



Rialtas
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Government
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Ár dTodhchaí
Tuaithe
Our Rural
Future



Our Rural Future

Progress Report 3

Prepared by the Department of Rural
and Community Development

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Executive Summary

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

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

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

This Third Progress Report covers activity that has taken place in Quarter 3 and Quarter 4 of 2022, and on ongoing actions throughout the year, ensuring that updates have been provided on all 318 actions in the 2022 Work Programme.

A total of 27 departments and State agencies made contributions to this Report, reflecting the whole-of-Government implementation of the objectives of Our Rural Future.

When added to updates provided in the Second Progress Report on work undertaken in Quarters 1 and 2 of 2022, a total of 179, or 71%, of measures due for delivery in 2022 have been completed, with a total of 72 delayed. In addition, while this report captures the position at the end of 2022, a number of actions may have been progressed in the meantime and such progress will be included in the Fourth Progress Report, which will be published in the summer.

A further 67 actions are classified as 'ongoing', these include multi-annual projects and funding programmes which are delivered annually and continue to invest substantially in services and facilities for rural communities.

These figures show that once again there was a significant level of delivery across Government, with some milestone achievements recorded (see below Key Measures Delivered). The war in Ukraine, and the ensuing unforeseen cost-of-living concerns, impacted implementation of measures in a range of ways as cost increases and the reprioritisation of resources (for example to the Community and Voluntary Energy Support Scheme, Measure 69.3) led to delays in some areas.

As with the Second Progress Report, published in August 2022, the substantial level of activity taking place across departments and State agencies to support rural communities in response to the arrival of more than 55,000 people escaping the war in Ukraine has been grouped under a single measure (Measure 153).

Key measures delivered across Government

The following is a selection of some notable Our Rural Future deliverables that are being reported across Government in the period to the end of 2022. Full details of these and all other updates begin at page 9.

Digital Connectivity and Remote Working:

- Provision of high-speed broadband to 379 additional primary schools during 2022. (Measure 1.6)
- A 480% increase in registered users of the Connected Hubs platform to 10,500 as a result of the Connected Hubs Voucher Scheme. (Measure 6.5)

Employment and Careers:

- €3.4 million in funding for 49 projects under the Regional Enterprise innovation Scoping Scheme. (Measure 21.4)
- 80% of new jobs created by Local Enterprise Office clients in 2022 were outside of Dublin. (Measure 23.1)

Revitalising Towns and Villages:

- Publication of the National Outdoor Recreation Strategy. (Measure 35.1)
- New funding of €115 million for 23 projects worth €162 million announced under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund. (Measure 46.4)
- More than €27 million approved under the 2022 Town and Village Renewal Scheme, including €6.1 million under the new Buildings Acquisition Measure. (Measure 47.1)

Enhancing Community Resilience and Participation:

- Funding of more than €21 million provided to 82 organisations under the new Scheme to Support National Organisations 2022-2025. (Measure 69.2)
- Launch of €10 million fund to support community and voluntary groups with energy costs. (Measure 69.3)
- €45.5 million provided to 850 projects under the Community Centres Investment Fund. (Measure 81.5)
- Approval of new PEACE PLUS Programme. (Measure 160.1)

Improving Public Services:

- Launch of new Local Area Hackney Pilot Scheme. (Measure 91c.2)
- Publication of the Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill. (Measure 98.2)

Climate Transition:

- Publication of the Climate Action Plan 2023. (Measure 108.5)
- Approval of Ireland's Territorial Just Transition Plan for the EU Just Transition Fund. (114a.2)
- Approval of the first Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme. (Measure 116d.2)
- Plans for electric vehicle charging infrastructure in rural areas included in publication of the Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy. (Measure 120.1)

Agriculture and Marine Sustainability:

- Completion of the Results Based Environment Agri Pilot Project. (Measure 127.2)
- Approval of Ireland's CAP Strategic Plan for the period 2023-2027. (Measure 130.3)
- Announcement of the €25 million Brexit Blue Economy Enterprise Development Scheme. (Measure 146.3)

117,000 premises
available for
connection under
**National
Broadband
Plan**



Approval of the
first **Offshore
Renewable
Energy
Support
Scheme**



10,500
registered
users of the
**Connected
Hubs**
remote
working
platform



**National
Outdoor
Recreation
Strategy**
published



Launch of
**Electric
Vehicle
Infrastructure
Strategy**



46
wastewater
treatment upgrade
projects
commenced

€45.5m
invested in
850
Community
Centres



€10m
support fund to assist
community energy
costs

€115m
in new
funding
under
RRDF
approved



82 organisations
supported
with **€21m**
under new
SSNO



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Highlights from Progress Report 3

Glossary

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

QQI	Quality and Qualifications Ireland
REDF	Regional Enterprise Development Fund
RRDF	Rural Regeneration and Development Fund
RTP	Regional Tourism Plan
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEAI	Sustainable Energy Authority Ireland
SEUPB	Special EU Programmes Body
SICAP	Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme
SME	Small and Medium-sized Enterprise
TVRS	Town and Village Renewal Scheme
URDF	Urban Regeneration and Development Fund
WDC	Western Development Commission

Optimising Digital Connectivity

Measure 1 Invest up to €2.7 billion in the rollout of the National Broadband Plan and explore how the initiative can be accelerated to deliver connectivity as soon as possible in rural areas.		
Lead Delivery Body: National Broadband Ireland under contract to DECC		
2022 Actions		Status
1.1	Continue rollout of the National Broadband Plan, with construction continuing in a majority of counties.	Ongoing
Update: Build works are ongoing across all counties, and as of 31 December 2022, 117,930 premises were available for order/pre-order. Over 27,000 Fibre-to-the-Premises connections are now completed.		
1.3	Complete work with NBI on the potential to accelerate the National Broadband Plan and bring forward comprehensive proposals for approval.	Complete
Update: Having reviewed this issue, the current focus of the rollout is on ensuring that the NBI build programme continues to gain momentum month on month.		
1.6	Continuation of the accelerated programme for the provision of high-speed broadband to primary schools across the intervention area.	Ongoing
Update: This programme is ongoing, with 561 schools installed as of 31 December 2022, an increase of 379 over the course of the year. Once installed, the service provider contracts for these sites will be managed by D/Education. (see Measure 17.1).		

Measure 3 Introduce legislation in 2021 to provide employees with the right to request remote work.		
Lead Delivery Body: DETE		
2022 Actions		Status
3.4	Complete passage of the legislation through the houses of the Oireachtas.	Delayed
Update: Approval was given by Government on 9 November 2022 to integrate the right to request remote working into DCEDIY's Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill		

2022. The Work Life Balance and Miscellaneous Provisions Bill continues to progress through the Oireachtas ahead of its enactment in Q1 2023.

Measure 4 Map and publish a comprehensive picture of remote working facilities across the country, and the various facilities available in each, to ensure that future hubs are developed in a strategic way that meets demand and maximises utilisation in key locations.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD, Western Development Commission		
2022 Actions		Status
4.3	Engage with stakeholders (Central Statistics Office and DETE) to ensure data and maps are incorporated into wider data gathering on remote working demand and supply as part of Making Remote Work.	Complete
Update: The work of the National Remote Working Strategy IDG has completed. DRCD and DETE continue to gather and analyse data on remote working, hub-based enterprises and the hub sector to inform policy decisions and to feed into the work of the National Hub Network IDG.		
4.4	Initiate research into the impact of remote working hubs and BCPs on communities to capture qualitative data and community needs / priorities (including climate mitigation impact).	Complete
Update: This research commenced in 2022 and will be used to inform the development of the National Hubs Strategy in 2023.		

Measure 5 Establish a comprehensive and integrated national network of 400 Remote Working Hubs throughout the country, with shared back-office services and a central booking platform for users.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD, Western Development Commission		
2022 Actions		Status
5.1	Building on the strong uptake in year 1, reach a target of 300 hubs onboarded to the ConnectedHubs.ie platform and the National Hubs Network.	Complete
Update: The National Hub Network Working Group identified and mapped over 450 remote working hubs throughout the country – all of which were invited to join the Connected Hubs Network. To date just over 300 of these remote working facilities have been successfully onboarded onto the Connected Hubs platform, with this number rising on an ongoing basis.		

5.2	Development of the Connectedhubs.ie platform to improve accessibility and functionality to include corporate booking functionality, recording of capacity and usage figures.	Ongoing
Update: Version 2.0.0 (V2) of the Connected Hubs platform was rolled out to the public in June 2022, in tandem with the Connected Hubs Voucher Scheme – Phase 1. Work continued throughout 2022 to develop the accessibility and functionality of the platform.		

Measure 6 Invest significantly in remote working facilities to support the retention of skilled people in rural communities and attract mobile talent to rural areas.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
6.5	Launch a targeted incentive to encourage the usage of remote working hubs in rural areas.	Complete
Update: The was announced on 8 June 2022. The scheme was designed and funded by DRCD to encourage increased remote working usage of hubs across the Connected Hubs Network. Some 7,800 vouchers were utilised over the course of the scheme and registered users of the Network increased more than four-fold.		
6.6	Make funding available to Local Authorities to run innovative marketing campaigns targeted at attracting remote workers and mobile talent under 2022 Town and Village Scheme.	Complete
Update: Under the dedicated Marketing Measure of TVRS 2022, DRCD received applications from 23 counties and all were approved for funding. The total funding approved in 2022 under the Marketing Measure was €1.12m. Local authorities have until April 2024 to complete their plans.		

Measure 7 Provide financial support to Local Authorities to bring vacant properties in town centres back into use as Remote Working Hubs.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
7.2	Projects that address vacancy and dereliction and ensure the re-use of heritage and other existing buildings to provide the necessary appropriately-scaled facilities and infrastructure in rural areas, including remote working facilities, will be supported under the fourth call to the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund and the 2022 Town and Village Renewal Scheme.	Complete

<p>Update: Funding of €115 million for 23 projects worth €162 million was announced under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund in November 2022. The projects will assist in combatting vacancy and dereliction in town centres, in many cases utilising heritage and other existing buildings to provide much needed infrastructure and facilities, including remote working facilities, in rural Ireland.</p> <p>The 2022 TVRS Scheme also prioritised addressing vacancy and dereliction and in 2022 incorporated a new Building Acquisition Measure for the purchase and development for community use of derelict and vacant buildings in rural towns and villages.</p>		

Measure 11 Pilot co-working or hot-desking for civil servants in a small number of towns initially, to support the objective of a move to 20% home or remote working.		
Lead Delivery Body: DPER		
2022 Actions		Status
11.1	Conduct a scoping exercise across the civil service to ascertain any current ongoing initiatives that could be incorporated into a pilot programme.	Complete
Update: This work has been incorporated into a wider work programme to drive flexible and dynamic workspaces for the Public Service, as part of the impending Public Service Transformation Programme.		

Measure 12 Through IDA Ireland, Enterprise Ireland and Údarás na Gaeltachta, promote and enable the uptake of remote working across their client base to support regional job creation.		
Lead Delivery Body: DETE, DTCAGSM		
2022 Actions		Status
12.3	Enterprise Ireland will continue to drive job creation in the regions through implementation of the Enterprise Ireland Strategy 2022-2024. This will include a strong focus on remote working opportunities.	Ongoing
Update: Regional job creation continued to be a key priority in 2022. For example, net EI-supported employment increased by five per cent, with 10,841 jobs created in 2022. Of these, 68% of jobs were created outside the Dublin region.		

12.4	The IDA will continue to highlight remote working opportunities across its client base (both existing and new client companies), through the promotion of the availability of Ireland's network of hubs and collaboration with regional stakeholders to drive greater take up of remote working opportunities by IDA Ireland client companies.	Ongoing
Update: During 2022, IDA Ireland continued to promote the availability of Ireland's network of hubs, which are a key resource to enhance remote working opportunities across the Agency's network of clients.		
12.5	Údarás na Gaeltachta to bring the number of digital hubs in operation in the Gaeltacht to 33.	Ongoing
Update: There are currently 27 gteic digital hubs developed in the Gaeltacht. Seven new digital hubs were opened in 2022 in Na Rosa, Carraig Airt, An Dromad, Corr na Móna, Inis Mór, Inis Meáin and Oileán Chléire. The gteic hubs opened in 2022 have contributed 70 new workspaces in total.		

Measure 14 Provide grants to retail businesses in rural towns and villages to establish or develop their online presence to complement traditional footfall trade.		
Lead Delivery Body: DETE, LEOs		
2022 Actions		Status
14.1	Continue delivery of the Trading Online Voucher Scheme which offers a voucher of up to €2,500 (50% co-funded by the applicant) to help businesses develop their online trading capability.	Ongoing
Update: The Trading Online Voucher Scheme continues to be a vital support for businesses across the country with a final figure for 2022 indicating 1,881 approvals.		

Measure 15 Develop Local Digital Strategies in each Local Authority area, to maximise the potential of improved rural digital connectivity for businesses and communities.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status

15.1	Provide support and assistance to Local Authorities to produce local digital strategies to drive regional digital development.	Ongoing
Update: DRCD continues to engage directly with each local authority through the Broadband Officer (BBO) cohort to support the development of digital strategies and the wider goal of regional digital development. For example, targeted briefings and have been provided on key national initiatives and the BBO network met regularly throughout 2022.		

Measure 16 Expand the provision of free-to-use wireless internet connectivity in rural areas through the rollout of Broadband Connection Points and other initiatives such as the WiFi4EU public Wi-Fi networks and the Digital Innovation Programme.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
16.4	Publication of the BCP Network's development strategy. The strategy will consider the option of including additional BCP sites, development and awareness raising activities.	Delayed
Update: Work on the Development Strategy has commenced and it will be published in Q2 2023. Throughout Q1 and Q2 2023, DRCD will hold a series of regional engagements with BCP managers, volunteers and users to capture their views and ambitions for their BCPs and for the national network.		
16.5	Bring number of operational Wifi4EU hotspots to approximately 1,000 nationwide, providing free public Wi-Fi services in areas of community life, such as town squares, libraries and other public buildings.	Complete
Update: Over 1,170 Wifi4EU hotspots are now live across 27 local authority areas.		

Measure 17 Under the Schools Broadband Programme, review on an ongoing basis the availability of broadband services and upgrade schools broadband connectivity, including within the State intervention area where possible.		
Lead Delivery Body: D/Education		
2022 Actions		Status
17.1	Continue to work with DECC to upgrade broadband connectivity to primary schools through the National Broadband Plan Intervention Area implementation, including the Schools Broadband Connection Points Programme.	Ongoing

Update: Connectivity for schools in the NBP Intervention Area is underway, with at least 210 of the 679 schools now fully connected via the Schools Broadband Programme. National Broadband Ireland is continuing with installations (See Measure 1.6) and it is anticipated that the balance of schools in the NBP will be on high-speed connectivity through the Schools Broadband Programme in 2023.		
17.3	Implement the Department's upgrade programme for those primary schools outside of the NBP Intervention Area and commercial provision, up to 990 schools total. Funding secured through Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Programme, leveraging the Next GenerationEU programme.	Ongoing
Update: Some 650 of the 990 primary schools included in the NRRP Project are now on high-speed connectivity through the Schools Broadband Programme, with the balance to be delivered by Q3 2023. By end of 2023 it is anticipated that all primary and special schools will be on 100 Mbps or greater as standard through the schools broadband programme.		

Measure 18 Increase the capacity for remote and blended learning to enable young people, in particular, in rural areas to access further and higher education courses through online learning while living in their local communities.		
Lead Delivery Body: DFHERIS		
2022 Actions		Status
18.1	Increase remote and blended learning to improve access to further and higher education.	Ongoing
Update: eCollege, the National Further Education and Training Service, operates on a continuous intake basis and offers flexible, fully online learning opportunities leading to certification. As a fully online service, eCollege supports learners from across Ireland, including rural areas, to access further education and training. Certified courses are available in basic digital, ICT professional, programming, digital marketing, graphic design, and business areas. Prospective learners can self-refer to the service via fetchcourses.ie be referred by the Department of Social Protection, or be referred by their local Education and Training Board.		
In 2022 there were 18,670 starters on the service, down from the Covid period peaks experienced over 2020 and 2021 of circa 30,000 starters per year, but ahead of pre-pandemic levels of circa 10,000 per year. It is expected that the service will continue to grow, albeit at a less accelerated pace than that prompted by Covid-19 closure of campuses.		

Supporting Employment and Careers in Rural Areas

Measure 21 Develop and implement a set of nine new Regional Enterprise Plans to support enterprise development and jobs growth in the regions.		
Lead Delivery Body: DETE		
2022 Actions		Status
21.3	Regional Steering Committees confirmed and established to drive implementation of the Plans.	Complete
Update: Implementation of the nine Regional Enterprise Plans is ongoing. Steering Committees are established in each region to drive implementation of the Plans. The National Oversight Group, chaired by the Ministers of State, has met to discuss implementation.		
21.4	Develop and launch regional enterprise funding schemes to develop and implement collaborative and innovative enterprise projects.	Complete
Update: In July, €3.4m in funding was awarded to 49 projects under the 2022 Regional Enterprise Innovation Scoping Scheme. A total of €145m in funding was secured under the European Regional Development Fund to support innovative enterprise focused projects coming from the Regional Enterprise Plans.		

Measure 22 Target 400 IDA investments up to 2024 for regional locations and deliver 19 Advanced Technology Buildings in regional locations in line with the National Planning Framework.		
Lead Delivery Body: IDA Ireland		
2022 Actions		Timetable for delivery
22.1	IDA Ireland's half-year results to be announced in July 2022 to include relevant updates.	Ongoing
Update: IDA's end-of-year results for 2022 contained the following updates: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Numbers directly employed in multinational sector in Ireland reach 301,475, the highest Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) employment level ever and a 9% increase on 2021 32,426 gross new job gains in 2022 – 24,019 net jobs 242 investments won in 2022 – 103 of them new name investments 		

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 127 of the 242 investments won (52%) went to regional locations – with employment growth in every region of the country 		
22.2	Deliver 19 Advanced Technology Buildings in regional locations.	Ongoing
<p>Update: Under IDA’s Property Programme, the regional building programme will see 19 Advanced Building Solutions delivered in regional locations across Ireland during the lifetime of the strategy. The current status of this programme is that construction has been completed on four buildings: an Advance Technology Building (ATB) for Monaghan, an Advance Office Building (AOB) for Sligo, an Advance Building Solution (ABS) for Dundalk and the Advance Manufacturing Centre (AMC) in Limerick.</p> <p>Four buildings are under construction at present, in Carlow (ABS), Limerick (ABS) and Waterford’s third ABS and an AOB for Athlone and these are due for completion by end Q1 2023. Other buildings under the programme, ABSs for Sligo, Cavan, Galway, Letterkenny, Mullingar, Drogheda, Longford, Tralee, Oranmore and Castlebar, are in various stages of site identification, design, procurement and planning phases. IDA is also engaged with a number of local authorities for the delivery of advance planning permission in regional locations through partnership agreements.</p> <p>In addition to these Advance Building Solutions and our existing business parks, IDA Ireland has acquired a number of landbanks for future development in counties Kildare, Westmeath, Kerry, Waterford, Laois, Cork, Galway and Louth.</p>		

Measure 23 Deliver ambitious job creation and enterprise development targets for the indigenous sector in the strategies of Enterprise Ireland, Údarás na Gaeltachta and the Local Enterprise Offices to embed jobs growth more deeply within the regions.		
Lead Delivery Body: Enterprise Ireland, Údarás na Gaeltachta, LEOs		
2022 Actions		Status
23.1	<p>Enterprise Ireland will continue to drive job creation in the regions through implementation of the Enterprise Ireland Strategy 2022-2024.</p> <p>The LEOs will continue to promote employment growth across the 31 Local Authorities and are engage with REDF projects in each of the regions.</p>	Ongoing
Update: In 2022, 80% of new jobs were created outside of Dublin by LEO clients. Enterprise Ireland has a target of creating 45,000 new jobs over the period 2022-2024, two thirds of which (30,000) will be outside Dublin.		
23.3	Launch mid-term review of Uíbh Ráthach Task Force.	Complete

Update: The mid-term review has been completed and was launched on 25 July 2022. A copy of the report is available at Tuairisc ar obair 2020-2021 - Progress Report 2020-2021 by tfur - Issuu.		
23.4	500 jobs to be created in client companies/enterprises of Údarás na Gaeltachta.	Complete
Update: Údarás na Gaeltachta had a successful year with the creation of 945 new jobs with a net creation of 151 jobs throughout the Gaeltacht areas. These jobs are spread over multinational, SMEs and microenterprise. At the end of 2022, 8,235 people were employed by Údarás na Gaeltachta-supported enterprises. In 2022, the board of Údarás na Gaeltachta approved support to entrepreneurs and enterprises to create 444 jobs over the next three years with both financial support (grant-aid) and non-financial support (provision of suitable business premises).		
23.5	Support the network of 33 Gaeltacht community development organisations funded through Údarás na Gaeltachta in delivering annual actions plans that take into account community-specific social issues.	Ongoing
Update: The network of 33 Gaeltacht community development organisations has been funded on the basis of an annual action plan, with those action plans aligned to Údarás na Gaeltachta's strategy, focusing on areas such as social enterprise, renewable energy, tourism, digital hubs and language planning.		

