Public Consultation - Questions & Answers Supporting Document

Why does Ireland need a new National Digital Strategy?

Digital transformation continues to affect all aspects of economic and social life. It brings with it fundamental opportunities, benefits and challenges for Ireland. Digital transformation forces us to think differently, about how and where we work, our education and skills needs, our privacy and security, and the impacts of increasing online interaction from shopping to socialising to seeking information.

In 2013, Ireland's previous National Digital Strategy was developed as a first step towards a digitally enabled society doing more with digital. Five years on, we need to reflect on, understand and plan for the next phase of the digital transformation. A new National Digital Strategy informed by extensive consultation with the public and a wide range of stakeholders is an opportunity to shape our collective future together. The Strategy will provide a long-term vision for how Ireland should respond to digitalisation that is citizen-centred as well as helping Ireland increase its profile internationally and at EU level as a leading digital economy and society.

What might be contained within the new National Digital Strategy?

The Strategy will set out Ireland's long-term vision and high-level ambition, and provide for overarching principles to guide public policy. It will assess Ireland's performance across key areas and provide an understanding of our strengths and weaknesses, important opportunities and challenges ahead, as well as setting out clear policy gaps and priorities. It will bring together important social and economic policy domains such as access, effective use, well-being and trust, innovation and growth, digital Government and data sharing, and the labour market, in order to shape outcomes.

How will the new National Digital Strategy be developed and delivered?

The development of the new National Digital Strategy is being led as a shared effort by: the Department of the Taoiseach, Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, and the Office of the Chief Information Officer in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform.   A Digital Strategy Interdepartmental Group including representatives from all Departments is supporting its development ensuring a comprehensive whole-of-Government approach. The development of the Strategy will be shaped by insights from public consultation, extensive stakeholder engagement, and consultation with experts in the field.

What might be the key thematic areas of the national digital strategy?

Preliminary work, points to the National Digital Strategy focusing on a number of key policy areas. A focus on our digital foundations will include policies supporting critical digital infrastructure and the protection and security of this infrastructure. Regulation and legislation that is timely and well balanced is also a critical foundation for success.

Trust, society and well-being will be an important focus and will include addressing any digital divide and inclusion. Broad education and skills will play a significant role across all thematic areas, and increasing awareness, understanding and embedding trust will be a particularly important issue.

Effective use of digital by citizens and enterprise including the delivery of high quality digital public services, transparent data sharing and accessible online Government services will be a central theme.

Innovation and economic policies including the enterprise eco-system and productivity will be another central area of focus, as will managing labour market changes arising from increased digitalisation.

International and EU linkages and dimensions will also be an important feature of the Strategy.

What do we mean by digital transformation?

Digital transformation refers to the economic and societal effects of digitisation and digitalisation. Digitisation is the conversion of analogue data and processes into a machine-readable format. Digitalisation is the use of digital technologies and data as well as their interconnection which results in new or changes to existing activities.