Policy Update on Ireland’s Implementation of the Sustainable Development Goal targets
October 2022
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SDG 1 No Poverty
SDG 1
End poverty in all its forms everywhere

Target 1.1
By 2030, eradicate extreme poverty for all people everywhere, currently measured as people living on less than $1.25 a day.

A Better World, Ireland’s policy for international development was launched in February 2019. Building on Ireland’s track record in delivering for the poorest and most vulnerable, A Better World seeks to realise the transformational pledge of the Sustainable Development Goals – reaching the furthest behind first. It signals a deepening and intensification of Ireland’s international efforts and commits to scaling up resources and capacity across four policy priorities: gender equality; reducing humanitarian need; climate action; and strengthening governance and three policy intervention areas: food, people and protection.

Using A Better World, in addition to guidance from The Global Island, and Ireland’s partnership strategies (Small Island Developing States, Africa and the Asia Pacific); Ireland continues to progress the eradication of extreme poverty through ongoing engagement with International Financial Institutions who have aims closely aligned with this target.

Target 1.2
By 2030, reduce at least by half the proportion of men, women and children of all ages living in poverty in all its dimensions according to national definitions.

The annual Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC) data is used to monitor poverty trends over time, in particular progress towards the National Social Target for Poverty Reduction which is to reduce the percentage of the population in consistent poverty to 2% or less by 2025; the child-poverty sub-target and the range of targets contained in the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025. The most recent SILC data (2021) shows reductions in the three national rates for the key poverty indicators when compared to the previous year (2020):

- Consistent Poverty: Reduced from 4.7% in SILC 2020 to 4.0% in SILC 2021
- At Risk of Poverty: Reduced from 13.2% in SILC 2020 to 11.6% in SILC 2021
- Deprivation Rate: Reduced from 14.3% in SILC 2020 to 13.8% in SILC 2021

The following table shows the consistent poverty, at risk of poverty and deprivation rates for different sub-groups (e.g., adults, children, retired people) for the last five years:
### Context and Impact Indicators from CSO SILC

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>2017</th>
<th>2018</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>a</td>
<td>Consistent poverty rate</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>5.5%</td>
<td>4.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>b</td>
<td>% of retired people at risk of poverty</td>
<td>9.1%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
<td>11.1%</td>
<td>9.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>c</td>
<td>% of retired people in consistent poverty</td>
<td>1.5%</td>
<td>1.9%</td>
<td>2.1%</td>
<td>1.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>d</td>
<td>% deprivation rate for retired people</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
<td>8.0%</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e</td>
<td>% of people aged 18-64 at risk of poverty</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
<td>13.7%</td>
<td>12.3%</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>e1</td>
<td>% of people aged 18-34 at risk of poverty</td>
<td></td>
<td>12.9%</td>
<td>8.7%</td>
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<tr>
<td>e2</td>
<td>% of people aged 35-49 at risk of poverty</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>11.2%</td>
<td>10.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>e3</td>
<td>% of people aged 50-64</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>f</td>
<td>% of people aged 18-64 in consistent poverty</td>
<td>7.0%</td>
<td>5.6%</td>
<td>5.1%</td>
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<td>f1</td>
<td>% of people aged 18-34 in consistent poverty</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.9%</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>f2</td>
<td>% of people aged 35-49 in consistent poverty</td>
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<td>4.7%</td>
<td>3.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>f3</td>
<td>% of people aged 50-64</td>
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<td>4.8%</td>
<td>5.0%</td>
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<td>g</td>
<td>% deprivation rate for people aged 18-64</td>
<td>19.1%</td>
<td>14.8%</td>
<td>17.1%</td>
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<td>g1</td>
<td>% deprivation rate for people aged 18-34</td>
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<td>14.2%</td>
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<td>g3</td>
<td>% deprivation rate for people aged 50-64</td>
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<td>13.0%</td>
<td>13.9%</td>
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<td>h</td>
<td>% of people not at work due to illness or disability at risk of poverty</td>
<td>35.4%</td>
<td>47.7%</td>
<td>37.5%</td>
<td>33.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>i</td>
<td>% of people not at work due to illness or disability in consistent poverty</td>
<td>24.0%</td>
<td>21.3%</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
<td>16.2%</td>
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<tr>
<td>j</td>
<td>% deprivation rate for people not at work due to illness or disabilities</td>
<td>45.9%</td>
<td>36.7%</td>
<td>43.3%</td>
<td>37.0%</td>
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<tr>
<td>k</td>
<td>% of children aged 0-17 at risk of poverty</td>
<td>18.4%</td>
<td>15.9%</td>
<td>15.3%</td>
<td>16.4%</td>
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<tr>
<td>l</td>
<td>% of children aged 0-17 in consistent poverty</td>
<td>8.8%</td>
<td>7.7%</td>
<td>8.1%</td>
<td>7.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>m</td>
<td>% deprivation rate for children aged 0-17</td>
<td>23.0%</td>
<td>19.7%</td>
<td>23.3%</td>
<td>18.9%</td>
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^All indicators in this table drawn from CSO SILC Survey. Due to a break in time series in 2020, the 2021 & 2021 figures are not directly comparable with previous years.
**Target 1.3**

*Implement nationally appropriate social protection systems and measures for all, including floors, and by 2030 achieve substantial coverage of the poor and the vulnerable.*

For many people on lower income deciles social transfers serve as their primary source of income. According to data from the 2021 SILC publication, households in the first household disposable income decile received, on average, €30.87 (12.0% of gross income) from market income and €226.32 (88.0% of gross income) from social transfers. Households in the tenth decile received, on average, €4,182.37 (96.3% of gross income) from market income and €162.00 (3.7% of gross income) from social transfers.

Budget 2022 introduced a number of improvements in the social welfare system, including:

- The inclusion of specific measures to support working families on low incomes including:
  - An increase of €5 per week on the maximum rate of all Working Age payments, including Carer’s Allowance, Disability Allowance, Supplementary Welfare allowance, One Parent Family Payments and Jobseekers Transition Payments, with proportional increases for reduced rates and Qualified Adult rates;
  - Increases of €10 per week in the Working Family Payment income threshold for all family sizes;
  - Increases in the rates of Increase for a Qualified Child (IQC) to €40 per week for children under 12 and €48 per week for children 12 years and older;
  - and
  - An increase of €10 in the Back-to-School Clothing and Footwear Allowance payment for both older and younger children
- €5 increase in weekly payments for pensioners
- Living Alone Allowance increased by €3 per week
- Fuel Allowance increased by €5 each week of the fuel season
- Budget 2022 included the introduction of an additional 2 weeks of Parent's Leave and Parent's Benefit to each parent of a child born or adopted on or after 1 November 2019, which will bring the total to 7 weeks from July 2022
- The Hot School Meals programme was extended in 2021, with 189 schools, including 171 DEIS schools, receiving funding under the programme

**Target 1.4**

*By 2030, ensure that all men and women, in particular the poor and the vulnerable, have equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to basic services, ownership and control over land and other forms of property, inheritance, natural resources, appropriate new technology and financial services, including microfinance.*

The *Global Island*, Ireland’s foreign policy, commits Ireland to promoting a fairer, just, secure and sustainable world. *A Better World* commits to reaching the furthest behind first through our development programmes. Ireland supports inclusive access to resources, technology and financial
services through our contributions to, and engagement with, multilateral development banks and the UN development system.

Ireland continues to ensure that its key foreign policy and development priorities, derived from A Better World, (including Gender Equality and Women’s economic empowerment) are reflected in International Financial Institutions operations and strategies; and assists to progress this target through ongoing engagement with International Financial Institutions who have aims closely align with target 1.4.

Target 1.5
By 2030, build the resilience of the poor and those in vulnerable situations and reduce their exposure and vulnerability to climate-related extreme events and other economic social and environmental shocks and disasters.

Housing for All recognises reducing and preventing homelessness is a top priority. In 2021, Ireland signed the Lisbon Declaration on the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness. The Declaration commits member states to work towards ending homelessness by 2030. This commitment is included in Housing for All, Ireland’s housing strategy. The signing of the Declaration was accompanied by the establishment of the European Platform on Combatting Homelessness (EPOCH), which gave effect to an action contained in the European Pillar of Social Rights Action Plan.

Housing for All contains a number of actions to address the issue of homelessness. These include the establishment of a National Homeless Action Committee to ensure that a renewed emphasis is brought to collaborating across Government and to bring better coherence and coordination of homeless-related services in delivering policy measures and actions to address homelessness. The National Homeless Action Committee (NHAC) was established in Q4 2021.

One of the initial key priorities of NHAC is the development of the Youth Homelessness Strategy. Development of this Strategy is currently underway. Its aim is to help people who are aged 18-24 and who are homeless or at risk of becoming homeless.

Housing for All also includes a commitment to expand Street Outreach Services to engage with rough sleepers across the country. Housing First is a key programme aimed at some of the most vulnerable people in our society, it enables people who may have been homeless and who have high levels of complex needs to obtain permanent secure accommodation with the provision of intensive supports to help them maintain their tenancies. This is done through the provision of permanent secure accommodation with ongoing intensive supports to help people maintain their tenancies. This support is time unlimited and provided for as long as required.

Building upon a commitment in Housing for All, the 2022-2026 Housing First National Implementation Plan covering the next five years was published in December 2021. The plan contains targets for each local authority, with an overall national target of 1,319 tenancies up to 2026.
The implementation of the Plan is a joint initiative of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Department of Health, the HSE, the Criminal Justice Sector and the local authorities, supported by NGO’s.

**Target 1.a**

Ensure significant mobilization of resources from a variety of sources, including through enhanced development cooperation, in order to provide adequate and predictable means for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, to implement programmes and policies to end poverty in all its dimensions.

*A Better World* provides the framework for Ireland’s expanding development programme, in line with our commitment to reach the UN target of allocating 0.7% of our GNI to official development assistance (ODA) by 2030. It commits Ireland to scaling up resources and capacity across the following four policy priorities: gender equality; reducing humanitarian need; climate action; and strengthening governance.

In addition to Ireland’s policy for international development *A Better World*, guidance from *The Global Island*, and Ireland’s partnership strategies (Small Island Developing States, Africa, and the Asia Pacific), the Department of Finance supports and advocates cooperation between International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to maximise available resources, ensure their effective allocation; and engages with IFIs to ensure Ireland’s international policy priority to reduce humanitarian need, is appropriately reflected and progressed in the governance, policies and operations of each institution.

**Target 1.b**

Create sound policy frameworks at the national, regional and international levels, based on pro-poor and gender-sensitive development strategies, to support accelerated investment in poverty eradication actions.

*A Better World* commits Ireland to reaching the furthest behind first with the necessary policies, resources and tools to effectively tackle extreme poverty and inequality. This will be realised through four policy priorities: gender equality; reducing humanitarian need; climate action; and strengthening governance.

Using *A Better World*, guidance from *The Global Island*, and Ireland’s partnership strategies (Small Island Developing States, Africa and the Asia Pacific); the Department of Finance continues to engage with International Financial Institutions to ensure their governance, policy, strategy and programme performance are aligned with Ireland’s international development policies priorities to reduce humanitarian need, and progress gender equality.
SDG 2 Zero Hunger
SDG 2
End hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture

Target 2.1
By 2030, end hunger and ensure access by all people, in particular the poor and people in vulnerable situations, including infants, to safe, nutritious and sufficient food all year round.

Ireland has been a long-standing champion of global efforts to reduce hunger and malnutrition, borne out of our historical memory of great hunger. The eradication of hunger and a particular focus on tackling undernutrition has been a cornerstone of Ireland’s development programme since its inception, and a key pillar of our foreign policy. Good nutrition is the most significant maker and marker of human development: as such, it mutually reinforces the four policy priorities in A Better World, all framed by the overarching objective to reach those furthest behind first.

2021 saw a sharp increase in poverty and hunger. After remaining virtually unchanged for five years, world hunger increased substantially last year with nearly one-tenth of the world’s population undernourished. Protracted violent conflicts, climate change, and the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic are all exacerbating existing inequalities and weaknesses in the food system.

At the Nutrition for Growth (N4G) Summit in December 2021, Ireland made three pledges, with respect to Hunger, Food Systems and Funding. Ireland is committed to taking a lead globally in tackling undernutrition in partnership with other stakeholders to support programming in multiple countries. The Irish experience of developing our agri-food strategy, ‘Food Vision 2030’ produced some important lessons, and Ireland commits to sharing this experience broadly. In cooperation with UN partners and to follow up to the UN Food Systems Summit, Ireland is committed to supporting interested member states realize their food systems pathways and associated SDGs by 2030.

In April 2021 the Minister of State with responsibility for social inclusion in the Department of Social Protection, Joe O’Brien, T.D., established the Food Poverty Working Group. The group comprises officials from a range of government departments along with representatives from the Society of St. Vincent de Paul, Crosscare and the Children’s Rights Alliance. The establishment of the group fulfils a commitment under the Roadmap for Social Inclusion to ‘Develop a comprehensive programme of work to further explore the drivers of food poverty and to identify mitigating actions’.
Target 2.2
By 2030, end all forms of malnutrition, including achieving, by 2025, the internationally agreed targets on stunting and wasting in children under 5 years of age, and address the nutritional needs of adolescent girls, pregnant and lactating women and older persons.

In common with other EU Member States, malnutrition in Ireland is primarily associated with overnutrition as opposed to undernutrition. The most recent data from the Childhood Obesity Surveillance Initiative published in 2020 indicates that childhood overweight and obesity rates are stabilising in Ireland, but at a high level of approximately 20%.

The Department of Health is represented on the Department of Social Protection Inter-Departmental Working Group on Food Poverty.

A Healthy Weight for Ireland, the Obesity Policy and Action Plan (OPAP), 2016-2025, aims to reverse obesity trends, prevent health complications and reduce the overall burden for individuals, families, the health system, and the wider society and economy. Childhood obesity and reducing the inequalities seen in obesity rates, where those from disadvantaged groups have higher obesity levels, are key priorities under the Policy. The cross-disciplinary Obesity Policy Implementation Oversight Group (OPIOG) was established in 2017 and includes representatives from a number of Government Departments and Agencies.

Target 2.3
By 2030, double the agricultural productivity and incomes of small-scale food producers, in particular women, indigenous peoples, family farmers, pastoralists and fishers, including through secure and equal access to land, other productive resources and inputs, knowledge, financial services, markets and opportunities for value addition and non-farm employment.

Ireland’s policy for international development A Better World recognises the central role that agricultural and food systems will play in achieving a sustainable future, and commits to adopting a ‘sustainable food systems approach’ that builds on Ireland’s strong track record in reaching the poorest, tackling hunger and fostering sustainable livelihoods.

Ireland fully supports the Secretary General’s Statement for Action at the 2021 UN Food Systems Summit. Food Vision 2030, Ireland’s agri-food strategy for the coming decade highlights the central objective of Ireland’s leadership in international Sustainable Food Systems (SFSs). With the development of Food Vision 2030, Ireland was one of the first countries to develop a national food systems strategy. With effective cooperation between the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) and the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM), Ireland stands ready to share the experience of development of this strategy with other countries. In achieving the highest standards of sustainability – economic, environmental and social – the Irish agri-food sector should provide the basis for its future competitive advantage.
The Ukraine conflict and the ‘build back better movement’ post-COVID pandemic should increase the political importance of sustainable food systems.

**Target 2.4**

**By 2030,** ensure sustainable food production systems and implement resilient agricultural practices that increase productivity and production, that help maintain ecosystems, that strengthen capacity for adaptation to climate change, extreme weather, drought, flooding and other disasters and that progressively improve land and soil quality.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine leads on target 2.4. The target is progressed through a number of strategies including:

- *Foodwise 2025* which aims for Ireland to be a global leader in sustainable food productions

- *National Animal Health Surveillance Strategy 2016 -2021* which contains four key goals, including
  - 1. Improving the governance of animal health surveillance in Ireland;
  - 2. Delivering a high quality surveillance system;
  - 3. Prioritisation of surveillance activities; and
  - 4. Improving communication of surveillance activities.

- *Organic Food Sector Strategy for Development 2019 2025* to further develop a viable Organic Food sector in Ireland enhancing the sustainability credentials of Irish food

- *CAP Strategic Plan* to further improve the sustainable development of farming, food and rural areas

**Target 2.5**

**By 2020,** maintain the genetic diversity of seeds, cultivated plants and farmed and domesticated animals and their related wild species, including through soundly managed and diversified seed and plant banks at the national, regional and international levels, and promote access to and fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and associated traditional knowledge, as internationally agreed.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) leads on target 2.5. The target is progressed through a number of programmes including:

- *Crop Variety Evaluation Programme:* EU legislation provides that crop breeders should be supplied with a national system of plant variety evaluation and registration.
• **Seed certification:** CDAFM is the certifying authority for Seed Certification in Ireland. This is an EU wide quality assurance system, underpinned by the EU Seeds Directives and Regulations, whereby seed intended for marketing is subject to official control and inspection to ensure minimum standards throughout the EU.

• **Conservation of Genetic Resources:** This programme provides funding to projects aimed at conserving native genetic resources in the plant, animal, forestry, aquatic and microorganisms and invertebrate domains. In addition a national gene bank containing germplasm for various crops and the potato collection is maintained. The purpose of the gene bank is to preserve seed in long term storage for potential future use particularly in crop breeding.

In addition, the National Biodiversity Action Plan contributes to target 2.4 through its aims to expand and improve management of protected areas and species and to conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the marine environment and countryside.

**Target 2.a**

**Increase investment, including through enhanced international cooperation, in rural infrastructure, agricultural research and extension services, technology development and plant and livestock gene banks in order to enhance agricultural productive capacity in developing countries, in particular least developed countries.**

_A Better World_ outlines Ireland's commitment to adopting a sustainable food systems approach which will consider the interactions between the biological, economic and social systems around food production, distribution and consumption.

With the establishment of the National Task Team for Rural Africa and subsequently the Ireland-Africa Rural Development Committee, Ireland draws on a broad range of stakeholders across private sector, academia, state agencies, NGOs and Government Departments to advance this target.

Ireland is committed to work closely with key global agricultural research and development partners – CGIAR, IFAD, Global Panel, FAO, WFP and others- to develop and share new global public goods and advance global food systems approaches.

**Target 2.b**

**Correct and prevent trade restrictions and distortions in world agricultural markets, including through the parallel elimination of all forms of agricultural export subsidies and all export measures with equivalent effect, in accordance with the mandate of the Doha Development Round.**

Ireland works with the European Commission and Member State colleagues to ensure elimination
of export subsidies in accordance with the agreement struck at the WTO Ministerial Conference in Nairobi in 2015.¹

**Target 2.c**

*Adopt measures to ensure the proper functioning of food commodity markets and their derivatives and facilitate timely access to market information, including on food reserves, in order to help limit extreme food price volatility.*

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine leads on target 2.c. The Food Wise Strategic Blueprint for Agri-Food Sector ensures up-to-date and timely provision of relevant data to the Central Statistics Office and European Commission in line with EU legislative requirements.

¹ Ireland works with the European Commission and Member State colleagues to ensure elimination of export subsidies in accordance with the agreement struck at the WTO Ministerial Conference in Nairobi in 2015.
SDG 3 Good Health and Well-being
SDG 3
Ensure healthy lives and promote well-being for all at all ages

Target 3.1
By 2030, reduce the global maternal mortality ratio to less than 70 per 100,000 live births.

Ireland has had long standing engagements at a global level and in our partner countries that have been focused on improving maternal health outcomes. *A Better World*, the Irish Government’s policy for international development, prioritises improvements in the quality and availability of health services, with a strong focus on maternal and child health. The policy also outlines our commitment to develop a new a new initiative specifically on sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR). This is following changes in our own national legislative framework for reproductive health since 2018. Ireland has had a long-standing engagement in HIV/AIDS globally and in partner countries that have been focused on maternal health. Specifically we want to look at developing our approach to SRHR in an international context by drawing from and shares useful lessons from our own SRHR journey here in Ireland.

In 2021, Ireland invested over €100 million in Global Health. Overseas, Ireland funds maternal health initiatives through Irish and international NGOs, UN agencies, the WHO in particular, and through our country programmes, in particular through health basket funds in countries such as Mozambique and Tanzania. In Tanzania, for example, through providing funding to the Government through the Health Basket Fund, Ireland is supporting the purchase of medicines and medical equipment for 5,700 health facilities and has a focus on delivering quality health care services, including for maternal and new-born health. We also support the construction, refurbishment and equipping of roughly a dozen primary health facilities per year to ensure the availability of quality emergency obstetric and new-born care services.

Target 3.2
By 2030, end preventable deaths of newborns and children under 5 years of age.

The delivery of these objectives is driven by the *National Maternity Strategy 2016-26*, under which the Model of Care Working Group has overseen the rollout of the Supported Care Pathway in all 19 maternity units and hospitals. Additionally, the first National Maternity Bereavement Experience Survey will be implemented later in 2022, in consultation with the HSE.

The National Neonatal Encephalopathy Action Group has established a number of work streams in order to reduce the frequency of cases of neonatal encephalopathy. It will implement specific measures to identify causes and risk factors and to eliminate or mitigate same.
The Women’s Health Taskforce, established in September 2019, is charged with improving women’s health outcomes and experiences of healthcare. A "Women’s Health Action Plan" for 2022/23 is currently being finalised. The Taskforce supports the implementation of all SDG Goals relevant to the Department of Health.

**Target 3.3**  
**By 2030, end the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and neglected tropical diseases and combat hepatitis, water-borne diseases and other communicable diseases.**

Progress under target 3.3 is driven by a number of national policies. "Healthy Ireland – A Framework for Improved Health and Well-being 2013-2025", under which the Healthy Ireland Strategic Action Plan was published in May 2021, includes the objective of protecting the public from threats to their wellbeing.

The National Sexual Health Strategy 2015-2020 has led on a number of key actions under this Goal, and continues to be implemented by the Department and the HSE. Over the last year it has introduced stakeholder consultations and expanded its online STI testing services. A new National Sexual Health Strategy is currently being developed.

A new National Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance, to cover the period 2021-25, was published in November 2021, and drives actions to prevent, monitor and combat AMR across the health, agriculture and environment sectors.

Finally, national policy in respect of COVID-19 is the subject of extensive reporting on the COVID-19 data hub.

**Target 3.4**  
**By 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from non-communicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and wellbeing.**

The Healthy Ireland Framework drives national policies of increasing the healthy proportion of our population, reducing health inequalities, protecting the public from threats to health and wellbeing, and creating an environment in which every individual and sector of society can play their part in achieving a healthy Ireland. Its Strategic Action Plan, published in May 2021 and aligned with the Sláintecare Implementation Strategy and Action Plan, sets out a roadmap towards achieving the goals of the Framework. This is supported by the National Physical Activity Plan, which held stakeholder consultations in 2021 and is being reviewed in 2022.

The National Cancer Strategy 2017-26 has overseen significant progress in cancer survival rates (from 42% over 1994-99 to 65% over 2014-18), largely through earlier detection and improvements in treatment.
The National Suicide Strategy, *Connecting for Life 2015-20*, was extended by Government to 2024, and has an implementation plan which will drive action to reduce suicide and self-harm rates, in general and for priority groups.

*Sharing the Vision – A Mental Health Policy for Everyone 2020-30* promotes mental health and wellbeing. Its 2022-24 Implementation Plan will be published in Q1 2022.

**Target 3.5**

Strengthen the prevention and treatment of substance abuse, including narcotic drug abuse and harmful use of alcohol.


Ireland became one of a small number of countries to introduce minimum unit pricing on alcohol sales in January 2022, as part of ongoing efforts to continue the reduction of alcohol consumption levels in Ireland.

**Target 3.6**

By 2020, halve the number of global deaths and injuries from road traffic accidents.

The *Road Safety Strategy 2013-2020* set out to reduce road crash fatalities from 186 in 2011 to 124 or fewer by 2020. In 2010, the UN declared the decade from 2011-2020 as a decade of action for road safety and set a target of halving road deaths globally by 2020. Ireland recorded 212 road deaths in 2010, this number was 147 in 2020. While it is well short of the 50% target set by the UN, and of the target set in the *Road Safety Strategy*, it should be understood in a national context. In the year 2000, there were 415 deaths on Irish roads (and in fact 458 as recently as 1998). As deaths have reduced on Irish roads, it has become harder to maintain a downward momentum.

In 2021 the number of deaths reduced further to 137. Ireland has now launched a *Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030*, with a goal of halving deaths and serious injuries on roads by 2030. This Strategy is divided into three Phases, with an Action Plan being implemented for Phase 1, 2021-2024. Action Plans for Phases 2 and 3, 2025-2027 and 2028-2030, will be developed in the months leading up to those Phases in light of circumstances at the time.

**Target 3.7**

By 2030, ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health-care services, including for family planning, information and education, and the integration of reproductive health into national strategies and programmes.

As outlined under target 3.3 above, the *National Sexual Health Strategy* drives actions under this
Goal. One of the key indicators of progress under target 3.7 has been the reduction of births to women aged under 20 years from 2,043 in 2010 to 980 in 2018.

**Target 3.8**  
*Achieve universal health coverage, including financial risk protection, access to quality essential health-care services and access to safe, effective, quality and affordable essential medicines and vaccines for all.*

Sláintecare will drive the national objective of delivering a healthcare system which offers the right care, in the right place, at the right time, by the right team and at low to no cost to the citizen. Its 2021 progress report will be published in Q1 2022.

**Target 3.9**  
*By 2030, substantially reduce the number of deaths and illnesses from hazardous chemicals and air, water and soil pollution and contamination.*

**The Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy**

The Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy (WAPCE) was launched in September 2020 with more than 200 recommendations to be attained over the following five year period. To date a number of recommendations have been implemented while others are well advanced. A key recommendation from the WAPCE was the introduction of a Circular Economy Bill which will initiate other recommendations such as the introduction of a number of economic instruments to assist in the reduction of generated waste to reach the relevant targets. The Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022 was enacted in July 2022.

**National Implementation Plan on Persistent Organic Pollutants**

The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) aims to eliminate or restrict the production and use of persistent organic pollutants (POPs). POPs are a group of chemical substances which persist in the environment, may accumulate in food and human tissue and are toxic. These substances can be divided into three main categories: pesticides, industrial chemicals and unintentional POPs such as dioxins and furans from backyard burning. The requirements of the Stockholm Convention are enacted into EU law by Regulation (EU) 2019/1021 and Irish law by S.I. No. 146 of 2020. Under Article 7 of the Convention, Ireland is required to develop and regularly update a National Implementation Plan on POPs. The EPA, as the competent authority, reviewed and updated the National Implementation Plan on POPs in 2018, in consultation with a number of public authorities, national stakeholders and the public. The EPA is currently updating the latest NIP to reflect additional POPs which have been added to the Stockholm Convention and Regulation (EU) 2019/1021.