Measure 25 Promote awareness and the use of remote working hubs and enterprise centres across the country to support remote working and encourage local enterprise start-ups.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD, DETE		
2022 Actions		Status
25.4	Publication of the National Hubs Network development strategy.	Delayed
Update: The development strategy for connectedhubs.ie, the online platform of the National Hub Network will be published in Q2 2023.		

Measure 26 Maximise our resources and strengths in the Green Economy to support employment opportunities for rural communities in areas such as renewable energy, sustainable tourism, energy retrofitting, the Bioeconomy and the Circular Economy.		
Lead Delivery Body: DAFM, DECC		

2022 Actions		Status
26.1	Hold regular cross-government bioeconomy policy implementation group meetings.	Complete
Update: Meetings were held in each quarter in 2022.		
26.3	Offer bioeconomy research opportunities by multiple funders including the Irish Research Council, EPA, DAFM, etc.	Ongoing
<p>Update: Bioeconomy research funding opportunities were offered by the EPA, SEAI, and DAFM in 2022.</p> <p>Projects relevant to rural development and bioeconomy that were funded in 2022 include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Co-Bioecon (cobioecon.com) – will produce an evidence-based, co-designed set of policies for the regional bioeconomy in Ireland, focusing on 1) sustainable and circular practice in the agri-food industry; 2) a regional land-use and conflict resolution strategy; 3) solutions for transition to more sustainable farming practices; and 4) a co-designed toolkit for wider application. ○ ROBIN - CircBio – Deploying circular bioeconomies at Regional level with a territorial approach. ○ BioMDJT – Developing multifaceted bioeconomy demonstration sites within Irish Midlands and connected Just Transition Region: Quo Vadis. ○ RuralBioUp - Irish Bioeconomy Foundation – RuralBioUp project will strengthen the cooperation among regional key actors and knowledge holders, empowering them to establish an inclusive and long-lasting ecosystem to support the mainstreaming of bio-based business models in rural areas. ○ MainstreamBio – project sets out to get small-scale bio-based solutions into mainstream practice across rural Europe, providing a broader range of rural actors with the opportunity to engage in and speed up the development of the bioeconomy. 		
26.4	Hold annual awareness raising event on bioeconomy in Ireland known as Bioeconomy Ireland Week (October 17-23 in 2022).	Ongoing
<p>Update: Bioeconomy Ireland Week 2022 was held between 17-21 October 2022 with a mixture of in-person and online events, including a Bioeconomy Launch Event and Research Symposium held in Backweston Celbridge, Co. Kildare. An All-Island Bioeconomy summit was also held on 12 October 2022 in Tullamore.</p>		
26.7	Funding mechanisms for bioeconomy innovation at demonstration level will be explored across a range of funding programmes.	Complete
<p>Update: Carbon Tax and Just Transition Fund funding was secured to support the development of bioeconomy innovation at demonstration level in 2022. This includes a €3 million investment in an integrated anaerobic digestion and green biorefining demonstration initiative. The funding has been jointly awarded to University College Dublin and Munster Technological University for the further development of climate neutral farming as part of the Farm Zero Carbon research project currently being undertaken on the Shinagh Estates Demonstration Farm in west Cork.</p>		

26.8	Development of a Bioeconomy Action Plan	Delayed
Update: A public consultation for the development of a bioeconomy action plan was launched in November 2022 with the Action Plan due to be published in Q2 2023.		

Measure 28 Develop an overarching Clustering Policy and Framework to advance strong and effective clustering and links between SMEs, multinational corporations and the third-level sector.		
Lead Delivery Body: DETE		
2022 Actions		Status
28.3	Finalise consultancy report and recommendations from the National Cluster Policy Steering Group to inform a national cluster policy and framework.	Delayed
Update: The consultancy report is currently being finalised, reflecting Steering Group inputs, and will be published in Q1 2023.		
The national clustering policy approach, drawing on the work of the Steering Group, has, in the meantime, been set out in the White Paper on Enterprise published in December 2022.		

Measure 29 Examine, and take forward as appropriate, the recommendations of the SME Growth Plan to map out an ambitious long-term strategic blueprint for all SMEs, including rurally-based businesses.		
Lead Delivery Body: DETE		
2022 Actions		Status
29.2	Bring to Government a report on actions taken to implement 10 key recommendations within the SME and Entrepreneurship Growth Plan that were identified for priority delivery by the SME and Entrepreneurship Implementation Group. These cover: access to finance; digital transformation; increasing first time exporters; enhanced assistance for high-potential businesses; clustering and networks; SME management skills; reducing the regulatory burden on SMEs; delivery of a single portal for business information and assistance; ensuring comprehensive enterprise agency coverage for SMEs; and promoting SME participation in public procurement.	Complete

Update: DETE reported to Government in December and subsequently published a report on the progress made to implement the 10 key recommendations from the SME and Entrepreneurship Growth Plan that were identified for priority delivery by the SME and Entrepreneurship Implementation Group. The report can be viewed here: [SME and Entrepreneurship Taskforce 2022: Priority Actions Progress Report - DETE \(enterprise.gov.ie\)](https://enterprise.gov.ie/Entrepreneurship-Taskforce-2022-Priority-Actions-Progress-Report)

Measure 30 Deliver a suite of new measures to support the development of Social Enterprises in rural areas to increase their social, economic and environmental impact and contribute to job creation locally.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
30.2	Include a focus on rural social enterprise in support programmes for social enterprises.	Ongoing
<p>Update: All social enterprise support programmes are designed to ensure support for rural (and urban) social enterprises and their particular requirements through proactive efforts made to ensure regional balance in terms of investment.</p> <p>In May 2022 a further €526,000 was awarded to the Awareness Raising Initiative for Social Enterprises (ARISE). The ARISE evaluation process has sought to ensure a wide geographic spread.</p> <p>On 17 November 2022 the pilot Scaling-Up Fund Scheme for social enterprises funded through the Dormant Accounts Fund was launched. The €1.5m scheme is designed to improve the impact and sustainability of social enterprises that address economic, social and educational disadvantage or support those with a disability. It comprises of two separate streams, one for feasibility studies and the second for large-scale capital works. The evaluation process for this scheme also ensured wide geographical spread.</p> <p>Further capital supports for social enterprises are planned which will include a continued focus on rural social enterprises, as part of efforts to ensure a wide mix of social enterprises and that their specific needs are addressed.</p>		
30.4	Launch the Gaeltacht Social Enterprise Development fund, to complement Údarás na Gaeltachta's Gaeltacht Social Enterprise fund. The fund will help community organisations develop an idea and business plan for a social enterprise so they may be in a position to develop their business model and apply for other supports.	Complete
<p>Update: DRCD provided €30,000 in funding for the Gaeltacht Social Enterprise Development scheme to support the development of social enterprise concepts in Gaeltacht areas. Following the launch of the scheme Údarás received six expressions of interest with three applications being accepted in 2022.</p>		

Údarás Na Gaeltachta provided funding of €210,000 to a Gaeltacht Social Enterprise scheme, which supported nine projects in 2022. In addition to the above two schemes, Údarás Na Gaeltachta launched the Social Enterprise Development Strategy in June 2022.

Údarás Na Gaeltachta also received €45,000 in funding under strand 2 of the ARISE scheme 2021 which supported their Social Enterprise Development Strategy awareness campaign.

Measure 31 Expand the use of socially responsible public procurement contracts, where feasible, which will incentivise the engagement of social enterprises and Circular Economy organisations.		
Lead Delivery Body: All Departments		
2022 Actions		Status
31.1	The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) will continue to incorporate socially responsible measures in its procurement solutions, including in the areas of energy provision, paper and print services, and electric vehicles. Each framework will be assessed through a prism of green and social considerations when planning next generation frameworks.	Ongoing
Update: The Office of Government Procurement (OGP) continues to incorporate socially responsible measures in its central procurement solutions, where feasible and permissible. OGP continues to engage with policy Departments, sourcing teams, and forums, such as the Strategic Procurement Advisory Group (SPAG), to provide assistance and expertise when planning next generation solutions.		
31.4	In line with Action 8 of the 'Working to Change' strategy, D/Justice will build on initial engagements with OGP and DPER to progress the development of guidance notes to facilitate the use of social considerations in Criminal Justice Sector contracts which can be used by other Government departments. These engagements will be incorporated into the development of a cross-departmental Buy Social Movement in Ireland. (D/Justice)	Complete
Update: Action 8 of the Working to Change strategy commenced in Q2 2021. D/Justice initiated a cross-departmental pilot initiative supporting the use of social clauses in public contracts as well as investment in the Buy Social Movement. The pilot has received the required financial backing from D/Justice, DPER, and DRCD. It is also being supported by the OGP. Guidance notes are being updated on an ongoing basis.		
DRCD has contracted Pobal to conduct a Request for Tender (RfT) process for research into an effective mechanism to introduce Socially Responsible Public Procurement (SRPP) in contracts. The RfT is currently being finalised for publication. DRCD will project lead, supported by the Working to Change Implementation Manager and the OGP. Following completion of the research, the findings will be discussed with the cross-departmental working group to inform the development of the Buy Social movement in Ireland.		

31.5	Under Action 9 of the 'Working to Change' strategy, D/Justice, the Irish Prison Service and the Probation Service will continue to review procurements which are new or due for renewal to see how social criteria/clauses may be included, in pursuit of meeting the pledged target of 10% of all Criminal Justice Sector procurement contracts for the provision of goods and services to include social considerations. (D/Justice)	Ongoing
<p>Update: Action 9 of the Working to Change Strategy was commenced in Q2 2021.</p> <p>D/Justice's Social Procurement Policy has been completed and distributed to all criminal justice agencies. The department has also successfully completed its first procurement contract with Green Procurement clauses. The Irish Prison Service finalised a contract that included social criteria with two social enterprises that will recycle all prison mattresses.</p>		

Measure 32		Further develop the Wild Atlantic Way, Ireland’s Hidden Heartlands, and Ireland’s Ancient East as regional tourism offerings and further diversify tourism opportunities by strengthening Ireland’s image as an outdoor activity holiday destination to the domestic and international markets.
Lead Delivery Body: Fáilte Ireland		
2022 Actions		Status
32.4	<p>Develop Regional Tourism Strategies (RTPs) for each of Fáilte Ireland's brand regions.</p> <p>In 2022, the Strategies will undergo Strategic Environmental Assessment and will then go to public consultation before launch.</p>	Complete
<p>Update: Four draft Regional Tourism Development Strategies and accompanying draft Strategic Environmental Assessments (SEC) were published in September 2022 on the Fáilte Ireland website for public consultation, as per the SEA Regulations. These strategies set a strategic framework for the Destination and Experience Development Plans (DEDPs) that will sit beneath them, ensuring that all DEDPs within a region are contributing to a single set of agreed strategic objectives.</p>		
32.5	<p>Extend and resource partnership with DRCD on the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Fund (ORIS) for the period 2022-2024 to support new and enhanced trail developments and linkages to existing infrastructure and visitor activities.</p>	Complete
<p>Update: Fáilte Ireland continues to be a key strategic partner with DRCD on the evaluation and selection of the ORIS projects and also on the Walks Scheme.</p>		

Measure 33 Strengthen the identity and branding of the Gaeltacht regions and develop a Tourism Strategy for the Gaeltacht areas.		
Lead Delivery Body: DTCAGSM		
2022 Actions		Status
33.1	Continue development of “Gaeltacht na hÉireann” branding across businesses, organisations, language planning groups and Gaeltacht organisations in a range of different contexts. Work will also continue, in partnership with other key stakeholders, in further developing the Gaeltacht’s unique potential in the realm of cultural tourism.	Ongoing
Update: A submission on the development opportunities in tourism in the Gaeltacht has been registered with the Joint Oireachtas Committee for Tourism, Culture, Arts, Sport, Gaeltacht and Media. A joint development and investment program with Fáilte Éireann (as part of the Memorandum of Understanding between both organisations) in the relation to the development of sustainable cultural tourism within the Gaeltacht is currently being finalised.		
33.2	Tender and complete review of the Gaeltacht na hÉireann brand, ensuring that it is fit for purpose and accordingly in a position to be adopted across a wide range of Gaeltacht sectors.	Delayed
Update: The review of the brand was tendered in 2022 with a view to ensuring that the brand was effective in that purpose, and that review process is being coupled with a Gaeltacht place-marketing strategy development The initial consultation phase of the place marketing strategy has been completed.		

Measure 35 Publish and implement a new National Outdoor Recreation Strategy, through Comhairle na Tuaithe, to support access to, and responsible use of, outdoor recreational and leisure facilities for people of all ages, and increase employment opportunities in rural areas.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
35.1	Publication of the National Outdoor Recreation Strategy.	Complete
Update: Embracing Ireland’s Outdoors – The National Outdoor Recreation Strategy 2023-2027 was published in November 2022.		

35.2	Review the Mountain Access Project, an initiative which seeks to secure the voluntary agreement of landowners in a defined mountain area to allow recreational access to their lands.	Delayed
Update: A subgroup of Comhairle na Tuaithe was established in 2021 to review the pilot Mountain Access Programme (MAP) and other relevant initiatives, consider adaptations to the programme, and explore how this model could be extended to other areas. A MAP toolkit will be developed which will enable the further rollout of the MAP. Visits to the two existing MAP areas were undertaken by the subgroup in 2022 to review the learnings and a report of their findings is expected in Q2 2023.		

Measure 36 Invest in greenways, blueways, walking trails and other outdoor recreation infrastructure to support the growth in outdoor recreational tourism.		
Lead Delivery Body: D/Transport, DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
36.1	<p>The exchequer capital funding available for greenways in 2022 is €60 million. Work is continuing on nine greenways currently under construction, with a total of 40 greenways scheduled for completion by 2024.</p> <p>In 2022:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three further sections of the Grand Canal Greenway, phase one of Midleton to Youghal Greenway and two sections of the North Kerry Greenway will be completed. Construction will continue on Athlone Bridge ahead of completion in 2023. Construction will commence on two further sections of the Grand Canal Greenway and on the Boyne Valley to Lakelands Greenway. Planning approval will be sought for four further projects: Grand Canal: Sallins to Clonkeen, Blessington to Blessington Lake Loop, North Kerry: Tralee to Listowel, and Suir Blueway: Gas House Bridge to Suir Island. 	Ongoing
Update: The following greenways were completed in 2022:		
<u>North Kerry Greenway</u> – Listowel to Limerick Border opened in October 2022. Tralee to Fenit opened October 2022, with trailhead works to continue in 2023.		
<u>Grand Canal Greenway</u> – Four of the five phases (constituting circa 17km) are completed. The remaining section (to the county boundary with Galway) will be complete in 2023. Works on Daingean (Molesworth Bridge) to Tullamore (Digby Bridge) and Henesy's Bridge to Turraun – were substantially complete in 2022, with minor enhancements to be completed in 2023.		

<p>The Daingean to Edenderry was also completed in 2022. Construction works have commenced on the Aylmer Bridge to Sallins, and 12th Lock to Hazelhatch Bridge sections.</p> <p><u>Midleton to Youghal</u> – First phase (Midleton to Mogeely - 8km) now expected to be complete in Q2 2023. Overall scheme completion date under review due to scope changes but likely to be towards the end of 2023 or early 2024.</p> <p><u>Navan to Kingscourt Greenway</u> – Works commenced on the section from Nobber to Kingscourt in 2022.</p> <p><u>Blessington e-Greenway</u> – Planning decision delayed.</p> <p><u>Suir Blueway</u> – The section at Gas House Bridge to Suir Island in Clonmel is currently at the design and environmental evaluation stage.</p>		
36.2	Continue delivery of the Outdoor Recreation Infrastructure Scheme (ORIS) to support the development of natural amenities such as our mountains, lakes, beaches, bogs, walkways, greenways, blueways and other outdoor recreation infrastructure. Funding allocation for 2022 is €15 million.	Ongoing
<p>Update: ORIS 2022 was launched in February 2022 with a budget of €15 million (up €3 million from 2021) and the measures ranged from small-scale projects (€30,000) to large-scale projects (€500,000) with the Project Development Measure (€50,000) continuing in 2022. In 2022, 259 projects were awarded over €19.8m under the Scheme.</p>		
36.3	Develop Interpretation Plans for new greenways and blueways in collaboration with local authorities to ensure infrastructure developed as best in class visitor experiences. Six plans will be completed in 2022. (DTCAGSM)	Delayed
<p>Update: There was a delay progressing this work in 2022. However, consultants have now been appointed to lead out on delivery of the plans. The first two Interpretation Plans will be completed by Q2 2023 (South East and Kerry). The remaining four Interpretation Plans will be delivered by Q4 2023.</p>		

<p>Measure 37 Develop a pilot bicycle up-cycling initiative to support employment creation, to harness the potential of investment in greenways and to support the development of the social enterprise business model.</p>		
<p>Lead Delivery Body: DRCD</p>		
<p>2022 Actions</p>		<p>Status</p>
37.1	During 2022 DRCD, in collaboration with Pobal, will continue this three-year scheme by providing funding to support the roll out of five bicycle projects. This will include modification of their premises into workshops for the upcycling of bikes and for the development,	Complete

	upgrade and delivery of bike mechanic training modules, with a particular focus on employment progression opportunities for the Community Services Programme Target Groups, which will in turn reduce the number of bikes going to landfill sites and increase the number of bikes brought back into use.	
<p>Update: There are five organisations currently under contract for this pilot initiative, most recently Treo Port Lairge CLG in Waterford, who entered into contract on 1 October 2022.</p> <p>D/Transport have committed funding of €3m up to December 2024 for this pilot initiative, which is managed by Pobal on behalf of both DRCD and D/Transport, with payments up to end November totalling €1,089,504.14. It is proposed to undertake an interim evaluation of the five approved projects in Q2 2023.</p>		

Measure 38 Expand the Walks Scheme to achieve a target of at least 80 trails, doubling the number from 2018.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
38.4	Progress the 31 new trails who received ‘approval in principle’ under the Scheme in 2021 – 15 of the trails expected to receive participant payments under the Scheme in 2022.	Complete
<p>Update: Nine new trails received participant payments in 2022, bringing the total number of trails on the Walks Scheme to 55 trails. Five trails are scheduled to join the Scheme in the first two months of 2023 and workplans for four more trails are currently being audited by Sport Ireland. Local development companies are working on the ground with the landowners on the remaining 13 approved trails to develop workplans and bring these on to the Walks Scheme.</p>		

Measure 39 Explore the potential for the development of further tourist trails, including cross-border trails and initiatives.		
Lead Delivery Body: DTCAGSM		
2022 Actions		Status
39.2	Explore methodology and route options for the Irish Sea Way and Wild Atlantic Way Coast Path.	Delayed
<p>Update: Due to resource and work challenges as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, Fáilte Ireland had to defer this initial work in 2022, however Fáilte Ireland is hoping to commence</p>		

work on the Wild Atlantic Way Coast Path in first half of 2023 and will procure consultants to support this work. This initial work will inform a methodology to develop a number of routes and will incorporate a community consultation strategy and order of magnitude costs for the infrastructural development of each of the trails.

The procurement process to tender for consultants for the Wild Atlantic Way Coast Path to develop a framework for delivery is due to commence with the objective to have consultants on board by Q2, with a 12-to-18-month timeframe for delivery of framework.

39.3	Delivery of eight new blueways in line with Blueways Ireland criteria.	Delayed
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Update: The Blueway Partnership is an all-island body comprising of state agencies with an interest in the development of Blueways: Fáilte Ireland, Tourism Northern Ireland, Sport Ireland, Sport Northern Ireland and Waterways Ireland. The Partnership is responsible for the oversight and accreditation of Blueways to ensure they are developed to a consistent standard across the island of Ireland. The Partnership sets the criteria for Blueway accreditation and also acts as the awarding body.

Three Blueways received accreditation in 2022;

- Boyne Blueway
- Suir Blueway Tipperary
- Lough Derg Blueway

They were the first ever Blueways to gain accreditation under the Blueways Accreditation scheme launched by the Blueway Partnership in 2019. A media launch to announce the accreditations took place in Trim, Co Meath on 5 April 2022.

