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PART 14/27

COMMISSION STAFF WORKING DOCUMENT

Digital Decade 2025 country reports

Accompanying the document

Communication from the Commission to the European Parliament, the Council and the European Economic and Social Committee and the Committee of the Regions

State of the Digital Decade 2025: Keep building the EU's sovereignty and digital future

{COM(2025) 290 final} - {SWD(2025) 290 final} - {SWD(2025) 291 final} -
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European Commission

DIGITAL DECADE 2025
COUNTRY REPORTS

Ireland

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Executive summary

Ireland shows good progress in digital infrastructure and should further improve access to e-health records building on visible progress made in 2024. The country positions itself as a cybersecurity leader, particularly through strong implementation of the 5G Cybersecurity Toolbox and public cloud control investments.

Ireland shows a high level of ambition in its contribution to the Digital Decade, having set 11 national targets, 91% of which are very well aligned with the EU's 2030 targets. The country is following its trajectories moderately well, with 50% of them being on track (on the basis of the 2024 trajectories defined for 6 KPIs out of 8 analysed). Ireland addressed 64% of the 11 recommendations issued by the Commission in 2024, either by implementing significant policy changes (9%) or making some changes (55%) through new measures.

Fibre and very high-capacity network (VHCN) coverage continued to register strong growth in 2024, including in rural areas, and 5G coverage reached 89.9%, approaching 90%. The digitalisation of SMEs remains just above the EU average, while adoption of advanced technologies, such as AI, is broadly in line with the EU average. Ireland piloted the European Digital Identity Wallet and advanced the preparations for its eIDAS notification. The country also expanded initiatives to reduce the environmental footprint of public sector digital infrastructure, including by creating a new public service data centre and promoting green public procurement. Cyber resilience efforts were extended to SMEs and key sectors, with targeted actions in the health system.

Digital Decade KPI (1)	Ireland				EU		Digital Decade target by 2030	
	DESI 2024 (year 2023)	DESI 2025 (year 2024)	Annual progress	National trajectory 2024 (3)	DESI 2025	Annual progress	IE	EU
Fixed Very High Capacity Network (VHCN) coverage	78.5%	87.2%	11.0%	93.5%	82.5%	4.9%	100.0%	100%
Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) coverage	61.6%	73.5%	19.3%	-	69.2%	8.4%	-	-
Overall 5G coverage	85.3%	89.9%	5.4%	87.1%	94.3%	5.9%	100.0%	100%
Edge Nodes (estimate)	20	39	95.0%	18	2 257	90.5%	-	10 000
SMEs with at least a basic level of digital intensity (2)	-	73.4%	-0.5%	-	72.9%	2.8%	90.0%	90%
Cloud	53.1%	-	-	-	-	-	75.0%	75%
Artificial Intelligence	8.0%	14.9%	86.0%	18.0%	13.5%	67.2%	75.0%	75%
Data analytics	37.1%	-	-	-	-	-	75.0%	75%
AI or Cloud or Data analytics	64.1%	-	-	-	-	-	-	75%
Unicorns	12	13	8.3%	-	286	4.4%	-	500
At least basic digital skills	72.9%	-	-	-	-	-	80.0%	80%
ICT specialists	6.2%	6.3%	1.6%	7.5%	5.0%	4.2%	9.6%	~10%
eID scheme notification		No						
Digital public services for citizens	81.2	87.1	7.2%	82.0	82.3	3.6%	100.0	100
Digital public services for businesses	100.0	100.0	0.0%	100.0	86.2	0.9%	100.0	100
Access to e-Health records	11.4	24.5	115.8%	-	82.7	4.5%	80.0	100

(1) See the methodological note for the description of the indicators and other metrics.
(2) DESI 2025 reports Version 4 of the Digital Intensity Index, which is comparable with the DII value from DESI 2023 (referring to year 2022) for the calculation of annual progress. It is not comparable to the national trajectory, which is based on Version 3 of the index.
(3) National trajectory value if present in the national roadmap and if the indicator was measured in DESI 2025 (year 2024).

According to the 2025 special Eurobarometer on the Digital Decade, 77% of Irish people consider that the digitalisation of daily public and private services is making their lives easier. On the action of the public authorities, 92% consider it important to counter and mitigate the issue of fake news and disinformation online. And on competitiveness, 93% consider it important to ensure that European companies can grow and become 'European Champions' capable of competing globally.

A competitive, sovereign, and resilient EU based on technological leadership

Ireland's strong digital economy, driven by a dynamic ICT sector and a vibrant start-up ecosystem, benefits from high foreign direct investment and proactive innovation policies. Fixed infrastructure indicators (VHCN, fibre to the premises (FTTP)) are above the EU average, and Ireland is consolidating its role as a strategic digital gateway. 5G deployment continues steadily, although deployments in the 3.6 GHz band remain limited and there is a lack of demand for spectrum in the 26 GHz band. Ireland maintains a high level of SME digitalisation, but growth has been stagnating since 2022. Nevertheless, the uptake of advanced technologies, such as cloud, AI, and data analytics, remains strong. National strategies on semiconductors, edge computing, and quantum technologies advance the country's technological leadership. Moreover, cybersecurity resilience is being strengthened through targeted initiatives across enterprises and critical infrastructure.

Protecting and empowering EU people and society

Ireland continues to perform strongly on digital skills and gender inclusion, with one of the narrowest rural-urban divides in the EU. However, significant disparities persist across education levels. Growth in the number of ICT workers remains modest, and a decline in employer-led training may undermine long-term readiness. Digital public services are a national strength, particularly for businesses, but further back-end integration is needed to improve efficiency and accessibility. Ireland advanced its eID roll-out and digital health strategy in 2024; however, access to electronic health records remains limited, and onboarding healthcare providers is at an early stage. Progress on online safety, media regulation, and electoral integrity accelerated, strengthening Ireland's commitment to a human-centric and trusted digital environment. Complementary tools provided by the national regulator, including broadband availability checkers, telecom comparison platforms, and anti-scam measures, further support digital empowerment and consumer protection.

Leveraging digital transformation for a smart greening

Ireland is strengthening the link between digital innovation and sustainability, with public strategies promoting energy-efficient infrastructure, green procurement, and support to SMEs' sustainable adoption of digital technologies. Projects, like Build Digital, and the Digital Transition Fund are advancing the decarbonisation of key sectors, and new policies encourage environmental criteria in ICT and construction. However, the absence of a unified system to monitor emissions reductions with digital solutions is still an issue. Green skills development has also been prioritised to ensure workers are ready for the twin transitions.

National Digital Decade strategic roadmap

Ireland submitted its adjusted Digital Decade strategic roadmap in November 2024. It expands the total number of measures to 81, including 22 new initiatives, with a total budget of EUR 9.2 billion, of which EUR 4.8 billion is from the public budget (equivalent to 0.90% of GDP). Maintaining its original structure and funding priorities, the roadmap confirms Ireland's strong focus on SME digitalisation,

public service digitalisation, digital skills, and cybersecurity. Although no new national targets were introduced, Ireland reiterated its commitment to gigabit coverage by 2028 and sustained investment in digital inclusion and connectivity. Based on the national strategy, Harnessing Digital, the roadmap continues to prioritise digital infrastructure, digital skills, cybersecurity, and support for innovation and scale-ups. All targets align with the EU's 2030 goals, except the one access to e-Health records (80% compared to the EU objective of 100%). Ireland has made some efforts to follow up the 2024 roadmap recommendations through new policy measures and updates.

Funding & projects for digital

Ireland allocates 34% of its total recovery and resilience plan to digital (EUR 312 million)[1]. In addition, under cohesion policy, EUR 54 million, representing 5% of the country's total cohesion policy funding, is dedicated to advancing Ireland's digital transformation[2].

Ireland is a member of the Alliance for Language Technologies European Digital Infrastructure Consortium (EDIC) and of the Local Digital Twins towards the CitiVERSE EDIC. Ireland is directly participating in the Important Project of Common European Interest on Microelectronics and Communication Technologies (IPCEI-ME/CT). It is also a participating state of the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking (JU) and of the Chips JU.

Ireland has contributed to the Digital Decade's Best Practice Accelerator[3] by sharing four practices, including three in the Digital Skills cluster (SuCcES, INGENIC, and TU Dublin's mentoring model for women in ICT) and one on the green transition (Build Digital). These initiatives reflect Ireland's strategic focus on skills, innovation, and sustainable infrastructure.

Digital rights and principles

According to a monitoring study, Ireland has been relatively active in implementing the **European Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles**, with 89 initiatives overall and 4 new initiatives launched in 2024. Ireland is most active in the area of digital education, training and skills. Less activity has been identified with regards to a fair digital environment and sustainability. Measures in the area of putting people at the centre of the digital transformation appear to have most impact on the ground, in contrast to those addressing freedom of choice.

Recommendations

- **e-Health**: Accelerate the onboarding of healthcare providers and enable full access to electronic health records for everyone, including legal guardians and authorised persons, building on the implementation of the national Digital Health Strategy.
- **Artificial intelligence**: Continue to support applied AI innovation and skills development to strengthen Ireland's leadership in responsible, human-centric AI and accelerate its adoption by SMEs.

[1] The share of financial allocations that contribute to digital objectives has been calculated using Annex VII to the Recovery and Resilience Facility Regulation. Last data update: 16 May 2025.

[2] This amount includes all investment specifically aimed at or substantially contributing to digital transformation in the 2021-2027 Cohesion policy programming period. The source funds are the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, and the Just Transition Fund.

[3] The Best Practice Accelerator (BPA) is a platform that enables Member States to share successful measures and challenges encountered in their efforts to meet their Digital Decade targets and objectives. Best practices are made available to Member States via the BPA Repository and showcased in regular workshops, currently focused on three thematic clusters: Digital Skills, Green IT, and the Uptake of Digital Technologies.

