



Rialtas  
na hÉireann  
Government  
of Ireland

Ár dTodhchaí  
Tuaithe  
Our Rural  
Future



# Our Rural Future

## Progress Report 2

Prepared by the Department of  
Rural and Community Development

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## Executive Summary

Our Rural Future 2021-2025 is the Government's national rural development policy, and provides a blueprint for sustainable development of and investment in rural Ireland over its five-year lifespan.

The policy contains a range of measures for implementation across Government throughout this period – these measures will be achieved through the delivery of actions set out in annual work programmes and monitored through the publication of twice yearly progress reports.

This Second Progress Report covers activity which has taken place in Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 of 2022, and reflects the progress made towards the delivery of actions set out in the 2022 Work Programme.

All progress reports and work programmes are published on the Department of Rural and Community Development's [Our Rural Future website](#).

The Second Progress Report contains updates on 148 of the 318 actions in the 2022 Work Programme, with contributions from 22 departments or agencies.

Of these, 35 actions were of an ongoing nature, of the remaining 113, a total of 82 were completed, with the remaining 31 delayed, a completion percentage of 72%.

This includes the completion of 14 actions that were delayed in 2021 and brought forward for completion in the first half of 2022.

A substantial number of actions have taken place across Government in response to the arrival in Ireland of more than 42,000 people escaping the war in Ukraine. This includes a number of specific measures to support rural areas that have welcomed Ukrainian people into their communities.

Due to the ongoing and evolving nature of the situation, this activity has been grouped under a single measure, and includes additional funding being delivered through the SICAP Programme and for Volunteer Centres, the establishment of Community Response Forums in Local Authorities, and the provision of added rural transport services.

Full details can be found under Measure 153 on page 56.

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## Key measures delivered across Government

The following is a selection of some notable Our Rural Future deliverables that were achieved across Government in the first half of 2022. Full details of these and all other updates begin at page 8.

### **Remote Working:**

- Launch of the Connected Hubs Voucher Scheme which will provide at least 10,000 hot desk spaces to remote workers at their local digital hub. (Measure 6.4)
- Publication of the Blended Working Policy Framework for Civil Service Organisations (Measure 11.2)

### **Employment and Careers:**

- Establishment of two new Technological Universities. (Measure 27)
- 73 of the 155 IDA investments in the first half of 2022 going to regional locations. (Measure 12.4)
- €9.29 million in new funding under the Online Retail Scheme, with 72% of successful applicants based outside Dublin. (Measure 14.2)
- Launch of nine new Regional Enterprise Plans. (Measure 21.2)

### **Revitalising Towns and Villages:**

- Launch of Heritage Ireland 2030. (Measure 41.1)
- Launch of the Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund, which will make available 2,000 sites/vacant homes by 2025. (Measure 55.1)
- Introduction of new Building Acquisition Measure under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme. (Measure 63.1)

### **Enhancing Community Resilience and Participation:**

- Completion of structural review of Public Participation Networks. (Measure 82.2)

### **Improving Public Services:**

- Commencement of pilot programme to explore the use of rural pubs as community spaces. (Measure 94.2)
- Continued rollout of the Community Health Networks – 81 of 96 proposed networks are now in operation. (Measure 96.1)

### **Climate Transition:**

- Launch of the Microgeneration Support Scheme. (Measure 111.1)
- Launch of the new National Home Energy Upgrade Scheme to drive the delivery of retrofitting targets. (Measure 115.3)

### **Islands Sustainability:**

- Introduction of an islands-specific measure as part of CLÁR 2022 called 'Our Islands'. (Measure 161.1)

**€412,000**

Funding  
under new  
**Our Islands  
CLÁR measure**



**73**

Regional  
investments  
supported by  
the IDA



**10,000**

hot-desk  
spaces  
provided  
under



**Connected  
Hubs Voucher  
Scheme**

Launch of the  
**National  
Energy  
Retrofit  
Scheme**



**€10.5 million**  
additional funding  
for the community  
response to  
support **Ukrainians**  
in Ireland

Launch of  
**Croí  
Cónaithe  
(Towns)  
Fund**



Roll-out of  
**€50m**  
scheme to  
improve rural  
wastewater  
infrastructure

**€150  
million**

new funding for  
sports facilities  
under the  
**Sports  
Capital  
Programme**



**262**

Remote  
working  
hubs  
on the  
**Connected  
Hubs  
Platform**



**2**

**New technological  
universities**



Atlantic TU and  
South East TU

Ár dTodhchaí  
Tuaithe  
Our Rural  
Future



# Highlights from Progress Report 2

# Glossary

<b>AA</b>	Appropriate Assessment
<b>BCP</b>	Broadband Connection Point
<b>CAP</b>	Common Agricultural Policy
<b>CLÁR</b>	Ceantair Laga Árd-Riachtanais
<b>CSP</b>	CAP Strategic Plan
<b>CSO</b>	Central Statistics Office
<b>DAFM</b>	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
<b>DCEDIY</b>	Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
<b>DETE</b>	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
<b>DECC</b>	Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications
<b>D/Education</b>	Department of Education
<b>DFHERIS</b>	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
<b>D/Finance</b>	Department of Finance
<b>D/Health</b>	Department of Health
<b>DHLGH</b>	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
<b>D/Justice</b>	Department of Justice
<b>DPER</b>	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
<b>DRCD</b>	Department of Rural and Community Development
<b>DSP</b>	Department of Social Protection
<b>DTCAGSM</b>	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
<b>D/Transport</b>	Department of Transport
<b>EPA</b>	Environmental Protection Agency
<b>ESB</b>	Electricity Supply Board
<b>EU</b>	European Union
<b>EV</b>	Electric Vehicle
<b>FLAG</b>	Fisheries Local Area Group
<b>GIS</b>	Geographic Information System
<b>HE</b>	Higher Education
<b>IDA</b>	Industrial Development Agency
<b>IT</b>	Institute of Technology
<b>LCDC</b>	Local Community Development Committee
<b>LECP</b>	Local Economic and Community Plan
<b>LEO</b>	Local Enterprise Office
<b>LGBTI+</b>	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender and Intersex
<b>LGMA</b>	Local Government Management Agency
<b>MAP</b>	Maritime Area Planning
<b>NBI</b>	National Broadband Ireland
<b>NMPF</b>	National Marine Planning Framework
<b>NPF</b>	National Planning Framework
<b>NPWS</b>	National Parks and Wildlife Service
<b>NTA</b>	National Transport Authority
<b>OECD</b>	Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development
<b>OGP</b>	Office of Government Procurement
<b>OPW</b>	Office of Public Works
<b>ORESS</b>	Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme
<b>ORIS</b>	Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme
<b>PESTLE</b>	Political, Economic, Sociological, Technological, Legal and Environmental

<b>PPN</b>	Public Participation Network
<b>REDF</b>	Regional Enterprise Development Fund
<b>RRDF</b>	Rural Regeneration and Development Fund
<b>RTP</b>	Regional Tourism Plan
<b>SEA</b>	Strategic Environmental Assessment
<b>SICAP</b>	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
<b>SME</b>	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
<b>SWOT</b>	Strength Weakness Opportunity Threat
<b>TU</b>	Technological University
<b>URDF</b>	Urban Regeneration and Development Fund
<b>WDC</b>	Western Development Commission

# Optimising Digital Connectivity

<b>Measure 1</b> Invest up to €2.7 billion in the rollout of the National Broadband Plan and explore how the initiative can be accelerated to deliver connectivity as soon as possible in rural areas.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> National Broadband Ireland under contract to DECC		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
1.1	Continue rollout of the National Broadband Plan, with construction continuing in a majority of counties.	Ongoing
<b>Update:</b> The rollout of the NBP is continuing, with a revised target to pass 102,000 premises by the end of January 2023 (cumulative). Build works are ongoing across all counties.		
1.6	Continuation of the accelerated programme for the provision of high speed broadband to primary schools across the intervention area.	Ongoing
<b>Update:</b> As of 15 July 2022, 380 school BCPs have been installed by NBI.		
1.7	Finalise and implement measures to mitigate COVID impacts on 2022 delivery.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> NBI continued to face many challenges due to the high number of cases in late 2021 and into 2022. They are, however, implementing a number of measures to help lessen the impact that these delays have had on the rollout. Such measures include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increasing the rate of pole replacement and duct remediation per month</li> <li>• Bringing in additional NBI resources</li> <li>• Earlier procurement of materials used in the build stages</li> <li>• Bringing in additional subcontractors.</li> </ul> As a result of actions taken by NBI, the project has been building momentum and monthly increases in premises passed are being recorded.		

<b>Measure 3</b> Introduce legislation in 2021 to provide employees with the right to request remote work.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DETE		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
3.1	Following public consultation period in May 2021, draft heads of Bill are anticipated by Q3 2021.	Complete



<b>Update:</b> The Draft General Scheme was finalised on 14 January 2022 and Cabinet approval was sought for the priority drafting on 25 January 2022.		
3.2	Obtain Government approval for the priority drafting of the Right to Request Remote Working Bill 2022.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> Government approval for the priority drafting of the Right to Request Remote Working Bill 2022 was secured on 25 January 2022.		
3.3	Complete pre-legislative scrutiny of the General Scheme by the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Enterprise, Trade and Employment.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> Pre-legislative scrutiny of the General Scheme commenced on 9 February 2022. The Final Report on pre -legislative scrutiny was published on 7 July by the Joint Oireachtas Committee and is being considered by department officials.		

<b>Measure 4</b> <b>Map and publish a comprehensive picture of remote working facilities across the country, and the various facilities available in each, to ensure that future hubs are developed in a strategic way that meets demand and maximises utilisation in key locations.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DRCD, Western Development Commission		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
4.1	Data gathering to establish extent of remote working hubs across country.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> The national Connected Hubs Network, together with the connectedhubs.ie platform, was launched on 31 May 2021. The National Hub Network Working Group initially identified and mapped over 400 remote working hubs throughout the country – this number has since increased to more than 500 (130 of which are BCPs). Some 262 of these have been onboarded to the platform and the remainder will be invited to join. The locations of the onboarded hubs, together with the services and facilities they offer and the map location are available <a href="#">online</a> . The work being undertaken by the WDC includes the development of a dataset for the national network’s hub infrastructure, which will be used to inform future decision making.		
4.3	Engage with stakeholders (Central Statistics Office and DETE) to ensure data and maps are incorporated into wider data gathering on remote working demand and supply as part of Making Remote Work.	Ongoing
<b>Update:</b> The IDG for the National Remote Working Strategy ( <i>Making Remote Work</i> ) includes representatives from DRCD, WDC, CSO and DETE. Pillar Two of <i>Making Remote Work</i> (“to develop and leverage a remote work infrastructure”) contains five actions. DRCD, supported by WDC lead on (amongst others) action two - to ‘[e]xtend the mapping and classifications of		

*hubs- as completed by Western Development Commission on the Atlantic Economic Corridor - across the country to develop national data on hub infrastructure’.*

The National Hub Network survey was launched in late February 2021 and to date the WDC have mapped and identified over 400 hubs to join the National Hubs Network (over 260 of which have been onboarded onto the platform with this number increasing on an ongoing basis). Verification of the hubs’ details is ongoing and details of hubs are available on the interactive map: <https://connectedhubs.ie/nationalhubsmap.html>.

WDC has shared the national hub dataset with the CSO who are working on action three of pillar two, to ‘[m]ap commuter, skills and childcare facilities data to inform future hub development decisions’. In May 2022, the CSO published their output, which provides the average distance from residences to hubs and childcare facilities: [Distance to Remote Work Hubs and Childcare Services February 2022](#) (valid at time of publication). In addition, CSO intends to update the 2019 ‘Measuring Distance to Everyday Services in Ireland’ product ([Measuring Distance to Everyday Services in Ireland](#)) with additional data and hub/childcare information once Census 2022 data is available next year.