Additionally, there are six Blueways that have **Stage 1 approval** and preparing their Stage 2 applications:

- Shannon
- Shannon Erne
- Barrow Blueway
- Lough Gill
- Skellig Coast
- Árainn Mhór

39.4	<p>Progress the delivery of the restoration of the Ulster Canal, through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commencement of construction on Phase 2 of the Ulster Canal restoration project from Clones to Clonfad, which includes the canal basin in Clones, access bridges and amenity areas. • Continue engineering feasibility and pre-construction stages of Phase 3 of the restoration (from Castle Saunderson to Clonfad), with the completion of these pre-construction stages envisaged by 2023. <p>(DHLGH/Waterways Ireland)</p>	<p>Complete</p> <p>Ongoing</p>
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Update:
Phase 2: Clonfad to Clones

Substantial completion of the main infrastructure works is expected in Q3 2023, with completion of the amenity and recreational facilities, including site reinstatement works expected by December 2023.

Phase 3: Castle Saunderson to Clonfad

This phase is divided into four sub-phases. Phases 3.1, 3.2 and 3.4 have planning permission in place. Phase 3.3 requires a new planning application as the present grant of planning will expire in May 2023. The development of a strategy for the delivery of the various sub-phases is to be completed and approved by June 2023. A consultancy commission to obtain planning permission for Phase 3.3 to be awarded in Q1 2023.

39.5	Completion of Beara Breifne Way Trail Audit SEA.	Delayed
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Update: Building on the significant work undertaken by local community groups in conceiving the Beara Breifne Way and developing the 12 way-marked ways that constitute the integrated long-distance route, Fáilte Ireland is currently undertaking a detailed development plan for the finalisation of the Beara Breifne Way walking route. This plan will identify the works required to bring the entire Beara Breifne Way route (from Dursey Island in Co. Cork to Blacklion in Co. Cavan) to National Trails Office standard and comprises a detailed trail audit and detailed route design, visitor experience plan and design, and interpretation strategy and plan. Funding will subsequently be sought for the implementation of the plan.

Measure 40 **Develop a Dark Skies Strategy for Ireland, with a focus on the opportunities it can create for rural communities and employment creation.**

Lead Delivery Body: DRCD

2022 Actions

Status

40.3	Carry out further engagement with relevant stakeholders.	Complete
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Update: DRCD has engaged with key stakeholders in 2022 and further engagement has been arranged to take place in 2023.

40.4	Establishment of Dark Skies Strategy Steering Group made up of key stakeholders.	Delayed
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Update: It is expected this will progress following the further engagement planned in 2023.

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

Lead Delivery Body: DTCAGSM		
2022 Actions		Status
42.2	Review training and development supports provided for the Gaeltacht audio-visual sector to ensure this evolving sector is fit for purpose.	Delayed
<p>Update: Údarás na Gaeltachta, in collaboration with key public and private sector stakeholders working within this sector, are currently preparing a development, investment and training Strategy for the sector within the Gaeltacht.</p> <p>This strategy will inform our prioritisation of investment measures and other critical interventions. It will include a review of the external supports available for the sector from Údarás na Gaeltachta and other funding public resources and private investment.</p> <p>On a strategic level, Údarás na Gaeltachta is currently engaged with a number of industry partners and HEI's to deliver training programmes in this sector. For example, in collaboration with TG4 we continue to co-fund a training programme for the audio-visual and film sector. The investment to date is estimated at approximately €1.74m.</p> <p>Alongside this programme we also co-fund a training programme in conjunction with South East Technological University and Nemeton Teoranta in Gaeltacht na Rinne. The funding provided to date towards this training support is in the region of €2.2m.</p>		
42.3	Develop a roadmap for the creative industries targeting design-based, digital creative and content creation sectors, and building on existing strengths in film, animation, a burgeoning games industry and on the potential of our design-based industries.	Delayed
<p>Update: Work on the roadmap is ongoing and it is planned to deliver on this action in 2023.</p>		

Measure 44 Through a new Pathways to Work Strategy 2021-2025, support people to upskill, reskill and find employment through increased capacity and intensive activation and training.		
Lead Delivery Body: DSP		
2022 Actions		Status
44.2	A report on 2021 progress on the implementation of the Pathways to Work Strategy will be prepared by the Labour Market Advisory Council. The report will be forwarded to Government and to the Joint Oireachtas Committee and published on the department's website.	Complete

Update: The first annual progress report on the implementation of Pathways to Work commitments, covering the period July 2021 to June 2022, has been completed by the Labour Market Advisory Council. It was considered by Government and is available at <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/1feaf-pathways-to-work-2021/>.

Measure 45 Through the Comprehensive Employment Strategy, develop initiatives to improve employment opportunities for people with disabilities living in rural areas, including through remote working options.

Lead Delivery Body: DCEDIY

2022 Actions

Status

45.1	In 2022, the Open Doors Initiative to operate an Employer Information Service – “Employers for Change” – will continue to be funded and an employer-focused awareness campaign will be developed and rolled out.	Delayed
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Update: DCEDIY will continue to provide grant funding to Open Doors to operate the Employers for Change initiative in 2023. An Employer Awareness Campaign is currently being developed. This advertising campaign will seek to reach out to employers through a variety of media channels, including print media, radio and social media.

Revitalising Rural Towns and Villages

Measure 46 Deliver a range of strategic investment programmes over the lifetime of this policy that meet the needs of differentiated rural areas, including through the €1 billion Rural Regeneration and Development Fund, and an enhanced Town and Village Renewal Scheme.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
46.3	Enhanced Grant Aid of up to €500,000 available for projects under the Town and Village Renewal Scheme to contribute to key targets and outcomes in Our Rural Future.	Ongoing
Update: In 2022, the TVRS scheme retained the enhanced grant aid of up to €500,000 for projects identified in Our Rural Future that will generate a significant positive impact. One application was accepted from each local authority for this maximum level of grant funding. 15 projects under this category were approved funding of €6.9m in December 2022.		
46.4	Announcement of successful projects under the fourth call for Category 1 applications to the RRDF (launched Q4 2021), tailored to contribute to key targets and outcomes of Our Rural Future, in addition to existing objectives in the National Planning Framework and National Development Plan.	Complete
Update: RRDF funding of €115 million for 23 projects worth €162 million was announced in November 2022. The projects were selected following an assessment of their contribution to the delivery of key targets and outcomes set out in Our Rural Future, the National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan.		
46.5	Complete a Focused Policy Assessment of the RRDF which will inform the future strategic direction of the programme, including as regards the scale of projects funded and the approach to funding predevelopment work under Category 2.	Complete
Update: A Focused Policy Assessment of the RRDF was completed in Q4 2022. The recommendations set out in the assessment will be implemented in 2023.		

Measure 47 Prioritise rural development programmes to focus on supporting rural towns and villages to recover from the impact of COVID-19 in the short-to-medium term.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		

2022 Actions		Status
47.1	Support initiatives through Town and Village Renewal Scheme and CLÁR Programme to support rural towns and villages.	Ongoing
<p>Update:</p> <p>Town and Village Renewal Scheme</p> <p>TVRS 2022 was launched in May 2022, and included two new measures, the Building Acquisition Measure and the Marketing Measure. More than €27 million was approved under the Scheme in 2022.</p> <p>CLÁR</p> <p>CLÁR 2022 was launched in February with an increased budget of €7 million, up €1.5 million on 2021. The measures funded under CLÁR 2022 were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing Community Facilities and Amenities (Measure 1) • Mobility, Cancer Care and Community First Responders Transport (Measure 2) • 'Our Islands' (Measure 3) <p>In total, 292 projects were approved valued at over €12 million.</p>		

Measure 48 Provide funding to support the upgrade and enhancement of shopfronts and street facades in towns and villages.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD, DHLGH		
2022 Actions		Status
48.1	Funding will again be provided to support shopfront and streetscape enhancement improvements through a Streetscape Enhancement Measure under TVRS 2022.	Complete
<p>Update: In August 2022, the 26 successful towns and villages under the Streetscape Enhancement Measure were announced. These towns and villages will benefit from a €2.6 million fund (€100,000 per town) to support the enhancement of streetscapes and shopfronts.</p>		

Measure 50 Deliver major regeneration projects in towns with a population of over 10,000 which play an important role as key hubs in rural areas, through the Urban Regeneration and Development Fund.		
Lead Delivery Body: DHLGH		
2022 Actions		Status

50.1	To date there have been two calls for proposals under the URDF with a total of almost €1.6bn allocated so far in respect of the 132 projects countrywide. €159m has been made available to support the URDF programme in 2022. Another call for proposals under the URDF will be arranged later this year which will have a specific focus on the town centre first agenda.	Ongoing
Update: A third call for proposals which will focus on tackling vacancy and dereliction in URDF town and city centres with a view to accelerating the provision of residential accommodation in accordance with Objective 16.3 of Housing for All has been launched.		

Measure 51 Develop and deliver a collaborative Town Centre First approach to put town centres at the heart of decision-making where appropriate.		
Lead Delivery Body: DHLGH, DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
51.2	Establishment of a National Town Centre First office to drive policy delivery and implementation of the TCF actions, and to co-ordinate stakeholder engagement at a national level.	Complete
Update: The Town Centre First (TCF) National Office has been established within the Local Government Management Agency to drive implementation of the policy across the country.		

Measure 52 As part of the Town Centre First approach, provide and resource dedicated Local Authority staff to support town centre renewal.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
52.1	Provide funding for the appointment of Town Regeneration Officers in 26 local authorities to support the establishment and ongoing work of Town Teams, ensuring development and delivery on the Town Centre First Plans.	Complete
Update: As part of the Town Centre First Policy, funding has been provided for the appointment of 26 Town Regeneration Officers (TRO) to drive the delivery of Town Centre First Policy and development of Town Centre First Plans at a local level.		

Measure 53 Enhance the powers of Local Authorities to offer commercial rates-based incentives for businesses, targeting the re-use of vacant commercial units.		
Lead Delivery Body: DHLGH		
2022 Actions		Status
53.1	<p>The preparation and commencement of regulations under sections 9 and 15 of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Section 9 provides that a local authority may make schemes for the abatement of rates in respect of vacant properties. Section 15 of the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019 provides that a local authority may make rates waiver schemes to support the implementation of the National Spatial Strategy, Development Plans, Local Area Plans or Local Economic and Community Plans. 	Delayed
<p>Update: Amendments are required to address key issues in the Local Government Rates and Other Matters Act 2019. The remaining provisions of the Act, including sections 9 and 15, cannot be commenced until these issues are addressed by amending the primary legislation. DHLGH has received legal advice on these issues and the drafting of the amendments required to the act has commenced based on this advice, with a revised target date of Q2 2023, with a local authority able to begin making schemes in 2024.</p>		

Measure 54 Examine the feasibility of introducing ‘meanwhile use’ legislation so that empty buildings and shopfronts on main streets can be brought back into compatible use on a short-term, temporary basis as pop up shops, street markets, exhibitions spaces and other purposes in accordance with Town Centre First policies.		
Lead Delivery Body: DHLGH		
2022 Actions		Status
54.1	Engage with DETE to examine the scope of the measure, further to the publication of Town Centre First.	Delayed
<p>Update: DHLGH is examining the feasibility of possible changes to planning regulations to facilitate meanwhile use. This will require engagement with certain stakeholders including DETE.</p>		

Measure 56 Engage the Approved Housing Bodies with responsibility for housing for older people to develop accommodation in town centres more suited for those with reduced mobility.		
Lead Delivery Body: DHLGH		
2022 Actions		Status
56.1	Develop a Geographic Information System (GIS) Decision Support Tool for use by the Department, local authorities, approved housing bodies and developers which would score available sites on their appropriateness for housing developments for older people in line with Action 2.3 and Action 5.9 set out in "Housing Options for Our Ageing Population", published in 2019.	Delayed
<p>Update: The project to provide a GIS tool to local authorities to assist finding the best sites for housing for older people is nearing completion. The tool is developed and is currently being rolled out to local authorities. Local authorities are currently being trained in the use of the tool. To be fully rolled out by end Q2 2023.</p>		

Measure 57 Expand the Town and Village Renewal Scheme as an enabler to bring vacant and derelict buildings and sites back into use as multi-purpose spaces and for residential occupancy.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
57.1	The 2022 Town and Village Renewal Scheme will prioritise projects that bring vacant and derelict buildings and sites back into use as multi-purpose spaces and/or for residential occupancy. Grant aid for individual projects under the scheme has been increased to a maximum of €500,000.	Complete
<p>Update: The 2022 TVRS prioritised vacancy and dereliction to bring sites back into use as multi-purpose spaces in line with Our Rural Future. 138 applications in 2022 were received in 2022 with 24 related to bringing vacant or derelict buildings back into use as multi-purpose spaces. Of the 24 applications received, 20 were approved for funding.</p> <p>In addition, the new Buildings Acquisition Measure was introduced to immediately acquire derelict or vacant buildings, with the intention of using these for town regeneration purposes. €6.1m funding was paid to acquire 29 properties.</p>		

Measure 58 Encourage greater use of the Buy and Renew Scheme and the Repair and Lease Scheme to combat vacancy and dereliction.		
Lead Delivery Body: DHLGH		
2022 Actions		Status
58.1	<p>Housing for All committed to placing a renewed focus on the Repair and Leasing Scheme (RLS), as one of the delivery options in Pathway 4 – Pathway to Addressing Vacancy and Efficient Use of Existing Stock.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Funding of €12 million has been secured for this scheme for 2022; this will be targeted at bringing back into use 120 homes and to provide funding for Vacant Homes Officers in each local authority. A 20% increase in funding to a total of €60,000 is available for each local authority for Vacant Homes Officers in 2022 / 2023, contingent on the role being made full-time. 	Ongoing
<p>Update: In June 2022 a circular issued expanding the repair and leasing scheme on a pilot basis. This expansion removes the requirement that a property owner be unable to fund, or to access funding, to carry out the necessary repairs, for the following categories of properties:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> vacant commercial units; vacant units associated with a commercial unit (e.g. over the shop); vacant institutional buildings; unfinished developments which have been vacant for a significant period of time. <p>At the end of Q4 2022 there were 29 local authorities with full time Vacant Homes Officers in place. A total of 70 homes were brought back into use under the repair and leasing scheme to end Q3 2022.</p>		

Measure 61 Prioritise the siting of new State agencies, Departments and enterprises in towns and cities outside of Dublin, to support the Government's regional development objectives.		
Lead Delivery Body: DPER		
2022 Actions		Status
61.1	Identify if any appropriate avenues exist in the current business case or appraisal mechanisms to facilitate this action.	Complete

Update: Each department/public service body continues to select the appropriate siting of accommodation in accordance with the principles of value for money as set out in the Public Spending Code.

Measure 62 Identify potential State-owned properties in rural towns and villages which can be used for community purposes.		
Lead Delivery Body: OPW		
2022 Actions		Status
62.2	Following engagement with relevant local authorities, the OPW is progressing leases on four properties in the Leitrim and Roscommon areas.	Complete
<p>Update: Roscommon County Council decided to acquire rather than lease the two former Garda station properties in Co. Roscommon. The properties, located in Ballintubber and Tarmonbarry, were transferred to Roscommon County Council under D/PER Circular 11/15 on 28 November 2022.</p> <p>OPW is engaging with Leitrim County Council to progress the transfer of two former Garda station properties under Lease Agreements for the purposes of community use. The two properties are located in Dromahair and Keshcarrigan in Co. Leitrim.</p>		
62.3	The OPW is engaging directly with community groups who have expressed an interest in licensing two former Garda stations and one other site.	Complete
<p>Update: OPW is engaging with Leitrim County Council to progress the transfer of two former Garda stations (See Measure 62.2). Timelines are subject to a range of different factors in assessing requests and then agreeing terms, as well as the due diligence undertaken by the Chief State Solicitor's Office in drafting the licences.</p>		
62.4	The Town and Village Renewal Scheme will continue to support projects which bring State-owned properties into use as multi-purpose spaces. (DRCD)	Ongoing
<p>Update: In recognition of the urgent need to transform and regenerate town centres the new Buildings Acquisition Measure was introduced to immediately acquire derelict or vacant buildings, with the intention of using these for town regeneration purposes. The Measure forms part of the overarching TVRS structure. Buildings purchased under this Measure must be for use as multi-purpose community spaces. €6.1m funding was paid to acquire 29 properties including four former Garda stations. These include two in Roscommon (see Measure 62.2) and buildings in Moyvane, Co Kerry and Ashford, Co Wicklow.</p>		

Measure 65 Support the take-up of Irish Water’s Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme 2020-2024, which will provide water and waste water growth capacity in smaller settlements that would otherwise not be provided for in Irish Water’s capital investment plan.		
Lead Delivery Body: DHLGH		
2022 Actions		Status
65.2	Progress the list of 36 waste water treatment projects announced by Irish Water in September 2021 through Preliminary Business Case stage to Final Business Case stage (detailed design and tender).	Ongoing
<p>Update: As of the end of 2022, a total of 46 waste water treatment plant (WWTP) upgrade projects have been publicly announced or notified under the Small Towns and Villages Growth Programme (STVGP). Of the 46 projects, six were at Stage 1 (Strategic Assessment), 37 at Stage 2 (Preliminary Business Case), and three at Stage 3 (Final Business Case).</p> <p>All upgrade projects will be progressed into Stages 3 (Final Business Case) and 4 (Implementation) over the coming months and years (subject to appropriate approvals and governance).</p> <p>In addition to the above identified 46 WWTP upgrade projects, Irish Water initiated Stage 1 Strategic Assessments on a further 21 WWTP upgrade projects during 2022. The metrics associated with these potential upgrades are currently being defined and will be announced during 2023 when these WWTP upgrades are progressed to Stage 2 (Preliminary Business Case), subject to appropriate approvals and governance.</p> <p>Where necessary, projects to provide additional water supply capacity in the settlements prioritised by local authorities are also being progressed. Four projects to provide additional water supply capacity have been notified under the STVGP, all of which will be delivered via other CIP programmes. The four projects will address water supply constraints in Rathdrum, Dunlavin (Wicklow), Ballivor (Meath) and Rathkeale (Limerick) (note there are no current waste water treatment capacity deficits in these settlements).</p> <p>Information Note –</p> <p>Note, that typical project durations from Stages 1 to 4 are between 5-7 years.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage 1: Strategic Assessment (optioneering, cost estimation, preferred approach) • Stage 2: Preliminary Business Case (feasible options appraisal, concept design) • Stage 3: Final Business Case (detailed design, statutory consents, tendering) • Stage 4: Implementation (construction) 		

Measure 67	Bring forward proposals for the development of a Policy on the Night Time Economy which will support the revitalisation of our rural towns, as well as our larger urban centres and cities, in the post-COVID recovery.
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Lead Delivery Body: DTCAGSM

2022 Actions

Status

67.2 Continue to work in partnership with key departments, agencies and stakeholders to drive the progress of the 36 actions contained in the Report of the Night-Time Economy Taskforce and where possible to ensure that the Night-Time Economy is included as a target policy area for any relevant existing or new capital scheme interventions.

Ongoing

Update: €6million was allocated to the Night-Time Economy (NTE) as part of Budget 2023 to build on some of the foundational work started last year, which will help stimulate new ideas and new thinking in the NTE. A capital scheme focusing on soundproofing measures will be developed and rolled out in 2023.

DTCAGSM is continuing to work with colleagues across Government and stakeholders to drive the implementation of the various actions in this Report and work is well underway in this regard. The Implementation Group met six times in 2022.

Enhancing Participation, Leadership and Resilience in Rural Communities

Measure 69 Refine and build on a range of programmes to support communities, voluntary organisations, social enterprises and charities to build their resilience and enhance their impact in the aftermath of COVID-19.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
69.2	Commencement of the new iteration of the Scheme to Support National Organisations 2022-2025.	Complete
Update: The new Scheme launched on 1 July 2022. Funding of just over €21 million has been provided to 82 organisations. This is an increase of eight additional organisations being supported under the new scheme and represents an increase of over €2 million in funding in comparison to the previous scheme.		
69.3	Launch fund to support community and voluntary groups with rising energy costs.	Complete
Update: In November 2022, a €10 million fund to support community and voluntary groups with energy costs was launched. The Community and Voluntary Energy Support Scheme (CCESS) is part of a range of measures being undertaken by Government to meet higher energy costs for households, businesses and community organisations. The CCESS complements other supports to the community and voluntary sector, promoting sustainable, inclusive and empowered communities across Ireland. The first tranche of 180 successful organisations was announced in December, the scheme remained open to applications into early 2023 with further rounds of funding to be announced in January.		

Measure 71 Establish a permanent volunteer reserve in local areas which can be called on by community and voluntary organisations and Local Authorities as required.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
71.2	Roll out of Phase Two of the Community Volunteer Programme, providing a service to 11 counties to respond to local need beyond emergencies, such as local and national events. This will bring the total amount to 20 counties that will provide the full service.	Complete

Update: The Community Volunteers Programme was launched in September 2021. It was rolled out across 10 Local Authorities in seven counties across the country in 2021, and the second phase of the programme was rolled out in 2022 with a further 11 volunteer centres and local authorities collaborating on the programme in their county.

