

Country Reforms Matrix - Ireland

Lab	Theme	Policy Name/Concept/Leading Institution	Policy Description
Lab 1 - Voice	Engaging citizens	Open Government Partnership National Action Plan.	Ireland is using joint working group with officials and citizens and consultative events to draft and implement their Open Government Partnership National Action Plan . Implementation along three core themes – Open Data, Citizen Participation and Strengthening Governance and Accountability – is currently underway. Some example events:
		National Economic Dialogue	National Economic Dialogue allowed representatives from parliament, business, and civil society to engage in an open and inclusive exchange on the competing economic and social priorities of Ireland before the 2016 budget.
		Citizen Participation Unit	A Citizen Participation Unit has been created to ensure that children and youth have a voice in design, delivery and monitoring of services and policies.
		National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making	The National Strategy on Children and Young People's Participation in Decision-Making is a 5-year strategy that focuses on giving youth a voice in decision-making. Broad consultation and evidence-based approaches were used to create the strategy, which included a consultation with 66,700 youth nationally.
		Open Policy Debates	11 Open Policy Debates have been held since early 2015, involving policy networks of practitioners, academics and experts on key issues.
		Freedom of Information Act	A review of the Freedom of Information Act in 2013 included an expert working group comprised of academic, civil society and journalists who reviewed implementation and made recommendations.
		Convention on the Constitution	A Convention on the Constitution was created to consider and make recommendations for future Constitutional amendments. 66 randomly selected citizens, 33 politicians and an independent chair comprised the Convention. 38 recommendations emerged, including a referendum on marriage equality, which passed in 2015.
		Pre-legislative scrutiny	Almost all legislation goes under pre-legislative scrutiny , providing an opportunity for citizens and civil society to make submissions.
	Establishing partnerships		

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Integrating groups		Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme	The Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP) seeks to promote social inclusion and poverty reduction through partnerships with community and volunteers, local engagement, direct dialogue and targeted delivery.
		Benefacts	Benefacts is a program funded by the government and two philanthropic bodies to promote a single repository of financial, governance and other relevant data for the not-for-profit sector. Operated as a non-profit, Benefacts allows anyone to see funding allocations and other information to make sure taxpayer's money is being well spent.
		Health Service Reform Fund	The Health Service Reform Fund is program funded by the government, a non-profit, and a philanthropic organization. It utilizes a person-centred model to support better outcomes for service users in the disability and mental health sector.
		Area Based Childhood Programme	The Area Based Childhood (ABC) programme , co-funded by the government and a philanthropic organization, targets investment in evidence-informed interventions to improve long-term outcomes for disadvantaged families. The implementation is supervised by the Centre for Effective Service, a non-profit entity, and many frontline service providers.
		Tús	Tús helps long-term unemployed citizens find 12-month work placement opportunities in the community, social care and heritage sectors.
		Code of Practice	The Irish Business and Employers' Confederation and the Irish Congress of Trade Unions are helping to develop a new Code of Practice .
		JobPath	JobPath is a new program to help jobseekers find stable and full time paid employment or self-employment. It also provides support for long-term unemployed and newly unemployed who need intensive support. The program is privately delivered by two organizations, selected by tender competition, and paid according to results.
	Early Childhood Care and Education	Early Childhood Care and Education	is delivered by 4,000 service providers to approximately 70,000 children annually. This includes private and not-for-profit providers.
Using ICTs	Public Service Information and Communication Technology Strategy		The new Public Service Information and Communication Technology Strategy allows citizens to engage with government over digital channels. A recent survey showed contact via email or online channels has increased, especially with young customers. In addition, online feedback mechanisms on webpages allow citizens to provide feedback regarding online services.

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	Involving citizens	Social Media Usage Policy	A Social Media Usage Policy has been developed, requiring public bodies to take account of new Information and Communication Technologies and social media. Most government departments/offices now have a range of social media accounts. The government lists all social media accounts on a central web page for easy access.
		Surveying civil servants	In accordance with the Public Service Reform Plan and Civil Service Renewal Plan, the government runs regularly surveys of Civil Service customers to more fully understand user experiences, expectations and requirements as well as more general perceptions to the civil service.
		Fixyourstreet.ie	Fixyourstreet.ie allows citizens to engage with local authorities online, with associated mobile technologies, to report non-emergency issues such as graffiti, road defects, street lighting, water leaks or illegal dumping.
Lab 2 - Design	Utilising a mix of policy instruments	Regulating for a Better Future	<p>The policy statement "Regulating for a Better Future" (2013) was developed to provide a clearer policy and strategic context in which Sectoral Departments can establish and articulate policy directions. This is an attempt to cater to a range of sectoral specific issues while maintain a coordinate whole of government approach.</p> <p>Mandate Reviews must be initiated by Sectoral Departments at least every seven years. This serves to update economic regulatory policy and sync with EU level policy reviews and market conditions. These reviews aide the whole of government approach.</p> <p>'Hierarchy of objects' are an innovative economic regulatory tool. This requirement in regulations aims to better balance national and sectoral policy objectives and provide a performance and accountability framework. It works in tandem with Mandate Reviews.</p> <p>Together, Mandate Reviews and hierarchy of objects give maximum flexibility to sectoral departments but in a way that aids whole of government coordination. These tools seek to meet the 'Regulating for a Better Future' goals.</p>
		Regulatory Impact Assessment	All proposals for primary and significant secondary legislations are subject to regulatory impact assessments .

