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State of the Digital Decade 2026: Closing structural gaps and mobilising investments for 2030 and beyond

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European Commission

DIGITAL DECADE COUNTRY REPORT 2026

Ireland

Ireland

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Executive summary

Overall, Ireland has strong assets in digitalisation, such as strong fixed connectivity, high levels of basic digital skills and a dynamic ICT ecosystem. However, it does not fully translate these strengths across the whole of its economy and society. Parts of Ireland's SME base still lag behind in digitalisation, while growth in the number of ICT specialists remains too slow, and public-service digitalisation remains uneven, with weak access to e-Health records and the justice system.

Ireland's internationally competitive global tech business base is an important asset for productivity and **competitiveness**. However, the uneven level of digitalisation of businesses across the wider economy weighs on performance, as firms that remain less digitalised are less well placed to improve productivity, adopt more efficient processes, and scale across markets. A stronger supply of ICT specialists could help relieve skills shortages across the Irish economy and support digital transformation, to better empower indigenous firms in benefiting from productivity gains that stem from the strong multinational base. Finally, the more widespread provision of digital public services, in particular better access to e-Health records, could increase the efficiency gains from digitalisation and widen benefits for the public, businesses and public administration.

Ireland has several **digital leadership** assets. It combines a vibrant start-up ecosystem with the presence of major global technology players, and it remains one of the EU's stronger performers on the number of digital unicorns relative to its size. Public policy in Ireland has also shifted more clearly in recent years towards promoting AI, with the updated National Digital & AI Strategy for 2030 positioning Ireland both as: (i) a location of choice for AI and digital start-ups; and (ii) a global hub for applied AI innovation. At the same time, Ireland is strengthening its role in strategic technologies through its 2025 semiconductor strategy 'Silicon Island' and the planned establishment of an Irish quantum centre of excellence, while digital growth is also raising challenges for the green transition and for infrastructure more broadly.

Ireland in the Digital Decade

Ireland shows a high level of ambition in its contribution to the Digital Decade, having set 11 national targets (out of 14 possible), 91% of which are aligned with the EU's 2030 targets. In its national roadmap, Ireland provided 10 trajectory points for 2025 (out of 13 analysed). The country is following these trajectory points moderately well, with 60% considered on track. Ireland has addressed 88% of the eight recommendations issued by the Commission in 2025, either by implementing significant policy changes (for 25% of recommendations) or making some changes (63% of recommendations) through new measures. According to the national roadmap, by the end of 2026, 47% of Ireland's roadmap measures will come to an end. The total public budget associated to these measures is EUR 535 million, representing 11% of the total public budget outlined in the roadmap.

According to the special 2026 Eurobarometer on the Digital Decade, 84% of Irish people consider that digital policy should have a high/very high priority for the EU in shaping our future in Europe. They also think that, in the next 10 years, the EU should cooperate with Member States to strengthen cybersecurity and protection from online threats (97% agree), promote digital education and skills programmes (92% agree) and strengthen the regulation of online platforms (e.g. online social networks, marketplaces, app stores, etc.) (84% agree). In addition, 79% of Irish respondents think that the EU should reduce its dependencies on digital from non-EU countries, and 86% that the EU should

prioritise investments in digital infrastructure and services that are developed and controlled in Europe. Meanwhile, 59% of Irish respondents to the Eurobarometer would be willing to switch to an EU-based digital service provider even if it meant slightly higher costs.

Funding for digital and multi-country projects

Ireland is allocating 33% of its total recovery and resilience plan (RRP) to digital (EUR 0.3 billion). In addition, under cohesion policy, EUR 0.04 billion, representing 4% of the country's total cohesion policy funding, is dedicated to advancing Ireland's digital transformation.

Ireland is a member of both the Alliance for Language Technologies EDIC and the Local Digital Twins towards the CitiVERSE EDIC. Ireland is also directly participating in the important project of common European interest (IPCEI) on Microelectronics and Communication Technologies. In addition, Ireland is a participating state in both the EuroHPC Joint Undertaking (JU) and the Chips JU.

