

eGovernment Strategy 2017–2020

June 2017

Foreword

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform’s previous eGovernment strategy set out a vision of what needed to be done to continue the good progress that had already been made in improving citizens’ and businesses’ access to and interaction with Government Services.

The Public Service ICT Strategy, published in 2015, then placed the eGovernment Agenda within a bigger picture of change, i.e. of a government using data and digital to drive a better customer experience and using sharing, enhanced governance and improved capability to maximise the effectiveness of all aspects of government ICT and associated services.

The appointment of a dedicated Minister of State for eGovernment in May last year demonstrated the Government’s commitment to better serve its people using modern, secure and robust technology. This document therefore highlights the aspects of the ICT Strategy and subsequent delivery programme that will really enhance the vibrancy and user centricity of eGovernment in Ireland.

I look forward to seeing the positive outcomes that its implementation will deliver.

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1. Executive Summary

Ireland is well placed to be an exemplar in eGovernment

The eGovernment 2012 – 2015 Strategy¹ set out a step change approach that would see Ireland make ever greater use of Digital and ICT to improve the experience of citizens and businesses transacting with Government.

The 2015 Public Service ICT Strategy² then set out how Ireland would further develop its use of innovation and technology to meet the growing needs and expectations of its people. When delivered, this Strategy will create a new model for ICT delivery across the Public Service; delivering more efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery through a more integrated, shared and inclusive digital environment.

The Public Service ICT Strategy is fully aligned to the Government direction in this area, most recently articulated in November 2016 with the publication of the Draft Open Government Partnership National Action Plan 2016-2018.³ This commits Government inter alia to increased citizen engagement, increased transparency and open data.

The EU eGovernment Action Plan 2016-2020⁴ highlights the importance of the digital transformation of government to the success of the European Digital Single Market, by helping to remove existing digital barriers and preventing further fragmentation arising in the context of the modernisation of public administrations. It sets out 20 principles that Member States are recommended to observe in order to deliver the significant benefits that eGovernment can bring to businesses, citizens and public administrations.

This document demonstrates how the development of its Public Service ICT Strategy not only allows Ireland to align closely with the EU eGovernment Action Plan but will ensure that Ireland is well placed to be an exemplar in eGovernment.

2. Business Context

Ireland has made significant strides in terms of political leadership, administrative alignment and technological advancements.

Public Service Reform was a central element of the response to the crisis of recent years and remains an essential part of building for the future. Since the first [Public Service Reform Plan](#) was published in November 2011, a comprehensive programme of reform has been implemented. This has enabled the Public Service to continue to provide essential services, while demand for those services increased and while resources were very constrained.

A second [Public Service Reform Plan 2014-2016](#) was published on 14th January, 2014. This renewed wave of reforms was developed, building on the progress made to date and re-focussing the Government's ambition for reform. This phase of reform reflected the need to maintain a focus on reducing costs and increasing efficiency. This Plan had an ambitious overarching objective of delivering better outcomes for all stakeholders and a strong emphasis on service improvement. The

¹ See <http://egovstrategy.gov.ie/>

² See <http://ictstrategy.per.gov.ie/>

³ See <https://consult.ogpireland.ie/en/consultation/irelands-draft-national-action-plan-2016-2018>

⁴ See <https://ec.europa.eu/digital-single-market/en/european-egovernment-action-plan-2016-2020>

Plan was delivered through a focus on service users, on efficiency and on openness, underpinned by a strong emphasis on leadership, capability and delivery.

The Civil Service Renewal Plan⁵ (CSRP) was launched by the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform and the Taoiseach in October 2014 and set out a fundamental new vision and direction for the Civil Service. The Renewal Plan focused on driving practical change through 25 specific actions in four key areas:

1. Unified – Managing the Civil Service as a single unified organisation;
2. Professional – Maximising the performance and potential of all civil service employees and organisations
3. Responsive – Changing our culture, structure and processes so that we become more agile, flexible and responsive
4. Open and Accountable – Continuously learning and improving by being open to external ideas, challenge and debate.

A number of the 25 actions relate to the opportunity to use digital and ICT to drive improved service and transformation, including:

- CSRP Action 5: Improve the delivery of shared whole-of-Government projects;
- CSRP Action 6: Expand the model of sharing services and expertise across organisations;
- CSRP Action 19: Expand the ICT capacity of Departments and increase efficiencies by creating common systems and infrastructure;
- CSRP Action 24: Improve how data is collected, managed and shared.

