



**The newly established SDG Interdepartmental Working Group aims to improve coordination and address (potential) trade-offs to promote policy coherence.** To ensure coordination across government departments, the government has established an SDG Interdepartmental Working Group that aims to facilitate information sharing as well as provide a platform for discussion and negotiation in the event of disagreements. While line departments retain responsibility for implementing the elements of the SDGs most relevant to their work, government action follows a whole-of-government approach and is embedded in a common '2030 Vision'. This comprehensive, long-term Vision on how to achieve the SDGs is an integral part of the Irish SDG National Implementation Plan 2018-2020. This vision will remain central to the development process of future iterations of the SDG National Implementation Plan as well as to Ireland's policy for international development assistance. Ireland's new policy for international development is an important part of the Government's response to the SDGs. It will be a whole of government policy and consistent with the principles of whole of Government action set out in Our Public Service 2020, strengthened coordination across government on international development and humanitarian action will help inform how best to maximise our influence and ensure policy coherence. A detailed consultation process has been conducted involving all government departments, and through a whole of society approach including a number of public consultation meetings, which has significantly informed policy proposals (Ireland, 2018<sub>[1]</sub>; 2018<sub>[2]</sub>; OECD, 2018<sub>[3]</sub>).

**Raising awareness of the SDGs is one of Ireland's strategic priorities to mobilise stakeholders to contribute to coherent and comprehensive implementation.** The Irish government has identified the lack of awareness of the SDGs among civil society, business and citizens as a major constraint for effective implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Committed to promoting transparency, building citizen participation and strengthening accountability, the government is working on the development of an online SDG platform as a 'one-stop-shop for SDG information and learning'. Following input from the Irish SDG Stakeholder Forum, it will select national organisations as 'SDG Champions' to raise awareness of the Global Goals among the general public. The Stakeholder Forum will also develop a number of toolkits and communication materials to reach out to national and local organisations and support their contributions to a coherent and comprehensive implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Ireland's international development programme (Irish Aid) also invests significantly in development education. Ireland has a vibrant development education sector, which will continue to play a critical role in creating public awareness and ownership of the Irish development programme and the SDGs more broadly (Ireland, 2018<sub>[1]</sub>; 2018<sub>[2]</sub>; OECD, 2018<sub>[3]</sub>).

**Ireland's support for international flagship programmes on gender equality statistics fosters effective monitoring and evaluation at a global level.** Ireland is committed to improving the availability, quality and use of gender disaggregated data and statistics, in particular in relation to education, employment, and asset ownership. To this end, the government supports the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality Joint Programme of UN Women and the UN Statistics Division, as well as the UN Women flagship programme 'Making Every Woman and Girl Count'. In 2016, the government provided funding of €150,000 to the flagship programme, thereby significantly advancing the work on measurements of progress on sustainable development in the area of gender equality. The new data enhances PCSD by allowing for more effective monitoring, reporting and evaluation of progress on, and interrelations between, a broad range of SDGs (Ireland, 2018<sub>[1]</sub>; 2018<sub>[2]</sub>; OECD, 2018<sub>[3]</sub>).

### **Box 1. Government Task Forces help address cross government policy issues in a coherent manner**

The Government Task Force (GTF) on Emergency Planning is a cross-government body, convened by the Office of Emergency Planning within the Department of Defence. In 2018, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in coordination with the GTF on Emergency Planning facilitated a short seminar with UNISDR (the UN body responsible for Disaster Risk Reduction). The objective of this seminar was to introduce the Sendai Framework on DRR as Ireland worked through institutional roles and responsibilities emerging from signing up to Sendai, and how it fits with the National Adaptation Framework. The GTF collaborated closely with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade in March 2018 on collating and submitting Ireland's first data return on the Sendai Framework, resolving an important cross government policy issue on capturing key loss and damage data from natural disasters, as well as institutional arrangements for disaster preparedness and prevention. We are currently collaborating on the second data return.

Source: Ireland (2018<sup>[3]</sup>).