- **Cybersecurity**: Strengthen efforts to address evolving threats, particularly for SMEs and public services.
- **ICT specialists and advanced skills**: make digital training and reskilling opportunities more accessible and more relevant to job market needs. Address the stagnation in gender participation in the digital sector through dedicated national measures.
- **Take-up of advanced technologies**: Support the adoption of advanced digital technologies (particularly AI and cloud) by businesses through the creation of regional ecosystems and industrial use-case pilots. Encourage the use of sovereign European solutions.
- **SMEs**: Improve the digitalisation of SMEs, including by prioritising support to those with lower levels of digital maturity, regardless of their size. Ensure the continuity of existing schemes beyond their current RRF funding.
- **5G**: Encourage the assignment of 5G mid-band spectrum and promote the deployment of stand-alone 5G networks and industrial use cases, including in rural and underserved areas.
- **eID:** Notify an eID scheme under the eIDAS Regulation to the Commission.

A competitive, sovereign and resilient EU based on technological leadership

Ireland's economy is characterised by a strong performance in several sectors, particularly technology and pharmaceuticals, which are largely driven by foreign direct investments (FDI). These investments have positioned Ireland as a major player in digital markets. The country's GDP growth was forecast to be around 3.3% in 2025, indicating a robust economic environment conducive to maintaining and boosting competitiveness.

Ireland has a significant footprint in the global digital economy, particularly in high-tech sectors. It holds substantial market activity in information and communication technologies (ICT)[4]. The Irish ICT sector represented 34.8% of the gross value added of the country in 2022, by far the highest share in the EU[5]. The presence of multinational enterprises heavily influences this sector, benefiting from Ireland's favourable corporate tax rates and skilled workforce.

Despite its strengths, Ireland faces challenges in public investment in R&D, which remains relatively low compared to EU averages. Nonetheless, the country has made significant strides in business digitalisation, performing above the EU average in several digital areas. In particular, R&D business expenditure in the ICT sector accounted for 42.98% of the total R&D expenditure in 2021, and the number of R&D personnel in the ICT sector as a percentage of the total number of R&D personnel was 44.65%. Ireland ranks as a 'strong innovator' in the European Innovation Scoreboard, with significant performance in the private sector R&D, indicating a robust innovation ecosystem that is crucial for maintaining technological leadership. The Irish Government is updating its National Digital Strategy in 2025, to set out a coherent vision for Ireland's ambition as a digital, AI and innovation leader; the revised Strategy will continue to align with the Digital Decade programme and its targets.

Ireland is advancing in AI, with increased adoption rates and initiatives to support digital transformation in SMEs. This includes funding from national initiatives and participation in European Digital Innovation Hubs, which are vital for fostering an environment conducive to technological innovation and competitiveness.

The start-up ecosystem in Ireland is vibrant, with a growing number of start-ups and unicorns. This sector benefits from proactive governmental policies and a supportive business environment that encourages innovation and entrepreneurship.

Digital infrastructure in Ireland is well-developed, with high rates of digital service use among citizens and businesses. This includes a leading role in digital public services for businesses and a strong push towards using digital IDs and digital credentials[6]. However, the country still faces challenges, such as the need for greater access to e-Health records, indicating areas where further improvement could boost overall digital competitiveness.

[4] The Economist Intelligence Unit. (2025). EIU One-Click Report: Ireland.
[5] Most of the indicators mentioned in the country report are explained in the DESI 2025 Methodological Note accompanying the State of the Digital Decade report 2025.
[6] European Commission. (2025). European Semester Annex on Effective Institutional Framework: Ireland.

Building technological leadership: digital infrastructure and technologies

Ireland continues to expand its digital infrastructure in line with EU connectivity targets, showing strong progress in FTTP and VHCN coverage and moderate progress in 5G, particularly in rural areas. These efforts underpin broader ambitions in technological sovereignty and resilience.

Connectivity infrastructure

Ireland's VHCN coverage reached 87.2% in 2024 (2030 national target: 100%), surpassing the EU average of 82.5% and with a strong annual growth rate of 11.0%. However, the country remains below its national trajectory. Rural coverage (72.19%) also exceeded the EU average (61.89%).

FTTP coverage increased significantly, reaching 73.48% in 2024, above the EU average of 69.24%, with an annual growth rate of 19.3%. Coverage in sparsely populated areas also rose to 72.11%, outperforming the EU average of 58.78%. The rural annual growth rate of 27.2% confirms strong momentum. The country did not provide a national trajectory point for 2024[7].

Ireland's 5G coverage rose to 89.94% in 2024, still below the EU average of 94.35%, with a modest annual increase of 5.4%. The country is on track according to its national trajectory. Ireland took a significant step forward in late 2022 through the Multi Band Spectrum Award, which allocated 465 MHz of spectrum—a 46% increase in total assignments—across the 700 MHz, 2.1 GHz, 2.3 GHz, and 2.6 GHz bands. Each of the three mobile network operators (Eir, Three, and Vodafone) received more than 100 MHz of mid-band spectrum. These licences come with robust population-based coverage obligations to be met progressively between 2026 and 2030.In rural areas, coverage reached 76.37%, lagging behind the EU's 79.57%, but Ireland's annual growth rate of 22.6% nearly doubled the EU's 11.9%, signalling targeted rural acceleration. However, 5G deployment in the strategic 3.4-3.8 GHz band remains low: total coverage rose to 58.83% (3.8%), below the EU's 67.72%, with national authorities reporting insufficient demand. In rural areas, this band reached 18.48% coverage, growing by 75.8% but still below the EU average of 26.19%, highlighting the need for further spectrum-based action.

Indicators on Ireland's broadband take-up show a mixed performance. In 2024, 69.05% of fixed broadband subscriptions were faster than 100 Mbps, slightly below the EU average of 71.88%, but Ireland's annual growth rate (13.1%) outpaced the EU's (9.1%). The share of subscriptions to speeds faster than 1 Gbps stood at 13.2%, well below the EU average of 22.25%, yet grew rapidly at 39.2%, nearly double the EU's 20.5%, suggesting significant demand potential. As fibre roll-out accelerates, especially in rural areas, 1 Gbps take-up is expected to rise. The National Broadband Plan (NBP) continues to drive progress: by end-2024, over 111,000 premises had been connected, with more than 326,000 premises (58% of the intervention area) able to order or pre-order a connection. Over 46,000 new premises were connected in 2024 alone, and NBP adoption is running ahead of schedule.

Ireland's 5G SIM penetration grew from 24.43% in 2023 to 31.97% in 2024. Despite being above the EU average in 2023, it fell behind the EU average of 35.56% in 2024. Moreover, Ireland's annual growth

[7] Due to improved data availability and additional analysis, Ireland has provided detailed new data for the year 2024. The data for 2024 is more accurate given this improved data availability, but the change in approach has resulted in a decrease in FTTP coverage and only a very minor increase in Fixed VHCN coverage for the year 2024 vs what was previously published in this report for the year 2023. This is due to differences in the calculation methodologies and data sources used by Comreg vs the calculation methodologies and data sources used in previous years where the figures were estimated using data collected directly from operators. To mitigate the impact of the change in approach and provide a more accurate insight into the actual year-on-year changes that have occurred, Ireland have provided revised figures for the year 2023.

rate (30.9%) lagged behind the EU's 63.9%, indicating a relative slowdown in 5G adoption momentum that could reflect either market saturation or bottlenecks in commercial offerings.

VHCN and FTTP

Ireland's VHCN and FTTP targets remain at 100% with a completion date set for 2028, as set out in the initial roadmap submitted in 2023. Based on the sustained growth rates recorded in 2024 and coverage now exceeding EU averages in both total and rural segments, the targets are considered realistic. It is therefore justified that the existing strategy, led by NBP, remains the primary measure, with no additional connectivity-related actions introduced in the roadmap adjustment. The NBP has expanded its reach to all counties and now includes 10 island communities. In 2024 alone, more than 65 000 premises were connected, with over 205 000 premises passed to date.

While no copper switch-off has yet occurred in practice, Eircom's intention to pursue copper switch-off was first publicly expressed in 2021. Following industry engagement and public consultation, in November 2023, ComReg (national regulatory authority) adopted a Copper Switch-Off (CSO) framework, which Eircom must follow when decommissioning its regulated legacy network services. In line with the ComReg Decision, the first step in the process of migration from legacy to modern infrastructure is for Eircom to submit a Switch Off Proposal to ComReg for consideration and, if appropriate, subsequent approval. On 12 May 2025, Eircom submitted such a proposal. Fibre subscriptions continue to rise, particularly in areas where open-access infrastructure allows for increased competition and provider choice. The rollout of FTTP by National Broadband Ireland (NBI) under the NBP has improved retail competition in rural areas. Recent data on broadband subscriptions indicates a fast-growing demand base.

There is currently no reported decline in network investment levels, but capacity challenges—particularly a shortage of skilled workers and local permitting delays—remain potential obstacles for the last mile of rollout. The government's continued coordination with stakeholders, including local authorities and telecom providers, was a key success factor for sustaining rollout momentum.

Ireland's position as a strategic gateway for EU connectivity is further strengthened by the EU-funded **PISCES subsea cable system**, which links Ireland with France, Spain and Portugal and enables interconnection with global transatlantic networks. While not nationally managed, this infrastructure project contributes directly to EU digital sovereignty and resilience goals.

5G

Ireland's 5G target remains at 100% population coverage by 2030, as set out in the initial roadmap submitted in 2023. While 5G rollout is advancing, spectrum assignment at 3.6 GHz although available, is not receiving sufficient demand. The roadmap adjustment submitted in 2024 does not include new dedicated measures for 5G deployment, relying instead on continued operator-led expansion and licensing frameworks.

Ireland's assignment of harmonised available spectrum in the 5G pioneer bands stood at 62.5% in 2025, unchanged since the previous year and significantly below the EU average of 74.63%. However, focusing exclusively on pioneer bands (700 MHz, 3.6 GHz, and 26 GHz) does not provide a full picture of spectrum assignment. In practice, 5G in Ireland is deployed across a broader range of bands, including 700 MHz, 1800 MHz, 2100 MHz, 2.3 GHz, 2.6 GHz, and 3.6 GHz. The 26 GHz band, while part of the EU-designated pioneer bands, remains unassigned due to a lack of demand by operators, rather than policy or regulatory delay. This can be explained by coverage and technical limitations of the band,

such as shorter range and limited equipment availability which combined with Ireland's relatively low population density, discourages operators from investing in network deployment in that specific band.