Article 5 of the Stockholm Convention requires parties to outline measures to reduce or eliminate releases from unintentional production of POPs. However, intentional POPs have been included in Ireland's action plan to assess and mitigate against risks posed by these substances to human health and the environment. As part of the POP’s Action Plan, the EPA is investigating the risks
posed by certain POPs to human health and the environment in the Irish context including PFAS in fire-fighting foams, POPs in landfill leachate and PCBs in building materials. Further details on these studies are available on the EPA website.

**National Clean Air Strategy**

Tackling the sources and causes of air pollution is a significant cross-Governmental challenge, as it involves emissions from transport, industry, agriculture, shipping and the use of solid fuels in homes. Given the wide range of pollutant sources, it is important that action is coordinated across various sectors.

The *Clean Air Strategy* will provide a strategic policy framework which will recognise the positive impact of existing Government plans, but also look to identify and promote additional integrated measures to reduce air pollution and promote cleaner air.

As set out in the Programme for Government, the *Clean Air Strategy* will include policies and measures such as:

- putting in place regional approach to air quality and noise enforcement
- a multi-agency approach to clamping down on the sale of high-sulphur content fuel imported from the UK, with local authorities and the Revenue Commissioners
- investing in our network of monitoring stations, to provide scientific evidence of air quality across different parts of the country, including real-time and localised air quality information
- extending the Smoky Coal ban to new towns and, over the term of Government, move towards a full nationwide ban

There are a number of national policy frameworks already in place which will also help to reduce pollutant emissions and improve air quality such as the *Climate Action Plan*, and the *National Air Pollution Control Programme*. It is important that synergies are maximised between these plans and the Clean Air Strategy, with a view to achieving lasting reductions in the health and environmental impacts of air pollution in the most effective manner.

A public consultation on the draft Clean Air Strategy ran from 7 March to 3 May. More than 100 submissions were received, and these are now being reviewed, with a view to finalising and publishing the strategy later this year.

**Target 3.a**

*Strengthen the implementation of the World Health Organization Framework Convention on Tobacco Control in all countries, as appropriate.*

Ireland’s national policy, “*Tobacco Free Ireland 2013-25*”, seeks to reduce smoking prevalence to less than 5% by 2025. The HSE Tobacco Free Partners Group, which met most recently in December 2021, continues to discuss the tobacco control agenda.
Target 3.b
Support the research and development of vaccines and medicines for the communicable and non-communicable diseases that primarily affect developing countries, provide access to affordable essential medicines and vaccines, in accordance with the Doha Declaration on the TRIPS Agreement and Public Health, which affirms the right of developing countries to use to the full the provisions in the Agreement on Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights regarding flexibilities to protect public health, and, in particular, provide access to medicines for all.

A Better World, the Irish Government’s policy for international development, outlines our commitment to supporting global ambitions towards ending the epidemics of AIDS, tuberculosis, malaria and other communicable diseases by 2030. Ireland continues to be a core funder of world-leading product development partners that are developing cutting-edge medicines for these three epidemics including Medicines for Malaria Venture, the International Partnership for Microbicides and TB Alliance. We supported Gavi, the international vaccine alliance which is committed to saving children’s lives and protecting people’s health by increasing access to immunisation in developing countries. The alliance brings together developing country and donor governments, the World Health Organization, UNICEF, the World Bank, the vaccine industry, civil society, and private sector partners to secure sustainable funding for, and adequate supply of quality vaccines in over 70 countries.

In 2021, Ireland was also one of the early funders of COVAX, the global facility created and hosted by Gavi in collaboration with the WHO, CEPI and UNICEF. The facility worked to unblock production barriers for vaccines and ensure equity of access to vaccines on a global scale. To date, COVAX has facilitated the distribution of over 1.5bn doses of COVID-19 vaccines, and, is at the forefront of efforts to ensure low- and lower middle-income countries can access and administer COVID-19 vaccines.

Target 3.c
Substantially increase health financing and the recruitment, development, training and retention of the health workforce in developing countries, especially in least developed countries and small island developing States.

As outlined in its international development policy, A Better World, Ireland understands that delivering health and well-being for all requires good health governance, and strong health systems resourced by a healthy workforce. It requires well capacitated, accountable and effective institutions, nationally, regionally and globally. Ireland’s support for the global health agenda is based firmly around our support for the World Health Organisation and central role it continues to play in setting norms and standards for health service provision, and in governing the global health agenda. Since the onset of the pandemic, Ireland has trebled our voluntary contributions to the WHO. Ireland was an early supporter of the recommendation of the Working Group on Sustainable
Financing, which were adopted by the World Health Assembly 75 in May 2022.

In response to the pandemic, Ireland has increased its global health financing overall, investing over €100 million in global health per annum. Ireland is also a core funder of the Global Fund against AIDS, TB and malaria, and in the position of Board Member for the Point 7 constituency, is playing an active role in promoting the financing of the organisation in advance of its 7th replenishment conference in September 2022.

**Target 3.d**

**Strengthen the capacity of all countries, in particular developing countries, for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks.**

In line with *A Better World*, Ireland’s global health partnerships focus on key priorities such as health systems strengthening and tackling HIV/AIDS and other epidemics. Ireland is working to ‘future-proof’ our development cooperation, including health, through investing in pandemic preparedness and response, as well as investing in new medicines and innovative technologies to address existing epidemics.

Ireland supports a strong and sustainably financed World Health Organisation (WHO) to ensure appropriate global health governance in the face of potential future pandemics, and to drive progress towards SDG 3. As such, Ireland welcomes the recommendation, adopted by World Health Assembly, to increase assessed contributions to WHO by Member States.

The EU is a leading proponent of an international pandemic agreement along with several other WHO Member States. Ireland is a member of the Group of Friends of a Treaty for Pandemic Preparedness and Response, which strongly supports an international pandemics treaty that would foster an all-of-government and all-of-society approach, strengthening national, regional and global capacities and resilience to future pandemics.

Ireland also continues to support other multilateral organisations focused on global health, namely Gavi - the Vaccine Alliance and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. In their new strategy, the Global Fund has for the first time included pandemic preparedness and response, integrated into resilient and sustainable systems for health.
SDG 4 Quality Education
SDG 4
Ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all

Target 4.1
By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys complete free, equitable and quality primary and secondary education leading to relevant and effective learning outcomes.

Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS) are schools which have a high concentration of disadvantage. Launched in 2005 by the Department of Education, DEIS is the most recent national programme aimed at addressing the educational needs of children and young people from disadvantaged communities.

The DEIS Plan 2017 sets out the Department of Education’s vision for education to more fully become a proven pathway to better opportunities for those in communities at risk of disadvantage and social exclusion.

Schools in the DEIS programme avail of a range of targeted supports aimed at tackling educational disadvantage, including additional classroom teaching posts, home school community liaison coordinator posts, DEIS grant funding and access to the School Completion Programme.

In March 2022 a refined DEIS Identification model was published increasing access to the DEIS scheme to an additional 310 schools and providing additional levels of support to 37 existing DEIS schools at an additional cost of €37m. This will increase provision to 1,194 schools and over 240,000 students, approximately 27% of the overall school population.

Target 4.2
By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

The Early Childhood Care and Education programme, ECCE, provides two years of free pre-school to children aged between 2 years and 8 months and 5 years and 6 months. ECCE is provided for 3 hours a day, for 5 days a week, over 38 weeks which generally follows the primary school term. ECCE is provided by nearly 4,000 private providers throughout the State, who contract with DCEDIY to deliver the ECCE programme. ECCE providers are required to follow the approved preschool curriculum.

ECCE is not mandatory but has a take-up rate of 95% of children in the eligible age range. Children with additional needs are supported to attend ECCE through the Access and Inclusion Model, or AIM, programme.
A review of ECCE is being carried out in 2022 to assess current programme design and delivery.

**Target 4.3**

**By 2030, ensure equal access for all women and men to affordable and quality technical, vocational and tertiary education, including university.**

The current *Further Education and Training Strategy: Transforming Learning 2020 -2024* supports the active inclusion of individuals of all ages and abilities to participate in further education and training to enable every citizen to fully participate in society. The FET strategy is based around three strategic pillars - Building Skills, Fostering Inclusion and Facilitating Pathways. In addition specific enabling themes are outlined in the Strategy to underpin the delivery of the strategic pillars. They are Staffing, Capabilities and Structures, Learner and Performance, Digital Transformation and Capital Infrastructure.

The Transforming Learning Steering Group is the body that oversees and advises on the development and delivery of the Strategy. The Steering Group is chaired by the Chief Executive Officer of SOLAS and is comprised of a range of senior leaders from SOLAS, DFHERIS, ETBI, ETBs and QQI. In addition, there are four advisory groups (one for each strategic pillar and one for the overall enabling themes) that are tasked with monitoring Strategy implementation as well as providing expertise and oversight. The Advisory Groups are made up of a variety of stakeholders.

Within SOLAS the Transformation Project Management Office (TPMO) was set up to ensure delivery of strategic priorities and enabling themes of the Strategy and serves as secretariat to the Transforming Learning Steering Group. The project management approach aims to ensure the delivery of the strategic priorities and the enabling themes of the FET Strategy.

**Target 4.4**

**By 2030, substantially increase the number of youth and adults who have relevant skills, including technical and vocational skills, for employment, decent jobs and entrepreneurship.**

The current *Further Education and Training Strategy: Transforming Learning 2020 -2024* supports the active inclusion of individuals of all ages and abilities to participate in further education and training to enable every citizen to fully participate in society. The FET strategy is based around three strategic pillars - Building Skills, Fostering Inclusion and Facilitating Pathways. In addition specific enabling themes are outlined in the Strategy to underpin the delivery of the strategic pillars. They are Staffing, Capabilities and Structures, Learner and Performance, Digital Transformation and Capital Infrastructure.

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The Fostering Inclusion Advisory Group is comprised of a range of stakeholders including SOLAS, DFHERIS, ETBI, ETBs, QQI, Aontas, NDA and AHEAD. The advisory group is tasked with driving strategy delivery within this pillar with a particular focus on implementation of the Fostering Inclusion pillar.

The DFHERIS Statement of Strategy sets out the vision for the Department over the next three years. At the heart of the Department is an objective to ensure everyone regardless of their background, age, gender, or address – achieves their best potential, whether that is through education or the workforce.

Ireland has an advanced system of skills provision, across Further and Higher Education, lifelong learning and human capital development, which is agile and responsive to changes in the world of work, in order to address evolving skills needs.

Upskilling and reskilling provision in higher education is available through Springboard+ and the Human Capital Initiative (HCI). Springboard+ complements the core State-funded education and training system and provides free and subsidised upskilling and reskilling higher education opportunities in areas of identified skills need. Springboard+ courses are at Level 6 (Certificate) to Level 9 (Masters) on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and are delivered by public and private higher education providers around the country.

Now entering its twelfth year, over €330m has been spent on Springboard+ and over 90,000 people have benefited from the programme to date. The Springboard+ programme is managed by the Higher Education Authority, on behalf of the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

In 2022/23, over 13,000 places will be available through Springboard + and Pillar 1 of the Human Capital Initiative, with in excess of 95% of the courses being delivered in a flexible format, which will enable more people to engage in upskilling and reskilling around the country.

**Target 4.5**

**By 2030, eliminate gender disparities in education and ensure equal access to all levels of education and vocational training for the vulnerable, including persons with disabilities, indigenous peoples and children in vulnerable situations.**

**Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools (DEIS)**

DEIS – Delivering Equality of Opportunity in Schools is the main policy initiative. In the 2021/22 academic year there are 884 schools in the DEIS Programme - 687 Primary and 197 Post Primary, serving over 180,000 pupils. This represents approximately 20% of the overall school population. The total Department spend on DEIS in 2021 was over €150 million, which includes over €26 million for the School Completion Programme (SCP). The DEIS programme provides for smaller class sizes and other supports including additional teaching posts, Home School Community Liaison Coordinators, DEIS grants, enhanced book grants, curriculum supports and priority access to Continuing Professional Development.
Budget 2022 has allocated the largest-ever increase in funding for the DEIS programme (DEIS Identification Model), providing for an additional allocation of €18 million in 2022 (€32 million over a full year) which will enable an expansion in 2022 of the DEIS programme to further schools. This means that by 2023 the Department of Education will target over €180 million at addressing educational disadvantage through the DEIS programme, an increase of 20% on the 2021 allocation. This package follows an extensive body of work which has been under taken by the DEIS technical group in relation to the development of a model to identify the concentrated levels of disadvantage of schools. The refined DEIS Identification model is an objective, statistics based process, based on school enrolment data and data available from Census 2016 under the HP Deprivation Index. It is important to note that there is no application process for the DEIS programme and all schools will be considered under the refined DEIS model when it is applied. In advance of the implementation of the refined DEIS identification model, there will be further engagement with relevant stakeholders. The purpose is to ensure that, as far as possible, the refined DEIS identification model can provide an objective and independent means of identifying schools serving high concentrations of pupils at risk of educational disadvantage and also to ensure there is a full understanding of the refined model and its potential application.

**STEM Education Policy Statement 2017-2026**

A Review of Literature to Identify a Set of Effective Interventions for Addressing Gender Balance in STEM in Early Years, Primary and Post-Primary Education Settings was published in November 2020. The report sets out what is known about critical barriers to girls’ participation in STEM education and STEM learning, while also highlighting effective interventions to increase participation of girls in STEM. Development of a set of recommendations to guide national actions in relation to gender balance in STEM have been developed and will be published shortly. Development of the second STEM Education implementation Plan 2022-2026 is underway to include public consultation and targeted education stakeholder/partners consultations. The outputs from the consultation process along with the Gender balance in STEM recommendations and STEM and the Arts recommendations that are being developed at present will inform the new implementation plan. The Implementation Plan is expected to be ready for publication by the end of Q2 2022.

**Target 4.6**

By 2030, ensure that all youth and a substantial proportion of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy.

**Literacy and Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy**

The Literacy and Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2011-2020 has now expired. Development of a follow on strategy is underway with research commissioned to include the identification of achievements, gaps, best practice and possible areas for action for the new 10 year strategy. This research is due to be finalised and with the Department of Education in the coming weeks. This will inform stakeholder engagement and public consultation which will also feed into the development of the new strategy.

**10 Year Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy**

The Adult Literacy for Life (ALL) Strategy was developed by SOLAS and launched by Minister Simon
Harris on the 8th September 2022. The strategy sets out a cross-government, cross-economy and cross-society approach to achieve the vision of an Ireland where every adult has the necessary literacy, numeracy and digital literacy to engage in society and realise their potential.

A number of important commitments under the Strategy have already been delivered, including the establishment of a one-stop-shop, adultliteracy.ie, which provides over 210 local contacts points and access to a national Freephone for anyone who wishes to avail of one of the 100,000 places currently available through further education and training providers across the country.

In 2022, there is a plan to build on and accelerate the implementation of the Strategy. This year €3 million will be allocated for the implementation of the ALL Strategy in Budget 2022 which will enable the establishment of partnership structures to initiate focused coordination supports which are critical to delivering on the targets set for adult literacy, numeracy and digital literacy.

Target 4.7

By 2030, ensure that all learners acquire the knowledge and skills needed to promote sustainable development, including, among others, through education for sustainable development and sustainable lifestyles, human rights, gender equality, promotion of a culture of peace and non-violence, global citizenship and appreciation of cultural diversity and of culture’s contribution to sustainable development.

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is acknowledged as both an SDG target in itself and as a key enabler for achieving all 17 SDGs. The Department of Education, the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth have been working together to develop the Second National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development: ESD to 2030, which will be published in June 2022.

ESD to 2030 spans the continuum of education in Ireland, from early years to third level education and research, and extends beyond to engage with local communities, and youth groups through lifelong learning. Building on the progress achieved under the first National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development (2014-2020), ESD to 2030 is aligned with the UNESCO framework for ESD for 2030 sets out five key priority areas for action over the coming years, namely i) Advancing Policy ii) Transforming Learning Environments, iii) Building Capacities of Educators, iv) Empowering and Mobilising Young People, and v) Accelerating Local Level Actions.

ESD to 2030 and its accompanying implementation plan for 2022 to 2026, has been informed by a public consultation process and engagement with a wide range of stakeholders. While the three respective departments will lead on this strategy, it will be implemented through a cross-government approach and in close collaboration with early learning and care settings, schools, further and higher education institutions, youth groups, civil society organisations, local authorities, communities, and enterprise.

Under the first ESD strategy 2014 – 2020, significant work was done integrating ESD themes and
principles into the curriculum at all levels, into assessment and inspection processes, into Initial teacher education and continuing professional development, and as a focus of research. ESD to 2030 will build on this work ensuring that the 2030 target is met.

Target 4.a

Build and upgrade education facilities that are child, disability and gender sensitive and provide safe, non-violent, inclusive and effective learning environments for all.

Review of the School Transport Scheme

The Department of Education commenced a review of the School Transport Scheme in February 2021. The review is examining the current scheme, its broader effectiveness and sustainability, with a view to ensuring that it serves students and their families appropriately. The review will build upon the commitments within the Programme for Government as they relate to school transport and includes an examination of options to reduce car journeys, commitments in respect of climate action and the potential of the School Transport Scheme to support broader government aims of promoting sustainability in transport. The review is also examining promoting where possible initiatives that encourage walking and cycling to school, including assessing how the School Transport Scheme can work in liaison with the Safe Routes to Schools Programme which is funded by the Department of Transport and operated by Green-schools in partnership with the National Transport Authority and the local authorities.

Schools Energy retrofit Pathfinder Programme

The Department of Education is at the forefront of design with respect to sustainable energy in school buildings and this performance has been recognised at both National and International level with sustainable energy awards for excellence in Design and Specification. The Department of Education’s Technical Guidance Documents set the benchmark for sustainable design in school buildings with a clear focus on energy efficiency and they are based on solid energy research projects.

Schools that are designed and built in accordance with the Department’s schools technical guidance documents have been achieving A3 Building Energy Ratings since 2009 with current schools typically achieving up to 20% higher performance than required by the current Building Regulations, along with 10% of primary energy provided via photovoltaics and infrastructure provision for electric vehicle charging.

All new technologies and approaches are tested to ensure compatibility with school design and operational requirements. Successful and repeatable results are then incorporated into all new school designs and refurbishments. The Departments policy is supported by a strong research programme with fifty three research projects at various stages including the energy website www.energyineducation.ie. which is a joint partnership with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI).

The Department of Education and the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications established a jointly funded pathfinder programme with the SEAI, testing and demonstrating energy efficiency and decarbonisation retrofit approaches. This Pathfinder programme is paving
the way for, and informing, a much larger national schools’ programme for the energy retrofit of schools built prior to 2008 as included in the National Development Plan. It is facilitating research on a range of typical retrofit options, which will have been tried and tested. It is providing valuable development information for a solution driven delivery strategy which will be founded on a solid evidence base that has proven the robustness and scalability of renewable solutions within the schools’ sector.

The longer-term outcome of the pathfinder will be to create an accurate and scalable model for energy efficient retrofits of schools across Ireland. The deep energy retrofit programme for schools built prior to 2008 is due to be rolled out as included in the National Development Plan. The pathfinder programme has retrofitted 41 schools across Ireland to date with work on an additional 9 schools added in 2021 underway. 2022 sees six additional schools undergoing deep retrofit to a Building Energy Rating (BER) of B with renewable heating systems. Each school undergoes a comprehensive assessment to ensure that the measures are suitable for that school and will deliver value to both the school and learnings for the national retrofit programme.

**Target 4.b**

By 2020, substantially expand globally the number of scholarships available to developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States and African countries, for enrolment in higher education, including vocational training and information and communications technology, technical, engineering and scientific programmes, in developed countries and other developing countries.

Each year the Ireland Fellows Programme brings promising individuals from ODA-eligible partner countries to Ireland to study for a master’s level qualification at a University or Institute of Technology. The aims of the Programme are to nurture future leaders; to develop in-country capacity to achieve national SDG goals; and to build positive relationships with Ireland. The award is fully funded and covers programme fees, flights, accommodation and living costs. The Ireland Fellows Programme promotes gender equality, equal opportunity, and welcomes diversity.

Eligible master’s level programmes are in a wide range of areas aligned with the SDGs such as climate change and associated challenges; the protection of the blue economy and marine life; engineering and sustainable technology; development studies; international relations; human rights; law; health; education; science and technology; and business.

The Programme has operated since 1974, bringing students from African partner countries and, since 2009, Vietnam. Following a decision to expand the programme in 2019-20 it was enlarged to include students from the occupied Palestinian Territories and, in 2020-2021, from Small Island Developing States (a commitment in the Government’s 2019 strategy for partnership with SIDS).

DFA has committed to increase the overall number of fellowship places awarded from 84 in 2018 to approximately 210 by 2025. As per a commitment in the Africa Strategy, 150 of these places will go to Fellows from African countries. 158 Fellows from 36 countries took up their studies in 2021.
Target 4.c
By 2030, substantially increase the supply of qualified teachers, including through international cooperation for teacher training in developing countries, especially least developed countries and small island developing States.

The Global Island, Ireland’s foreign policy, commits Ireland to promoting a fairer, just, secure and sustainable world. A Better World provides the framework for delivering on these commitments, prioritising reduction of humanitarian need, climate action, strengthened governance and gender equality. Ireland’s annual core funding of UNICEF is one way in which Ireland supports teacher training in developing countries.
SDG 5 Gender Equality
SDG 5
Achieve gender equality and empower all women and girls

Target 5.1
End all forms of discrimination against all women and girls everywhere.

The National Strategy for Women and Girls (NSWG) provides the framework through which the Government addresses gender equality. The National Strategy for Women and Girls was due to conclude at the end of 2020 but, due to the impact of COVID-19 on implementation of actions, the Strategy was extended to end 2021.

The Programme for Government includes a commitment to develop a successor to the NSWG and consultations for a new Strategy are anticipated for the end of 2022, with the development of a new Strategy to begin in 2023.

The Gender Pay Gap Information Act 2021 was passed by the Oireachtas in 2021 and provides for the introduction of gender pay gap reporting. Gender pay gap reporting will begin for organisations with over 250 employees in 2022.

Access to family leaves was extended through the Family Leaves and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2021 which extended access to paid-Parent’s Leave to five weeks for each parent of a child under 2, and the removal of a presumption of gender in Adoptive Leave, allowing families to choose which parent will avail of the leave.

Target 5.2
Eliminate all forms of violence against all women and girls in the public and private spheres, including trafficking and sexual and other types of exploitation.

The Department of Justice is fully committed to combatting violence against women in all its forms and to ensuring that anyone who is a victim of this type of abuse is empowered and supported to seek help, confident that there are robust systems in place to bring perpetrators to account.

The Department of Justice is dedicated to building systems that are victim-centred. This is marked in the Programme for Government and the statement of strategy commitments, in the considerations taken into account and prioritised in the context of managing the pandemic and in the work being undertaken as a priority within the Department in collaboration with other Departments, agencies and stakeholders.

Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence (DSGBV) 2016-2021
The Second National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2016-2021 was a whole of Government response to Domestic and Sexual Violence. The bulk of the Strategy’s actions were aimed at changing societal attitudes through awareness raising to help prevent domestic and sexual violence, improving services to victims and holding perpetrators to account.

**Third National Strategy on DSGBV 2022-2026**

The Department of Justice launched the Third National Strategy to combat Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence 2022-2026 on 28 June 2022. Detailed consultations and analysis for Third Strategy began in April 2021 following the completion of the consultation for the ‘Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence: Audit of Structures’. An Executive Group (made up of a representative of the Department of Justice, The National Women’s Council of Ireland, and Safe Ireland respectively) was established. The establishment of this group, along with extensive Departmental, State Agency and NGO sector engagement ensured that the strategy was drafted in a co-design process.

The new strategy is drafted and structured on the basis of the four principles of the Istanbul Convention, the "four Ps": Prevention, Protection and support of victims, Prosecution of offenders and Integrated Policies. Under each of the pillars, high level objectives are outlined. While there are a number of specific aims listed, the Strategy is high level in tone and content. The Strategy is accompanied by a more detailed action/implementation plan setting out how these aims will be achieved. The first implementation plan will run for 18 months to the end of 2023 and will then be published on an annual basis moving forward. The Third National Strategy integrates the relevant Sustainable Development Goals where appropriate.

Under Budget 2022, increased funding to a total of €13m has been allocated to further our work in the area of Domestic, Sexual and Gender Based Violence.

This includes:

- €5.35 million for raising awareness of domestic, sexual and gender based violence was secured.
- €4.9m has been allocated to supporting Victims of Crime
- An additional €1.1m will be used to begin putting in place a legal advice and legal aid service in court for victims of sexual violence.
- And an additional €1 million is being provided under the Garda Vote to refurbish the Divisional Protective Service Units.

**‘Still Here’ campaign**

The Department of Justice, An Garda Síochána, the Courts Service, the Legal Aid Board, Tusla and other services, including the vital supports provided by the community and voluntary sector, worked collectively to ensure supports were available to address the likely increased risk to victims of DSGBV during the Covid-19 lockdown. The ‘Still Here’ campaign, which began in April 2020 and continued throughout 2021, sends the message that frontline supports and services continue to be available to victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence. It is also about getting the message out that travel restrictions do not apply in the case of domestic violence or to escape a risk of harm, whether to the person or to another person.
The Defence Organisation continues to support Ireland’s policy on Women, Peace and Security and the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 and Related Resolutions. The promotion of the first ever female Major General to serve on secondment to the UN, speaks to our commitment towards women’s meaningful and equitable participation at senior decision-making and leadership levels in Defence. At the United Nations, Major General Maureen O’Brien currently occupies the post of Deputy Military Advisor in the Office of Military Affairs, the most senior female military officer in the UN. (Major General Maureen O’Brien was appointed on 25/05/2021)

In addition, a Defence White Paper Project is underway and entails the conducting of a survey to ‘identify any impediments to the advancement of women in the PDF.’ (Defence White Paper Project 56 - DF leads on this project with support from DOD (DFPP Branch)

As committed in the Defence Forces Third Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security published in December 2020; there is continued implementation of a gender perspective in Defence Forces operations both at home and overseas with the aim of addressing the differing security needs experienced by women and men. For example, gender trained personnel are deployed with all DF troop rotations overseas equipped with plans for the integration of a gender perspective in IRISHBATT operations for completion and where KPI and relevant stakeholders are captured.