<b>Measure 5</b> <b>Establish a comprehensive and integrated national network of 400 Remote Working Hubs throughout the country, with shared back-office services and a central booking platform for users.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DRCD, Western Development Commission		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
5.2	Development of the Connectedhubs.ie platform to improve accessibility and functionality to include corporate booking functionality, recording of capacity and usage figures.	Ongoing
<b>Update:</b> Version 2.0.0 (V2) of the Connected Hubs platform was rolled out to the public on 26 June 2022, in tandem with the Connected Hubs Voucher Scheme – Phase 1. The latest version of the Connected Hubs app was rolled out on 19 July 2022.		

<b>Measure 6</b> <b>Invest significantly in remote working facilities to support the retention of skilled people in rural communities and attract mobile talent to rural areas.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DRCD		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
6.4	Announce successful applicants under the 2022 Connected Hubs Fund. The Fund will support capital works to increase capacity and impact of existing hubs and Broadband Connection Points, as well as support the development of the National Hub Network.	Complete

**Update:** The 2022 Connected Hubs Call was launched in February, a €5 million funding stream to further support remote working facilities (including BCPs) throughout the country and to add further capacity to the National Hub Network. Some 81 applicants from across the country were successful in securing funding for their applications under this call enabling the ongoing development of the National Hub Network.

6.5	Launch a targeted incentive to encourage the usage of remote working hubs in rural areas.	Complete
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**Update:** The Connected Hubs Voucher Scheme was launched on 27 June 2022 and will give remote workers free use of a hot desk at their local digital hub. At least 10,000 hot desk spaces are provided under the Scheme, which is aimed at both existing hub users, as well as those accessing hub facilities for the first time. The scheme will run over two phases with phase one running from 27 June to 31 August. Phase two will start in September and run into early 2023. All users registered on connectedhubs.ie on 27 June will automatically be credited with three vouchers on their account for the use of a hot-desk in phase one. The number of vouchers and use for additional services will be reviewed for phase two.

6.6	Make funding available to Local Authorities to run innovative marketing campaigns targeted at attracting remote workers and mobile talent under 2022 Town and Village Scheme.	Complete
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**Update:** A dedicated marketing measure has been introduced for TVRS 2022 for innovative marketing campaigns targeted at attracting remote workers and mobile talent to counties. LAs may apply for up to €50,000 under the measure to run a marketing campaign. Closing date for applications is 22 July 2022.

## Measure 8 Develop national data on the incidence and frequency of remote work, to provide an evidence base for future policy.

**Lead Delivery Body:** CSO

### 2022 Actions

### Status

8.1	Inclusion of specific question in the 2022 Census of Population on whether persons at work ever work from home. If a respondent indicates that they work from home, then a follow-up question is asked on the number of days usually worked from home. Information will be available at detailed geographic level in 2023.	Complete
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**Update:** The 2022 Census of Population was conducted in April 2022. The field operation has concluded and the processing of census forms is underway. Information on persons working from home will be published at a detailed geographic level during 2023

## Measure 10 Mandate public sector employers, colleges, and other public bodies to move to 20% home and remote working in 2021, with further annual increases over the lifetime of this policy.

<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DPER		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
10.1	Publication of the Remote Working Framework.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> The Blended Working Policy Framework for Civil Service Organisations was published on 31 March 2022.		

<b>Measure 11</b>			<b>Pilot co-working or hot-desking for civil servants in a small number of towns initially, to support the objective of a move to 20% home or remote working.</b>
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DPER			
<b>2022 Actions</b>			<b>Status</b>
11.2	Publish Blended Working Policy Framework for Civil Service to provide an overarching framework to inform Civil Service organisations when developing blended working policies and other related initiatives.		Complete
<b>Update:</b> The Blended Working Policy Framework for Civil Service Organisations was published on 31 March 2022. This sets out guidance to all civil service organisations for the development and implementation of individual Blended Working Policies.			

<b>Measure 12</b>	<b>Through IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and Údarás na Gaeltachta, promote and enable the uptake of remote working across their client base to support regional job creation.</b>	
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DETE, DTCAGSM		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
12.3	Enterprise Ireland will continue to drive job creation in the regions through implementation of the Enterprise Ireland Strategy 2022-2024. This will include a strong focus on remote working opportunities.	Ongoing
<b>Update:</b> Enterprise Ireland has supported the development of 78 regional projects nationally, under the Regional Enterprise Development Fund & Border Enterprise Development Fund since 2017. Over 40 of these projects are now completed and have commenced operational delivery. These projects offer a mix of start-up, scaling and remote work spaces in almost every county in Ireland.		

EI is currently in the process of developing and rolling out a promotional campaign to their client base to outline the project facilities, supports and opportunities available in these projects for their businesses.		
12.4	The IDA will continue to highlight remote working opportunities across its client base (both existing and new client companies), through the promotion of the availability of Ireland's network of hubs and collaboration with regional stakeholders to drive greater take up of remote working opportunities by IDA Ireland client companies.	Ongoing
<p><b>Update:</b> The IDA announced its half-year results on 6 July 2022.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 155 investments won up to the end of Q2 – 73 of them new name investments</li> <li>• Associated employment potential of over 18,000 jobs</li> <li>• Strong regional performance continued with 73 of the 155 investments going to regional locations</li> </ul> <p>Many of the “office” based investments have a remote working model and optionality associated with the jobs announced.</p> <p>IDA Ireland continues to highlight remote working and flexible spaces as Vehicles for Job Creation and Investment into Regional locations in Ireland. The IDA continues to promote the Connect Hubs and the Community and Enterprise Association of Ireland networks to new and existing clients. IDA is also supportive of training initiatives undertaken by local ETB's and clients on how to operate and manage in remote working environments.</p>		

<b>Measure 14</b> <b>Provide grants to retail businesses in rural towns and villages to establish or develop their online presence to complement traditional footfall trade.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DETE, LEOs, Enterprise Ireland		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
14.1	Continue delivery of the Trading Online Voucher Scheme which offers a voucher of up to €2,500 (50% co-funded by the applicant) to help businesses develop their online trading capability.	Ongoing
<p><b>Update:</b> The Trading Online Voucher Scheme continues to be a vital support for businesses across the country with 4,450 applications approved by Local Enterprise Offices in 2021 and a further 942 approvals as of the mid-year point in 2022.</p>		
14.2	Provide further funding under the Online Retail Scheme.	Complete
<p><b>Update:</b> The Online Retail Scheme is targeted at retailers to enhance their online capability and presence to best exploit new opportunities and attract new customers. The latest Call under the Scheme (announced 19 July 2022) saw 216 retailers across all counties approved for funding of €9.29 million. 72% of successful applicant companies are based outside of Dublin.</p>		

Since 2018 more than 700 projects from retailers based in Ireland have been approved for €28.3m in funding through the Government's Online Retail Scheme. Successful applicants will receive a grant ranging from €10,000 to a maximum of €64,000.

**Measure 15      Develop Local Digital Strategies in each Local Authority area, to maximise the potential of improved rural digital connectivity for businesses and communities.**

**Lead Delivery Body:** DRCD

**2022 Actions**

**Status**

15.1	Provide support and assistance to Local Authorities to produce local digital strategies to drive regional digital development.	Ongoing
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**Update:** Support is continuing for those Local Authorities which haven't published their local digital strategies. Further research is required in order to align these strategies with the new National Digital Strategy, Harnessing Digital – The Digital Ireland Framework, which was published in February 2022, along with recent European policy developments.

DRCD will engage with Local Authorities that have yet to publish a digital strategy and those that will need to update their strategies in the coming months.

# Supporting Employment and Careers in Rural Areas

<b>Measure 21</b> <b>Develop and implement a set of nine new Regional Enterprise Plans to support enterprise development and jobs growth in the regions.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DETE		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
21.2	Publish and launch the nine Regional Enterprise Plans to 2024.	Completed
<b>Update:</b> All nine Regional Enterprise Plans to 2024 have been launched and published.		
21.3	Regional Steering Committees confirmed and established to drive implementation of the Plans.	Delayed
<b>Update:</b> Implementation of the nine Regional Enterprise Plans has commenced. Regional Steering Committees are being established together with Working Groups to drive implementation of the Plans. To date, five Steering Committees have met, with the remainder to meet shortly.		

<b>Measure 23</b> <b>Deliver ambitious job creation and enterprise development targets for the indigenous sector in the strategies of Enterprise Ireland, Údarás na Gaeltachta and the Local Enterprise Offices to embed jobs growth more deeply within the regions.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> Enterprise Ireland, Údarás na Gaeltachta, LEOs		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
23.1	Enterprise Ireland will continue to drive job creation in the regions through implementation of the Enterprise Ireland Strategy 2022-2024. The LEOs will continue to promote employment growth across the 31 Local Authorities and are engaged with REDF projects in each of the regions.	Ongoing
<b>Update:</b> In 2021, 68% of new jobs were created outside of Dublin by Enterprise Ireland companies. The positive jobs figures saw increases in employment across all regions in Ireland, with, for example, employment increasing by 9% in the Northwest and by 7% in the Southeast.		
Through implementation of the Enterprise Ireland Strategy 2022-2024 over 45,000 new jobs will be created by 2024. Over two-thirds of new jobs created in regions outside of Dublin. Although only six months into the strategy Enterprise Ireland has targeted job creation projects and maximised job retention across all regions of Ireland already, through		

engagements made by their regional development executives and development advisors nationally.

The first pillar of the strategy is *Export-focused Irish enterprises delivering growth across all regions*, work is ongoing in Enterprise Ireland to develop a new exporter's interactive scorecard which will enable companies to understand their export readiness. Work is also being finalized on the development of a New Exporter Journey, mapping the stages and key requirements for each stage.

Although concrete data is not available for 2022 yet, evidence from monthly PMI pulse surveys carried out by Enterprise Ireland show that both employment and new export orders have increased each month in 2022 thus far in all regions across the State despite the headwinds of inflationary and supply chain challenges.

23.3	Launch mid-term review of Uíbh Ráthach Task Force.	Complete
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**Update:** The mid-term review has been completed and was launched on July 25.

23.5	Support the network of 33 Gaeltacht community development organisations funded through Údarás na Gaeltachta in delivering annual actions plans that take into account community-specific social issues.	Ongoing
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**Update:** The network of 33 Gaeltacht community development organisations has been funded on the basis of an annual action plan, with those action plans aligned to Údarás na Gaeltachta's strategy, focusing on areas such as social enterprise, renewable energy, tourism, digital hubs and language planning.

**Measure 25** Promote awareness and the use of remote working hubs and enterprise centres across the country to support remote working and encourage local enterprise start-ups.

**Lead Delivery Body:** DRCD, DETE

**2022 Actions**

**Status**

25.2	Launch of the Connected Hubs national promotional campaign.	Complete
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**Update:** The first National Connected Hubs marketing campaign was launched in Q1 2022 and included the launch of a Connected Hubs mobile app.

In Q2 2022, a series of announcements to raise the profile of the National Hub Network and remote working generally were made. These announcements were:

- the results of the CH Call 2022
- the launch of the Connected Hubs Voucher Scheme
- €50K grants for Local Authorities to market their remote work offerings.



A smaller regionally-focused marketing campaign has commenced for the summer months to encourage remote workers to utilise local hubs in tourist locations. A more significant campaign and series of announcements are scheduled for Q3/4 2022.

25.3	Develop collaborative strategies with key stakeholders to promote hubs to diverse markets (SMEs, workers, etc.).	Ongoing
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**Update:** With 262 remote working hubs now onboarded to the connectedhubs.ie platform, the focus has shifted to raising awareness of the network, with the first National Connected Hubs marketing campaign being launched in Q1 2022 – this included the promotion of digital hubs to SMEs and remote workers.