Although rural deployment in the 3.6 GHz band grew strongly, overall coverage in this frequency range remains limited. In parallel, Ireland has not yet launched or announced any national strategy for 5G stand-alone core deployment or vertical-specific use cases, such as network slicing.

Despite these gaps, the country's three main operators continued to expand 5G networks throughout 2024. Government **stakeholders highlighted persistent challenges in planning processes, staffing capacity, and backhaul delivery**. These included the **limited availability of skilled contractors**, the **capacity of the market to deliver at the required scale**, and **delays linked to local authority permitting**, particularly in rural and harder-to-reach areas. The absence of targeted state support or incentive mechanisms for advanced deployments may slow progress on industrial applications and rural densification over time.

Ireland's roll-out remains more market-driven and less supported by dedicated public incentives or national vertical strategies. As a result, industrial use cases and 5G stand-alone development remain limited.

Ireland's 5G infrastructure is also subject to increasing scrutiny in terms of security and resilience. As more than one third of the **EU's digital infrastructure traffic is routed through Ireland**, national authorities have intensified efforts to safeguard strategic telecom infrastructure. In particular, coordination between the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications, the **National Cyber Security Centre** (NCSC), and key telecom providers has focused on assessing systemic risk and ensuring the continuity of critical digital services. This includes both preventive cybersecurity measures and the physical protection of network assets. Given 5G's central role in powering future societal and economic functions, **Ireland's risk management approach** reflects the growing strategic importance of secure and resilient digital infrastructure.

Moreover, recent **climate-related events**, particularly in the west of Ireland, have caused disruptions to mobile services, triggering **cross-sectoral engagement on natural disaster preparedness**. In the case of the mobile networks, 84% of the network impacts were due to power loss. While some infrastructure was affected for the most part all such impacts were rectified quickly after power restoration. Risk mitigation now forms part of 5G infrastructure planning in exposed areas, with increased attention to backup power, redundancy, and access in flood-prone or wind-exposed zones. Although these efforts are ongoing, **they have not yet been translated into a new measure in the 2024 roadmap.**

2024 recommendation on connectivity: (i) Continue efforts to ensure full gigabit and 5G coverage, including by addressing operational bottlenecks such as permissions for telecoms mast deployment to extend mobile coverage. (ii) Ensure sufficient access of new players to spectrum for innovative business-to-business (B2B) and business-to-consumer (B2C) applications and encourage operators to speed up the deployment of 5G stand-alone core networks.
In 2024, Ireland continued the implementation of existing measures but did not take any new measures. In 2024, Ireland recorded high growth rates in VHCN and FTTP coverage, with rural areas also seeing strong improvements, confirming a trajectory aligned with national and EU targets. However, no new measures were introduced to tackle long-standing bottlenecks in planning and permitting, which continue to affect infrastructure roll-out. While rural 5G coverage expanded significantly, spectrum assignment remained unchanged, and no national plan for supporting 5G

stand-alone deployment or B2B use cases was launched due to the lack of demand. The roadmap adjustment did not add new measures in these areas.

Semiconductors

Semiconductors remain a priority in Ireland's digital strategy. In May 2025, Ireland published its National Semiconductor Strategy, Silicon Island. Developed following a public consultation with 42 contributions from industry, academia, and public stakeholders, the strategy fully aligned with the objectives of the EU Chips Act and Digital Decade, it sets out clear actions to grow the national semiconductor ecosystem through high-value job creation, skills development, international positioning, and infrastructure investment.

Key priorities include attracting leading-edge fabrication facilities, promoting R&D and start-ups, and establishing the industry-led Semiconductor Advisory Council. While no new semiconductor-specific measures were included in the 2024 roadmap adjustment, Ireland continues to engage actively in European-level initiatives under **the EU Chips Act**, including its role in **the European Semiconductor Board** and the **OECD Informal Semiconductor Network**. Ireland is also participating in the **IPCEI on Microelectronics and Communication Technologies** (IPCEI-ME/CT), with Analog Devices Inc., which announced a EUR 630 million investment to expand its Irish operations. A national **Chips Competence Centre** has already been established under the Chips Act framework.

Edge nodes

In 2024, Ireland continued implementation of existing measures but did not take any new measures. According to estimates, the number of edge nodes in Ireland increased from 20 in 2023 to 39 in 2024. Ireland's national roadmap includes a target of deploying 23 public sector edge nodes by 2025. This target is supported by a dedicated measure titled 'Public sector edge node project', which has already received EUR 41.5 million in public investment, with an additional EUR 63.4 million planned measure The measure is being monitored by the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO), and implementation continues as planned.

Further expansion of edge infrastructure – particularly for far-edge services requiring sub-5 millisecond latency – may be shaped by the future emergence of relevant use cases and clearer signals of market demand.

2024 recommendation on edge nodes: Explore opportunities for public-private partnerships and leverage funding mechanisms to support the roll-out of edge node infrastructure.

In 2024, Ireland continued implementation of existing measures but did not take any new measures. Edge node deployment progressed under public investment, but no new public-private partnership initiatives or funding mechanisms were reported.

Quantum technologies

Ireland launched its Quantum 2030 national strategy at the end of 2023, setting out its ambition to become an internationally competitive hub in quantum technologies by 2030. The strategy is structured around five pillars: **research, talent, collaboration, entrepreneurship, and awareness**, and is currently in its early implementation phase. Working groups have been established involving

enterprises, academia, and expert stakeholders. These groups are developing operational recommendations in areas such as micro-credentials, SME engagement, and skills planning.

While the roadmap does not set a specific quantum target, Ireland continues to support quantum-related R&D and talent development under its research and innovation framework. Ireland is also participating in the **EuroQCI** initiative, with a fibre-based quantum communication infrastructure linking Dublin, Waterford, and Cork now at the final stages of implementation. This infrastructure is being used to explore quantum key distribution (QKD) use cases in collaboration with government networks and the NCSC.

No new quantum-specific measures were introduced in the 2024 roadmap adjustment, but Ireland's involvement in **EuroHPC** and emerging EU collaboration on satellite-based quantum communication (with Germany, Luxembourg, and Greece) underscores its contribution to European sovereignty in this domain.

Supporting EU-wide digital ecosystems and scaling up innovative enterprises

Ireland boasts a dynamic digital start-up ecosystem, with a high adoption rate of advanced technologies among large firms and well-established infrastructure for innovation. However, progress in SME digitalisation has stalled, and the share of SMEs with at least a basic level of digital intensity stagnated in 2024 compared to 2022. This persistent gap between digitally advanced firms and less advanced firms risks limiting Ireland's long-term competitiveness. As highlighted in the Draghi report[8], improving the adoption of key digital technologies – particularly AI and data analytics – across enterprises of all sizes is essential to lifting productivity and boosting economic resilience.

SMEs with at-least-basic digital intensity

In 2024, 73.38% of SMEs in Ireland had at least a basic level of digital intensity (2030 national target: 90%), which was nearly unchanged from 74.05% in 2022. This stagnation contrasts with the broader EU trend, which saw an annual increase of 2.8%. Nevertheless, Ireland remains slightly above the EU average of 72.91%. Looking more closely at advanced adoption, 39.56% of Irish SMEs reached a high level or a very high level of digital intensity, significantly exceeding the EU average of 32.66%. This highlights a clear divide between a group of digitally advanced firms and a group of slower-moving firms, which continues to present a structural challenge.

Ireland's policy mix to support SME digitalisation has gradually expanded since the launch of its **national recovery and resilience plan** (RRP) and the **National Digital Strategy**. In 2024, the country maintained the abovementioned 90% target and strengthened several national instruments. The **Digital Transition Fund** had approved EUR 46.15 million for 498 companies by the end of 2024, while the **Grow Digital Voucher**, launched in September 2024, offers up to EUR 5 000 to SMEs for adopting digital tools. Although initial uptake was modest, demand increased by late 2024, in part due to its link with the more established **Digital for Business** initiative, which continued to receive strong engagement through the **Local Enterprise Offices**.

Complementing these financial supports, the **Grow Digital Portal**, launched in July 2024, offers SMEs a self-assessment tool and a tailored digital roadmap. Together, these instruments form a coherent support package. However, this has yet to yield measurable progress on the Digital Intensity Index.

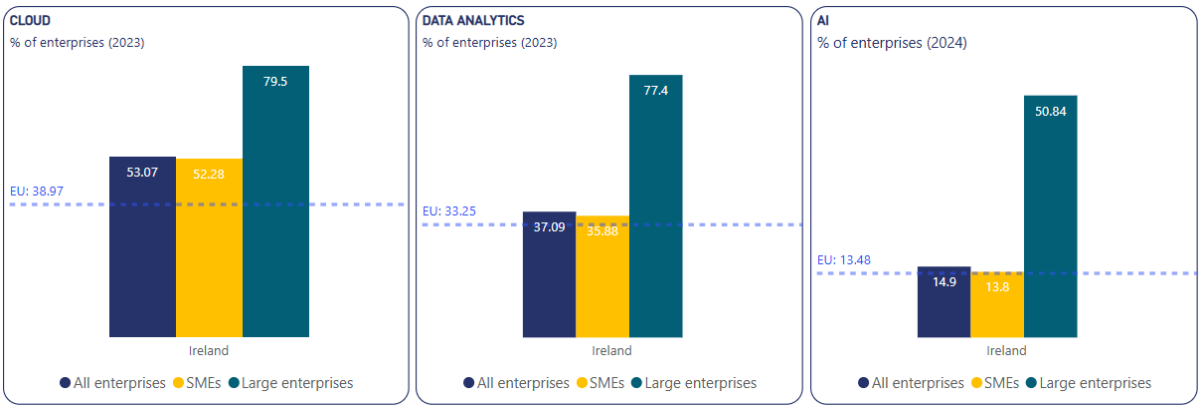
Ireland's **four European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs)** are now fully operational and serve as a vital bridge between the national strategy and local enterprise needs. Co-funded by the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) and the Digital Europe Programme, the EDIHs had provided 490 services to 265 companies by the end of 2024, including test-before-invest, access to AI and cybersecurity tools, and digital skills training. In addition, 62 public sector bodies also received support. EDIH services are fully funded for SMEs under *de minimis* State aid rules (which allow for small amounts of State aid to be provided without needing approval from the European Commission). After the initial set-up, the number of engagements by the Irish EDIHs is significantly increasing and is expected to reach full delivery capacity.

