



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Ár dTodhchaí
Tuaithe
Our Rural
Future



Our Rural Future 2026-2031

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Our Rural Future 2021-2025

- Represented an ambitious **new approach** to rural development in Ireland.
- **Whole-of-Government** policy for rural Ireland for **five years**.
- Focused on sustainable **economic, social, and environmental development**.
- Key principles include:
 - Place-based policy-making
 - Participative approach
 - Policy alignment



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Our Rural Future
Rural Development
Policy 2021-2025



The next iteration of Our Rural Future...

- **PFG commitment**

- continue whole-of-Government approach
- build on the momentum of the first policy

- **Policy Development**

- Comprehensive public and stakeholder consultation process
- Bilateral engagement with sectoral Ministries
- OECD Review
- IDG established

Stakeholder Consultation

- **Stakeholder Consultation**

- Seven in person workshops between May and June 2025, one trí Gaelige
- Regional locations across Ireland
- Additional workshop online
- Included civil society, NGOs, academics, local councillors, government and public agency officials

- **Youth Engagement**

- Dedicated Rural Youth Assembly
- 54 young people aged between 12 and 24 years
- Represented 25 counties, including island and peripheral coastal communities

Stakeholder Consultation

- **Written Public Consultation**

- Policy paper provided an outline of the policy format
- Positive feedback on the proposed policy vision and pillar framework

- **Key Messages**

- Key issues raised included Housing, Transport, Enterprise supports and improved services/facilities for youth and older people
- Also focus on overall investment and engagement with rural communities and community organisations

OECD Review

- Broad consultation, over 500 stakeholders including with local communities
- Recommendations on areas such as improved use of data, addressing spatial challenges, broadening of support for rural enterprise and agriculture, and ensuring delivery of essential services in rural areas.
- Review praises Ireland's policy structures:
“Ireland has built one of the OECD's most sophisticated rural policy frameworks and has a unique whole-of-government approach that maintains visibility on rural impacts across all departments in Ireland”

Key Successes of ORF 2021-25

Biggest successes of Our Rural Future 2021-2025:

- Improvements to digital connectivity and remote working seen as the biggest positive change
- Development of community facilities, public transport services, outdoor amenities and town regeneration

Major challenges remain for the new policy:

- Demographic trends around ageing populations and youth retention, followed by housing, infrastructure, social isolation and resilience in responding to extreme weather events

Key Priorities

- Informed by consultations, the OECD Review, and engagements to date, the new policy will be based around five policy pillars focusing on:
 - **Rural Places**
 - **Rural Services**
 - **Rural People**
 - **The Rural Economy**
 - **The Rural Environment**

Next Steps

- Work with DRCDG Units and Departments to finalise the first Action Plan under the new policy for the period to end-2028.
- Government approval and publication – Q3 2026

Prioritising Rural Development during Ireland's Presidency

- The LEADER programme has been a cornerstone of EU rural development policy for 35 years
- Ireland has been a strong advocate for the LEADER programme to remain a core element of the new CAP framework and for the continued prioritisation of a well funded LEADER programme in the coming years

Prioritising Rural Development during Ireland's Presidency

- Ireland will host a High-Level EU Rural Policy Forum
- This Event will take place in collaboration with the European Commission and with the support of the Rural Pact Support Office
- 200 delegates will be invited to explore integrated approaches to Rural Development with a particular focus on LEADER
- We look forward to welcoming EU & national policymakers, regional and local leaders, rural development practitioners, researchers and stakeholders shaping the future of rural development across Europe
- **Save the Date:** 3rd & 4th of November in Naas, Co Kildare



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Thank You

Any Questions?

