

Regional Outlook 2019 IRELAND

Regional Development Policy in Ireland



General policy approach

At government level, regional policy in Ireland is set out in the National Planning Framework (NPF) 2018, a long-term spatial development framework supported by a ten-year public investment strategy to 2027, and in the National Development Plan (NDP) 2018. Together, both the NPF and the NDP comprise “Project Ireland 2040”, a planning and investment programme for the future growth of Ireland’s regions, cities, towns and rural areas, focused on a common set of ten shared development goals. The overall Project Ireland 2040 strategy is based on the enhanced growth of Ireland’s regions and in particular the four cities other than Dublin (Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford) as accessible centres of scale. At the same time, it supports Dublin’s continued role as a key national growth driver. The strategy also identifies five smaller regional and cross-border growth drivers that complement the five-city catchment areas.

A new funding model for Exchequer-funded public investment is being put in place to ensure that resources are allocated to projects and programmes that meet the NDP’s priorities. In addition, the three elected regions manage operational programmes for the use of EU regional policy funds.

The Action Plan for Rural Development is the overarching framework for rural policy. In addition, there is a Rural Development Programme for use of related EU funds.

Recent policy changes

- Plebiscites will be held regarding municipal governance arrangements (i.e. the possibility of directly elected mayors) in the four cities other than Dublin in mid-2019.
- In 2016, the government published “Rebuilding Ireland: An Action Plan for Housing and Homelessness”, and implementation continues to be a major priority, with progress now being made towards the targets set out to 2021.
- To support Project Ireland 2040, the government launched four Exchequer funds worth a total of EUR 4 billion to 2027. These are to support urban (EUR 2 billion) and rural (EUR 1 billion) regeneration and development as well as disruptive technologies (EUR 500 million) and climate action (EUR 500 million). Following competitive bid-based processes, the first successful proposals were announced at the end of 2018.
- In order to optimise surplus state land for affordable urban housing and other development, and to ensure a long-term urban land supply, a new Land Development Agency was established in 2018, also as part of Project Ireland 2040.
- The Department of Rural and Community Development was established in 2017 to facilitate and co-ordinate whole-of-government economic and social policies that affect rural communities. Its Action Plan for Rural Development contains over 270 actions, where each action has a lead body and timeframe for delivery. The action plan is overseen by a monitoring committee, with progress reports published biannually.

Institutional arrangements to prepare for global megatrends

The Project Ireland 2040 Delivery Board is Ireland's long-term planning, centre-of-government unit. It is jointly chaired by the secretary generals of each of the 15 government departments and is principally supported by the Investment Projects and Programmes Office within the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, as well as by the Forward Planning Section of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. Those two departments are responsible for the NDP and the NPF, respectively. This arrangement enables integration across the government, and facilitates other departments' input on an ongoing co-ordinated sectoral basis. In addition, in January 2019 the government established an independent Office of the Planning regulator to conduct research as to what constitutes proper planning and sustainable development.

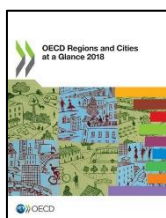
The NDP and NPF are based on a set of demographic and econometric projections, from which, for example, future population change, ageing, migration patterns, housing, employment, education and transport demand are assessed on a regionally disaggregated basis.

At the regional level, Ireland's three regional assemblies – the North Western Regional Assembly, Southern Regional Assembly, and Eastern and Midlands Regional Assembly – have published a draft Regional Economic and Spatial Strategy to 2031. The strategies detail regional planning and investment priorities and will be finalised in 2019. They must include metropolitan area strategic plans for each of the five city-regions in Ireland.

Additional institutional arrangements include the Regional Skills Fora, which is part of the government's National Skills Strategy. It provides an opportunity for employers and the education and training system to work together to meet the emerging skills needs of their regions. Similarly, the Regional Action Plan for Jobs is an initiative by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (now the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation) aimed at raising employment levels in each region and facilitating them to achieve their economic potential.

Looking for statistical information to complement this?

Take a look at our publication Regions and Cities at a Glance:



<https://oe.cd/pub/2n9>

OECD Regional Outlook 2019: Leveraging Megatrends for Cities and Rural Areas

The 2019 edition of the *OECD Regional Outlook* examines the regional dimensions of global megatrends and their implications for the well-being of people living in different places. It discusses how place-based policies, public investment and multi-level governance reforms can respond to these megatrends to revive productivity growth, reduce inequalities, improve quality of life and increase sustainability.

Consult the full publication and the other country profiles on line: <https://oe.cd/pub/2vq>.