Looking ahead, Ireland will need to further improve outreach to SMEs with lower levels of digital maturity and secure sustainable funding beyond the current EU and RRP cycles to ensure the continuity and impact of its Digital Decade targets and objectives.

[8] Draghi, M., The future of European competitiveness, Part A – A competitiveness strategy for Europe, 2024.

Ireland

Take-up of cloud/AI/data analytics



According to 2023 data, 64.10% of enterprises in Ireland used either AI technologies, sophisticated or intermediate cloud computing services, or data analytics – well above the EU average of 54.7%. Although these results indicate a strong overall performance, the adoption gaps between large firms and SMEs persist (29.68 percentage points (pps)) but it is lower than the EU gap (32.97 pps). In 2022, SMEs accounted for 20.6% of national value added in the economy despite representing 97% of all enterprises with more than 10 employees, underscoring the importance of accelerating digital uptake in this segment to support inclusive growth and economic resilience.

Ireland maintains the EU 2030 target of achieving 75% adoption for each of the three technologies. While current uptake is encouraging, the pace of SME digitalisation is insufficient to meet the target without further targeted support. No new dedicated national programme was introduced in 2024, but several horizontal instruments continued to support adoption. These include **the Digital for Business initiative** (now expanded to firms with up to 50 employees), the **Grow Digital Voucher**, and the **Grow Digital Portal**, launched in September 2024. These instruments are delivered via the Local Enterprise Offices and cover AI, cloud, and data analytics.

A national awareness campaign focused on boosting SME uptake of these technologies is planned for 2025. In parallel, Ireland's four **EDIHs** continue to provide services across all three technology areas. The EDIHs are expected to scale up further as demand increases. Strategic coordination is supported by the **SME and Entrepreneurship Growth Taskforce** under the SME Growth Plan and the **Enterprise Digital Advisory Forum (EDAF)**, which provides guidance on emerging digital technologies based on input from government, enterprises, and academic stakeholders.

2024 recommendation on enterprises and SMEs: Develop targeted programmes and incentives to encourage enterprises and SMEs to adopt data analytics and AI and leverage their potential for innovation and growth.
Ireland made some efforts to address the recommendation through new policy actions in 2024. While relevant horizontal support measures remain in place and adoption has grown, the recommendation was **only partially addressed** as no new dedicated incentive or strategic stream was launched for these technologies.

- **Cloud**

Adoption rates of cloud computing continue to be some of Ireland's strongest digitalisation indicators. In 2023, 53.07% of Irish enterprises adopted cloud services, well above the EU average of 38.97%.

SMEs' adoption of the technology reached 52.28%, compared to 79.5% for large enterprises, resulting in a gap of 27.22 pps – below the EU average of 31.68.

Ireland has not formally joined the **IPCEI on Cloud Infrastructure and Services (IPCEI-CIS)** but continues to monitor its evolution. In parallel, the **Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE)** is contributing to the design phase of the **IPCEI on Computing Infrastructure (IPCEI-ECI)**. Although Ireland has not yet formally endorsed the IPCEI-ECI, it is actively exploring national participation and retains the option to join once the structure is finalised. Participation in such a project could strengthen Ireland's position in secure and sovereign next-generation cloud services and support wider EU objectives.

2024 recommendation on cloud: Promote the uptake of next-generation cloud infrastructure and services, including through engagement with EU-level initiatives such as the IPCEI-CIS.
In 2024, Ireland continued implementation of existing measures but did not take any new measures. While cloud adoption continued to grow and support measures remain available, Ireland has not formalised its participation in the IPCEI-CIS

- **Data analytics**

In 2023, 37.09% of Irish enterprises reported using data analytics, above the EU average of 33.25%. SME uptake was 35.88%, while large enterprises reported a rate of 77.4%, resulting in a gap of 41.52 pps – broadly in line with the EU average.

Ireland maintains a national target of achieving 75% uptake of data analytics by 2030. While analytics is acknowledged as a strategic priority in the roadmap, no new dedicated measure was introduced in 2024. Instead, data analytics remains an eligible area for support under the **Grow Digital Voucher**, the **Digital for Business initiative**, and the **Grow Digital Portal**.

- **Artificial intelligence**

In 2024, 14.90% of enterprises adopted AI (2030 national target: 75%), slightly above the EU average of 13.48%; this is a significant increase from 8.01% in 2023 (86%, above the EU's 67.2%). The country is lagging behind its national trajectory. Despite this strong annual growth, adoption remains highly uneven across firm sizes: only 13.8% of SMEs reported using AI, compared to 50.84% of large enterprises – a gap of 37.04 pps, significantly wider than the EU average.

The Enterprise Digital Advisory Forum (EDAF) contributes to policy alignment, and **CeADAR** – Ireland's National Centre for Applied AI – delivers AI-focused training and test-before-invest services as part of the European Digital Innovation Hub network. In 2024, CeADAR introduced targeted training to support AI literacy obligations under the EU AI Act, drawing positive feedback from both enterprises and public organisations.

Ireland's AI strategy, 'AI – Here for Good', continues to provide the national vision, focusing on trustworthy, human-centric AI, and its implementation is reportedly on track. However, a more structured use-case policy or sector-specific deployment initiative has not yet materialised.

Unicorns, scale-ups and start-ups

At the end of 2024, **Ireland had 13 unicorns**, up from 12 in 2023. One additional unicorn is expected to be confirmed shortly, reflecting the dynamism of Ireland's digital and innovation-driven economy. While no national unicorn target has been set, Ireland continues to strengthen its support ecosystem

for digital firms with high potential, with a focus on software as a service (SaaS), fintech, and deep-tech sectors.

The 2024 roadmap reconfirms **digital entrepreneurship and scale-up growth** as strategic priorities. Several new and scaled-up funding instruments were introduced to support enterprises throughout their growth cycle. The **Seed and Venture Capital Scheme 2025-2029** was renewed with a EUR 250 million allocation (an increase of EUR 75 million), aiming to increase Series A and growth-stage equity financing and improve the domestic capital environment.

The EUR 90 million **Irish Innovation Seed Fund Programme (IISF)** was launched through a partnership between Enterprise Ireland, the European Investment Fund, and the Ireland Strategic Investment Fund. The IISF focuses on highly innovative early-stage enterprises, particularly in areas like AI, advanced computing, climate, and clean tech.

To address structural gaps in scale-up finance, the government established a **Finance for Scaling Group**, which published its first report in July 2024. The report recommends creating new public instruments to support scale-ups, improving the mobilisation of institutional capital, and revising tax policy to align it with long-term investment needs. An implementation Action Plan to develop the recommendations into concrete policy actions is being prepared.

Access to finance in Ireland continues to improve. Venture capital investment reached 0.4% of GDP in 2023 – slightly below the EU average of 0.5% – while private equity remained at 0.2%, below the EU average of 0.4%. Access to institutional capital remains constrained by the low engagement of pension funds and insurance companies, despite targeted public-private dialogues held in 2024.

Ireland's **start-up and scale-up ecosystem** is supported by a wide range of Enterprise Ireland schemes, including the **Pre-Seed Start Fund**, **Competitive Start Fund**, **High Potential Start-Up Fund**, and **New Frontiers** programme. These tools are delivered through an expanding network of innovation hubs and founder supports. A **National Start-Up Hub** is under development and expected to launch in 2025, centralising ecosystem access and improving service delivery for early-stage founders.

Ireland's broader strategic approach was set out in **'Delivering for Ireland – Strategy 2025-2029'**, published in January 2024. The strategy outlines Ireland's ambition to support 1 000 start-ups by 2029, strengthen global competitiveness, and prioritise sectors such as AI, health tech, and sustainability. A dedicated **Start-Up Ireland Plan**, referenced in the strategy, is currently under preparation to consolidate and coordinate national start-up supports.

2024 recommendation on unicorns and scale-ups: Increase funding mechanisms such as the Digital Transition Fund and Seed and Venture Capital Scheme to support digital entrepreneurship and nurture potential unicorns.
Ireland fully addressed the recommendation by putting significant policy actions into place in 2024. Major new financial instruments were launched in 2024, and structural finance reforms are actively being developed to improve scale-up readiness and long-term competitiveness.

Strengthening cybersecurity & resilience

Ireland has taken significant steps to strengthen its cybersecurity and digital resilience architecture, with progress observed across individual awareness, enterprise preparedness, regulatory frameworks, and strategic capacity building.

Digital safety awareness and behaviour among individuals remain high. In 2023, 80.69% of individuals took at least one action to protect their personal data online – well above the EU average of 69.55%. Moreover, 59.23% took three or more protective measures, indicating widespread above-basic digital safety skills. Refusing the use of personal data for advertising was the most common behaviour (63.1%), while only 40.39% of individuals read privacy policies.

Cyber resilience among Irish enterprises is improving. In 2024, the share of businesses reporting ICT outages due to external cyberattacks dropped to 1.22%, down from 2.1% in 2022 and well below the EU average. However, 10.37% of enterprises reported other types of ICT-related incidents, such as internal system failures. As of 2022, 86.22% of firms had put in place some form of ICT security measures, and 69.16% included staff awareness-raising and training actions.

On secure internet protocols, mixed progress was observed. Ireland continues to lag behind in IPv6 adoption – only 23% of end users and 10% of servers used IPv6 as of Q3-2024 (below the EU averages of 37% and 16%, respectively). However, it leads on DNS Security Extensions (DNSSEC), achieving a validation rate of 49% (EU average: 43%).

Transposition of the NIS2 Directive is still pending. Ireland missed the 17 October 2024 transposition deadline, although drafting the legislation was prioritised by the Irish government in July 2024. Until it is adopted, entities are not required to register, and reporting portals remain offline. Ireland is one of several Member States facing delays.

