



## Public Consultation Information Note

Digital technology is altering our way of life in ways that we are only beginning to understand. Enormous changes due to digital transformation means that we must think deeply about the skills our society will need, the jobs of the future, and how new technologies will increasingly affect how we go about our daily lives and tasks and how we interact with each other.

Ireland's new National Digital Strategy aims to map out how we can positively embrace digital advances for the benefit of every citizen, business, and community in Ireland. We want to educate and empower all our citizens to use digital to improve their lives.

Digital tools can help our small and medium businesses to compete successfully on a global scale accessing more customers. It can help our communities to have greater reach, support our older citizens to live independently, and can mean a higher quality of life for our citizens through better public services, such as more personalised health and education services.

While risks and fears associated with increasing technology changes are understandable and must be addressed, we must also embrace the enormous positive potential for Ireland. Technology when used appropriately can be a strong force for social good, whether it is providing more accurate diagnosis and treatments in medicine, reducing accidents on our roads, or enabling beneficial changes to our environment.

We have already seen very positive examples of the use of technology in Ireland. For example, our emergency services using mobile phones to assist in determining the exact location of people in need; fire brigade crews using drones as an aid at major incidents; local authorities using surveillance technology to combat illegal

waste; and connected personal monitored alarms enabling older and more vulnerable persons to continue to live securely in their homes.

In 2013, Ireland's previous National Digital Strategy was launched, and focused on *Doing more with Digital*. It was a first step to help Ireland reap the full rewards of a digitally enabled society, and set out practical actions and steps to encourage and assist citizens and businesses to get online.

Five years on, the Government is seeking to develop a new National Digital Strategy to take full advantage of the opportunities of digital transformation. We need to position Ireland to fully exploit digital to fulfil our potential - that is to maximise the well-being of our citizens as well as the productivity, competitiveness and sustainability of our economy.

This new Strategy aims to ensure that we support and shape the impact of technology for good and manage the transformation in an inclusive and citizen-centric way. This public consultation will ensure that the public are at the heart of the Strategy.

Following the conclusion of the consultation phase, all submissions will be published online and Government will draft and publish a Strategy that reflects them. Through answering the series of questions, your submission will help us carve out the issues that matter to the people of Ireland, and create a strong new National Digital Strategy based on the real concerns, needs and ambitions of the country.