Another facet of the Government’s commitment to modernisation is its support for the Open Government Partnership (OGP) initiative⁶, which challenges governments to be more transparent, accountable and responsive to citizens. In December 2016, the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform published a National Action Plan 2016-2018 following a consultation process.

The commitments set out in the National Action Plan 2016-2018 move forward on many of the key themes that civil society highlighted in the context of Ireland’s first National Action Plan 2014-2016. The themes addressed in the National Action Plan 2016-2018 are:

1. Increased Citizen Engagement, to improve policies and services;
2. Increased Transparency, to better understand government activities and decisions;
3. Open Data, for transparency and innovation; and
4. Anti-Corruption and Strengthened Governance and Accountability, to ensure integrity in public life.

Information and Communications Technology Contribution

The Public Service ICT Strategy represented the ICT response to the challenges of the Public Service Reform and Civil Service Renewal agendas. The Strategy, which was published in 2015, set out an ambitious ICT-driven agenda under five “pillars”, i.e. Build to Share; Digital First; Data as an Enabler; Improve Governance; and Increase Capability.

⁵ See <http://www.per.gov.ie/en/civil-service-renewal/>

⁶ OGP is a multilateral initiative currently joined by some 70 countries in the developed and developing world see <http://www.opengovpartnership.org/>

The ICT Strategy is aligned with the objectives of the Public Service Reform Plan of increasing efficiencies and the overarching objective of providing better outcomes for citizens, businesses and public servants through embracing the latest technological advances. When delivered, this Strategy will create a new model for ICT delivery across the Public Service; delivering more efficiency and effectiveness in service delivery through a more integrated, shared and digital environment.

1. Build to Share



Creating ICT shared services to support integration across the wider Public Service to drive efficiency, standardisation, consolidation, reduction in duplication and control cost.

2. Digital First



Digitisation of key transactional services and the increased use of ICT to deliver improved efficiency within Public Bodies and provide new digital services to citizens, businesses and public servants.

3. Data as an Enabler



In line with statutory obligations and Data Protection guidelines, facilitate increased data sharing and innovative use of data across all Public Bodies to enable the delivery of integrated services, improve decision making and improve openness and transparency between Government and the public.

4. Improve Governance



Ensure that the ICT strategy is aligned, directed and monitored across Public Bodies to support the specific goals and objectives at a whole-of-government level and with an emphasis on shared commitment.

5. Increase Capability



Ensure the necessary ICT skills and resources are available to meet the current and future ICT needs of the Public Service.

The 18 Step Action Plan (see Annex A) not only delivers against the Public Service ICT Strategy and Civil Service Renewal Plan, but it was also developed very much in the context of the drive towards a European Digital Single Market and the EU eGovernment Action Plan 2016-20.

The Specific Focus of eGovernment and the European Dimension

eGovernment is a specific facet of a Government ICT Strategy. It is intended to specifically support administrative processes, improve the quality and inclusiveness of the services, and increase internal public service efficiency. It is generally recognised across the public service that digital public services reduce administrative burden on businesses and citizens by making their interactions with public administrations faster and efficient, more convenient and transparent, and less costly. Moreover, as an active participant in the delivery of the EU eGovernment Action Plan, Ireland fully subscribes to the view that by using digital technologies as an integrated part of their own modernisation strategies, governments can help unlock further economic and social benefits for society as a whole⁷. Of course, it is not just about the presentation of services, we must and will also ensure that we incorporate best practice security into our designs, ensuring appropriate cyber and privacy safeguards underpin all of

⁷ Recommendation of the Council on Digital Government Strategies, OECD, 2014

our digital services, including best practice implementation of the EU’s General Data Protection Regulation.

While there is recognition that Ireland has done well in the delivery of digital government services to date, we recognise that the key to an even better customer experience is to provide access to all services via a gateway or portal. This will not only make access easier but, through the use of voluntary registration and identification, will enable us to adopt the “tell us once, we will use many times” principle that underpins all excellent digital services. Indeed, not only is this the key to better government services, it is essential to facilitating the participation of our people and businesses in the emerging European Digital Single Market.

It was the desire to ensure a cross-European collaborative approach to the Digital Single Market that led to the European Commission launching a new eGovernment Action Plan for 2016-2020, which would specifically seek “*to remove existing digital barriers to the Digital Single Market and to prevent further fragmentation arising in the context of the modernisation of public administrations*”. Consequently, the EU eGovernment Action Plan sets out a number of principles that Member States have been asked to observe in order to deliver the significant benefits that eGovernment can bring to businesses, citizens and public administrations themselves.