In parallel, the **Resilience of Critical Entities Directive** was transposed into Irish law via S.I. No. 559/2024, enabling the identification of Critical Entities in the digital infrastructure sector. ComReg has been designated as the Competent Authority for Digital Infrastructure and will assume supervisory responsibilities under this framework, including following the full transposition of the NIS2 Directive.
Strategic governance measures have expanded. A mid-term review of the National Cyber Security Strategy 2019-2024 was conducted in 2023. Notable outcomes include the expansion of the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), the establishment of a Counter-Ransomware Task Force, and improved cross-sector information-sharing. In 2024, a National Cybersecurity Coordination and Development Centre (NCC-IE) was launched with EUR 4.2 million in joint EU-national funding.

Efforts to secure 5G networks have advanced. The Communications Regulation and Digital Hub Development Agency (Amendment) Act 2023 provides the legal basis for 5G vendor restrictions, which entered into force on 1 September 2024. A Technical Stakeholder Consultation was held between June-August 2024. Based on the responses to that consultation, guidelines on the implementation of technical and organisational measures to manage the risks posed to the security of networks and

services will be drafted for the purpose of providing practical guidance to providers. The NCSC organises quarterly CORE (Cyber Operational Readiness Engagement) meetings with mobile operators to strengthen joint response preparedness.

Cybersecurity support for SMEs has expanded. The Cybersecurity Review Grant, launched in 2024 under the Digital Transition Fund, enables SMEs to assess and upgrade their defences. This is complemented by services from Ireland's European Digital Innovation Hubs (EDIHs), which provide fully funded cybersecurity, AI, and HPC support for SMEs.

Skills development and awareness-raising initiatives are growing. Ireland supports enterprise-led cybersecurity training through the National Apprenticeship Alliance and Skillnet Ireland. Awareness campaigns are promoted by Enterprise Ireland and the Small Firms Association, with targeted outreach in schools via digital safety teaching support.

Longer-term resilience is being fostered through innovation. The National Challenge Fund's Digital for Resilience Challenge supports applied research on cyber risk and continuity. One flagship project – 'Digital Resilience for SMEs' – focuses on preparedness and reducing exposure among small firms.

Protecting and empowering EU people and society

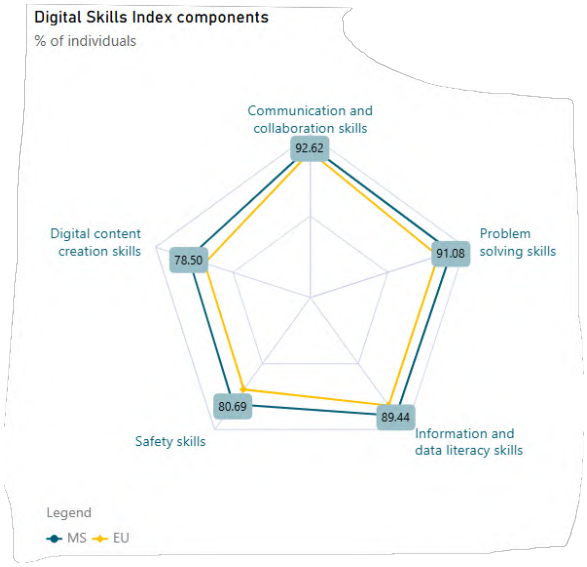
Empowering people and bringing the digital transformation closer to their needs

Ireland's digital transformation is underpinned by a strong foundation of high-skill levels and wide digital access, yet persistent inequalities require continuous, targeted action. The national approach recognises that digital progress must also tackle the barriers faced by lower-income groups, older adults, and those with lower levels of educational attainment. Policy efforts increasingly emphasise not just access to infrastructure but also the capacity of individuals and communities to engage meaningfully with digital services and the online environment. Digital upskilling is increasingly embedded across public service delivery, labour market activation, and education planning, supported by evolving coordination between national and local actors.

While structural programmes are in place, fragmentation and under-coverage remain challenges – particularly for hard-to-reach populations. Moreover, digital divides continue to intersect with broader social and regional disparities, making inclusion a cross-cutting policy concern. However, Ireland has taken significant institutional steps to ensure a secure and rights-respecting digital environment, with recent reforms in online safety regulation, media supervision, and democratic protection. These include an independent oversight of harmful content, strengthened electoral resilience, and better cooperation between regulators, education providers, and civil society. Overall, Ireland's digital transition is characterised by strong digital maturity, but inclusiveness now stands as the critical frontier to sustain progress and ensure that no group is left behind.

Equipping people with digital skills

Basic digital skills



In 2023, 72.91% of the Irish population had at least a basic level of digital skills, placing Ireland significantly above the EU average of 55.56%. Although no new data was released in 2024, Ireland remains one of the EU's best performers. A demographic breakdown shows this strength to be widely shared across age, geography, and gender, though notable gaps remain based on education level.

- **Gender gap**: 74.43% of men and 71.45% of women in Ireland had at least a basic level of digital skills – with a gender gap of 2.98 pps, slightly above the EU average of 2.23 pps.
- **Education level**: The digital divide is widest between educational groups. While 88.23% of those with tertiary education possess at least a basic level of digital skills, only 14.43% of individuals with low or no formal education do, creating a gap of 58.48 pps – one of the highest in the EU.

- **Living areas**: Digital skills are widespread in rural communities, with 71.55% of residents having at least a basic level of digital skills. The rural-urban gap is just 1.36 pps, far below the EU average (8.06 pps).
- **Age groups**: The highest levels of digital skills are observed among those aged 25-34 (87.99%). The lowest is among those aged 55-64 (46.74%), but this is still well above the EU average.
- **Digital Skills Index**: Ireland scores above the EU average in all five digital competence areas. Communication and collaboration scored highest (92.62%), while digital content creation was the lowest at 78.50%.

Ireland retains its 2030 national target of achieving 80% basic digital skills among its population, which appears realistic given the current good performance. Several major initiatives launched or scaled up in 2024 support this trajectory and are described below.

The **Adult Literacy for Life (ALL)** Strategy remains Ireland's overarching policy for lifelong learning, with a strong digital component. In 2024, it funded 103 community-based projects focused on digital and literacy inclusion. Applications opened in December 2024 for the 2025 Collaboration and Innovation Fund. The purpose of the fund is to pay for collaborative and innovative projects that support adults with unmet literacy, numeracy, digital and financial literacy needs, and create a more literacy friendly and equal society. Also in 2024, The ALL-programme Office – housed in SOLAS - provided additional funding to Age Action on expanding their digital literacy programme for older people. 1023 people completed the competency-based digital skills training, of which: 406 older learners completed their pre-course assessment measuring skills and confidence, and 246 of whom also completed their post-course assessment.

The **Social Inclusion and Community Activation Programme (SICAP)** delivers digital inclusion support across 30 contract areas, including loans of digital devices, IT workshops, and outreach to marginalised communities. As of 2024, 34 IT courses were active across seven regions, and three local organisations implementing the courses were focused entirely on digital access initiatives.

Libraries continue to play a vital role in digital access. In 2024, Ireland upgraded the digital infrastructure across 330 public libraries, providing free access to new PCs, laptops, and tablets. These spaces also complement ALL by offering accessible internet and training environments for underserved groups.

From an employment perspective, the **Pathways to Work** strategy provides targeted upskilling and digital training to jobseekers and those outside the labour force. Irish authorities have highlighted as a vital measure to connect national policy with local delivery efforts.

Ireland also continues to integrate digital skills across the education system. The **Digital Strategy for Schools to 2027 sets out the Department of Education and Youth's policy to embed the use of digital technology across the curriculum in teaching, learning and assessment in primary and secondary schools.** The **STEM Education Policy Statement 2017-2026** promotes STEM teaching, learning and assessment practices using digital technologies at primary and secondary levels. Additionally, the **new Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy (2024–2033)** ensures the development digital literacy skills, knowledge, and dispositions from early childhood to the end of secondary education..

Under Ireland's RRP, a EUR 64 million investment **supports digital inclusion across the education spectrum**. The package combines infrastructure such as the provision of high-speed broadband of 100Mbs for almost 1000 primary schools and funding for a once off grant scheme for all recognised

primary and post primary schools in the free education scheme to support learners at risk of educational disadvantage through the digital divide. These investment projects were aligned with strategic reforms including the Digital Strategy for Schools to 2027, the Adult Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy, measures to increase the number of ICT graduates, and supports for further and higher education institutions to provide laptops to disadvantaged students. This holistic investment reinforces Ireland's ambition to address digital divides across all education levels[9].

At enterprise level, Skillnet Ireland, the National Apprenticeship Alliance, and Local Enterprise Offices remain central delivery points for demand-led upskilling. A **pilot SME Training Cost Recovery Scheme** is under development to subsidise small businesses when allowing employees take time off for digital skills training.

ICT specialists

In 2024, Ireland reached 6.3% of ICT specialists in total employment (2030 national target: 226 000, around 9.6% of employment), well above the EU average of 5.0%. However, this represents only a marginal increase of 0.1 pps from 6.2% in 2023, with an annual growth rate of 1.6%, significantly below the EU average growth of 4.2%. This relatively slow increase takes place against the backdrop of a 1.1 % growth in the number of people in employment in Ireland between Q2 2023 and Q3 2024[10]. While Ireland maintains a strong baseline, progress remains too slow to meet the national target, and the country is lagging behind its expected trajectory. **To reach the objective, Ireland would need to add around 8 700 new ICT specialists annually, a pace that has not yet been achieved under current trends.**

Ireland continues to outperform the EU average in closing the gender gap. Women accounted for 24.4% of ICT specialists in 2024, compared to 19.5% at EU level. However, the annual growth rate was modest (0.4% vs 0.5% in the EU), signalling a stagnation that risks limiting further convergence. There is still a need for renewed momentum to close this gender gap.

Meanwhile, ICT training provision in enterprises declined. In 2022, 23.21% of Irish firms with more than 10 employees provided ICT training, slightly above the EU average (22.37%). By 2024, this had fallen to 21.58%, below the EU average (22.29%). The annual contraction reflects a fall in employer-led upskilling, pointing to a structural fragility in Ireland's overall training system despite its otherwise advanced digital landscape.

