



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Consultation on the Digital Connectivity Strategy

February 2022

Prepared by the Department of
The Environment, Climate and Communications
www.gov.ie/decc

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1 Introduction

The purpose of this consultation ("**Consultation**") is to seek comments from interested parties on the State's Digital Connectivity Strategy.

2 The Digital Connectivity Strategy

2.1 Background

High quality, secure, universal digital connectivity is central to enabling greater remote working across all regions of the country, and thereby facilitating greater access to regional talent and skills. More broadly, it will contribute to rural regeneration and help to address the digital divide for rural areas. This involves the delivery of connectivity to even the most remote rural locations; facilitating the joining up of national networks, for example libraries, to Broadband Connection Points and [Connected Hubs](#); and supporting the development of networks of regional innovation hubs. Full delivery of the National Broadband Plan is a vital enabler.

Ireland needs digital connectivity characterised by excellent performance, security and sustainability, which is optimised to leverage the latest optical fibre technologies in fixed networks and to connect innovative wireless systems such as 5G, for its economic prosperity and social inclusion.

This will be achieved, guided by the principles of encouraging investment in energy efficient solutions, network integrity and security, and supporting and facilitating the modernisation of existing networks and transition to Gigabit and 5G networks both with direct and indirect Government supports. Ensuring coherency in our regulatory framework so that it promotes infrastructure competition, encourages investment, and supports innovation in emerging technologies and removes unnecessary burdens will also be important.

The Digital Connectivity Strategy is primarily focused on enabling the physical telecommunication infrastructure and services delivering digital connectivity. The Digital Connectivity Strategy sets out the State's ambition and the strategic enablers and initiatives needed to ensure this ambition level is met.

2.2 Consultation Questions Relating to the State’s Digital Connectivity Strategy

A draft Digital Connectivity Strategy is included as part of this consultation as Annex 1.

The Department invites comments and observations from interested parties on the following including any supporting or reference information on any views shared:

Consultation Question 1

Is the ambition level set out in the State’s Digital Connectivity Strategy appropriate?

Consultation Question 2

The Department invites commercial operators to submit details of their existing or future planned networks delivering broadband services to premises with at least 1Gbps download speed? Details should include the list of premises that are or will be covered and the expected date by which the Gigabit broadband service will be made available to each premises.

Consultation Question 3

Are the strategic enablers set out in the State’s Digital Connectivity Strategy appropriate? Do these strategic enablers need to be amended? Are further strategic enablers, initiatives or measures needed?

Consultation Question 4

The Department welcomes any views on the State structures, agencies and resources needed to oversee and ultimately secure the delivery of the Digital Connectivity Strategy?

Consultation Question 5

The Department welcomes any views on how to ensure a sufficiently skilled workforce, with the necessary competence and experience, is available to industry and the State so that Digital Connectivity Strategy can be delivered? The Department would welcome suggestions on the State’s role in encouraging the development of this workforce?

Consultation Question 6

The Department welcomes any other general observations and views on the State’s Digital Connectivity Strategy and how it can be improved?

3 Responding to this Consultation

3.1 Deadline for and format of responses

All responses to the consultation must be received in full by the Department no later than **5:30pm on 31 March 2022**.

Where possible, responses should be returned electronically via email.

All responses to this consultation should be clearly marked: " A Consultation on the State's Digital Connectivity Strategy - Name of Respondent" and sent to:

Email: digitalconnectivity@decc.gov.ie

and/or

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3.2 Data Protection

We are committed to engaging with stakeholders in a clear, open and transparent manner. Any person or organisation can make a submission in relation to this consultation. All submissions and feedback will be considered before the final version of the Digital Connectivity Strategy is published.

Please note that responses to this consultation are subject to the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2014 (FOI), Access to Information on the Environment Regulations 2007-2018 (AIE) and the Data Protection Act 2018.

Please also note that we intend to publish the contents of all submissions received to our consultations on our website. We will redact personal data prior to publication. In responding to this consultation, parties should clearly indicate where their responses contain personal information, commercially sensitive information or confidential information which they would not wish to be released under FOI, AIE or otherwise published.

We would like to draw your attention to our [Data Privacy Notice](#) which explains how and when we collect personal data, why we do so and how we treat this information. It also explains your rights in relation to the collection of personal information and how you can exercise those rights.

4 Next Steps

Once the Department has considered the responses received, it will publish the updated Strategy document.

Annex

Annex 1 The State's Digital Connectivity Strategy