schools | Ongoing | D/Education |

09

# Strategy Implementation & Stakeholder Engagement

# Strategy Implementation & Stakeholder Engagement

To ensure we deliver on our overall ambition to strengthen our position as a digital leader, we will put a **sharper focus on delivery and impact** across all areas of the Strategy.

Regular, robust progress tracking will form a central part of delivery mechanisms. This will focus on outcomes and the impact of work programmes and will reflect a whole-of-government approach to ensure coherence and consistency across Government.

Implementation will be **driven from the centre of Government,** reporting to the Cabinet Committee on the Economy, Trade and Competitiveness. This work will be supported by the Senior Officials Group on Digital Issues, chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach to enhance coherence across the system. This reflects the priority that the Government places on accelerating progress across our digital agenda.

Progress reporting will be open and transparent, and we will prioritise flexibility and agility, with regular reviews of the Strategy and deliverables over the lifetime of the Strategy, to ensure we remain on track to achieve our goals, and our vision.

We will **review our domestic digital regulatory structures** to ensure they are fit-for purpose in this evolving regulatory landscape. We will also **strengthen coordination of digital policy files across Government,** to maximise domestic coherence and cross-sectoral impact analysis on the development of policy positions on digital regulation to enable Ireland to influence and shape critical global digital issues.

**Strengthening and maximising the impact of stakeholder engagement** will be a central part of our approach. We will build on existing stakeholder engagement fora and structures to deepen our existing partnerships, and to foster new partnerships to enhance delivery and impact across all areas of our digital ambitions. Regular, collaborative stakeholder engagement across a wide representative spectrum will involve engaging with industry, digital regulators, and wider stakeholders.

Such an approach will enable a rich, diverse, expert and inclusive range of views, feedback and input, which is essential to ensure our approach to delivering on our digital ambitions remains on track.

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X. Appendix I

# Progress to date on EU Digital Decade Targets to 2030

| | Progress against 2030 Digital Decade Targets – Ireland, EU Average | | | Targets to 2030 | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Ireland | | | Ireland | EU |
| Digital Decade KPI | 2024 (data 2023) | 2025 (data 2024) | Annual Growth | | |
| **Digital Transformation of Businesses** | | | | | |
| Cloud | 53.1% | | | 75% | 75% |
| AI | 8.0% | 14.9% | 86.0% | 75% | 75% |
| Data Analytics | 37.1% | | | 75% | 75% |
| SMEs with at least a basic level of digital intensity | | 73.4% | -0.5% | 90% | 90% |
| **Digital Infrastructure** | | | | | |
| Gigabit Network* | 78.5% | 87.2% | 11.0% | 100% | 100% |
| Overall 5G coverage | 85.3% | 89.9% | 5.4% | 100% | 100% |
| **Skills** | | | | | |
| At least basic digital skills | 72.9% | | | 80% | 80% |
| ICT Specialists | 6.2% | 6.3% | 1.6% | 9.6% | 10% |
| **Digitalisation of Public Services** | | | | | |
| Government Services Online** | 81.2% | 87.1% | 7.2% | 100% | 100% |
| Digital public services for businesses | 100% | 100% | N/A | 100% | 100% |
| Access to eHealth records | 11.4% | 24.5% | 115.8% | 80% | 100% |

State of the Digital Decade Report: https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/library/state-digital-decade-2025-report

*Irish Target to 2028
**Irish Target of 90% applicable services consumed online

11

XI: Appendix II

# High-Level Objectives and Supporting Deliverables

# Objectives & Supporting Deliverables

## **APPLY:** Public Services

| Objective | Digitalise 100% of key public services, with 90% of services consumed online by 2030 | Timeline | Lead Department |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Deliverables** | 1. **Redesign and integrate public services around Life Events,** delivering a seamless, user-centred, and integrated digital experience for citizens, across digital and non-digital service delivery | By 2028 | D/PER |
| | 2. **Customisable shared public digital infrastructure building blocks** to accelerate the delivery of seamless, interoperable public services that are robust, secure and provide value for money | From 2026 | D/PER |
| | 3. **Support all public servants to avail of AI training** courses during 2026 | In 2026 | D/PER |
| | 4. Launch Ireland's **Government Digital Wallet,** including progressing a related online age verification mechanism | End 2026 | D/PER; D/CSS |
| | 5. **All new legislation will be subject to a digital readiness check** to ensure that, where relevant, its required outputs can be delivered economically using digital products, and it is consistent with digital delivery of public services | Ongoing | AGO; All Depts |
| | 6. **Legislation will be published online in compliance with an open standard** | Ongoing | AGO; All Depts |
| | 7. **A review of transposition of EU directives and regulations** will be carried out to streamline this process to deliver more efficient and timely transposition that supports simplification and optimisation of our digital regulatory framework | Ongoing | AGO; All Depts |