The WDC are currently developing the Connected Hubs corporate offering and also reviewing opportunities to support job creation and work activation through the platform.

Work on a National Hub Network Development Policy will begin in 2022.

<b>Measure 26</b> <b>Maximise our resources and strengths in the Green Economy to support employment opportunities for rural communities in areas such as renewable energy, sustainable tourism, energy retrofitting, the Bioeconomy and the Circular Economy.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DAFM, DECC		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
26.1	Hold regular cross-government bioeconomy policy implementation group meetings.	Ongoing
<b>Update:</b> As planned the cross-government bioeconomy policy implementation group have met twice in Q1 and Q2 2022.		
26.6	Implement Bioeconomy Forum work programme and prepare report for Bioeconomy policy implementation.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> The Bioeconomy Forum work programme phase 1 has been delivered on schedule. This included five plenary meetings for the period (July 2021 until June 2022). It also included 26 bilateral meetings with Forum members, three working groups delivering a report each and a site visit to the Farm Zero C climate neutral dairy demonstration farm. The report from the Bioeconomy Forum to the Bioeconomy policy implementation was delivered on schedule in July 2022.		
26.9	Launch the national retrofitting scheme to drive demand and grow the home energy upgrade market.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> The new National Home Energy Upgrade Scheme was launched in February this year. An Exchequer investment of €8 billion to 2030 for retrofit and clarity on the annual allocations for the years to come, will provide confidence to the sector to grow, due to the resulting large and stable pipeline of work that it will support.		

26.10	Introduce a system of registration for retrofit One-Stop Shops.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> See Measure 115.4		

<b>Measure 27</b> Roll out the development of the Technological University model to help support regional growth through the education and training sector and to act as an anchor for regional economic development, research and investment.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DFHERIS		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
27.2	Establishment of Atlantic Technological University.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> Atlantic Technological University was established on 1 April 2022.		
27.3	Establishment of South East Technological University.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> South East Technological University was established on 1 May 2022.		

<b>Measure 28</b> Develop an overarching Clustering Policy and Framework to advance strong and effective clustering and links between SMEs, multinational corporations and the third-level sector.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DETE		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
28.3	Finalise consultancy report and response from the National Cluster Policy Steering Group to inform a national cluster policy and framework.	Delayed
<b>Update:</b> Timeline extended by one month due to logistics associated with the National Clustering Policy Stakeholder event held in May 2022. The consultancy report was brought forward for consideration by National Cluster Policy Steering Group at the end of July, with a view to completion in Q3 2022.  A national clustering policy approach to be brought forward in conjunction with the forthcoming White Paper on Enterprise for delivery in Q4 2022.		

<b>Measure 30</b> <b>Deliver a suite of new measures to support the development of Social Enterprises in rural areas to increase their social, economic and environmental impact and contribute to job creation locally.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DRCD		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
30.2	Include a focus on rural social enterprise in support programmes for social enterprises.	Ongoing
<p><b>Update:</b> All social enterprise support programmes are designed to ensure support for rural (and urban) social enterprises and their particular requirements though proactive efforts are made to ensure regional balance in terms of investment. For example, support schemes such as the 2021 Capital Grants Scheme seek to ensure a wide geographic spread as part of assessment processes by encompassing all local authority areas via the Local Community Development Committees.</p> <p>Similarly, the Awareness Raising Initiative for Social Enterprises (ARISE) evaluation process has sought to ensure a wide geographic spread. Údarás na Gaeltachta launched its social enterprise development strategy in Q2 2022.</p> <p>Further capital supports for social enterprises are planned which will include a continued focus on rural social enterprises, as part of our efforts to ensure a wide mix of social enterprises and their specific needs are catered for.</p>		
30.3	Approval of additional organisations and employment opportunities for specific disadvantaged individuals under the Community Services Programme which provides local social, economic and environmental services through a social enterprise model.	Complete
<p><b>Update:</b> To date an additional seven organisations have been approved for entry to the programme during 2022, with a start date from 1 June 2022, supporting an additional six manager positions and 15 full-time equivalent positions, with a current annual allocation of €477,495.</p> <p>A number of additional funding requests, supporting an additional 5.5 FTE positions with a current annual allocation of €104,681, were also approved. In addition to the awarding of these positions, two temporary FTE positions have been approved for two organisations which are currently supporting with the influx of refugees from Ukraine.</p>		

<b>Measure 31</b> Expand the use of socially responsible public procurement contracts, where feasible, which will incentivise the engagement of social enterprises and Circular Economy organisations.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> All Departments		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
31.6	Inclusion of social clause in the tender process for the Social Enterprise Data Gathering Exercise. (DRCD)	Complete
<b>Update:</b> A social considerations clause to encourage collaboration and partnership with social enterprises was included in the social enterprise data collection tender. The tender was awarded in Q1 2022 to a consortium which included a social enterprise support network.		

<b>Measure 32</b> Further develop the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Hidden Heartlands, and Ireland's Ancient East as regional tourism offerings and further diversify tourism opportunities by strengthening Ireland's image as an outdoor activity holiday destination to the domestic and international markets.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> Fáilte Ireland		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
32.4	Develop Regional Tourism Strategies for each of Fáilte Ireland's brand regions.  In 2022, the Strategies will undergo Strategic Environmental Assessment and will then go to public consultation before launch.	Ongoing
<b>Update:</b> The Regional Tourism Strategies are now undergoing Strategic Environmental Assessment for each of the four regions (Ireland's Ancient East, Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland's Hidden Heartlands and Dublin) and will then go to public consultation before launch.		

<b>Measure 36</b> Invest in greenways, blueways, walking trails and other outdoor recreation infrastructure to support the growth in outdoor recreational tourism.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> D/Transport, DRCD		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
36.4	Begin the development of the Seanamhach Walking/Cycling trail, funded through ORIS. (DTCAGSM)	Complete

**Update:** DRCD approved €500,000 under ORIS 2021 Measure 3 to Údarás na Gaeltachta for Bealach Shéanadh Mhacha / Discover Shéanadh Mhacha Development of a walking/cycling looped trail and nature trails. Project tendering has initiated.

Measure 38 <b>Expand the Walks Scheme to achieve a target of at least 80 trails, doubling the number from 2018.</b>		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
38.1	10 new trails will become operational under the Walks Scheme, with 283 new participants covering 174.2 kms. Nine trails were completed in 2021, a tenth trail will become operational in Q2.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> Since 2019, 11 new trails have joined the Scheme. This includes trails which were approved in principle in 2019 and also some of the 31 new trails (c.417 new participants covering c.930 kms) which were announced in September 2021. Work is progressing on these, with two already operational under the Walks Scheme, two more at an advanced stage, and all others in a developmental stage. Additional funding was also provided to the Local Development Companies who deliver the scheme at a local level, as well as the creation of eight new Rural Recreation Officer (RRO) posts. This is in addition to the 13 RROs already in place.		

Measure 39 <b>Explore the potential for the development of further tourist trails, including cross-border trails and initiatives.</b>		
Lead Delivery Body: DTCAGSM		
2022 Actions		Status
39.5	Completion of Beara Breifne Way Trail Audit SEA.	Delayed
<b>Update:</b> This audit is currently underway.		

Measure 41 <b>Implement a new National Heritage Plan, Heritage Ireland 2030, to identify priority actions in the heritage area.</b>		
Lead Delivery Body: DHLGH		
2022 Actions		Status
41.1	Publication of Heritage Ireland 2030.	Complete

**Update:** Heritage Ireland 2030 launched in February 2022. Work is now ongoing in assessing progress in delivery of actions and objectives and establishment of Implementation Structures ahead of Heritage Ireland Forum to take place in October 2022.

**Measure 42** Identify opportunities for the Creative Industries in Ireland and maximise their potential to support employment in rural areas through the development of a roadmap to support the sector.

**Lead Delivery Body:** DTCAGSM

**2022 Actions**

**Status**

42.1	Appoint an artist in residence for the gteic Gaeltacht digital hub network.	Complete
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**Update:** Donegal musician Mairéad Ní Mhaonaigh has become Ireland's first ever digital hub Artist in Residence. Since her appointment, she has run information sessions as Gaeilge in gteic@Gaoth Dobhair on her personal journey in the music world and on the history of traditional music in Northwest Donegal. Mairéad has been a focal point at several major events in the gteic@Gaoth Dobhair hub where she has highlighted the importance of traditional music to the Gaeltacht region and to the Gaeltacht community.

# Revitalising Rural Towns and Villages

<b>Measure 46</b> Deliver a range of strategic investment programmes over the lifetime of this policy that meet the needs of differentiated rural areas, including through the €1 billion Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, and an enhanced Town and Village Renewal Scheme.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DRCD		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
46.3	Enhanced Grant Aid of up to €500,000 available for projects under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme to contribute to key targets and outcomes in Our Rural Future.	Ongoing
<p><b>Update:</b> TVRS 2022 was launched in May with an increased budget of €17 million, up €2 million on 2021. There were also two new measures introduced under the scheme, the Building Acquisition Measure and the Marketing Measure. The 2022 scheme places particular emphasis on projects supporting bringing vacant and derelict buildings and sites back into use as multi-purpose spaces and enhancing town centre living. The maximum grant level remains at the increased level of €500,000 to allow projects of additional scale to be funded.</p> <p>Successful projects under the Building Acquisition Measure were announced on 11 July 2022 and announcements under the other measures will be made later in the year.</p>		

<b>Measure 47</b> Prioritise rural development programmes to focus on supporting rural towns and villages to recover from the impact of COVID-19 in the short-to-medium term.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DRCD		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
47.1	Support initiatives through Town and Village Renewal Scheme and CLÁR Programme to support rural towns and villages.	Ongoing
<p><b>Update:</b> CLÁR 2022 was launched in February last with an increased budget of €7 million, up €1.5 million on last year. The measures being funded under CLÁR 2022 are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Measure 1: Developing Community Facilities and Amenities</li> <li>• Measure 2: Mobility, Cancer Care and Community First Responders Transport</li> <li>• Measure 3: 'Our Islands'</li> </ul> <p>32 projects were approved under Measure 2 valued at over €1.6 million and 11 projects under Measure 3 valued at over €400,000. Applications under Measure 1 are currently being assessed and successful applications will be announced in the coming months.</p>		

TVRS 2022 was launched in May last with an increased budget of €17 million, up €2 million on 2021. Successful projects under the new Building Acquisition Measure were announced on 11 July 2022 and announcements under the other measures will be made later in the year.

47.4	Commence implementation of An Cheathrú Rua Action Plan, supporting economic renewal of Ireland's largest Gaeltacht village. (DTCAGSM)	Complete
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**Update:** Commencement of the plan has begun, with the establishment of an advisory committee. Actions from the plan are being implemented, along with an identification process of the most impactful projects and potential funding sources.

#### **Measure 48 Provide funding to support the upgrade and enhancement of shopfronts and street facades in towns and villages.**

**Lead Delivery Body:** DRCD, DHLGH

2022 Actions		Status
48.1	Funding will again be provided to support shopfront and streetscape enhancement improvements through a Streetscape Enhancement Measure under TVRS 2022.	Complete

**Update:** The Streetscape Enhancement Measure opened in June 2022. Local Authorities have submitted the proposed towns under the measure and these are currently under consideration.

#### **Measure 51 Develop and deliver a collaborative Town Centre First approach to put town centres at the heart of decision-making where appropriate.**

**Lead Delivery Body:** DHLGH, DRCD

2022 Actions		Status
51.2	Establishment of a National Town Centre First office to drive policy delivery and implementation of the TCF actions, and to co-ordinate stakeholder engagement at a national level.	Complete

**Update:** A Town Centre First (TCF) National Office has been established within the Local Government Management Agency to drive implementation of the policy across the country. This Office will organise best practice exchanges, conduct research, and provide toolkits and other resources to aid the development of TCF. A National TCF co-ordinator, who will lead this Office, has now been appointed. The Office will coordinate the work of new dedicated



Town Regeneration Officers (TROs) to be established across the Local Authority system in 2022, with recruitment processes for these posts underway.