Following recent media coverage relating to historical allegations of unacceptable behaviour in the workplace, the Organisational Culture Standing Committee (OCSC) has been established by the Defence Forces in order to drive and coordinate the process of cultural change within the Defence Forces. The Minister has also established an Independent Review to carry out a robust examination of the systems, policies, procedures and workplace culture with a view to ensuring a safe workplace underpinned by dignity and equality for all members of the Defence Forces, both male and female. The Review will be undertaken by entirely external and independent experts in the field. The Minister has also introduced a set of interim support measures for people affected by these issues

Target 5.3
Eliminate all harmful practices, such as child, early and forced marriage and female genital mutilation.

The practice of FGM/C was officially made illegal in Ireland in 2012 and in May 2014 the first specialist clinic was opened for women who have been affected by FGM/C, estimated to be approximately 4000 women in Ireland.

A Better World, the Irish Government’s policy for international development, establishes gender equality as a policy priority. Ireland is among OECD countries with the highest annual proportion of official development assistance (ODA) invested in gender equality measures. Addressing gender-based violence and harmful practices is a key objective within that. The Sustainable Development Goals ask all UN members to eliminate female genital mutilation (FGM) by 2030. Ireland advocated strongly for the inclusion of this particular target on FGM, which is intended to provide much needed impetus to international action to end this appalling practice.

Overseas Ireland funds initiatives to this end through Irish and international NGOs, the UN and
through our country programmes, mostly in Africa. In 2021, through the Irish Aid programme, Ireland committed approximately €15 million annually to address Gender Based Violence (GBV). This includes partnerships with the International Rescue Committee, and the UN Trust Fund to End Violence Against Women, and the UN Population Fund (UNFPA) is a longstanding partner of Ireland’s.

In tackling FGM/C, Ireland takes a multi-dimensional approach tackling root causes including poverty, gender inequality, and gender based violence, and working to reduce the impact of FGM/C through increasing access to essential services, social supports, and opportunities for educational and economic advancement. In addition to supporting work at the EU and UN levels to end FGM, and with our civil society partners, Ireland has also supported work to end FGM at country level, including in Sierra Leone, Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya among other partner countries.

Irish Aid also works in partnership with the Ifrah Foundation, an Irish/Somali based NGO working towards the elimination of FGM in Somalia and the horn of Africa through Advocacy, Awareness and Community Empowerment.

The Department of Foreign Affairs supports and is a member of the Irish Consortium on Gender Based Violence which facilitates advocacy, learning and capacity building of Irish NGOs to respond to GBV.

**Target 5.4**

*Recognize and value unpaid care and domestic work through the provision of public services, infrastructure and social protection policies and the promotion of shared responsibility within the household and the family as nationally appropriate.*

The *Parent’s Leave and Benefit Act 2019* introduced an individual non-transferrable entitlement to 2 weeks paid leave for each parent of a qualifying child to be taken in the first year of the child’s life, with the intention to facilitate both parents to spend more time with their child in the earliest years. The leave also encourages greater sharing of family leaves and caring responsibilities.

The *Family Leaves and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2015* extended the entitlement to 5 weeks for each parent, to be taken within the first two years of the child’s life and the Government intends to extend the entitlement further to 7 weeks from July 2022.

Parent’s Leave and Benefit adds to the existing suite of paid and unpaid family leaves which pay a significant role in assisting families to achieve a better work-life balance.

**Target 5.5**

*Ensure women’s full and effective participation and equal opportunities for leadership at all levels of decision-making in political, economic and public life.*

Actions under the *National Strategy for Women and Girls* lead to the development of a range of
initiatives to promote women in leadership positions, including the Balance for Better Initiative a business led group whose aim it is to ensure that more women play a role at board level and in senior leadership teams. The most recent report of the initiative highlighted the continued progress being achieved against the targets for female representation on boards and leadership teams of Ireland’s 39 listed companies. ISEQ20 companies now have an average female representation of 32%, this is up from 18% in 2018 when B4BB was established.

The Women, Peace and Security Agenda
Ireland has been a longstanding champion of the Women, Peace and Security (WPS) agenda at the UN, reflecting Ireland's commitment to Goal 5: Gender Equality (as well as towards Goal 16: Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions, specifically towards Target 16.7: Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels). Ireland aims to demonstrate how women can be agents of change in conflict and post-conflict settings, by bringing those women to the table and emphasising the need for their full, equal, meaningful and safe participation in peace processes as well as in public life more broadly. At the UN Security Council Ireland has sought to ensure the voices of women on the ground are heard across the files on the Security Council’s agenda. Ireland's goal is to advance the WPS agenda more broadly across all the work of the Security Council – including on country, thematic and peacekeeping files – as well as through ongoing engagement with civil society.

Ireland’s third National Action Plan (NAP) on WPS has been afforded special recognition by the UN Secretary-General for including women from conflict-affected contexts living in Ireland, those who have experienced conflict on the island of Ireland, and rural and minority women, in the design and development of the Plan. The Plan includes an ambitious set of actions across government in development, peacekeeping and diplomatic engagement. As a UN Member State with over sixty years of continuous peacekeeping experience, Ireland recognises the importance of integrating gender perspectives and empowering women in peacekeeping. The Plan forms a central element of Ireland’s broader commitment to gender equality, which is a priority in Ireland’s foreign policy, reflected in both The Global Island and Ireland’s policy for international development, A Better World. (DFA)

Target 5.6
Ensure universal access to sexual and reproductive health and reproductive rights as agreed in accordance with the Programme of Action of the International Conference on Population and Development and the Beijing Platform for Action and the outcome documents of their review conferences.

As with targets 3.3 and 3.7 above, the National Sexual Health Strategy is one of the main national policies driving actions relevant to this target.

In addition, services for termination of pregnancy under the Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act 2018 have been available since 1 January 2019. These services should be made available in all 19 maternity hospitals. All hospitals are providing terminations in emergency situations (when a woman’s life or health is at risk). Terminations in cases of fatal foetal abnormality
are, generally, available in the larger tertiary hospitals, as in such cases particular expertise, only available in those hospitals, may be required. Terminations up to 12 weeks of pregnancy are currently being provided in 10 maternity hospitals/units.

**Target 5.a**

Undertake reforms to give women equal rights to economic resources, as well as access to ownership and control over land and other forms of property, financial services, inheritance and natural resources, in accordance with national laws.

*A Better World*, Ireland’s international development policy, launched in early 2019, establishes gender equality as a core policy priority for Ireland’s international development cooperation. Ireland’s efforts to increase investments in gender mainstreaming have been successful. The share of programmes that integrate gender equality across its entire portfolio is one of the highest among DAC donors, covering health, education, agriculture and gender-related statistics. Ireland’s allocations align well with its gender equality priorities. The Official Development Assistance portfolio has a strong thematic focus on human development, governance and civil society, humanitarian assistance, and agriculture – all of the intervention areas identified in *A Better World*.

**Target 5.b**

Enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology, to promote the empowerment of women.

*A Better World* commits to an overarching focus on women and girls in all of our partnerships. Ireland provides funding to UN Women’s flagship programme on gender-related data, Making Every Woman and Girl Count. This builds the technical capacity of national statistics agencies to enhance the availability of data on gender equality and women’s empowerment.

**Target 5.c**

Adopt and strengthen sound policies and enforceable legislation for the promotion of gender equality and the empowerment of all women and girls at all levels.

The Programme for Government includes a commitment to develop a successor to the outgoing *National Strategy for Women and Girls* and the development of a new Strategy is expected to begin in 2023.

The *Gender Pay Gap Information Act 2021* was passed by the Oireachtas in 2021 and provides for the introduction of gender pay gap reporting. Gender pay gap reporting will begin for organisations with over 250 employees in 2022.

Access to family leaves was extended through the *Family Leaves and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2021* which extended access to paid-Parent’s Leave to five weeks for each parent of a child under 2, and the removal of a presumption of gender in Adoptive Leave, allowing families to choose which parent will avail of the leave.
SDG 6 Clean Water and Sanitation
SDG 6
Ensure availability and sustainable management of water and sanitation for all

Target 6.1
By 2030, achieve universal and equitable access to safe and affordable drinking water for all.

Targets 6.1, 6.3 and 6.4 are addressed by means of the Water Services Policy Statement and the implementation of River Basin Management Plans to ensure a robust policy for water quality, while meeting the objectives of the EU Water Framework Directive.

Published in 2018, the Water Services Policy Statement gives clear direction to strategic planning and decision making on water and wastewater services in Ireland for the period up to 2025. The Statement sets out a series of high-level policy objectives across the three thematic areas of Quality, Conservation, and Future Proofing, which must be pursued when planning capital investment and framing current spending plans. A copy of the Policy Statement is available on the Department Of Housing, Local Government and Heritage’s website at the following link: https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/49364-water-services-policy-statement-2018-2025/

Ireland’s second River Basin Management Plan, outlines the measures the Government and other sectors are taking to improve water quality in Ireland’s groundwater, rivers, lakes, estuarine and coastal waters during the period 2018 - 2021. A key commitment in the programme for government, a new strengthened River Basin Management Plan for the period 2022-2027 is currently being finalised for publication in 2022. Building on the work of the second cycle and strengthening the incorporation of the integrated catchment management approach, this plan will again describe the main pressures and activities affecting water status, set out the environmental objectives to be achieved up to 2027 and identify the measures needed to achieve these objectives. A copy of the draft River Basin Management Plan for 2022-2027 is available at www.gov.ie/draftRBMP

An Fóram Uisce (The Water Forum) established as a statutory body in June 2018, provides a platform for public engagement on all matters relating to water as an environmental, social and economic resource. It provides an opportunity for stakeholders to debate and analyse a range of issues with regard to water quality, rural water concerns, issues affecting customers of Irish Water and the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and the preparation of River Basin Management Plans for Ireland.

Target 6.2
By 2030, achieve access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all and end open defecation, paying special attention to the needs of women and girls and those in vulnerable situations.
In our international development policy, *A Better World*, we are committed to supporting the state capacity, effective institutions, and adequate finance that are essential for fostering integrated, participatory approaches to sustainable planning, health and sanitation. In the context of unprecedented levels of economic growth across the world, coupled with climate change, that are increasing pressure on natural resources, public service provision is struggling to keep pace with needs, with particular impact on women and girls, the rural poor, the poorest living in cities, and those in fragile and conflict-affected countries and regions. We focus on those furthest behind first in all our interventions.

In February 2021 year a sub-committee of Ireland’s National Strategy for Women and Girls published a discussion paper on period poverty (in Ireland), see [here](#). Included in that paper were recommendations for various actors on how to address the issue. The paper makes recommendations that are mostly oriented for actions needed in Ireland.

For DFA there is the additional suggestion to: Prioritise the issue of menstrual equity for girls and children’s rights as central to Irish Aid’s work overseas in line with the UN’s Sustainable Development Goal 5 on achieving gender equality and empowering all women and girls, and Goal 6 which calls for universal and equitable access to adequate and equitable sanitation and hygiene for all by 2030.

In 2022, the Department of Foreign Affairs will seek to increase the number of initiatives that tackle period poverty through our embassy network, in particular in low-income settings. In addition, we will pilot the provision of environmentally sound period products for staff and visiting members of the public in a number of our missions around the world and in HQ. Learnings from that pilot will be used to inform the development of a departmental approach in due course.

**Target 6.3**

*By 2030, improve water quality by reducing pollution, eliminating dumping and minimizing release of hazardous chemicals and materials, halving the proportion of untreated wastewater and substantially increasing recycling and safe reuse globally.*

[See text above for target 6.1]

**Target 6.4**

*By 2030, substantially increase water-use efficiency across all sectors and ensure sustainable withdrawals and supply of freshwater to address water scarcity and substantially reduce the number of people suffering from water scarcity.*

[See text above for target 6.1]

**Target 6.5**

*By 2030, implement integrated water resources management at all levels,*
including through transboundary cooperation as appropriate.

Both targets 6.5 and 6.6 are addressed by means of the EU Water Framework Directive and incorporation of integrated catchment management within Ireland’s current River Basin Management Plan for Ireland (2018-2021). Preparations are currently underway for the publication of Ireland’s next River Basin Management Plan to cover the period 2022 to 2027. A key commitment in the Programme for Government, a 6 month public consultation on the draft plan has recently been completed, and a review of the submissions received is underway with a view to delivering a new strengthened River Basin Management Plan. Northern Ireland has also moved into its third cycle of river basin management plan making for 2022-2027, with their draft plan launched for a 6 month public consultation on 9 April 2021. As part of this process, Ireland and Northern Ireland authorities are working together to continue strong water governance arrangements in the border area, via formal North-South mechanisms of the Good Friday (Belfast) Agreement, now that the whole UK is no longer within the EU legal framework.

Target 6.5 is also addressed by the Water Services Policy Statement, which outlines Ireland’s policy objectives for water services, including quality, conservation and the future proofing of services.

**Target 6.6**

*By 2020, protect and restore water-related ecosystems, including mountains, forests, wetlands, rivers, aquifers and lakes.*

To address the requirements of the EU Water Framework Directive (WFD), the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland (2018-2021) contains provision for a number of initiatives. These include, among others: increased waste water treatment in urban areas; increased focus in agriculture on the efficient use of nutrients and on water quality; improved protection of public drinking water sources; new water quality measures in 600–700 water bodies; improved water quality in 150 additional water bodies; increased public and stakeholder engagement with water issues. A new strengthened River Basin Management Plan, due for publication in 2022, will further address the requirements of the WFD and Target 6.6

**Target 6.a**

*By 2030, expand international cooperation and capacity-building support to developing countries in water- and sanitation-related activities and programmes, including water harvesting, desalination, water efficiency, wastewater treatment, recycling and reuse technologies.*

*The Global Island*, Ireland’s foreign policy, commits Ireland to promoting a fairer, just, secure and sustainable world. Ireland supports international cooperation and capacity-building in water and sanitation through our contributions to, and engagement with, multilateral development banks. Ireland also supports the UN Environment Programme’s Global Environment Monitoring System for freshwater.
**Target 6.b**

**Support and strengthen the participation of local communities in improving water and sanitation management.**

Target 6.b is addressed by means of An Fóram Uisce (The Water Forum), a statutory body established in June 2018 to provide a platform for public engagement on all matters relating to water as an environmental, social and economic resource. An Fóram Uisce is also closely engaged in the development of the next River Basin Management Plan. Since the launch of the draft plan for public consultation, a number of further engagements have taken place with An Fóram Uisce, and other stakeholders, to discuss the proposed measures to address water quality in Ireland and how these measures (including those in relation to public participation) can be strengthened for inclusion in the final plan.

The Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO), a national shared service working on behalf of all 31 local authorities in Ireland on the implementation of the Water Framework Directive, also provides extensive stakeholder and community engagement on local water matters while coordinating efforts to achieve good or high water quality.
SDG 7 Affordable and Clean Energy
SDG 7
Ensure access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all

Target 7.1
By 2030, ensure universal access to affordable, reliable and modern energy services.

Strategy to Combat Energy Poverty
The Government’s Strategy to Combat Energy Poverty was published in 2016. The Strategy set out a range of actions to alleviate the burden of energy poverty on the most vulnerable in society. The focus of the strategy is on high impact actions which aimed to make a real difference to the lives of those in energy poverty.

Good progress has been made under the strategy including:

- Funding for SEAI energy poverty retrofit schemes has increased dramatically over the period from €15 million in 2015 to over €109 million for 2021;
- Fuel Allowance payments have increased from €20 per week for 26 weeks in 2015 to €33 per week for 28 weeks in Budget 2022;
- Eligibility for free energy upgrades has been significantly expanded to include those in receipt of more DSP payments;
- The average value of a free upgrade under SEAI schemes has increased from €2,200 to €17,500;
- The Housing for All Strategy has committed to introducing minimum Building Energy Ratings for rented properties from 2025;
- The allocations for retrofit of social housing have also increased significantly to €85 million this year.

A review of the implementation of the Strategy to Combat Energy Poverty will be completed in the coming weeks and this will inform the next steps with a view to a new Strategy later this year. Measures to support those least able to afford to retrofit their homes have also been included in the new National Retrofit Plan, which was published as part of Climate Action Plan 2021.

National Energy and Climate Plan
To meet the EU’s energy and climate targets for 2030, EU countries need to establish a 10—year integrated national energy and climate plan (NECP) and submit progress reports for the period from 2021 to 2030.

These national plans outline how the EU countries intend to address:

- energy efficiency
Ireland is committed to achieving an energy resilient union with a forward-looking climate policy. Ireland’s NECP builds on previous national strategies and sets out in detail our objectives regarding the five energy dimensions together with our planned policies and measures to ensure that we achieve those objectives.

The first progress report is due to the Commission in 2023.

Smart metering
Citizen participation in the clean energy transition is essential to meeting our ambitious climate targets. The infrastructure needed to empower citizens to become active energy consumers is smart metering. With 750,000 smart meters already installed, and 1.1 million due to be reached by end 2022, Ireland has now achieved a critical mass. The next step is to ensure that we maximise the benefits of this critical public infrastructure for consumers and for the resilience of our energy system as we accelerate its decarbonisation.

Smart meters are set up to record consumption in day, night and peak time periods, as well as in shorter half-hour intervals. This in turn allows for electricity to be charged, based on the time of day it is used – known as Time of Use, or smart tariffs. Smart meters are also configured to record any electricity feeding into the grid, thereby facilitating payments under the Micro-generation Support Scheme. Smart metering provides the information consumers need to make more informed choices about their consumption and the best tariff option for them.

In February 2021, the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) made it an obligation on electricity suppliers to provide Time of Use tariffs to their customers. Building on this and as set out in SI 37 of 2022, work is underway to put in place a smart meter data access code, which will provide the framework for consumers to access much more detailed data on their historical energy usage, empowering them to engage with suppliers to find the smart tariff offering most suitable for them. This will in turn drive consumer demand for an increased range of more sophisticated smart tariff offerings from suppliers.

Target 7.2
By 2030, increase substantially the share of renewable energy in the global energy mix.

The Climate Action Plan 2021:
The Climate Action Plan 2021, reflects the legally binding targets for 2030 and 2050 by setting a roadmap for taking decisive action to meet these. The 2021 Plan is a cross-government project, with inputs and commitments from a range of Government Departments and State Agencies. It provided indicative ranges of emissions reductions required for each sector of the economy to reach our 2030 target, while also setting out the actions needed to deliver these targets.
While *Climate Action Plan 2021* builds on the ambitious targets of the 2019 Plan, it represents a significant step-up in terms of ambition and implementation.

An accompanying Annex of Actions was published 14 December 2021. The Annex provides detailed implementation pathways for actions, including specific timelines and clear lines of responsibility for the relevant Department or Agency.

Under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, the Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications has prepared for approval Ireland’s first Carbon Budget Programme and Sectoral Emission Ceilings. The Carbon Budgets comprise three five-year periods comprising 2021-2025, 2026-2030 and 2031-2035 (provisional). The Carbon Budgets were approved and came into being following approval by both Houses of the Oireachtas in April 2022. The Sectoral Emission Ceilings, which set the amount of emissions within each sector of the economy and must operate within the parameters of the carbon budgets, were approved by Government and came into effect on 28 July 2022.

The next Climate Action Plan will be developed in 2022 to provide an update on the progress made in meeting Ireland’s national climate objective and will seek to identify any challenges or obstacles in relation to this progress.

This updated Climate Action Plan will reflect Ireland’s new Carbon Budget Programme and Sectoral Emission Ceilings.

Under the Sectoral Emissions Ceilings emissions the electricity sector is now required to reduce emissions to 3 MtCO$_2$eq by 2030. In order to meet this target emissions in the electricity sector must decrease by 75%.

**Key Targets and Actions for the Electricity Sector Under Climate Action Plan 2021.**

- **Core Measures** includes a more rapid build-out of renewable generation capacity, particularly in the areas of offshore wind, solar power and micro-generation.
- **Further Measures** include increased electricity storage, the deployment of zero-emissions gas (i.e., biogas, biomethane and hydrogen) and the production of hydrogen for use in other industries.
- **CAP 2021** takes account of challenges in this sector – the growth in demand for power, as well as the need to ensure security of supply through the decarbonization journey.
- **By 2030, 75% of electricity, under the sectoral emissions ceiling, will be generated using renewable energy with a mix of 5 GW from offshore wind, 8 GW from onshore wind and 1.5-2.5 GW from solar PV.**

Through the *Climate Action Plan, the Sectoral Emissions Ceilings and Low Carbon Development Act 2021* the Government has committed to a binding target to increase the share of electricity generated from renewable sources by 2030.
Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS)

*Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS)* is a competitive auction-based scheme which invites renewable electricity generation projects to bid for capacity and receive a guaranteed price for the electricity they generate.

Supported technologies include onshore wind, solar and hybrids. It will also allow Ireland to take advantage of new technologies as they emerge to ensure delivery of renewable electricity in a sustainable, cost effective and secure framework, in the context of Ireland’s renewable electricity target of up to 80% by 2030.

Over 1GW of new wind and solar generation was secured in the RESS 1 auction in 2020, the first of these projects are now connecting to the grid and generating renewable electricity, projects are expected to reach commercial operation before the end of 2023. The Government has approved the final results of the onshore RESS 2 auction, with 2,748 GWh successful in the auction, equating to 414MW of onshore wind and 1,534MW of solar. This represents a potential increase of nearly 20% in Ireland’s current renewable energy generation capacity.

A future schedule of auctions through to 2025 was published in December 2021 so that generators can develop their projects with confidence to line up with these regular auctions ensuring a steady supply of projects to meet national targets.

The *Climate Action Plan* also includes an ambition for a pipeline of community projects to contribute up to 500 MW of community renewable energy by 2030. The Microgeneration Support Scheme which is being introduced on a phased basis throughout 2022 and the Small-Scale Generation scheme which is currently under development, will both contribute towards this goal.

A supporting Government strategy which proposes planning permission exemptions for rooftop solar panels on homes and other buildings proposed has just been published for consultation. The proposed changes to the existing planning exemptions for the installation of solar panels on the roofs of houses and certain non-domestic buildings are aimed at increasing Ireland’s generation of solar energy and national action on climate change.

Ireland through the Green Climate Fund supports and finances renewable energy development in developing countries.

In 2022 the EU Taxonomy for sustainable activities’ delegated act covering conditions for climate mitigation and adaptation, including renewable energy, came into force. Through providing security to investors on what can be considered environmentally sustainable, the Taxonomy aims to guide increased investments in sustainable economic activities including renewable energy.

**Target 7.3**

*By 2030, double the global rate of improvement in energy efficiency.*

**National Retrofit Plan**

The Programme for Government and Climate Action Plan set ambitious targets to retrofit the
equivalent of 500,000 homes to a Building Energy Rating (BER) of B2/cost optimal and the installation of 400,000 heat pumps in existing homes to replace older, less efficient heating systems by end-2030.

The National Retrofit Plan, which was published as part of Climate Action Plan 2021, sets out how the government will deliver on our retrofit targets. The Plan is designed to address barriers to retrofit across four key pillars: driving demand and activity; financing and funding; supply chain, skills and standards; and governance. For each pillar, barriers were identified and time-bound policies, measures and actions were put in place to address them. The initiatives in the Plan were guided by a number of key principles:

- fairness – ensuring fairness to all and supporting a just transition
- universality – covering all housing types and consumer segments/income deciles
- customer-centric – designing customer centric solutions to reduce the costs and hassle, making the process easier for those investing in retrofit
- cost-optimal – encouraging retrofits to cost-optimal level and maximising emissions abatement
- industry-led – stimulating and supporting industry confidence to invest, grow and take on more workers

National Energy and Climate Plan
To meet the EU's energy and climate targets for 2030, EU countries need to establish a 10-year integrated national energy and climate plan (NECP) and submit progress reports for the period from 2021 to 2030.

These national plans outline how the EU countries intend to address:

- energy efficiency
- renewables
- greenhouse gas emissions reductions
- interconnections
- research and innovation

Ireland is committed to achieving an energy resilient union with a forward-looking climate policy. Ireland's NECP builds on previous national strategies and sets out in detail our objectives regarding the five energy dimensions together with our planned policies and measures to ensure that we achieve those objectives.

The first progress report is due to the Commission in 2023.

The Climate Action Plan 2021
The Climate Action Plan 2021, reflects the legally binding targets for 2030 and 2050 by setting a roadmap for taking decisive action to meet these. The 2021 Plan is a cross-government project, with inputs and commitments from a range of Government Departments and State Agencies. It provided indicative ranges of emissions reductions required for each sector of the economy to reach our 2030 target, while also setting out the actions needed to deliver these targets.
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- **CAP 2021** takes account of challenges in this sector – the growth in demand for power, as well as the need to ensure security of supply through the decarbonization journey.
- **By 2030**, 75% of electricity, under the sectoral emissions ceiling, will be generated using renewable energy with a mix of 5 GW from offshore wind, 8 GW from onshore wind and 1.5-2.5 GW from solar PV.

Through the *Climate Action Plan, the Sectoral Emissions Ceilings and Low Carbon Development Act 2021* the Government has committed to a binding target to increase the share of electricity generated from renewable sources by 2030.
**Target 7.a**

By 2030, enhance international cooperation to facilitate access to clean energy research and technology, including renewable energy, energy efficiency and advanced and cleaner fossil-fuel technology, and promote investment in energy infrastructure and clean energy technology.

Climate action is a policy priority in *A Better World*, with commitments to future proofing all of our development cooperation; scaling up our spending and exploring innovative approaches to risk insurance and climate adaptation. Ireland supports access to clean energy research and technology through our contributions to, and engagement with, multilateral development banks.

Ireland works at EU level and in the Green Climate Fund to improve enhance and promote these areas.

**Target 7.b**

By 2030, expand infrastructure and upgrade technology for supplying modern and sustainable energy services for all in developing countries, in particular least developed countries, small island developing States, and land-locked developing countries, in accordance with their respective programmes of support.

Climate action is a policy priority in *A Better World*, with commitments to future proofing all of our development cooperation; scaling up our spending and exploring innovative approaches to risk insurance and climate adaptation. Ireland supports supply of modern and sustainable energy through our contributions to, and engagement with, multilateral development banks. Ireland through the Green Climate Fund finances such activities and maintains a focus on the most vulnerable countries.
SDG 8  Decent Work and Economic Growth
SDG 8
Promote sustained, inclusive and sustainable economic growth, full and productive employment and decent work for all

Target 8.1
Sustain per capita economic growth in accordance with national circumstances and, in particular, at least 7 per cent gross domestic product growth per annum in the least developed countries.

The Department of Finance publishes annual national budgets, stability programme updates, and summer economic statements to promote a stable macroeconomic environment and sound public finances. The Department engages with International Financial Institutions to ensure the governance, policy, strategy and programme performance of each institution are focused to promote economic growth and stimulus in least developed countries.