## **APPLY:** Public Services

| Objective | Build capacity and drive responsible AI adoption across public sector | Timeline | Lead Department |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Deliverables** | **8.** Establish an **AI Advisory Unit** in 2026 to provide advice and expertise for public service bodies | In 2026 | D/PER |
| | **9.** New **Public Service Data Strategy**, to further develop a modern, AI-ready, fit-for-purpose public service data ecosystem providing timely access to standardised and interoperable data | In 2026 | D/PER |
| | **10.** Engage with key Public Service Bodies and the AI market to determine the **feasibility of establishing an appropriate central procurement arrangement for AI** | In 2026 (Q1) | D/PER; OGP |
| | **11.** Establish a **National AI Fellowship Programme** to embed AI research expertise in the public service and to support researcher mobility into the private sector | In 2027 (H2) | D/FHERIS; Research Ireland |
| | **12. Report on AI adoption across the public service;** catalogue sectoral use-cases to support cross-Government information-sharing, learning, and strategic and operational oversight | Annually | D/PER |
| | **13.** Launch a **GovTech Challenge** to match SMEs and start-ups with public service challenges, accelerating the use of AI and emerging technologies | In 2026 | D/PER |

## **APPLY:** Health

| Objective | Accelerate the digital transformation of the health service through 'Digital for Care 2030' | Timeline | Lead Department |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Deliverables** | 14. **Implement 'Digital for Care 2030'** to improve care for patients and build a trusted digital and data ecosystem | By 2030 | D/Health |
| | 15. Launch the **'AI for Care'** strategy focused on **leveraging AI in four areas:** AI for Clinical Care; Operations; Research & Innovation; and Public Health | In 2026 (Q1) | D/Health |
| | 16. Publish and maintain a **catalogue of AI solutions and benefits,** that are deemed suitable for use across the health service [10] | Ongoing | D/Health |
| | 17. **Deliver the digitisation of Irish healthcare records** and information systems, through delivery of the National Health App, National Shared Care Record and the National Electronic Health Record programme | By 2032 | D/Health |
| | 18. Establish a **national electronic prescribing service** as a key enabler for digitisation of health records to be deployed | By 2028 | D/Health |

[10] When following guidance from HIQA for the safe and responsible use of AI in health and social care

## GROW: Enterprise

| Objective | Fast-track enterprise technology adoption, to boost productivity and competitiveness | Timeline | Lead Department |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Deliverables** | 19. **Develop a targeted strategy in 2026 to drive AI adoption across key sectors of the enterprise base,** with ambitious sectoral targets and milestones for delivery | In 2026 (Q4) | D/ETE |
| | 20. **Appoint AI Sector Champions** to work with industry and Government to spotlight sectoral AI opportunities | In 2026 (Q1) | D/ETE; Enterprise Ireland |
| | 21. **Enterprise Ireland** will develop a new **AI Adoption Roadmap for its client companies,** differentiated by sector | In 2026 (Q2) | D/ETE; Enterprise Ireland |
| | 22. Establish the **Observatory for Business AI Readiness (OBAIR),** an observatory which collects up to date data and provides intelligence on use of AI by enterprise in Ireland | In 2027 (Q1) | D/ETE |
| | 23. **Launch an AI and Digital awareness and literacy campaign** to drive AI literacy among SMEs | In 2026 (Q1) | D/ETE |
| | 24. Promote and support the **enterprise opportunity presented by the European Health Data Space** | Ongoing | D/ETE |