**Measure 54** Examine the feasibility of introducing ‘meanwhile use’ legislation so that empty buildings and shopfronts on main streets can be brought back into compatible use on a short-term, temporary basis as pop up shops, street markets, exhibitions spaces and other purposes in accordance with Town Centre First policies.

**Lead Delivery Body:** DHLGH

**2022 Actions**

**Status**

54.1 Engage with DETE to examine the scope of the measure, further to the publication of Town Centre First.

Delayed

**Update:** Under Action 16 of the Night-Time Economy (NTE) Taskforce Report, a dedicated workshop was held on 11 May 2022 to understand and determine the range and practical scope of planning and development-related actions that can support the NTE. One of the issues examined as part of this workshop was the role and scope of meanwhile use and how it might be developed in Ireland including how best it could be used to facilitate more activity in the cultural and NTE sectors. A report on the NTE workshop held is being prepared and will be submitted to the Night-Time Economy Implementation Group for consideration and action.

**Measure 55** As part of the Town Centre First approach, provide seed capital to local authorities to provide serviced sites at cost in towns and villages, to allow individuals and families to build homes in rural centres.

**Lead Delivery Body:** DHLGH

**2022 Actions**

**Status**

55.1 Launch the Croí Cónaithe (Towns) Fund on a pilot basis to assist the provision of sites for self-builders and to bring vacant and derelict properties into residential use. The initiative will be delivered by local authorities to support homeownership by making available serviced sites for housing at a reduced cost to people to build their own homes and providing a grant to support the refurbishment of vacant properties where the level of vacancy/dereliction is high.

Complete

**Update:** Croí Cónaithe (Towns) is designed to attract people to build their own homes or to support the refurbishment of vacant properties, enabling people to live in small towns and villages in a sustainable way. Croí Cónaithe (Towns) will make available 2,000 sites/homes by 2025, depending on demand. The Fund, which is initially focusing on supporting refurbishment of vacant properties in regional towns and villages, launched on 14 July. It is intended that provision of funding to Local Authorities to provide serviced sites at a reduced cost for new homes in towns and villages will commence in the coming months.

<b>Measure 56</b> Engage the Approved Housing Bodies with responsibility for housing for older people to develop accommodation in town centres more suited for those with reduced mobility.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DHLGH		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
56.1	Develop a Geographic Information System (GIS) Decision Support Tool for use by the Department, Local Authorities, approved housing bodies and developers which would score available sites on their appropriateness for housing developments for older people in line with Action 2.3 and Action 5.9 set out in "Housing Options for Our Ageing Population", published in 2019.	Delayed
<b>Update:</b> This is expected to be completed by end 2022.		

<b>Measure 58</b> Encourage greater use of the Buy and Renew Scheme and the Repair and Lease Scheme to combat vacancy and dereliction.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DHLGH		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
58.1	<p>Housing for All committed to placing a renewed focus on the Repair and Leasing Scheme (RLS), as one of the delivery options in Pathway 4 – Pathway to Addressing Vacancy and Efficient Use of Existing Stock.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Funding of €12 million has been secured for this scheme for 2022; this will be targeted at bringing back into use 120 homes and to provide funding for Vacant Homes Officers in each local authority. A 20% increase in funding to a total of €60,000 is available for each local authority for Vacant Homes Officers in 2022 / 2023, contingent on the role being made full time.</li> </ul>	Ongoing
<p><b>Update:</b> In June 2022, a circular issued expanding the repair and leasing scheme on a pilot basis. This expansion removes the requirement that a property owner be unable to fund, or to access funding, to carry out the necessary repairs, for the following categories of properties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>vacant commercial units;</li> <li>vacant units associated with a commercial unit (e.g. over the shop);</li> <li>vacant institutional buildings;</li> <li>unfinished developments which have been vacant for a significant period of time.</li> </ul>		

<b>Measure 60</b> <b>Review and extend the regulations which exempt certain vacant commercial premises, such as “over the shop” type spaces, from requiring planning permission for change of use for residential purposes in accordance with housing activation and Town Centre First policies.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DHLGH		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
60.1	The planning regulations, introduced by SI 30 of 2018, which exempted certain vacant commercial premises, including vacant areas above ground floor commercial premises, from requiring planning permission to change to residential are extended until 2025. The extension of the 2018 legislation, which was introduced by the Planning and Development Act (Exempted Development) Regulations 2022 (S.I. No. 75 of 2022), provides an immediate and seamless continuance of the previous exemption regulations. In addition, the scope of the exemption was also extended to include an extra class of use, that of public houses.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> New regulations entitled the Planning and Development Act (Exempted Development) Regulations 2022 (S.I. No. 75 of 2022) were signed into law on 21 February 2022.		

<b>Measure 63</b> <b>Examine the establishment of a Community Ownership Fund to help community groups and social enterprises buy or take over local community assets at risk of being lost, to run as community-owned businesses.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DRCD		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
63.1	Through an enhanced Town and Village Renewal Scheme, support the purchase of flagship buildings such as former banks so that these can be converted for community use and public good.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> The new Building Acquisition Measure was introduced under TVRS 2022, which allows up to €400,000 per Local Authority to purchase up to two buildings for use as multi-purpose community spaces. €7.5 million was approved on 11 July for the purchase of 36 properties.		

<b>Measure 64</b> Invest in infrastructure, including water and wastewater infrastructure, to support the development of rural towns and villages.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DHLGH		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
64.1	Finalise proposals to support the waste water collection and treatment needs of villages/settlements that do not have access to these public waste water services.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> Proposals were finalised and approved in Q2 2022 for a new fund under the Multi-Annual Rural Water Programme 2021-2025 to support the Waste Water Collection and Treatment needs for villages and settlements without access to Public Waste Water Services.		
64.2	Commence roll-out of new €50million scheme to improve wastewater infrastructure in rural towns and villages.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> The new funding measure was launched in Q2 2022 with the publication of the Framework document and it is now open to all Local Authorities to submit applications for funding.		

<b>Measure 65</b> Support the take-up of Irish Water's Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme 2020-2024, which will provide water and waste water growth capacity in smaller settlements that would otherwise not be provided for in Irish Water's capital investment plan.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DHLGH		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
65.2	Progress the list of 36 waste water treatment projects announced by Irish Water in September 2021 through Preliminary Business Case stage to Final Business Case stage (detailed design and tender).	Ongoing
<b>Update:</b> At present, 14 of the 36 WWTP projects announced have moved into Stage 2: Preliminary Business Case. It is forecast that 30 of the 36 projects announced will have moved into Stage 2: Preliminary Business Case by the end of 2022.		

<b>Measure 66</b> <b>Review the situation in relation to water services for towns and villages that are not currently on the Irish Water network.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DHLGH		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
66.1	Prepare report on waste water requirements in villages and similar settlements that do not have public waste water infrastructure.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> Report was finalised in Q2 2022.		

<b>Measure 67</b> <b>Bring forward proposals for the development of a Policy on the Night Time Economy which will support the revitalisation of our rural towns, as well as our larger urban centres and cities, in the post-COVID recovery.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DTCAGSM		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
67.1	Establish an Implementation Body which will oversee the progress of the 36 actions contained within the Report of the Night-Time Economy Taskforce which supports the development of a vibrant, diverse and inclusive Night-Time Economy and supports the revitalisation of rural towns and cities.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> Implementation Body established.		

# Enhancing Participation, Leadership and Resilience in Rural Communities

<b>Measure 70</b> <b>Implement the National Volunteering Strategy 2021-2025, which will support both volunteers and community-based organisations in rural areas and nationwide</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DRCD		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
70.1	Publication of Annual Update 2021 on the delivery and progress of actions under the National Volunteering Strategy.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> The National Volunteering Strategy Annual Update 2021 has been published on the <a href="#">DRCD website</a> .		

<b>Measure 76</b> <b>Develop a single information portal to provide a funding roadmap on the range of programmes and schemes available across Government for rural and community development.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DRCD		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
76.1	Preparation, by Pobal, of a scoping paper on the development of a central grantee database for the community and voluntary sector. This database has potential to be scaled up for use by all relevant programmes and schemes available across Government for rural and community development.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> A scoping paper exploring options for the development of a centralised grantee database has been completed by Pobal and currently is under consideration.		

<b>Measure 81</b> <b>Provide investment for multi-purpose spaces in the community (e.g. community centres, libraries, and sports clubs) for a variety of activities, including leisure, community, cultural and services provision.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DRCD		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
81.4	Support the development of sporting facilities through the Sports Capital and Equipment Programme. (DTCAGSM)	Ongoing

**Update:** In February 2022, €144m was provisionally allocated nationwide to Local Authorities, sports clubs, schools and community organisations under the Sports Capital and Equipment Programme. Following the appeals procedure, in May 2022, a further €6m was allocated bringing the total provisional allocation to a record €150m. Of this, €129.3m of the total funding was allocated to projects outside Dublin. These grants will provide new and improved sports facilities in local communities right across the country.

81.7	Issue a new call for the provision of the My Open Library Service in a number of public libraries during 2022.	Complete
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**Update:** In July 2022, €3.1 million was announced to support the My Open Library initiative in 46 public library branches across the country. Of this, €2.2 million will be provided to roll out the programme in a further 17 branches, with the remaining €900,000 invested in enhancing equipment in 29 existing My Open Libraries.

**Measure 82** Further enhance the Public Participation Network and Local Community Development Committee structures to ensure that local communities are fully involved in, and contribute to, decisions affecting their local areas.

**Lead Delivery Body:** DRCD

2022 Actions		Status
82.2	Complete structural review of Public Participation Networks.	Complete

**Update:** The PPN structural review has been completed. The review report has been published on the [DRCD website](#).

**Measure 83** Work in consultation with local community and voluntary groups and with local decision-making structures to help welcome and integrate newcomers to rural towns and villages and to support cohesion more broadly.

**Lead Delivery Body:** DCEDIY

2022 Actions		Status
83.1	Comhairle na nÓg across the 31 Local Authorities are available for consultation on welcoming and integrating young newcomers to rural towns and villages and on supporting cohesion. Individual Comhairlí at local levels have developed specific actions on a voluntary basis in relation to welcoming migrants and other groups.  Under the Comhairle na nÓg Five Year Development Plan all local Comhairlí have made commitments to include seldom-heard, minority and migrant young people in their Comhairle and in Comhairle na nÓg activities.	Ongoing

**Update:** DCEDIY has entered into contract with Involve CLG for the provision of a project to support the participation of young Travellers in Youth Participation Structures. The Comhairle na nÓg Five Year Development Plan includes key actions for the extension of membership and participation of Comhairle to seldom-heard groups, including young Travellers. The project will support the development of pathways by local Comhairlí.

**Measure 84      Implement Culture and Creative Strategies in each Local Authority area, including “Culture Days”, to showcase local cultural heritage.**

**Lead Delivery Body:** DTCAGSM

**2022 Actions**

**Status**

84.1	The Culture and Creativity Strategies in all 31 Local Authorities are currently being funded and implemented to support wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development of the creative sector.	Ongoing
84.2	Individual bilateral meetings between the Creative Ireland Programme and Culture and Creativity Teams in the 31 local authorities in relation to strategic direction of the Creative Ireland Programme 2023-2027.	Delayed

**Update:** Between March and May 2022, 25 bilateral meetings took place – 23 in person and two online. The remaining meetings will take place in Q3.

84.3	Hold Cruinniú na nÓg, the national day of creativity for children and young people led by the Creative Ireland Programme, in partnership with 31 local authorities.	Complete
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**Update:** Cruinniú na nÓg took place on 11 June, with almost 700 events taking place nationwide.