Measure 72 **Hold a regular series of Rural Ideas Fora to engage with rural dwellers to enable them to input on an ongoing basis to issues which impact on them and their communities, and to encourage their ongoing contribution to national rural policy innovation.**

Lead Delivery Body: DRCD

2022 Actions

Status

72.1	The ongoing series of Rural Ideas Fora events will continue in 2022.	Ongoing
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Update: Three Rural Ideas Fora took place in 2022: two were online and the first in-person event in this series held in partnership with Údarás na Gaeltachta, in An Cheathrú Rua, Co Galway. The themes for 2022 were Public Transport and Opportunities in Rural Ireland, An Ghaeltacht Ghlas, and A Socially Inclusive Rural Ireland. Panel discussion videos and presentations are available to view on the [DRCD website](#).

Measure 73 **Establish an annual Rural Youth Assembly to allow young people living in rural Ireland to make an on-going contribution to identifying and influencing policy issues that impact on them and their future.**

Lead Delivery Body: DRCD

2022 Actions

Status

73.2	The Rural Youth Assembly will become an annual element of the National Youth Assembly. DRCD will collaborate with DCEDIY and youth organisations to hold the event in 2022.	Complete
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Update: The 2022 RYA was held in Collins Barracks, Dublin on 14 July 2022 and was attended by 38 young people from across Ireland. The Assembly agreed a number of recommendations on issues of concern to young people across healthcare, transport, climate justice and young voices in the community.

A representative of the RYA took part in a youth panel discussion at the 13th OECD International Rural Development Conference held in Cavan on 28-29 September 2022 and presented the RYA recommendations to an international audience.

Measure 74 Build capacity for community development through provision of mentoring/training for community development leaders, with a particular focus on young people between the ages of 18 and 25.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
74.2	The assessment of training needs in the Community and Voluntary sector, taking place as part of the Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities Strategy, will continue with Project Two and Project Three assessments into the training needs of trustees of voluntary boards and smaller community and voluntary organisations.	Delayed
<p>Update: DRCD continues to work in collaboration with Pobal and a subgroup of the Cross-Sectoral Group on Local and Community Development on this comprehensive research on the training needs of the community and voluntary sector. Reports on Projects Two and Three, including recommendations are due in 2023. Following finalisation of these reports, an implementation plan will be developed.</p> <p>In addition, DRCD is providing support to the All-Ireland Endorsement Body for Community Work Education and Training (AIEB), hosted by Community Work Ireland. AIEB seeks to build an inclusive framework for the endorsement of community work education and training at all levels as laid out in the All Ireland Standards for Community Work developed in 2016 by AIEB in association with Community Work Ireland. AIEB endorsement benchmarks community work/community development as a profession in its own right requiring specific skills, values, knowledge and qualities. It provides clear and direct guidance on standards of professional practice and education and training programmes that meet those standards, with particular emphasis on third-level training programmes, relevant to the target cohort.</p>		
74.3	The proposed PEACE PLUS Programme 2021-2027, managed by the Special EU Programmes body and including the six border counties, will be agreed with the European Commission. The new programme will provide for a range of activities, including a Youth Development Programme which seeks to develop new community leaders and enhance the capacity of existing community leaders and volunteers to promote and facilitate peace and reconciliations over the lifetime of the programme.	Complete
<p>Update: The EU PEACE PLUS Programme 2021-2027 was approved by the Government, the NI Executive and the North-South Ministerial Council, following which it was submitted to the EU Commission for consideration. The Commission agreed and adopted the PEACE PLUS Programme in July 2022. Ahead of the programme launch in 2023, DRCD is working with Special EU Programmes Body and relevant NI Government Departments on the drafting of guidance documents and calls for applications under the PEACE PLUS Programme, which will open shortly after the launch.</p>		

Measure 77 Implement a €70 million Transitional LEADER Programme for community-led rural development for the period 2021-2022, and develop and deliver a new LEADER programme to commence in 2023, in line with the next EU funding framework.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
77.2	Engage with stakeholders on the next LEADER Programme, in order to finalise the development of the new LEADER programme for roll out in 2023.	Complete
Update: Engagement with stakeholders throughout 2022 included discussions on elements to finalise the details of the 2023-2027 LEADER programme, such as the selection process for new local action groups to deliver the programme. The first stage of the selection process for groups to deliver the new LEADER programme was launched in October.		
77.3	Full allocation of project budgets by Local Action Groups by end 2022 under the Transitional Programme.	Delayed
Update: The final date for approval of projects under the 2014-2020 programme has been extended to 31 August 2023 to accommodate the full allocation of budgets to projects.		

Measure 78 Deliver the Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) to the end of 2022, and develop a new SICAP programme to commence in 2023, following a review and consultation with stakeholders.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
78.2	Continue delivery of SICAP in 2022, resulting in funding of €43 million being used to assist over 2,200 community groups and over 23,000 individuals.	Complete
Update: SICAP funding of €43 million was delivered in 2022 and provided supports to 2,760 community groups and 30,416 individuals.		
78.3	Conduct review and consultation to inform next SICAP programme.	Delayed
Update: SICAP has received a one-year extension and will now run until 2023. A new iteration of SICAP will commence in 2024 following a review and consultation with stakeholders.		
DRCD hosted three SICAP Stakeholder Engagement Forums in 2022. The Forum is comprised of representatives from the Department, POBAL, ILDN and the LCDCs and provides an		

opportunity for stakeholders to give feedback on programme requirements, areas for improvement and discussion of collaboration opportunities.

DRCD is now undertaking an independent review of the current programme. Direct consultation sessions took place throughout the year with LCDCs, LDCs, SICAP beneficiaries, Government departments and State agencies. A draft report is receiving consideration, and the final report recommendations will inform part of the new programme design for 2024 onwards.

A formal LCDC Engagement Plan for the new SICAP procurement and design process has been finalised and LCDCs have been briefed on the new process. An engagement group comprised of Department and Pobal representatives, Chief Officers and Procurement Officers from LCDCs will commence work in Q1 2023 to finalise procurement design, and support events will be provided to LCDCs throughout the year.

Measure 79 Increase the number of places on the Rural Social Scheme, Tús and Community Employment Scheme to support rural communities.

Lead Delivery Body: DSP

2022 Actions

Status

79.2	Review the eligibility criteria for Tús and Community Employment in view of the tightening Labour Market to ensure these programmes, which are vital for rural communities, continue to attract and attain participants.	Complete
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Update: In June 2022, DSP introduced a series of reforms to support Community Employment (CE), Tús and also the Rural Social Schemes (RSS) and their participants. These work schemes are available to the long-term unemployed and those furthest removed from the labour market. The following is a summary of the changes:

- Removal of the six-year time limit for all participants on the Rural Social Scheme.
- Eligibility for Tús extended to persons in receipt of Disability Payments
- New flexibility to allow CE schemes to directly recruit eligible candidates to fill 30% of places.
- Intreo to significantly increase the number of referrals to CE with schemes required to offer places to at least 60% of candidates referred.
- Development of a pilot Scheme to extend eligibility to Qualified Adults. Due to commence in early 2023.
- Continue to allow CE and Tús schemes to extend individual placements and retain existing participants in cases where no replacement candidate has been referred.

During 2022, DSP renewed its focus on referrals to CE and Tús. In 2022, a number of DSP events centred on the theme of awareness and promotion to members of the Travelling community, the Roma community and other minority groups of the Employment Support Schemes.

DSP will continue to monitor CE, Tús and the RSS and the numbers of participants availing of these activation and valuable income support programmes, including qualifying criteria to ensure their most effective delivery and the best outcomes for both participants and communities.		
79.3	Commence internal review of Rural Social Scheme.	Complete
<p>Update: DSP continually monitors all of its income and employment support programmes and commenced the process of a review of the operation of Rural Social Scheme (RSS) in 2022.</p> <p>The purpose of this review is to ensure the ongoing best outcomes for both participants and their local rural communities. It will also take account of how the changes that have been implemented in 2022 are working in practice and the impact that these are having at community level. It is intended that the review will be completed in 2023.</p>		

Measure 80 Support the development of social innovation as a means of addressing pressing social challenges.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
80.1	Support organisations promoting the development of social innovation as a means of addressing pressing social challenges.	Ongoing
<p>Update: DRCD continues to support Rethink Ireland via grant-aid, with match-funding to the value of €5.5 million allocated in 2022 under the Dormant Accounts Action Plan. In addition, Ireland's ESF+ 2021-27 Programme was approved at European level on 6 October 2022 and by Government on 9 November. Under the ESF+ programme, DRCD has been allocated €14.5 million to develop and support Social Innovation programmes through to 2027. A programme delivery plan is currently being developed.</p>		
80.3	<p>The PEACE IV Programme, which is managed by the Special EU Programmes body and includes the six border counties, includes a Future Innovators project to supports communities to develop local solutions to social problems during the period 1 July 2021 – 31 March 2023.</p> <p>The Future Innovators projects aims to incorporate new technology with the on the ground local engagement to ensure everyone in the community has the ability to use their voice in the decisions made that affect their lives and where they live, engaging up to 500 individuals over the lifetime of the project.</p>	Ongoing
<p>Update: The Future Innovators Project is implemented by a cross-border partnership and commenced on 1 July 2021, with an operation end date of 31 March 2023. Their initial target was to support 500 participants by end of March 2023, which they are currently on track to</p>		

meet. The project brings all members of the community together to discuss, propose, adapt, and implement innovative policy solutions for addressing shared issues and provides community members the opportunity, knowledge and resources to innovatively reimagine their futures together.

DRCD also continues to support Rethink Ireland via grant-aid. Match funding to the value of €5.5 million has been allocated to Rethink Ireland in 2022 under the Dormant Accounts Action Plan. In addition, Ireland's ESF+ 2021-27 Programme EIST was approved at European level on 6 October 2022 and formal Government approval for the programme was received at Cabinet meeting on 9 November 2022. Under the ESF+ programme, DRCD has been allocated €14.5 million to develop and support Social Innovation programmes through to 2027. A programme delivery plan is currently being developed.

Measure 81 Provide investment for multi-purpose spaces in the community (e.g. community centres, libraries, and sports clubs) for a variety of activities, including leisure, community, cultural and services provision.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
81.2	The Small Scale Capital Works programme will continue to support refurbishments in public libraries. 28 of the 30 local authorities are expected to have completed ongoing projects in 2022.	Ongoing
Update: 24 of the 30 local authorities have completed their refurbishments under the Small Scale Capital Works programme. The remaining six are at various stages of completion, with all six due to be complete by Q4 2023.		
81.3	The CLÁR 2022 Programme includes a new Measure 1 to support Community Facilities and Amenities. Successful projects will be announced in Q3.	Complete
Update: CLÁR 2022 was launched in February with an increased budget of €7 million, up €1.5 million on 2021. The measures funded under CLÁR 2022 were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing Community Facilities and Amenities (Measure 1) • Mobility, Cancer Care and Community First Responders Transport (Measure 2) • 'Our Islands' (Measure 3) In total, 292 projects were approved valued at over €12 million.		
81.5	The new Community Centres Investment Fund will deliver a budget of €15 million to support capital funding for the upgrade and refurbishment of existing community centres and parish halls in urban and rural areas.	Complete
Update: The Community Centres Investment Fund was launched in April 2022 with funding of €15m available – applications were accepted between June and July 2022 with over 1,000		

received. Assessment of all applications was completed by November 2022 with funding of €45.5m allocated to more than 850 projects throughout the country.		
81.6	Complete delivery of the 2021 Community Activities Fund which is providing funding of €9 million to support groups in disadvantage areas with their non-pay running costs and funding to carry out necessary repairs and improvement to their facilities.	Complete
Update: Local Community Development Committees (LCDCs) have approved funding to groups and are finalising payments at present.		

Measure 82 Further enhance the Public Participation Network and Local Community Development Committee structures to ensure that local communities are fully involved in, and contribute to, decisions affecting their local areas.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
82.5	Consider recommendations arising from the training needs assessment conducted by Pobal and devise an implementation plan.	Delayed
<p>Update: Action 5.1 of Sustainable, Inclusive and Empowered Communities, commits to providing a comprehensive training and support programme for LCDC Chief Officers, members and Local Authority support staff. Action 2.1 commits to supporting community groups and organisations to identify and meet their training needs. Progress on these actions is being overseen by the Training Needs Subgroup of the Cross-Sectoral Group on Local and Community Development. DRCD have engaged Pobal to assist us in this work. It was agreed that a three step modular approach was the preferred approach, with assessment of training needs of :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Community Development Committees • Voluntary Boards of mid-sized non-profits • and smaller C&V groups <p>It has been agreed to publish the three reports together in order to ensure that all perspectives are fully considered, to avoid duplication, and to add value to existing work. All reports are expected to be published in 2023, with details of implementation to follow.</p>		
82.6	Progress the Dormant Accounts Funded pilot, working with a number of pilot LCDCs on the engagement and participation of marginalised communities in the LECP process with a view to sharing learnings with all LCDCs on successful engagement strategies.	Complete
Update: Two national events targeted at LCDCs, Local Authority staff and LECP advisory committees were held, aiming to build capacity and share information on principles of good consultation and meaningful engagement, featuring speakers from Galway City Traveller		

Movement, Independent Living Movement Ireland, Migrant Rights Centre Ireland, Pavee Point, LGBT Ireland, Community Work Ireland, the ILDN and Local Authorities themselves.

Four pilot projects were selected to develop and test engagement strategies as part of the LECP process, to inform the development of adaptable toolkits that can be scaled up and used in a variety of consultation and engagement processes undertaken by local and central government: Following an expressions of interest process, four LCDCs have been selected to lead the pilots – Fingal, Galway City, Wicklow and Clare.

82.7	Oversee preparation, delivery and completion of PPN awareness campaign and related communication measures.	Delayed
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Update: Extensive branding activities were carried out in 2022 with the development of a national logo and revised local logos for a unified visual appearance. Initial slogans and messaging concepts for the campaign were also developed collaboratively with a stakeholder sub-group. Delivery of communications training for PPNs commenced in Q4 2022.

The campaign timeframe has been extended, as additional branding activities were requested by stakeholders in late 2022 in order to more effectively prepare for the full campaign rollout. The awareness campaign rollout is now due in Q1 2023; campaign completion expected in Q2.

82.8	Develop, agree and commence implementation of roadmap for PPNs.	Delayed
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Update: The PPN Roadmap was not completed by end 2022, as the project scope was changed in response to extensive feedback received from PPN stakeholders.

DRCD is currently collaborating with a stakeholder Working Group to develop a Roadmap for future PPN development. Draft Roadmap currently expected by Q2 2023, with final Roadmap in Q3.

82.9	Support remaining PPNs in the development of their Community Wellbeing Statements.	Delayed
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Update: At the end of 2022, 10 PPNs had not been able to commence, and the project was complete or in progress in all other PPNs.

DRCD undertook extensive discussions with the training/toolkit provider on progressing the project with the PPNs that had not commenced or were still at an early stage of the process to assist more effective delivery of the project.

DRCD will provide final round of support to the remaining PPNs to complete Community Wellbeing statements over the course of 2023. Action will conclude by end 2023.

Measure 83		
Work in consultation with local community and voluntary groups and with local decision-making structures to help welcome and integrate newcomers to rural towns and villages and to support cohesion more broadly.		
Lead Delivery Body: DCEDIY		
2022 Actions		Status
83.1	<p>Comhairle na nÓg across the 31 Local Authorities are available for consultation on welcoming and integrating young newcomers to rural towns and villages and on supporting cohesion. Individual Comhairlí at local levels have developed specific actions on a voluntary basis in relation to welcoming migrants and other groups.</p> <p>Under the Comhairle na nÓg Five Year Development Plan all local Comhairlí have made commitments to include seldom heard, minority and migrant young people in their Comhairle and in Comhairle na nÓg activities.</p>	Ongoing
<p>Update: Work continues on ensuring that Comhairlí na nÓg (youth councils) in each Local Authority are accessible and inclusive to all young people, including newcomers.</p> <p>Inclusivity is a focus in the Comhairle na nÓg five-year development plan – initiatives in this area include a project to support young travellers to join their local Comhairle. Learning from this project will assist in developing pathways and supports for all marginalised young people who may be interested in joining, including young people from migrant and refugee backgrounds.</p> <p>Individual Comhairlí report on their activities on a yearly basis and this is collated and published by Pobal by mid-year.</p>		
83.2	<p>UBU Your Place Your Space is a national targeted youth service funding scheme based on service requirements identified from a needs analysis conducted locally by the ETB that involves all relevant stakeholders. Target groups under the scheme may include Young People Experiencing Marginalisation (e.g. Travellers/Roma, migrants, LGBTI+) and Young People who are at risk of not flourishing (including young people experiencing rural isolation).</p> <p>New areas selected for inclusion in 2022 are West Donegal; Cavan town; Bagenalstown, Co Carlow; Clonmel, Co Tipperary; South Sligo; rural North Kerry; rural Clare and Dungarvan/West Waterford.</p>	Ongoing
<p>Update: DCEDIY is currently engaging with the Education and Training Boards to finalise the approach to the Area Profiling, Needs Assessment, and Service Requirement Tool for Cycle 2 of the UBU Your Place Your Space scheme. Cycle 2 of the scheme is scheduled to commence in January 2024.</p>		

In 2022, DCEDIY approved €1 million in funding for eight new UBU services to be established across Ireland. These services became operational during late 2022, offering young person led service delivery to the disadvantaged, marginalised and/or vulnerable young people in counties Donegal, Cavan, Carlow, Tipperary, Sligo, Kerry, Clare and Waterford.

Through close collaboration with the Education and Training Boards, the Department ensured that the additional funding made available targeted at areas that were identified as most in need of additional support for the young people.

The Resilience and Effectiveness Initiative provided an additional €585,000 in 2022 to some one-worker UBU-funded organisations to increase the capacity to deliver more effective youth service.

The Minor Grant Scheme in 2022 saw an additional €1.3 million allocated to UBU-funded organisations to alleviate the cost of living pressure most youth services experienced.

DCEDIY is currently engaging with the Education and Training Boards to finalise the approach to the Area Profiling, Needs Assessment, and Service Requirement Tool for Cycle 2 of the UBU Your Place Your Space scheme. Cycle 2 of the scheme is scheduled to commence in January 2024.

83.3	The Local Youth Club Grant Scheme, administered by local Education and Training Boards, supports volunteer-led youth clubs across the country, and are particularly important in rural areas. The funding increased to this scheme by 10% in 2022, giving a total fund of €2.5 million.	Complete
Update: Funding under the Local Youth Club Grant Scheme will continue in 2023 supporting volunteer-led youth clubs across the country. This scheme is expected to support some 1,400 clubs or groups nationwide, providing approximately €1,500 on average to each club.		

Measure 84 Implement Culture and Creative Strategies in each Local Authority area, including “Culture Days”, to showcase local cultural heritage.		
Lead Delivery Body: DTCAGSM		
2022 Actions		Status
84.1	The Culture and Creativity Strategies in all 31 Local Authorities are currently being funded and implemented to support wellbeing, social cohesion and economic development of the creative sector.	Ongoing
Update: Through the Creative Ireland Programme, DTCAGSM and DHLGH invested €6.6 million in local communities in 2022. Support for projects covered policy areas such as climate action, enterprise, tourism, youth, urban, rural and community development, and community health and wellbeing. Alongside these projects, several new creative initiatives		

were introduced, including Creative Communities Economic Action Fund and a pilot Shared Island local authority initiative.		
84.2	Individual bilateral meetings between the Creative Ireland Programme and Culture and Creativity Teams in the 31 local authorities in relation to strategic direction of the Creative Ireland Programme 2023-2027.	Complete
Update: Individual bilateral meetings took place between March and October 2022 with Culture and Creativity Teams across the country. The meetings were an opportunity for local authorities to understand the direction of travel for the Creative Ireland Programme 2023-2027.		
84.3	Hold Cruinniú na nÓg, the national day of creativity for children and young people led by the Creative Ireland Programme, in partnership with 31 local authorities.	Complete
Update: In 2022 Cruinniú na nÓg went back to being a live event on Saturday 11 June. Creative Ireland commissioned five strategic partners to develop projects around the country, including Dance Ireland, Garageland, Historic Houses of Ireland, Nenagh Children's Film Festival and Irish Street Arts and Circus Network. Local authorities delivered 663 events that provided young people with the opportunity to try something new and demonstrate their own creative abilities.		
84.4	Support Údarás na Gaeltachta's arts and culture subsidiary, Ealaín na Gaeltachta, in commencing the design of its new five-year strategy.	Complete
Update: Throughout 2022, Ealaín na Gaeltachta supported over 120 arts projects, initiatives and events. In preparation for its new strategy for the 2023-2027 period, Ealaín na Gaeltachta undertook a consultation process during 2022 with its stakeholders in the arts sector, the community and with the relevant public bodies. This strategy is near completion and will be published in early 2023.		