Target 8.2
Achieve higher levels of economic productivity through diversification, technological upgrading and innovation, including through a focus on high-value added and labour-intensive sectors.

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment’s upcoming Enterprise Strategy White Paper is anticipated to address issues related to this target.

Target 8.3
Promote development-oriented policies that support productive activities, decent job creation, entrepreneurship, creativity and innovation, and encourage the formalization and growth of micro-, small- and medium-sized enterprises, including through access to financial services.

The Economic Recovery Plan, led by D/Taoiseach and launched in June 2021, sets out a new phase of supports and policies to support businesses and workers and help individuals get back into employment, training, or education following the severe unprecedented impact of Covid-19. The Economic Recovery Plan is currently the main strategy through which progress towards many of DETE’s SDG targets will be made.

Pillar 3 of the Economic Recovery Plan targets SME growth and measures to improve productivity by focusing on the digital transformation of business processes for SME’s as well as prioritizing export diversification. An essential part of this target is fostering entrepreneurship and start-ups to improve value added and long-term growth. As part of this plan, a Ministerial-lead SME and
Entrepreneurship Implementation Group leads on the delivery of supports for SMEs across all sectors. In addition, a single SME portal will be established to streamline access to assistance and take forward the recommendations brought forth by the SME and Entrepreneurship Growth Plan.

**Target 8.4**

Improve progressively, through 2030, global resource efficiency in consumption and production and endeavour to decouple economic growth from environmental degradation, in accordance with the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, with developed countries taking the lead.

**The Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy**

The Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy (WAPCE) was launched in September 2020 with more than 200 recommendations to be attained over the following five year period. To date a number of recommendations have been implemented while others are well advanced. A key recommendation from the WAPCE was the introduction of a Circular Economy Bill which will initiate other recommendations such as the introduction of a number of economic instruments to assist in the reduction of generated waste to reach the relevant targets. The Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022 was enacted in July 2022.

**Target 8.5**

By 2030, achieve full and productive employment and decent work for all women and men, including for young people and persons with disabilities, and equal pay for work of equal value.

Progress towards target 8.5 will be achieved through the Economic Recovery Plan. The plan contains a focus to help people back to work and reduce the risk of labour market scarring, which is to be achieved through labour market supports, increased activation through Pathways to Work 2021-2025, and the provision of training and upskilling opportunities.

An emphasis is placed on addressing youth unemployment within the plan due to the disproportionate effect of the pandemic on young people. In order to achieve this, intensive engagement with young job seekers will begin under a new EU Reinforced Youth Guarantee process in addition to an expanded Jobs Plus scheme.

Pillar 4 of the place focuses on building an inclusive society and labour market with greater emphasis on good quality employment, increasing participation and reducing barriers as the economy recovers. Progress on gender equality is to be achieved through the Gender Pay Gap Information legislation, promoting gender balance across senior management positions, and driving an increase in women led start-ups and scale-ups through the Enterprise Ireland Action Plan for Women in Business.

Work to achieve full and productive employment for those with disabilities is envisaged to achieved through supporting employers in the recruitment and retention of people with disabilities.
and developing initiatives to improve employment opportunities for those with disabilities in rural areas including through remote working options. Under Pathways to Work 2021-2025, an Early Engagement model for jobseekers with disabilities will be introduced, and wider take-up of incentives and supports available for the employment of people with disabilities will be promoted.

Target 8.6
By 2020, substantially reduce the proportion of youth not in employment, education or training.

Young people in the labour market (those under 25 years of age) can be adversely affected by labour market disruptions by virtue of the sectors they typically are employed in. This was particularly the case over the course of the pandemic when the COVID-19 adjusted measure of youth unemployment rose to almost 70 percent by April 2020.

However, following the phased reopening of the post-pandemic economy over the latter half of 2021, most young people returned to work, resulting in a strong decline in the youth unemployment rate. As of May 2022, the seasonally adjusted youth unemployment rate stands at 4.9 percent, an historic low. Similarly, the proportion of our youth population not in education, employment or training (NEET) has also declined sharply. Latest figures from Eurostat show Ireland’s NEET rate to be 6.7 percent as of Q4 2021 which compares favourably with the 10.6 percent rate for the EU 27 and Ireland’s own pre-pandemic 2019 Q4 figure of 9.8 percent.

While it is welcome that the youth unemployment rate has declined to less than half pre-pandemic levels, it is critical to continue to minimise potential scarring effects amongst young people who permanently lost their jobs during the pandemic and to support those disadvantaged young people who face barriers to labour market entry.

Accordingly, the Department of Social Protection has set out a series of targeted employment supports under Pathways to Work 2021-2025, the Government’s national employment services strategy, to promote youth employment opportunities both to move into / return to the labour market, and also to provide options for upward mobility within the labour market.

The Pathways to Work Strategy includes the following supports to help young people:

- Ring-fenced positions for young people on the Work Placement Experience Programme;
- Additional Community Employment and Tús places for young people;
- Increased places on the JobsPlus recruitment subsidy - with the subsidy being available, on an earlier basis than normal, to employers when they recruit unemployed young people;
- Targeting 10,000 apprentice registrations per year by 2025;
- Implementing an intensive model of engagement with young people (18-29 years of age) profiled as being at risk of long-term unemployment, as part of the EU’s Reinforced Youth Guarantee.
- Relaunching and expanding the Youth Employment Charter with employers to promote recruitment through Intreo of young unemployed people.
The Department also works closely with the Further Education and Training sector to provide access to training and upskilling opportunities. As part of Budget 2022 and Paths to Work 2021-2025, the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science are providing an additional 50,000 further education and training places to help more people to have the opportunity to upskill for employment into a new sector.

These measures will be of particular relevance to young people seeking to enter / advance in the labour market.

**Target 8.7**

*Take immediate and effective measures to eradicate forced labour, end modern slavery and human trafficking and secure the prohibition and elimination of the worst forms of child labour, including recruitment and use of child soldiers, and by 2025 end child labour in all its forms.*

**National Referral Mechanism**

On 11 May 2021 the Government approved the creation of a revised National Referral Mechanism (NRM) to make it easier for victims of trafficking to come forward, be identified and access support. A new National Referral Mechanism Operational Committee, made up of a number of competent authorities\(^2\) will make decisions on entry of victims into the NRM. In addition, selected NGOs will be designated as ‘trusted partners’ will also be able to refer victims to the NRM. This will allow an alternative and trusted pathway to enter the NRM, aside from State agencies. The NGO selection criteria will be set out in legislation and will essentially relate to undertaking the quasi-judicial and due diligence obligations of all NRM partners. The Department of Justice is currently in the process of drafting the General Scheme for the legislation to put the NRM on a legislative footing. This will be published by end of Q2 2022.

New operating procedures are also being developed which will guide the work of the competent authorities in the revised NRM. This will be carried out in a collaborative spirit with Departments, agencies and key NGO partners.

**Legislative amendment to expunge previous convictions for ‘sale of sex’ or prostitution offences**

A legislative amendment, which will provide for the expunging of convictions relating to the sale of sexual services that were acquired prior to a relevant legislative amendment of 2017, is currently being drafted within the Department of Justice. This initiative is being progressed arising from recognition that persons convicted relating to the sale of sexual services, may have been victims of human trafficking.

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\(^2\) An Garda Síochána, Department of Justice Immigration Services, Department of Social Protection, HSE, Tusla, Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, International Protection Accommodation Services (IPAS) and the Workplace Relations Commission
National Rapporteur for Anti-Human Trafficking

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) was designated as Ireland’s independent National Rapporteur for Anti-Human Trafficking under article 19 of the EU Human Trafficking Directive. The National Rapporteur’s responsibilities will include monitoring the implementation of anti-trafficking policy at the national level and playing a key role in data collection on trafficking in human beings at national level.

Legislation

The Criminal Justice (Smuggling of Persons) Act 2021 was signed into law on 15 December 2021. The Act provides for the transposition of three international legal instruments in the area of people smuggling.

Additionally the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (The Lanzarote Convention) entered into force in respect of Ireland on 1 April 2021. The Convention is a significant, international, legal instrument in protecting children from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse, and to promote national and international cooperation against such conduct.

Target 8.8

Protect labour rights and promote safe and secure working environments for all workers, including migrant workers, in particular women migrants, and those in precarious employment.

Work towards this target is achieved through the Workplace Relations Commission (WRC) which is an independent statutory office under the aegis of the Department of Enterprise Trade and Employment. The WRC was established in 2015 and its core services include the inspection of employment rights compliance, the provision of information and the provision of mediation, conciliation, and adjudication services.

Ireland’s comprehensive body of employment rights legislation protects all employees in Ireland who are legally employed on a contract of service basis.

Target 8.9

By 2030, devise and implement policies to promote sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.

The Government’s Tourism Policy Statement, People, Place, and Policy: Growing Tourism to 2025, affirms that it will place tourism as a key element of its economic strategy, with development in the tourism sector reflecting the highest standards of environment and economic sustainability.

As we look to rebuild the tourism sector in a post-pandemic world, the Department has initiated the development of a new national tourism policy that will seek to mainstream sustainability. This policy commitment will seek to deliver on Ireland’s ambition to be among the world-leaders in sustainable tourism practices from not only an environmental but also a social and economic perspective.
This new policy will build upon the work undertaken by the Sustainable Tourism Working Group, under the aegis of the Department, which has developed Guiding Principles for Sustainable Tourism Development in Ireland.

In addition to its intrinsic value, culture and creativity makes a significant contribution to tourism in Ireland and through policy frameworks such as Culture 2025 as well as Creative Ireland’s Creative Communities initiative, the Department is committed to ensuring cultural heritage and local communities are both protected and allowed to flourish as part of Ireland’s sustainable tourism agenda.

**Target 8.10**

**Strengthen the capacity of domestic financial institutions to encourage and expand access to banking, insurance and financial services for all.**

The Government continues to prioritise reform of the insurance sector in order to improve the cost and availability of this key financial service, as part of the implementation of the Action Plan for Insurance Reform. In this regard, the Cabinet Committee Sub-Group on Insurance Reform meets on a quarterly basis to oversee its implementation, which sets out 66 actions across several policy areas.

As at May 2022 there are 209 Credit Unions with over 400 branches holding €20 billion of assets and €5.2 billion of loans. Credit unions are continuing to expand the range of services provided to members. Following the introduction of new lending regulations on 1 January 2020, credit unions now have an increased combined capacity for SME and mortgage lending up to approximately €1.1 billion. The number of credit unions approved for, and offering, current accounts continues to expand with over 71 credit unions now offering current accounts.

**Target 8.a**

**Increase Aid for Trade support for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, including through the Enhanced Integrated Framework for Trade-Related Technical Assistance to Least Developed Countries.**

*A Better World* commits to promoting inclusive economic growth and trade and support initiatives that seek to foster trade and investment. Ireland’s contributions to, and our engagement with, multilateral development banks supports investment in capacity building and infrastructure that builds economic growth and trade.
Target 8.b
By 2020, develop and operationalize a global strategy for youth employment and implement the Global Jobs Pact of the International Labour Organization.

Under Pillar 2 of the Economic Recovery Plan there is a focus on youth unemployment with an expanded jobs plus scheme to incentivise the recruitment of young unemployed people and working intensively with young people at greater risk of long-term unemployment. As part of a new Government Youth Employment Charter, a new ambitious EU Reinforced Youth Guarantee process will see intensive engagement with young jobseekers, which seeks to widen the target cohort to include those aged 24-29. An expanded Jobs Plus scheme, with 8,000 places overall, will continue to provide a higher incentive for the recruitment of young unemployed people.
SDG 9 Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure
SDG 9
Build resilient infrastructure, promote inclusive and sustainable industrialisation and foster innovation

Target 9.1
Develop quality, reliable, sustainable and resilient infrastructure, including regional and transborder infrastructure, to support economic development and human well-being, with a focus on affordable and equitable access for all.

Project Ireland 2040 is a whole of Government strategy and spans the breadth of Government Departments and agencies. In order to co-ordinate and drive implementation of the National Planning Framework (NPF) in tandem with the National Development Plan (NDP), governance arrangements were put in place in the form of the Project Ireland 2040 Delivery Board, which includes high-level representation from across Government. It is co-chaired by the Secretaries General of the Departments of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) and Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) and has met regularly since 2018.

The DHLGH implementation support role is primarily focused on strategic and spatial planning, and has focused on bringing forward institutional, regulatory and investment measures required to deliver compact and regional growth objectives set out in the NPF. As with all public spending departments and agencies across government, there is a wider DHLGH role in the implementation of the NPF and NDP, through the significant capital investment programmes for which the Department is responsible in the areas of water, housing, the Urban and Rural Development Fund (URDF), as well as local government expenditure.

Project Ireland 2040 is the government’s long-term overarching strategy to make Ireland a better country for all and to build a more resilient and sustainable future. The National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan combine to form Project Ireland 2040. The NPF sets the vision and strategy for the development of our country to 2040 and the NDP provides the enabling investment to implement that strategy. By 2040, there will be approximately one million additional people living here in Ireland. This population growth will new homes, heightened cultural, and social amenities, enhanced regional connectivity and improved environmental sustainability. Project Ireland 2040 sets out to deliver these. The objective of Project Ireland 2040 is to provide a comprehensive social, economic and cultural infrastructure for all our people. Project Ireland 2040 is enhancing regional connectivity and competitiveness, improving environmental sustainability and building a fairer, more equal Ireland for everyone.

The Project Ireland 2040 strategy ensures the alignment of investment plans with the National Strategic Objectives for 2040 in a considered, cohesive and defined manner.
The National Strategic Outcomes are:

- Compact Growth
- Enhanced Regional Accessibility
- Strengthened Rural Economies and Communities
- Sustainable Mobility
- A Strong Economy supported by Enterprise, Innovation and Skills
- High-Quality International Connectivity
- Enhanced Amenity and Heritage
- Transition to a Low Carbon and Climate Resilient Society
- Sustainable Management of Water, Waste and other Environmental Resources
- Access to Quality Childcare, Education and Health Services

This represents a shift from the approach of the past, which saw funding spread thinly across sectors and public investment decisions. Alongside the development of physical infrastructure, Project Ireland 2040 supports business and communities across all of Ireland in realising their potential.

The NDP was reviewed and published in October 2021 as the NDP 2021-30. With an investment of €165 billion over the next decade this revised plan will deliver the largest and greenest NDP in the history of the State.

The regional element has been strengthened throughout the NDP 2021-30. National Strategic Outcome 2, enhanced regional connectivity, seeks to enhance intra-regional accessibility through improving transport links between key urban centres of population and their respective regions, as well as improving transport links between the regions themselves. The Government is firmly committed to encouraging the use of walking, cycling and other active travel methods, and this has been signalled by the recent increase in the active travel budget, for example, through the continued rollout of the successful and popular Greenways programme throughout the country. The Department of Transport launched the National Investment Framework for Transport in Ireland (NIFTI) in late 2021 which sets out the prioritisation for future investment in the land transport network to support the delivery of the National Planning Framework (NPF). Investment in the regional and commuter bus fleet will continue with the purchase of up to 400 new vehicles. A Strategic Rail Review was launched in late 2021, which will examine all aspects of the inter-urban and inter-regional rail network including decarbonising the railway, and the feasibility of higher speeds and increased capacity. Under the NDP, the National Roads programme will continue to provide for improved connectivity across the years 2021-2030. Accordingly, there will be significant investment in the national road network across the next 10 years.

The rural and urban funds under the NDP 2021-30 are being targeted outside of Dublin in line with the National Planning Framework with a range of major investments planned throughout the country. Major public transport investments are planned in each of the regional cities of Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford, along with improved public transport in rural areas. The reviewed National Development Plan sets an enhanced level of ambition for collaborative
cross-border public investment, to build a more connected, prosperous and sustainable island, for all communities and traditions that share the island. The Government will work through strong all-island partnerships, to co-design, co-fund and co-deliver investments to enhance the shared island and address common strategic concerns including on balanced regional development, pandemic recovery, and climate action. The Government’s Shared Island Fund, the EU PEACE PLUS programme, and partnership approaches with the Northern Ireland Executive and UK Government, provide a strong basis for delivery on strategic investment priorities for a shared island out to 2030.

**Target 9.2**

Promote inclusive and sustainable industrialization and, by 2030, significantly raise industry’s share of employment and gross domestic product, in line with national circumstances, and double its share in least developed countries.

Pillar 3 of the Economic Recovery Plan- “re-building sustainable enterprises” sets out an ambition to exceed pre-crisis employment levels but in more productive and resilient jobs. This is to be achieved using a two-pronged approach; a focus on domestic SMEs, which is critical for broad-based jobs-led economic growth; whilst leveraging and reinforcing the enormous strength of the Foreign Direct Investment sector.

The plan commits to sustainable recovery therefore, the Green Transition Fund (RRF) worth €55m over 5 years was launched in June 2022. The Fund aims at helping enterprises to use sustainable alternatives away from fossil fuels. This fund is split across two schemes: the Climate Planning Fund for Business (€25 million) which replaces the €10m Climate Enterprise Action Fund, and the Enterprise Emissions Reduction Investment Fund (€30 million), which will fund manufacturing businesses to invest in carbon neutral heating processes, smart metering and energy monitoring, and research and development”. In addition, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland Strategies will prioritise sustainable growth.

**Target 9.3**

Increase the access of small-scale industrial and other enterprises, in particular in developing countries, to financial services, including affordable credit, and their integration into value chains and markets.

From a national perspective, Goal 1 of the Economic Recovery Plan 2021 is to achieve a strong recovery and sustainable economic development. A key aspect of how this will be achieved is assisting SME’s to start up, expand, and access international markets.

The microenterprise loan fund administered by MicroFinance Ireland, and supported by the European Investment Fund, provides loans of up to €25,000 to microenterprises that cannot obtain funding through traditional sources.

The strategic mission of the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI) is to provide and promote the provision of credit to Irish SMEs and address the failures of the credit market and
increase competition. In doing so, the SBCI has implemented loan guarantee schemes on behalf of the DETE and DAFM. It also provides liquidity to non-bank lenders to assist in the provision of credit to the Irish SME market.

In addition, in relation to developing countries, the Department will engage with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) to ensure the governance, policy, strategy and programme performance of these institutions are aligned with Ireland’s objectives to promote inclusive economic growth and trade and support initiatives that seek to foster trade and investment.

**Target 9.4**

By 2030, upgrade infrastructure and retrofit industries to make them sustainable, with increased resource-use efficiency and greater adoption of clean and environmentally sound technologies and industrial processes, with all countries taking action in accordance with their respective capabilities.

**The Climate Action Plan 2021:**

The *Climate Action Plan 2021*, reflects the legally binding targets for 2030 and 2050 by setting a roadmap for taking decisive action to meet these. The 2021 Plan is a cross-government project, with inputs and commitments from a range of Government Departments and State Agencies. It provided indicative ranges of emissions reductions required for each sector of the economy to reach our 2030 target, while also setting out the actions needed to deliver these targets.

While *Climate Action Plan 2021* builds on the ambitious targets of the 2019 Plan, it represents a significant step-up in terms of ambition and implementation.

An accompanying Annex of Actions was published 14 December 2021. The Annex provides detailed implementation pathways for actions, including specific timelines and clear lines of responsibility for the relevant Department or Agency.

Under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, the Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications has prepared for approval Ireland’s first Carbon Budget Programme and Sectoral Emission Ceilings. The Carbon Budgets comprise three five-year periods comprising 2021-2025, 2026-2030 and 2031-2035 (provisional). The Carbon Budgets were approved and came into being following approval by both Houses of the Oireachtas in April 2022. The Sectoral Emission Ceilings, which set the amount of emissions within each sector of the economy and must operate within the parameters of the carbon budgets, were approved by Government and came into effect on 28 July 2022.

The next Climate Action Plan will be developed in 2022 to provide an update on the progress made in meeting Ireland’s national climate objective and will seek to identify any challenges or obstacles in relation to this progress.

This updated Climate Action Plan will reflect Ireland’s new Carbon Budget Programme and Sectoral Emission Ceilings.
Under the Sectoral Emissions Ceilings emissions the electricity sector is now required to reduce emissions to 3 MtCO$_2$ eq by 2030. In order to meet this target emissions in the electricity sector must decrease by 75%.

Key Targets and Actions for the Electricity Sector Under Climate Action Plan 2021.

- Core Measures includes a more rapid build-out of renewable generation capacity, particularly in the areas of offshore wind, solar power and micro-generation.
- Further Measures include increased electricity storage, the deployment of zero-emissions gas (i.e., biogas, biomethane and hydrogen) and the production of hydrogen for use in other industries.
- CAP 2021 takes account of challenges in this sector – the growth in demand for power, as well as the need to ensure security of supply through the decarbonization journey.
- By 2030, 75% of electricity, under the sectoral emissions ceiling, will be generated using renewable energy with a mix of 5 GW from offshore wind, 8 GW from onshore wind and 1.5-2.5 GW from solar PV.

Through the *Climate Action Plan, the Sectoral Emissions Ceilings and Low Carbon Development Act 2021* the Government has committed to a binding target to increase the share of electricity generated from renewable sources by 2030.

**Target 9.5**

*Enhance scientific research, upgrade the technological capabilities of industrial sectors in all countries, in particular developing countries, including, by 2030, encouraging innovation and substantially increasing the number of research and development workers per 1 million people and public and private research and development spending.*

The Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science recently launched *Impact 2030: Ireland’s Research and Innovation Strategy*. This whole-of-government strategy will ensure that Ireland’s investment in research and innovation makes as big a difference as possible to as many people as possible.

Innovation is a key pillar of our national enterprise policy and is a key focus of investment assistance and policy advice from the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE) and the enterprise development agencies. Working with partners across the R&I ecosystem, it is particularly focused on encouraging innovative start-ups and disruptive innovation and the development of relevant R&I capability and skills.

*Impact 2030* commits to growing the number of researchers to 15 per 1,000 at work from 10 per 1,000 currently, which will increase absorptive capacity and innovation outputs in enterprise. Working with DETE, this will be achieved by ensuring that skills and talent from our research and higher and further education systems are aligned with enterprise needs and by fully embracing lifelong learning.
Government investment in R&I is now approaching €1 billion per annum. As part of our overall research intensity rate target of 2.5% of GNI*, we will continue to increase public investment in order to deliver the solutions, the people and the academic-enterprise collaborations that will support a strong and sustainable economy that addresses key economic and societal challenges. Strong advisory, governance and oversight structures will ensure that R&I plays a central role in delivering on Government policies, articulating the impact of R&I on our economy and society and advocating for increased investment in R&I, both public and private.

**Target 9.a**

**Facilitate sustainable and resilient infrastructure development in developing countries through enhanced financial, technological and technical support to African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States.**

Strengthening governance is a policy priority in *A Better World* and includes the ambition to work with partner governments to help promote inclusive growth and trade. Ireland’s Trust Fund for building climate and disaster resilience in Small Island Developing States provides technical assistance and funding to SIDS for sustainable and resilient infrastructure. Commitments to the Trust Fund up to 2021 amount to €14.1 million. Ireland also makes annual assessed contributions to the UN Industrial Development Organisation (UNIDO) as it is a member of the organisation. UNIDO’s mission is to promote and accelerate inclusive and sustainable development in developing countries and in transition economies.

**Target 9.b**

**Support domestic technology development, research and innovation in developing countries, including by ensuring a conducive policy environment for, inter alia, industrial diversification and value addition to commodities.**

Strengthening governance is a policy priority in *A Better World* and includes the ambition to work with partner governments to help promote inclusive growth and trade. Ireland supports technology development through our contributions to, and engagement with, multilateral development banks and the UN Industrial Development Organisation.

**Target 9.c**

**Significantly increase access to information and communications technology and strive to provide universal and affordable access to the Internet in least developed countries by 2020.**

Strengthening governance is a policy priority in *A Better World* and includes the ambition to work with partner governments to help promote inclusive growth and trade. Ireland’s contributions to, and our engagement with, multilateral development banks support investment in information technology to build universal and affordable access to the internet.
SDG 10 Regular Inequalities
SDG 10
Reduce inequality within and among countries

Target 10.1
By 2030, progressively achieve and sustain income growth of the bottom 40 per cent of the population at a rate higher than the national average.

Social transfers and taxes have a key role in reducing income inequality and preventing poverty. Data from the 2020 Survey on Income and Living Conditions (SILC), published by the CSO in December 2021, show that social transfers reduced the at-risk-of-poverty rate from 37.9 per cent to 13.2 per cent in 2020.

The Department of Social Protection published The Social Impact Assessment of Budget 2022 which shows that the social welfare budget measures introduced in Budget 2022 benefited those in the lower two income quintiles the most.

Budget 2022 resulted in average household incomes increasing by 1.0 per cent (€7.80 per week. Households in the lower end of the income distribution gained most, with smaller gains for those at the higher end. Households in the first income quintile gained at 2.0 per cent and the second income quintile gained at 1.4 per cent, with gains between 0.8 and 1.0 percent for the third, fourth and fifth quintiles. Social welfare measures primarily benefit households in the first two quintiles, or the lowest 40% of the income distribution. Non-earning households gained most from Budget 2022. Non-earning lone parents gained most at 2.5%, followed by non-earning couples with children at 2.4% and non-earning single households at 2.3%. Social transfers continued to reduce poverty with an estimated fall in the population at-risk-of-poverty rate of 0.7 percentage points as a result of measures announced in Budget 2022. Budget 2022 had a progressive pattern with bigger gains for the bottom 40% of the income distribution and smaller gains for the remainder.

The assessment supports the implementation of the national social target for poverty reduction, which is to reduce consistent poverty to 2 per cent or less by 2025 as set out in the Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025. It does this by helping to ensure that Budget measures reduce the at-risk of poverty rates, are redistributive in nature, and do not negatively impact vulnerable families. It also informs Government policy on improving living standards among low- and middle-income families, reducing inequality and improving poverty outcomes.

Target 10.2
By 2030, empower and promote the social, economic and political inclusion of all, irrespective of age, sex, disability, race, ethnicity, origin, religion or economic or other status.

Target 10.2 is addressed through a number of equality strategies focussing on specific groups, these include the National Traveller and Roma Inclusion Strategy (NTRIS), the National Strategy for
Women and Girls (NSWG), the National LGBTI+ Inclusion Strategy, the Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities, and the Migrant Integration Strategy (MIS).

As with the NSWG, the MIS was due to conclude at the end of 2020 but, due to the impact of COVID-19 on implementation of actions, the Strategy was extended to end 2021. The Equality Strategies concluding in 2021 (MIS, NSWG and NTRIS) will be subject to a common evaluation in 2022 and the outcome of this will inform the development of future Strategies, with a greater emphasis on the measurability of Strategy outcomes.