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Using joined-up government	Using joined-up government	Department of Public Expenditure and Reform	<p>The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (D/PER) was created in 2011 to drive cross-cutting, joined-up government reform and integrate expenditure management. They have been involved in many projects, including the Civil Service Renewal Plan, the Open Data Initiative, and the Open Government Partnership National Action Plan.</p> <p>D/PER drives, oversees and supports the implementation of the Public Service Reform Plan (2014-2016). A key component is the development of effective governance models to ensure successful implementation of the reform. Regular reports from D/PER to the Cabinet Committee on Social Policy & Public Service Reform, chaired by the Prime Minister, on progress on reform fosters a centre of government coordination approach. In addition, the reform plan highlights a number of cross-cutting initiatives requiring joined-up government.</p>
		Data Sharing and Governance Bill	<p>The Data Sharing and Governance Bill is currently being developed with the aim of providing better information data sharing between public service bodies. For example, the Department of Social Protection can directly send the Student Universal Support Ireland, the national student grant authority, information directly, which reduces administrative burden.</p>
		Regulating for a Better Future	<p>The policy statement "Regulating for a Better Future" (2013) was developed to provide a clearer policy and strategic context in which Sectoral Departments can establish and articulate policy directions. This is an attempt to cater to a range of sectoral specific issues while maintain a coordinate whole of government approach. This initiative prioritises joined-up government in policy design.</p>
Fostering a whole-of-government approach	Fostering a whole-of-government approach	Regulating for a Better Future	<p>The policy statement "Regulating for a Better Future" (2013) was developed to provide a clearer policy and strategic context in which Sectoral Departments can establish and articulate policy directions. This is an attempt to cater to a range of sectoral specific issues while maintain a coordinate whole of government approach.</p>
		Achieving buy-in from ministries	<p>Generally, it is the practice in Ireland to consult various ministries when developing policy in order to achieve buy-in.</p>
		Statements of Strategy and Business Plans	<p>The development of Statements of Strategy and Business Plans require consideration of impacts of proposals and the involvement of other stakeholders in implementation.</p>
Engaging with innovative practices	Engaging with innovative practices	Public Service Reform Plan	<p>The Public Service Reform plan places an emphasis on innovative delivery in order to achieve efficiency savings. This includes a focus on digital government, improving customer service, and new delivery models.</p>
		Reform and Delivery Office	<p>The Reform and Delivery Office, in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, drives the Government's Reform Programme. A key component of this is to develop innovative approaches throughout the Irish public service.</p>

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		Integrated Reform Delivery Plan	As part of the reform plan, the annual Integrated Reform Delivery Plan sets out the implementation for cross-cutting actions that includes innovative approaches, specifically in terms of exploiting information and communication technologies and digital delivery of services.
		Design Labs	Public bodies have also used their own innovative approaches, such as Design Labs , to develop ideas for improved service delivery, competitions to develop innovative apps, and ideas campaigns.
		Service Design Workshops	Service Design training workshops is an emerging and innovative method for improving public services. Tools and techniques are applied to view service delivery from a customer perspective in order to identify administrative burdens and develop innovative service solutions.
Lab 3 - Delivery	Strengthening the civil service	Public Service Reform Plan	The Public Service Reform Plan (2014-2016) seeks to improve efficiency and reduce cost, but also aimed to improve service delivery and achieving better outcomes for users. It focused on building skills in leadership, capability and delivery.
		Civil Service Renewal Plan	Part of the above plan, the Civil Service Renewal Plan was launched in 2014 with the goal of creating a world class civil service. The aim is to build capacity, including a focus on creating an open, accountable and responsible professional civil service. A new shared model for delivering learning and development focuses on developing skills and professional development. The Irish Senior Public Service was established in 2011 with the aim of strengthening the senior management and leadership capacity.
	Building a diverse & inclusive civil service	Civil Service Renewal Plan	The Civil Service Renewal Plan includes a dedication to achieving greater equality of opportunity, diversity and gender across the workforce. Opening up recruitment and promotion processes at all levels is key to making sure each appointment is drawn from the widest possible pool of talent.
		Recruitment Campaigns	Recruitment campaigns , including the Graduate Development Programme, attempt to fill specialist and technical skill gaps.
	Building trust in government	Organisational improvement initiatives	Town halls and surveys are parts of ongoing organisational improvement initiatives .
		Building Trust in the Civil Service	Recent reforms aimed at building trust:
			Appointments to State Boards must be advertised openly.
			The Ombudsman Act (amended, 2012) extends power of the Ombudsman and brings a wider range of bodies within its remit. This increases the quality and accountability in the administration.