84.4	Support Údarás na Gaeltachta’s arts and culture subsidiary, Ealaín na Gaeltachta, in commencing the design of its new five-year strategy.	Complete
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**Update:** Work has commenced on developing Ealaín na Gaeltachta’s new five-year strategy. With support from Údarás na Gaeltachta and An Chomhairle Ealaíon, an independent consultant has been appointed to develop the strategy and engage with all relevant stakeholders. A public consultation process is close to completion, and it is envisaged that the strategy will be published in the early autumn.



# Enhancing Public Services in Rural Areas

<b>Measure 89</b> Increase the residential occupancy of rural towns and villages while enabling the Irish countryside to continue to be a lived-in landscape by adopting a balanced approach to planning, in line with relevant national planning policy and guidelines, while avoiding unsustainable ribbon and over-spill development from urban areas.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DHLGH		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
89.1	Action #26 of the Town Centre First Policy provides for the development of the Croí Cónaithe (Towns) scheme to deliver serviced sites and adaptive re-use grants to encourage new housing within towns. This scheme will be progressed through a call for proposals to the local authorities.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> See Measure 55.1.		

<b>Measure 91a</b> Provide improved rural public transport services and pilot new transport initiatives for people of all ages and abilities living in rural areas, through: a) Developing and implementing a Sustainable Rural Mobility Plan to ensure all settlements over a certain size in terms of population have a service connecting them to the national public transport system.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> D/Transport, National Transport Authority		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
91a.2	D/Transport will support the NTA's implementation of the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan to increase public transport connectivity outside major cities and towns in rural Ireland  In 2022, the NTA will issue a report on public consultations commenced in 2021 on the Plan, and will finalise proposals to roll out a network of new and improved services planned on a phased basis from 2022 to 2025.	Ongoing
<b>Update:</b> The Connecting Ireland consultation process wrapped up in December 2021, and the NTA consultation report was published on 3 May 2022. It is available online on the <a href="#">NTA's website</a> . On 19 July 2022, the NTA announced the Connecting Ireland Programme – Phase 1 2022 Implementation Plan. It is also available on the <a href="#">NTA's website</a> and contains details on individual services. See also update under Measure 153.		

91a.3	Additional funding has been allocated for the starting of New Town Services in key rural towns across Ireland. Starting with Carlow Town, the NTA will finalise plans and run tender competitions for bus services.	Delayed
<b>Update:</b> The NTA has gone to tender in respect of the Carlow Town service. Tendering process underway currently.		
<b>Measure 91c</b> <b>c) Developing a subsidised Local Area Hackney Scheme in designated areas of rural Ireland which are too small or remote to support a full- time taxi or hackney service.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> D/Transport, National Transport Authority		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
91c.1	The Advisory Committee on Subsidised Public Service Vehicles (SPSVs) will complete drafting its advices to NTA and the Minister, on foot of presentations provided by NTA on rural services nationally and internationally.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> D/Transport and the NTA have received advice from the Advisory Committee, this is currently being considered.		
<b>Measure 91d</b> <b>d) Developing and trialling a grant-aided Community Transport Service Scheme through Local Link to support otherwise unsustainable community services.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> D/Transport, National Transport Authority		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
91d.2	Complete review to consider the expansion of the Community Transport Scheme beyond the car sharing website and voluntary car schemes that currently exist and share findings.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> The pilot in five locations was extended from end 2020 to end 2021 as it primarily operated as a 'collect and deliver' service for more vulnerable communities during COVID. In June 2022, D/Transport approved the NTA's proposal to expand the Scheme to other locations.		

<b>Measure 92</b> <b>Build on the work already undertaken to ensure that public transport services in rural and regional areas are accessible to persons with disabilities.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> D/Transport, National Transport Authority		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
92.4	Irish Rail is rolling out Customer Service Officers (CSOs) on all Intercity routes to assist passengers, towards a target of 120 Customer Service Agents. This will eliminate the advance notice requirement on such services.	Ongoing
<b>Update:</b> Some 97 out of a total of 120 Customer Service Agents have been redeployed or hired to be on the Intercity routes to assist passengers. Irish Rail recently undertook a recruitment campaign to hire the remainder of the staff needed. This will allow a representative from Irish Rail to be on every intercity train to assist passengers.		

<b>Measure 93</b> <b>Work with An Post to identify the scope to channel additional services through the post office network.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DECC		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
93.1	Subgroup on offline service to report to Government on deliberations regarding one-stop-shop approach for Government services.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> The Report of the Interdepartmental Subgroup on the Provision of Offline Government Services was noted by Government on 31 May 2022. The report is currently being translated, prior to its publication.		

<b>Measure 94</b> <b>Explore the potential to develop a pilot scheme to support the use of rural pubs as community spaces and hubs for local services.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DRCD		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
94.2	A pilot programme will be launched involving five rural public houses, driven by local community groups and co-ordinated by the	Complete

	Vintners Federation of Ireland, to tackle rural isolation and focus on the use of pubs as community spaces.	
<b>Update:</b> The Vintners Federation of Ireland (VFI) were approved €50,000 for the pilot project 'Pubs as Community Hubs' under the CLÁR 2021 Innovation Measure. The locations of the four pilots are Bawnboy, Co. Cavan; Moyasta, Co. Clare; Kilclooney, Portnoo, Co. Donegal; and Drinagh, Co. Cork.		

<b>Measure 96</b>		<b>Establish 96 new Community Healthcare Networks throughout the country to re-shape how community healthcare services will be delivered and support people to live more independently in their community.</b>
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> D/Health		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
96.1	Continue the roll-out of 96 Community Health Networks across the country to support the local delivery of integrated care at the appropriate level of complexity.	Ongoing
<b>Update:</b> As of the end of May 2022, 81 of the 96 Community Health Networks were operational. Operational Networks are defined as those with a Network Manager, ADPHN in place, GP Lead at an advanced stage of recruitment & 25% of frontline line staff in place.		

<b>Measure 97</b>		
Through the Healthy Ireland programme, support improved health and wellbeing of rural communities in collaboration with Local Authorities and local stakeholders and partners.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> D/Health		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
97.1	Deliver the Sláintecare Healthy Communities programme, which empowers local authorities to identify local needs and align their policies to meet the Healthy Ireland objectives for the local population.	Ongoing
<b>Update:</b> The Sláintecare Healthy Communities (SHC) programme was officially launched in October 2021. The relevant Local Authorities have recruited Local Development Officers (LDOs), in each of the SHC 19 communities. These LDOs report to a National Development Officer, who is also in situ. The programme has provided funding to each community for a number of initiatives.		

97.2	Strengthen the Healthy Cities and Counties infrastructure to deliver on the Healthy Cities and Counties goals.	Ongoing
<b>Update:</b> The infrastructure of the Healthy Cities and Counties programme has evolved under Round 4 of the Healthy Ireland Fund. To ensure consistency and for the purposes of closer aligning the work of the Healthy Ireland Coordinators with the core work of the Local Authorities, a Healthy Ireland Coordinator is being recruited at Grade VI in each of the Local Authorities. Where appropriate these will work with the SHC LDOs and input into the development of the LECP in each Local Authority.		
97.3	Round 4 of the Healthy Ireland Fund will, subject to the ongoing budgetary process, commence on 1 June 2022 and is expected to run until 31 December 2025. This will include funding for each local authority to recruit a new Healthy City/County Coordinator.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> Round 4 of the Healthy Ireland Fund commenced in June 2022 as scheduled. Further details in update 97.2 above.		

<b>Measure 98</b> <b>Introduce a new Policing and Community Safety Bill to redefine the functions of An Garda Síochána to include community safety.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> D/Justice		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
98.2	Complete drafting of the Bill for submission to Government for approval to publish. This is subject to the conclusion of pre legislative scrutiny by the Joint Justice Committee.	Delayed
<b>Update:</b> Drafting of the Bill is well advanced. The pre-legislative scrutiny report of the Joint Justice Committee was published on 1 June 2022. Its recommendations are under consideration to identify what further refinements might be required in the course of drafting to ensure that the Bill meets its objectives. It is anticipated that the Bill will be finalised in the autumn for submission to Government.		

<b>Measure 100</b> <b>Review and enhance the effectiveness and availability of community-based alert and property-marking schemes in partnership with rural stakeholders.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> D/Justice		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
100.2	Draft report on the retail alert scheme to be considered by the Rural Safety Forum.	Delayed

**Update:** An Garda Síochána legal and data protection units are considering how the retail sector could be supported in this, having regard to the different legal and constitutional positions in this jurisdiction.

<b>Measure 101</b> Provide greater clarity for Local Authorities and local communities, through a revised legislative framework, on how local CCTV schemes can be established while enhancing community safety and data protection safeguards.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> D/Justice		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
101.2	Publication of the Garda Síochána (Digital Recording) Bill 2022 which will provide a new legislative basis for Community CCTV schemes.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> Bill approved by Government in June 2022 and will be published over the summer.		

<b>Measure 103</b> Ensure that the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) is funded into the future.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DRCD		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
103.1	The Local Improvement Scheme will fund the upgrade and maintenance of non-public rural roads and laneways. The 2022 Scheme will see €11 million allocated to local authorities.	Ongoing
<b>Update:</b> 2022 Scheme launched on 5 April, with an €11 million allocation. Letters of Offer now issued to 24 Local Authorities and improvement works are ongoing. Should savings emerge, consideration will be given to an additional allocation under the Scheme for 2022.		

<b>Measure 105</b> Approve and implement an Irish language plan for each of the 26 Gaeltacht districts to strengthen Irish language usage by individuals, community, and businesses in these areas.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DTCAGSM		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
105.1	Approve the final language plan relating to a Gaeltacht Language Planning Area under the language planning process.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> The final Gaeltacht language plan was approved for the Aran Islands in April 2022.		

# Transitioning to a Climate Neutral Society

<b>Measure 107</b> Enact and implement the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Bill and set five-year carbon budgets to contribute to meeting Ireland's target of net zero emissions by 2050.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DECC		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
107.3	Adopt the first three five-year carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> Carbon Budgets received Cabinet approval in February 2022 and approval in both Houses of the Oireachtas in April 2022, thus coming into effect. Sectoral Emissions Ceilings were approved by Government on 28 July 2022.		

<b>Measure 109</b> Develop new models of engagement with individuals, sectors, and regions on a structured dialogue basis so that the whole of society can contribute to the climate action process.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DECC		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
109.1	Hold a national Stakeholder Engagement Forum to provide feedback from annual Climate Action Plan consultation, and discuss and showcase local engagement opportunities which will lead to mobilisation.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> The National Climate Stakeholder Forum (NCSF) has been established under the National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA). The first meeting was a one-day deliberative workshop held on 22 March 2022. It was introduced by the Minister and brought policymakers and key stakeholders together to explore practical means of accelerating on our progress in the Climate Action Plan 2021. A second meeting was scheduled for July 2022.		
109.2	Conduct a national baseline study on Irish behaviours and attitudes around climate change awareness, engagement and activation of public.  The Climate in the Irish Minds Study was published in December 2021 followed by sectoral and regional reports which will be published in Q2 2022.	Delayed

**Update:** The sectoral and regional reports will now be published in Q4 2022.

109.3	Establish an Interdepartmental Working Group to explore critical barriers and/or enablers that will support a new National Dialogue on Climate Action engagement model and annual Climate Action Plan consultations.	Complete
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**Update:** The Interdepartmental Working Group has been established to help guide the design and implementation of key NDCA activities. It has met twice in 2022 to date.

**Measure 110** Enable community energy to play a role in reaching the target of generating at least 70% of electricity through renewables by 2030, through supports such as a Community Benefit fund and a community category within the Renewable Electricity Support Scheme.