3. Vision and underlying principles

This eGovernment Strategy is underpinned by the Government’s commitment to be open, flexible and collaborative with our citizens and businesses, using digitisation and technology to increase efficiency and effectiveness and constantly improve public services.

The Government recognises that the lives of our citizens have become increasingly digital, leading to higher expectations of public administration performance⁸. Citizens and businesses expect greater transparency and it is the Government’s intention to ensure the trust of its people by opening up to and engaging with stakeholders in decision-making⁹, and ensuring more accountability. In addition, the Government recognises that opening public sector data and services to third parties, in full compliance with the legal framework for the protection of personal data and for privacy, has the potential to contribute to growth and competitiveness.

This eGovernment Strategy also recognises Ireland’s growing influence and role as a European state and, to that end, this Strategy will ensure our alignment to the EU eGovernment Action Plan, which is guided by the following vision:

By 2020, public administrations and public institutions in the European Union should be open, efficient and inclusive, providing borderless, personalised, user-friendly, end-to-end digital public services to all citizens and businesses in the EU. Innovative approaches are used to design and deliver better services in line with the needs and demands of citizens and businesses. Public administrations use the opportunities offered by the new digital environment to facilitate their interactions with stakeholders and with each other.

Consequently, the publication of this eGovernment Strategy confirms the Government of Ireland’s support for the underlying principles of the EU eGovernment Action Plan, which are as follows:

⁸ EU eGovernment Benchmark Report 2014

⁹ Recommendation of the Council on Digital Government Strategies, OECD, 2014

- **Digital by Default:** we will deliver services digitally as the preferred option through a single contact point or a one-stop-shop and via different channels. We will still keep other channels open for those who are disconnected by choice or necessity and we will explore “assisted digital” for those who feel they would benefit from such a service.
- **Once only principle:** we will strive to ensure that citizens and businesses only need to supply the same information to us once. We will then internally re-use this data, in due respect of data protection rules, so that no additional burden falls on citizens and businesses.
- **Inclusiveness and accessibility:** we will design digital public services that are inclusive by default for the widest possible audience (universal design) and cater for a broad range of needs and abilities, including older people and people with disabilities^{10 11}.
- **Openness & transparency:** we plan to enable citizens and businesses to access, control and correct their own data; we will also enable users to monitor administrative processes that involve them; we will engage and consult with key stakeholders (such as citizens, businesses, researchers and non-profit organisations) in the design and delivery of services.
- **Cross-border by default:** we will develop the capability to make relevant digital public services available across borders (where permitted to do so) to facilitate mobility within the Single Market.
- **Interoperability by default:** we will design and review public services taking into account the wider desire that these should where possible work seamlessly across the European Digital Single Market and across organisational silos.
- **Trustworthiness & Security:** our aspiration is to go beyond compliance with the legal framework on personal data protection and privacy, and best practice in IT security, by integrating those elements in the design phase of new public service projects. We recognise that these are important pre-conditions for increasing trust in and take-up of digital services.

Digital Health Services

Healthcare in Ireland is changing radically as a result of various demographic, organisational and resourcing factors, the increasing proliferation of technology and in particular the internet. These factors mean that future healthcare systems will need to be radically different in order to respond efficiently and equitably to forecasted demand. Demographic changes resulting mainly from an ageing population have been projected to add 1% per annum to our health care costs for the foreseeable future. Significant other costs will arise from expected rises in chronic disease rates as well as increasing demand and complexity of healthcare services.

The eHealth strategy published by the Government in 2013 demonstrates how the individual citizen, the Irish healthcare delivery systems - both public and private - and the economy as a whole will benefit from eHealth. It shows how the proper introduction and utilisation of eHealth will ensure;

- The patient is placed at the centre of the healthcare delivery system and becomes an empowered participant in the provision and pursuit of their own health and wellbeing.

¹⁰ A directive on making the websites and mobile apps of public sector bodies more accessible was published on 2 December 2016 and entered into force on 22 December 2016, COM (2012)721.