## GROW: Enterprise

| Objective | Position Ireland as a location of choice for AI and Digital startups, and a global hub for applied AI innovation, building on sectors of strength and research expertise | Timeline | Lead Department |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Deliverables** | **25.** Establish an internationally leading **AI Research Centre of scale** | In 2026 (H2) | D/FHERIS; Research Ireland |
| | **26.** Establish a **National Accelerator Programme** as part of **Start-up Ireland** to provide a coordinated framework to boost Ireland's start-up competitiveness | In 2026 | D/ETE |
| | **27.** Establish Phase 1 of an **AI regulatory sandbox,** with a particular focus on SMEs and startups | In 2026 | D/ETE |
| | **28. Scale CeADAR** to accelerate and deepen Ireland's R&I capability in applied AI and to drive and support adoption of AI across the entire enterprise base | Ongoing | D/ETE |
| | **29.** Establish a **National AI research, technology and infrastructure centre of scale,** to underpin a cohesive and integrated national AI ecosystem | By 2029 | D/ETE; D/FHERIS |
| | **30.** Establish an **AI in Research transformation programme** to:<br>• Develop a pipeline of **PhD-trained AI researchers** to support the needs of the private sector<br>• Increase the **AI literacy of researchers**, across all disciplines, through **a national training programme**<br>• Build a **National AI in Research Platform** that leverages AI to amplify the productivity of Irish research<br>• Leverage our investment in research to accelerate the translation of AI technologies into **start-up companies** | <br><br>Ongoing<br>In 2027 (H2)<br>In 2028 (H2)<br>Ongoing | <br><br>D/FHERIS; Research Ireland<br>D/FHERIS; Research Ireland<br>D/FHERIS; Research Ireland<br>D/FHERIS; Research Ireland |
| | **31. Establish a Quantum Centre of Excellence,** to ensure coordinated investment, agile policy development, and international leadership in quantum technologies, and support the implementation of the Quantum 2030 Strategy | In 2026 (H2) | D/FHERIS |

## GROW: Enterprise

| Objective | Strengthening Ireland's attractiveness as a location for global technology business | Timeline | Lead Department |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Deliverables** | 32. **Engage with industry and stakeholders,** across all pillars of the Strategy, to ensure that the digital policy and regulatory landscape is coherent and effective | Ongoing | D/Taoiseach; All relevant Depts |
| | 33. Establish the **Artificial Intelligence Office of Ireland** as the focal point for AI regulation and innovation in Ireland | In 2026 (By August) | D/ETE |
| | 34. Host an **International AI and Digital Summit,** during Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the EU, to showcase Ireland as a digital and regulatory hub | In 2026 (October) | D/ETE |
| | 35. Advocate for and **prioritise digital connectivity and resilience** during negotiations of the 2028-2034 EU Multiannual Financial Framework | Ongoing | D/CCS; D/FAT |
| | 36. **Optimise funding under the new European Competitiveness Fund** to enable Irish-based firms to realise opportunities in EU instruments, such as IPCEIs in key digital sectors, including microelectronics, AI and quantum computing | Ongoing | D/ETE; All relevant Depts |
| | 37. **Implement the 'Large Energy User Action Plan'** to attract and facilitate investment in very energy intensive industrial developments | 2025-2030 | D/ETE, D/CEE |

| **INVEST:** Digital & AI Infrastructure | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective** | **Prioritise digital connectivity to leverage the full potential of new and emerging digital opportunities** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **38.** Updated **Digital Connectivity Strategy** | In 2026 | D/CCS |
| | **39.** Complete **National Broadband Plan deployment** | In 2026 | D/CCS |
| | **40.** Enable **Gigabit broadband connectivity to every premises** | By 2028 | D/CCS |
| | **41.** Promote and facilitate the creation of **new subsea cable connectivity routes** from Ireland to Europe | By 2030 | D/CCS |
| **Objective** | **Strengthen the security and resilience of our digital infrastructure** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **42.** Support **development of more cables on new and diverse routes** and partner with neighbouring states to develop response and repair capacities | Ongoing | D/CCS |
| | **43.** **Facilitate satellite services to provide resilience** for critical public services where appropriate | Ongoing | D/PER |
| | **44.** **Build preparedness capacities** across the digital infrastructure sector to counter potential vulnerabilities, through:<br>• Measures to **protect the State's infrastructure from extreme climate events,** by 2030 including examining the use of satellite services to mitigate the risk of terrestrial backhaul outages<br>• **Strengthening consumer protections** in service outage scenarios<br>• **Enhancing our systems for public warnings emergency alerts** and Emergency Call Answering Services by 2027<br>• **Adding more resilience** to our emergency and critical public services' communications systems, and delivering next generation critical communications systems by 2030. | By 2030<br>Ongoing<br>By 2027<br>By 2030 | D/CCS<br>D/CCS<br>D/CCS<br>D/PER |

| **INVEST:** Digital & AI Infrastructure | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective** | **Support the development and adoption of transformative digital infrastructure technologies** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **45.** Develop a **National Strategy for Advanced Computing Infrastructure and Services** | In 2026 (Q4) | D/FHERIS |
| | **46.** Implement **sustainable national HPC/AI infrastructure (CASPIr)** to ensure the competitiveness of our digital infrastructure to support the academic, public sector and industry ecosystems | Ongoing | D/FHERIS |
| | **47.** Establish **Ireland's AI Factory Antenna** to support R&I in AI and enable Irish SMEs to access supercomputing resources in an AI Factory in the EU | In 2026 (Q2) | D/FHERIS |
| | Implement **strategic pilot digital initiatives:**<br>**48.** To exploit 5G capabilities through **5G Standalone pilots** including within the Public Service in Health and Public Safety | Ongoing | D/CCS |
| | **49.** To expand our **Quantum communication networks** in partnership with EU Member States | Ongoing | D/CCS |
| | **50.** To **foster experimentation** and **develop advanced communication technologies,** e.g. 6G | Ongoing | D/CCS |

