



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

Connecting Government 2030:

A Digital and ICT Strategy for
Ireland's Public Service

Prepared by the Office of the
Government Chief Information Officer
gov.ie

Foreword

We are delighted to present **Connecting Government 2030**, which is the new digital and ICT strategy for Ireland's Public Service; and one that sets out a step-change in how government services will be presented and used in the future.

When we took on our responsibilities with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, we very much enjoyed hearing and discussing the progress that Ireland had made and continues to make in Digital Government, since the 2015 Public Service ICT Strategy.

It is hard to recall that, at the time of that strategy albeit many eGovernment services were well established, the Public Service was just starting its *digital transformation* journey. For example, there were only a few thousand verified MyGovID accounts and the concept of a modern gov.ie service was yet to emerge.

And yet we make these observations at a time when the world is (hopefully) emerging from the grip of the pandemic, and at a time when the value of digital technologies to government and society has never been better understood. Moreover, we have the fastest growing take-up of eIDs for government services in the world; *gov.ie* has become the “go to” place for government information and services; we have built strong legal underpinnings for data sharing and are one of the leaders in Europe in Open Data; we have significantly advanced our journey to ICT Professionalisation; and we are increasingly sharing infrastructure, solutions and other digital assets.

“The coming years will be about building upon our strong foundations and creating a trusted, human-driven, intuitive and inclusive world-leading digital government service”

The last Public Service ICT Strategy was about building the plans, structures, governance and ultimately the foundations of a powerful digital government ecosystem. In this regard, and as outlined above, we have delivered pleasingly well against our expectations and we commend the leadership and skills of our Civil and Public Service for the progress made. That said, we now need a step-change in the pace of our delivery if we are to reflect the pervasiveness of “digital” in every aspect of society and the corresponding expectations of Government, our people and businesses. Moreover, this step-change will be required for Ireland to maintain our

position amongst leading digital economies. In that context, **Harnessing Digital – The Digital Ireland Framework** sets a specific range of targets for the digitalisation of public services, which are reflected in this new strategy, **Connecting Government 2030**.

Through **Connecting Government 2030**, the coming years will be about building upon our strong foundations and creating a trusted, human-driven, intuitive and inclusive world-leading digital government service. We will use data proactively to anticipate and deliver early on the needs and entitlements of our people. We will see our systems being accessible using the same credentials, easily and securely regardless of device. These years will also see us further exploit the efficiencies and security of cloud technology and innovatively driving continuous improvement with our own sustainable talent pipeline supported by the strengths of our academia and industry. All this will be underpinned by continuous improvement in both our cyber security defences and our use of sustainable ICT.

Given the talent at our disposal and the contribution that “digital” can make to our economy, by the end of this decade, Ireland must seek to be consistently ranked among the top three EU digital nations and the top 10 globally. And we have no doubt that by working together and with Government support, we can make this a realisable ambition.

We look forward to supporting **Connecting Government 2030** in its ambitions to enhance Ireland’s reputation as a digital leader.



Michael McGrath TD

**Minister for Public Expenditure
and Reform**

March 2022



Ossian Smyth TD

**Minister of State with responsibility for Public
Procurement and eGovernment
Minister of State with responsibility for
Communications and Circular Economy**

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Executive Summary

The experiences of recent years, and in particular since early 2020, have reaffirmed for us all the increasing importance of and dependency that we have on digital technologies, tools and services. For most individuals and businesses, expectations and requirements of technology-enabled government services have risen significantly. Government must therefore continue to make services as seamless, user-friendly and accessible as possible. Providing faster, more convenient services will also free up scarce resources to give a more personalised and equitable service to those who need it most.

Connecting Government 2030: A Digital and ICT Strategy for Ireland's Public Service sets out an approach to deliver digital government for all, benefitting both society and the broader economy. The Public Service in Ireland must harness digitalisation to drive a step-change in how people, businesses, and policy makers interact, ensuring interoperability across all levels of government and across public services. We must ensure that in digitalising our public services we take a “user first” and “business first” approach. As a key reform initiative of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, delivering on **Connecting Government 2030** will help achieve these ambitions. It will also drive the wider GovTech priorities as well as bring significant public value benefits.

Connecting Government 2030 addresses the Digitalisation of Public Services dimension of the national digital strategy, [Harnessing Digital – The Digital Ireland Framework](#). It also aligns with the targets set out in [Civil Service Renewal 2030](#). The strategy will carry forward the [GovTech 2019 Priority Action Plan](#) and incorporates specific actions from the Programme for Government as well as addressing digital targets set by the EU.

For **individuals**, ambitions of **Connecting Government 2030** include providing better access to trusted, high quality digital government services; services that are delivered in an equitable, inclusive and sustainable manner with better service to those who need assistance; secure and transparent reuse of personal data; and, opportunities to co-create government services.

For **businesses**, the ambitions include better access to integrated digital government services; reduced administrative overhead; GovTech opportunities; and, greater openness and engagement with government.

And for **policy makers**, the ambitions include better use of data to plan and deliver all government services; strengthened capabilities and skills; an ecosystem of common digital building blocks/tools; and, stronger governance.

Digitalisation of public services in itself is not enough to deliver a Digital Government. What is required is *digital transformation* of government: redesigning and rebuilding government

processes and services, if necessary across organisations, and using digitalisation and data to provide an integrated experience for our people, businesses and policy makers.

To deliver on the ambitions of **Connecting Government 2030**, we have identified **six priority action areas**:

- **A Human-Driven Digital Experience** – Understanding our users and their needs is key to delivering better services;
- **Harnessing Data Effectively** – Improve public services by implementing structures to deliver more and better re-use of data, respecting privacy and data protection;
- **Government as a Platform** – Drive service simplification through an ecosystem of standards, resources and tools including application of the “once-only” principle;
- **Evolving Through Innovation** – Challenge ourselves to look afresh at solving difficult problems to build innovative solutions putting our users at the centre;
- **Strengthening Digital Skills** – Strengthening and developing new capabilities and skills, which are able to sustain a digital public service culture;
- **Focusing on Governance and Leadership** – Put in place governance structures to drive digital transformation across government.

Underpinning these priority action areas will be a set of **core design principles**:

- **Digital by Default and Cloud-First** – Building towards the targets for 2030 that 90% of applicable services are consumed online and being more proactive and progressive in embracing cloud;
- **All-of-Government Approach** – Ensuring an integrated and richer experience for individuals and businesses and that digital considerations are embedded in policy processes;
- **New Ways of Working** – Enabling working environments that empower our people to give of their best, promoting the sharing of ideas, designs and innovations;
- **Privacy-Driven and Secure by Design** – Design and build systems that are aligned with best practice in security and cyber defence.

Connecting Government 2030, a key reform initiative of the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, sets out a framework within which all public service organisations can deliver their own digital commitments focussed on the targets set out in the national digital strategy, *Harnessing Digital – The Digital Ireland Framework*.

Governance will be aligned with the structures foreseen in the national digital strategy. The Office of the Government Chief Information Officer at the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform will oversee implementation of **Connecting Government 2030**.

1. Our Vision for a Digital Public Service

The rapid pace of technological advance and associated potential for the use of data have not only changed the way people live but also the way people work. This digital disruption hits all sectors, including the public sector.... *OECD, 2021.*

The experiences of recent years, and in particular since early 2020, have reaffirmed for us all the increasing importance of and dependency that we have on digital technologies, tools and services. Digital government services not only played a key role during the worst stages of the pandemic, but also highlighted the value of fit-for-purpose, on-demand services to individuals and businesses and also to the economy. The national digital strategy, [Harnessing Digital – The Digital Ireland Framework](#), of which Digitalisation of Public Services is a key pillar, reflects these experiences.

For most individuals and businesses, expectations and requirements of technology-enabled government services have risen significantly in recent years. They know what they want, how they want it and when they want it.