A Review of the Equality Acts (Equal Status Acts and Employment Equality Acts) is underway to assess the effectiveness of the existing equality legislation. The review includes consideration of Programme for Government commitments on the introduction of a socio-economic ground for discrimination and protections for transgender persons. A public consultation to inform the review is currently concluding.

**Target 10.3**

Ensure equal opportunity and reduce inequalities of outcome, including by eliminating discriminatory laws, policies and practices and promoting appropriate legislation, policies and action in this regard.


A review of the Equality Acts is underway in the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth to examine the functioning of the Acts and their effectiveness in combatting discrimination and promoting equality. It will also include a review of current definitions, including in relation to disability and programme for Government commitments to examine the introduction of a socio-economic ground for discrimination and protections for gender identity under the Acts.

A consultation process as part of the review has concluded and submissions are currently being analysed.

**Target 10.4**

Adopt policies, especially fiscal, wage and social protection policies, and progressively achieve greater equality.

A wide range of tax and welfare policy changes were announced in Budget 2022 along with more recent measures to mitigate the increase in the cost of living.

These policies were introduced in the context of a strongly redistributive tax and transfer system. The latest CSO data shows the effectiveness of it in combatting income inequality, with the Gini coefficient – the most internationally recognised measure of income inequality – falling to 0.27 in SILC 2021, from 0.285 the previous year.
The combination of changes in indirect taxes, direct taxes and welfare measures had an overall impact that was strongly progressive, with those in lower income deciles tending to benefit the most. This distributional analysis shows that the measures introduced more than offset the carbon tax increases for all income deciles.

**Target 10.5**

**Improve the regulation and monitoring of global financial markets and institutions and strengthen the implementation of such regulations.**

Ireland operates within an overarching EU framework and has been actively involved in a number of EU initiatives.

- The European Commission published its "Banking Package" in October 2021 which aims to finalise the implementation of the Basel III agreement in the EU.
- The Commission also published the "Capital Markets Union Legislative Package" in November 2021 which aims to improve the functioning of EU capital markets. This package is currently under negotiation in Brussels.
- The Department has also been involved at EU level in the negotiation and development of the EU Taxonomy for sustainable activities, for which delegated acts are now in place, setting climate mitigation and adaptation criteria and disclosures and reporting rules. The Commission has adopted an act on natural gas and nuclear investments which is awaiting approval by the co-legislators.
- Also at EU level, a regulation for a European green bond standard was proposed in 2021 and the Department actively engaged to develop Council’s general approach, which will be negotiated with the European Parliament.
- Requirements for investors to report their sustainability risks and impacts are being put in place under the Sustainable Finance Disclosures Regulation.

**Target 10.6**

**Ensure enhanced representation and voice for developing countries in decision-making in global international economic and financial institutions in order to deliver more effective, credible, accountable and legitimate institutions.**

The Department of Finance engages with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) in shareholder discussions, working with IFIs to develop and implement robust governance frameworks to ensure that developing countries increase their voice and representation at these institutions. The Department supports the development, implementation and monitoring of robust, effective and wide ranging Environmental, Social and Governance safeguards across the IFIs.

**Target 10.7**

**Facilitate orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people, including through the implementation of planned and well-managed migration policies.**
The Department of Justice’s Strategy Statement 2021-2023 includes as one of its five strategic priorities, the commitment to deliver a fair immigration system for a digital age under the following key objectives:

- Develop a fully digital, customer-centric immigration service;
- Protect the fairness and enhance the efficiency of our immigration system through new strategic policies and legislative proposals;
- Communicate effectively with our service users, recognising and understanding their diversity and supporting them to engage effectively with us;
- Restructure our immigration services to better serve our customers and our country; and
- Eliminate processing backlogs across all immigration application types.

In the first year of implementation, the Department of Justice has been focusing in particular on the digitalisation and customer services aspects of our immigration services, including for example the introduction of eVetting for some categories of immigration service applicants and the introduction of a new website for immigration services in Ireland, with all content written in plain language and following the customer journey for improved access.

The Department of Justice engages with other Government Departments, including the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE) and the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) to support Sustainable Development Goal 10 – Reduce inequality within and among countries. For example, the Department of Justice participates in the Employer Economic Forum chaired by the DETE which also comprises employer and industry bodies in terms of consulting and considering issues relevant to facilitating legitimate immigration and residence by non-EEA nationals for the purpose of taking up employment in line with government policy.

In addition to engaging with other Government Departments, the Department of Justice also engages on an ongoing basis with a range of other stakeholders including through its Immigration NGO Forum. This Forum ensures that the Department is responsive to the needs of their customers and it has contributed significantly to positive initiatives such as the development and roll out of a new immigration customer service helpdesk, which was launched last year. There is also an Employers Migration Users’ Forum, which the Department of Justice runs in conjunction with DETE. This provides employer organisations and enterprise related representatives (like Enterprise Ireland, the IDA and Failte Ireland) with an opportunity for high-level dialogue with senior officials across the Immigration Service.

From the introduction of the Covid-19 travel restrictions in March 2020, the Immigration Service Delivery function within the Department of Justice has worked closely with colleagues across Government to continue to provide services, which included:

- Border Management Unit liaising with DAA and HSE to introduce relevant protocols to deal with passenger travel and suspected cases identified
- Working with the HSE across a number of areas, including accommodation centres for
international protection applicants and the international protection offices.

- processing priority/emergency Visa Application cases throughout the pandemic such as those required for healthcare professionals, persons legally resident in the State, those entitled to avail of EU Free Movement Directive provisions
- introduction of contingency measures such as automatic extensions of immigration permissions; an online Registration Renewal System for non-EEA students based in Dublin, a temporary system to enable citizenship applicants to complete their naturalisation process by signing a statutory declaration of loyalty to replace the requirement to attend citizenship ceremonies.
- A detailed FAQ was regularly updated to address issues relating to visas, stamps, immigration etc. throughout the pandemic.

The COVID-19 pandemic has accelerated the Department’s transition to online services for the Immigration Service. The Department introduced an online registration renewal system for Dublin-based customers in July 2020, which means customers are no longer required to attend the Public Office in Burgh Quay to renew their immigration permissions. It also launched our first Chatbot ‘Tara’ to assist our citizenship customers. Since Tara was launched in November 2020, she has answered more than 10,000 customer queries. In addition to providing timely and responsive customer service, this has also enabled staff to focus on the processing of applications. A new and more user-friendly website for the Immigration Service was launched in summer 2021, providing a further dedicated information resource for our customers.

ISD engages with key stakeholders through the Immigration NGO Forum coordinated on the NGO side by Crosscare Migrant Project. Engagement with our stakeholders is key to ensuring that we are responsive to the needs of our customers. Meetings take place approximately every six weeks focusing on topics chosen by our NGO partners. Between meetings, Forum members are encouraged to contact us with any issues of concern and we notify the Forum of upcoming announcements or opportunities to feed into the development of new processes and content. For example, two members from the Forum have worked with the Department to develop and roll out its new immigration customer service helpdesk, which launched on 20 April 2021.

**Target 10.a**

**Implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with World Trade Organization agreements.**

Target 10.a aims to implement the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries, in particular least developed countries, in accordance with World Trade Organization (WTO) agreements. DETE continues to represent Ireland at the WTO and commits to uphold and implement the various WTO agreements of which special and differential treatment is a part. Goal 4 of DETE’s Statement of Strategy sets out to “deepen and extend Ireland’s global business and trade in a fair and sustainable manner supportive of high labour standards and grow further the all-island economy”. In order to achieve this the strategy sets out the need to work with the EU to ensure that the WTO is at the heart of a global, rules-based, multilateral trading system, delivering on its negotiating, dispute settlement and trade capacity building and outreach remits.
**Target 10.b**

**Encourage official development assistance and financial flows, including foreign direct investment, to States where the need is greatest, in particular least developed countries, African countries, small island developing States and landlocked developing countries, in accordance with their national plans and programmes.**

The *Global Island*, Ireland’s foreign policy, commits Ireland to promoting a fairer, just, secure and sustainable world. A *Better World* commits to reaching the furthest behind first in our efforts to support the achievement of the SDGs in developing countries, in particular to tackle extreme poverty and inequality.

**Target 10.c**

**By 2030, reduce to less than 3 per cent the transaction costs of migrant remittances and eliminate remittance corridors with costs higher than 5 per cent.**

Money remittance is defined in the revised Payment Services Directive (PSD2) as a payment service where funds are received from a payer, without any payment accounts being created in the name of the payer or the payee, for the sole purpose of transferring a corresponding amount to a payee or to another payment service provider acting on behalf of the payee, and/or where such funds are received on behalf of and made available to the payee. As this service falls within the scope of PSD2, it is subject to EU law and Member States are not permitted to deviate from the PSD2 text. A review of PSD2 is currently underway by the European Commission and Department officials are actively engaging with the Commission to ensure that any future text reflects the financial services landscape in Ireland. This includes the application of PSD2 to money remittance services.
SDG 11 Sustainable Cities and Communities
SDG 11
Make cities and human settlements inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable

Target 11.1
By 2030, ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and upgrade slums.

In September 2021, the Government published a new housing strategy, Housing for All. Under the Plan, the Government aims to increase the supply of housing to an average of 33,000 per year by 2030. Central to the Plan are measures to increase the supply of social and affordable housing. The Plan aims to deliver an average of 10,000 new build social homes each year and 6,000 affordable homes (including affordable purchase and affordable rental) in the period 2022-2030.

Housing for All commits to eradicating homelessness by 2030 and contains measures to meet this objective. A priority in the Plan is to support rough sleepers and long-term users of emergency accommodation through the creation of an additional 1,100 Housing First tenancies. Under Housing First, individuals are provided with social housing and wrap around supports, including both housing and health supports.

Housing for All includes measures to increase the housing options for people with a disability and for older people through the provision of more age-friendly housing. A new National Housing Strategy for Disabled People 2022 – 2027 has been published and places a greater emphasis on independent living and community inclusion. Implementation of the plan will be based on the principles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. Housing for All also includes to actions to increase the provision of Traveller-specific accommodation.

Housing for All is supported by an investment package of over €4b per annum, through an overall combination of €12bn in direct Exchequer funding, €3.5bn in funding through the Land Development Agency and €5bn in funding through the Housing Finance Agency over a five year period.

Target 11.2
By 2030, provide access to safe, affordable, accessible and sustainable transport systems for all, improving road safety, notably by expanding public transport, with special attention to the needs of those in vulnerable situations, women, children, persons with disabilities and older persons.

Alignment of public transport policy with the SDGs
The Department of Transport (DoT) has responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to accessible, integrated and sustainable public transport including in isolated rural areas.
The Department’s *Sustainable Mobility policy* aligns with the four principles of the SDGs, i.e., Integration, Universality, Inclusion and ‘Leave no one (and no place) behind’ and specifically aligns with SDG Target 11.2.

**Accessible public transport for those in vulnerable situations**

It also accords with the United Nations Conventions on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD). Critically, the UNCRPD serves as a guide for the implementation of the SDGs by providing a human-rights perspective to the inclusion of Persons with Disabilities, particularly in the pursuit of the ‘leave no one behind’ principle.

In line with the UNCRPD, the Department and its Agencies are progressively making public transport accessible, in both rural and urban areas, by

1. ensuring that new infrastructure and services are accessible from the design stage, and
2. retro fitting older (legacy) infrastructure and facilities to make them accessible.

DoT funds a ring-fenced multi-annual Accessibility Retrofit Programme, managed by the National Transport Authority (NTA), to deal with these legacy issues. Amongst the projects which it funds are making bus and train stations accessible, installing accessible bus stops in rural and regional areas and increasing the number of accessible taxis.

The Travel Assist Scheme enables, for example, Persons with Disabilities, Reduced Mobility and Older people to travel independently on public transport. Other initiatives include disability awareness training for staff in the public transport companies and dedicated Disability User Groups which provide a forum for operators to consult and update disability organisations on accessibility proposals and developments, and for disability organisations to raise operational and other accessibility issues.

These policies and funding programmes are incorporated into DoT’s Accessibility Work Programme and the “whole of Government” strategies that underpin it, for example, the *National Disability Inclusion Strategy* (NDIS), the *Comprehensive Employment Strategy for People with Disabilities* (CES), the *Climate Action Plan* and “Our Rural Future” Rural Development Policy. This “whole of Government” and “whole of society” approach aligns with the SDGs.

**Expanding safe, affordable, accessible, and sustainable public transport for all**

DoT provides funding for socially necessary, but uneconomical, public transport services, in line with EU Regulation 1370/2007 on Public Passenger Transport Services by Rail and the Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008.

In terms of expanding the range of services in all areas, and especially those in vulnerable situations, the NTA promotes both the development of an integrated, accessible and sustainable public transport network and the integration of local and rural transport services.

TFI Local Link public transport services in rural areas nationwide comprise door to door services, open to all, which respond to local demands and increasingly, conventional fixed services with regular routes, stopping places and timetables. TFI Local Link aims “to provide a quality nationwide
community based public transport system in rural Ireland which responds to local needs”. Its key priorities including addressing social exclusion in rural areas and the integration of rural transport services with other public transport services. Approximately 90% of passenger trips across the LTFI Local Link network of rural transport services are accessible.

The NTA’s Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan is a major national public transport initiative being developed by the NTA to increase public transport connectivity, particularly for people living outside the major cities and towns. It will significantly increase both the number of routes and the frequency of existing services right across the country. Connecting Ireland proposes to specifically expand the public transport network in rural areas and to increase service levels. Under Connecting Ireland, the NTA is proposing an overall increase of approximately 25% in rural bus services as part of the five-year Connecting Ireland plan. Hundreds of rural villages and areas will for the first time be served by a viable public transport link.

Currently, routes identified through the Connecting Ireland consultation process are being prioritised to provide emergency public transport services to those Ukrainian refugees housed in rural or isolated locations to ensure better access to our local communities. This will be achieved through an acceleration of network improvements, including additional stops, route modifications, and more services with the aim to increase connectivity. Areas such as the Ring of Kerry will avail of such improvements, in practice catering for both existing demands as well as responding to the increased pressures on services where the local population has grown in response to the humanitarian crisis.

In preparing certain policies, strategies, and plans, the NTA is required under its establishing legislation—Dublin Transport Authority Act 2008 and Public Transport Regulation Act 2009—to consult with several government departments, public bodies, local communities, users, and other affected groups. Furthermore, the NTA undertakes public consultations in respect of proposed regulations. For example, the Connecting Ireland public consultation took place during Q4 2021.

In addition, DoT published its new Sustainable Mobility Policy (SMP) on 7 April 2022. The SMP sets out a strategic framework to 2030 for active travel and public transport to support our requirement to achieve a 51% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by the end of this decade. It builds on and replaces the existing sectoral policy documents Smarter Travel, A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020 and the National Cycle Policy Framework.

The new policy is informed by the UN’s Sustainable Development Goals and the EU’s Sustainable and Smart Mobility Strategy, and is closely aligned with the national strategic outcomes of the National Planning Framework. It provides an opportunity to change our daily travel choices by making it easier for people to travel by more sustainable modes, including public transport, and aims to support this modal shift through infrastructure and service improvements, as well as demand management and behavioural change measures. It is the product of a collaborative approach to policy-making which included public consultation and extensive stakeholder engagement, and is centred around the following three principles:

- Safe and Green Mobility
These principles are supported by ten high-level goals intended to set a framework to 2030, with an action plan covering the period to 2025. This action plan will be reviewed and updated in 2025 with new/revised/continuing actions for the remaining 5 years to 2030.

Delivery of the action plan will be underpinned by funding under the National Development Plan 2021-2030 which provides €35 billion for transport over this decade. This funding will support the delivery of major public transport projects such as BusConnects, DART+ and Metrolink, increased investment in the inter-urban and regional rail network and significant expansion of walking and cycling infrastructure. This will be complemented by an expansion of public transport services including in rural and regional areas under the Connecting Ireland plan.

In addition to being underpinned by funding under the renewed National Development Plan, the Sustainable Mobility Policy includes a commitment to establish a Leadership Group and Delivery Team to oversee implementation and delivery of its action plan, including the mid-term review in 2025. This Leadership Group and Delivery Team have both already been established and have begun their work in overseeing and driving delivery of the actions via collaboration among the departments and agencies responsible.

**Target 11.3**

**By 2030, enhance inclusive and sustainable urbanization and capacity for participatory, integrated and sustainable human settlement planning and management in all countries.**

The targets 11.3, 11.7, 11.a and 11.b are inter-linked and feed collectively into SDG 11. In order to support the achievement of these targets and assist in the preparation of development plans updated guidance on development plans, rural housing and sustainable and compact settlement is being prepared including:

- A draft of the Development Plan Guidelines was published in August 2021 and the public consultation period ended on 8 October 2021. Following a review of all public submissions received and updates to reflect changes to national policy, the Department issued the final 'Development Plans - Guidelines for Planning Authorities' (June 2022). The Guidelines, revised for the first time since 2007 provide a 'go-to' reference manual for all those who may be involved in the often complex process of producing a county or city development plan. While principally aimed at local authority planners and councillors, they will also assist citizens and those involved in the development sector. The revised 'Development Plans - Guidelines for Planning Authorities' highlight the need for good policy alignment between the UN SDGS and Irish national, regional and local spatial planning policy.

- Updated Rural Housing Planning Guidelines are currently being prepared to ensure consistency with current requirements and legislation at national and EU level in respect of areas related to rural housing such as environmental protection, the Gaeltacht and climate action. The new guidelines will ensure a more consistent approach between counties and alignment
with NPF objectives. A preliminary draft of the Guidelines been prepared and environmental assessments (AA / SEA) are ongoing. Following the completion of the AA and SEA processes, the Draft RHGs will be subject to a period of consultation. Submissions made during the public consultation period will be taken into consideration and thereafter, the draft guidelines will be finalised for publication. It is intended that the review can conclude in 2022 and that final Guidelines will be issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000. Once issued, Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála will be required to have regard to the Guidelines in carrying out their functions.

A review to update the Sustainable Residential Development in Urban Areas Guidelines (SRDUA) for Planning Authorities (2009) with new Sustainable and Compact Settlement Guidelines (SCSGs) for Planning Authorities is ongoing. A preliminary draft of the Guidelines has been prepared and environmental assessments are ongoing (AA / SEA). Following the completion of the AA/SEA process, the Draft SCSGs will be subject to a period of consultation. Submissions made during the public consultation period will be taken into consideration and thereafter, the draft guidelines will be finalised for publication. It is intended that the review can conclude by mid-2023 and that final Guidelines will be issued under Section 28 of the Planning and Development Act 2000. Once issued, Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála will be required to have regard to the Guidelines in carrying out their functions.

- The National, Urban and Regional Planning Policy Unit continues to support the implementation of the National Planning Framework. The adoption of this overarching national and regional urban planning policy embeds a spatial hierarchy of plans that cascades to local level, with the ongoing review of city and county development plans by each of the 31 local authorities in Ireland. The public consultation element of these reviews gives both an open right to comment on planning matters (through the development management process) and to shape the planning and development of their area (through the development plan making process) in line with SDG 11.3.2.

In addition, a Town Centre First policy framework, in line with the Programme for Government Commitment has now been jointly published by DHLGH and DRCD. This framework will:

- Support local communities to prepare a Town Centre First Plan for their town supported by the assistance of their local authority. The plan will be action/project focused and will enable greater access to a range of funding streams including the flagship Urban Regeneration and Development Fund (URDF) and Rural Regeneration and Development Fund (RRDF) which are already investing over €600m in regeneration projects in towns across the country. Funding of €2m has initially been provided to 26 towns for 2022 to assist in preparing of TCF plans.

- A significant action in the policy is the establishment of a National Town Centre First Office, based in the LGMA and led by a National Town Centre First Coordinator, who was appointed in Q2 2022. This Office will organise best practice exchanges, conduct research, provide toolkits and other resources to aid the development of TCF. The Office will coordinate the work of new dedicated Town Regeneration Officers (TROs) to be established across the local authority system in 2022.
Target 11.4
Strengthen efforts to protect and safeguard the world’s cultural and natural heritage.

In 2015, Ireland ratified the UNESCO Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage. Since 2017, our unique practices of Uilleann Piping, Hurling and Irish Harping have been recognised by UNESCO and inscribed on the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity. In December 2021, Falconry in Ireland joined 23 other countries as part of a multinational inscription to the UNESCO Representative List.

The Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media has also developed a National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage where 38 practices have been inscribed. This work by the Department, in close cooperation with the communities concerned and with international partners, strengthens awareness raising and supports the safeguarding of our rich and diverse cultural heritage. More information on the National Inventory and practices can be found here https://nationalinventoryichchg.gov.ie/.

Target 11.5
By 2030, significantly reduce the number of deaths and the number of people affected and substantially decrease the direct economic losses relative to global gross domestic product caused by disasters, including water-related disasters, with a focus on protecting the poor and people in vulnerable situations.

Ireland’s humanitarian assistance contributes to reduced death and loss from disasters in crises across the globe. Our funding has increased steadily in recent years and we consistently rank in the top 20 humanitarian donors. In 2020 Ireland’s total humanitarian funding reached over €193 million.

Ireland provides funding to support life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection in countries and regions experiencing protracted humanitarian crises such as the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Somalia, Yemen and the Sahel.

We also provide rapid relief to unforeseen events – recently this has included the volcanic eruption in St. Vincent & Grenadines, the earthquake in Haiti and Typhoon Rai in the Philippines.

Ireland has strengthened its support to anticipatory action. This approach uses improved forecasting tools and early warning systems to trigger a response before a full-blown humanitarian crisis unfolds. Evidence show that this saves lives and minimises loss. In 2021 Ireland’s support mitigated the impact of drought, flooding, displacement and disease in Afghanistan, Somalia and South Sudan and Sudan.

Ireland channels its funding through a range of partnerships with the UN system, the Red Cross Family, civil society organisations, as well as through the European Union. Our missions in
countries such as Ethiopia, Mozambique and Uganda also provide critical humanitarian assistance to partners on the ground.

**Target 11.6**

**By 2030, reduce the adverse per capita environmental impact of cities, including by paying special attention to air quality and municipal and other waste management.**

**National Clean Air Strategy**

Tackling the sources and causes of air pollution is a significant cross-Governmental challenge, as it involves emissions from transport, industry, agriculture, shipping and the use of solid fuels in homes. Given the wide range of pollutant sources, it is important that action is coordinated across various sectors.

The Clean Air Strategy will provide a strategic policy framework which will recognise the positive impact of existing Government plans, but also look to identify and promote additional integrated measures to reduce air pollution and promote cleaner air. As set out in the Programme for Government, the Clean Air Strategy will include policies and measures such as:

- putting in place regional approach to air quality and noise enforcement
- a multi-agency approach to clamping down on the sale of high-sulphur content fuel imported from the UK, with local authorities and the Revenue Commissioners
- investing in our network of monitoring stations, to provide scientific evidence of air quality across different parts of the country, including real-time and localised air quality information
- extending the Smoky Coal ban to new towns and, over the term of Government, move towards a full nationwide ban

There are a number of national policy frameworks already in place which will also help to reduce pollutant emissions and improve air quality such as the Climate Action Plan, and the National Air Pollution Control Programme. It is important that synergies are maximised between these plans and the Clean Air Strategy, with a view to achieving lasting reductions in the health and environmental impacts of air pollution in the most effective manner.

A public consultation on the draft Clean Air Strategy ran from 7 March to 3 May. More than 100 submissions were received, and these are now being reviewed, with a view to finalising and publishing the strategy later this year.

**Target 11.7**

**By 2030, provide universal access to safe, inclusive and accessible, green and public spaces, in particular for women and children, older persons and persons with disabilities.**

[See target 11.3]
In addition, the further development of the *Design Manual for Urban Roads and Streets* (DMURS) will ensure more widespread and consistent implementation of the principles of Universal Design. (DHLGH and DoT) have put together a CPD training program in relation to DMURS with Engineers Ireland and with the support of Irish Planning Institute and the Royal Institute of Architects Ireland has now been jointly developed by DHLGHL and D/Transport). The program will be in the form of a series of free on-line webinars, each 1 hour long, over the course of 8 weeks and launched on the 10th of February 2022.

**Target 11.a**

Support positive economic, social and environmental links between urban, peri-urban and rural areas by strengthening national and regional development planning.

[See target 11.3]

**Target 11.b**

By 2020, substantially increase the number of cities and human settlements adopting and implementing integrated policies and plans towards inclusion, resource efficiency, mitigation and adaptation to climate change, resilience to disasters, and develop and implement, in line with the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015-2030, holistic disaster risk management at all levels.

[See target 11.3]

**Target 11.c**

Support least developed countries, including through financial and technical assistance, in building sustainable and resilient buildings utilizing local materials.

Ireland supports building sustainable and resilient buildings through prioritisation of climate in our international development. Technical assistance and funding provided by Ireland’s Trust Fund for building climate and disaster resilience in Small Island Developing States supports mainstreaming climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction in infrastructure development.
SDG 12 Responsible Consumption and Production
SDG 12
Ensure sustainable consumption and production patterns

Target 12.1
Implement the 10-year framework of programmes on sustainable consumption and production, all countries taking action, with developed countries taking the lead, taking into account the development and capabilities of developing countries.

The Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy
The Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy was launched in September 2020 with more than 200 recommendations to be attained over the following five year period. To date a number of recommendations have been implemented while others are well advanced. A key recommendation from the WAPCE was the introduction of a Circular Economy Bill which will initiate other recommendations such as the introduction of a number of economic instruments to assist in the reduction of generated waste to reach the relevant targets. The Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022 was enacted in July 2022.

Target 12.2
By 2030, achieve the sustainable management and efficient use of natural resources.

The Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy
The Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy was launched in September 2020 with more than 200 recommendations to be attained over the following five year period. To date a number of recommendations have been implemented while others are well advanced. A key recommendation from the WAPCE was the introduction of a Circular Economy Bill which will initiate other recommendations such as the introduction of a number of economic instruments to assist in the reduction of generated waste to reach the relevant targets. The Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022 was enacted in July 2022.

Target 12.3
By 2030, halve per capita global food waste at the retail and consumer levels and reduce food losses along production and supply chains, including post-harvest losses.

The Rural Innovation and Development Fund supports research projects that are aimed at reducing waste.
The Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy

The Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy was launched in September 2020 with more than 200 recommendations to be attained over the following five year period. To date a number of recommendations have been implemented while others are well advanced. A key recommendation from the WAPCE was the introduction of a *Circular Economy Bill* which will initiate other recommendations such as the introduction of a number of economic instruments to assist in the reduction of generated waste to reach the relevant targets. The *Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022* was enacted in July 2022.