Measure 85 Empower local communities and enhance community health and wellbeing by supporting heritage, arts, cultural activities and other activities to tackle social issues such as cohesion, rural isolation and mental health.		
Lead Delivery Body: DTCAGSM		
2022 Actions		Status
85.1	Support the wellbeing of older people through Creativity in Older Age Scheme 2022 and through a regional programme co-designed with Older People's Councils; Traveller health and wellbeing through a programme developed in partnership with the HSE and the Arts Council and co-designed by Travellers; the mental wellbeing of young people coping with disabilities.	Ongoing

<p>Update: In March 2022, the Creative Ireland Programme collaborated and co-funded the Traveller Wellbeing through Creativity with D/Health (Healthy Ireland), the HSE (Mental Health Unit/National Social Inclusion Office) and the Arts Council. This was a pilot initiative that addressed specific Travellers' health and cultural inequalities. Funding of approximately €250,000 was awarded to five creative projects co-designed and co-produced by Travellers.</p> <p>In 2022, Creative Ireland's collaboration with Age Friendly offered opportunities to improve health and wellbeing, reduce loneliness and increase social connections through participation in creative activities. These included train the trainer adapted céilí sessions, music lessons, poetry and mask-making workshops.</p> <p>Creative Ireland further developed a range of new and existing initiatives in the community and healthcare facilities in collaboration with local authorities to support positive ageing and creative wellbeing for older people. 24 projects were funded under the Creativity in Older Age Scheme in 2022.</p> <p>Creative Ireland supported three Social Prescribing pilot projects in Dún Laoghaire/Rathdown, Mayo and Waterford county councils.</p>		
85.2	Creative Youth will provide enhanced access for seldom heard or marginalised children and young people to engage with and experience creative activities, supported by programmes such as the Local Creative Youth Partnerships (LCYP).	Ongoing
<p>Update: With six Local Creative Youth Partnerships now established in Education and Training Boards around the country, in 2022 these delivered creativity in their local communities prioritising seldom heard children and young people to address inclusivity, social and rural isolation as well as cultural identity. Across the country, the Creative Technology Programme with Kinia trained educators in youth work settings and a large number of creative writing sessions were delivered in partnership with Fighting Words, targeting seldom heard children and young people.</p>		

Measure 87 Commission research on the experiences and outcomes of children and young people in rural Ireland, building on the Growing Up In Ireland and other relevant datasets		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
87.1	Examine feasibility of developing research project in conjunction with DCEDIY based on Growing Up in Ireland longitudinal dataset and other relevant datasets.	Complete
<p>Update: A research proposal was developed with DCEDIY on '<i>Civic Participation of Young People in Rural Ireland</i>,' which will use relevant GUI datasets. The research is being undertaken by the ESRI under the framework agreement with DCEDIY in partnership with</p>		

DRCD. The ESRI commenced the research in October 2022 and the final report is expected in Q3 2023.

Measure 88			Undertake research to inform the particular needs of women, girls, LGBTI+, Travellers, Roma, migrants and those of migrant origin living in rural areas.
Lead Delivery Body: DCEDIY			
2022 Actions			Status
88.2	The review of implementation of the LGBTI+ Youth Strategy will be completed in 2022 and used to inform any future strategy.		Delayed
Update: The report of this review of implementation of the LGBTI+ National Youth Strategy is expected in early 2023.			

Enhancing Public Services in Rural Areas

Measure 90 Update the Rural Housing Guidelines for planning authorities, to address rural housing in a broader rural development and settlement context.		
Lead Delivery Body: DHLGH		
2022 Actions		Status
90.1	<p>Prepare updated Rural Housing Planning Guidelines that will continue to allow for the development of homes in rural areas while also highlighting the need to manage certain areas around cities and towns in order to avoid over-development of those areas.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The update to the rural housing guidelines is at an advanced stage. Screening for Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and for the purposes of Appropriate Assessment (AA) is underway. Following the completion of the environmental assessments, the draft guidelines will be placed on display for a focused period of public consultation, with guidelines to be finalized in Q3 2022, subject to environmental assessment timelines. 	Delayed
<p>Update: The guidelines are at an advanced stage of drafting and environmental assessments (AA and SEA) are nearing completion. It is intended to publish the draft guidelines for a period of public consultation when the environmental assessments are completed. This is expected to happen in Q2 2023.</p> <p>Following the period of consultation, and with any subsequent changes made, the guidelines will be submitted for approval to publish. Once issued, Planning Authorities and An Bord Pleanála will be required to have regard to the guidelines in carrying out their functions.</p>		

<p>Provide improved rural public transport services and pilot new transport initiatives for people of all ages and abilities living in rural areas, through:</p>		
<p>Measure 91a a) Developing and implementing a Sustainable Rural Mobility Plan to ensure all settlements over a certain size in terms of population have a service connecting them to the national public transport system.</p>		
<p>Lead Delivery Body: D/Transport, National Transport Authority</p>		
2022 Actions		Status
91a.2	<p>D/Transport will support the NTA's implementation of the Connecting Ireland Rural Mobility Plan to increase public transport connectivity outside major cities and towns in rural Ireland</p> <p>In 2022, the NTA will issue a report on public consultations commenced in 2021 on the Plan, and will finalise proposals to roll out a network of new and improved services planned on a phased basis from 2022 to 2025.</p>	Ongoing
<p>Update: On 19 July 2022, the NTA announced the Connecting Ireland Programme – Phase 1 2022 Implementation Plan, giving an overview of services in or proposed to go into operation in 2022.</p> <p>These proposals are routinely updated as the estimated implementation dates are indicative and may well change for a number of reasons such as planning and design process, changes in demand, availability of service providers, etc. Given the rapidly changing environment, it is important that the Connecting Ireland team is agile and flexible in its management of the programme, so that where progress is impacted, other plans can be advanced instead.</p> <p>During 2022, routes identified through the Connecting Ireland consultation process were 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 continued to be achieved through an acceleration of network improvements, including additional stops, route modifications, and more services with the aim to increase connectivity (see Action 153.1 below).</p> <p>Examples of revisions implemented on routes and services during 2022 included those in counties Cavan, Monaghan, Donegal, Clare, Sligo, Kildare, Offaly, Mayo and Wexford. In October 2022, Bus Éireann, in conjunction with NTA, delivered eight new and enhanced services – five services within the Limerick area and three in the northeast.</p>		
91a.3	<p>Additional funding has been allocated for the starting of New Town Services in key rural towns across Ireland. Starting with Carlow Town, the NTA will finalise plans and run tender competitions for bus services.</p>	Delayed
<p>Update: The implementation of the Carlow Town service has been delayed to Q3 2023.</p>		

Measure 91b b) Delivering expanded Local Link services and further integrating Local Link services with other existing public transport services through the roll out of the NTA Connecting Ireland Plan.		
Lead Delivery Body: D/Transport, National Transport Authority		
2022 Actions		Status
91b.2	Identify the potential for integration of non-emergency health transport services with Local Link services managed by the NTA by conducting and monitoring a pilot project in Co. Leitrim, which will run until 2024, to deliver non-emergency health transport services.	Ongoing
Update: The Integrated Pilot Project introduced in Leitrim has now been in operation for over a year. To date all feedback with regard to the pilot, from stakeholders and passengers has been very positive. In addition to the positive feedback, passenger numbers on Regular Rural Services have grown considerably since the introduction of the revised TFI Local Link network for Co Leitrim.		
91b.3	Transition PSO Local Link bus services to low-/zero-emission bus fleets – deploy two electric vehicle buses on the Dingle peninsula, Co. Kerry.	Delayed
Update: The deployment of these two vehicles has been delayed to Q3 2023.		
Measure 91c c) Developing a subsidised Local Area Hackney Scheme in designated areas of rural Ireland which are too small or remote to support a full- time taxi or hackney service.		
Lead Delivery Body: D/Transport, National Transport Authority		
2022 Actions		Status
91c.2	NTA will review the Local Area Hackney (LAH) Scheme and processes and develop a LAH initiative in line with the Connecting Ireland programme for a Community Car Scheme (SPSV regulation exempted scheme).	Complete
Update: Following extensive research conducted in 2022, a new Local Area Hackney Pilot Scheme was launched by the NTA. The pilot programme will roll out across 21 rural areas. The NTA has worked closely with the Connecting Ireland and Local Link teams around the country, to identify areas with very limited public transport, where it would be difficult to provide a viable SPSV service. A scheme that offers grant funding is being put in place for these areas. Eight new Local Area Hackney licences were awarded in 2022.		
91c.3	Assessment of viable designated areas will commence with reference to the transport gaps highlighted by Connecting Ireland and follow-up local knowledge visits.	Complete

Update: The assessment of viable designated areas is complete. 21 rural areas have been designated for the new Local Area Hackney Pilot Scheme stretching from Donegal to Cork, for one year (see Measure 91c.2). All drivers will be licensed, insured and Garda-vetted and will be able to pick people up from their doors to drop them to where they want to go, providing that essential “last mile” connection for people living in more isolated and rural areas.		
Measure 91e	e) Running a pilot, after COVID-19 has abated, to examine the potential for ride-hailing services to improve rural connectivity.	
Lead Delivery Body: D/Transport, National Transport Authority		
2022 Actions		Status
91e.1	Following receipt of advice from the Advisory Committee on SPSVs on the potential for ride-hailing services to improve rural connectivity, NTA will consider the viability of such a scheme in the regulated environment.	Delayed
Update: This is still under consideration. The NTA has incorporated ride-hailing services into demand responsive services (DRT) which are operated through Connecting Ireland.		

Measure 92			Build on the work already undertaken to ensure that public transport services in rural and regional areas are accessible to persons with disabilities.
Lead Delivery Body: D/Transport, National Transport Authority			
2022 Actions			Status
92.1	The NTA has set a target of having wheelchair accessible bus stops (one stop in each direction) in 43 towns with a population over 5,000. This would mean 50% of main towns would have a wheelchair accessible bus stop (one in each direction). Engagement with Local Authorities and Bus Éireann is ongoing.		Ongoing
Update: While all bus stops in regional cities, and some towns, are wheelchair accessible, that is not the case in regional and rural areas. To date, 31 stops have been completed and 11 stops are in construction. 14 stops are now served by low-floor vehicles and the remaining are in design and progressing with the local authorities. 15 additional stops have been constructed in various towns nationwide.			
The NTA is upgrading its National Journey Planner App, which has a Universal Design rating for each of the 12,000 bus stops nationwide. This will let passengers know if the bus stop is wheelchair accessible for them.			

92.2	Purchase of additional low floor buses, for Public Service Obligation regional commuter routes up to 50km, to enable wheelchair users to board with normal ramp access and have a dedicated wheelchair space.	Ongoing
<p>Update: Since 2019, the NTA has purchased 142 new low-entry single deck regional commuter vehicles (coaches) for use on PSO services, to replace high-floor coaches. These vehicles have a low floor entrance with about half of the available seating at the low floor level, allowing step-free access to seats for mobility impaired and older passengers. These vehicles are accessible for wheelchairs through a fold-out ramp at the front door, and have a permanent wheelchair space so that there is no requirement for the removal of seats.</p> <p>In addition, the NTA purchased added a further 50 new double deck regional commuter vehicles (coaches) in 2022, bringing the since the start of 2021 to 103. These vehicles are low floor, have a dedicated wheelchair space and an additional passenger information display, with a flat lower deck floor and a higher upper deck ceiling to increase the space available to passengers.</p>		
92.3	The NTA will continue to manage the upgrading of existing and older infrastructure and facilities, such as Victorian-era rail infrastructure via the Department of Transport's dedicated, ringfenced Accessibility Retrofit Programme funding.	Ongoing
<p>Update:</p> <p><u>Bus stations:</u> The NTA has been working with Bus Éireann on installing an accessible bus bay in all of their bus stations. 16 bus stations have been completed to date: Cavan, Drogheda, Letterkenny, Monaghan, Ballyshannon, Killarney, Sligo, Tralee, Athlone, Ballina, Cork, Rosslare, Tramore, Clonmel, Macroom, Ennis, Waterford, Wexford, Galway and Limerick.</p> <p><u>Train stations:</u> Platform works were completed at Ennis station while planning and design works proceeded Banteer stations. Minor Accessibility Works were also completed at Thurles station.</p>		
92.4	Irish Rail is rolling out Customer Service Officers (CSOs) on all Inter-city routes to assist passengers, towards a target of 120 Customer Service Agents. This will eliminate the advance notice requirement on such services.	Complete
<p>Update: All 120 CSOs have now been hired.</p>		

<p>Measure 95</p> <p>Undertake research on early learning and care, and school-age childcare needs of parents who work atypical hours or live in rural communities, and develop recommendations for future action.</p>	
<p>Lead Delivery Body: DCEDIY</p>	
<p>2022 Actions</p>	<p>Status</p>

95.2	Completion and publication of research is underway in partnership with DRCD and DETE by the end of the year. The project comprises two complementary phases: a phone poll of 500 households, and a qualitative focus group study.	Delayed
<p>Update: The first phase of the project has been completed, with the phone polls completed in August 2022.</p> <p>The second phase relating to the qualitative focus group study is nearing completion. Work on this phase had initially been delayed due to challenges in securing focus group participants. The second phase results have been reviewed by the project oversight group, and are currently with the researcher for finalising.</p> <p>A final report that incorporates the results of both project phases, as well as a review of the relevant literature, will be published in 2023.</p>		

Measure 96 Establish 96 new Community Healthcare Networks throughout the country to re-shape how community healthcare services will be delivered and support people to live more independently in their community.		
Lead Delivery Body: D/Health		
2022 Actions		Status
96.1	Continue the roll-out of 96 Community Health Networks across the country to support the local delivery of integrated care at the appropriate level of complexity.	Ongoing
<p>Update: There are 91 of the planned 96 Community Health Networks (CHNs) already established, with 1,359 whole time equivalents (WTEs) recruited, against target recruitment of 1,685 WTEs (81% recruitment completed). HSE recruitment campaigns are ongoing, and it is forecast that recruitment to the CHNs will be fully completed by the end of quarter 2, 2023.</p> <p>Most key leadership roles are already in place with 94 of the required 96 Community Healthcare Network Managers (98%), and 63 of the required 96 General Practitioner Leads (66%) for the CHNs on-boarded or at an advanced stage of recruitment.</p> <p>D/Health have engaged with HSE colleagues with responsibility for the Enhanced Community Care (ECC) programme (who have been working with HSE National Clinical Advisors and Group Leads (NCAGLs)) on the development of a wide range of activity metrics that demonstrate key aspects of the ECC programme. The suite of metrics are currently being recorded and collated, with reporting due to commence in February 2023.</p> <p>The HSE reports that CHN implementation, along with the aligned and integrated delivery of care by Community Specialist Teams for Older Persons and those with Chronic disease in more appropriate locations closer to home and within the community will facilitate up to</p>		

6,700 avoidable Emergency Department (ED) attendances in Winter 2022/23, and up to 21,000 avoidable ED attendances during the full year 2023.

Measure 97 Through the Healthy Ireland programme, support improved health and wellbeing of rural communities in collaboration with Local Authorities and local stakeholders and partners.		
Lead Delivery Body: D/Health		
2022 Actions		Status
97.1	Deliver the Sláintecare Healthy Communities programme, which empowers local authorities to identify local needs and align their policies to meet the Healthy Ireland objectives for the local population.	Ongoing
<p>Update: There are 19 areas nationwide where the Sláintecare Healthy Communities programme is being implemented. In all of these areas the D/Health have funded the recruitment of a Local Development officer (LDO) hosted by the local authority. A National Coordinator Healthy Ireland – Local Government and an Assistant Coordinator have also been funded and are hosted by Waterford City and County Council. These posts have been recruited and are in situ. The majority of the areas have had their own local launch of the programme.</p> <p>Once-off enhancement funding of €250,000 for each of the 19 areas has been awarded to the relevant local authority. Some examples of projects funded are:</p> <p>Athlone area: installation of community hubs which cater for residents’ associations, mother and toddlers’ group, training in the community and delivery of talks and information sessions on health and wellbeing for the community as well as HSE core programmes.</p> <p>Donegal area: extension and upgrade of walkways to include accessible wheelchairs giving universal access</p> <p>Bray area: installation of three community kitchens to enable the delivery of healthy eating and cooking courses.</p> <p>Annual seed fund of €75,000 has also been awarded to each area. Project proposals have been evaluated and approved. The LDO will oversee the expenditure of this fund and the implementation of the approved projects in their relevant areas.</p>		
97.2	Strengthen the Healthy Cities and Counties infrastructure to deliver on the Healthy Cities and Counties goals.	Ongoing
<p>Update: Round 4 of Healthy Cities and Counties (HC&C) commenced in June 2022. Coordinators are hosted through the local authority and the majority have been recruited and are in situ. Funding of €75,000 has been allocated to each coordinator and their</p>		

respective local authorities. This fund is monitored through Pobal and is nearly double the funding the HC&C coordinators received in 2021.		
97.4	Conduct review of the National Physical Activity Plan (NPAP) which is due to conclude in 2022.	Complete
Update: The Review of the NPAP was completed in 2022 and found that of the 60 actions, almost all had either been completed or substantially progressed. Work has now begun on a successor to the Plan which will chart the course for the direction of policy and the promotion of physical activity in the coming years.		

Measure 98 Introduce a new Policing and Community Safety Bill to redefine the functions of An Garda Síochána to include community safety.		
Lead Delivery Body: D/Justice		
2022 Actions		Status
98.2	Complete drafting of the Bill for submission to Government for approval to publish. This is subject to the conclusion of pre legislative scrutiny by the Joint Justice Committee.	Complete
Update: The Joint Justice Committee published its report on the Policing, Security and Community Safety Bill on 1 June 2022. Its report and recommendations were examined and refinements made in the course of drafting. On 22 November 2022, Government approval to publish the text of the Bill was received. The Bill has been formally published and is accessible on the Houses of the Oireachtas website here . The intention is to progress the Bill to enactment by the summer recess of 2023 with a view to commencement on 1 January 2024.		

Measure 99 Roll out a Local Community Safety Partnership Pilot in a rural location.		
Lead Delivery Body: D/Justice		
2022 Actions		Status
99.2	Commence implementation of the Local Community Safety Plans for the Local Community Safety Partnerships in Waterford and Longford.	Complete
Update: Local Community Safety Partnership (LCSP) pilots in Waterford and Longford were established in 2022. The pilots have met several times and have active subgroups examining		

issues affecting community safety in their areas. The Longford LCSP launched their Community Safety Plan in 2022 and this is due to be launched in Q1 2023.

Measure 100 Review and enhance the effectiveness and availability of community-based alert and property-marking schemes in partnership with rural stakeholders.		
Lead Delivery Body: D/Justice, An Garda Síochána		
2022 Actions		Status
100.2	Draft report on the retail alert scheme to be considered by the Rural Safety Forum.	Delayed
Update: In relation to the Belfast City Crime initiative, An Garda Síochána chaired a working group that looked at this in detail and, based on legal advices, decided that it would not be possible to implement it in this jurisdiction due to legal and GDPR matters. The matter was referred back to the DMR office to further explore same with the retail group with a view to identifying elements of a response that would be effective in this jurisdiction.		
100.3	Commence review of property marking schemes.	Complete
Update: Property Marking Ireland is now being funded by D/Justice to support local communities in property marking schemes.		

Measure 101 Provide greater clarity for Local Authorities and local communities, through a revised legislative framework, on how local CCTV schemes can be established while enhancing community safety and data protection safeguards.		
Lead Delivery Body: D/Justice		
2022 Actions		Status
101.3	Enactment of the Garda Síochána (Digital Recording) Bill.	Delayed
Update: The Garda Síochána (Recording Devices) Bill 2022 was published on 4 August 2022 and is being progressed through the Oireachtas.		

Measure 102 Invest in high-quality walking and cycling infrastructure specifically targeted at towns and villages across the country.		
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Lead Delivery Body: D/Transport		
2022 Actions		Status
102.1	Continue the roll out of 340 Active Travel Projects in 19 rural local authorities, to be completed by 2025.	Ongoing
Update: The expansion of the Active Travel Programme to local authorities outside the Greater Dublin Area and the regional cities in 2021 led to an allocation of specific active travel funding by the NTA to the 19 local authorities for the first time. In 2022, this funding was incorporated into the overall Active Travel Programme, which saw a total of approximately €290m allocated for Active Travel across all local authorities, including the 19 rural local authorities. The National Development Plan has committed similar levels of funding out to 2025, which will enable the continuation of the rollout of Active Travel projects over the next three years.		
102.2	Support expansion of walking and cycling facilities across the country through the creation of up to 248 posts in local authorities dedicated to delivering and promoting active travel in Ireland.	Ongoing
Update: Sanction was provided in 2021 for all local authorities to recruit dedicated active travel staff to deliver the enhanced Active Travel Programme around the country. The latest update provided showed 211 Active Travel staff in place in local authorities as of end September 2022.		
102.3	Publish the National Cycle Network and Implementation Plan. (Transport Infrastructure Ireland)	Delayed
Update: TII provided D/Transport with a draft National Cycle Network in Q3 2022, however it is envisaged that the NCN should be completed and published in Q2 2023.		