More and more users of government services are technology sophisticated and expect these services to be available on their device of choice 24 hours a day, 7 days a week (24-7), with swift responses and minimal administrative burden. Government must therefore continue to make services as seamless, user-friendly and accessible as possible. Successful digital transformation will ensure digital is the preferred channel for people to access public services. While this not only provides them with faster, more convenient services, it will also free up scarce resources to give a more personalised and equitable service to those who need it most.

There has been a significant take-up in the use of digital government over recent years. If we are to sustain that, and achieve the highly ambitious targets set by Government in the national digital strategy, we must go further in striving for a **human-driven digital experience** by offering a more complete digital journey with fully end-to-end government services, minimising friction along the way.

Trust is very important to users of digital public services, with personal data security being critical. We must maintain the hard-earned trust we have achieved in our public services by being meticulous and transparent in our stewardship of data and assets.

When developing new government services, public service organisations should first seek to use data they or another part of government have already collected from individuals and businesses. Significantly more effective data sharing between public service organisations can yield very substantial benefits to all users of public services. Data protection, data quality and data integrity are essential to best quality services. To that end, the [Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019](#)¹ sets out a legal framework for the sharing and governance of data across Government. The [Public Service Data Strategy 2019 – 2023](#) sets out how we will move to an integrated approach to **harnessing data effectively**, particularly across public service organisation boundaries.

Digitalisation in itself is not enough – data and services must interoperate within and across public service organisations and potentially with appropriate third parties. Otherwise, we simply end up digitising processes and maintaining organisational silos. We must therefore continuously examine how our public services are delivered and how digital technologies and data can assist in that delivery, including using services available from other public service organisations i.e. taking a **Government as a Platform** approach.

We live in an era of previously unforeseen technological advancement and we must grasp this opportunity to **evolve our services digitally with innovation** at the core. Technologies and services such as Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Blockchain, Digital Wallets and Voice Activation open up vast opportunities for potential improvements in public services or even imagining new ones; but we must be open to experimentation and willing to commit the energy and resources to drive positive outcomes from our work.

To sustain a digital public service culture we need to **strengthen digital skills** and develop new capabilities for those in digital technology roles. However, to effect real transformation, we also need to ensure that all civil and public servants, including those in positions of seniority, have an appropriate core level of digital and data skills.

¹ <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2019/act/5/enacted/en/html>

Delivering modern digital public services also requires greater openness and collaboration. We will look at opportunities for greater engagement between individuals and government as well as between government, industry and academia. **Focussing on governance and leadership** and having the right structures in place will be key to achieving our ambitions and enable us communicate progress.

The audience for this strategy is diverse and includes everyone involved in the design, build, delivery and support of public services. The strategy also aims to reach individuals and businesses who depend on and use those public services; existing and start-up organisations doing or wishing to do business with the Public Service; academia and industry bodies; and other representative groups.

As a key enabler of the national digital strategy, **Connecting Government 2030** sets out an approach to guide us towards achieving this vision.

Connecting Government 2030: Our Ambition

The world is digital and we need a digitally enabled State. *OECD, 2021.*

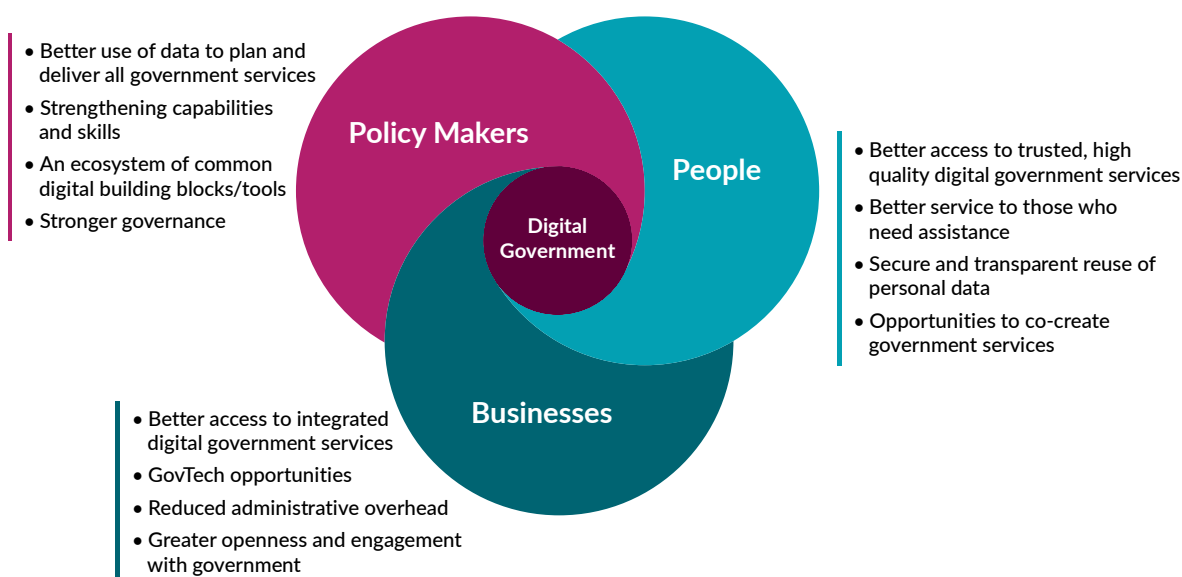
The Public Service in Ireland must harness digitalisation to drive a step-change in how people, businesses, and policy makers interact, ensuring interoperability across all levels of government and across public services. We in the Public Service believe that strong digital government brings significant public value benefits to the wider economy as well as to the communities and businesses with whom we engage.

We must ensure that in digitalising our public services we take a “user first” approach, be that for individuals or businesses. We must make our services comfortable, accessible, inclusive and easy to use. We must take an all-of-government approach and make those services interoperate to a greater extent while also maximising inclusion through assisted digital and/or an improved off-line experience for those who are unable to access services digitally.

We will achieve our digital ambitions by working to:

- enable every person and business to access trusted, high quality digital government services;

- use Government digital services to drive an expansive programme of growth, reform and transformation - people, processes, customers, locations and data;
- give all our stakeholders a voice to help us co-create a new inclusive digital government future for Ireland;
- deliver our services using an efficient, secure, privacy-driven and sustainable platform;
- inspire others to develop their skills and join the team across the Public Service, to deliver quality digital government services for all;
- use digitally acquired intelligence and the innovative potential of technology to be more informed and astute in our planning and implementation of public services; and
- position Ireland as a respected contributor to and influencer of digital policies and strategies at the EU, UN and other such bodies, and as an exemplar in their delivery.



Digital Government at the heart of how people, businesses and policy makers interact

Delivering on **Connecting Government 2030** will also drive the wider GovTech priorities, which aim to ensure that Ireland is the best place in Europe to transact digitally with Government and the best place in Europe to be part of a tech start-up.

2. Building on Our Progress

Digital technologies are now imperative for working, learning, entertaining, socialising, shopping and accessing everything from health services to culture. *2030 Digital Compass, EU 2021*

Connecting Government 2030 seeks to build upon the significant progress already made in transforming the delivery of public services. This new strategy is the next step on the journey from eGovernment to digital government.

The 2015 Public Service ICT Strategy had a Public Service remit, but implementation beyond the Civil Service Departments and Offices was somewhat limited. **Connecting Government 2030** will engage further with the wider Public Service to drive all-of-government approaches to delivering digital public services.

Connecting Government 2030 addresses the digitalisation of the public services dimension of [Harnessing Digital – The Digital Ireland Framework](#). It specifically replaces the Public Service ICT and the eGovernment strategies and will also act as an umbrella strategy for actions across a number of other government policies and strategies to ensure an overall coordinated and integrated approach to their delivery.