**Lead Delivery Body:** DECC

**2022 Actions**

**Status**

110.4	Rollout of trusted advisory service to support the development of community electricity projects. The service will provide expert financial, grid and planning advice, and financial enabling grant supports.	Complete
110.5	Rollout of enabling grants to support the development of community electricity projects.	Complete

**Update:** Trusted advisory service and enabling grants were launched at an SEAI event on 21 April 2022.

**Measure 111** Prioritise the development of microgeneration of renewable electricity, allowing people sell excess power back to the grid, through the establishment of a Microgeneration Support Scheme.

**Lead Delivery Body:** DECC

**2022 Actions**

**Status**

111.1	Launch of Microgeneration Support Scheme.	Complete
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**Update:** The Microgeneration Support Scheme (MSS) grant took over from SEAI SVP grants in February 2022. The MSS final scheme design is being prepared for publication.

111.2	SEAI to extend the Microgeneration Support Scheme to the non-domestic sector, framework for payment of tariff for electricity export to the grid.	Delayed
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**Update:** The MSS will be extended to non-domestic sector by end Q3 2022.

111.5	Framework for payment of tariff for electricity export to the grid	Complete
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**Update:** The Commission for Regulation of Utilities published interim Clean Export Guarantee decision paper. A number of suppliers have published CEG rates, ESB Networks interim micro-gen market settlement solution went live on 28 June 2022 and the first payments under the scheme are due to be complete by 31 August.

**Measure 113 Launch further calls for projects to be supported from the Climate Action Fund.**

**Lead Delivery Body:** DECC

**2022 Actions**

**Status**

113.2	Climate Action Fund Community Climate Action Programme – Strand 2: Projects arising from open call run by Pobal to be approved and commence.	Delayed
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**Update:** Under Strand 2 of the CCAP €5 million has been allocated for an open call for projects and initiatives that facilitate community climate action through education, capacity building and learning by doing, which is being run by Pobal on behalf of DECC. A total of 72 applications were received and have been assessed. The successful projects are expected to be announced shortly.

**Measure 114b Continue to develop Ireland's approach to a Just Transition away from fossil fuels, including by:**

**b) Commissioning additional research on Just Transition to consider future priorities and spatial and sectoral impacts.**

**Lead Delivery Body:** DECC

**2022 Actions**

**Status**

114b.2	Establish a Just Transition Working Group to coordinate the provision of strategic advice and research to the proposed Just Transition Commission.	Delayed
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**Update:** The Government has committed, in the Climate Action Plan 2021, to establishing a statutory Just Transition Commission. The 2021 Plan sets out that the purpose of the Commission will be to provide strategic advice to Government, integrating its role with existing governance and engagement structures, on how Government policy can further a just transition. DECC is currently progressing the development of proposals on the mandate of the Commission in advance of preparing the general scheme of legislation.

**Measure 114c c) Supporting projects under the National Just Transition Fund.**

**Lead Delivery Body:** DECC

**2022 Actions**

**Status**

114c.2	Issue funding agreements to successful projects and finalise arrangements for delegated management of the National Just Transition Fund.	Complete
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**Update:** Funding agreements have been agreed with all successful projects under the National Just Transition Fund 2020. The Fund is providing €21.5 million in grant funding to 56 projects. These projects will bring €14.5 million in additional funding to the region and support an estimated 174 direct and 987 indirect jobs, as reported by the grantees. Details of all projects supported by the National Just Transition Fund can be found [online](#). Discussions are ongoing regarding the transfer of management of the National Just Transition Fund to Offaly County Council.

**Measure 115 Retrofit 500,000 homes and install 400,000 heat pumps across the country up to 2030, contributing to employment opportunities in rural areas.**

**Lead Delivery Body:** DECC

**2022 Actions**

**Status**

115.1	Following further evaluation of a potential new Community Activation Scheme, a targeted and more streamlined strand of the Communities Grant Scheme focused on smaller projects for retrofitting homes will be instead be introduced.	Delayed
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**Update:** The scheme is being developed and not due to commence until later in 2022.

115.3	Launch a new SEAI National Home Energy Upgrade Scheme (One Stop Shop Service) to drive the delivery of B2 retrofits with heat pumps and facilitate year-round working.	Complete
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**Update:** The new National Home Energy Upgrade Scheme was launched in February this year. The scheme introduces a customer-centric, year-round way to undertake home energy upgrades with One Stop Shops providing an end-to-end service for homeowners to drive the delivery of our retrofit targets.

115.4	Introduce a system of registration for retrofit One-Stop Shops.	Complete
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**Update:** The SEAI registration portal is open for companies to apply to be a One-Stop Shop. To date, nine One-Stop Shops are registered, it is anticipated that 20 One-Stop Shops will be registered by the end of 2022.

<b>Bring investment and job opportunities to coastal communities by developing the offshore renewable energy sector, including through:</b>		
<b>Measure 116a</b>		
<b>a) The finalisation of the Marine Planning and Development Management Bill.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DHLGH		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
116a.2	Formation of secondary legislation working group with Marine Legislation unit, DECC and MARA establishment team.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> Secondary legislation working group set up and continues to meet on an ongoing basis to discuss and prioritise relevant secondary legislation.		
<b>Measure 116b</b>		
<b>b) The development of a new consenting regime for offshore energy.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DECC		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
116b.1	Design of Maritime Area Consent processes and guidance documents. MAC applications for first batch of offshore renewable energy projects will be submitted for assessment.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> The Maritime Area Consent (MAC) assessment regime for Ireland's first offshore energy projects was designed and implemented in 2022. The finalisation of MAC assessment Guidance was informed by a public consultation, with the MAC application window for Phase One projects opening in Q2 2022. MAC assessment Guidance is available on <a href="https://gov.ie">gov.ie</a> .		
116b.2	Consultation on the Maritime Area Consent Assessment assessment criteria for first Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) projects.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> A Public Consultation on the Maritime Area Consent assessment criteria for the first Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) projects was held in Q1 2022. Submissions received helped inform the finalisation of the MAC assessment regime for Phase One projects.		
116b.3	Opening of the Maritime Area Consent Application Window for first ORE projects.	Complete

**Update:** The Maritime Area Consent application window for Phase One ORE projects opened on 25 April for an eight-week period, closing on 22 June 2022.

**Measure 116c c) The development of an offshore transmission grid.**

**Lead Delivery Body:** DECC

**2022 Actions**

**Status**

116c.2	Publication of offshore grid regulatory framework by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities.	Delayed
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**Update:** Progress in this area includes a CRU public consultation on Phase 1 Grid Connection Assessment which completed in Q4 2021, with a decision published in February 2022. In June 2022 CRU launched a public consultation on proposals for offshore grid connection, the consultation will run until July with a decision expected in September.

**Measure 116d d) Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme auctions.**

**Lead Delivery Body:** DECC

**2022 Actions**

**Status**

116d.2	Government approval of final Terms and Conditions for the first Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme.	Delayed
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**Update:** A public consultation on the Terms and Conditions of the first offshore RESS auction, ORESS 1, was hosted by DECC in late 2021. Following receipt of over 150 submissions and a series of informal follow-up consultations, a formal response to the consultation was published by DECC in May 2022. In June 2022, a provisional ORESS 1 auction calendar was also published. The ORESS Project Board decided to continue to develop the ORESS 1 Terms and Conditions further over summer 2022, including consideration of several measures with the intention of further de-risking the auction process and to ultimately reduce the cost borne by electricity consumers. Final ORESS 1 Terms and Conditions are therefore scheduled to be submitted for Government approval and publication in Q3 2022.

**Measure 117a**

**Rehabilitate peatlands to contribute to reduced carbon emissions, carbon sequestration and enhanced biodiversity, including through:**

**a) Funding investment of €108 million to repurpose 80,000 acres of bog in the Midlands as part of a major peatlands restoration plan.**

**Lead Delivery Body:** DECC

**2022 Actions**

**Status**

117a.3	Complete six monthly report on progress.	Delayed
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**Update:** This project is funded through Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan under the EU's Recovery and Resilience Facility. The Commission has changed the reporting requirements for the Operational Arrangements for this project. As a result the report has been delayed and will now be issued as an annual report. A draft version of the report is currently being agreed with stakeholders and will be published in September.

**Measure 118**      **Develop a national policy on coastal erosion and flooding and maintain a multi-annual investment programme in flood relief measures to protect impacted communities.**

**Lead Delivery Body:** OPW, DHLGH

**2022 Actions**

**Status**

118.5	The Interdepartmental Group on Coastal Change Management Strategy will finalise and submit its report to Government with options and recommendations for managing the projected impact of coastal change to our coastal communities, economies, heritage, culture and environment.
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Delayed

**Update:** The Technical Working Group met in May 2022 to consider the range of data, information and research available across State organisations and that which is needed in the short, medium and longer terms to monitor the projected impact of coastal change associated with sea level rise. The Inter-Departmental Group Steering Group last met in June 2022 and has now advanced the drafting and finalising of its report. This Report will be finalised in the coming months and will then be presented to Government for consideration.

**Measure 119**      **Carry out a comprehensive review of Public Participation Networks and Local Economic and Community Plans, to ensure that they are fit for purpose for climate action.**

**Lead Delivery Body:** DRCD

**2022 Actions**

**Status**

119.2	The review of PPN structures (Action 82.2) will ensure that PPNs provide communities with a voice regarding climate action policy.
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Complete

**Update:** The PPN structural review has been completed. In accordance with its terms of reference, the review process considered the 'suitability of PPNs for contributing to climate action and community development', in line with the commitment in the Programme for Government. The review report has been published on the [DRCD website](#).

119.3	DRCD, in collaboration with DHLGH, will continue to support the development of the LECs through a series of events designed to equip all LCDCs with the necessary knowledge and skills needed to develop and implement their LEC. These events will include full consideration of emerging needs including climate action.
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Complete

**Update:** Following the publication of the Guidelines for the development of the Local Economic and Community Plans in November last, DRCD, in collaboration with DHLGH have over the past number of months run a series of webinars to support LCDCs and local authority staff in the development of the new LECPs.

Four webinars took place on the following themes:

- Getting Started
- Economic/Local Enterprise
- Climate Action
- Community, social and cultural aspects of the LECP

These sessions were intended to equip the LCDCs with the required knowledge and skills for the preparation of the LECPs, and have been designed and delivered in partnership with other relevant departments/stakeholders. The presentations and recordings from each webinar are available on the DRCD website and provide a valuable resource to LCDCs and local authority staff.

<b>Measure 120</b> Consider the needs of rural areas in the development of an Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy which will seek to ensure that charging infrastructure stays ahead of demand.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> D/Transport		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
120.1	Publish national infrastructure strategy for electric vehicles.	Delayed
<b>Update:</b> The draft strategy was published in March with a public consultation between 5-31 May. Over 14,000 responses to the online questionnaire were received and over 80 detailed written submissions from individuals and organisations. Responses and submissions received as part of the public and stakeholder consultations are being considered in the development of the final Strategy for publication, along with an Implementation Plan, in Q4 2022.		

# Supporting the Sustainability of Agriculture, the Marine and Forestry

<b>Measure 122</b> Encourage and support Local Authorities to expand the number of farmers' markets, farm shops and food emporiums, and support the formation of community-owned markets in all towns, showcasing local food produce from local farmers, growers, and food producers.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DAFM		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
122.2	Establish a cross Departmental forum to gather information with a view to developing an agreed strategy to deliver this commitment and similar commitments regarding support for local producers.	Delayed
<b>Update:</b> Planning is ongoing for the establishment of a cross-Departmental forum. DAFM is engaging with DRCD to scope potential for the involvement of Local Community Development Committees in the implementation of this measure. It is expected to have completed this action by Q4 2022.		