The Irish labour market remains focused on high-value digital roles. Based on Eurostat data from online job advertisements, **the most sought-after profiles in 2024 were software and applications developers and analysts (56.5% of postings), followed by ICT operations and user support technicians (13.5%) and other ICT specialist roles (15.2%).** The 'other ICT specialist roles' category exceeds the EU average and comprises experts in cybersecurity, AI, and advanced digital systems. Demand for telecommunications and hardware roles remains low, suggesting a continued shift to expert digital profiles.

Ireland reaffirmed its policy commitment to raise the number of ICT specialists in the 2024 roadmap, which maintains a package of nine core measures supported by EUR 957 million. A structural reform of the **National Training Fund** is central to this approach, allocating **EUR 1.485 billion** to tertiary and higher education between 2025 and 2030. Apprenticeship budgets were increased by **EUR 67.4 million in 2024 then over 77 million in 2025. 244 active ICT apprentices** were reported in 2023 which grew

[9] Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard: Thematic analysis Digital skills and education, December 2024.
[10] Data available at: https://www.cso.ie/en/statistics/generalstatisticalpublications/irelandtheyearinnumbers/

to 447 in 2024. At the end of Q1 2025, there 484 active ICT apprentices, with 42 ICT apprentice registrations being recorded in Q1 2025. Further growth is planned through 2025.

Upskilling and reskilling mechanisms also remained active. **Springboard+** and **Skillnet** Ireland continued throughout 2024, targeting both employed and unemployed individuals. The upcoming Springboard+ call in 2025 will prioritise digital and ICT programmes. A **new Digital Technology Skills Roadmap** is also under preparation to forecast demand in advanced specialist roles, such as cybersecurity, AI, and quantum technologies. However, no new gender-specific or expert-focused actions were included in the 2024 roadmap.

Ireland's stronger-than-average share of female ICT professionals may partly reflect successful institutional efforts. As part of the EU's Best Practice Accelerator[11], Ireland presented three high-impact higher education initiatives to EU Member States: (i) the **SuCcES programme** (Technological University Dublin), launched in 2021, supporting recruitment and retention of women in ICT academia; (ii) **INGENIC** (Trinity College Dublin), a 2023 national network coordinating institutional gender strategies across computing departments; and (iii) Technological University Dublin's long-running **mentoring model for female students in computing**, operational since 2012. While not government-led, these initiatives illustrate scalable approaches to boosting gender inclusion across the EU.

2024 recommendation on ICT Specialists: Expand apprenticeship programmes and reskilling and upskilling initiatives to meet the growing demand for ICT specialists through a structural reform of the National Training Fund. Efforts should be continued in bridging the gender gap.
Ireland made some efforts to address the recommendation through new policy actions in 2024. Structural reforms and significant financial commitments advanced the apprenticeship and reskilling agenda, but more targeted national action will be needed to accelerate gender equality in ICT careers.

Key digital public services and solutions – trusted, user-friendly, and accessible to all

In 2024, Ireland confirmed its position as one of the EU's top performers in the provision of digital public services, especially for businesses. **The country achieved a score of 87.08 for digital public services for citizens (2030 national target: 100), well above the EU average of 82.32, and a significant improvement from 81.21 in 2023 (up 7.2%).** This annual growth rate was double the EU's 3.6%, placing Ireland on a promising path. Cross-border services for citizens saw equally strong progress, rising from 78.69 in 2023 to 85.79 in 2024 – again ahead of the EU benchmark and with an annual growth rate of 9.0% (EU: 4.3%). **The country is on track to meet both its national and EU-level targets for digital public services by 2030.**

Digital public services for businesses remain Ireland's top strength. Since 2020, Ireland has maintained a perfect score of 100 for both domestic and cross-border digital services for businesses – one of only three EU countries to do so. Maintaining this leadership will require sustained attention to usability, accessibility, and back-end interoperability.

[11] The Best Practice Accelerator (BPA) is a platform that enables Member States to share successful measures and challenges encountered in their efforts to meet their Digital Decade targets and objectives. Best practices are available to all Member States via the BPA Repository and showcased in regular workshops, currently focused on three thematic clusters: Digital Skills, Green IT, and the Uptake of Digital Technologies.

Despite this strength, e-Health remains a structural weakness. In 2024, Ireland's score for access to e-Health records rose to 24.52, up from 11.37 in 2023 – an impressive growth rate of 115.8%. Nevertheless, this remains far below the EU average of 82.7. Ireland is therefore progressing quickly from a low baseline but still faces major gaps in availability and access across medical providers and service categories.

Meanwhile, the **proportion of individuals interacting with public authorities online** remained strong, albeit with a slight decline. The share of users stood at **90.09% in 2024**, down from **91.53% in 2023**, but still significantly above the EU average of **74.71%**. This small drop does not appear to reflect a structural issue as citizen uptake in Ireland continues to rank among the highest in the EU.

eID

Ireland continues to perform strongly in digital identification. The share of **eID** users reached 73.8% in 2024, well above the EU average of 41.1%. The **MyGovID** system has been widely adopted and continues to, with over 2.7 million verified accounts as of December 2024, representing close to 65% of the adult population. Ireland has set an ambitious target of reaching 80% coverage among eligible individuals by 2030.

Ireland is actively participating in EU-level pilots related to the **European Digital Identity Wallet (EUDI)**, including Digital Credentials for Europe. In 2024, Ireland conducted a pre-notification compliance assessment for MyGovID and coordinated with the European Commission and the Cooperation Network in preparation for formal eIDAS notification, expected in 2025. A pilot of the EUDI Wallet was carried out with 500 public servants, and broader implementation is in preparation. MyGovID is also being tested across sectors such as banking and social security. No major strategic changes were introduced in 2024, but implementation continues in line with the eIDAS 2.0 framework.

2024 recommendation on eID: Notify an eID scheme under the eIDAS Regulation to the Commission, while leveraging digital schemes such as MyGovID and the EU Digital Identity Wallet to improve access to essential services under eIDAS.
Ireland made some efforts to address the recommendation through new policy actions in 2024. Preparations for eIDAS notification advanced, and the EUDI Wallet was piloted. However, Ireland did not yet submit a formal notification in 2024. Further steps are planned in 2025.

Digitalisation of public services for citizens and businesses

Ireland's roadmap reconfirms the 2030 target of achieving 100% availability of key digital public services for both citizens and businesses. Progress in 2024 was supported by streamlined service delivery and improved integration across systems, with a strong emphasis on human-centric design.

Ireland's latest Programme for Government reinforces the role of the Minister for Public Expenditure and Reform in driving digitally enabled transformation for the benefit of citizens and wider society. A roadmap for the all-embracing transformation of Public Services will be published in June 2025. This will set out how Ireland will go beyond the EU 2023 targets by having 100% of applicable public services online and these services being consumed online by at least 90% of people.

Administrative simplification and digital-by-default approaches were strengthened through **Gov.ie** improvements and the ongoing development of the **Public Service Transformation 2030** strategy. Irish authorities highlighted recent improvements in back-end integration, interoperability standards, and

the reusability of government-held data – building on the **'only once' principle**. The **Interoperability Framework** piloted in 2024 underpinned these developments, particularly in health and social protection services.

Ireland's public service cloud strategy was also refined. While not framed explicitly as a sovereignty measure, the state maintains control over its core infrastructure through the **Office of the Government Chief Information Officer (OGCIO) managed public service cloud**, hosted on secure national servers. Further developments in line with the **European Interoperable Cloud Framework** are expected in 2025.

In addition, under the **recovery and resilience plan**, Ireland allocated **EUR 85 million (Component 2)** to support the digital transformation of the public administration. This includes the **development of an online response option for the population census**, which aims to make the data collection more efficient, streamline administrative tasks, and reduce processing time through digital means.

e-Health

Ireland did not provide a national e-Health trajectory point for 2024 but made significant progress, with its e-Health maturity score more than doubling to 24.52. Although still well below the EU average of 82.7, the 13-point improvement signals the growing availability of digital health services across the system. For the first time, Ireland submitted disaggregated data for each of its six health regions, reflecting regional progress and efforts to close gaps in service availability.

In 2024, Ireland further developed its electronic health record infrastructure, prioritising data on eDispensations and patient identification. This roll-out began in pharmacies nationwide, supported by HSE Live – a centralised assistance platform for health service users. A national patient application was soft-launched in 2024 for select user groups. However, as this occurred after the 31 December 2024 cut-off for this report, it is not yet reflected in the current maturity score.

Ireland's **Digital Health Strategy 2023-2030** provides the strategic framework for integrated services. Key components include the development of a national Shared Care Record starting in 2025, the expansion of ePrescriptions and secure messaging for primary and community care, and pilots for the interoperability between doctor's systems and central databases. This is further underpinned in Ireland's latest Programme for Government which states that Government will 'Continue to work towards the full digitisation of Irish healthcare records and information systems'. Digital for Care describes a stepwise approach to delivering on this ambition and to put in place digital health records for all, requiring a National Patient App, a National Shared Care Record and an enterprise level Electronic Health Record (EHR) system.

To complement this, Ireland is using EUR 75 million from the Recovery and Resilience Facility to invest in e-Health tools, such as hospital ePharmacy systems and an integrated financial management platform[12]. Stakeholders highlighted that further progress would depend on onboarding healthcare providers, clarifying consent and governance structures, and overcoming persistent interoperability issues. The **Health Information Bill, when enacted** and Ireland's implementation of the **European Health Data Space** Regulation are expected to address key regulatory gaps and support future cross-border compatibility.

2024 recommendation on e-Health: (i) Expand the coverage of the online access service to ensure that all citizens can access their electronic health data online. (ii) Make further data types available

[12] European Commission, Recovery and Resilience Scoreboard, Digital Public Services Thematic Analysis, 2024.

to citizens through the online access service. (iii) Increase the supply of health data by onboarding more categories of healthcare providers.
Ireland made some efforts to address the recommendation through new policy actions in 2024. Ireland advanced its e-Health strategy and invested in new infrastructure through the Recovery and Resilience Facility, piloted a national patient application, and began rolling out eDispensation services via pharmacies. The only major gap remains in e-Health, where progress is visible but ongoing efforts have not yet materialised.