Connecting Government 2030 will carry forward the [GovTech 2019 Priority Action Plan](#) and incorporates specific actions from the Programme for Government. It also encompasses the vision set out in [Europe's Digital Decade](#)², as further detailed in the [2030 Digital Compass](#), including the [Green Deal](#), as well as the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#). Particularly relevant themes, many of which build on previous strategies, include human-driven design, once-only principle, trust, transparency, data-driven services, interoperability, digital empowerment, skills, inclusion and sustainability.

² Ireland has obligations under various EU Digital/ICT Regulations such as [the Single Digital Gateway Regulation](#) (including the once-only system) and [the Electronic Identification and Trust Services \(eIDAS\) Regulation](#) (including proposals for a European Digital Identity Wallet). We will continue to engage as appropriate with these and other EU initiatives as they arise.

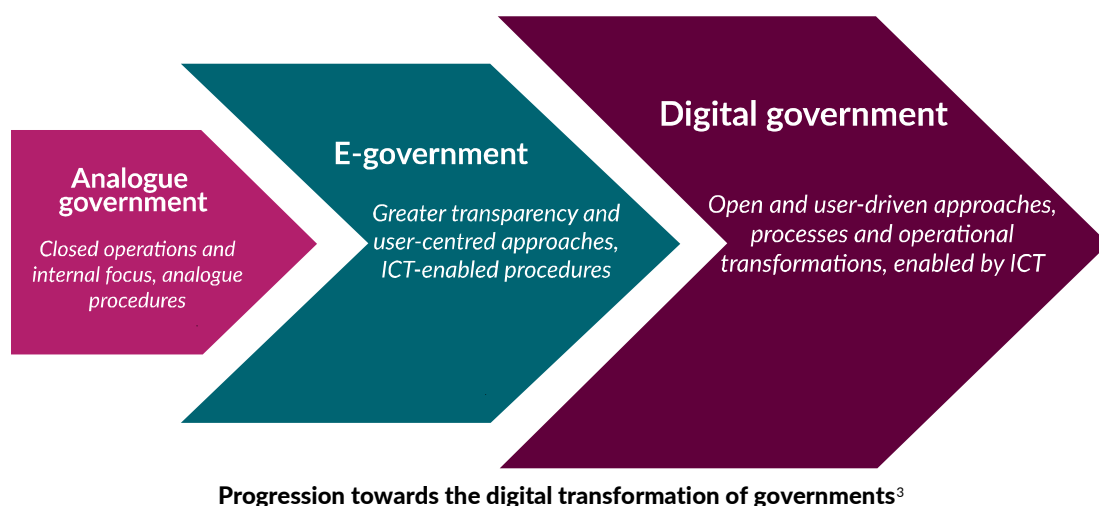
In bringing together these strategies and policy directions, **Connecting Government 2030** establishes the framework for an all-of-government ecosystem to deliver Digital Government for all.

Defining Digital Government

An *eGovernment* approach to public services has tended to take a technology focus and look at phases of maturity in delivering public services, from simple online and informational presence through to more complex transactional services and beyond.

A *Digital Government* approach recognises that digital technologies can also drive transformations that go deeper into and across public service organisations and their relationships with individuals and businesses. Although eGovernment has expanded in definition over time to include aspects of Digital Government, the term Digital Government is now more common and is the one we will use in this **Connecting Government 2030** strategy.

This OECD diagram summarises the progression from Analogue Government through eGovernment to Digital Government:



Digitisation refers to moving a paper and manual based (analogue) process or service to ICT-enabled digital representation. *Digitalisation* refers to using digital technologies to change a process or service and thereby increasing profit or in the case of public services, achieving an

³ Adapted from Strengthening Digital Government, OECD 2019 <https://www.oecd.org/going-digital/strengthening-digital-government.pdf>

improvement in service provision or greater value for money. However, digitalisation in itself is not enough to deliver a Digital Government.

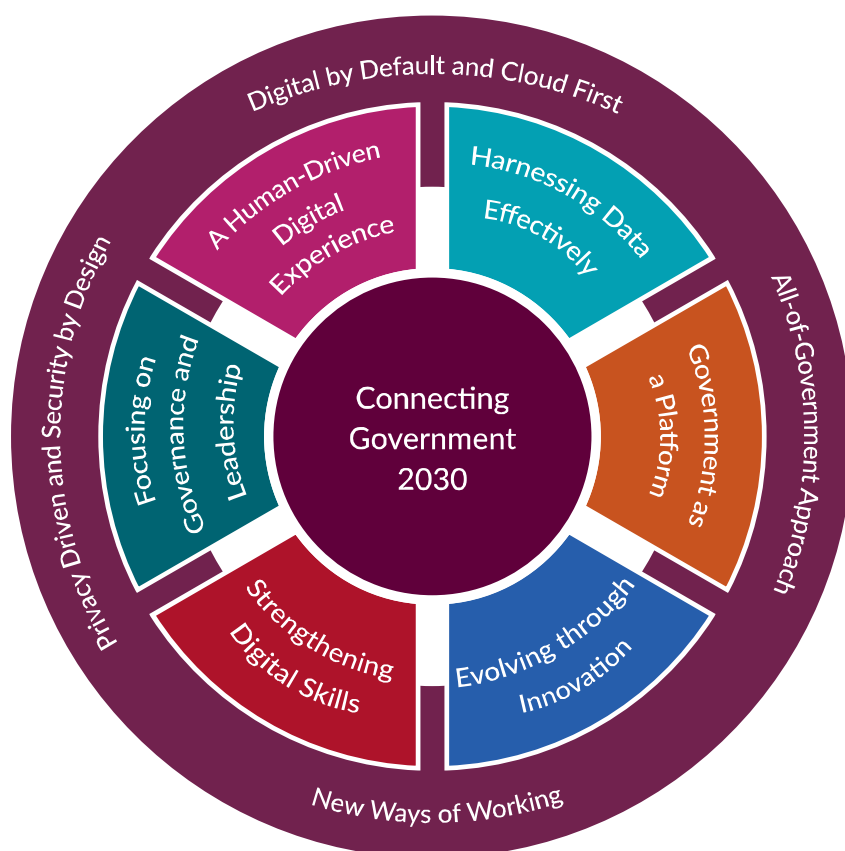
What is required is *digital transformation* of government: redesigning and rebuilding government processes and services, if necessary across organisations, and using digitalisation and data to provide an integrated experience for our people, businesses and policy makers. This reflects a *GovTech* approach to all-of-government transformation, which promotes simple, efficient, and transparent government with the individual at the centre while also supporting growth of our indigenous businesses. That is our ambition for the purposes of this strategy, **Connecting Government 2030**. This requires digital, as underpinned by ICT, to be part of policy making and public service design processes from the outset in order to achieve more person-focused outcomes.

3. Priority Action Areas

To deliver on the ambitions of **Connecting Government 2030**, we have identified six priority action areas and a number of key objectives. Underpinning these priority action areas will be a set of core design principles as set out in Section 4. Furthermore, this approach will also address these targets set in [Harnessing Digital – The Digital Ireland Framework](#):

- “Through a trusted, user-driven, intuitive, inclusive and efficient world-leading digital government service, 90% of applicable services will be consumed online by 2030
- 80% of eligible citizens using MyGovID by 2030.”

Developing the roadmaps and outcomes-based plans to deliver these actions will be a collaborative effort involving colleagues across the Public Service working in consultation with other key stakeholders and partners. The roadmaps and plans will reflect the importance of ongoing monitoring and adapting of our public services so as to maintain high standards and quality. These will also reflect the need for services to continue to evolve to meet future needs.



Priority Action Areas and Underpinning Design Principles

1. A Human-Driven Digital Experience



We must significantly improve the digital experience of individuals and businesses when using public services by making those public services as seamless, user-friendly and accessible as possible. Rather than implementing

our assumptions of their wants and preferences, understanding our users and their needs is key to delivering better services. Having a design that *works* better rather than just *looks* better allows for services that are accessible to all.