¹¹ Disability Act 2005 (Code of Practice) (Declaration) Order 2006 (S.I. No. 163 of 2006)

- The successful delivery of health systems reform and the associate structural, financial and service changes planned.
- The realisation of substantial health service efficiencies including optimum resource utilisation.
- That Ireland’s healthcare system can respond to the challenge defined by the EU task force report - Redesigning health in Europe for 2020 - to ensure that in the future all EU citizens have access to a high level of healthcare, anywhere in the Union, and at a reasonable cost to our healthcare systems.
- That the potential of eHealth as a driver for economic growth and development can be realised.

The delivery of eHealth to Ireland means digital transformation. It means the agile transition to an underlying healthcare model that exploits digital infrastructure that is making Ireland the digital hub for Europe. This evolution will enable commonly shared capabilities and access to information throughout health and removes silos of information that exist today. It will ensure that excellence is shared - not piloted in obscurity, but enabled and encouraged to realise benefits to patients.

eHealth is an important enabler to the sharing and protecting of information and providing a range of services digitally for patients. The Department of Health and the Health Services Executive through eHealth Ireland are focused on delivering technology to securely support healthcare, grounded in the outcomes it delivers and not deploying technology for its own sake. Digital solutions enabled by the deployment of the individual health identifier will deliver a range of patient focussed services based technology to support electronic health records, ePrescriptions, digital radiology enabling connected health solutions.

The strategy is being realised through the implementation of the HSE’s Knowledge and Information Plan which aims to deliver an electronic health record for Ireland. It will no longer be acceptable for technology professionals to simply support the business; the delivery of digital health will be the business of the health services. Thus, the developments in eHealth are consistent with the national eGovernment Strategy; moreover, there is an excellent opportunity to use the national principles and plans to also help in the delivery of excellence in eHealth service provision.

4. Delivering our eGovernment Principles

Our eGovernment priorities will be taken forward through the delivery of 10 key actions, which are set out below.

We will keep our plans under review and add to or refine them over the 3 years that the Strategy is in place.

1. **We will develop a Digital Service Gateway** – we recognise the clear requirement from our citizens and businesses to have a similar user experience in dealing with Government as they would have in dealing with the best of the retail and banking sectors. We will therefore ensure all of our Digital Government services are high quality, secure, reliable and easy to use, can be provided on a cross-government basis and are designed around a positive user experience. Achieving this requires a simple front-end that can present the services of most interest/relevance to citizens and businesses, can allow them to authenticate themselves through an identification process and then can use the information they have provided to

save them the inconvenience of repeated re-keying in the future (this will not prevent them going directly to services that they are already familiar with). We will therefore develop a Digital Service Gateway, using appropriate consultation with the public and/or their representatives.

2. **We will maintain an overall Digital Programme plan overseen by our eGovernment Minister** - we will continue to build upon the excellent progress made since the publication of the first eGovernment Strategy by increasing the scale of the service provision and developing a more cohesive, joined-up programme that clearly articulates our achievements, priorities and progress. We will identify common requirements in service provision, e.g. authentication and payments, build on existing initiatives, and ultimately seek to develop these on a write once use many basis.
3. **We will develop our existing e-ID capability** – as stated above, we recognise the value of e-IDs as a means to protecting our people and our businesses against fraud; improving the overall user experience, avoiding the requirement for the public to provide the same information to Government numerous times; and helping Public Service fully align with Data Protection principles and legislation. The e-ID and the Digital Services Gateway will be the means for single sign-on/authentication and verification/update of general information (e.g. simple address information), using the “tell us once” principle. We appreciate that on-line identity remains an area of concern due to fears of on-line personation or identity theft. We believe that we already have an excellent approach to addressing these concerns and facilitating safe and robust citizen identification, whether face to face, by telephone or on-line. We will therefore maintain our efforts to increase the uptake of MyGovID and the Public Services Card through the SAFE II authentication model and, to that end, we have developed a roadmap for underpinning access to key public services with SAFE II authentication – see Annex B.
4. **We will develop similar plans to facilitate business and location identification** – becoming a data-driven government and providing better digital services whether nationally or across Europe is hugely dependent on holding reliable data on businesses and locations as well as people. We will therefore continue to encourage uptake of the Eircode and develop a model for Location and Business e-Identification. As well as citizens, businesses will be enabled to interact with Government to via the Digital Service Gateway, using an e-identification process to use relevant information already provided and avoid repeated re-keying in the future (this will not prevent them going directly to services that they are already familiar with).
5. **We will enhance our data-sharing capability** – we are doing this by working with key stakeholders to develop the concept of a National Data Infrastructure, i.e. a set of principles, standards, codes, policies, systems and infrastructures overseen by an appropriate governance model designed to standardise the collection, processing, classification, storage, transmission of and access to key Government data assets.
6. **We will introduce legislation to support our data-sharing ambitions** – we intend to take a Data-Sharing and Governance Bill through legislation to provide for the regulation of Data-Sharing between Public Service Bodies and ensure applicable safeguards and conditions

(including governance).