Building a safe and human-centric digital environment and preserving our democracy

In Ireland, online participation in political and civic life is relatively high and trending upwards. In 2024, 27.86% of individuals used the internet to participate in online consultations, express opinions, or sign petitions, well above the EU average of 20.45%. This represents an increase from 20.08% in 2023, confirming Ireland's position among the top-performing countries for digital civic engagement. Specifically, 16.10% of individuals reported participating in online consultations or voting in 2024 (EU: 10.05%), and 20.23% shared civic or political opinions online (EU: 16.48%).

Due to the non-mandatory nature of certain Eurostat questions, Ireland does not report nationally comparable data on the share of individuals encountering or verifying untrue or doubtful information online. However, policy responses have evolved significantly in recent years to address growing concerns around disinformation, particularly during electoral periods.

Ireland has experienced increasing exposure to organised disinformation campaigns, including those targeting trust in public health information during the COVID-19 pandemic and election-related narratives. In response, a national strategy to counter disinformation is under preparation. This process is led by a dedicated working group coordinated by the Media Literacy Ireland network and involves collaboration between government, industry, academia and civil society. Existing efforts, such as the 'Be Media Smart', campaign promote public awareness on disinformation and are already well integrated into Ireland's media literacy landscape.

The Online Safety and Media Regulation Act 2022 (OSMR) represents a major legislative step forward. It established **Coimisiún na Meán**, Ireland's independent media and online safety regulator, which now oversees compliance with the Digital Services Act (DSA). This includes the development of binding Online Safety Codes for video-sharing platforms and systemic obligations to address harmful content online. These frameworks will serve as key enforcement tools to address issues such as hate speech, cyberbullying, and misleading narratives. As the designated Digital Services Coordinator, Coimisiún na Meán is responsible for handling complaints on breaches of the DSA in Ireland.

The Electoral Reform Act 2022 further strengthens democratic resilience. It created **An Coimisiún Toghcháin** (Electoral Commission), a permanent, independent body with a mandate to oversee electoral integrity and regulate online political advertising. Its remit includes monitoring disinformation risks during election campaigns and delivering public information initiatives to promote civic participation.

In education, Ireland continues to expand digital and media literacy across all levels. The Department of Education and Youth, with the support of Webwise and the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment, promotes critical thinking and safe online behaviour through dedicated resources and

classroom materials. These efforts form part of broader strategies outlined in the Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024-2033 and the Digital for Good programme.

Regarding the protection of minors, Ireland has enacted several important safeguards under the OSMR Act. Online platforms are required to adopt measures to protect children from harmful content and improve content moderation systems. Coimisiún na Meán adopted Ireland's first dedicated Online Safety Code in October 2024, with a focus on those platforms most frequently used by children and young people. In parallel, Ireland is participating in EU-level discussions on interoperable age verification systems, including their future integration into the European Digital Identity Wallet framework. These initiatives complement existing educational and parental control measures developed by schools and public bodies.

ComReg provides digital consumer-focused tools that support informed digital participation. These include the Compare Tool, which helps users to find a mobile, broadband, home phone or bundled plan that best suits their needs. The Outdoor Mobile Coverage Map web and mobile application, enables users to navigate information related outdoor mobile coverage signal by provider at a location. The Service Checker allows users to identify the service name or number of a Premium Rate Service.

Recently, ComReg launched new online tool called Broadband Checker, to help the public determine what fixed broadband services are available in their area. It also conducted public information campaigns to raise awareness about broadband and mobile technologies, highlighting the benefits, promote consumer tools, and position ComReg as a trusted source for independent advice and information.

ComReg has progressed a number of measures to reduce the volume of, and the harm-caused by, scam calls and SMS, specifically with the implementation of an SMS Sender ID Registry in 2025. ComReg has also worked with the mobile industry to ensure support for real time text as required by the European Accessibility Act.

Protecting and empowering people requires that rights are upheld and obligations enforced. In this context, ComReg has taken targeted enforcement actions on issues such as information provision, cooling-off rights, roaming, switching, and complaint handling. It has also revised and enhanced its dispute resolution procedures to ensure that end-users have access to timely and effective redress mechanisms.

Overall, Ireland's framework for a safer digital environment is based on a whole-of-society approach, combining regulation, education, civic participation, and digital rights. While there are gaps in the statistical monitoring of disinformation exposure and fact-checking behaviours, national efforts to build resilience – especially through cross-sector collaboration and youth education – are well aligned with EU priorities and evolving legislative standards.

Leveraging digital transformation for a smart greening

Ireland has made climate action a national priority, committing to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 51% across all sectors by 2030 and to achieve net-zero emissions by 2050. The government explicitly links climate and digital goals through its **Programme for Government**, **the White Paper on Enterprise**, and the **Circular Economy Act**. The updated roadmap reconfirms the integration of the green and digital transitions as a cornerstone of national policy. According to the latest Eurobarometer[13] survey, 89% of Irish respondents believe that digital technologies should be used to support environmental sustainability, which is one of the highest levels of public support in the EU.

Despite high levels of awareness, the adoption of energy efficiency measures remains uneven. Only 20% of Irish businesses implemented measures to reduce ICT energy consumption in 2024, with most citing cost or complexity as the key barriers. While 56% considered the environmental impact when selecting ICT solutions, only 30% of firms with high levels of digital intensity incorporated sustainability as a criterion, which highlights the need for more structured incentives.

From a consumer perspective, price and technical specifications remain the dominant factors when purchasing ICT devices, with only 27.12% of Irish users considering energy efficiency important (EU: 19.35%) and just 14.32% considering eco-design important (EU: 12.04%). Recycling rates are modest: 8.97% of old mobile phones and 14.52% of old laptops are recycled (EU: 10.93% and 11.31% respectively). A significant share of laptops (69.32%) is kept at home after use, compared to the EU average of 51.16%, highlighting a potential for targeted recycling initiatives.

Green public procurement (GPP) is a key area of policy leverage. In April 2024, the government adopted the **Green Public Procurement Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027**, which aims to make green criteria a standard part of all procurement procedures, particularly in ICT, construction, transport, and energy-related services. The strategy mandates GPP implementation and monitoring across sectors, integrates circular economy objectives, and establishes dedicated training and reporting tools. The government has also launched a searchable GPP-criteria database and mandated its use in all public tenders[14].

Ireland's **public digital infrastructure strategy** maintains national control over critical systems through the OGCIO-managed public service cloud, which is hosted on secure national servers. This set-up ensures compliance with government ICT policies and includes sustainability objectives, such as reducing the energy consumption of cooling systems and data storage infrastructure[15].

Digital technologies are also being deployed directly in support of Ireland's green goals. **The Build Digital project** applies Building Information Modelling and other digital tools to decarbonise the construction sector. A new data processing centre for the public service will target a power usage effectiveness (PUE) of 1.2, below the 1.3 Climate Neutral Data Centre Pact benchmark. Additional

[13] Special Eurobarometer 566 on 'the Digital Decade' 2025: https://digital-strategy.ec.europa.eu/en/news-redirect/883227
[14] Green Public Procurement Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027. Published on 4 April 2024, Available here: https://assets.gov.ie/288344/3b6eece7-7d30-47c5-895e-0512a0e9b3f8.pdf.
[15] OECD, The Digital Transformation of Public Procurement in Ireland: A Report on the Current State, OECD Public Governance Reviews, 2024.

carbon tracking mechanisms have been brought into capital works procurement to enable embodied carbon monitoring.

The **Digital Transition Fund**, launched under Ireland's RRP and co-funded by the EU, supports SMEs in adopting digital tools that improve SMEs' environmental performance. By the end of 2024, EUR 46.15 million had been paid out to 558 companies. Four European Digital Innovation Hubs also provide services that help SMEs reduce their environmental impact through digital innovation. This includes test-before-invest programmes for energy-efficient solutions in manufacturing and logistics.

In parallel, the **Green for Business** and **GreenStart** schemes offer tailored support to SMEs aiming to become more sustainable. Grants are tied to investments in energy-efficient technologies verified through the **Triple E Register** of Ireland's Sustainable Energy Authority. These instruments were highlighted by Irish authorities as critical for strengthening SMEs' resilience while reducing their environmental impact.

On the skills side, the government published **Green Skills 2030**, a national **Further Education and Training** strategy to build a workforce ready for the green transition. It includes new apprenticeships in sustainability and a national offshore wind academy, reflecting skills gaps identified by industry. These efforts are complemented by the integration of green topics into the **Adult Literacy and Digital Skills Strategy**, supporting objectives for a just transition[16].

2024 recommendation on the green and digital transitions

Develop a coherent approach to twinning the digital and green transitions:

(i) Promote improvements in the energy and material efficiency of digital infrastructures, in particular data centres.

(ii) Support the development and deployment of digital solutions that reduce the carbon footprint in other sectors, such as energy, transport, construction, and agriculture, including the uptake of such solutions by SMEs.

(iii) Monitor and quantify the emission reductions of the deployed digital solutions in line with the relevant EU guidance and with the support of the methodology developed by the European Green Digital Coalition, in view of future policy development and to attract relevant financing.

Ireland made some efforts to address the recommendation through new policy actions in 2024. For the energy efficiency of digital infrastructure (point i), initiatives such as the public service data centre and sustainability criteria in government ICT policies are steps forward.

On the deployment of digital solutions across sectors (point ii), schemes like Build Digital, GreenStart, and the Digital Transition Fund support SME uptake and emissions reduction.

However, no system is in place yet to monitor or quantify emission reductions (point iii), and the absence of a unified framework limits policy coherence. Further efforts are needed to implement standardised monitoring tools and align with EU-level methodologies.

[16] European Commission. (2025). European Semester, Annex on Education: Ireland.