A human-driven approach to digital government is increasingly acknowledged (including by the EU, OECD and UN) as key to delivering an improved digital experience. This also includes approaches such as application of the once-only principle and proactive delivery of services using data and information we already have or know, without requiring any administrative steps from the individual/ business⁴. A key outcome in our own [Civil Service Renewal 2030](#) strategy is that applicable public services, available and consumed online, are designed with the user at the centre.

Key Objectives

Ensuring that 90% of applicable Government services are consumed online by 2030

Building towards 24-7 services providing consistent, integrated and end-to-end digital solutions and taking a digital building block approach

Application of the once-only principle (including for authentication) enabling proactive delivery of services

Promoting standards and guidance for driving digital change and equipping organisations to evolve their digital maturity

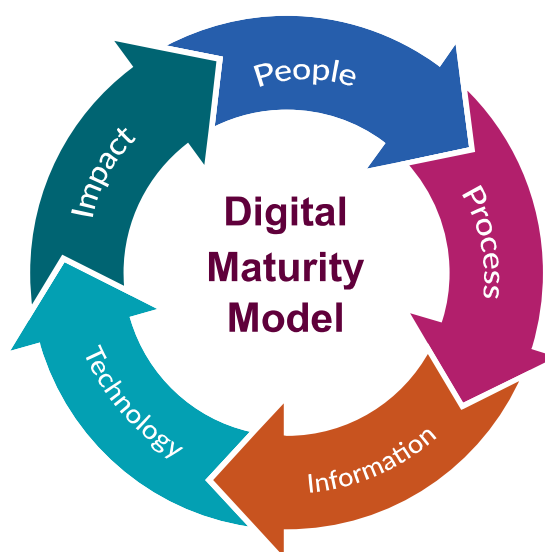
To ensure consistency across organisations, we will promote awareness of the possibilities of digital. We will put in place supports such as standards on how digital services should be designed and delivered; guidance for driving digital change through an organisation; a standard ecosystem of digital building blocks embracing an open-source approach, as appropriate; and using innovation procurement⁵ in the sourcing of digital solutions. This will also require the strengthening of digital skills within organisations.

⁴ For personal data, this is supported by [Section 13.\(2\)\(a\) of the Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019](#)

⁵ European Commission guidance describes *innovation procurement* as "... any procurement that has one or both of the following aspects: buying the process of innovation – research and development services – with (partial) outcomes; and buying the outcomes of innovation"

Standards may include, for example, content and service design. Content design will complement the government-wide effort in promoting plain language as well as helping with accessibility across all digital products. Service design involves designing new and existing government services around the user. It means cutting across departmental silos and concentrating on delivery or co-delivery of the service to the end-user.

Public service organisations are at different stages of digital maturity and transformation. Consequently, some of their services may exhibit elements and characteristics that are also at different levels of maturity. Strong awareness of our evolving digital maturity will help us highlight specific areas for attention and facilitate continuous improvement. A digital maturity model is useful to determine which aspects of digital government initiatives are missing or need to be strengthened. We will introduce such a model, which will be based on the key dimensions in the diagram across, as part of implementation of this strategy.



Digital Maturity Model Dimensions

See: https://ec.europa.eu/growth/news/new-practical-guidance-help-public-buyers-boost-innovation-procurement-2021-06-22_en

2. Harnessing Data Effectively



Harnessing data effectively requires government to recognise data held by the Public Service as a key strategic asset in contributing to society as a whole and to take steps to govern this data. The contribution to society is

achieved through the application of data in the planning, implementation and monitoring of policies and services. A data-driven approach requires government to adopt rules and ethical principles for the trustworthy and safe reuse of data.

The [Public Service Data Strategy 2019 – 2023](#) sets out a detailed vision with a set of goals and actions to deliver an all-of-government approach to how data is used and managed within the Public Service. It recognises that data lies at the heart of Government, informs and drives public policy, is collected and consumed by public service organisations and is central to the delivery of public services.

The [Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019](#)⁶ underpins many points of the Public Service Data Strategy. It provides a generalised legal basis for the sharing of data between public service organisations and sets out appropriate safeguards under which such sharing can take place. Other provisions include the establishment of a personal data access portal and the designation of base registries, including obligations on public service organisations to ensure base registry information is accurate, up to date and complete.

Implementation of the Public Service Data Strategy will be further supported through delivery of **Connecting Government 2030**. Improved data quality, and more and better reuse of data will put the individual's right to privacy and data protection at the heart of how we design and deliver all our digital public services. Government adopting the once-only principle means that individuals and businesses need supply the same information only once to public service organisations. We will further streamline and automate back office functions through

Key Objectives

Improve public services by implementing structures to deliver more and better re-use of data

Provide individuals with better access to their data and transparency in its use

Drive better data sharing and interoperability to streamline service delivery

Expand the range of data sets published to generate insights for public policy and research

⁶ <http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2019/act/5/enacted/en/html>

common data architectures and standards and enhanced interoperability between public service organisations.

Data held by the Public Service can help generate insights for public policy and research. The [Public Service Data Catalogue](#)⁷ provides information on the wide-ranging data held by the Public Service in Ireland. In addition, government has made many public service administrative datasets available as [Open Data](#)⁸ that are free to use, reuse, and redistribute. In that regard and as set out in [DPER Circular 20/2021](#), we will raise public service organisational awareness of their obligation to comply with the [Open Data Directive](#)⁹.

Together, these initiatives create a strong and supportive data ecosystem for the Public Service in Ireland.

⁷ <https://datacatalogue.gov.ie/>

⁸ <https://data.gov.ie/>

⁹ S.I. No. 376/2021 - European Union (Open Data and Re-use of Public Sector Information) Regulations <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2021/si/376/made/en/print> DPER Circular 20/2021 describes the actions required and supports available <https://assets.gov.ie/212217/bd5cd126-1954-4d65-8b3d-dd5a8398b453.pdf>

3. Government as a Platform



Government acts as a platform when it delivers human-driven, consistent, seamless, integrated, proactive and cross-sectoral public services. We will drive simplification of public services by facilitating an ecosystem of

resources and tools that support and equip service design and delivery teams. This ecosystem will include sharing best practice and guidelines; governance and assurance arrangements; digital inclusion; common components and tools (such as digital identity, notifications, design systems and, in some cases, payments¹⁰); data governance and its application for public value and trust; and public service talent and capabilities.

By investing in shared digital infrastructure, we can more rapidly and cost effectively scale-up the development of digital services. Implementing interoperable, scalable technology-based solutions – and in particular using digital/ ICT building blocks – will deliver economies of scale and maximise return on investment as we achieve our digital ambitions. This approach is also in line with [UN guidance](#)¹¹, encouraging an all-of-government approach to digital investment, which in turn supports achieving the Sustainable Development Goals.

The integration of digital components within and across organisations sometimes happens on an *ad hoc* basis, which may miss the potential value-added for an all-of-government digital environment. We will look at approaches such as standards for adopting and coordinating

Key Objectives

Drive service simplification through an ecosystem of standards, resources and tools

Use digital building blocks to deliver an interoperable all-of-government digital environment, e.g. verified MyGovID, etc.

Expand the Build to Share Programme to transform service delivery capacity, enhance cyber security, and deliver economies of scale

Take a cloud-first approach to delivery of services – public facing and back office

Identify and maximise opportunities to re-use Government assets

Align with the EU Green Deal and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

¹⁰ For example to facilitate individuals or businesses to pay fees or other charges for certain public services

¹¹ SDG Digital Investment Framework - A whole-of-Government Approach to Investing in Digital Technologies to Achieve the SDGs, International Telecommunication Union (ITU) and the Digital Impact Alliance (DIAL) <https://www.itu.int/pub/D-STR-DIGITAL.02-2019>

Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) in and across government, to support an interoperable all-of government digital environment, similar to the Eircode API currently in use by a number of public service organisations.