Target 12.4

By 2020, achieve the environmentally sound management of chemicals and all wastes throughout their life cycle, in accordance with agreed international frameworks, and significantly reduce their release to air, water and soil in order to minimize their adverse impacts on human health and the environment.

The Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy

The Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy was launched in September 2020 with more than 200 recommendations to be attained over the following five year period. To date a number of recommendations have been implemented while others are well advanced. A key recommendation from the WAPCE was the introduction of a *Circular Economy Bill* which will initiate other recommendations such as the introduction of a number of economic instruments to assist in the reduction of generated waste to reach the relevant targets. The *Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022* was enacted in July 2022.

National Implementation Plan on Persistent Organic Pollutants

The Stockholm Convention on Persistent Organic Pollutants (POPs) aims to eliminate or restrict the production and use of persistent organic pollutants (POPs). POPs are a group of chemical substances which persist in the environment, may accumulate in food and human tissue and are toxic. These substances can be divided into three main categories: pesticides, industrial chemicals and unintentional POPs such as dioxins and furans from backyard burning. The requirements of the Stockholm Convention are enacted into EU law by Regulation (EU) 2019/1021 and Irish law by *S.I. No. 146 of 2020*. Under Article 7 of the Convention, Ireland is required to develop and regularly update a National Implementation Plan on POPs. The EPA, as the competent authority, reviewed and updated the National Implementation Plan on POPs in 2018, in consultation with a number of public authorities, national stakeholders and the public. The EPA is currently updating the latest NIP to reflect additional POPs which have been added to the Stockholm Convention and Regulation (EU) 2019/1021.

Article 5 of the Stockholm Convention requires parties to outline measures to reduce or eliminate releases from unintentional production of POPs. However, intentional POPs have been included in Ireland’s action plan to assess and mitigate against risks posed by these substances to human health and the environment. As part of the POP’s Action Plan, the EPA is investigating the risks posed by certain POPs to human health and the environment in the Irish context including PFAS.
in fire-fighting foams, POPs in landfill leachate and PCBs in building materials. Further details on these studies are available on the EPA website.

National Clean Air Strategy

Tackling the sources and causes of air pollution is a significant cross-Governmental challenge, as it involves emissions from transport, industry, agriculture, shipping and the use of solid fuels in homes. Given the wide range of pollutant sources, it is important that action is coordinated across various sectors.

The Clean Air Strategy will provide a strategic policy framework which will recognise the positive impact of existing Government plans, but also look to identify and promote additional integrated measures to reduce air pollution and promote cleaner air.

As set out in the Programme for Government, the Clean Air Strategy will include policies and measures such as:

- putting in place regional approach to air quality and noise enforcement
- a multi-agency approach to clamping down on the sale of high-sulphur content fuel imported from the UK, with local authorities and the Revenue Commissioners
- investing in our network of monitoring stations, to provide scientific evidence of air quality across different parts of the country, including real-time and localised air quality information
- extending the Smoky Coal ban to new towns and, over the term of Government, move towards a full nationwide ban

There are a number of national policy frameworks already in place which will also help to reduce pollutant emissions and improve air quality such as the Climate Action Plan, and the National Air Pollution Control Programme. It is important that synergies are maximised between these plans and the Clean Air Strategy, with a view to achieving lasting reductions in the health and environmental impacts of air pollution in the most effective manner.

A public consultation on the draft Clean Air Strategy ran from 7 March to 3 May. More than 100 submissions were received, and these are now being reviewed, with a view to finalising and publishing the strategy later this year.

Target 12.5

By 2030, substantially reduce waste generation through prevention, reduction, recycling and reuse.

The Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy

The Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy was launched in September 2020 with more than 200 recommendations to be attained over the following five year period. To date a number of recommendations have been implemented while others are well advanced. A key recommendation from the WAPCE was the introduction of a Circular Economy Bill which will initiate other recommendations such as the introduction of a number of economic instruments to assist in the reduction of generated waste to reach the relevant targets. The Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022 was enacted in July 2022.
Target 12.6
Encourage companies, especially large and transnational companies, to adopt sustainable practices and to integrate sustainability information into their reporting cycle.

Progress towards this goal was initially achieved through the CSR Stakeholder Forum which implemented the actions of Ireland’s Second National Plan on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) 2017-2020. The CSR forum has now ended but DETE is currently discussing how best to continue engagement.

One of the main mechanisms that will be used to encourage sustainable practices is through action 36 of the Second National Implementation Plan. This action concerns the establishment of a suitable mechanism to facilitate business sector engagement with the SDGs. In addition, DETE has begun initial discussions with the UN Global Compact regarding the establishment of a network here in Ireland. The Compact supports businesses globally to align their work with ten principles on human rights, labour, environment, and anti-corruption, as well as advance the SDGs. The establishment of an Irish network would be a positive development for encouraging sustainable practice among Irish enterprise in making progress towards the Sustainable Development Goal targets, and it is something which the Department will work to facilitate.

Target 12.7
Promote public procurement practices that are sustainable, in accordance with national policies and priorities.

The Office of Government Procurement has undertaken a number of actions to promote sustainable procurement practices in line with SDG Goal 12.7:

- Established the Strategic Procurement Advisory Group bringing policy makers and practitioners together to share information, knowledge and understanding and collaborate on promoting the incorporation of social, innovative, and sustainable considerations in public procurement
- In 2019, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform published Circular 20/2019: Promoting the use of Environmental and Social Considerations in Public Procurement instructing government departments to consider using green criteria in procurement, to report on green public procurement, and to include future opportunities for the inclusion of green criteria in their annual Corporate Procurement Plans. It also highlights the possibilities for departments to deliver wider social and environmental aims through public procurement
- The OGP contributed to a revision of Green Procurement – Guidance for the Public Sector, led by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), which, in addition to broad guidance on Green Public Procurement, will describe defined, measurable, and up to date ‘Irish GPP criteria’ for 10 priority sectors. The OGP also assisted the EPA in developing training in this area, aimed at procurement practitioners in the use of GPP, across the local authority sector.
Target 12.8
By 2030, ensure that people everywhere have the relevant information and awareness for sustainable development and lifestyles in harmony with nature.

The Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy
The Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy was launched in September 2020 with more than 200 recommendations to be attained over the following five year period. To date a number of recommendations have been implemented while others are well advanced. A key recommendation from the WAPCE was the introduction of a Circular Economy Bill which will initiate other recommendations such as the introduction of a number of economic instruments to assist in the reduction of generated waste to reach the relevant targets. The Circular Economy and Miscellaneous Provisions Act 2022 was enacted in July 2022.

Through EU legislation such as the Taxonomy for sustainable activities, the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive and the Sustainable Finance Disclosures Regulation, Ireland is working at EU level to ensure companies and financial services providers are transparent about sustainability matters, to ensure people have relevant information and awareness.

Target 12.a
Support developing countries to strengthen their scientific and technological capacity to move towards more sustainable patterns of consumption and production.

The Global Island, Ireland’s foreign policy, commits Ireland to promoting a fairer, just, secure and sustainable world. Ireland supports sustainable patterns of consumption and production through our contributions to, and engagement with, multilateral development banks and the UN Industrial Development Organisation.

Target 12.b
Develop and implement tools to monitor sustainable development impacts for sustainable tourism that creates jobs and promotes local culture and products.

The Government’s Tourism Policy Statement has been implemented by way of two Tourism Action Plans, initially from 2016-2018 and latterly from 2019-2021. The implementation of the most recent Action Plan was interrupted by the need to respond to the devastating impact the COVID-19 crisis has wrought on the Irish tourism sector.

However, this Action Plan contained an action providing for the establishment of a working group to review international best practice in sustainable tourism and to propose guiding principles for sustainable tourism development in Ireland. The Sustainable Tourism Working Group completed its work on this action in late 2019 and its report was subsequently published and is available at https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/fff4eb-sustainable-working-group-report/. The report
set out the ambition that “Ireland will seek to be amongst the world-leaders in sustainable tourism practices” and it also set out accompanying Guiding Principles for Sustainable Tourism Development in Ireland.

Late last year Minister Martin brought a report to Government, developed by the Sustainable Tourism Working Group, which identifies a suite of actions that will promote sustainable tourism practices out to 2023. The successful implementation of the actions identified in this interim action plan will establish new research methods, which will increase the level of evidence available, and form a clear narrative for communicating about the sustainability agenda to build a better understanding and awareness among tourism stakeholders and the general public. It will also ensure that sustainability is taken into account in policy development, business planning by the tourism agencies and industry as well as in destination management and promotional activity.

Fáilte Ireland’s Destination Experience Development Plans (DEDPs) enable and motivate stakeholders and industry in an area to amplify their local tourism offering. The plans aim to increase visits, dwell time and spend in the locality in a sustainable manner. The impact of the DEDPs is continually monitored using key metrics that examine the commercial development of tourism across the Destination. The Plan framework adopts the VICE model as a means of measuring success. The VICE Framework identifies sustainable tourism as the interaction between Visitors, the Industry that serves them, the Community and Culture that hosts them and their collective impact on and response to the Environment where it all takes place.

**Target 12.c**

*Rationalize inefficient fossil-fuel subsidies that encourage wasteful consumption by removing market distortions, in accordance with national circumstances, including by restructuring taxation and phasing out those harmful subsidies, where they exist, to reflect their environmental impacts, taking fully into account the specific needs and conditions of developing countries and minimizing the possible adverse impacts on their development in a manner that protects the poor and the affected communities.*

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform has committed to developing and applying definitions to identify and track government spending that may be having a negative impact on climate and environmental outcomes. Assessing spending that may be having a negative impact on climate and environmental outcomes will be informed by the ex-post assessment of fossil fuel and similar subsidies conducted by the Central Statistics Office and international best practice. Supporting information on methodologies used to arrive at the assessments will also be published.
SDG 13 Climate Action
SDG 13
Take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts

Target 13.1
Strengthen resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-related hazards and natural disasters in all countries.

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act, 2015 (as amended) sets out statutory requirements for the development by Government, on an iterative basis, of National Adaptation Frameworks (NAF) and Sectoral Adaptation Plans. Ireland’s first statutory NAF was published in January 2018. The NAF sets out Ireland’s strategy for the application of adaptation measures in different Government sectors, including the local authority sector to reduce the vulnerability of the State to the negative effects of climate change but also to avail of any positive effects that may occur. Following publication of the NAF, Sectoral Adaptation Plans covering 12 priority sectors were published in 2019. The NAF is currently being reviewed.

In 2019, all 31 Local Authorities in Ireland also published local adaptation strategies in line with Guidelines published under the NAF. Following from the 2021 amendment to the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act, Local Authorities have a requirement to develop Local Authority Climate Action Plans. New Guidance for local authorities, related to both mitigation and adaptation, is being developed in advance of progressing the Local Authority Climate Action Plans.

The amended climate legislation also sets out the requirement for the development by Government of an annual Climate Action Plan, including mitigation and adaptation measures. Climate Action Plans were published in 2019 and 2021 (CAP 2021) which included significant adaptation actions and these built on existing work undertaken under the NAF and its Sectoral Adaptation Plans.

The Climate Action Plan 2021 includes Adaptation measures across key sectors, including actions addressing flooding, built environment, transport and energy and communications networks. These actions are mainstreamed into the appropriate sectoral chapters of the Plan. There are also adaptation actions contained in the adaptation chapter of the Plan.

Target 13.2
Integrate climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning.

The Climate Action Plan 2021, published 4 November 2021, reflects Ireland’s legally binding emission reduction targets for 2030 and 2050 by setting a roadmap for taking decisive action to meet these targets. The 2021 Plan was a cross-Departmental effort, with inputs and commitments from a range of Government Departments and State Agencies. It provided indicative ranges of
emissions reductions required for each sector of the economy to reach our 2030 target, while also setting out the actions needed to deliver these targets.

While Climate Action Plan 2021 builds on the ambitious targets of the 2019 Plan, it also represents a significant step-up in terms of ambition and implementation. An accompanying Annex of Actions was published 14 December 2021. The Annex provides detailed implementation pathways for actions, including specific timelines and clear lines of responsibility for the relevant Department or Agency. The Department of Taoiseach oversees the reporting process that will monitor the progress made against the Actions and associated measures listed in the Annex.

Under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, the Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications has prepared for approval Ireland’s first Carbon Budget Programme and Sectoral Emission Ceilings. The Carbon Budgets comprise three five-year periods comprising 2021-2025, 2026-2030 and 2031-2035 (provisional). The Carbon Budgets were approved and came into being following approval by both Houses of the Oireachtas in April 2022. The Sectoral Emission Ceilings, which set the amount of emissions within each sector of the economy and must operate within the parameters of the carbon budgets, were approved by Government and came into effect on 28 July 2022.

The next Climate Action Plan will be developed in 2022 to provide an update on the progress made in meeting Ireland’s national climate objective and will seek to identify any challenges or obstacles in relation to this progress. This updated Climate Action Plan will reflect Ireland’s new Carbon Budget Programme and Sectoral Emission Ceilings.

Total greenhouse gas emissions per year (Ireland’s ghg emissions)

In 2020, Ireland’s GHG emissions are estimated to be 57.72 million tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent (Mt CO₂eq), which is 3.6% lower (or 2.14 Mt CO₂ eq.) than emissions in 2019 (59.86 Mt CO₂ eq.). There was a decrease of 4.0% in emissions reported for 2019 compared to 2018. Emissions reductions have been recorded in six of the last ten years of inventory data (2010-2020). In 2020 national total emissions decreased by 3.6%, emissions in the stationary ETS sector decreased by 6.1% and emissions under the ESD (Effort Sharing Decision) decreased by 2.8%. In May 2022, the EPA’s latest projections estimated that Ireland’s greenhouse gas emissions had increased by 6% compared to 2020.

Target 13.3

Improve education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity on climate change mitigation, adaption, impact reduction and early warning.

The transition to a climate neutral economy by 2050 will require changes in our society and economy, and a collaborative effort by government, business, communities, and individuals to reimagine how we work, heat our homes, travel, produce our food, consume goods and services, and manage our waste. This transition must be achieved in a fair and equitable manner.
Delivering on this ambition requires a systematic means of actively enabling stakeholders and the public across Ireland to engage with climate action at the local and national level. The National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA) is the primary vehicle through which this is delivered, and through which everyone in society will be empowered to actively participate in Climate Action.

The NDCA is being delivered across four main pillars:

1. Improving climate literacy by creating awareness about, and promoting understanding of, climate change through formal and informal education and strategic communications.
2. Funding, supporting, and enabling engagement in climate action at a local and national level.
3. Capturing insights from engagement activities and social and behavioural research to measure behavioural change among the public, providing an evidence base to inform the Climate Action Plan and sectoral climate policies.

By providing the opportunity to engage constructively in climate action, the NDCA supports and promotes activity among the specific stakeholder groups, younger people, harder to reach communities, and those who are vulnerable to the transition to carbon neutrality.

Target 13.a
Implement the commitment undertaken by developed-country parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change to a goal of mobilizing jointly $100 billion annually by 2020 from all sources to address the needs of developing countries in the context of meaningful mitigation actions and transparency on implementation and fully operationalize the Green Climate Fund through its capitalization as soon as possible.

Ireland is committed to realising the goals of the Paris Agreement, championing progressive action, and ensuring that the most vulnerable are at the heart of all our engagement. Ireland’s international climate finance is targeted with these considerations. The majority of Ireland’s finance goes towards adaptation and is grant-based.

Ireland supports the COP26 decision text call for increased finance to be directed towards adaptation action in developing countries, to achieve greater balance in funding for mitigation and adaptation actions and enabling climate resilient sustainable development, particularly in LDCs and SIDS, and transparent finance flows for adaptation, and to channel finance to local level.

At COP26, in November 2021, Ireland committed to more than double its funding for developing countries to tackle climate change by 2025, rising from €93 million to €225 million by 2025.

In addition to the above, Ireland committed to provide support to the following specific funds:

- at least €10m between now and the end of 2022 to the Adaptation Fund;
- €5m to the Santiago Network established to provide technical assistance to support
developing countries experiencing climate related loss and damage (€4m DECC, €1m Irish Aid);
• €2m to the Climate and Clean Air Coalition Trust Fund which aims at cutting short-lived pollutants including methane and to reduce air pollution;
• €2.1m to address the impacts of climate change on Small Island Developing States and coastal communities, which includes €1m to expand disaster insurance for coastal communities in five countries: Haiti, Antigua and Barbuda, Belize, Jamaica, Montserrat;
• €3.5m funding package to assist least developed countries adapt to the effects and impacts of climate change, comprised of €1m to the National Adaptation Plan Global Network to support national-level adaptation in developing countries and €2.5 m to the Least Developed Countries Fund (LDCF) to support adaptation activities in some of the world’s most climate vulnerable countries.

Ireland’s all-of-Government Climate Finance Roadmap will be published in the next quarter and will set out the strategy for achieving Ireland’s international climate finance targets. It will outline the vision, objectives, principles, themes, geographic focus and channels for scaling up our climate finance. It will also build on Ireland’s strengths as a donor and partner, including through enhancing support for thematic areas in which Ireland is already playing a leading role.

**Target 13.b**

Promote mechanisms for raising capacity for effective climate change-related planning and management in least developed countries and small island developing States, including focusing on women, youth and local and marginalized communities.

The Department of Foreign Affairs continues to engage domestically and internationally to progress SDG achievement. This includes follow-up on last year’s UN Food Systems Summit and preparations for the UN Transforming Education Summit in September. On follow up to COP26, towards preparation for COP27, while DECC leads national coordination and EU engagement, DFA continues to lead on issues related to climate adaptation and loss and damage. The official work is complemented by DFA’s continued engagement in the Champions Group on Adaptation Finance.

At COP26, the Taoiseach announced that Ireland will more than double its international climate finance, reaching at least €225 million per year by 2025. The target represents a significant increase on current levels of climate finance (€93.6 million in 2019). The Programme for Government tasked DFA with devising a strategy to scale up Ireland’s climate finance contributions, working closely with other Government Departments in the development of this Climate Finance Roadmap. Work on the Roadmap is well advanced, with a view to finalising it in Q2 of 2022.
SDG 14 Life Below Water
SDG 14
Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development

The Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD) requires European member states, including Ireland, to reach good environmental status (GES) in the marine environment. GES in the marine environment means that the seas are clean, healthy and productive and that human use of the marine environment is kept at a sustainable level. Under MSFD, our marine waters are assessed against an agreed set of standards across a range of environmental criteria; appropriate environmental targets and indicators set; and a monitoring programme programmes put in place; and, where necessary, measures put in place to maintain or reach GES. The Directive is implemented in 6 year cycles with cycle 2 currently being implemented.

The National Marine Planning Framework (NMPF) brings together all marine-based human activities for the first time, outlining the government’s vision, objectives and marine planning policies for each marine activity. The Framework details how these marine activities will interact with each other in an ocean space that is under increasing spatial pressure, ensuring the sustainable use of our marine resources to 2040.

The Maritime Area Planning Act was signed into law by An tUachtarán on December 23rd 2021, and represents the biggest reform of marine governance since the foundation of the State, with a legal and administrative framework to support a marine environment that Ireland can use, enjoy and benefit from socially, environmentally and economically. The Act establishes in law a new planning regime for the maritime area and will be a key enabler of decarbonisation of Ireland’s energy sources and the development of offshore energy. It will replace existing State and development consent regimes and streamline arrangements on the basis of a single consent principle, i.e. one State consent (Maritime Area Consent) to enable occupation of the Maritime Area and one development consent (planning permission), with a single environmental assessment.

Target 14.1
By 2025, prevent and significantly reduce marine pollution of all kinds, in particular from land-based activities, including marine debris and nutrient pollution

Reducing Pollution and Sustainable Use:
A comprehensive assessment under the MSFD in 2020 showed Ireland achieved good environmental status for harmful substances that can cause pollution and eutrophication, and displayed a continued downward trend in the prevalence of marine litter on our beaches and coastline.
In December 2021, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage completed the second stage of MSFD implementation – i.e. the development and reporting of its monitoring programmes. Work has commenced on the third stage of MSFD Implementation to put in place programme of measures to maintain, or where appropriate, achieve GES in Ireland’s marine environment. This work is being progressed under a national Steering Group chaired by the Department, which comprises of external stakeholders and colleagues from other Departments and Agencies.

A public consultation on measures to maintain or achieve good environmental status concluded on 20 May 2022 and the final reporting stage to the European Commission is expected to be completed in quarter 4 of 2022.

Ireland’s 25 marine environmental targets established in 2020 will further guide work on tackling pollution to 2024 and beyond. These targets ensure that the marine environment will be sustainably managed and protected, and they now form the environmental pillar of the National Marine Planning Framework, launched on 1 July 2021.

**Marine Litter**

In 2020, Ireland enacted legislation to prohibit the manufacture, sale or export of products containing intentionally added plastic microbeads as these impact the marine environment.

Public awareness and action on coastal litter is delivered through the An Taisce Clean Coast range of programmes and the Green Schools Global Citizenship: Marine Environment module and by incorporation of marine litter awareness raising messaging in mainstream anti-litter programmes such as The National Spring Clean initiative.

Ireland also plays a strong role in regional multilateral cooperation to address the problem of marine litter through EU expert groups and the OSPAR Regional Action Plan on Marine Litter.

**OSPAR Convention**

On 1st October 2021 OSPAR’s new North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy (NEAES) 2030 was delivered and formally endorsed under the Irish Chairmanship of the OSPAR Commission. The NEAES 2030 sets out actions to address the current environmental challenges in the North-East Atlantic arising from climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution including marine litter. It contains 54 clear operational actions that are designed to address these challenges in the decade to 2030, thereby forming a fundamental pillar for achieving SDG 14 and increased cooperation with our EU and non-EU neighbours.

The 2021 OSPAR Ministerial meeting also delivered a new 600,000km² marine protected area (MPA) in the high seas south of Greenland. This is designed to protect a wide range of seabirds species for which the new North Atlantic Current and Evlanov Seabasin (NACES) MPA represents a critical foraging area.

Other deliverables included an agreement to control the discharge of raw plastic pellets; to protect kelp forests and other sensitive species; and agreements to work with other intergovernmental
bodies to address common challenges. All make a substantial contribution to the implementation of actions to achieve SDG Goal 14.

**Target 14.2**
By 2020, sustainably manage and protect marine and coastal ecosystems to avoid significant adverse impacts, including by strengthening their resilience, and take action for their restoration in order to achieve healthy and productive oceans.

[See Target 14.1]

**Target 14.3**
Minimize and address the impacts of ocean acidification, including through enhanced scientific cooperation at all levels.

Ireland has assumed a leadership role at a North-East Atlantic level in the scientific work on ocean acidification, leading on the delivery of an ocean wide assessment (publication in 2023).

**Target 14.4**
By 2020, effectively regulate harvesting and end overfishing, illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and destructive fishing practices and implement science-based management plans, in order to restore fish stocks in the shortest time feasible, at least to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as determined by their biological characteristics.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine leads on target 14.4. The target is progressed through the Common Fisheries Policy; Sea Fisheries Maritime Jurisdiction Act 2006 and Food Wise 2025 which aim to:

- Actively promote setting annual quotas at EU level, in line with maximum sustainable yield principles.
- Promote at EU level the introduction of constructive technical measures that promote sustainability, decrease by-catch and protect fish stocks for the future.
- Introduce national policies that support the sustainable fishing
- Give effect to EU policies

**Target 14.5**
By 2020, conserve at least 10 per cent of coastal and marine areas, consistent with national and international law and based on the best available scientific information.

Actions in the Programme for Government – Our Shared Future (PfG) commit to enacting new
legislation to achieve 10% coverage of marine protected areas (MPAs) as soon as practicable to achieve SDG14.

The PfG further aims to achieve 30% MPA coverage by 2030 in line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the forthcoming draft commitments of the UN Convention on Biodiversity (October 2021) and the OSPAR Commission Ministerial meeting (September 2021).

DHLGH is in the process of developing stand-alone legislation to enable the identification, designation and management of marine protected areas. Work is under way to draw up the General Scheme of the Bill. The target is to publish the heads of bill in Quarter 3 of 2022. Dedicated resources have been assigned to this work.

A public consultation on the MPA process is was completed in July 2021 with over 2,300 responses received. An independent review and analysis was subsequently undertaken. The findings and conclusions from this study were published on the 31 March 2022 and are helping to inform the development of MPA legislation.

DHLGH maintains a very active communications and engagement plan in relation to MPAs, which has included to date bilateral meetings, focus group meetings with key stakeholders and interest groups, plus a very wide campaign of advertising through various media.

**Target 14.6**

By 2020, prohibit certain forms of fisheries subsidies which contribute to overcapacity and overfishing, eliminate subsidies that contribute to illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing and refrain from introducing new such subsidies, recognizing that appropriate and effective special and differential treatment for developing and least developed countries should be an integral part of the World Trade Organization fisheries subsidies negotiation.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine manage EU and national funding programmes in line with EU policy including the Common Fisheries Policy.

**Target 14.7**

By 2030, increase the economic benefits to Small Island developing States and least developed countries from the sustainable use of marine resources, including through sustainable management of fisheries, aquaculture and tourism.

In 2021, based on an analysis of Ireland's potential added-value in climate diplomacy, as well as our experience as an island nation, the Department of Foreign Affairs identified the promotion of the Sustainable Blue Economy as a priority area for Ireland. This priority is in line with commitments in A Better World to support climate action through our development cooperation, as well as the SIDS Strategy, to provide support to Small Island Developing States to address climate change.
Ireland has significantly increased the amount of funding to SIDS and coastal LDCs, to harness the sustainable use of marine resources. Since 2020, this includes €1 million for the Caribbean Catastrophe Risk Insurance Facility, €1 million for the World Bank's PROBLUE Trust Fund, €400,000 for the International Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Great Blue Wall Initiative in the Western Indian Ocean, and €900,000 to the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

Target 14.a
Increase scientific knowledge, develop research capacity and transfer marine technology, taking into account the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission Criteria and Guidelines on the Transfer of Marine Technology, in order to improve ocean health and to enhance the contribution of marine biodiversity to the development of developing countries, in particular small island developing States and least developed countries.

Under Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth, the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine aims to build capacity, education, training and awareness. Ireland is an active member of Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission and Partnership for Observation of the Global Oceans.

Target 14.b
Provide access for small-scale artisanal fishers to marine resources and markets.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine ensures that inshore waters continue to be protected for smaller fishing vessels and recreational fishers and that pair trawling will be prohibited inside the six-mile limit. The Department also supports the inshore fishing fleet in generating greater marketing and promotional capacity, by facilitating the establishment of a Producer Organisation for these smaller fishing vessels, thereby providing additional opportunity for the island and coastal communities involved in the inshore sector.