**Table 1. Institutional Mechanisms for PCSD in Ireland**

PCSD Building Blocks	
Political commitment	In its 2018 Voluntary National Review, Ireland specifies that the government is guided by the principle that “economic, social and environmental requirements [...] are fundamentally linked and interdependent on each other”. The Strategic Objectives of Ireland’s SDG National Implementation Plan 2018-2020, thus include a commitment to “identify opportunities for enhancing policy coherence” and to “support and promote policies and initiatives across government which contribute towards meeting the [Sustainable Development] Goals at home and abroad.”
Policy integration	SDG Mainstreaming is a key component of Ireland’s National Implementation Plan 2018-2020. Building on existing commitments in strategies and action plans on gender equity, biodiversity, corporate social responsibility and air pollution, the plan seeks to further integrate SDGs into national policies. A major aspect of the Plan is the SDG Policy Map, which sets out responsibilities for achieving SDG targets and indicators across multiple government departments. Each Department will oversee the implementation of those Goals most relevant to its policy area. This will allow for a joined-up approach to implementation while ensuring that the relevant departments across government take ownership of the respective Goals. To foster PCSD, Ireland has chosen to take a ‘whole-of-government’ approach, using existing interdepartmental coordination structures.
Intergenerational timeframe	In 2018, the Irish government adopted an overarching policy initiative with a medium to long-term vision of sustainable development called “Project Ireland 2040”. It is comprised of a new National Planning Framework and a 10-year National Development Programme. In addition, Ireland’s National Implementation Plan 2018-2020 is embedded in a long-term comprehensive ‘2030 Vision’, a high-level outline of what the country’s successful national implementation of the SDGs will look like. This ‘2030 Vision’ will remain central to subsequent iterations of the SDG National Implementation Plan and to Ireland’s policy for international development in general.
Policy effects	When preparing any proposal for government, Irish Government Departments are formally required to identify and address (potential) spill-overs related to that proposal under a range of headings. These headings include, inter alia, impacts on poverty, gender equality, employment and competitiveness, people with disabilities, as well as certain transboundary issues.
Coordination	The Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment has lead responsibility for promoting PCSD, overseeing the coherent implementation of the SDGs on a whole-of-government basis, and establishing a robust implementation and reporting framework. Responsibility for policy coherence related to foreign policy lies with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. To ensure coordination across government departments, the government has established a Senior Officials’ Group on the SDGs, composed of Assistant Secretaries from all Government Departments, which is supported by an SDG Interdepartmental Working Group that aims to facilitate information sharing as well as provide a platform for discussion and negotiation in the event of disagreements. Furthermore, it has defined a clear structure of responsibility, allocating ownership of SDG activity across all of government to departments and state agencies based on its SDG Policy Map.
Local involvement	Work is ongoing to align SDG relevant initiatives with the local government sector with the whole-of-government approach adopted at the national level. Increasing local government engagement is an important task of the SDG National Implementation Plan 2018-2020.
Stakeholder participation	In June 2018, the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment established a National SDG Stakeholder Forum. The Forum was established to bring together stakeholders working on, or involved in the promotion of the SDGs across Ireland and abroad. The Forum allows for policy makers, civil society, business and other interested parties to share experiences and information on SDG related activities at national and international level. The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, as Chair of the Forum, feeds back through the Interdepartmental Working Group on relevant issues and aims to include stakeholder input in the design of National Implementation Plans.
Monitoring and reporting	From 2018 onward, National Reports on SDG implementation will be published every two years and Voluntary National Reviews every four years. Both reports use EU indicators as the official measure of progress, but complement these with national indicators appropriate to the Irish context. Reports on Ireland’s international development policy and programme and as they relate to the SDGs are issued annually by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. The SDG Stakeholder Forum discusses progress on SDG related activities. The government is particularly active in advocating for gender disaggregated data as reflected by its support for the Evidence and Data for Gender Equality Joint Programme of UN Women and the UN Statistics Division, as well as the UN Women flagship programme on statistics ‘Making Every Woman and Girl Count’.

Source: OECD (2018<sup>[3]</sup>; 2018<sup>[4]</sup>) and Ireland (2018<sup>[1]</sup>; 2018<sup>[2]</sup>).

## References

- Ireland (2018), *Ireland: Voluntary National Review 2018 Report on the Implementation of the 2030 Agenda to the UN High-level Political Forum on Sustainable Development*. [1]
- Ireland (2018), *The Sustainable Development Goals National Implementation Plan 2018-2020*, Department of Communications, Climate Action & Environment, <http://www.dccae.gov.ie/SustainableDevelopmentGoals>. [2]
- OECD (2018), *2018 Survey on applying the eight building blocks of PCSD in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda: Ireland*, unpublished, Paris. [3]
- OECD (2018), *Policy Coherence for Sustainable Development 2018: Towards Sustainable and Resilient Societies*, OECD Publishing, Paris, <https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/9789264301061-en>. [4]