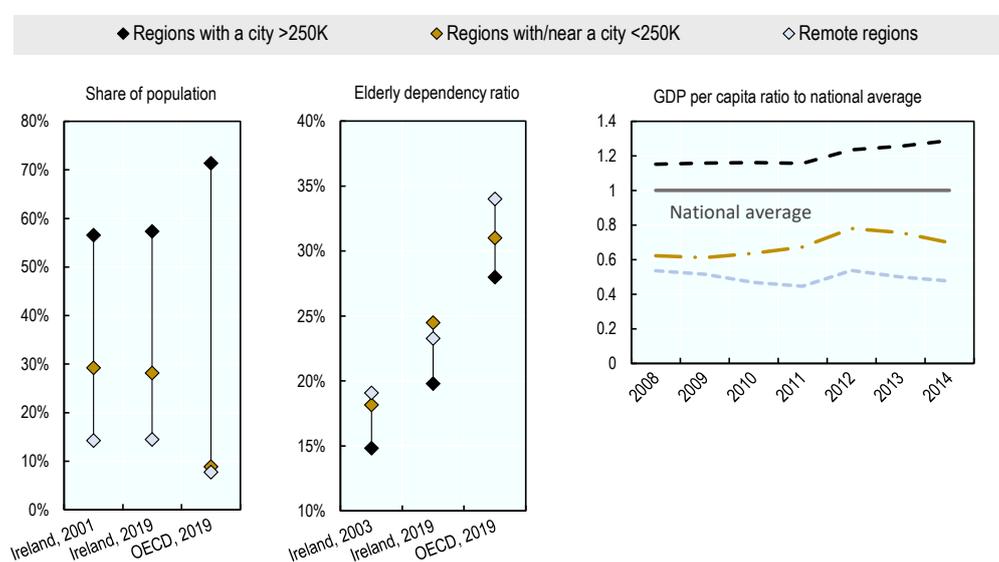


Ireland

Statistical profile

Figure 1. Statistical profile



| | Population growth 2008-2019 (%) | Growth in employment 2008-2016 (%) | GVA per worker (1 000 USD ppp) | GVA manufacturing share (%) | Hospital beds per 1 000 inhabitants |
|--------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Regions with a city >250K | 1.4 (0.7) | 0.3 (0.4) | 121 (74) | 20 (18) | 3.3 (8) |
| Regions with/near a city <250K | 0.9 (0.2) | -1.3 (-0.1) | 74 (62) | 33 (23) | 2.8 (4.9) |
| Remote regions | 1.2 (0.5) | -1.1 (-0.05) | 57 (58) | 22 (18) | 2.1 (4.6) |

Note: OECD average is presented in parenthesis. Data for hospital beds are from 2018 and data for GVA per worker, GVA by sector and unemployment rate are from 2017. GVA and GDP are measured in USD PPP (2015). The OECD average by order in the table has been made with 33, 25, 26, 25, 19 countries with available data. Employment growth measured as employment in the workplace.

Source: (OECD, 2020^[1]) OECD Regional Statistics (database), <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/region-data-e>.

Policy framework and Institutional setting of rural development

Rural Definition

- ❖ Ireland does not have a single formal definition of what is rural for policymaking purposes. The Central Statistics Office of Ireland defines rural as settlements with a population of less than 1,500 persons. CEDRA, the precursor to the Action Plan for Rural Development, defines rural as areas outside the administrative boundaries of the five main cities (Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford). The National Planning Framework, published in 2018 by the Irish Government, defines rural as all areas outside towns with a population of less than 10,000.

National rural policy

- ❖ Ireland has an explicit national rural policy defined by Action Plan for Rural Development 2017-2019. This plan acts as an overarching structure for the co-ordination and implementation of initiatives right across the government, which benefit rural Ireland. The Plan contains five key pillars aiming to improve both the economic and social fabric of rural areas. The five pillars are: i) supporting sustainable communities; ii) supporting enterprise and employment; iii) maximising our rural tourism and recreation potential; iv) fostering culture and creativity in rural communities and v) improving rural infrastructure and connectivity.

Lead ministry(ies) and other co-ordination bodies in charge

Table 1. Main institutions in charge of rural development policies at the national level

| Ministries/Committees (most important first) | Role |
|---|---|
| Department of Rural and Community Development | Promote rural and community development and to support vibrant, inclusive and sustainable communities throughout Ireland. |
| Committee on Rural and Community Development | Consider and report on matters including expenditure, administration and policy of the relevant Government Department |
| Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine | Key instrument for implementing rural development policy in Ireland |

Table 2. Main institutions in charge of rural development policies at the sub-national level

| Institutions | Role |
|--|---|
| Western Development Commission | Promote social and economic development in the Western Region |
| Udaras na Gaeltachta | Regional authority responsible for the economic, social and cultural development of the Gaeltacht |
| Local Authorities | Planning and implementation of rural policy |
| Local Community Development Committees | Co-ordinate, plan and oversee local and community development funding |

Key objectives in rural policy and delivery mechanisms

- Ireland's rural development policy allocates a high degree of importance to economic and social areas (Table 3). Table 4 shows the main priorities of its rural policy.
- The main delivery mechanisms to conduct implement rural policies are dedicated grants programmes.

Table 3. Relevance of sectors in rural development policy

| Policy areas | Weight on rural policy | Average OECD |
|--------------|------------------------|--------------|
| Economic | 40% | 40% |
| Social | 40% | 30% |
| Environment | 20% | 30% |

Note: Self-reported responses from country delegate to the question: "Please grade from 1 to 10 the importance rural development policies in your country assigns to economic, social and environmental areas".

Source: OECD (2018), "Responses to the institutional survey on rural policy in OECD countries".

Table 4. Relevant objectives in rural development policy

| Top objectives | Programmes | Main financial mechanisms to support the strategy |
|--|---|---|
| Service delivery | Various funding schemes provided by Dept. Rural and Community Development | NA |
| Accessibility (transport/broadband) | Transport policy remit of Dept. Transport, Tourism and Sport. Broadband remit of Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment | NA |
| Innovation support to "rural" sectors | Skills needs of regions identified by network of Regional Skills Fora | NA |
| Support to private sector, jobs and investment | Inward Investment Promotion Agency. Indigenous enterprise development. Local Enterprise Offices. | NA |
| Quality of life/well-being of rural residents | Various programmes | NA |

Note: Objectives presented are the objectives with higher scores in the survey responses.

Source: OECD (2018), "Responses to the institutional survey on rural policy in OECD countries".