<b>Measure 123</b> Support farm diversification, including through the provision of the Options programme managed by Teagasc.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DAFM		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
123.2	Pilot a new approach to the Farm Business Options programme in collaboration with Roscommon LEO.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> A pilot Farm Business Options training session was held at Teagasc Roscommon in partnership with Roscommon LEO from 1 March 2022 over six weeks. The training is a modified version of the Start Your Own Business course run annually by the LEO Networks. The purpose of the training was to give individuals a good understanding of how to turn an idea into a viable business, to provide a mentor for individuals on their idea, to assist in the completion of a business plan and to introduce individuals to other agencies/parties who may be able to offer tangible assistance for their specific project.		

<b>Measure 124</b> Support research and development in areas such as agri-food, bio-based systems, smart agriculture and precision agriculture to promote and encourage innovation.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DAFM, DETE		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
124.5	DAFM will award funding to 13 additional projects that, following a meeting of the DAFM Competitive Research Committee, were placed on a 2021 Reserve list pending budget availability.	Complete
<p><b>Update:</b> Twelve Reserve List projects were funded in Q2 2022, resulting in funding of €9.6m to nine research performing organisations in Ireland. These awards continued the North/South collaboration with DAERA (Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs) in Northern Ireland committing funding to four of the projects across two research performing organisations in Northern Ireland.</p>		
124.6	DAFM will continue co-funding arrangements with other funders across both national and international initiatives.	Ongoing
<p><b>Update:</b> Three new European research area calls have been initiated in the first half of 2022 for Irish researcher participation that include a commitment by DAFM of €4m to the budgets of the Calls covering agrobiodiversity, soil management and monitoring and consumer-driven information, communication, and technology for food provenance.</p> <p>The US-Irl Ireland R&amp;D Partnership Agriculture Call launched in March 2022 to support joint research proposals between Irish, Northern Irish and US researchers in 12 research areas.</p> <p>The Ireland and New Zealand three-year pilot Research Mechanism was established in 2022, with the first Joint Research Call launched in May 2022 with a budget of €3m from DAFM for joint proposals from Irish and New Zealand researchers.</p> <p>The EU public-private partnership Circular Biobased Europe is now open for applications to support research and development for bio-based innovation and systems.</p>		

<b>Measure 125</b> Explore the potential application of Living Labs in an Irish context, establishing innovation networks to identify and pilot tailored place-based initiatives for primary production, food and bio-based systems.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DAFM		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
125.2	An Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) Coordination Group will be established.	Delayed



**Update:** The action to establish an Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) Coordination Group has been delayed until Q3 2022. The potential to apply Living Labs in an Irish context, establishing innovation networks to identify and pilot tailored place-based initiatives for primary production, food and bio-based systems is currently being explored through several funding routes including the EU co-funded Common Agricultural Policy and the EU co-funded Just Transition Fund.

**Measure 126 Implement Ag Climatise – A Roadmap towards Climate Neutrality for the agri-food sector.**

**Lead Delivery Body:** DAFM

**2022 Actions**

**Status**

126.2	Ag Climatise will be updated in 2022 to take account of the increased ambition set out in Climate Action Plan 2021.	Delayed
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**Update:** It is expected that Ag Climatise will be updated in the second half of the year. This task cannot be completed until the final sectoral emissions ceiling is established for the sector.

**Measure 128 Publish a successor forestry programme to deliver an ambitious afforestation plan, to achieve an afforestation target of 8,000 ha/year, with a particular focus on an increased farmer participation and habitat creation.**

**Lead Delivery Body:** DAFM

**2022 Actions**

**Status**

128.3	Completion of report on a study conducted by Irish Rural Link with communities and interest groups on the role of forests in communities.	Complete
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**Update:** Irish Rural Link have engaged with communities across Ireland and have presented their final report to the Minister in June 2022 to be published later this year.

128.4	Completion of report on a survey conducted by research agency Behaviour and Attitudes on attitudes to afforestation in Ireland.	Complete
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**Update:** A national public attitudes survey on afforestation was carried out by Behaviour and Attitudes, under Working Group 2 of Project Woodland. [link](#)

Measure 129 Provide ongoing support for the development of the knowledge and skills base of the agriculture and forestry sectors by the Teagasc Advisory and Education Services.		
Lead Delivery Body: DAFM		
2022 Actions		Status
129.2	<p>Teagasc Advisory Service:</p> <p>Teagasc will continue through its advisory service to provide a comprehensive advisory and environmental support service to its clients across a range of areas, roll out AETS one day environment courses, bring derogation farmers up to the new nitrates standards, run events on Signpost Farms, run discussion groups, and Options courses, and enhance its virtual services to farmers.</p>	Ongoing
129.3	<p>Teagasc Education Service will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Promote college/regional courses via open days, information events and an online campaign.</li> </ul>	Complete
<p><b>Update:</b> Teagasc Education Service promote college/regional courses across the year to reflect ongoing intake and varying start dates depending on the course. College open days ran in spring 2022 and will run again in autumn 2022. All Teagasc Education Services were showcased and promoted at the Kildalton 50 event, the National Beef Open Day 2022 and Sheep Open Day 2022. Teagasc colleges and Advisory Regions continue to engage with the public via social media promotion and information evenings. The July/August 2022 edition of Today's Farm magazine includes an eight page feature titled "The Green Cert: the benefits to students are more than financial" (<a href="#">link</a>). This feature promotes college/regional courses and features graduates from courses.</p>		

Measure 131 Support generational renewal, including young farmers and women in agriculture, through measures including the CAP, taxation measures and access to finance initiatives.		
Lead Delivery Body: DAFM		
2022 Actions		Status
131.4	<p>Provide input to policy development on generational renewal and gender equality in the CAP Strategic Plan in line with the EU Commission's approval process.</p>	Ongoing
<p><b>Update:</b> DAFM has, in conjunction with stakeholders, developed measures in the CAP Strategic Plan (CSP), to support generational renewal, including young farmers and women in agriculture. The CSP was submitted for approval to the EU Commission in December 2021</p>		

and DAFM is engaging in the approval process with a view to implementing the CSP from 1 January 2023.		
131.5	Progress actions on gender equality set out in Food Vision 2030, the new stakeholder-led strategy for the Irish agri-food sector, including a national dialogue on women in agriculture.	Ongoing
<b>Update:</b> DAFM continues to engage with stakeholders to progress the actions set out in Food Vision 2030. This includes initial planning for a national dialogue on women in agriculture.		
131.7	Monitor access to finance for the agri-food sector.	Ongoing
<b>Update:</b> DAFM works with stakeholders to ensure there is appropriate access to finance for farmers including young and women farmers.  DAFM in partnership with DETE, funds the Brexit Impact and Covid-19 Loan Schemes which are available to farmers. Available through participating banks and credit unions, both schemes provide loans to Irish businesses impacted by Brexit or COVID-19 for working capital, investment, and re-financing, with longer terms of up to six years. Loans range from €25,000 to a maximum of €1.5m are available for terms of between one and six years. Loans of up to €500,000 available unsecured.		

<b>Measure 132</b> <b>Increase awareness and outreach across the farming community of programmes and initiatives to support the safety, health and wellbeing of farmers.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DAFM		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
132.1	Support the roll out of the On Farm Ground programme, to train 800 farm advisers in relation to farmer health and wellbeing. The target for 2022 is 510.	Ongoing
<b>Update:</b> To date 222 farm advisers have been trained. Discussions with stakeholders are ongoing regarding the potential to extend the programme to train private veterinary practitioners and agri-sales advisors in relation to farmer health and wellbeing.		
132.4	Media campaign to promote uptake of the Accelerated Capital Allowances Scheme.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> Media campaign commenced in June 2022 and will continue over the summer. The campaign is targeting farmers and farmers' tax advisers/accountants.		

<b>Measure 133</b> <b>Conduct a review of the means test for Farm Assist to ensure farmers receive the appropriate level of support through this scheme.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DSP		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
133.2	Following the review of the means test disregards for Farm Assist, the Social Welfare Act 2021 extended the list of agri-environmental schemes which attract a disregard, and this measure will be implemented from June 2022.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> The Technical Review of the Farm Assist Scheme was completed in October 2021 and the report is available on the Government's website. One of the key recommendations of the report was to extend the list of agri-environmental schemes which attract a disregard under the Farm Assist scheme, and this measure was approved under Budget 2022 and implemented from June 2022.		

# Supporting the Sustainability of our Islands and Coastal Communities

<b>Measure 139</b> Explore the potential for community-based enterprise hubs on islands not under the remit of Údarás na Gaeltachta.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DRCD		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
139.1	Local development companies to explore the potential for community-based enterprise hubs as part of their annual work programmes to achieve their community support targets. Financial support has been approved for this to take place in 2022.	Delayed
<b>Update:</b> This work has begun and the work programme will be reviewed mid-term.		

<b>Measure 146</b> Continue to invest in coastal communities through the Fisheries Local Area Group (FLAG) scheme, providing support for investments by micro seafood enterprises and projects in the area of marine tourism and leisure and the wider marine sector.		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DAFM		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
146.2	Calls for expression of interest in the community-led local development under the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund 2021-2027 Operational Programme will be issued.	Delayed
<p><b>Update:</b> The new round of EU funds under the European Maritime Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF) will invest similar funds over the period 2021-2029. The Operational Programme is to be finalised in 2022. Areas of investment for the EMFAF programme will be broadly similar to the current EMFF programme in regard to CLLD.</p> <p>DAFM is also providing public aid with funding under the EU Brexit Adjustment Reserve. A range of schemes for the seafood sector and coastal communities are being implemented, with 100% funding from the EU, to mitigate the impacts of the Trade and Co-operation Agreement between the EU and the UK. As part of this a €45 million Brexit Blue Economy Enterprise Development Scheme is being implemented, offering grants of up to €200,000 to enterprises active in the blue economy, including seafood enterprises, marine tourism, marine leisure, and sport.</p>		

## Implementation of the Policy

<b>Measure 148</b> <b>Develop an effective rural proofing model to ensure the needs of rural communities are considered in the development of Government policies.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DRCD		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
148.2	Following completion of commissioned report into rural proofing, consultation with key stakeholders will take place, through the ORF Implementation Advisory Group and other engagement structures.	Delayed
<b>Update:</b> The consultants have completed their report and submitted it to DRCD. It is currently being considered to determine the next steps to develop a rural proofing model that is robust, effective and implementable and supports rural policy development. Further consultations with key stakeholders will progress from Q3 2022.		

<b>Measure 149</b> <b>Support new research into rural development priorities, including in collaboration with Higher Education Institutions and other research funders and research organisations.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DRCD		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
149.2	Establish a new postdoctoral research fellowship on rural development which will further understanding of economic and social development issues in rural areas and the needs of rural communities.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> A new postdoctoral research fellowship has been established in partnership with the National University of Ireland for a duration of two years. Applications have been received and are scheduled to be assessed by an evaluation panel in Q3, with the objective of awarding the fellowship to the successful applicant to commence for academic year 2022.		

<b>Measure 150</b> <b>Establish a Higher Education Institutions Network on rural development to ensure ongoing engagement with rural development experts over the lifetime of this policy.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DRCD		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
150.2	Support the NUI in hosting the Rural Voices Seminar series.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> NUI Galway has hosted seven Rural Voices Seminars since its inception. The series has been welcomed with good attendance via online platform and has presented a range of topics related to rural development.		

<b>Measure 151</b> <b>Enhance the sharing of information and best practice on rural development policy on a North-South basis and identify areas for further cooperation.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DRCD		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
151.1	Ongoing engagement between representatives of DRCD and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland will continue through biannual meetings of the North-South Rural Policy Forum.	Ongoing
<b>Update:</b> DRCD and DAERA representatives attended the third official, and first in-person, meeting of the North-South Rural Policy Forum on 20 May 2022 in Drumhowan, Co Monaghan.		
151.2	Hold Shared Island Dialogue event on Rural Development and Social Enterprise.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> The Shared Island Dialogue event was held, in collaboration with the Department of the Taoiseach, on 20 May 2022. The hybrid event was held with an in-person audience at Drumhowan BCP in Co Monaghan, and online attendees. It comprised two panel discussions, the first focused on the theme of 'Social Enterprise for Thriving Rural Communities' and the second on the 'Transformational Potential of Rural Hubs'. Guest speakers included sectoral experts and key stakeholders from both sides of the border.		