| **INVEST:** Cyber Security | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective** | **Securing our State against Emerging Digital and AI Threats** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **51. New Cyber Security Strategy,** to set out a roadmap for delivery of key initiatives in the NDP Review | In 2026 | D/JHAM |
| | **52. Prioritise legislation to implement the EU NIS2** Directive and prepare for **implementation of the EU Cyber Resilience Act** | Ongoing | D/CCS; D/JHAM |
| **Objective** | **Building our Cyber Security Capacity** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **53. New National AI Cyber Risk assessment,** and **updated guidance** on secure use of AI in the public service | In 2026 (NRA Q1; Guidance Q2) | D/JHAM; NCSC |
| | **54.** Establish a **Cyber Security Research Centre of Excellence,** to bring together Government, academia and industry | By 2030 | D/JHAM; NCSC |

| **LEAD:** Digital Regulatory Hub and Centre of Expertise | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective** | **Reinforce Ireland's position as a trusted, agile, forward-looking digital regulatory hub for companies operating across the EU Digital Single Market** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **55. Enhance our strategic engagement at EU level** to influence and advance the EU's digital simplification agenda, leveraging the Country of Origin principle to maximise legal certainty for companies, to future-proof the EU digital regulatory framework and improve its coherence and effectiveness | Ongoing | D/Taoiseach; D/FAT; All Depts |
| | **56. Strengthen cross-sectoral engagement** to help ensure digital regulatory frameworks are balanced, coherent, and future-proof | Ongoing | D/ETE |
| | **57.** Ensure the **effective and coherent implementation of the EU AI Act** in Ireland | Ongoing | D/ETE |
| | **58. Establish the AI Office of Ireland** as the central co-ordinating body for the AI Act | In 2026 (August) | D/ETE |
| | **59.** Foster **agile, enabling and supportive governance models** to facilitate innovation, including the establishment of an **AI Regulatory Sandbox** | Ongoing | D/ETE |

| **LEAD:** Digital Regulatory Hub and Centre of Expertise | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective** | **Deliver a predictable, efficient, well-resourced and streamlined regulatory environment responsive to the evolving digital age** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **60.** Establish a **Criminal Justice International Cooperation Office,** under the **EU eEvidence Package** | In 2026 (August) | D/JHAM |
| | **61.** Support Ireland's role as a Centre of Regulatory Excellence by **ensuring our digital regulators are sufficiently resourced and maximising timely recruitment and resourcing** | Ongoing | D/PER; All Relevant Depts |
| | **62.** Engage with the DRG, while respecting the statutory independence of its constituent members, to encourage an **approach that enables innovation and competitiveness** | Ongoing | D/Taoiseach; All Relevant Depts |
| | **63.** Work with the DRG, in partnership with education and training providers, to provide the requisite **skills initiatives** to build capacity and support the delivery of digital regulatory functions | Ongoing | D/FHERIS; All Depts |
| | **64.** Explore options to streamline the digital regulatory process, including through **single-reporting mechanisms** and **guidance toolkits**, where appropriate and as outlined in the Digital Omnibus proposal | Ongoing | D/Taoiseach; All Relevant Depts |
| **Objective** | **Foster collaboration and coherence across the digital regulatory landscape** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **65.** **Review our domestic digital regulatory structures a**nd strengthen coordination of digital policy files across Government, to maximise domestic coherence | Ongoing | D/Taoiseach; All Relevant Depts |
| | **66.** Support the enhancement of the **Digital Regulators Group** and its Secretariat to deepen cross-agency collaboration across the digital regulatory landscape | Ongoing | D/Taoiseach; All Relevant Depts |
| | **67.** Explore the introduction of measures to enable **information-sharing** across the Digital Regulators Group, to increase efficiencies | Ongoing | D/Taoiseach; All Relevant Depts |