Measure 103 Ensure that the Local Improvement Scheme (LIS) is funded into the future.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
103.1	The Local Improvement Scheme will fund the upgrade and maintenance of non-public rural roads and laneways. The 2022 Scheme will see €11 million allocated to local authorities.	Ongoing
Update: Initial funding of €11m was provided in Budget 2022. To meet strong demand and following identification of capital savings elsewhere the allocation was doubled to €22m. This brought the total allocation since 2017 to over €100m.		

Measure 104 Adopt a whole-of-Government approach to the protection and promotion of the Irish language, in implementing the 20-year Strategy for the Irish Language 2010-2030 and Action Plan, and enacting the Official Language Amendment Bill.		
Lead Delivery Body: DTCAGSM		
2022 Actions		Status
104.2	The third annual progress report on the implementation of the Action Plan for the Irish Language will be published.	Complete
Update: This third report, published in November 2022, covers the period 2018-2021 and reports on 180 actions to be completed by approximately 60 stakeholder over the course of the plan. The five-year plan has been extended by an additional year. Significant progress has been reported regarding the implementation of actions in the plan. The report is available at https://assets.gov.ie/238802/58f06766-a116-412e-9bab-15a8fa27d707.pdf .		
104.3	Under the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme, which has been extended to 2024, continue to provide supports to schools in the Scheme to strengthen the provision of high quality Irish-medium education in the Gaeltacht. (D/Education)	Ongoing
Update: Supports continue to be provided to the 103 primary schools and 29 post-primary schools participating in the Gaeltacht School Recognition Scheme to assist them in providing high quality Irish-medium education to their students/pupils. These include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an annual grant of €1,200 for the purchase of Irish-language resources • additional language support hours for Irish in accordance with school enrolment • allocation of additional teaching hours and a once-off grant of €5,000 for post-primary Gaeltacht schools participating in the e-Hub project for Leaving Certificate Physics or Chemistry • targeted advisory support from the Inspectorate • additional continuing professional development provided by COGG. 		
104.4	Explore options, based on demand and available resources, to extend the range of subject provision through the medium of Irish for Gaeltacht post-primary schools via the e-Hub project. (D/Education)	Ongoing
Update: Leaving Certificate Physics has been available for students in Gaeltacht schools to study remotely through the e-Hub project since September 2019. An independent review of the project carried out by the Education and Training Inspectorate of Northern Ireland in 2021 found that the project was well run and well-resourced and noted that the e-Hub “has potential to be scaled up to provide a wider range of subjects”. A second subject – Leaving Certificate Chemistry – was added to the project in September 2022. <p>There are currently three e-Teachers based in two e-Hub schools delivering the Physics and Chemistry Leaving Certificate courses to 28 students in eight Gaeltacht post-primary schools (including two island schools) under the supervision of e-Mentors.</p>		

Measure 105 Approve and implement an Irish language plan for each of the 26 Gaeltacht districts to strengthen Irish language usage by individuals, community, and businesses in these areas.		
Lead Delivery Body: DTCAGSM		
2022 Actions		Status
105.2	Commence implementation phase across 26 Gaeltacht language plans.	Complete
Update: Irish Language Plans have been approved for the 26 Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas. 25 Language Planning areas are in various stages of implementing their language plans, which cover a seven-year period.		

Measure 106 Develop Gaeltacht Service Towns situated in or adjacent to Gaeltacht Language Planning Areas which will play a significant role in providing public services, recreational, social and commercial facilities for those areas.		
Lead Delivery Body: DTCAGSM		
2022 Actions		Status
106.1	Approve six language plans for Gaeltacht Service Towns.	Delayed
Update: To date, two Irish Language Plans have been approved and are in the process of being implemented in two of the three recognised Gaeltacht Service Towns that are located in the Gaeltacht. It is expected that work will be begin on the preparation of the Language Plan for the third Gaeltacht Service Town in 2023.		

Transitioning to a Climate Neutral Society

Measure 108 Publish a new Climate Action Plan in 2021 and update on an annual basis.		
Lead Delivery Body: DECC		
2022 Actions		Status
108.3	Undertake a public consultation to capture views, observations and other inputs from the public to inform the development of the 2022 Climate Action Plan.	Complete
Update: Consultations took place as part of the wider National Dialogue on Climate Action; a national programme to engage, enable and empower stakeholders and the citizens across society to co-create solutions to climate challenges.		
108.4	Finalise report from public consultation to inform the development of the 2022 Climate Action Plan.	Complete
Update: The Climate Conversations 2022 Summary Report (see Action 109.2) was published in December 2022 alongside the updated Climate Action Plan.		
108.5	Publication of 2022 Climate Action Plan.	Complete
Update: The 2022 update of the Climate Action Plan (titled Climate Action Plan 2023) was approved by Government and published on 21 December 2022.		

Measure 109 Develop new models of engagement with individuals, sectors, and regions on a structured dialogue basis so that the whole of society can contribute to the climate action process.		
Lead Delivery Body: DECC		
2022 Actions		Status
109.2	Conduct a national baseline study on Irish behaviours and attitudes around climate change awareness, engagement and activation of public. The Climate in the Irish Minds Study was published in December 2021 followed by sectoral and regional reports which will be published in Q2 2022.	Complete

Update: The Climate Conversations 2022 engaged with 4,300 members of the public, more than 400 stakeholders, and populations vulnerable to the transition to carbon neutrality. Insights inform the Climate Action Plan 2023 and sectoral policies. The Climate Conversations 2022 Summary Report was published alongside the Climate Action Plan 2023.

The Climate Change in the Irish Minds (CCIM) study was published in December 2021, a benchmark nationally representative study of 4,000 adults in Ireland. The Four Irelands segmentation report was published in 2022.

In 2022 DCEDIY hosted the first National Youth Assembly on Climate, with a report from the event published on 18 November 2022. The second NYAC will be held in March 2023.

Two National Climate Stakeholder Forum events are planned for Q2 and Q3 2023.

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

Lead Delivery Body: DECC

2022 Actions

Status

110.6	Rollout of next three toolkits in the Community Energy Resource Toolkit.	Delayed
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Update: SEAI has in place a suite of resources to enable communities to develop projects. SEAI has published four Community Energy Resource guides on the SEAI website. These cover Onshore Wind, Solar PV, the Planning Process, and Grid Connections. A further five guides are in development covering Stakeholder Engagement, Community Groups and Governance, Business Planning and Procurement, Irish Electricity Market, and Financing Community Projects. The first three of these are expected to be published in Q2 2023. SEAI hold regular webinars and workshops with community groups to support project development.

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

Lead Delivery Body: DECC

2022 Actions

Status

111.2	SEAI to extend the Microgeneration Support Scheme to the non-domestic sector, framework for payment of tariff for electricity export to the grid.	Complete
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Update: The Microgeneration Support Scheme opened to non-domestic applicants in September 2022.		
111.3	SEAI to assess the extension of the MSS grant scheme to include other technologies beyond solar.	Delayed
Update: Due to the high level of demand for Solar PV in 2022, assessing the extension of grants to include other technologies beyond solar, will take place in 2023.		
111.4	CRU to consult on an Implementation Plan for a support tariff for new micro-generators between 6 kW and 50 kW.	Delayed
Update: The CRU has had significant resource gaps and have only now been able to set up a new Active Consumer and Energy community team, which will work on the implementation plan for the CEP in 2023.		

Measure 112 Expand the Sustainable Energy Communities Network from 500 to 1,500 by 2030, to support local communities to be directly involved in energy projects.		
Lead Delivery Body: DECC		
2022 Actions		Status
112.2	Increase the number of Sustainable Energy Communities to 680 by end 2022.	Complete
Update: Figures for the end of 2022 show there are now 703 Sustainable Energy Communities (SECs) in place across the SEC Network.		

Measure 113 Launch further calls for projects to be supported from the Climate Action Fund.		
Lead Delivery Body: DECC		
2022 Actions		Status
113.2	Climate Action Fund Community Climate Action Programme – Strand 2: Projects arising from open call run by Pobal to be approved and commence.	Complete
Update: The 18 successful recipients of the €5 million fund under Strand 2 of the Community Climate Action Programme (CCAP) were announced on 26 October 2022. The projects represent a range of activities across the five programme themes: Home and Energy; Food		

and Waste; Shopping and Recycling; Transport and Local Climate and Environment. The projects are expected to begin work early this year.		
113.3	Climate Action Fund Community Climate Action Programme – Strand 1: Local authority/community partnership projects to be approved and commence.	Delayed
Update: Under Strand 1 €24 million is being provided to local authorities to support communities to build low carbon communities in a considered and structured way. This strand is expected to open for applications in 2023.		

Continue to develop Ireland's approach to a Just Transition away from fossil fuels, including by: Measure 114a a) Preparing a Territorial Just Transition Plan for Ireland for the EU Just Transition Fund.		
Lead Delivery Body: DECC		
2022 Actions		Status
114a.2	Finalisation of a Territorial Just Transition Plan for Ireland for the EU Just Transition Fund.	Complete
Update: Ireland's Territorial Just Transition Plan was approved by Government in November 2022 and was formally approved by the European Commission on 13 December 2022. Further details available online .		
Measure 114b b) Commissioning additional research on Just Transition to consider future priorities and spatial and sectoral impacts.		
Lead Delivery Body: DECC		
2022 Actions		Status
114b.2	Establish a Just Transition Working Group to coordinate the provision of strategic advice and research to the proposed Just Transition Commission.	Delayed
This commitment will be taken forward during 2023 as part of the development of proposals for a Just Transition Commission.		

Measure 115 Retrofit 500,000 homes and install 400,000 heat pumps across the country up to 2030, contributing to employment opportunities in rural areas.		
Lead Delivery Body: DECC		
2022 Actions		Status
115.1	Following further evaluation of a potential new Community Activation Scheme, a targeted and more streamlined strand of the Communities Grant Scheme focused on smaller projects for retrofitting homes will be instead be introduced.	Delayed
Update: DECC and SEAI are working to finalise the development of a scheme to enhance community activation with a view to its launch in 2023.		

Measure 116a Bring investment and job opportunities to coastal communities by developing the offshore renewable energy sector, including through: a) The finalisation of the Marine Planning and Development Management Bill.		
Lead Delivery Body: DHLGH		
2022 Actions		Status
116a.3	Co-ordination of preparation of MAP Act regulations.	Delayed
Update: DHLGH is progressing work on the Planning and Development (Maritime Area) Regulations. These will be available early 2023. Work is also progressing on the MAP Regulations for public participation statements. These will be issued to coincide with the commencement of Part 2 of the MAP Act.		
116a.4	Development of Guidance materials.	Delayed
Update: Marine Spatial Planning guidelines for Offshore Wind Energy are currently being developed by DHLGH and are expected to be published in 2023.		
Measure 116b Bring investment and job opportunities to coastal communities by developing the offshore renewable energy sector, including through: b) The development of a new consenting regime for offshore energy.		
Lead Delivery Body: DECC		
2022 Actions		Status

116b.4	Issue of Maritime Area Consent for Successful Applicants.	Complete
Update: The Maritime Area Consents were issued to the Phase One projects in December 2022.		
Measure 116c c) The development of an offshore transmission grid.		
Lead Delivery Body: DECC		
2022 Actions		Status
116c.2	Publication of offshore grid regulatory framework by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU).	Delayed
Update: CRU launched the third of their consultations for the offshore grid regulatory framework for Phase One projects. The Regulator is expected to issue their decision on that consultation in January 2023.		
116c.3	EirGrid to issue Grid Connection Assessments.	Complete
Update: Grid Connection Assessments were issued to Phase One Projects in Q4 2022.		
Measure 116d d) Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme auctions.		
Lead Delivery Body: DECC		
2022 Actions		Status
116d.2	Government approval of final Terms and Conditions for the first Offshore Renewable Electricity Support Scheme.	Complete
Update: The Government approved the final Terms and Conditions in November 2022.		

Measure 117a		
Rehabilitate peatlands to contribute to reduced carbon emissions, carbon sequestration and enhanced biodiversity, including through:		
a) Funding investment of €108 million to repurpose 80,000 acres of bog in the Midlands as part of a major peatlands restoration plan.		
Lead Delivery Body: DECC		
2022 Actions		Status
117a.3	Complete six monthly report on progress.	Complete

Update: The progress report has been completed and is due for release in Q1 2023.		
117a.4	A further 21 rehabilitation plans for peatlands from Bord na Móna to be approved by the Regulator (NPWS).	Complete
Update: All plans for 2022 have been approved by the Regulator.		
117a.5	Rehabilitation works to commence on approved peatlands by Bord na Móna.	Complete
Update: These works have now commenced and to date 11,114 hectares of peatlands have been rehabilitated to date across the project.		
Measure 117b Rehabilitate peatlands to contribute to reduced carbon emissions, carbon sequestration and enhanced biodiversity, including through: b) The national raised bog designated sites restoration programme to restore in the region of 25,000 hectares of raised bog.		
Lead Delivery Body: DHLGH		
2022 Actions		Status
117b.1	Work will continue in 2022 on the restoration and revitalisation of protected raised bogs Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHA), predominately in the midlands region.	Ongoing
Update: In 2022, restoration measures were undertaken on six protected raised bog Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Natural Heritage Areas (NHA). Works remain on track with further phases of the restoration programme continuing into 2023.		

Measure 118 Develop a national policy on coastal erosion and flooding and maintain a multi-annual investment programme in flood relief measures to protect impacted communities.		
Lead Delivery Body: OPW, DHLGH		
2022 Actions		Status
118.3	A total of €96 million is allocated in 2022 to provide for Flood Relief Schemes, allowing work on the review of flood maps to be updated and the Voluntary Homeowners Relocation Scheme to progress. The allocation will also provide funding to local authorities for the Minor Flood Mitigation Works and Coastal Protection Scheme to address localised flooding problems within their areas.	Complete

Update: Since 2018, a phased approach to scheme delivery has allowed the OPW to treble the number of flood relief schemes at design and construction to 90. In 2022, two flood relief schemes reached substantial completion, providing protection to approximately 270 properties. Construction is continuing on six further flood relief schemes, and the review of the flood maps is ongoing.

Under the Minor Flood Mitigation Works and Coastal Protection Scheme in 2022, approximately €2.6m approximately was approved for local authorities to address localised flooding and coastal protection problems within their administrative areas, bringing the total approved funding under the scheme to more than €60 million since 2009.

118.4	An additional €19.3m will be provided for the maintenance and repair of river channels and embankments.	Complete
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Update: Some 2,262km of channels and embankments were maintained across OPW Arterial Drainage Schemes in 2022.

118.5	The Interdepartmental Group on Coastal Change Management Strategy will finalise and submit its report to Government with options and recommendations for managing the projected impact of coastal change to our coastal communities, economies, heritage, culture and environment.	Delayed
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Update: Work on finalising the report for Government was advanced during 2022. It is expected that the report will be brought to Government for its consideration by the end of Q2 2023.

Measure 120 Consider the needs of rural areas in the development of an Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy which will seek to ensure that charging infrastructure stays ahead of demand.		
Lead Delivery Body: D/Transport		
2022 Actions		Status
120.1	Publish national infrastructure strategy for electric vehicles.	Complete
Update: The Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Strategy has been published along with an accompanying Implementation Plan. This includes plans for the provision of charging infrastructure in remote areas. The strategy sets out the government's ambition regarding the delivery of a public EV charging network to support up to 195,000 electric cars and vans by the middle of the decade.		
A key action in the Strategy is the provision of high-powered chargers in remote areas to enable just transition. In addition, a range of new charging infrastructure schemes are being developed which will help provide another critical link in the overall network for public charging, including rural areas.		

Supporting the Sustainability of Agriculture, the Marine and Forestry

Measure 121 Develop and Implement a new Agri-Food Strategy to 2030, building on the success of the previous strategies.		
Lead Delivery Body: DAFM		
2022 Actions		Status
121.2	Progress implementation of Food Vision 2030, with updates provided through Annual Report to be published in Q3 2022.	Ongoing
<p>Update: Implementation of Food Vision 2030 is progressing well, with many of its actions already commenced. One of the immediate priorities identified in the context of climate is work on the important action to determine the sustainable environmental footprint of the dairy and the beef sectors:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Food Vision Dairy Group, chaired by Professor Gerry Boyle with representatives from the farming organisations, the dairy industry, DAFM and relevant agencies, published its final report in October 2022, containing measures on how to mitigate greenhouse gas emissions from the dairy sector. • The Food Vision Beef and Sheep Group, chaired by Professor Thia Hennessy with representatives from the farming organisations, the beef and sheep processing industry, DAFM and relevant groups and agencies, published its final report In November 2022, which outlines actions that can reduce the greenhouse gas emissions associated with the drystock sector. <p>Both reports are currently being considered.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Food Vision Annual Report 2022 will be published ahead of the Fourth Our Rural Future Progress Report in mid-2023. 		

Measure 122 Encourage and support Local Authorities to expand the number of farmers' markets, farm shops and food emporiums, and support the formation of community-owned markets in all towns, showcasing local food produce from local farmers, growers, and food producers.		
Lead Delivery Body: DAFM		
2022 Actions		Status
122.1	Engagement with DRCD to scope potential involvement of Local Community Development Committees in the implementation of this measure.	Delayed

<p>Update: DAFM organised an information webinar on supports for Local, Small and Micro Food Businesses/Producers on 12 October 2022. This event gave State bodies the opportunity to promote the services they provide and local, small food producers and businesses, with plans to set up or diversify their farm business, the opportunity to hear about the supports available to them.</p> <p>At the event a local authority presented on the organisation and running of farmer markets and community gardens.</p> <p>There will be further engagement with DRCD in the first half of 2023 on how the measure can be actioned including the potential involvement of Local Community Development Committee supports for local communities.</p>		
122.2	Establish a cross Departmental forum to gather information with a view to developing an agreed strategy to deliver this commitment and similar commitments regarding support for local producers.	Delayed
<p>Update: Building on the DAFM-organised information webinar on supports for local, small and micro food businesses/producers on 12 October 2022, and the Bord Bia research on supports for local food producers, DAFM will be seeking to liaise with other departments and State agencies chiefly involved in providing supports for local producers in 2023.</p>		
122.3	Provision of supports of €500,000 to progress this and other similar Programme for Government commitments addressing local supply chains.	Delayed
<p>Update: There were a number of proposals considered for the implementation of pilot regional programmes to progress this and other PFG commitments to support local food producers. However, on assessment, including following the Bord Bia research on supports for local food producers, many proposals were already covered by other Government/Agency funding programmes/schemes. The research found that there may be difficulties in identifying how to access supports and this resulted in the webinar referred to as 122.1. DAFM is assessing other options for measures to support local food producers/businesses.</p>		
122.4	Bord Bia to provide training resources online to food entrepreneurs wishing to develop improved routes to market.	Complete
<p>Update: Training resources have been provided on the Bord Bia website for food entrepreneurs to give them marketing expertise and knowledge to engage with the relevant authorities to improve routes to market.</p> <p>Resources on the Bord Bia website include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Setting up a Food Market • Advice on Setting Up a Stall • Types of Markets <p>There is also a facility on the site to contact Bord Bia to update market listings.</p>		

Measure 123 Support farm diversification, including through the provision of the Options programme managed by Teagasc.		
Lead Delivery Body: DAFM		
2022 Actions		Status
123.3	Deliver a series of Farm Business Options workshops throughout Teagasc Advisory Regions.	Delayed
Update: A pilot Farm Business Options workshop was delivered in Roscommon in 2022. Further planned workshops have been deferred to spring 2023.		