## New Measures for 2022

### Measure 153 Support rural communities following the arrival of citizens of Ukraine.

**Lead Delivery Body:** All Departments

#### 2022 Actions

#### Status

153.1 Implement a number of infrastructural and community initiatives to support rural communities dealing with the challenges and opportunities arising from the arrival of Ukrainian refugees.

Ongoing

#### Update:

**DHLGH:** On 31 March 2022, the Minister, together with the Minister for Rural and Community Development, wrote to the chief executives of the local authorities welcoming the establishment of Community Response Forums in every local authority area to coordinate the community-led response in the provision of assistance and support to those arriving into our communities from Ukraine.

The Community Response Forums ensure effective communication and information sharing in the coordination of public and local community and voluntary actions providing community supports to the new Ukrainian communities. To assist this process, a Community Response Forum Framework, i.e. a national template for arrangements to enable all involved at a local level to work together to support the integration of Ukrainian refugees, was developed by the two Departments with the local government sector. Along with the immediate requirement for basic services to be provided, the support also includes a strong focus on integration, education, health, support for job seekers, childcare, etc. There is ongoing engagement with local development companies under the SICAP programme to support LAs at local level in a similar way to how it operated under Covid e.g. language services, campaigns at local level for specific purposes. Good engagement is also in place with the Volunteers Centres around the country.

In recognition of the numbers arriving and the complexity of managing the situation, on 22 April, the Minister wrote again to Chief Executives of local authorities to request that a Director of Service level staff member be assigned full time, supported by a small team, to coordinate the provision of services and supports locally.

**DRCD:** On 1 June 2022, an additional €10.5 million in funding was announced to assist the community response to support people arriving from Ukraine. €5 million in funding is being provided to the Local Development Companies through the SICAP Programme, €5 million was allocated to Community Foundation Ireland (CFI) in respect of the 'Ireland for Ukraine' Fund and €500,000 is being used to support Volunteer Centres and to provide supports to volunteers. The funding will strengthen the capacity of those already working across the community and voluntary sector to improve the experience and quality of life of people arriving from Ukraine. As new arrivals begin to settle into community life in Ireland, this funding will help ensure that we continue to look after those most in need.



The Community and Voluntary Sector Ukraine Stakeholder Forum has been meeting regularly to share information and feedback from community organisations that are involved in providing supports and services at a local level, lining in with the Community Response Fora.

An initiative has been put forward to the local authority Community Response Fora to avail of underutilised community transport vehicles and to provide flexible transport services to the Ukrainian community, using the additional funding provided to pay for fuel and related costs and recruiting suitably qualified volunteer drivers.

Some additional funding has been provided to organisations funded under the Community Services Programme (CSP) to assist in providing services to the Ukrainian community (See Measure 30.3).

BCP locations are currently being used as emergency accommodation centres to support Ukrainian refugees arriving into the country. Current sites are:

- The Liam Rodgers Centre, Fingal, Co Dublin
- Ballon Community Centre, Co Carlow
- St Patrick's Accommodation Centre, Co Monaghan
- Meenreagh Hostel, Co Donegal

Persons staying at these centres can avail of the use of the WiFi connectivity while there.

**D/Transport:** On 21 April 2022 it was announced that emergency public transport services would be provided to Ukrainian refugees placed in rural locations.

A three-pronged approach includes the acceleration of elements of the new Connecting Ireland plan, with certain routes identified by the NTA in their public consultation held in Nov-Dec 2021 being prioritised and accelerated. Additional bus services will also be deployed to cater for those housed away from the existing public transport network. Such measures will provide better access to a range of amenities, employment opportunities and to onward public transport connections to larger centres.

A Community Transport Fund was also established to support occasional social travel requests. This is operated by the TFI Local Link offices to enable Ukrainians to join in the many activities that are available in our towns, in particular, activities focused on youth, integration, culture, and education.

**DETE:** IDA Ireland has shared an inventory of its suitable land holdings and available buildings to the Department and remains in conversation with DETE re same. The majority of IDA land holdings are active Business and Technology Park settings.

LEOs are actively engaged either individually or through community interaction assisting Ukrainian refugees in exploring roads to start your own business or seeking employment in local communities.

**DSP:** Since the middle of April, Intreo Employment Services have been arranging employment support events across the country specifically for Ukrainians to gather information on their education and skills and to provide information on vacancies and jobs as well as income and training supports to which they may be entitled. To date, Intreo Employment Services staff have engaged with over 12,000 Ukrainians at these events.

**D/Education:** The Regional Education And Language Teams (REALT) are co-ordinating the provision of education services for Ukrainian families and their children by assisting in finding school places and supporting schools to meet the needs of these children as they emerge, in particular the area of English language supports.

In addition, school transport officials are liaising with the REALT teams and Bus Éireann to ensure all those who require transport have access. These teams are ensuring that clear, accessible information flows are in place between schools, local education support services and national support structures in relation to arrivals from Ukraine.

**Teagasc:** Teagasc has responded proactively and demonstrated a strong commitment to and support of government policy relating to the housing of refugees from Ukraine. Teagasc has invested in the infrastructure of its colleges in Ballyhaise, Co. Cavan and Clonakilty, Co. Cork, to bring facilities up to an acceptable standard to cater for up to 100 refugees at present.

#### **DTCAGSM:**

Creative Ireland: The Creative Ireland programme supports events which are free of charge for children and young people and which will facilitate the full participation of young Ukrainians in a variety of ways, some of which formed part of the Cruinniú na nÓg programme of activities on 11 June. Young Ukrainians arriving in Ireland are benefiting from free artistic supports and creative activities across the country, including free craft classes, storytelling, drama, art, Lego play groups, doll making lessons and circus workshops. Other events include 'The Shared Music Sessions' with Festival in a Van. These events will be rolled out from September 2022 in 10 counties and go beyond the idea of "performing for" and will be shared sessions. Ukrainian musicians will be invited to take the stage in the Van and perform, either as solo artists, or in sets with Irish musicians.

Sport Ireland: Sport Ireland has written to all funded bodies with details of the Government's request for the use of sports halls and clubhouses for temporary accommodation.

Sport Ireland's Ethics Unit is currently developing some Ukrainian-focused safeguarding resources which will be available on the website, fully translated, in the coming weeks. Individual national sporting governing bodies have introduced measures within their sports to welcome Ukrainian Refugees and support their integration into local communities.

Examples include:

- The waiving of player, coach and referee license fees for Ukrainian Refugees to participate and officiate in sport;
- Removal of registration deadlines;
- Provision of free training wear and other sports equipment.

<b>Measure 154      Review of School Transport Scheme, including provision of school transport in rural communities.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> D/Education		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
154.1	Complete the review of the School Transport Scheme (which encompasses the School Transport Scheme for Children with Special Educational Needs and the Primary and Post-Primary	Delayed

School Transport Schemes) with a view to ensuring that it serves students and their families appropriately. The review will consider issues such as climate action, school transport in rural areas, and promoting where possible initiatives that encourage walking and cycling to school.	
<b>Update:</b> Work is continuing on this review with a view to completion in Q3 2022.	

<b>Measure 157 Development of strategic Gaeltacht tourism initiatives.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> Údarás na Gaeltachta, Fáilte Ireland		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
157.1	<p>Formation of strategic partnership between Fáilte Ireland and Údarás na Gaeltachta committed to making the Gaeltacht experience appealing, accessible and relevant to visitors.</p> <p>The organisations will work together across a number of priority areas for tourism development including capital projects, building capacity within the tourism industry and supporting the development of tourism products to showcase the unique cultural offering of Ireland's Gaeltacht regions.</p>	Complete
<b>Update:</b> The strategic partnership agreement was finalised and signed on 11 February 2022.		
157.2	Initiate tendering process to deliver three visitor experiences in the Connemara Gaeltacht.	Delayed
<b>Update:</b> This action has commenced. The tendering process is ongoing for visitor experiences at Carna (complete) and Litir Meallain (50% complete) and construction work is ongoing on Aras Scealta an Atlantaigh (Eachléim) Visitor Hub.		
157.3	Údarás na Gaeltachta to undertake a pilot programme to develop and promote language holidays for select target demographics.	Delayed
<b>Update:</b> This is currently in development.		
157.4	Údarás na Gaeltachta to undertake an audit of existing greenways & cycle trails in the Gaeltacht and agree a 10-year roadmap for future development.	Delayed
<b>Update:</b> A decision was taken to divide this action into two bodies of work, beginning with an audit of existing trails to be undertaken Q3/4 2022. A 20-year road map will be commissioned thereafter.		

<b>Measure 159</b> <b>Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the forestry licensing system to support measures aiming to achieve an afforestation target of 8,000 ha/year.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DAFM		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
159.1	Proposed amendment to the Forestry Act (2014) to allow for small scale planting (up to 1ha) of native trees without requirement for a forestry licence.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> The changes introduced as part of the Animal Health and Welfare and Forestry (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2022, allow the introduction of Regulations to facilitate small scale planting of native tree areas without the need to first obtain an afforestation licence.		
159.2	Conduct pre-application consultation pilot for forestry licensing processes.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> Pre-application discussions on afforestation licence applications, to provide advice and guidance to applicants will be rolled out nation-wide, following the completion of a pilot exercise across six regions.		
159.3	Undertake legal and regulatory review evaluating the possibility of single consent scheme within the current legal and regulatory framework.	Complete
<b>Update:</b> The legal and regulatory review report was published on 29 June 2022 on the <a href="https://www.gov.ie">Gov.ie website</a> . This report reviewed and critically analysed the existing EU and domestic legal framework for the licensing of forestry activities, including relevant case law. In addition, the Report focuses on practical and implementable options for streamlining processes and procedures, having regard to arrangements in other European countries, and the constraints imposed under EU law as interpreted by the Courts. The department is now developing an action plan for the implementation of the recommendations contained in the report, with the implementation of certain recommendation already under way. The possibility of a single consent system was considered as part of the work and is covered in the report.		
159.4	Development of communications strategy and customer charter.	Delayed
<b>Update:</b> Work has progressed on the development of a communications strategy for forestry, and it is due to be finalised in tandem with the Forestry Strategy. Work on a draft Forestry Customer Charter has commenced and envisages identifying timelines within the Charter. Finalisation is dependent on any new practices arising from the Regulatory Review already published and taking into consideration the implementation of the end-to-end process review as conducted under Working Group 4 of Project Woodland.		
159.5	Produce a report on Training Needs Analysis.	Delayed

**Update:** A training Needs Analysis is currently underway with results expected in August 2022.

<b>Measure 161</b> <b>Establish dedicated funding streams specific to the islands within existing funding programmes.</b>		
<b>Lead Delivery Body:</b> DRCD		
<b>2022 Actions</b>		<b>Status</b>
161.1	Establish an islands-only stream within the CLÁR programme.	Complete
<p><b>Update:</b> An islands-specific measure was introduced as part of CLÁR 2022 under Measure 3 called 'Our Islands'. The measure is funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Island Community Transport – community bus/vehicle with an electric charging point which is powered by solar PV panels.</li> <li>• Outdoor Community Recreation Amenities – benches, picnic tables/areas, toilets.</li> </ul> <p>11 applications were approved under this Measure to the value of over €412,000.</p>		
161.2	Establish a new scheme under the Minor Works Programme where funding is provided for non-county roads on the islands.	Complete
<p><b>Update:</b> Over €2 million was sanctioned earlier this year for the upgrading of non-county roads. These roads will be taken in charge by the relevant Local Authority upon completion.</p>		