| **EMPOWER:** Online Safety | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective** | **Ensure our Online Safety Framework is sufficiently robust to deal with emerging challenges and risks** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **68. Continue to support and adequately resource regulators** tasked with preventing harm to the public, especially children, in particular Coimisiún na Meán in implementation of the Online Safety Code | Ongoing | D/CCS, All Relevant Depts |
| | **69. Progress enhancements to the EU Online Safety Framework,** working with Member States, in particular through the **review and any resultant proposal for the revision of the Audiovisual Media Services Directive** during Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the EU | By end-2026 | D/CCS, All Relevant Depts |
| | **70.** Engage with the European Commission **to ensure the list of prohibited practices under Article 5 of the EU AI Act remains fit for purpose** in the context of growing capabilities of AI | Ongoing | D/ETE |
| | **71. Support Coimisiún na Meán to lead an information and awareness campaign,** in conjunction with other relevant bodies, to support public understanding and reporting of AI-generated non-consensual intimate images | Ongoing | D/CCS |
| | **72.** Building on existing work, Coimisiún na Meán and the AI Advisory Council will **review existing taxonomies of online harms** and update, as appropriate, with regard to AI-enabled harms | Ongoing | D/CCS |
| | **73. Implementation of the National Counter Disinformation Strategy,** through effective allocation of funding for media literacy, fact-checking expertise and continued research on disinformation | Ongoing | D/CCS, All Relevant Depts |

| **EMPOWER:** Online Safety | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective** | **Enhance online safety, in particular for children and young people, as a whole of Government priority** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **74.** Develop a national network of **Digital Citizenship Champions** to support and implement online safety and digital citizenship education in primary schools | By 2028 | D/Education |
| | **75.** **Support robust age verification across the European Union** and through Ireland's Government Digital Wallet, **implement an age verification tool,** protecting users' rights including privacy, and enhancing online safety<br>• **Pilot of the age verification tool** in the Government Digital Wallet | Ongoing<br>In 2026 (H1) | D/CCS<br>D/CCS; All Relevant Depts |
| | **76.** Work actively with like-minded Member States to explore options to **introduce age restrictions on the use of social media concentrating, in particular, on those under sixteen years of age** | Ongoing | :D/CCS |
| | **77.** **Align educational and professional learning supports** with national online safety and regulatory frameworks, and **update our resources for schools** on online safety, cybersecurity, digital citizenship and AI | Ongoing | D/Education |
| | **78.** **Embed digital media literacy** across teacher professional learning and curriculum supports | Ongoing | D/Education |

| **EMPOWER:** Skills & Talent | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective** | **Optimise the pipeline of specialist technology skills to meet industry and public sector needs** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **79.** New **Roadmap for Technology Skills of the Future** | In 2026 | D/FHERIS |
| | **80.** Progress **the second wave of Research Ireland Centres for Research Training,** to expand our research talent pipeline and attract more PhD students in areas aligned with emerging industries | In 2026 | D/FHERIS |
| **Objective** | **Skills to lead and support the digital transformation of the economy** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **81.** Establish a **National Skills Observatory** that delivers data and insights on labour market dynamics and skills development, including in the field of AI | In 2026 | D/FHERIS; D/ETE |
| | **82.** Launch a **nationwide Digital and AI Skilling campaign** | In 2026 | D/FHERIS |
| | **83. Develop new digital and AI skills opportunities** for enterprise, SMEs, and the public sector through SOLAS and Skillnet Ireland | Ongoing | D/FHERIS |
| | **84.** Deliver an **online AI Skilling Platform,** a one-stop-shop offering AI learning opportunities for employers and individuals | In 2026 (Q2) | D/FHERIS |

| **EMPOWER:** Skills & Talent | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Objective** | **Digital transformation of the tertiary education sector** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **85.** New **Statement of Ambition on Digital Skills** | In 2026 (Q2) | D/FHERIS |
| | **86.** Support the HEA in the rollout of the new **Policy Framework on Generative AI in Teaching and Learning** | Ongoing | D/FHERIS; HEA |
| | **87.** Provide flexible **professional development opportunities** in digital and AI for tertiary educators | Ongoing | D/FHERIS |
| **Objective** | **Enhance digital literacy and basic skills at all levels, for society and for the economy** | **Timeline** | **Lead Department** |
| **Deliverables** | **88.** Launch a **National Conversation on AI in research** to support public engagement and informed debate, build public trust, and ensure that societal values and concerns directly inform AI research and wider adoption | In 2027 | Research Ireland |
| | **89.** **Update Guidance on AI in Schools** to take account of latest research, evaluation and feedback from the school system | Bi-annually | D/Education |
| | **90.** **Develop AI toolkits for teachers** and school leaders; **CPD resources** to support teacher training and capacity building; and r**ecommendations for policymakers** on developing and implementing AI in schools | Ongoing | D/Education |