To that end, **Connecting Government 2030** will build on the successes of key common components already in place, including the [gov.ie](https://www.gov.ie/) portal, the [MyGovID](https://www.mygovid.ie/) digital identity service, [Revenue Online Service](https://www.revenue.ie/en/online-services/index.aspx) (ROS), [Eircode](https://www.eircode.ie/) and the [Digital Postbox](https://www.digitalpostbox.ie/)¹². In particular, and where applicable, we will use verified MyGovID accounts for authenticating individuals to access services. Additional common components may include messaging and payment systems as well as services enabled by the [Data Sharing and Governance Act](#) such as the Unique Business Identifier and base registries.

We will develop human-centred services by using digital to break through traditional organisational boundaries, potentially beyond public service organisations, and deliver better outcomes for individuals and businesses. The principle of once-only implies that Government will use digital technology to present and enable its services in a more theme-oriented proactive way. We have already made huge strides to achieve this with [gov.ie](https://www.gov.ie/); but we aim to develop the service even further. Consequently, a priority under this strategy will be the availability of life events services, recognising that no one should need to know every government service or requirement relating to a life event such as registering a birth or death, starting a new business or returning to Ireland.

Connecting Government 2030 will continue to develop the **Build to Share** programme. This was a pillar of the last Public Service ICT Strategy and will remain a prominent feature of this new strategy. Adoption of Build to Share services benefits all sizes of organisations through access to robust and resilient infrastructures, in particular cyber defences, as well as a suite of government-specific common applications that will transform and simplify back office operations. Investing in infrastructure, applications and services will lead to streamlined processes thereby introducing efficiencies through consolidation, rationalisation, digitalisation, automation and new technologies. Having a single provider for such an extensive suite of services will free up valuable resources in departments and agencies enabling them in turn, to deliver innovative solutions tailored to their individual organisations and the needs of their particular customers.

¹² <https://www.gov.ie/>; <https://www.mygovid.ie/>; <https://www.revenue.ie/en/online-services/index.aspx>; <https://www.eircode.ie/>; <https://digitalpostbox.ie/>

We will also continue to support opportunities to further develop, enhance/ replace core enterprise resource planning and similar enterprise solutions to ensure effective functioning of our organisations.

In line with the [European Green Deal](#) and the [United Nations Sustainable Development Goals](#) we will examine and implement ways to improve our use of sustainable ICT, including improved circular product cycles. We will work to ensure ICT equipment and services implemented by Government become fully circular, i.e. not just energy efficient in design, but also are designed to last longer, to be properly maintained, to contain recycled material and to be easily dismantled and recycled.

A key element of this ambition is the development of the first Government Data Centre, which will be innovative in its green design, delivery and sustainability credentials. The new data centre and, more specifically, the “cloud-orientated” infrastructure design within it, will provide the pathway to close down inefficient computer rooms and small data centres and create a more energy-efficient hosting capability across the Public Service. It will also be central to our wider data collection and storage plans, including edge computing.

Our collective contribution to developing Government as a Platform will be a strong basis in delivering quality digital public services that meet the needs of our people and businesses and are recognised as exemplars internationally. A further benefit will be its contribution towards achieving key United Nations Sustainable Development Goals.

4. Evolving Through Innovation



A useful definition of innovation is *“the creation and implementation of new processes, products, services and methods of delivery which result in significant improvements in outcomes efficiency, effectiveness or quality¹³”*.

Digital innovation provides the impetus for and underpinning of such changes because it enables us to address known business problems through the application of digital technology.

[Making Innovation Real](#), the strategy for embedding innovation in the Irish Public Service, has as its vision: *“Harness the power of innovation to deliver world-class public services in Ireland”*. Delivering the priorities and goals of that strategy will further assist in driving a culture of innovation as well as supporting digital transformation in public service organisations. Innovative initiatives at local level, such as those supporting smart cities, will also be key to providing better services for our people and businesses.

Key Objectives

Challenge ourselves to look afresh at solving difficult problems to build innovative solutions which put the public and users at the centre

Develop partnerships with industry and academia and seek fresh approaches to how we, in the Public Service, do our business

Make it easier for Start Ups and SMEs to work with Government to improve digital public services

Support experimentation of new and emerging technologies to address old problems

We are living in an era of previously unforeseen technological advancement. Technologies and services such as Artificial Intelligence, Machine Learning, Blockchain, Digital Wallets and Voice Activation open up vast opportunities for potential improvements in public services or even imagining new ones; but we must be open to experimentation and willing to commit the energy and resources to drive positive outcomes from our work.

In consultations with the public and their representatives over the last few years, including a partnership between OGCI¹⁴ and the Trinity Business School, we have learned to examine our services through the eyes of others, to be open to criticism and sympathetic to frustrations, and to be committed to improve.

¹³ Mulgan and Albury (2003)

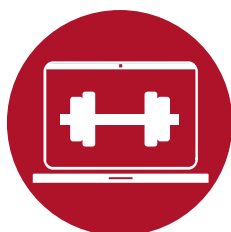
¹⁴ Office of the Government Chief Information Officer, Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER)

In [Civil Service Renewal 2030](#) our Government challenges itself and its staff to build on our strengths. Ireland has long been recognised as a hotbed of ideas and invention. We must develop the frameworks and approaches by which to use such talent so that we can establish the same trailblazing reputation for digital government as we have in Pharma, Medtech and FinTech.

In its [2019 GovTech report](#), the Government committed to foster talent and support our start-up and SME community through mentoring and delivering easier ways to do business with the Public Service. The GovTech model provides the roadmap through which our leading edge companies can use emerging technology to help us better serve our people, and in doing so, create products that can have significant export value to the benefit of our economy, our jobs creation and our reputation.

We know that we have the capability to match the progress of those countries who are recognised as leaders in this space, such as Singapore and Estonia. **Connecting Government 2030**, our GovTech priorities and our commitment to innovation gives us the roadmap to get there.

5. Strengthening Digital Skills



Delivering **Connecting Government 2030** requires the strengthening and development of new capabilities and skills which are able to sustain a digital public service culture. Public Service leaders across business, digital

and ICT, need to develop and adopt transformational mind-sets in order to drive successful digital programmes while effectively harnessing data. To that end, we will build a digitally skilled workforce to realise a *digital by default* and evidence-informed culture as also set out in [Civil Service Renewal 2030](#).

The capacity to learn and adapt to new tasks and jobs is becoming ever more important for all of society. We continue to need skills across the range of ICT and digital disciplines including design thinking, user experience, creative problem solving, data science and analysis, digital design and innovation, cloud infrastructures, cyber security and new technologies as they emerge. Given the extent to which digital technologies pervade most roles, a core level of digital and data competence is a requirement across government and not only for digital / ICT-specialists. Therefore, it is essential that all civil and public servants have an appropriate core level of digital and data-related skills in order to embed a digital mind-set across the Public Service.

The following OECD diagram visualises the requirement for digital skills across all levels of government. We will update competence frameworks to reflect a core digital and data capability as the baseline for 21st century skills for all civil and public servants. This framework will also include innovation, cyber awareness, and safe and appropriate use of data.