7. **We will continue to develop our Open Data portal** – we fully recognise the benefits of sharing our data with outside stakeholders where appropriate and were proud to note the formal recognition of our efforts earlier this year when Ireland was ranked in the top 3 in Europe for Open Data maturity¹². We will continue to engage with key stakeholders on strategic direction and increase the quantity and quality of the material we make available.
8. **We will transform our “back office”** – we will simplify our processes and back-office infrastructure to facilitate better, more cohesive and more cost effective delivery of Government services.
9. **We will ensure appropriate governance is in place** – this eGovernment Strategy will only achieve its ambitions if appropriate governance is in place to ensure that our data is managed securely, our services are joined-up appropriately and we do maximise the efficacy of our investments through sound stewardship of projects and avoidance of duplication.
10. **We will ensure our people have the skills and capabilities to help us move forward** – we recognise the need to have people with the confidence to challenge how we currently do things and the capability to help facilitate appropriate interventions and transformations. We will do this by training the ICT staff who will deliver the technology and the business people who will be providing the digital-led services.

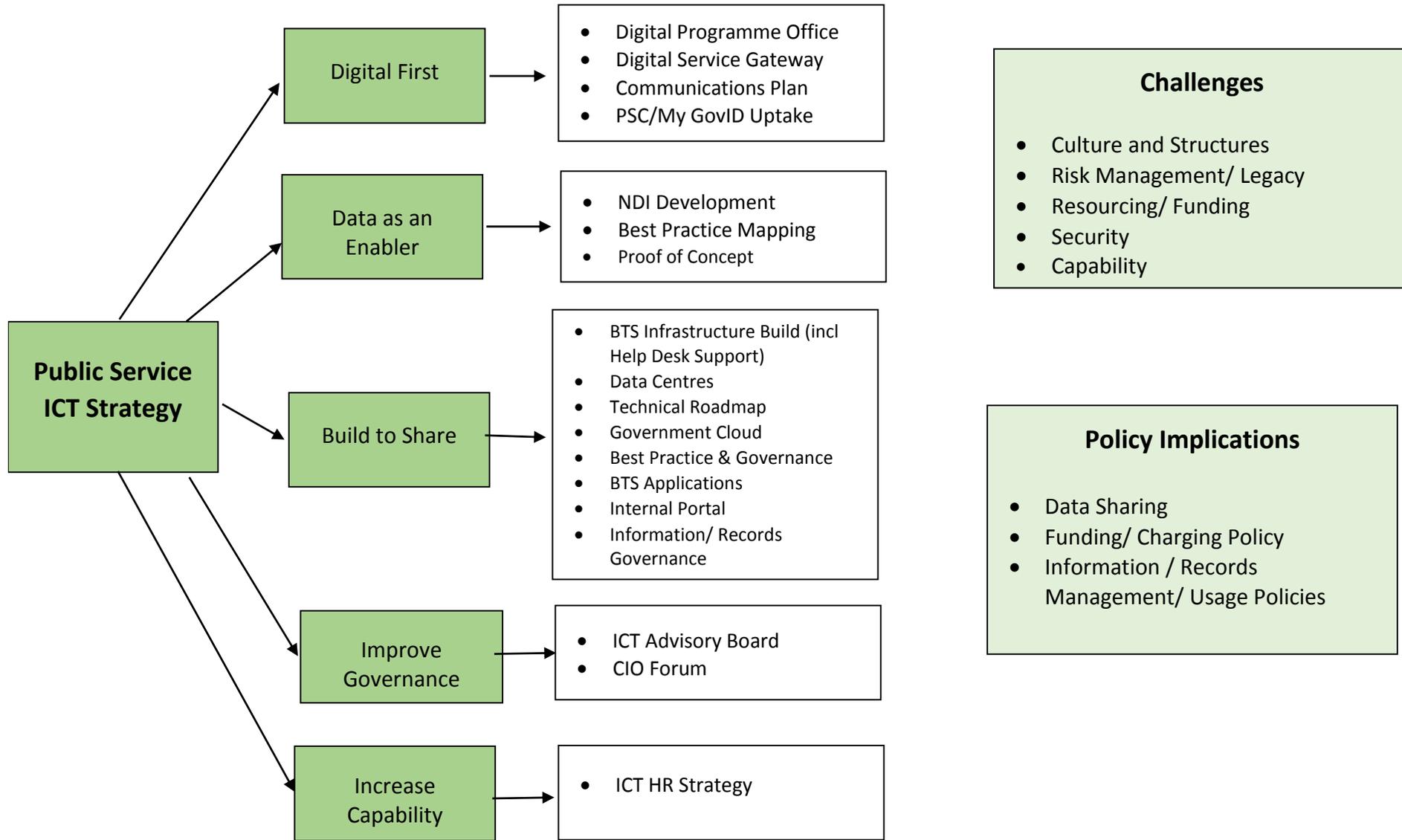
5. Conclusion

This eGovernment Strategy has been developed with the aim of succinctly setting out the next phase of eGovernment in Ireland. It sets out the contextual changes that have occurred since the publication of the first eGovernment Strategy, particularly with regard to a more joined-up Civil Service, a more digitally focused European Union and significant changes in technology, use of technology and resulting public expectation. It recognises the progress that has continued to be made and the momentum that has been created by the Public Service ICT Strategy and its 18-step delivery plan.

The Strategy therefore focuses on 10 key actions. These are designed to continue the momentum in Ireland’s drive for excellence in eGovernment, ensure alignment with the wider EU eGovernment agenda and ensure that the next strategic review is carried out against a background of success and achievement.

¹² See <https://www.europeandataportal.eu/en/dashboard>

Annex A: Public Service ICT Strategy 18-Step Deliver Plan



Annex B: Adoption Plan for the Public Services Card and MyGovID