Measure 124 Support research and development in areas such as agri-food, bio-based systems, smart agriculture and precision agriculture to promote and encourage innovation.		
Lead Delivery Body: DAFM, DETE		
2022 Actions		Status
124.3	<p>The following Enterprise Ireland programmes will continue to support this measure:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Commercialisation Fund Programme which funds the development of innovations at all stages of the commercial pipeline to the point where they can be commercialised as new products, services and/or companies. 2) Innovation Partnership Programme which encourages Irish-based companies to work with Irish research institutes resulting in mutually beneficial co-operation and interaction. 3) In-Company RD&I Fund which supports the development of new or improved products, services or processes which will add a competitive advantage to the company. <p>Enterprise Ireland will report on projects approved in the aforementioned areas at the end of the 2022.</p>	Ongoing
Update: Enterprise Ireland continued to run the Commercialisation Fund Programme and Innovation Partnership Programme in 2022. In 2022, €13.6m was paid to research institutions under the Commercialisation Fund by Enterprise Ireland and over €5.5m was paid out under the Innovation Partnership Programme. In total, there were 1,613 collaborations between enterprise and the research system in 2022. Enterprise Ireland also continues to run the In-Company RD&I Fund including the Business Innovation Initiative and the Agile Innovation Fund. In 2022 there were 102 approvals made to industry valued at over €100k.		
124.6	DAFM will continue co-funding arrangements with other funders across both national and international initiatives.	Ongoing

Update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • DAERA NI provided €1.1 million in funding to Northern Island based institutions involved in four research projects in DAFM's Call 2021 Reserve List which was launched in Q2 2022. • DAFM, along with the Ministry for Primary Industries in New Zealand, established the Joint Research Initiative (JRI) and launched the first joint call under the JRI in May 2022. Four projects under the Research Call, with funding from DAFM of more than €3.5 million, were announced in December 2022. • DAFM continued co-funding arrangements in 2022 with the EPA and SEAI. DAFM co-funded 10 projects at €614,533 under the EPA's 2022 National Call and co-funded three projects at €768,095 under the SEAI's 2022 Research Call. 		

Measure 125 Explore the potential application of Living Labs in an Irish context, establishing innovation networks to identify and pilot tailored place-based initiatives for primary production, food and bio-based systems.		
Lead Delivery Body: DAFM		
2022 Actions		Status
125.2	An Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) Coordination Group will be established.	Delayed
Update: An Agricultural Knowledge and Innovation Systems (AKIS) Coordination Group will be established ahead of the Fourth Our Rural Future Progress Report. The potential application of Living Labs in an Irish context, establishing innovation networks to identify and pilot tailored place-based initiatives for primary production, food and bio-based systems will be offered as a 'Technological Infrastructure' option that can be supported in Bioeconomy Demonstration Initiatives as part of the EU Just Transition Fund programme that will open up in 2023.		
125.3	Support will be provided by the Bioeconomy Implementation Group secretariat to the Cill Ulta organisation to facilitate the development of the Northwest Bioeconomy Hub, including the potential development of a Living Lab approach.	Complete
Update: The Bioeconomy Implementation Group secretariat participates in the working group seeking to establish the Northwest Bioeconomy Hub including informing a scoping study being undertaken to inform an application to the Rural Regeneration Fund.		

Measure 126 Implement Ag Climatise – A Roadmap towards Climate Neutrality for the agri-food sector.		
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Lead Delivery Body: DAFM		
2022 Actions		Status
126.2	Ag Climatise will be updated in 2022 to take account of the increased ambition set out in Climate Action Plan 2021.	Delayed
Update: A new Climate Action Plan 2023 was launched in late December 2022. A decision was taken to delay the updating of Ag Climatise until after the publication of the 2023 Climate Action Plan. It is envisaged that work on updating Ag Climatise will begin in Q1 2023.		

Measure 127	Pilot a results-based agri-environment scheme to reward farmers for adapting to more sustainable methods of farming with a view to the development of a new agri-environment scheme capable of delivering broad environmental and biodiversity benefits that will align financial supports with climate objectives.	
Lead Delivery Body: DAFM		
2022 Actions		Timetable for delivery
127.2	Complete the Results Based Environment Agri Pilot Project (REAP) and issue payments to participants	Complete
Update: 3,650 REAP participants have completed their REAP contracts. 90% of participants have received full payment. The remainder will be paid as outstanding issues are resolved.		
The REAP contract term ran from January 2021 to December 2022. The main objective of REAP was to test the use of the results-based model in an agri-environment context on a national basis. The pilot also sought to test the upscaling potential of the model for use in the Department’s next national agri-environment scheme. The results and learnings from REAP have fed into the development of the Agri-Climate Rural Environment Scheme (ACRES), which closed for application on 7 December 2022. ACRES includes a broad use of the results based model.		

Measure 128		Publish a successor forestry programme to deliver an ambitious afforestation plan, to achieve an afforestation target of 8,000 ha/year, with a particular focus on an increased farmer participation and habitat creation.
Lead Delivery Body: DAFM		
2022 Actions		Status
128.2	Implement the co-creation and engagement strategy and establish a shared vision for forestry.	Complete

Update: Informed by comprehensive engagement and public consultation over the 2022 period, a Shared National Vision for the role of trees and forests in Ireland to 2050 was published in September 2022.		
128.5	The new Forestry Strategy is now expected to be completed by Q3 2022.	Delayed
Update: A new Forest Strategy for 2022-2030 is nearing completion. In parallel, a Forest Strategy Implementation Plan (FSIP) was developed to facilitate the initial steps in the implementation of the Forest Strategy. This Plan comprises a list of actions and measures and includes the Forestry Programme (2023-2027), which will be the main implementation vehicle for the Forest Strategy in the immediate to short term. DAFM has introduced new interim arrangements to ensure that those with valid licence approvals can avail of the current planting season under the higher grant and premium rates proposed to be paid under the new Programme. Further details, including frequently asked questions and scheme documents, are available here: Forestry grants and schemes (www.gov.ie) .		

Measure 129 Provide ongoing support for the development of the knowledge and skills base of the agriculture and forestry sectors by the Teagasc Advisory and Education Services.		
Lead Delivery Body: DAFM		
2022 Actions		Status
129.2	Teagasc Advisory Service: Teagasc will continue through its advisory service to provide a comprehensive advisory and environmental support service to its clients across a range of areas, roll-out one-day environment courses, bring derogation farmers up to the new nitrates standards, run events on Signpost Farms, run discussion groups, and Options courses, and enhance its virtual services to farmers.	Ongoing
Update: Advisory services were provided to 43,000 clients in 2022 – including ongoing technical advice and discussion groups across dairy, beef, sheep and tillage. A range of Knowledge Transfer meetings, seminars, major open days and public events were held in 2022 to cater for all farmers. The 12 Teagasc Advisory Regions were involved in the delivery of a range of video content via social media, articles for local and national papers and local radio interviews to disseminate information to the wider farming public.		
129.3	Teagasc Education Service will: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Promote college/regional courses via open days, information events and an online campaign. 	Complete

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Submit three apprenticeships to QQI for validation (Horticulturist, Farm Technician, Farm Manager). • Enrol students for the new Sportsturf Technician apprenticeship. • Continue to support current programmes to allow c. 4,500 learners to successfully graduate from in process programmes. 	Complete Delayed Complete
Update: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • College/Regional courses were promoted with visitors welcomed back to sites following the lifting of Covid-19 restrictions. • Three apprenticeships were submitted to QQI for validation. Time delays were experienced in awaiting a validation date from QQI for peer review. • Students were not enrolled for the Sportsturf Technician apprenticeship in 2022 as the scheme awaited a verification date/meeting with QQI. The objective is to enrol students in September 2023. • Teagasc continues to work with c. 4,500 learners per annum across all programmes (full-time, part-time and distance education). 		

Measure 130 Develop the Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan for the period 2023-2027, which will address existing and emerging challenges including climate action, environmental protection, generational renewal, viable farm incomes, and sustain vibrant rural areas.		
Lead Delivery Body: DAFM		
2022 Actions		Status
130.3	Engage as appropriate with the Commission to ensure the approval of the draft CAP Strategic Plan 2023.	Complete
Update: The CAP Strategic Plan was approved by Government on 4 October 2022.		

Measure 131 Support generational renewal, including young farmers and women in agriculture, through measures including the CAP, taxation measures and access to finance initiatives.		
Lead Delivery Body: DAFM		
2022 Actions		Status
131.4	Provide input to policy development on generational renewal and gender equality in the CAP Strategic Plan in line with the EU Commission's approval process.	Complete

	<p>Update: A number of measures have been included in the CAP Strategic Plan which was adopted by the EU Commission on 31 August 2022 and approved the Irish Government on 4 October 4. The full list of measures are available https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/76026-common-agricultural-policy-cap-post-2020/#irelands-cap-strategic-plan-2023-2027 and include: Complementary Income Support for Young Farmers and the Collaborative Farming Grant (providing support for the establishment of Registered Farm Partnerships and providing advice in relation to succession and/or retirement).</p>	
131.5	Progress actions on gender equality set out in Food Vision 2030, the new stakeholder-led strategy for the Irish agri-food sector, including a national dialogue on women in agriculture.	Ongoing
	<p>Update: A National Dialogue on Women in Agriculture is taking place in Q1 2023 to recognise this priority in Food Vision 2030 and examine issues relating to gender equality in agriculture.</p> <p>A number of measures were also included under the CAP Strategic Plan, with increased grant aid under Targeted Agriculture Modernisation Schemes for women aged 41-66, women-only Knowledge Transfer groups and a call under the European Innovation Projects to examine women's participation in agriculture.</p>	
131.6	Monitor agri-taxation measures in consultation with stakeholders and the Department of Finance in advance of Budget 2023.	Complete
	<p>Update: Important agri taxation measures were renewed in Budget 2023, such as Stamp Duty Relief for Young-trained Farmers and Stock Relief for Young-trained farmers and Partnerships, with the addition of the Accelerated Capital Allowances for slurry storage relief.</p>	
131.7	Monitor access to finance for the agri-food sector.	Ongoing
	<p>Update: DAFM liaises with stakeholders to ensure there is appropriate access to finance for farmers, including young and women farmers. DAFM works in partnership with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment on providing loan schemes to SMEs, including farmers, fishers and food businesses.</p> <p>The Brexit Impact Loan Scheme and Covid-19 Loan Schemes closed on 31 December 2022 and approved loans are currently being drawn down.</p> <p>There are two new loan schemes opening in the first half of 2023:</p> <p><u>Growth and Sustainability Loan Scheme (€500m)</u></p> <p>The Growth & Sustainability Scheme (GSLs) will make up to €500 million in low-cost loans for long-term investment available to SMEs and small mid-caps, including farmers, fishers and food businesses at favourable terms and conditions.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Loans will be allowed for the investment purposes only. • Loans of between €25,000 and €3 million. • Loans for terms of between 7 and 10 years. • Loans of < €500k will not require security. <p><u>Ukraine Credit Guarantee Scheme (€1.2bn)</u></p>	

The Ukraine Credit Guarantee Scheme will assist businesses, including farmers, fishers and food businesses in meeting their liquidity and working capital needs.

- Loans to be available to SMEs, primary producers and mid-caps.
- Loans of up to €1 million on a six- year term,
- Loans of < €250K will not require security.

Measure 132 Increase awareness and outreach across the farming community of programmes and initiatives to support the safety, health and wellbeing of farmers.		
Lead Delivery Body: DAFM		
2022 Actions		Status
132.1	Support the roll out of the On Feirm Ground programme, to train 800 farm advisors in relation to farmer health and wellbeing. The target for 2022 is 510.	Ongoing
Update: The target training was not achieved by the end of 2022, but it is expected to have 500 advisors trained in 2023.		
132.5	Support the extension of the On Feirm Ground programme to Private Veterinary Practitioners (PVPs) and agri-sales staff.	Delayed
Update: Preparations are underway for the programme to be rolled out to PVPs and DAFM staff with a target of 200 to receive training in 2023. Roll out to agri-sales staff will be progressed in 2023.		
132.6	Assess the impact of the Farm Health and Safety and Wellbeing European Innovation Partnership projects.	Delayed
Update: The EIPs were granted extensions to 2023 and are due to end by Q2 2023		
132.7	Launch booklet on Farmer Health and run advertising campaign on farm safety.	Complete
Update: The Farmer Health and Wellbeing booklet was launched on 5 July 2022 at the Beef 2022 Teagasc Open Day. In addition, the booklet is included in the Basic Income Support for Sustainability packs issuing to 132,000 farmers in Q1 2023.		

Supporting the Sustainability of our Islands and Coastal Communities

Measure 135 Publish and implement a new cross-Departmental Policy for Island Development and associated action plans to ensure delivery of the policy, including in areas such as housing, health, energy, utilities, waste management, climate change, education, digital connectivity, employment, infrastructure and transport.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
135.1	Publication of draft policy and agreement of action plans with participating Government Departments.	Delayed
Update: Work continues on the draft policy and it is expected to publish in advance of the next Our Rural Future Progress Report.		

Measure 136 Progress vital infrastructure development for our island communities.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
136.1	Funding to be delivered to local authorities for the minor capital works programme, with works completed by year end. These works comprise road improvements and marine works but also can include other small construction projects such as helipads, recycling facilities, slipway repairs, etc.	Ongoing
Update: In excess of 40 projects were approved and funding of €2.4m was provided to local authorities in 2022 for the minor capital works programme. The Department also invested €1.5 in capital infrastructure upgrades to the State owned aerodrome facilities serving the Aran Islands.		
136.3	Progress the Inis Oírr Pier development to tender stage in association with Galway County Council.	Delayed
Update: Galway County Council published the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) notice and schedule in December 2022. It also adopted new bye-laws, which have come into effect for the duration of the pier's development. Progression to tender stage is dependent on the outcome of the CPO process.		

136.4	Following submission of business case for the Inis Meáin development by Galway County Council, sanction will be given for the retention of consultants to acquire relevant permissions and licences for the development.	Delayed
<p>Update: As part of the preparatory works, the National Maritime College of Ireland was requested by Galway County Council to develop a model simulation for the harbour. This has been completed, and a full demonstration took place in mid-September, with the skippers of the key relevant vessels in attendance.</p> <p>That data has now been compiled, along with the feedback received from the vessel operators who participated. Galway County Council will use the findings and data from the model simulation in preparing a draft business case.</p>		

Measure 137			Establish a forum for ongoing dialogue between Local Authorities, relevant policy Departments and island communities.
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD			
2022 Actions			Status
137.2	Establish inter-agency forums in association with the relevant local authorities in Donegal, Sligo, Mayo and Galway to support the new islands policy. These will be based on the West Cork inter-agency model.		Delayed
Update: DRCD has engaged with the relevant local authorities to progress this action in the context of the forthcoming Islands Policy (see Measure 135).			

Measure 138			Establish gteic enterprise hubs on the islands under the remit of Údarás na Gaeltachta to support employment opportunities.
Lead Delivery Body: Údarás na Gaeltachta			
2022 Actions			Status
138.1	Completion of three further island gteic enterprise hubs bringing the total number of operational island hubs to seven.		Complete

	When the full programme is completed, gteic hubs on eight islands will provide approximately 100 workspaces on Gaeltacht islands.	
<p>Update: Three new island gteic digital hubs were completed and opened in 2022 in Inis Mór, Inis Meáin and Oileán Chléire. Six gteic hubs are now operational providing 78 workspaces on the islands.</p> <p>Two further island gteic hubs are planned for Toraigh and Inis Oírr and are at various stages of development. Once completed and operational, this will bring the number of island gteic digital hubs to eight.</p>		

Measure 139 Explore the potential for community-based enterprise hubs on islands not under the remit of Údarás na Gaeltachta.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
139.1	Local development companies to explore the potential for community-based enterprise hubs as part of their annual work programmes to achieve their community support targets. Financial support has been approved for this to take place in 2022.	Delayed
<p>Update: This work has not yet been completed. It will be reviewed as part of the work programmes for 2023.</p>		

Measure 140 Maximise the potential to utilise the islands as test-beds for innovative technologies (e.g. eHealth, micro-generation of renewable energy).		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
140.1	The potential for such projects will be discussed with relevant departments, and action points will be identified for inclusion in the action plan for the islands that will be published in conjunction with the Islands Policy.	Delayed
<p>Update: Discussions have taken place with other stakeholders to progress this action in the context of the forthcoming Islands Policy.</p>		

140.2	The Small Scale Capital Works programme will explore the potential for installation of technology which facilitates public library collections and returns in island communities.	Complete
Update: Funding allocated to each local authority under the Small Scale Capital Works programme was €100,000 and, following initial investigation of the potential to install these technologies, this allocation was not sufficient to allow for the purchase of these facilities. A Call for Proposals for the new Libraries Capital Programme will be issued in early 2023, under which local authorities will be able to apply for funding for this type of investment.		
140.3	Trial telemedicine / eHealth solutions on offshore islands. These trials will test the viability, demand and efficacy of using connectivity and digital technologies to support the provision of health services to isolated communities.	Complete
Update: Following the delivery and installation of an eHealth pod on Clare Island, DRCD will continue to assess the demand for, and use of, the facility to inform further deployments. DRCD continues to engage with public sector colleagues to identify opportunities for further deployments.		

Measure 141	Develop a new integrated marine sustainable development plan, as a successor to Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth, focusing on all aspects of the marine sector.
Lead Delivery Body: DAFM	
Update: The original Harnessing our Ocean Wealth (HOOW) was a cross-Departmental initiative. The period covered by that report has now ended. In terms of the development of a potential successor plan, no decision has been taken to date.	

Measure 142	Publish Ireland's first ever Marine Spatial Planning policy, setting out a clear vision for the future development of our marine planning system.				
Lead Delivery Body: DHLGH					
<table> <tr> <th>2022 Actions</th><th>Status</th></tr> <tr> <td>142.2 Draft Marine Planning Policy Statement to be developed, following public consultation and analysis, with formal establishment expected in 2023.</td><td>Delayed</td></tr> </table>		2022 Actions	Status	142.2 Draft Marine Planning Policy Statement to be developed, following public consultation and analysis, with formal establishment expected in 2023.	Delayed
2022 Actions	Status				
142.2 Draft Marine Planning Policy Statement to be developed, following public consultation and analysis, with formal establishment expected in 2023.	Delayed				
Update: DHLGH are currently engaging with other Government departments on drafting of the MPPS. It is expected that further inputs will be sought in Q1 2023. DHLGH expect to finalise the MPPS by Q3 2023.					

Measure 143 Following completion of the Marine Spatial Planning policy, bring forward Ireland's first National Marine Planning Framework which will introduce a planning system for managing the development of Ireland's maritime area in the same way that the National Planning Framework fulfils this function on land.		
Lead Delivery Body: DHLGH		
2022 Actions		Status
143.1	Supporting Reform of Marine Management in Ireland (SRMMI) Project – DG REFORM funded cross-Government project identifying the changes needed, including specifying digital systems and tools, to put in place plan-led marine management in Ireland as detailed in the MAP Act.	Delayed
Update: The project is expected to be completed in advance of the Fourth Our Rural Future Progress Report.		
143.2	In partnership with the Marine Institute, establish a monitoring approach for the NMPF, identifying implementation progress indicators.	Complete
Update: A draft monitoring approach has been prepared and indicators are being applied to gather information that will form the basis of the first annual NMPF implementation report, which is expected in Q2 2023.		

Measure 144 Establish a marine planning oversight delivery board, Project Ireland Marine 2040, to provide leadership and oversight to the implementation of the National Marine Planning Framework, and implement the long-term overarching strategy to manage Ireland's seas for the benefit of all its people.		
Lead Delivery Body: DHLGH		
2022 Actions		Status
144.2	Project Marine – the cross-Government NMPF implementation group – to establish meeting pattern and develop action plan.	Complete
Update: Project Ireland Marine 2040 is contained in the Programme for Government. A new cross-departmental group has been established to replace Project Marine. This new Wind Taskforce will be comprised of the same representatives as originally envisaged, so the initial group is no longer required.		