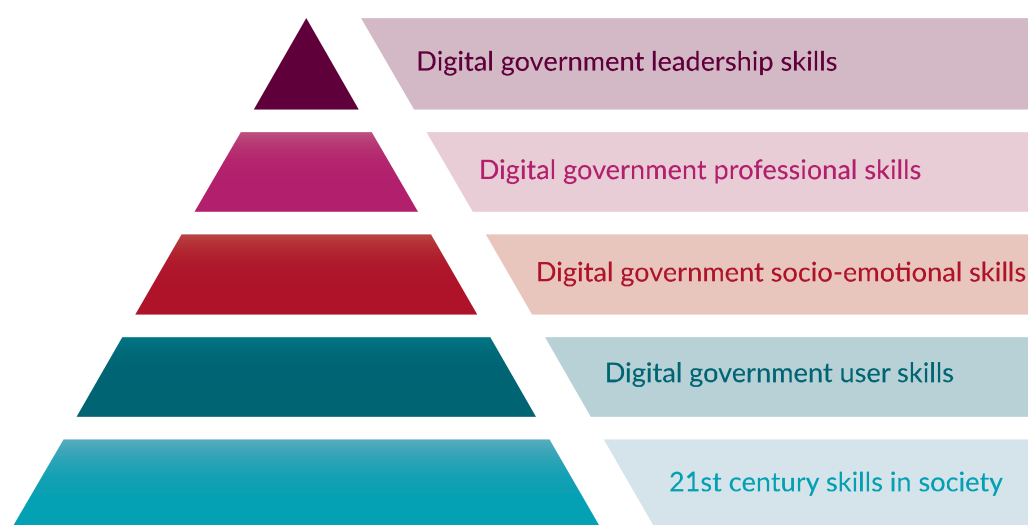
Key Objectives

Update the competence model to include a core digital and data competence at all levels of the Public Service

Develop a new Civil Service ICT HR Professionalisation Strategy which recognises the critical dependency on digital in enabling government services

Build sustainability into the talent pipeline for digital and ICT professionals across the Civil and Public Service

Look for opportunities to collaborate on the development of digital and ICT professionalisation and talent development programmes



Skills to support digital government¹⁵

Connecting Government 2030 will build on the existing ICT HR Professionalisation Strategy in place for the Civil Service. The new ICT HR strategy will again consider how to address the talent pipeline to ensure the civil and public service can strike the appropriate balance of internal and external skilled resources to deliver digital and ICT solutions, products, services and infrastructures that are available 24-7. The strategy should reflect on innovations in the talent pipeline for the Civil Service given the demand for digital and ICT skills generally and building on the success of the pilot ICT Apprenticeship programme. The strategy will also need to reflect the support requirements needed to deliver digital government services that are available on demand, 24-7.

Recognising the common need for digital and ICT skills across both the civil and public service, we will work to extend the scope of the professionalisation strategy into the wider public service. This will facilitate opportunities for shared and common skills development and sharing of expertise as well as the development of a stable digital and ICT talent pipeline for the civil and public service.

We will also work with the wider industry through representative organisations to share ideas and standards on professionalisation and talent development.

¹⁵ Adapted from The OECD Framework for digital talent and skills in the public sector (2021) <https://www.oecd.org/gov/the-oecd-framework-for-digital-talent-and-skills-in-the-public-sector-4e7c3f58-en.htm>

6. Focusing on Governance and Leadership



The impact of digital across society and the economy generally has seen the emergence of more visible leadership driving the government's digital agenda. In addition, fostering public trust in how we deliver our

digital government services is an important factor in driving uptake of digital services. In that broader context, we will need fit-for-purpose and enabling governance structures to ensure we deliver on the ambitions for **Connecting Government 2030** as a key dimension of both the national digital agenda and the [Recovery Plan for Europe / NextGenerationEU](#). The new governance arrangements, aligned with the structures foreseen in [The Digital Ireland Framework](#), will significantly advance digital transformation across government by enabling the identification of priority projects and facilitate mitigating any risks as well as addressing and removing real or apparent blockers to cross organisation integration in the delivery of public services. Building momentum around digital transformation programmes will also require strong leadership at all levels. The specific governance and reporting structures will be communicated separately.

Key Objectives

Put in place governance structures to drive digital transformation across government

Identify and track progress on priority projects and remove any blockers to progress

Foster public trust in the safety, transparency and value of digital solutions through effective communications and engagements with key stakeholders

Consult individuals and businesses to determine their priorities for digital government services

In line with the Programme for Government, and to deliver on the Digitalisation of Public Services dimension of the national digital strategy, we have established a **Digital Strategy Implementation Unit** within the Office of the Government CIO that will oversee implementation of **Connecting Government 2030**. Working with our key stakeholders, the Unit will develop a digital government development roadmap that will support delivery of the ambitions of this strategy and accelerate the move to a more digital public service for Ireland. The Unit will also lead on communicating progress and in raising awareness of the availability of digital services.

A digital government development roadmap will ensure consistent and coherent delivery of quality digital government services as framed in the vision for **Connecting Government 2030**. The **Digital Strategy Implementation Unit**, in conjunction with the Expenditure Management Units in DPER, will work with public service organisations to ensure that progress on digital

transformation is being delivered. This approach reflects the function of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform to further modernise and develop the Public Service.

In aligning with new governance structures foreseen in the national digital strategy, the Unit will maintain a dashboard on digital progress, in particular highlighting areas where insufficient progress is being made. We will also ensure the voices of our various stakeholders are heard so as to inform progress. This will include engaging with individuals and businesses, industry, academia, and advocacy groups, as well organisations across the Public Service. In addition, the Office of the Government CIO as a whole will continue to engage with representative networks across the Public Service (e.g. ICT Managers' Network, Quality Customer Service Network, the Civil Service Corporate Assistant Secretary Network as well as groups across the Health and Local Authority Sectors) as appropriate.

Connecting Government 2030 sets out a framework within which all public service organisations can deliver their own digital commitments focussed on the targets set out in [The Digital Ireland Framework](#) and [Civil Service Renewal 2030](#) as appropriate. If they have not done so already, they will also be required to have a named board member responsible for digital delivery within their department and/or sector who will be the liaison with the **Digital Strategy Implementation Unit**. Investment decisions and approvals for initiatives will be contingent on alignment with this Strategy and the wider national digital agenda.

Furthermore, given the range of benefits possible from a widespread adoption of common services and building blocks, both for back-office transformation and digital service delivery, organisations will be required to make a business case – and have this agreed – where identified common components, services or platforms are *not* used.

For large scale digital and ICT projects, or projects of particular risk or strategic importance, we will implement an **enhanced peer review process** to ensure that the governance and leadership of projects of scale is carried out in a way that provides maximum assurance of successful delivery. This will be overseen by the Office of the Government CIO and in line with [Department of Public Expenditure and Reform Circular 14/2021](#)¹⁶.

¹⁶ Circular 14/2021: Arrangements for Oversight of Digital and ICT-related Initiatives in the Civil and Public Service <https://www.gov.ie/en/circular/fd285-142021-arrangements-for-oversight-of-digital-and-ict-related-initiatives-in-the-civil-and-public-service/>

4. Underpinning Design Principles

At the core of this Strategy is a focus on people and businesses and the need to take a human-driven approach to the design and delivery of integrated public services. We challenge ourselves to continue making step-changes in the quality of our services to meet the evolving expectations of our users – individuals, businesses and public servants alike. We also recognise that delivering services on a 24-7 basis has implications on a range of fronts, and that we will need to be innovative in how we respond to these challenges.

To deliver the Priority Action Areas set out above, we will adopt the following core design principles:

I. Digital by Default and Cloud first

We will deliver our public services taking a digital by default approach through collaboration with our stakeholders and the public, building towards the target for 2030 set by the [Civil Service Renewal](#) strategy of ensuring that 90% of applicable services are consumed online. In delivering a human-driven experience, we will take a universal design approach, so that the services are available on a 24-7 basis, on the device of choice and are delivered in an equitable, inclusive and sustainable manner.

We will be more proactive and progressive in embracing cloud in line with the [Public Service Cloud Computing Advice Note](#). This advises that, subject to certain considerations, “organisations should no longer decide on *whether* to move to cloud for new or existing systems; the decision to be made now is *what, how* and *when* to move to cloud and which particular systems are suitable for cloud”.