The availability of a secure and consistent citizen identity verification scheme is a requirement for the effective delivery of digital services, the reform of backend processes, the ability to effectively make policy decisions, the protection of personal data, and the interoperability with EU Member States in the context of citizen interaction. In line with the 2013 Government Decision, S180/20/10/1789, the Public Services Card (PSC) infrastructure is the Government's standard identity verification scheme, which is to be used for access to all public services where appropriate. As such, the widespread adoption of the PSC infrastructure, including its online counterpart MyGovID, to underpin access to public services by citizens is critical to the successful delivery of the eGovernment strategy. The following lists the commitments by Departments and Offices to adopt the PSC and MyGovID infrastructure for specified public services within the listed timeframes.

Department/Office	Service	Note	Date
Office of the Revenue Commissioners	Online PAYE Anytime Service	Access to the online PAYE Anytime service will be possible via MyGovID	Jun-17
Road Safety Authority	Drivers Theory Test	Access to the Drivers Theory Test will require service users to be SAFE 2 registered	Jun-17
Dept. Education and Skills	School Transport Appeal	Submission of a school transport appeal will require submitter to be SAFE 2 registered; Online submission of appeal will be possible via MyGovID	Sep-17
Dept. Employment & Social Protection	Treatment Benefit	Checking eligibility for treatment benefits (dental/optical/aural) via MyWelfare using MyGovID	Nov-17
Dept. Foreign Affairs and Trade	Passport Application	All adult passport applications, new and renewals, for residents in Ireland will require applicants to be SAFE 2 registered; Online renewal of adult passports will use MyGovID	Q4-18
Road Safety Authority	Drivers Licence Application	Driver licence applications will require applicants to be SAFE 2 registered; Online renewal of drivers licences to be introduced and use MyGovID	Mar-18
Dept. Justice and Equality; Dept. Emp & Social Protection	Proof of Age	Introduce the optional use of the PSC as an Age Card for use as a Proof of Age service	Q3-18
Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI)	Student Grant Application	MyGovID will be used as the authentication mechanism to	Apr-18

		provide access to the student grant scheme for the 2018/19 academic year. Applicants will have to be SAFE 2 registered in order to make an application	
Dept. Education and Skills	School Grant Appeal	Submission of a school grant appeal will require submitter to be SAFE 2 registered; Online submission of appeal will be possible via MyGovID	Sep-18
Health Service Executive	Online Health Portal	MyGovID will be used as the authentication mechanism to provide access to a new online Health portal being launch in 2018 - this portal is to provide access to a growing number of health related services online.	Sep-18
Dept. Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Agfood.ie	Support for individual access to the Agfood.ie set of services via MyGovID	Sep-18