This is complemented by continued investment in coastline communities through the Fisheries Local Area Group (FLAG) programme, providing support for innovative projects to boost economic growth and job creation.

Target 14.c
Enhance the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources by implementing international law as reflected in UNCLOS, which provides the legal framework for the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and their resources, as recalled in paragraph 158 of The Future We Want.

The Irish Chairmanship of OSPAR (2018-2022) continues to deliver ambitious actions to ensure
the marine environment is clean, healthy, diverse and used sustainably in accordance with UNCLOS. These actions address all human activities within OSPAR’s competency including radioactive discharges, the off-shore industry, protection/restoration of biodiversity, marine litter, noise, non-indigenous species, and hazardous substances and eutrophication (but excluding shipping and fisheries management).

Ireland is contributing to negotiations to reach agreement at the UN on a new agreement for biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction.
SDG 15 Life On Land
Goal 15
Protect, restore and promote sustainable use of terrestrial ecosystems, sustainably manage forests, combat desertification, and halt and reverse land degradation and halt biodiversity loss

Target 15.1
By 2020, ensure the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of terrestrial and inland freshwater ecosystems and their services, in particular forests, wetlands, mountains and drylands, in line with obligations under international agreements.

Ireland is an active and fully participating member of the United Nations Forum on forestry.

Target 15.2
By 2020, promote the implementation of sustainable management of all types of forests, halt deforestation, restore degraded forests and substantially increase afforestation and reforestation globally.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine leads on target 15.2. The target is progressed through a number of strategies including:

- DAFM Statement of Strategy Goal 3
- "Forest, products and people": Ireland's forest policy;
- Food Wise 2025;
- Climate Action Plan

Ireland's objective is to:

- increase the forest area, in accordance with sustainable forest management principles and to ensure the sustainable management of the forest resource in accordance with best practice thereby ensuring its capacity to provide the full range of timber and other benefits.
- ensure that afforestation, management of existing forests and development of the forest sector are undertaken in a manner that ensures compliance with environmental requirements and objectives and enhances their contribution to the environment and their capacity for the provision of public goods and services.

Target 15.3
By 2030, combat desertification, restore degraded land and soil, including land affected by desertification, drought and floods, and strive to achieve a land degradation-neutral world.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Raised bog restoration programme has restored or is actively restoring bog habitat across a project area of c. 5,000 ha of protected raised bogs with further sites planned for restoration.

NPWS is acting as the regulator for the Enhanced Decommissioning, Rehabilitation and Restoration Scheme (EDRRS). The EDRRS was approved by the Government in November 2020 and encompasses work on approximately 33,000 hectares of Bord na Mona peatlands, spanning 82 bogs, previously harvested for peat extraction for electricity generation. The funding of 108 million for this scheme is being sourced from the National Recovery and Resilience Fund (NRRF). The Scheme is administered by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications and regulated by the NPWS. Bord na Móna are undertaking the operational work under this Scheme. As of May 2022 over 8,000 hectares of peatlands has been restored since the scheme commenced in 2021.

NPWS has been part of three further successful EU LIFE applications which will focus on the restoration of coastal ecosystems and Upland systems and an EU Horizon 2020 application which includes a blanket bog action restoration site.

**Target 15.4**

By 2030, ensure the conservation of mountain ecosystems, including their biodiversity, in order to enhance their capacity to provide benefits that are essential for sustainable development.

LIFE IP Wild Atlantic Nature is a €20.6m, 9 year project that is working with farmers and local communities to implement a range of initiatives planned for the conservation and restoration of blanket bog complexes and associated habitats in Ireland’s North Western region. Other initiatives in upland areas include plans to restore peatland sites that have been afforested.

**Target 15.5**

Take urgent and significant action to reduce the degradation of natural habitats, halt the loss of biodiversity and, by 2020, protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species.

[See target 15.3]

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) is drafting the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan which will build on current actions to reduce the degradation of natural habitats and protect and prevent the extinction of threatened species. Actions will be implemented across the public and private sector. Building on conservation measures developed by the KerryLIFE project, the Pearl Mussel Project, commenced in May 2018 as a locally-led European Innovation Partnership (EIP). The six-year...
project, which has a total budget of €10 million, involves local farmers, species and habitat experts, and agricultural advisors working together to develop and implement a programme to ensure long-term coexistence of farming and Freshwater Pearl Mussel in the top eight priority catchments for the species. While the focus is on the river systems that host Freshwater Pearl Mussel, measures in the wider catchments are delivering sustainable management for peatlands and associated habitats.

Corncrake/Traonach LIFE is a new EU LIFE funded project working with farmers and landowners to improve habitat for corncrakes in the Special Protection Area network and surrounding farmland.

The entire Irish breeding population of Roseate Tern is confined to Rockabill SPA and Lady’s Island Lake SPA. Both sites are managed on an annual basis for the conservation of Roseate Tern and other breeding seabird populations. Recently NPWS secured a long-term lease with the owners of Rockabill thus securing the ability to warden this site for the foreseeable future.

Work is ongoing to incorporate final amendments into the Hen Harrier Threat Response Plan and the site-specific conservation objectives for the Hen Harrier SPAs. Work has also commenced on the preparation of a request for tenders for consultants to support the public consultation process and the undertaking of the necessary ecological assessments, as required by the SEA and Habitats Directives.

A programme of pond creation and management for natterjack toad continues. Results-based farm plans for this species are also being rolled out. Captive rearing, captive breeding and translocations are also being undertaken in an effort to prevent the extinction of this endangered species in the wild.

**Target 15.6**

**Promote fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising from the utilization of genetic resources and promote appropriate access to such resources, as internationally agreed.**

The EU ABS Regulation (511/2014), which Ireland has transposed via secondary legislation (SI No. 253 / 2019), brings European Union law into line with the Nagoya Protocol and sets out user obligations and Member State functions with regard to access and benefit-sharing of genetic resources (ABS) in the Union.

The EU ABS Regulation covers benefit-sharing aspects (the flow of benefits from users to providers as a result of utilisation of genetic resources) of the Nagoya Protocol and does not cover access to genetic resources in Member States. Member States may introduce their own regulations in this regard outside the scope of the EU ABS Regulation. Ireland has no plans to do so at this time.

Ireland is a signatory to the Protocol. A Memorandum for Government seeking approval to ratify the Protocol has been drawn up jointly with DFAT. This will be brought to Cabinet in the coming
weeks. Once the Protocol is ratified, we will put in place the operational framework to facilitate implementation in conjunction with stakeholders / competent authorities across sectors and other Government agencies.

**Target 15.7**

*Take urgent action to end poaching and trafficking of protected species of flora and fauna and address both demand and supply of illegal wildlife products.*

CITES (the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora) is an international agreement between governments. Its aim is to ensure that international trade in specimens of wild animals and plants does not threaten the survival of the species. NPWS is the management authority for the implementation of CITES in Ireland.

Under this Convention, trade in species listed on the Appendices to the Convention is restricted and facilitated by national authorities once set criteria have been satisfactorily met. Levels of exploitation of some animal and plant species are high and the trade in them, together with other factors, such as habitat loss, is capable of heavily depleting their populations and even bringing some species close to extinction. Many wildlife species in trade are not endangered, but the existence of an agreement to ensure the sustainability of the trade is important in order to safeguard these resources for the future.

CITES can serve as an instrument to promote a decrease in demand for goods derived from certain species, e.g. rhino horn and ivory. For instance, the EU and its Member States take a strict approach to the trade in rhino horn, as outlined in the European Commission’s 'Guidance document on the export, re-export, import and intra-Union trade of rhinoceros horns (2019/C 386/04)'.

While CITES is an effective and far-reaching mechanism for the application of controls on the trade in endangered species, it is not a wider protection mechanism outside of the context of international trade. Likewise, CITES Management Authorities do not generally have a responsibility for wider investigative or law enforcement functions in relation to the illegal trade in wildlife, poaching and trafficking.

The draft post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework supports SDG Target 15.7, inter alia, through targets for reduction in human – wildlife conflict and management actions to enable recovery and conservation of wild species and habitats.

**Target 15.8**

*By 2020, introduce measures to prevent the introduction and significantly reduce the impact of invasive alien species on land and water ecosystems and control or eradicate the priority species.*

Work is progressing on new national legislation that will give effect to aspects of the EU IAS Regulation (1143/2014) and also update existing legislation. In tandem with this drafting process,
which is close to being finalised by the OPC, Ireland continues to meet its wider obligations under the Regulation.

In 2021, Ireland identified three priority pathways on foot of analysis carried out in accordance with Article 13(1) of the Regulation: angling, recreational boating and transportation of habitat material. Priority Pathway Action Plans are required for each. The first of these Plans “Ireland’s Invasive Alien Species Angling Pathway Action Plan 2022 – 2027” to address the priority pathway through angling is now complete and Ireland is currently in the process of implementing same.

Work on the other two Plans is progressing with a view to completion later this year. Ireland has also committed to developing a National Management Plan for invasive alien species in its current Programme for Government. It is envisaged that a national plan will collate the work being done across government departments and agencies with a view to more streamlined and effective implementation of national policy on IAS.

**Target 15.9**

*By 2020, integrate ecosystem and biodiversity values into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts*

Under the new Annex to Regulation (EU) 691/2011 ‘Ecosystem Accounts’, which is currently being developed, the CSO will have a legal obligation to report on ecosystem extent, selected ecosystem condition indicators (aggregate indicators at a national scale, e.g. the Common Farmland Bird Index), and some ecosystem services (e.g. wood provision, crop provision, climate regulation (i.e. carbon sequestration and storage), and recreation services). Ecosystem service provision will be reported in physical terms; as yet there is no requirement in the module to report on value. Methodologies for the valuation of ecosystem services are still very much under development, and it is planned to include these in the accounts in the future. It is proposed that the first data submission to Eurostat will be in 2026, covering reference year 2024.

The integration of these data into national and local planning, development processes, poverty reduction strategies and accounts will require further deliberation and discussion between relevant departments and agencies, including DHLGH and the CSO.

**Target 15.a**

*Mobilize and significantly increase financial resources from all sources to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity and ecosystems.*

The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage is working to mobilise funding from a variety of sources for peatland conservation and restoration. This includes the Department entering into a public-private partnership with Intel Ireland to pilot the restoration of peatlands in Wicklow Mountains National Park. The LIFE Integrated Project Wild Atlantic Nature has a remit to attract complementary funding towards the objectives of the Prioritised Action Framework (PAF) for Natura 2000 in Ireland. To
date, the project has secured €2.1m in Horizon 2020 funding for participation in the WaterLANDS project in Cuilcagh – Anierin SAC, in addition to funding for several smaller community based projects.

NPWS, in collaboration with the European Investment Bank, are supporting the Peatland Finance Ireland Initiative to develop a roadmap with an investment plan, an economic and funding model and a proposal for a financing instrument for peatland restoration.

NPWS is working with academics to draft a Financial Needs Assessment for Biodiversity as well as recommendations for a Resource Mobilisation Strategy.

**Target 15.b**

**Mobilize significant resources from all sources and at all levels to finance sustainable forest management and provide adequate incentives to developing countries to advance such management, including for conservation and reforestation.**

Through *Food Vision 2030*, Ireland aims to work with the European Commission to:

1. introduce a regulation that aims to minimise risk that products linked to deforestation and forest degradation are placed on the EU market and to develop a definition of deforestation-free supply chains; and
2. improve EU regulation.

**Target 15.c**

**Enhance global support for efforts to combat poaching and trafficking of protected species, including by increasing the capacity of local communities to pursue sustainable livelihood opportunities.**

Wildlife Crime Operations is designed as a central coordinating hub for the 84 Conservation Rangers all across the county, who enforce the Wildlife Act and Birds and Habitats Regulations, gather books of evidence and bring prosecutions. This number will soon be increased further to 120, a doubling of the number of Rangers since 2020. Resources within the National Parks and Wildlife Service are being increased at the moment, as per the recommendations in the €55m-funded *Strategic Action Plan for the Renewal of the NPWS*. The primary functions of the Wildlife Crime Operations hub are to provide advice, guidance, data management and training, engage with An Garda Síochána, and coordinate more broadly across the entire organisation.
SDG 16 Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions
SDG 16
Promote peaceful and inclusive societies for sustainable development, provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels

Target 16.1
Significantly reduce all forms of violence and related death rates everywhere.

The Department of Justice’s work in support of the implementation of A Policing Service for our Future, arising from the recommendations of the Commission on the Future of Policing in Ireland (CoFPI) continued despite the challenges of the pandemic, particularly for An Garda Síochána.

As recommended by CoFPI, the Government approved the development of a Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill to replace the Garda Síochána Act 2005. A Community Safety Policy Paper has been developed to inform the drafting of the Bill. It is intended that the Bill will redefine the functions of An Garda Síochána (AGS) to include community safety and to place an obligation on relevant Departments, State agencies and local authorities to cooperate with agencies in the criminal justice system in relation to carrying out this function.

Work was also progressed on the Garda Operating Model Bill. The new model, announced by the Garda Commissioner in August 2019, introduces major changes to the structures of An Garda Síochána by providing more front-line Gardaí, increased Garda visibility, and a wider range of policing services for people in their local area. Under the Divisional Policing Model being introduced, all services will be managed and coordinated at divisional level, to allow greater specialisation and to release Gardaí from back office functions, and Garda Districts will no longer form part of the organisational structure.

The Policing Plan is monitored by the Policing Authority who hold a number of public meetings with AGS leadership each year. Tackling crime in our communities is a priority in the Programme for Government and for An Garda Síochána. As part of Budget 2022, the government has provided a record €2.062 billion to An Garda Síochána in their efforts to tackle crime and to build community resilience against crime.

Target 16.2
End abuse, exploitation, trafficking and all forms of violence against and torture of children.

The Second National Action Plan to Prevent and Combat Human Trafficking was launched in 2016. The Action Plan involves a victim-centred and human rights based approach with the ultimate
aims of preventing human trafficking, ensuring an effective criminal justice response and delivery of supports to victims. Great importance is also attached to the work of multilateral international organisations who are active in tackling human trafficking, including the UN, Council of Europe, OSCE and the European Union and Ireland continues to work with all our partners in those fora.

Included in the Department of Justice Action Plan 2021 is an action to: Work with public sector and civil society stakeholders to review and strengthen our processes and legislative framework to combat human trafficking. As part of this engagement, the Department of Justice established a forum for victims and stakeholders in 2020 to examine avenues of improvement in relation to human trafficking. The forum consists of State, agency and civil society organization stakeholders working together to provide supports to victims of human trafficking.

To progress the work of the forum, a number of sub-groups have been established with expert members to examine subjects such as the National Referral mechanism (NRM), specialised accommodation, a review of the current Action Plan and other priority issues.

One subgroup was tasked with examining the existing Action Plan and forming a view on the value of developing a replacement and updated Action Plan. It was agreed by them that a new National Action Plan should be developed rather than a revision of the current plan. Given developments since the Second National Action Plan in 2016, the subgroup and Department see a real value in developing a new National Action Plan now and linking this in with the work being progressed on development of a new National Referral Mechanism.

The current Action Plan retains many pertinent and worthwhile goals but some new European wide approaches to tackling trafficking had developed in recent years and will be accounted for in particular;

- A greater recognition of a gender element to trafficking and gendered tailored responses.
- A greater focus on integration of identified victims and not just to address the immediate crime itself

The new action plan will be introduced by mid-2022.

An Garda Síochána has committed significant resources to the investigation and prosecution of human trafficking in Ireland. A specialised Garda Unit, the Human Trafficking Investigation and Co-ordination Unit (HTICU), has been in place since 2009 to conduct investigations into human trafficking and provide advice, support and where necessary, operational assistance to investigations at district level.

An Garda Síochána is also active in relation to trafficking gangs through work targeting organised crime - targeting their finances, their use of the internet and by working closely with other jurisdictions.

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) has been designated as Ireland’s independent National Rapporteur for Anti-Human Trafficking under article 19 of the EU Human
Trafficking Directive. On the 16 October 2020, the Minister signed S.I. No. 432/2020 - European Union (Prevention and Combating of Human Trafficking) (National Rapporteur) Regulations 2020, in order to make this designation. The National Rapporteur’s responsibilities will include monitoring the implementation of anti-trafficking policy at the national level and playing a key role in data collection on trafficking in human beings at national level.

Revised National Referral Mechanism
On 11 May 2021, the Government approved the creation of a revised National Referral Mechanism to make it easier for victims of trafficking to come forward, be identified and access support. Details are outlined at 8.7 (Goal 8) above.

Target 16.3
Promote the rule of law at the national and international levels and ensure equal access to justice for all.

The Courts Service has developed a Long Term Strategic Vision 2030, which has been summarised as follows “Delivering excellent services to court users; working in partnership with the judiciary and others, to enable a world class courts system”. The long-term vision will have a phased implementation.

The Courts Service has created a Modernisation Programme Board to oversee the implementation of its Modernisation Programme which is to deliver a user centred, digitally enabled Courts Service over the coming years.

The key areas of reform are:

Redesigning the delivery of services around court users to make them more efficient and accessible, and ensuring that court users are at the centre of how the Courts Service designs and delivers its services for example:

- Digital services, including e-filing and digital case management
- Build a modern technology infrastructure
- Invest in people by building new skills, capacity and culture
- Invest in modern court venues

The Modernisation Programme is currently on target to deliver all key deliverables for the Transition Phase of the Modernisation Programme (2021-2023). The Programme itself spans a 10-year period from 2020 to 2030.

As it was deemed to be an essential service, Courts remained open at all times during the pandemic to deal with urgent cases as a minimum, but frequently it was possible to deal with much more than just essential matters. Urgent family law cases including domestic violence and crime were prioritised at all times during the periods of Level 5 restrictions and Judges remained available to hear these matters as and when required.
The Courts Service management, both nationally and locally, continue to work closely with the Judiciary to deal with the consequences of the pandemic and look to schedule extra sittings to deal with delays within the system. Additional judicial resources are sought from the Presidents of the Circuit & District Courts for special additional court sittings. However, judicial resources are deployed to scheduled Court sittings as a first priority so are not readily available to deal with additional demands that have resulted from the pandemic. It is likely the pressure on the Court system will remain a feature for the short to medium term.

Courts have also added capacity during traditional Court Vacation periods. In 2021, additional sittings were added in Easter, Whitsun and during the long vacation where judicial resources were available. This was in addition to the normal scheduled vacation sittings of the District Court and emergencies sittings of the other jurisdictions.

The Court system have adapted to accommodate as much work as possible and has returned to near normal operations but, while the pandemic remains a feature of our lives, additional safeguards continue to operate to ensure the safety of all court users. This includes social distancing, increased hygiene regimes, staggering of court lists etc. and this can lead to a reduction in the efficient operation of Courts. As the situation evolves, the Courts Service, working with the Judiciary, adapts working arrangements to ensure that as many cases as possible continue to be dealt with.

While the pandemic may have disrupted forward planning for a time, it has enabled our Courts Service to leap forward several years through the use of technology and remote hearings in particular. As a result, at the end of last year, the Supreme Court and Court of Appeal had historic low waiting times for hearings, while the High Court was able to list more matters than it did the previous year due to the use of technology. Towards the end of 2020, the Courts Service committed an investment in excess of €2.2 million to expand the number of courtrooms that are technology enabled. The project has been delivered successfully in 2021 and has brought the number of up-to-date technology courtrooms from 55 to 104.

The Courts have at all times prioritised family law, criminal matters (especially cases involving people in custody), bail and urgent injunctions. The use of video technology for cases involving people in custody has also made a very significant contribution to supporting the efficient running of our prisons and other places of custody. It has undoubtedly made a major contribution in keeping the Irish Prison Service estate largely COVID-free.

During the pandemic, we prioritised the issues of domestic abuse and sexual violence. At a time when we are asking people to stay home, we know that for some of the most vulnerable people in our society, home is anything but a safe place. The national police service An Garda Síochána, the Courts Service and the Legal Aid board continue to prioritise domestic abuse cases and additional resources have been provided for organisations working to provide services to victims, alongside a state funded television and radio awareness campaign to remind victims that supports are ‘Still Here’.

A detailed roadmap ‘Supporting a Victims Journey’ has been prepared to ensure we have a more victim-centred system that supports and empowers victims and gives them the confidence to
engage with services knowing they will be supported, informed and treated with respect and dignity at every point and by every person they come into contact with.

Work is also ongoing in conjunction with the Judiciary, the Courts Service and others to agree a high-level vision and objectives for the development of a national family justice system in parallel with the establishment of a dedicated Family Court structure as envisaged by the forthcoming *Family Court Bill*.

The overall aim is to change the culture so that the focus of the family justice system meets the complex needs of people who need help with family justice issues.

Budget 2022 saw the highest ever budgetary allocation for the Justice sector including €164 million for the Courts Service. This included €1 million for the Courts Modernisation Programme which builds on the €8 million allocated for that Programme in Budget 2021 and retained in 2022. This investment has given flexibility for strategic infrastructural investment including in relation to ICT and accommodation. €4m in funding was also retained as part of the phased withdrawal of Covid-19 pandemic support to enable court sittings take place in a safe environment.

The government agreed to increase the number of High Court judges which will be likely required to clear backlogs created during the pandemic and will form an important part of the Justice Sectoral Recovery Plan deploying resources to the areas of most pressing need. Specifically, when enacting the provisions of the the Civil Law (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2021, following Government approval, the number of judges in the High Court was increased by five with provision made for one additional appointment where necessary in the interests of the administration of justice. Following receipt of the necessary sanction, and the completion of the necessary due diligence, the Government approved the nomination of that additional ordinary judge of the High Court in January, 2022.

This represents one of the largest increases in judges approved in recent memory and a very significant investment by the State in judicial resources. This will ensure sufficient resources are available to address areas of immediate need within the Court, including the pressures on criminal justice arising from Covid-19 and Strategic Infrastructure Development issues.

Any further judicial resourcing needs will be informed by the outcomes of the Judicial Planning Working Group process, a Working Group established in April, 2021, in line with a commitment in the Programme for Government, to consider the number of, and type of, judges required to ensure the efficient administration of justice over the next five years. The Working Group, operating under an independent Chair, is examining the wider judicial resource needs in all courts, and is expected to complete its work and submit its report in Q2 2022. To help inform that work, the OECD has been commissioned to prepare an independent review of judicial resource needs, including benchmarks against international comparators.

The focus of our response will be on citizens' needs. It will consider economic recovery, personal well-being and a strong justice system capable of delivering justice in a timely, efficient and equitable manner.
The Judicial Appointments Commission Bill 2017 lapsed with the dissolution of the 32nd Dáil. The current programme for Government contains a commitment to enact legislation to reform Judicial Appointments. It also commits to engage with stakeholders to ensure the legislation enjoys broad support. Government approval was secured in December 2020 for the drafting of a Judicial Appointments Commission Bill. The Bill provides for the establishment of a new commission to replace the Judicial Appointments Advisory Board.

The Programme for Government Our Shared Future contains a commitment to implement measures to reduce the costs associated with access to the legal system in Ireland. In order to progress this, and in the absence of a clear recommendation from the Review Group on how this could be achieved, the Department of Justice has commissioned Indecon Consultants to undertake an economic research in this area. In particular, Indecon has been asked to economically evaluate the majority and minority views outlined in the Review Report, as well as any other measures it can identify which would serve to reduce legal costs for citizens, businesses and the State.

This research is expected to be completed by the end of 2022, after which time the Department will assess it and seek legal advice on its recommendations. Once received, both the research and legal advice will inform the development of policy proposals.

Civil Legal Aid

As part of the Justice Plan 2021, the Minister announced her intention to commence a review of the Civil Legal Aid Scheme, which provides legal advice and legal aid in civil cases to those who may not be able to afford legal representation or advice. Since the Civil Legal Aid Scheme was established 42 years ago, Irish society has changed and the demands on the Scheme have grown. In order to provide maximum benefit to those it was established to serve, an independent Review Group with membership and terms of reference to be agreed by the Minister, will conduct a robust, comprehensive review of the Scheme. The review will commence once membership is agreed. It is likely that the review will continue into 2023. Ultimately, the review should map out a future for the Civil Legal Aid Scheme; one which will provide for a flexible service that has, as far as possible, the capacity and resources to respond to the priority legal assistance needs of those of insufficient means.

See also Target 16.5 re anti-corruption measures

Target 16.4

By 2030, significantly reduce illicit financial and arms flows, strengthen the recovery and return of stolen assets and combat all forms of organized crime.

In relation to combatting arms trading, Ireland is committed to ratifying the United Nations Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, their Parts and Components and Ammunition. In large part, Ireland complies with the Protocol. However, remaining areas relating to the marking and destruction of firearms will be addressed in the Criminal Justice (Miscellaneous Provisions) Bill which is due to be published in the coming months.
Return of forfeited assets from Ireland to the Federal Republic of Nigeria

Ireland's commitment to the restitution of stolen assets is exemplified by the conclusion in 2020 of a long running case involving cooperation between Ireland and Nigeria. This represents the culmination of a process, which began with an internationally-led investigation. The Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB) took part in this international operation which led to the freezing of over $1bn in funds worldwide, of which approximately €5.5m was identified in a Dublin-based bank account.

The return of these assets was the first time that Ireland has taken such action and is a concrete demonstration of Ireland's commitment to international cooperation in the fight against corruption and to assisting countries which have been adversely affected by corruption in the past, and is in line with our international obligations as a signatory to the UN Convention Against Corruption. Article 57 of the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) provides for the return of confiscated assets and, where appropriate, States Parties may give consideration to concluding agreements or mutually acceptable arrangements, on a case-by-case basis, for the final disposal of confiscated property.

This Proceeds of Crime case of international significance was determined by the High Court on 15 June 2020. The High Court ordered the return to Nigeria of approximately €5.49m in assets frozen by the Criminal Assets Bureau (CAB) in a bank account in Ireland in 2014. These assets were misappropriated by the late General Sani Abacha, former Head of the State of Nigeria and his family. The Nigerian authorities made an application to the High Court in December 2019 seeking an order for the return of these assets.

Money laundering and Terrorist Financing

Targeting money laundering is central to fighting organised crime. Those who commit crimes such as drug trafficking, human trafficking and fraud depend on hiding and converting the proceeds of those crimes. Pursuing those proceeds to bring those responsible to justice and meaningfully reduce the incentive to commit the crimes in the first place is a key focus of the work of the Criminal Assets Bureau and the Garda National Economic Crime Bureau. Responsibility for countering money laundering is shared across several Government Departments and other bodies, and affects many sectors of our economy.