Digital by default does not mean digital only. Consequently, we will use digital to improve the off-line experience for those who are unable to consume services digitally. By enabling those who can use digital services to so do, we can redirect resources in a range of ways to provide a much better service to those who may need assistance, for example through our public offices and libraries.

II. All-of-Government Approach

To enable the Government-as-a-Platform concept, we will deliver our services by taking an all-of-government approach, improving customer service and ensuring an integrated and richer experience for our people and businesses. This will require all public service

organisations to align with this strategy. This work could include exploring the concept of designating ownership of particular services and establishing centres of excellence.

Achieving our digital ambitions will require greater collaboration across organisations and sectors, adopting the once-only principle and re-using data that already exists in the system, even if held by a different organisation. This will be done in a transparent and trustworthy way, with strong protection of data, including robust cyber security defences, in compliance with relevant legislation and guidance. We recognise there will be challenges and complexities in achieving these ambitions, but we can overcome these by working together.

To support real digital transformation, we will ensure that digital considerations are embedded in policy processes including through the introduction of enabling legislation and administrative arrangements, as appropriate. We will put in place enhanced governance processes to ensure we deliver on the ambitions set out in this strategy in line with the Digitalisation of Public Services dimension of the national digital strategy.

III. New Ways of Working

We will support public services organisations in enabling employees to give of their best while ensuring their well-being. This includes looking at new ways of working including job-design and flexibility around location. We will engage with stakeholders on how technology and innovation can help to achieve these ambitions. This could also include establishing new forms of partnership between government, industry and academia.

To support strengthening digital skills, we will provide appropriate training or retraining opportunities in digital skills, and pursue professionalisation of technology roles. In attracting new staff to digital opportunities, we will look to make the Public Service an employer of choice.

We will provide common platforms and applications that can be shared between and across organisations to facilitate greater collaboration and to reduce difference when operating across different organisations, including maximising the opportunities and benefits of cloud. We will enable working environments that empower our people to give of their best, promoting the sharing of ideas, designs and innovations.

IV. Privacy-Driven and Secure by Design

We will design and build systems that are aligned with best practice in security and cyber defence. By harnessing data effectively, we will bring a privacy-driven approach to our work ensuring trustworthy and safe use and re-use of data.

We will apply the [Public Service Cyber Security Baseline Standards](#) to assess and improve the management of cybersecurity risks. This, in turn, will put public service organisations in a much better position to identify, protect, detect, respond to, and recover from an attack.

Collective responsibility to drive digital transformation of public services falls to the Boards of all Departments, Offices and State Bodies across all sectors. And in turn, every Chief Information Officer, Head of ICT/ Digital or equivalent will play a leading role in identifying, preparing for and navigating future challenges and opportunities both for their organisation and in the context of all-of-government initiatives.

5. Conclusion

Implementing **Connecting Government 2030: A Digital and ICT Strategy for Ireland's Public Service** will take an all-of-government endeavour to deliver its ambitious outcomes. This work will also help in achieving the targets set for us in the national digital strategy, [Harnessing Digital – The Digital Ireland Framework](#):

- “Through a trusted, user-driven, intuitive, inclusive and efficient world-leading digital government service, 90% of applicable services will be consumed online by 2030;
- 80% of eligible citizens using MyGovID by 2030.”

To achieve these aims we will build on our experience with earlier strategies and the elements of those that worked particularly well. Accordingly, we will research people's expectations and then work collaboratively with colleagues across the Public Service to develop informed outcome-based plans and roadmaps. We will also continue to evolve the Build to Share suite and further develop common components and toolkits, data sharing, professionalisation, problem-focused consultation with industry and academia, while working closely with our Ministers and politicians.

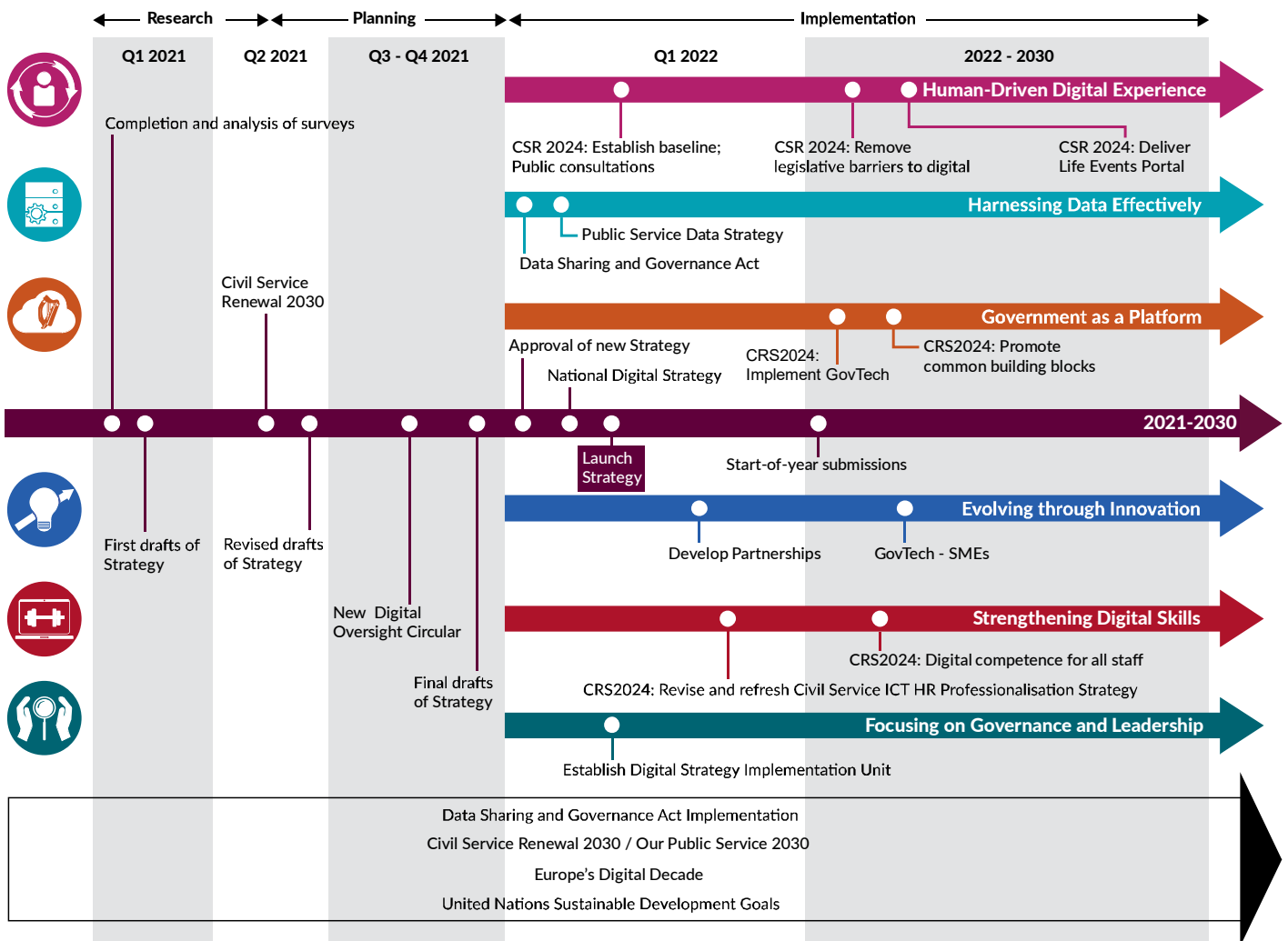
We will develop a detailed implementation plan identifying key activities over the coming years. We will introduce reporting dashboards to inform our key stakeholders on progress while aligning with other related strategies including Harnessing Digital, Civil Service Renewal and Public Service Reform.