Annex I – National roadmap analysis

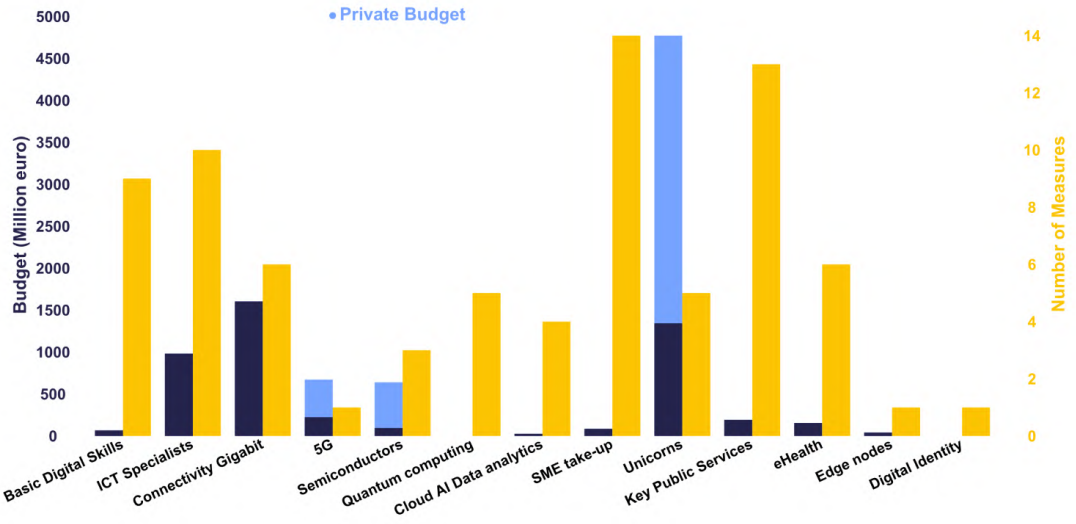
Ireland's national Digital Decade strategic roadmap

The adjusted roadmap addresses a limited number of roadmap recommendations issued in 2024. Ireland did not revise its 2030 targets but submitted a detailed update to the narrative outlining the national responses to each of the recommendations and the progress made under the original strategic framework. The revised roadmap was not resubmitted as a new stand-alone document.

The adjustment maintained the original structure and target levels set in 2023. While the 2030 targets for basic digital skills and ICT specialists were confirmed, no new or revised quantitative targets were introduced, including on FTTP, edge node deployment, and unicorns. Nevertheless, the roadmap reaffirms Ireland's commitment to delivering gigabit connectivity to all premises by 2028 and sets out concrete implementation details for the national FTTP roll-out, supported by both commercial operators and the state-led National Broadband Plan.

As part of the adjustment, Ireland significantly expanded the repository of national measures. The roadmap now comprises 81 measures, including 22 new ones introduced since the original submission, with a total investment of EUR 9 240.89 million. Several of the new measures focus on the digitalisation of SMEs, including the introduction of a dedicated national voucher scheme, improved advisory support through a new enterprise hub, and programmes to foster digital discovery, process innovation, and digital marketing capabilities across sectors. Together, these initiatives form the foundation for a more coordinated national approach to the digital transition of SMEs ahead of the forthcoming SME Digitalisation Action Plan.

Measures and budget in national roadmap[17]



Other new measures strengthen the roadmap's focus on digital skills, with additional actions targeting all stages of the learning cycle – from early childhood education to adult upskilling and lifelong learning. These are complemented by measures aimed at promoting digital inclusion, particularly for socio-economically disadvantaged groups. Further additional measures support the

[17] When referring to national roadmaps, data used in this report are those declared by the Member States in their national roadmaps, on the basis of the Commission's guidance (C(2023) 4025 final). Data might reflect possible variations in reporting practices and methodological choices across Member States. No systematic assessment of the extent to which Member States followed the guidance was carried out.

public sector, particularly in the areas of interoperability, cybersecurity, and the development of digital government services.

The update also revises a small number of existing measures to reflect updated timelines, adjusted scopes, and refined budget data. The roadmap now reports over EUR 3.5 billion in public investment, with total planned funding exceeding EUR 7.8 billion across all pillars. In some areas, such as broadband deployment, implementation is backed by formal monitoring and an evaluation of the impact. However, evaluation frameworks are still not applied consistently across the full set of measures.

While some efforts are noted with regard to the implementation of digital rights and principles, the adjustment does not include a formal mapping of the roadmap measures to the Digital Decade objectives or the Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles. In this respect, Ireland's update remains more operational than strategic.

Overall, the roadmap reflects a determined effort to advance implementation. It remains strong in terms of infrastructure deployment, investment mobilisation, and the breadth of policy action, particularly in the education and SME domains. The inclusion of new initiatives and the improvement of existing ones demonstrate a commitment to accelerating progress towards the 2030 targets. At the same time, there is scope to further consolidate the roadmap in strategic areas – such as AI, data-driven innovation and support for unicorns – to boost the roadmap's coherence and maximise its long-term impact.

Annex II – Factsheet on multi-country projects (MCPs) and funding

Multi-country projects and best practices

Ireland is a member of the Alliance for Language Technologies EDIC and of the Local Digital Twins towards the CitiVERSE EDIC. Ireland is directly participating in the IPCEI on Microelectronics and Communication Technologies (IPCEI-ME/CT). Ireland is a participating state in the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking (JU) and the Chips JU.

Ireland has contributed to the Best Practice Accelerator by sharing three best practices as part of the Digital Skills cluster (SuCcES programme, INGENIC and mentoring model for female students in computing).

EU funding for digital policies in Ireland

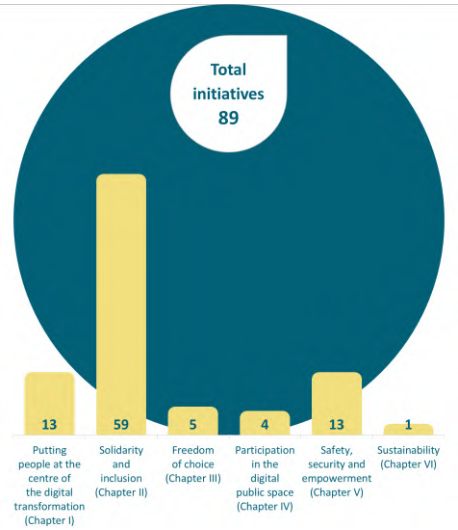
Ireland allocates 34% of its total recovery and resilience plan to digital (EUR 312 million)[18]. In addition, under cohesion policy, EUR 54 million (representing 5% of the country's total cohesion policy funding), is dedicated to advancing Ireland's digital transformation[19]. According to JRC estimates, EUR 347 million directly contribute to achieving Digital Decade targets (of which EUR 312 million comes from the RRF and EUR 35 million from cohesion policy funding)[20].

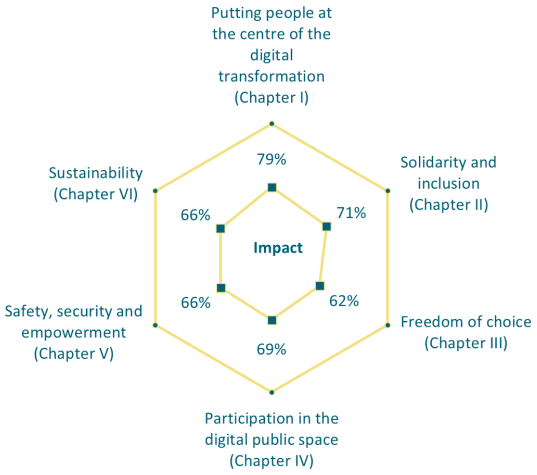
The RRF and cohesion policy funding provide balanced support across the different areas of the Digital Decade. In particular, the Irish recovery and resilience plan (RRP) makes significant contributions to the targets for **gigabit and FTTP broadband deployment**, with major investments channelled through the **National Broadband Plan**. The RRP also includes significant reforms and investments aimed at **digitalising public services and strengthening e-Government**, such as the **roll-out of the MyGovID system**, improvements to health sector ICT systems, and the creation of a national data infrastructure to support e-Health and interoperability.

Furthermore, the RRP addresses **digital skills development** through measures focused on **adult learning, basic digital skills acquisition, and enterprise upskilling**, contributing to the overall resilience and inclusiveness of Ireland's digital transition.

[18] The share of financial allocations that contribute to digital objectives has been calculated using Annex VII to the Recovery and Resilience Facility Regulation. Last data update: 16 May 2025.
[19] This amount includes all investment specifically aimed at or substantially contributing to digital transformation in the 2021-2027 Cohesion policy programming period. The source funds are the European Regional Development Fund, the Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, and the Just Transition Fund.
[20] Joint Research Centre, Nepelski, D. and Torrecillas, J. Mapping EU level funding instruments 2021-2027 to Digital Decade targets – 2025 update, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2025, JRC141966. Last data update: 10 March 2025.

Annex III – Digital rights and principles[21]





Activity on digital rights and principles

Ireland has been relatively active in implementing digital rights and principles, with 89 initiatives overall and 4 new initiatives launched in 2024, showing limited progress towards its commitments. **Ireland is most active in the area of digital education, training and skills**. There is room for improvement, especially with regards to a fair digital environment and sustainability where less activity has been identified.

Impact of digital rights initiatives

Quantitative impact indicators, developed by a support study on Digital Rights and Principles, illustrate the level of implementation of digital rights initiatives on the ground. Based on available data, they estimate the impact of measures implemented by key stakeholders in Ireland (mainly national government) and how these are perceived by citizens.

The indicators suggest that **Ireland is most successful in implementing commitments related to putting people at the centre of the digital transformation**. Ireland should strengthen efforts in areas where the impact of digital rights initiatives appears to be limited, notably on freedom of choice.

According to the Special Eurobarometer 'Digital Decade 2025', **61% of citizens in Ireland think that the EU protects their digital rights well** (a 1% decrease since 2024). This is above the EU average of 44%. Citizens are particularly confident about getting basic and advanced digital education, training and skills (70%, above EU average of 60%). They are most worried that their right to a safe digital environment and content for children and young people is not well protected (41%, below the EU average of 48%).

[21] Based on a study to support the Monitoring of the Implementation of the Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles, available here. For a more detailed country factsheet accompanying the study, click here.