Measure 145 Explore the potential for Coastal Partnership Groups to bring together the local coastal communities to address issues of concern, share best practice and resources, and facilitate communication between stakeholders.		
Lead Delivery Body: DHLGH		
2022 Actions		Status
145.2	Establish pilot coastal partnership agreement with selected local authority by year end.	Complete
<p>Update: A contract has been signed with Mayo County Council on participation in REGINA-MSP project, which is a two-year project funded by the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund (EMFAF).</p> <p>The project aims to improve the participation of regions as well as local authorities and stakeholders in the development and implementation of national maritime spatial planning, identifying how regional actors can contribute to improving efficiency and achieving European Green Deal goals. The Irish case study region is the Co. Mayo coast, and Mayo County Council has set up a Marine Section with the intention of bringing a stronger strategic focus on all marine aspects with a view to leveraging extensive marine resources to build a vibrant competitive marine sector.</p>		

Measure 146 Continue to invest in coastal communities through the Fisheries Local Area Group (FLAG) scheme, providing support for investments by micro seafood enterprises and projects in the area of marine tourism and leisure and the wider marine sector.		
Lead Delivery Body: DAFM		
2022 Actions		Status
146.2	Calls for expression of interest in the community-led local development under the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund 2021-2027 Operational Programme will be issued.	Delayed
<p>Update: Development of the European Maritime, Fisheries and Aquaculture Fund 2021-2027 Programme for Ireland was necessarily paused while the work of the Seafood Task Force was ongoing, in order to ensure a coherent approach to supporting the Seafood Sector in the wake of Brexit and Beyond. The programme was adopted by the EU Commission in December 2022, and can now commence implementation. FLAG selection, local development strategies, animation and capacity building will commence in 2023 with a view to providing supports through FLAGs immediately following the end of the Brexit Blue Economy Enterprise Development Scheme (see Action 146.3)</p>		
146.3	Consider Seafood Task Force recommendation for Brexit Adjustment Reserve-funded community led local development	Complete

	<p>scheme implemented via FLAGS to mitigate Brexit impacts on coastal communities through support for entrepreneurial initiatives in the blue economy.</p>	
<p>Update: The €25 million Brexit Blue Economy Enterprise Development Scheme was announced in March 2022. The scheme was based on the Task Force recommendation for Brexit Adjustment Reserve-funded community led local development scheme.</p> <p>Funding is available to enterprises and entrepreneurs in the sectors of Small Non-Commercial Harbour/Pier Activities; Boat Building and Repair; Coastal Tourism; Marine Leisure and Sport; Seafood; and, Renewable Energy Initiatives supporting the Blue Economy.</p> <p>Funding is available for capital investment, business mentoring and capacity development, and upskilling and training. The scheme has been in operation for the latter half of 2022 and will continue to run into 2023.</p>		

Implementation of the Policy

Measure 147 Support rural communities to develop long-term cohesive Master Plans for their areas, to support an integrated place-based approach to rural development (aligned with Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies, County Development Plans, Local Development Plans, and relevant national, regional and local policy objectives).		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
147.2	Following the initial 2021 allocation to 26 towns, a further allocation in 2022 will enable additional towns develop their respective Town Centre First Plans.	Delayed
Update: A further phase of allocations to towns for development of TCF Plans is scheduled for 2023.		

Measure 148 Develop an effective rural proofing model to ensure the needs of rural communities are considered in the development of Government policies.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
148.2	Following completion of commissioned report into rural proofing, consultation with key stakeholders will take place, through the ORF Implementation Advisory Group and other engagement structures.	Complete
Update: DRCD has actively engaged with Government departments in relation to rural proofing, and has identified several areas to work collaboratively on in 2023, as part of a phased approach to developing a new model. The pilot approach, may see departments apply a 'rural lens' to consider the likely impact of their policies on rural areas at an early stage in their development, and, where necessary, adjust the policy to ensure that the rural perspective is incorporated. The rural proofing consultants' report has been published on the DRCD website .		
148.3	Develop an initial draft rural proofing model, based on research recommendations and consultation process, for further consideration by departments	Delayed

Update: Following the publication of the consultants' report, DRCD has now commenced engagement on a pilot basis with key Government departments to identify the best approach in the Irish context (see Measure 148.2). This phased pilot approach will allow DRCD to evaluate the process to glean the value added for other departments, assess how the approach can be modified and strengthened and to agree the best approach to rolling it out more broadly.

Measure 149 Support new research into rural development priorities, including in collaboration with Higher Education Institutions and other research funders and research organisations.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
149.1	Provide support to the North Atlantic Forum to enable holding of event on Sustainable Livelihoods.	Complete
Update: DRCD has made a funding allocation available to support the holding of this event, although a date has not been finalised.		
149.2	Provide funding and support for the establishment of a post-doctoral research position on rural development.	Complete
Update: In 2022, DRCD partnered with National University of Ireland to award the first post-doctoral fellowship in rural development. The fellowship will support the delivery of a research project <i>Mapping Social Enterprises and their Impact on Sustainable Rural Development in Ir</i> . The project will advance research in the field of rural social enterprise by providing the first nationwide study on the relationship between these organisations and different types of rural areas and their impact on sustainable rural development. The research will also generate an evidence base for the development of policy in sustainable development of rural social enterprises.		

Measure 150 Establish a Higher Education Institutions Network on rural development to ensure ongoing engagement with rural development experts over the lifetime of this policy.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
150.1	Ongoing engagement with rural development experts over the lifetime of this policy will continue through meetings of the Our Rural Future Higher Education and Research Network.	Ongoing

Update: Two meetings of the Network took place in 2022, the second meeting being held in person in University College Cork in October. The Network provides a platform to share information about current and planned research and teaching activities in the area of rural development.

Arising from the Network, the University of Galway and DRCD collaborated on a seminar series, *Rural Voices*, on areas relevant to rural development. The Series provides a platform for Irish academics and key rural stakeholders to present their research or rural projects, to allow them to network with others engaged in a similar space and to initiate discussions around key rural issues. The Series launched on Wednesday 26 January 2022 and is ongoing.

A number of HEI members nominated a representative to take part in a Research Poster Presentation at the recent 13th OECD International Rural Development Conference in Cavan on 28-29 September, which received much interest from the international audience.

Measure 151 Enhance the sharing of information and best practice on rural development policy on a North-South basis and identify areas for further cooperation.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
151.1	Ongoing engagement between representatives of DRCD and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs in Northern Ireland will continue through biannual meetings of the North-South Rural Policy Forum.	Ongoing
Update: Following the first in-person meeting of the North-South Policy Forum in May, representatives of DRCD and DAERA met for the second time in 2022 on 26 August at Slieve Gullion in Co Armagh.		

Measure 152 Deepen engagement at international level on policy relating to rural development matters through increased participation, including at OECD and EU level.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status
152.1	Participate in OECD Working Party on Rural Policy and relevant EU networks.	Ongoing
Update: DRCD continued to be an active participant in international networks in 2022. It attended two meetings of the OECD Working Party on Rural Policy, in May and November, which included discussion of the OECD Rural Development Conference and other issues		

including the impact of the war in Ukraine on rural areas, rural proofing, remote working, islands and agriculture.

In June, DRCD was invited to make a presentation on the development and implementation of Our Rural Future to all EU member states at the first EU Rural Pact conference in Brussels.

152.2	Ireland will host the 13 th OECD Rural Development Conference, titled 'Building Sustainable, Resilient and Thriving Rural Places'.	Complete
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Update: The Irish Government hosted the 13th OECD Rural Development Conference in Cavan from 28-30 September 2022 in partnership with the OECD's Centre for Entrepreneurship, SMEs, Regions and Cities.

More than 300 international delegates attended this prestigious event, which focused on the pillars of economic, social and environmental sustainability in a rural context. A diverse cohort of expert Irish and international speakers brought huge experience to the event, and the comprehensive programme also featured dedicated input from young people and researchers.

The Conference was opened by the Minister for Rural and Community Development. The event was also addressed by An Taoiseach and the OECD Deputy Secretary-General, and a number of relevant ministers from OECD countries, including the United States, Scotland, Korea and Colombia, attended and participated in the debates.

The Conference concluded with the publication of the '[Cavan-OECD on Strengthening Rural Resilience against Global Challenges](#)', which will guide the OECD with their future endeavours relating to rural development.

New Measures for 2022

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

Lead Delivery Body: All Departments

2022 Actions

Status

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

Under the Community Services Programme, additional staffing requests have been approved for three organisations to work with Ukrainian refugees, all of which have been approved one additional temporary full-time position up to 31 December 2023. One of these temporary positions has created employment for two Ukrainian people on a part-time basis.

In June 2022, an additional €500,000 was allocated to support volunteer centres in respect of the additional work being undertaken in response to the Ukraine crisis. Each of the 29 volunteer centres received a baseline figure with the remainder distributed proportionally based on the number of newly arrived Ukrainians recorded in each area. The allocation is based on the CSO data recorded in each area. The following activities were undertaken by volunteer centres in response to the Ukraine crisis:

- Recruiting volunteers for a variety of roles to support Ukrainian arrivals such as providing conversational English classes, translation services, transport, organising donations and coordinating donation distribution centres, and intercultural and befriending activities such as supporting local events for Ukrainian people and organising joint activities/projects.
- Taking steps to encourage volunteering among Ukrainians by building relationships and trust through other activities such as family activity camps, intercultural and social inclusion events, and community integration and networking events.
- Developing infrastructure to support Ukrainians to volunteer by linking Ukrainian communities with local groups, and working in partnership with local development companies.
- Working directly with Ukrainian people to support them to volunteer, for example by delivering information sessions for Ukrainians at volunteer centres and in accommodation centres, delivering one-to-one sessions, organising volunteer expos where local organisations can recruit Ukrainian volunteers, and supporting Ukrainians as they begin to volunteer.
- Recruiting Ukrainian people as volunteers for a variety of roles supporting other Ukrainians e.g. providing interpretation and translation services or emotional support, as well as for roles volunteering with and for the wider communities, e.g. supporting local music and arts events, engaging with local voluntary groups and charities and promoting intercultural understanding.

An additional €1m in funding for volunteering supports has been secured in Budget 2023 to continue assisting Ireland's response to the Ukraine crisis. It will be used to ensure that the response and services for people from Ukraine can continue.

Additional funding of €5m was secured in 2022 to support SICAP to deal specifically with new arrivals from Ukraine. This funding has strengthened the capacity for Local Development Companies to ensure continued supports to those most in need. Services available through SICAP to support Ukrainians included transport services; access to health care; access to school places; services to older people; Ukrainian community engagement; personal skills and wellbeing, lifelong learning and access to the labour market. Some of these supports are delivered on a one-to-one basis and in a group setting. DRCD will continue to monitor the situation and additional funding will be provided to SICAP in 2023 for delivering the programme to new arrivals.

DFHERIS: Education and Training Boards (ETBs) are working across the country to offer further education and training options to people from Ukraine in Ireland. The 16 ETBs offer English language skills courses for adults, these ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) courses are being run across the country in response to demand presenting locally. The majority of people from Ukraine engaged with ETBs are enrolled in ESOL courses. These courses are being offered in a variety of modes to help learners, including in ETB settings and on an outreach basis, such as accommodation settings.

In addition, these actions are complemented through the use of volunteers. SOLAS provides grant aids to Third Age for the Fáilte Isteach community project, which involves trained tutors welcoming migrants through free conversational English classes. Since March 2022, Fáilte Isteach has opened locations in 32 new communities across Ireland, bringing the total to 137, reaching every county, and many of these new areas are running two or more classes.

D/Health: In December 2022, a one-off Healthy Ireland Ukrainian Resilience Fund of €1 million was distributed to local authorities to fund projects in line with the Healthy Ireland vision. These projects are focused on improving health and wellbeing for Ukrainian refugees and all people in the community.

The funding was divided, on a pro-rata basis, to provide a maximum amount of funding for each local authority based on the number of Ukrainian refugees living in each area. Some examples of the proposals funded are:

- Art Therapy Workshops
- Woodland Walks
- Orienteering for families and children
- Mindfulness Exercises and Workshops
- Family Day Excursions to attractions and leisure facilities
- Cookery Classes and healthy Food made easy.
- Development of allotments and planting schemes in conjunction with local environmental/tidy town groups.

DHLGH: In March 2022, Community Response Fora were set up in every local authority area with the role of coordinating local agencies and community and voluntary groups in the response to the arrival of large numbers of Ukrainian beneficiaries of temporary protection into communities. Within the Forums, public bodies/entities, like the HSE, TUSLA, INTREO, Regional Education and Language Teams (REALT), Local Link, etc., along with local community and voluntary organisations, are working together under the stewardship of the local authority to provide advice and support to Ukrainian arrivals.

Along with the immediate requirement for basic services, the supports provided have broadened to include a strong focus on integration, education, health, local transport, and support for job seekers, childcare, language training, etc. Since May 2022, DHLGH has provided support to local authorities in relation to staffing resources dedicated to coordinating the local response.

D/Transport: In line with the whole of Government approach, D/Transport and the National Transport Authority (NTA) have been working on practical and meaningful responses to the Ukrainian humanitarian crisis. Additional bus services are deployed to cater for those housed away from the existing public transport network. Such measures will provide better access to a range of amenities, employment opportunities and to onward public transport connections to larger centres.

A number of improvements were introduced to the TFI Local Link network during 2022, which have predominantly been in response to the influx of Ukrainian refugees to rural parts of Ireland.

DTCAGSM:

Creative Ireland: Creative Ireland supported Festival in a Van to deliver 46 Shared Music Sessions with 118 artists (including contributions by 59 Ukrainian artists) to centres in 20 counties. Festival in a Van worked with Local Authorities, Creative Ireland Coordinators, The Arts Council, and networks including Creative Schools, Men's Sheds, Music Generation, Ireland's Festival networks to provide the Shared Music Sessions.

The Creative Ireland programme also supported events as part of **Cruinniú na nÓg** for children and young people from Ukraine arriving in Ireland, to ensure participation of young Ukrainians in a variety of ways. All events delivered under Cruinniú na nÓg are free for all children and young people.

Sport Ireland: The safeguarding-related work is now complete and freely available : [Safeguarding Information - Ukrainian Translations | Sport Ireland](#). National governing bodies and local clubs continue to integrate Ukrainian refugees into their existing activities. This will differ from sport to sport depending on their size, scale, geographical location and relevance of the sport to those played in Ukraine.

Measure 154 Review of School Transport Scheme, including provision of school transport in rural communities.		
Lead Delivery Body: D/Education		
2022 Actions		Status
154.1	Complete the review of the School Transport Scheme (which encompasses the School Transport Scheme for Children with Special Educational Needs and the Primary and Post-Primary School Transport Schemes) with a view to ensuring that it serves students and their families appropriately. The review will consider	Delayed

	issues such as climate action, school transport in rural areas, and promoting where possible initiatives that encourage walking and cycling to school.	
Update: Work is continuing on this with aim to complete in early 2023.		

Measure 155 Provide supports to small schools to facilitate a sustainable future for schools in communities of lower population density.		
Lead Delivery Body: D/Education		
2022 Actions		Status
155.1	Advance an action research project examining new ways of supporting small schools through the Primary Education Forum.	Ongoing
Update: This is a two-year action research project aimed at improving the sustainability of small schools, involving six clusters of small schools across the country. Each cluster is working on a range of initiatives, supported by a team of coordinators, education partners and D/Education.		
155.2	Continue to facilitate amalgamations of schools where a decision to amalgamate has been made by the Patrons/Trustees.	Ongoing
Update: This is an ongoing process in line with the wishes of Patrons/Trustees, supported by D/Education.		

Measure 156 Delivery of actions in the Sustainable Tourism Interim Action Plan to support and promote sustainable tourism in rural areas.		
Lead Delivery Body: DTCAGSM		
2022 Actions		Status
156.1	Develop a roadmap for the delivery of e-charging infrastructure to support e-car touring and sustainable travel.	Complete
Update: D/Transport has launched the new Electric Vehicles Charging Infrastructure Strategy 2022-2025, which will see €100 million spent on public charging infrastructure over the next three years (See Measure 120.1).		
156.2	Roll out a Carbon Calculator for tourism businesses and visitors.	Complete

Update: Launched in November 2022 to the tourism industry by Fáilte Ireland, the Climate Toolkit 4 Business (CT4B) carbon calculator was developed by DETE and DECC in consultation with Fáilte Ireland. Fáilte Ireland's work on rolling it out to the tourism industry is ongoing.

Measure 157 Development of strategic Gaeltacht tourism initiatives.

Lead Delivery Body: Údarás na Gaeltachta, Fáilte Ireland

2022 Actions

Status

157.2	Initiate tendering process to deliver three visitor experiences in the Connemara Gaeltacht.	Complete
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Update: A request for tender issued in Q2 2022 to appoint interpretative designers to create detailed interpretative plans for two visitor experiences – Ionad na nImlirceach Carna and the Seaweed & Heritage Centre in Leitir Mealláin and outlined plans to be developed for Ionad Oidhreachtá Árann. Plans are due to be delivered Q2 2023. Full delivery of the visitor experiences (which required capital works) has been delayed due to funds not being approved in 2022 but it is hoped that this will be secured in 2023 and then upgrade and building works can commence.

157.3	Údarás na Gaeltachta to undertake a pilot programme to develop and promote language holidays for select target demographics.	Delayed
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Update: Funding was secured from Fáilte Ireland to undertake a joint pilot programme in 2023 with marketing support from Fáilte Ireland. Terms of the programme are to be agreed in Q1 2023, with invitations to be issued to potential suppliers of holiday packages in Q2 2023. It is anticipated that packages will be developed and on sale from Q4 2023.

157.4	Údarás na Gaeltachta to undertake an audit of existing greenways & cycle trails in the Gaeltacht and agree a 10-year roadmap for future development.	Delayed
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Update: A request for tender to audit current infrastructure will be advertised in Q1 2023 for completion by Q3 2023. The RfT for the 10-year road map will be advertised in Q4 2023.

157.5	Complete the South Conamara Outdoor Recreation Hub report.	Delayed
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Update: A draft report is due to be signed off for completion in early 2023.

Measure 158 Development and implementation of An Gaeltacht Ghlas strategy, which will look to create a sustainability strategy for the Gaeltacht, taking into account economic, community and social sectors.

Lead Delivery Body: Údarás na Gaeltachta		
2022 Actions		Status
158.1	Publication of An Gaeltacht Ghlas Strategy.	Delayed
Update: Stakeholder engagement and preparatory research around the An Ghaeltacht Ghlas strategy was completed in 2022. Work on the final Strategy document began in Q4 2022 and is due for completion during Q2 2023.		
158.2	Lead discussions on the development of Ros an Mhíl as a strategic port in the support of offshore renewable energy development with other State Departments and Agencies.	Complete
Update: A masterplan was commissioned to show how the port and hinterland could be developed between now and 2037 for both the fishing and offshore renewable sector. We are actively engaging with parties to highlight the huge opportunity Ros an Mhíl has as a strategic port supporting the renewable sector.		
158.3	Development plans to be finalised for a 100% community-owned renewable energy project, through a Photo Voltaic Park being proposed on lands belonging to Údarás na Gaeltachta with a view to provide electricity to the local community.	Complete
Update: Planning permission approved for a 5MW solar farm development at Ard na Ceapairí, An Bun Beag, Co. Donegal. The solar farm has an area of approximately 14.1 hectares, comprising solar photovoltaic panels on ground-mounted frames and all necessary ancillary development structures. The project is being developed in partnership with six community development organisations in Gaoth Dobhair. The photovoltaic farm will contribute to the local economy, serve as a valuable source of income for local development groups, reduce the carbon footprint and enable the adjacent Pairc Ghnó Ghaoth Dobhair (Gaoth Dobhair Business Park) to move away from fossil-fuel generated energy and towards sustainability and energy independence. Discussions are currently ongoing in regards to grid connection.		

Measure 159 Improving the efficiency and effectiveness of the forestry licensing system to support measures aiming to achieve an afforestation target of 8,000 ha/year.		
Lead Delivery Body: DAFM		
2022 Actions		Status
159.4a	Development of communications strategy.	Complete
Update: A Forestry Communications Strategy has been finalised and presented to the Project Woodland Working Group.		

159.4b	Development of customer charter.	Delayed
Update: The customer charter has been integrated with the revised farmers' charter and the departmental charter and is currently under consideration.		
159.5	Produce a report on Training Needs Analysis.	Complete
Update: The training needs analysis was finalised in Q4 2022.		

Measure 160 Co-develop and implement rural development elements of the new PEACE PLUS programme 2021-2027.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD, SEUPB		
2022 Actions		Status
160.1	Agreement of the proposed PEACE PLUS Programme 2021-2027 by the European Commission, following which the programme will be launched. The Programme will include a range of initiatives to enable and empower local community partnerships, led by local authorities, to select and deliver priority projects on a cross-community basis, which will result in shared and inclusive local services, facilities and spaces; and make a significant and lasting contribution to peace and reconciliation.	Complete
Update: The Commission agreed and adopted the PEACE PLUS Programme in July 2022. The programme is expected to be launched early in 2023 with an indicative budget of over €1.14 billion. In the interim, DRCD are working with, SEUPB and relevant Northern Irish departments on the drafting of guidance documents and calls for applications under the PEACE PLUS Programme, which will open shortly after the launch of the programme. Pre-application support workshops commenced in July 2022 with further workshops to take place in March 2023, providing guidance on the relevant investment areas, concept notes and accountable departments providing guidance on policy interests from a Northern Ireland and Ireland perspective, all of which are available on the SEUPB website.		

Measure 162 Support the National Women's Council of Ireland (NWCi) to host a Rural Women's Conference in 2022.		
Lead Delivery Body: DRCD		
2022 Actions		Status

162.1	Provide supports to the NWCI to host a National Rural Women's Conference.	Complete
<p>Update: To mark International Day of Rural Women, the National Women's Council hosted a national conference titled 'Claiming Our Space – women in rural Ireland leading change' on 14 October 2022 in Monaghan.</p> <p>The event, which was supported by funding from DRCD, discussed key issues for women in rural areas, including violence against women, social inclusion, civic participation and climate action.</p>		