Successful implementation of **Connecting Government 2030** will not only deliver digital government for all, but will also generate significant public value benefitting both society and the economy in general.

By connecting government and working together, we can make this happen!

6. Annexes

Annex 1: Implementation Timeline



Annex 2: Key Objectives

I. A Human-driven Digital Experience

Ensuring that 90% of applicable Government services are consumed online by 2030

Building towards 24-7 services providing consistent, integrated and end-to-end digital solutions and taking a digital building block approach

Application of the once-only principle (including for authentication) enabling proactive delivery of services

Promoting standards and guidance for driving digital change and equipping organisations to evolve their digital maturity

II. Harnessing Data Effectively

Improve public services by implementing structures to deliver more and better re-use of data

Provide individuals with better access to their data and transparency in its use

Drive better data sharing and interoperability to streamline service delivery

Expand the range of data sets published to generate insights for public policy and research

III. Government as a Platform

Drive service simplification through an ecosystem of standards, resources and tools

Use digital building blocks to deliver an interoperable all-of-government digital environment, e.g. verified MyGovID, etc.

Expand the Build to Share Programme to transform service delivery capacity, enhance cyber security, and deliver economies of scale

Take a cloud-first approach to delivery of services – public facing and back office

Identify and maximise opportunities to re-use Government assets

Align with the EU Green Deal and the UN Sustainable Development Goals

IV. Evolving through Innovation

Challenge ourselves to look afresh at solving difficult problems to build innovative solutions which put the public and users at the centre

Develop partnerships with industry and academia and seek fresh approaches to how we, in the Public Service, do our business

Make it easier for Start Ups and SMEs to work with Government to improve digital public services

Support experimentation of new and emerging technologies to address old problems

V. Strengthening Digital Skills

Update the competence model to include a core digital and data competence at all levels of the Public Service

Develop a new Civil Service ICT HR Professionalisation Strategy which recognises the critical dependency on digital in enabling government services

Build sustainability into the talent pipeline for digital and ICT professionals across the Civil and Public Service

Look for opportunities to collaborate on the development of digital and ICT professionalisation and talent development programmes

VI. Focusing on Governance and Leadership


Put in place governance structures to drive digital transformation across government

Identify and track progress on priority projects and remove any blockers to progress

Foster public trust in the safety, transparency and value of digital solutions through effective communications and engagements with key stakeholders

Consult individuals and businesses to determine their priorities for digital government services

Annex 3: Extract from Cruinniú GovTech Report 2019

GovTech Priority Action Plan	Connecting Government 2030 Priority Action Areas					
 <p>Government should:</p>	Human-driven	Harnessing Data	Government as a Platform	Innovation	Digital Skills	Governance
1. Seek to facilitate the re-use of Government Assets where lawful and feasible.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
2. Review the Government business development funding frameworks to identify any gaps or opportunities for further cohesion, with a view to reviewing how the model can be better communicated to, and understood by, its target audience.				✓		✓
3. Develop a more cohesive life-long digital talent development model covering all life stages, from pre-school age to retirement and all levels of competence from service user, to systems developer and systems architect.	✓			✓	✓	✓
4. Seek to develop procurement solutions, which fully comply with EU legislation, to enable easier access for new market entrants to conduct business with Government.			✓	✓		✓
5. Drive GovTech by being an exemplar in the delivery of digital services, the continuous development of employee skills and the adoption of innovation.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
6. Actively engage with all sectors of society to ensure GovTech is fully inclusive and addresses the main societal obstacles to digital participation.	✓	✓			✓	✓
7. Create an appropriate GovTech Governance structure.						✓
8. Create a GovTech branding model, which will be available to all contributors.				✓		✓

Cruinniú GovTech Report: <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/c9a9c8-cruinniu-govtech-report/>

Annex 4: Further Reading

Harnessing Digital – The Digital Ireland Framework

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/adf42-harnessing-digital-the-digital-ireland-framework/>

Public Service Data Strategy 2019 – 2023

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/1d6bc7-public-service-data-strategy-2019-2023/>

Cruinniú GovTech Report (November 2019)

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/c9a9c8-cruinniu-govtech-report/>

Cloud Computing Advice Note (October 2019)

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/078d54-cloud-computing-advice-note-october-2019/>

Civil Service ICT HR Professionalisation Strategy (January 2018)

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/2ac3e-the-civil-service-ict-hr-professionalisation-strategy/>

Civil Service Renewal 2030 Strategy – Building on our Strengths (May 2021)

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/efd7f-civil-service-renewal-2030/>

Civil Service Renewal 2024 Action Plan

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/47061-civil-service-renewal-2024-action-plan/>

Making Innovation Real – Our Public Service. Delivering Today, Shaping Tomorrow.
(November 2020)

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/6b625-making-innovation-real-delivering-today-shaping-tomorrow/>

Open Data Strategy 2017-2022

<https://data.gov.ie/pages/open-data-strategy-2017-2022>

National Cyber Security Strategy (December 2019)

<https://www.ncsc.gov.ie/strategy/>

Public Service Cyber Security Baseline Standards (November 2021)

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/d1fd5-cyber-security-baseline-standards/>

National Broadband Plan

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/c1b0c9-national-broadband-plan/>

Making Remote Work – National Remote Work Strategy (January 2021)

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/51f84-making-remote-work-national-remote-work-strategy/>

National Artificial Intelligence Strategy for Ireland (July 2021)

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/91f74-national-ai-strategy/>

Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy 2022 – 2023 (December 2021)

<https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/b542d-whole-of-government-circular-economy-strategy-2022-2023-living-more-using-less/>

EU: A Europe fit for the digital age

https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/europe-fit-digital-age_en

EU: Digital Compass / Digital Decade

<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/policies/digital-compass>

EU: European Green Deal

https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/priorities-2019-2024/european-green-deal_en

EU: Recovery Plan for Europe

https://ec.europa.eu/info/strategy/recovery-plan-europe_en

EU: Guidance on Innovation Procurement

https://ec.europa.eu/growth/news/new-practical-guidance-help-public-buyers-boost-innovation-procurement-2021-06-22_en

Berlin Declaration on Digital Society and Value-based Digital Government

<https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news/berlin-declaration-digital-society-and-value-based-digital-government>

UN Sustainable Development Goals

<https://sdgs.un.org/goals>

SDG Digital Investment Framework – A whole-of-Government Approach to Investing in Digital Technologies to Achieve the SDGs

<https://www.itu.int/pub/D-STR-DIGITAL.02-2019>

Digital Impact Alliance Catalog of Digital Solutions – Building Blocks

https://solutions.dial.community/building_blocks

GovStack Building Blocks

<https://www.govstack.global/building-blocks/>

The OECD Digital Government Policy Framework – Six dimensions of a Digital Government (2020)

https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/governance/the-oecd-digital-government-policy-framework_f64fed2a-en

The OECD Framework for digital talent and skills in the public sector (2021)

<https://www.oecd.org/digital/the-oecd-framework-for-digital-talent-and-skills-in-the-public-sector-4e7c3f58-en.htm>

Strengthening Digital Government, OECD 2019


<https://www.oecd.org/gov/digital-government/strengthening-digital-government.pdf>

Mulgan, G. and D. Albury (2003) UK Cabinet Office Discussion Paper: Innovation in the Public Sector, ver1.9, October 2003 [Archived 23 August 2004]

<https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20040823222650/http://www.pm.gov.uk/print/page4627.asp>

Notes

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Tithe an Rialtas. Sráid Mhuirfean Uacht,
Baile Átha Cliath 2, D02 R583, Éire
Government Buildings, Upper Merrion Street,
Dublin 2, D02 R583, Ireland

T:+353 1 676 7571
@IRLDeptPer
www.gov.ie/per