

Main Messages from Ireland's Voluntary National Review (VNR) 2023

Ireland is proud to have played a significant role in the development and adoption of the 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development. We continue to show leadership as the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) are implemented, nationally and internationally, and will be leading consultations and co-facilitating negotiations on the outcome document of the Political Declaration of the Sustainable Development Goals Summit, in September 2023.

Ireland's Voluntary National Review (VNR) is based on the theme of *Building Back Better While Leaving No One Behind*. In this context, and to amplify the voices of those furthest behind, civil society stakeholders have contributed chapters. In January and April 2023, National Stakeholder Fora were held, to further promote meaningful engagement with civil society, including youth representatives. As active global citizens and shapers of society, young people are key, equal stakeholders of Agenda 2030, and made a valuable contribution to the Fora giving voice to their generation.

Ireland is progressing well in achieving the SDGs and the [National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals 2022 – 2024](#)¹ demonstrates the continued commitment to the 2030 agenda through a 'whole-of-government' approach and mainstreaming SDGs across national policies.

Agenda 2030 and the SDGs also strengthens the linkages between Ireland and our global engagement through our overseas development assistance programme. Since our last VNR, [A Better World: Ireland's Policy for International Development](#)² (2019) has been published, fully integrating the SDGs, setting out our contribution to realising them not just at home, but abroad. Headline priorities include reducing humanitarian need, supporting climate action, promoting gender equality, and strengthening governance, while reaching the furthest behind first. These priorities align with the SDGs, and the 2030 Agenda. Ireland's work also continues in traditional areas of strength such as food security, education, and health.

As in every country around the globe, the COVID-19 pandemic has had an extraordinary impact on Irish people's lives and brought unprecedented disruption to our society and economy.

¹ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/e950f-national-implementation-plan-for-the-sustainable-development-goals-2022-2024/>

² [Policy for International Development - Department of Foreign Affairs \(irishaid.ie\)](#)

A Cabinet-led approach ensured a whole-of-Government response to the crisis, with recovery from the pandemic shaped by a number of overarching national framework policies, to address longstanding challenges and needs while preparing the economy and labour market for the challenges and opportunities of the future.

Many of the measures through which Ireland will achieve the SDGs will be actioned in the context of policies such as the [Economic Recovery Plan](#) developed in alignment with the [National Recovery and Resilience Plan](#) which is part of NextGenerationEU - a €750 billion recovery package for the European Union. We have placed a particular focus on advancing the twin green and digital transitions, and significant policies and work programmes are being advanced to drive progress in these areas, allowing Ireland to build back better, ensuring a just transition for all.

The eleven dimensions of our national [Well-being Framework](#) (designed to help improve our understanding of quality of life) have been mapped to the SDGs demonstrating the synergies across both initiatives. Embedding the Well-being Framework into the policy-making process further supports progress towards achieving the SDGs. The Equality and Well-being frameworks are being integrated into the budgetary process to better inform policymakers with associated impacts on areas such as income, health and education.

Our planet is facing unprecedented pressure from the triple planetary crisis of Climate Change, Pollution, and Biodiversity Loss. [Ireland's Climate Action Plan](#) sets a legally binding framework for national climate targets and commitments, and ensures the necessary structures and processes are embedded on a statutory basis to achieve our obligations in the near and long term. The SDGs offer us a pathway to seize the opportunity to create a better, greener, and safer world, and a just transition that transforms every sector of our economy, while leaving no one behind.

In this context Ireland's VNR demonstrates how we are accelerating action towards achieving the SDGs, calling out the contribution being made across Government on climate action and the circular economy, employment, education, health, housing, and Ireland's international support of the SDGs in order to build back better, determined to not settle for surviving the climate crisis, but thriving despite it.

Ireland is committed to delivering its second VNR to the 2023 session of the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development.