Preventative measures are addressed through the Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) Act 2010, which criminalised money laundering activities, and required those whose business activities can be used to facilitate money laundering to help prevent it. In 2018, the Act was amended to give effect to the Fourth Anti-Money Laundering Directive. The Fifth Anti Money Laundering Directive was transposed via the Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) (Amendment) Act 2021.

The amendments to transpose the Fifth Directive:

- Address the challenges presented by complex legal structures which can obscure the true owners of assets.
- Bring virtual asset service providers and custodian wallet providers into the scope of anti-
money laundering regulation.

- Improve safeguards for financial transactions to and from high-risk third countries and sets new limits on the use of anonymous pre-paid cards.
- Bring a number of new designated persons under the existing legislation, including property services providers as well as dealers and intermediaries in the art trade.
- Enhance the customer due diligence requirements of the existing legislation.
- Prevent credit and financial institutions from creating anonymous safe-deposit boxes.
- Provide for Ministerial guidance which will clarify domestic "prominent public functions".

Criminals routinely move the proceeds of crime from one country to another and exploit inconsistencies and weak links. Accordingly, a coherent global approach is needed and the EU has long had legislation in this area. On 20 July 2021, the European Commission proposed a package of legislative changes to further develop the EU’s anti-money laundering regime. This package would significantly reshape how anti-money laundering regulation is structured, and if introduced, the package will require substantial revisions to our national anti-money laundering regime. However, as the negotiations on the package are ongoing, and the proposals may change significantly before they are finalised, it would be premature to speculate on what changes may be required. Any significant changes will require detailed consideration and consultation with public and private sector stakeholders as the final EU measures emerge.

PIF Directive

Directive 2017/1371, commonly known as the PIF Directive, targets fraud against the EU’s financial interests. It is provided for in Part 6 of the Criminal Justice (Theft and Fraud Offences) Act 2001, as amended. The offences were updated in the Criminal Justice (Theft and Fraud Offences) (Amendment) Act 2021 which was enacted on 18 March 2021 and commenced on 14 April 2021. The offences of money laundering and corruption which are also relevant to the PIF Directive are provided for in the Criminal Justice (Money Laundering and Terrorist Financing) Act 2010, as amended, and the Criminal Justice (Corruption Offences) Act 2018.

Target 16.5
Substantially reduce corruption and bribery in all their forms.

The Programme for Government 2020 states that ‘Corruption and white collar crime damages our economy, breeds cynicism in our society and is a threat to our international reputation’, and contains the following commitments:

- Establish the Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement (ODCE) to be a stand-alone statutory body.
- Introduce and implement new anti-corruption and anti-fraud structures, informed by the forthcoming Hamilton Review.
- Legislate to provide for preliminary trial hearings to expedite the administration of justice in white-collar crime cases.
- Amend the Criminal Justice (Corruption Offences) Act 2018 to make the prosecution of white-collar crime more manageable and efficient.
The Companies (Corporate Enforcement Authority) Act 2021, which establishes the Corporate Enforcement Authority as a stand-alone statutory body, was signed into law by the President on 22 December 2021.

The Review of Structures and Strategies to Prevent, Investigate and Penalise Economic Crime and Corruption, was published on 3 December 2020. The review was led by Mr James Hamilton, the former Director of Public Prosecutions, who chaired a multi-agency review group comprising representation from Government Departments and the key State agencies with responsibility for the prevention, investigation and prosecution of economic crime and corruption as well as a small number of experts from outside the public service.

Following the publication of the report of the review group in December 2020, the implementation plan was published in April 2021 and outlines 22 actions to be completed by the end of 2022. Of the 22 actions included in the Implementation plan, three have been completed in full, and a number of other have been significantly advanced:

- A Forum of senior representatives from the relevant operational bodies was established in June 2021.
- The establishment of the Advisory Council against Economic Crime and Corruption is currently in the final stages.
- Once the Advisory Council is established, work will begin on developing a multi-annual strategy for combating economic crime and corruption and an accompanying action plan. This will include public consultations.
- Following Government agreement in September 2021 to a review of the statutory framework for ethics in public life, DPER has commenced the review of ethics in public office.
- The General Scheme of the *Garda Síochána (Powers) Bill 2021* was published in June 2021. The General Scheme went to the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Justice for pre-legislative scrutiny in December 2021, and this represents progress across a number of Hamilton recommendations.
- The *Criminal Procedure Act 2021*, which provides for preliminary trial hearings in respect of certain criminal offences, was signed into law by the President on 24 May 2021.

**Target 16.6**

**Develop effective, accountable and transparent institutions at all levels.**

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform continues to pursue a wide ranging reform programme aimed at delivering an open, accountable and ethical government underpinned by a transparent and effective public system.

**The Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015**

The Regulation of Lobbying Act 2015 established a web based register of lobbying activity to deliver appropriate transparency on “who is lobbying whom about what”. Currently, there are almost 2,300 organisations and individuals registered on the Register and over 61,000 returns have been submitted to date to the register and are now available for viewing by the public at www.lobbying.ie reinforcing our efforts to provide transparency. The Heads of a General Scheme
to strengthen the 2015 Regulation of Lobbying Act, following an extensive review of the existing legislation, have been prepared. It is intended to bring a finalised General Scheme to Government shortly for approval. The purpose of the amendments will be to build on the existing strong legislative foundation and to:

- Improve the operation and functionality of the Lobbying Register;
- Strengthen the existing legislation and its enforcement; and
- Make failure to comply with the post-term employment restrictions set out in section 22 of the Act a relevant contravention under the Act.

The Protected Disclosures Act

The Protected Disclosures Act has been in place since 2014 and provides robust statutory protections for workers in both the public and private sectors against the real or potential penalisation by their employers where they have brought concerns about wrongdoing in the workplace to light. The Act is to be amended by the Protected Disclosures (Amendment) Bill which will take into account the provisions of the new EU Whistleblowing Directive (Directive (EU) 2019/1937). This Bill was published in February 2022 and is making its way through the legislative process in both the Dáil and Seanad.

The Freedom of Information Act 2014

The Freedom of Information Act 2014 seeks to underpin a culture of openness, transparency and accountability across the public sector. Under the Freedom of Information (FOI) system in Ireland, members of the public can request records held by public bodies, which must be provided unless they are specifically exempt under the terms of the legislation. Even where the basic requirements of an exemption provision are satisfied, in many cases FOI officers are additionally required to consider the public interest in issuing decisions on access to records, which allows for the release of otherwise exempt records when there are particular public interest factors in favour of release. The FOI system in Ireland also places a strong emphasis on transparency across the public sector. The legislation mandates public bodies to proactively publish records that may be of public interest in order to maintain a culture of openness and transparency around public decision making.

While all objective indicators point to a system that is robust and functioning well, a review of Freedom of Information legislation is currently underway to examine the strengths and weaknesses of the current FOI regime and to take account of relevant domestic and international developments. The review is designed to be collaborative in nature and seeks to incorporate the views of as many stakeholders as possible. A number of projects have already taken place as part of the review process, including a public consultation to determine the scope of the review process and a customer satisfaction survey is set to launch shortly, which seek to gain a deeper insight into the experiences of the FOI process on the part of requesters, as well as staff of FOI Bodies. The report on the review of the Freedom of Information Act is intended to be published later in the year.

Target 16.7

Ensure responsive, inclusive, participatory and representative decision-making at all levels.
The Open Government Partnership process was reinvigorated during 2021 in line with the Programme for Government commitment by establishing the Open Government Round Table, multi-stakeholder forum, co-chaired with Civil Society. The Round Table is progressing the co-development of Ireland’s 3rd Open Government National Action Plan, informed by submissions from a public call. It is expected that the National Action Plan will be brought to Government by mid-July 2022.

The Guidelines on Appointments to State Boards are in place since 2014. These Guidelines contribute to responsive, inclusive and participatory decision-making by having in place a default process that requires Departments and Agencies in making appointments to State Boards to advertise the positions openly and invite the public to submit applications. The Guidelines provide for a fair and transparent process of consideration before the appointments are made. This enhances inclusive participatory decision making at all levels.

Target 16.8

Broaden and strengthen the participation of developing countries in the institutions of global governance.

The Global Island, Ireland’s foreign policy, commits Ireland to promoting a fairer, just, secure and sustainable world. Ireland provides funding to the Voluntary Technical Assistance Trust Fund to support the participation of Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States in the work of the Human Rights Council. Ireland provides a platform for civil society in development countries to participate in global governance processes.

Ireland continues to provide support to UN processes focussed on small island developing states (SIDS), in particular the SAMOA Pathway process, and to support efforts by SIDS to influence global processes.

Since 2019 Ireland has provided assistance to UN DESA (the UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs), and OHRLLS (the Office of the High Representative for Least Developed Countries, Land-locked Developing Countries and SIDS) to bolster the staff resources in its SIDS Unit and to support SIDS partnerships in the SAMOA pathway process. A recent partnership initiative was the holding of a meeting of the SIDS Global Business Network during the 7th Our Ocean Conference in Palau in April 2022.

Ireland recognises the challenges SIDS face in engaging in international discussions - due to capacity constraints and their remote locations - and the importance of their participation in global discussions. As a response to this Ireland has increased our contributions to mechanisms to facilitate the participation of SIDS representatives at international meetings on climate change and global ocean action, such as COP26, the 7th Our Ocean Conference and, the 2022 UN Ocean Conference. In recognition of the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement in these discussions, Ireland has also provided financial assistance to enable youth and civil society representatives to contribute to these discussions.
**Target 16.9**
By 2030, provide legal identity for all, including birth registration.

Ireland has contributed €15.755 million to the European Union Trust Fund for Africa (EUTF) which supports programmes for modernising civil registration systems. These programmes cover accessibility to registration centres, training of personnel, maintenance of records, and awareness-raising campaigns. The development of effective and reliable civil registration systems not only impacts on the return and readmission of a country’s nationals who find themselves in an irregular migratory situation in a country of destination. It is also a necessary condition for citizens to be able to fully realise their civil, political and social rights, including in cases where migrants seek the assistance of their country’s consular services when abroad. It also contributes to the stability of states, notably in terms of the integrity of electoral registers.

Ireland provides for legal identity domestically through, for example, provision of passports and Foreign Birth Registration.

**Target 16.10**
Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements.

**Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019**

Under the Data Sharing and Governance Act 2019, the Data Governance Board has been established to provide a generalised legal basis for the sharing of data between public bodies while setting out appropriate principles and safeguards under which such sharing should take place.

Board membership is diverse, providing wide ranging views from across industry, academia, legal, societal representation and technical spheres in addition to the public service. Membership includes 3 members appointed as the result of a successful Public Appointment Service State Boards competition.

Establishment of the Board and development of a new Data Sharing & Governance Framework are key milestones in the implementation of the Public Service Data Strategy.

**Open Data Strategy 2017-2022**

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform has responsibility for the operation of the national Open Data portal [https://data.gov.ie](https://data.gov.ie). The portal provides easy access to over 13,000 datasets of official non-personal government data from 152 public organisations in open formats for reuse and redistribution. 56% of this data is available via APIs. Progress reports and minutes of Open Data Governance Board meetings are published quarterly on the Portal.

The EU’s Open Data Directive was transposed into Irish law in July 2021 through [SI 376/2021](https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2021/si/376/contents) which places additional obligations on public bodies to release government data in open formats. To support public bodies to meet their obligations under the directive my Department has put in place a drawdown procurement framework for Technical Services for Open Data and Data Management and has also procured an Open Data Training framework and a national open data training programme will be implemented later this year.
Target 16.a
Strengthen relevant national institutions, including through international cooperation, for building capacity at all levels, in particular in developing countries, to prevent violence and combat terrorism and crime.

Ireland has an unwavering commitment to multilateralism and actively participates in the UN and the EU, guided by our values.

Ireland was successfully elected to the UN Security Council for a two-year term after a campaign focussed on empathy, independence and partnership. Now in our second year, Ireland is actively engaged across the full Security Council agenda in line with our overarching principles of Building Peace; Strengthening Conflict Prevention; Ensuring Accountability.

Amongst several priority areas, Ireland is working to uphold international humanitarian and human rights law in our engagement across the Council’s agenda, and to promote accountability for violations. We are acting as focal point on hunger and conflict and we take a leading role on Women, Peace and Security.

In particular, given our long-standing record as a troop contributor, we are paying close attention to peacekeeping mandates. As an elected member of the Security Council, Ireland has consistently sought to peacekeeping operations more effective. Ensuring mandates are clear, credible, and realistic is a priority, as is ensuring that missions are adequately resourced to carry out their tasks. To date, Ireland has contributed to the mandate renewal processes of nine UN peacekeeping operations, and one UN authorised peace operation.

Ireland contributes to this Goal in the role it plays in supporting multilateralism and collective security through participation in United Nations authorised peace support and crisis management operations. Ireland currently participates in six of the twelve peacekeeping missions operated by the UN. We are, according to the UN data, the 6th largest per capita troop contributing country in the world and the largest in Europe, a commitment also reflected by the high regard in which senior Irish Defence Forces’ personnel are held. On average per month, there were 569 Irish Defence Forces personnel involved in UN-led and UN mandated missions throughout 2021.

Ireland has also made a lasting difference to the UN’s peacekeeping architecture. In September 2021 during Ireland’s Presidency of the Council, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Defence presided over the unanimous adoption of a UN Security Council Resolution spearheaded by Ireland on peacekeeping transitions. UNSCR 2594 was the first standalone resolution on transitions ever agreed at the Council, providing the first shared definition of what the transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding entails. It underlines that UN transitions should not be conceptualised as mission closures or exit strategies. Rather, they represent a reconfiguration of UN strategy, footprint, and capacity in a way that supports peacebuilding, prioritises the protection of civilians, and safeguards the gains peacekeepers have made. The resolution provides a framework and set of principles that will guide missions, current and future, for years to come, as the UN makes the challenging, but essential, transition from peacekeeping to peacebuilding. It focuses on the transition from UN peace missions to a UN civilian presence that supports
peacebuilding in post conflict environments, and ensuring that civilians stay protected throughout this process. This overall Irish initiative involved cross-governmental engagement by the Department of Foreign Affairs, Ireland’s Permanent Mission to the United Nations in New York, and Department of Defence.

During its term on the UN Security Council, and in other fora, Ireland has consistently highlighted that respect for human rights is key to preventing and combatting terrorism. Ireland has also advocated strongly for global counter-terrorism approaches that include meaningful engagement with affected communities, particularly women, and with civil society. With its EU partners, Ireland sought stronger language on human rights, rule of law and gender aspects in the recent 7th review of the UN Global Counter Terrorism Strategy. Ireland also continues to amplify the voices of the victims of terrorism. Ireland also works to ensure that counter-terrorism measures, including sanctions, do not obstruct humanitarian activity. As members of the UN’s 14 Sanctions Committees during our UN Security Council tenure, we have worked intensively to ensure that there are provisions in these sanctions regimes protecting humanitarian activity. This has included supporting the introduction of humanitarian language in the 1267 ISIL (Da’esh) Al Qaida Sanctions Regime, and a humanitarian carve-out to the 1988 Afghanistan Regime in December 2021.

Target 16.b
Promote and enforce non-discriminatory laws and policies for sustainable development.


In July 2021, Minister O’Gorman launched a public consultation process to inform a review of the Equality Acts to examine the functioning of the Acts and their effectiveness in combatting discrimination and promoting equality.

The Review will examine the degree to which those experiencing discrimination are aware of the legislation and whether there are practical or other obstacles that preclude or deter them from taking an action. The Review will also include consideration of Programme for Government commitments to examine the introduction of a socio-economic ground for discrimination and protections for gender identity under the current legislation.

The public consultation process has now concluded and the results are being analysed.
SDG 17 Partnerships for the Goals
SDG 17
Strengthen the means of implementation and revitalize the global partnership for sustainable development

Target 17.1
Strengthen domestic resource mobilisation, including through international support to developing countries, to improve domestic capacity for tax and other revenue collection.

Strengthening governance is a policy priority in A Better World and includes the ambition to strengthen domestic resource mobilisation (DRM) and tax administrations in developing countries. Ireland’s DRM Initiative, launched in late 2019, is a whole-of-government collaboration between the Department of Finance, the Department of Foreign Affairs and the Office of the Revenue Commissioners to strengthen developing countries’ DRM capacity. The initiative aims to:

- Scale up Ireland’s support to DRM activities;
- Share Ireland’s experience through effective global partnerships; and
- Shape an enabling environment to support the coordination and sharing of lessons.

Through the initiative, Ireland provides tailored support to partner countries to address their specific DRM needs, including strengthening tax systems and public financial management, and continues to promote the DRM initiative to other counties. In addition, the DRM initiative has improved Ireland’s capacity for engagement with our long-standing DRM partners, the African Tax Administration Forum and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development.

Target 17.2
Developed countries to implement fully their official development assistance commitments, including the commitment by many developed countries to achieve the target of 0.7 per cent of ODA/GNI to developing countries and 0.15 to 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries. ODA providers are encouraged to consider setting a target to provide at least 0.20 per cent of ODA/GNI to least developed countries.

In Global Island, Ireland reiterated the commitment to expand Official Development Assistance and make progress on delivering the United Nations target of allocating 0.7 percent of Gross National Income (GNI) for Official Development Assistance by 2030. A Better World provides the framework for this expansion and commits to reaching the furthest behind.
Target 17.3
Mobilize additional financial resources for developing countries from multiple sources.

Strengthening governance is a policy priority in A Better World and includes the ambition to strengthen domestic resource mobilisation and tax administrations in developing countries. Through our engagement with multilateral development banks and the UN development system, Ireland’s supports private sector resource mobilisation for sustainable development.

In December 2021 the Minister for Finance in his capacity as Ireland’s Governor at the World Bank, pledged almost €106 million on behalf of Ireland to the International Development Association (IDA) under it 20th replenishment round. IDA is the World Bank’s fund for the world’s poorest countries and this pledge will be encashed over 9 years commencing in 2023.

The policy agenda associated with this replenishment is heavily oriented to facilitating developing countries make progress across all SDGs and also is reckonable for ODA.

Target 17.4
Assist developing countries in attaining long-term debt sustainability through coordinated policies aimed at fostering debt financing, debt relief and debt restructuring, as appropriate, and address the external debt of highly indebted poor countries to reduce debt distress.

Ireland continues to engage with the Paris Club, IMF and World Bank Group on issues related to debt relief – including the Common Framework and SDR reallocation.

Target 17.5
Adopt and implement investment promotion regimes for least developed countries.

In line with the Government’s Africa Strategy, Ireland hosts a triennial Africa Ireland Economic Forum, which provides a high-level platform for business leaders, policy makers and public and private sectors from Ireland and Africa to explore and promote opportunities for increasing trade and investment in both directions.

Target 17.6
Enhance North-South, South-South and triangular regional and international cooperation on and access to science, technology and innovation and enhance knowledge sharing on mutually agreed terms, including through improved coordination among existing mechanisms, in particular at the United Nations level, and through a global technology facilitation mechanism.
A Better World commits to strengthen Ireland’s approach to research and learning for development. This includes by working with Irish and international research partners to create knowledge for development and promoting research consortia. Ireland’s Trust Fund for building climate and disaster resilience in Small Island Developing States supports South-South learning on innovative approaches to climate and disaster resilience. Our annual core funding of UNDP also supports access to science, technology and innovation.

**Target 17.7**

Promote the development, transfer, dissemination and diffusion of environmentally sound technologies to developing countries on favourable terms, including on concessional and preferential terms, as mutually agreed.

The Global Island, Ireland’s foreign policy, commits Ireland to promoting a fairer, just, secure and sustainable world. Ireland supports access to environmentally sound technologies on concessional terms through our contributions to, and engagement with, multilateral development banks.

**Target 17.8**

Fully operationalize the technology bank and science, technology and innovation capacity-building mechanism for least developed countries by 2017 and enhance the use of enabling technology, in particular information and communications technology.

A Better World commits to strengthen Ireland’s approach to research and learning for development. This includes by working with Irish and international research partners to create knowledge and provide capacity building for development and promoting research consortia. Ireland’s annual core funding of UNDP also supports least developed countries’ access to science, technology and innovation.

**Target 17.9**

Enhance international support for implementing effective and targeted capacity-building in developing countries to support national plans to implement all the sustainable development goals, including through North-South, South-South and triangular cooperation.

The Global Island, Ireland’s foreign policy, commits Ireland to promoting a fairer, just, secure and sustainable world. A Better World provides the framework for delivering on these commitments, prioritising reduction of humanitarian need, climate action, strengthened governance and gender equality. Ireland’s annual core funding of the UN development system, and our contributions to multilateral development banks, support capacity building for country-led sustainable development cooperation.
Target 17.10
Promote a universal, rules-based, open, non-discriminatory and equitable multilateral trading system under the World Trade Organization, including through the conclusion of negotiations under its Doha Development Agenda.

Goal 4 of DETE’s Statement of Strategy sets out to “deepen and extend Ireland’s global business and trade in a fair and sustainable manner supportive of high labour standards and grow further the all-island economy”. In order to achieve this the strategy sets out the need to work with the EU to ensure that the WTO is at the heart of a global, rules-based, multilateral trading system.

The overall goal of the Trade and Investment Strategy 2022-2026 is to see Ireland grow sustainably and diversify export markets, assisted by the EU’s trade policy and our growing network of Free Trade Agreements, and to address concentration risk in our FDI base. This is set to achieved through a values-based approach to trade and investment underpinned by a commitment to multilateralism and working with EU partners in the World Trade Organization (WTO).

Target 17.11
Significantly increase the exports of developing countries, in particular with a view to doubling the least developed countries’ share of global exports by 2020.

The Global Island, Ireland’s foreign policy, commits Ireland to promoting a fairer, just, secure and sustainable world. A Better World provides the framework for delivering on these commitments, prioritising reduction of humanitarian need, climate action, strengthened governance and gender equality.

Target 17.12
Realize timely implementation of duty-free and quota-free market access on a lasting basis for all least developed countries, consistent with World Trade Organization decisions, including by ensuring that preferential rules of origin applicable to imports from least developed countries are transparent and simple, and contribute to facilitating market access.

DETE continues to represent Ireland at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) and commits to uphold and implement the various WTO agreements and will work to implement policies in line with WTO decisions. Goal 4 of DETE’s Statement of Strategy sets out to "deepen and extend Ireland’s global business and trade in a fair and sustainable manner”. In order to achieve this the strategy sets out the "need to work with the EU to ensure that the WTO is at the heart of a global, rules-based, multilateral trading system, delivering on its negotiating, dispute settlement and trade capacity building and outreach remits".
Target 17.13
Enhance global macroeconomic stability, including through policy coordination and policy coherence.

The Department of Finance’s Statement of Strategy (2021-2023) sets the framework against which the Department will implement Government policies to support economic recovery and to ensure fiscal and macroeconomic sustainability. At international level, we continue to engage and coordinate, at EU level, and through international organisations such as the OECD, on areas of shared policy and concern, including most recently in our response to the pandemic.

Target 17.14
Enhance policy coherence for sustainable development.

Strategic Objective 1 in the SDG National Implementation Plan 2022-2024 relates to embedding the SDG framework into the work of Government Departments to achieve greater Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development (PCSD). The overall objective is to move Ireland towards a position where:

1. national policies are fully informed by Agenda 2030;
2. greater dialogue is promoted between policy makers across sectors;
3. a high level analysis of the principal national policies is possible to identify areas of strength, gaps, synergies and conflicts for progressing the SDGs.

A number of initial steps have been identified to lay the foundations upon which PCSD can be built, including the integration of the SDGs into public administrative mechanisms and building capacity across national and local government. Providing clear guidance to officials is essential so that they can effectively consider their work in terms of the impact on economic, social and environmental dimensions, the principles set out under Agenda 2030 (for example the principle of Leave No One Behind) and the impact their work has on each of the goals and targets.

In order to progress PCSD Ireland will draw on existing research, knowledge and resources developed both nationally and internationally and continue to attend the OECD Network of National Focal Points for Policy Coherence (PCSD Network) which facilitates peer learning in enhancing PCSD.

Target 17.15
Respect each country’s policy space and leadership to establish and implement policies for poverty eradication and sustainable development.

The Global Island, Ireland’s foreign policy, commits Ireland to promoting a fairer, just, secure and sustainable world. A Better World provides the framework for delivering on these commitments, prioritising reduction of humanitarian need, climate action, strengthened governance and gender equality. Ireland’s annual core funding of the UN development system supports country-led sustainable development cooperation.
Target 17.16
Enhance the global partnership for sustainable development, complemented by multi-stakeholder partnerships that mobilize and share knowledge, expertise, technology and financial resources, to support the achievement of the sustainable development goals in all countries, in particular developing countries.

The Department of Finance will engage with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) and encourage cooperation amongst these institutions to maximise available resources and ensure their effective allocation, mobilize the private sector and encourage engagement with civil society in support of sustainable development.

Target 17.17
Encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.

Strategic Objective 3 in the SDG National Implementation Plan 2022-2024 relates to greater partnerships for the goals. Reflecting the fact that the SDGs belong to everybody and Governments will need to work in partnership with society to achieve the Goals, the Implementation Plan places a large emphasis on partnerships for the Goals. Work towards achieving the SDGs will be carried out through international partnerships, partnerships across national and local government, with civil society and communities and with key sectors and groups. Existing partnerships will be further developed and new partnerships formed.

The Implementation Plan builds on existing national stakeholder engagement mechanisms. A new multi-stakeholder SDG Forum committee will be created to assist in the design and development of the SDG National Stakeholder Forum. The Implementation Plan includes a new chapter relating to sectoral stakeholder engagement reflecting the contribution of key groups to the SDGs and identifying opportunities for greater partnerships. It is intended that this chapter and the groups included therein will be developed further in subsequent iterations of this Implementation Plan.

Target 17.18
By 2020, enhance capacity-building support to developing countries, including for least developed countries and small island developing States, to increase significantly the availability of high-quality, timely and reliable data disaggregated by income, gender, age, race, ethnicity, migratory status, disability, geographic location and other characteristics relevant in national contexts.

Strengthening governance is a policy priority in A Better World. Ireland’s annual core funding of the UN development system, and our contributions to multilateral development banks, support developing countries to increase the availability of high-quality, disaggregated data.
Target 17.19
By 2030, build on existing initiatives to develop measurements of progress on sustainable development that complement gross domestic product, and support statistical capacity-building in developing countries.

Strengthening governance is a policy priority in A Better World. Ireland’s annual core funding of the UN development system, and our contributions to multilateral development banks, support developing countries to build statistical capacity.