Our Rural Future
Rural Development Policy 2021-2025

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New Rural Development Paradigm

Sustainable Development

- Peace
- Planet
- Partnership
- Prosperity
- People

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A new approach to rural development

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

- Policy development was informed by extensive consultation with rural stakeholders
  - 11 regional consultation with approximately 500 attendees.
  - 2 workshops with young people on the future of rural Ireland
  - 2 public “town hall” events
  - An online survey, with over 1,700 responses
  - Focus Groups on the implications of COVID-19 for rural areas

- *Our Rural Future* responds to issues identified by those living/working in rural areas
What does the policy focus on?

• More than 150 commitments across Government

• Optimising opportunities from high speed broadband

• Transformational potential of Remote/Connected Working

• Supporting Employment and Careers in rural areas

• Revitalising rural towns and villages

• Enhancing participation, leadership and resilience of rural communities
What does the policy focus on (cont’d)?

• Enhancing **public services**

• Supporting young people, including through a **Rural Youth Assembly**

• Supporting a **Just Transition** to a climate neutral society and seizing **new opportunities** in the Green and Circular Economies

• Supporting the sustainability of **Agriculture, the Marine and Forestry**, attracting more **young/female farmers**

• Ensuring the sustainability and viability of **island and coastal communities**

• Nurturing our culture and heritage.
Policy Coherence

- Supports delivery of other key Government policies
- Directly supports achievement of UN’s Sustainable Development Goals
Key investments

- €2.7 billion in the delivery of high-speed broadband to rural areas
- €1 billion under the Rural Regeneration and Development Fund to support ambitious projects to regenerate towns and settlements of < 10,000 people
- €2 billion Urban RDF will support larger rural towns
- Up to €100 million to support a Town Centre First approach, including addressing vacant properties and encouraging more town centre living
- €50+ million invested in walking and cycling infrastructure
- Significant investment in Remote Working infrastructure / National Network
Other Notable Measures

- Support rural communities to develop Master Plans to meet the long-term needs of their area
- Pilot new rural transport initiatives
- Pilot scheme to support use of rural pubs as community spaces / local hubs
- Prioritise regional sites for new Government or public agencies
- Develop and implement key Strategic Plans across a range of sectors:
  - Outdoor Recreation
  - Dark Skies
  - Agri-food
  - National Heritage
  - Islands development
  - Apprenticeships
What difference will it make?

- More people **living and working** in rural Ireland
- **Rural towns** as **vibrant hubs** for commercial and social activity
- Reduced regional income disparities
- Improved **access to public services**, such as transport links
- Rural Ireland benefits from the **transition to a more sustainable future**.
- Rural communities, and especially **young people**, having an active role in **shaping their future**
Our Vision is for a rural Ireland which is integral to our national economic, social, cultural and environmental wellbeing and development.
Thank you

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