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			<p>The House of Oireachtas Act (2013) increases the power of Parliament to scrutinize the decisions made by Government Ministries and enable ministries to assist committees in their work.</p> <p>The Freedom of Information Act (2014) significantly reduces restrictions introduced in the 2003 Act and extends its force to almost all public bodies and to non-public bodies using funding from government.</p> <p>The consultation paper 'Strengthening Civil Service Accountability and Performance' (2014) examined accountability commitments and set out options for change. Many of these recommendations were incorporated into the Civil Service Renewal Plan.</p> <p>The establishment of an Accountability Board was one such recommendation. The Board's focus is to provide oversight of senior management performance and progress on the delivery of agreed priorities.</p> <p>Another – the organisational capability reviews – intends to embed a culture of regular and objective assessment in each department, working to close any gaps.</p> <p>The Regulation of Lobbying Act (2015) is part of a suite of transparency legislation. It extends lobbying to public scrutiny, including the establishment of a registry to see who is talking to whom.</p> <p>The recently published Public Sector Standards Bill (2015) intends to support and promote ethical conduct.</p>
	Reaffirming the core values in the public service	Civil Service Renewal Plan	<p>The Civil Service Renewal Plan outlines the core values of the public service. The Renewal Plan set out 6 priority actions for delivering within the first 200 days. Furthermore, of the 25 overall actions, 23 have been initiated and of the 104 sub actions, 14 are completed and 54 have been initiated.</p> <p>A Civil Service Management Board has been created, chaired by the Secretary General to the Government, which aims to strengthen collective leadership and cohesive executive management of the civil service. Also the board is responsible for implementing the Reform Plan.</p> <p>The first performance review process for Secretaries General has been approved to strengthen the senior civil service.</p>
	Establishing gender balance in the civil service	Gender Equality Policy	The Gender Equality Policy has been in operation since 2001. Covering the civil service, it contains practical steps to promote equality of opportunity. In addition, HRM policy areas are being asked to incorporate gender equality.

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		National Women's Strategy	Targets for percentage of women in grades AP and PO contained within the National Women's Strategy 2007-2016 have been exceeded.
		Mentoring and Leadership Development Programme	A Mentoring and Leadership Development Programme has been launched to increase the number of women in top decision-making levels of the civil service. It has been piloted in 16 Departments with cross-Departmental Principle Officers.
		Civil Service Renewal Plan	The Civil Service Renewal Plan also commits to improving gender balance.
Lab 4 - Accountability	Developing a coordinated government-wide evaluation system	Value for Money and Policy Reviews	<p>Value for Money and Policy Reviews (VFMPRs) aim is to ensure the maximum impact of public spending is achieved. These reviews are conducted in accordance with requirements set out in the Public Spending Code. Improvements to the VFMPRs include:</p> <p>Focused Policy Assessments analyse the specific issues of policy configuration and delivery. They can be cross cutting or a discrete expenditure programme and is designed to be completed in a short period of time.</p> <p>Balanced Scorecards are a required element of VFMPRs. This standard report enables policy makers to view how the programme fared relative to other programmes by outlining a set of standard criteria common to all evaluations (e.g. quality of programme design)</p>
		Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service	Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES) was established in 2012 as a cross-Government service to enhance the role of economics and value-for-money analysis in policy making. A dedicated online section on the Service's website will be dedicated to resources for VFMPRs and FPAs.
	Strengthening performance management	Performance Budgeting Initiative	The Performance Budgeting Initiative reformats the annual Book of Estimates to provide decision-makers and the public information on financial and human resource inputs, outputs and activities, and context and impact indicators.
		Ireland Stat Project	The Ireland Stat project is a new whole-of-government performance measurement system designed to measure success in delivering on the Government's goals. Their website lists performance information for 51 programmes across 14 Ministerial Vote Groups, which account for approximately half of the Gross Voted Expenditure.
		Civil Service Renewal Plan	The Public Service Reform Plan and the Civil Service Renewal Plan both focus on strengthening the performance culture and the continuous improvement of performance management systems.

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	Identifying what works	Value for Money and Policy Reviews	Value for Money and Policy Reviews (VFMPRs) evaluations are required to be published, either on the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES) or departmental websites. This complements policy papers and departmental reports that are published as part of regular spending reviews.
		Sectoral Evaluations	There are a wide range of sectoral evaluations completed and published by Government Departments and Agencies, consultants, public economic research bodies and audit institutions.
		Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service	The Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES) Network has been established to allow the exchange of ideas and best practices between IGEES and the economic and evaluation community in the public service. IGEES also acts as a support unit for policy makers and builds links between external academics and policy experts.
	Utilising policy and programme experimentation/piloting	Health Service Reform Fund	Some funding from the Health Service Reform Fund will be used to develop the capability and capacity of service users and staff as well as innovation and evaluation with a specific focus on outcomes.
		Area Based Childhood Programme	Area-Based Childhood (ABC) Programmes was created out of a pilot programme called the Prevention and Early Intervention Programme (PEIP) and delivered to children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Also, the ABC programme was scaled up from the PEIP programme, from 3 areas to 13.
		Pilot Programs	Under the Public Spending Code , it is now a requirement that current expenditure proposals should include a pilot as part of the policy development process.