

Rural Pact Conference

15-16 June 2022





Rialtas
na hÉireann
Government
of Ireland

Ár dTodhchaí
Tuaithe
Our Rural
Future



Our Rural Future 2021-2025

Ireland's Rural Development Policy



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Our Rural Future

A new approach to rural development

- **Whole-of-Government** policy for rural Ireland for the **next five years**
- Focuses on sustainable **economic, social, and environmental development**
- Emphasises the **interdependency** of rural and urban areas.
- Advocates **an integrated, place-based approach** to rural development
- Aims to **maximise the impact, coherence and effectiveness** of investment



Our Rural Future

High level objectives

More people **living and working** in rural Ireland

Rural towns as **vibrant hubs** for commercial and social activity

Reduced regional income disparities

Improved **access to public services**, such as transport links

Rural Ireland benefits from the **digital and green transitions**.

Rural communities, and especially **young people**, having an active role in **shaping their future**



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The Participative Approach

- Policy development was informed by extensive consultation with rural stakeholders and delivery partners
- Series of regional consultations, town hall events, youth workshops
- *Our Rural Future* responds to issues identified by those living/working in rural areas
- In-depth bilateral meetings held with Departments across Government
- Participative approach to policy development resulted in buy-in



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Our Rural Future

The Participative Approach

- Since policy launch:
 - Established Implementation Advisory Group
 - Higher Education and Research Network
 - Launched Rural Ideas Fora and Rural Youth Assembly
 - Openness to other ad-hoc engagements and supports to stakeholder organisations with interest in rural development



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Cross-Government coordination

- Measures in policy were co-created with Departments across Government
- Responsibility for delivery is assigned to relevant Department(s)
- Centrally co-ordinated by Department with overall responsibility for rural development
- Annual Work Programmes, and twice-yearly Progress Reports
- Allows room for policy to evolve to meet changing needs



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Cross-Government coordination – How?

- Policy approved by Government
- Establish point of contact within each Department
- Hold annual (or more regular) meetings with relevant policymakers in each Department
- Simplified reporting processes
- Championed at political level



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One year on

- **80% completion rate** for actions to be delivered in 2021
- **Enthusiasm from Departments** demonstrated in 2022 Work Programme



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Key observations

Identify Department or Agency to oversee policy development and implementation

Ideally, **distinct** from Departments with other potentially cross-cutting remits, i.e. Agriculture

Strong voice, ie senior Minister, to advocate publicly and politically, and to ensure accountability

Involve Departments early in the policy-making process

Build **relationships** with key implementers

Continue to **engage with stakeholders** throughout delivery phase



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Thank you