Digital Decade KPI (1)	Ireland				EU		Digital Decade target by 2030	
	Last available data (2)	DESI 2026 (year 2025)	Annual progress	National trajectory 2025 (3)	DESI 2026	Annual progress	IE	EU
Fixed Very High Capacity Network (VHCN) coverage	87.2%	89.0%	2.1%	95.2%	85.5%	3.7%	100.0%	100%
Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) coverage	73.5%	84.5%	15.0%	-	74.1%	7.1%	-	-
Basic 5G coverage	89.9%	96.3%	7.1%	89.3%	96.8%	2.6%	100.0%	100%
Edge Nodes (estimate, new methodology)	-	114	-	23	7451	-	-	10000
SMEs with at least a basic level of digital intensity *	66.1%	79.3%	9.5%	86.0%	71.4%	11.0%	90.0%	90%
Cloud *	53.1%	63.0%	9.0%	53.0%	46.7%	9.5%	75.0%	75%
Artificial Intelligence	14.9%	19.6%	31.8%	28.0%	20.0%	48.0%	75.0%	75%
Data analytics *	37.1%	40.8%	4.9%	37.0%	39.9%	9.5%	75.0%	75%
AI or Cloud or Data analytics *	64.1%	71.7%	5.8%	-	63.2%	7.5%	-	75%
Unicorns	17	18	5.9%	-	324	10.2%	-	500
At least basic digital skills *	72.9%	82.8%	6.6%	72.0%	60.4%	4.3%	80.0%	80%
ICT specialists	6.3%	6.2%	-1.6%	7.9%	5.0%	2.0%	9.6%	~10%
e-ID scheme notification		No						
Digital public services for citizens	87.1	91.4	5.0%	82.0	84.6	2.8%	100.0	100
Digital public services for businesses	100.0	100.0	0.0%	100.0	88.6	2.7%	100.0	100
Access to electronic health records	24.5	44.0	79.5%	-	86.5	4.6%	80.0	100

(1) See the methodological note for the description of the indicators and other metrics.
(2) Last available data are DESI2025 (reference year 2024) except for indicators marked with a star * for which the last available data are from DESI2024 (reference year 2023).
(3) National trajectory value for 2025, if set by the country in its Digital Decade national roadmap.

A competitive, sovereign and resilient EU based on technological leadership

Ireland is performing well in **connectivity**, with rates of fixed infrastructure connectivity above the EU average, and the national broadband plan continuing to extend gigabit-capable coverage. However, the remaining challenge for connectivity in Ireland is increasingly the last phase of rollout and effective take-up of fixed-infrastructure internet connectivity. Ireland has also largely achieved broad national

5G availability, but higher-capacity deployment remains weaker, with coverage in the 3.4-3.8 GHz band still below the EU average, including in sparsely populated areas, no demand for 26 GHz connectivity, and no dedicated strategy as yet for 5G standalone or large-scale industrial use cases.As an island economy and major **data hub**, Ireland also faces longer-term needs related to the diversification and resilience of international connectivity infrastructure.

On the business side, Ireland ranks above the EU average in both **SME digitalisation** and in the uptake of advanced technologies by businesses, but its rate of growth in these areas is slower than at EU level, pointing to weak rates of diffusion across the broader domestic business base. Policy has shifted more clearly towards promoting **AI in recent years**, with new measures taken in 2025 to promote sectoral adoption, SME awareness, experimentation, and research infrastructure. Ireland is also strengthening its position in strategic technologies such as semiconductors, but the main challenge it faces now is to translate this into stronger domestic scale-up of its semiconductor sector. This is because access to specialised skills, commercialisation support and scale-up finance remains more limited for indigenous firms and start-ups. **Cybersecurity** preparedness across businesses and public services also remains uneven in Ireland, limiting both trusted digitalisation and resilience as the uptake of digital technologies increases. At the same time, better alignment between digital development and the green transition will be important to ensure that digital investment also supports decarbonisation and resource efficiency.

Protecting and empowering EU people and society

Ireland performs strongly on basic **digital skills** and remains well above the EU average on this measure. By contrast, growth in ICT specialists as a percentage of Ireland's workforce remains modest and below the pace needed to meet the country's 2030 target, while evidence points to persistent shortages in advanced digital skills across the economy. These shortages constrain firms' capacity to adopt and scale digital technologies and may limit wider productivity gains, especially in domestic sectors already facing skills and capability gaps.

Ireland also performs strongly in digital **public services**, especially for businesses, and citizen-facing services are also comparatively well developed. Significant progress has also been made on digital identity, with MyGovID expected to become the basis for Ireland's EUDI Wallet. However, important legal, interoperability and rollout steps must still be addressed before the country will have a fully operational and cross-border digital identity framework in place. The same can be said for digitalisation of justice where some proceedings still rely on paper. Access to e-Health records remains low despite recent progress and ongoing implementation of the country's 'Digital for Care' strategy.

Recommendations

- **Digital skills:** Strengthen Ireland's ICT specialist pipeline and broader digital skills base by scaling up and better aligning ICT education, training, upskilling and reskilling with enterprise demand, including in AI and cybersecurity; broadening participation in ICT careers, notably through targeted measures to increase women's participation and reduce bottlenecks in the domestic talent pipeline; and improving the scale, accessibility and targeting of digital skills provision for groups still at risk of exclusion, notably lower-skilled adults and older people.
- **E-health:** Accelerate the digital transformation of the health system by speeding up the onboarding of healthcare providers to interoperable electronic health-record systems across the public and private health system; expanding the availability and effective use of core digital health services and data-sharing tools, including the Shared Care Record, ePrescribing and patient access solutions; and ensuring full, secure and user-friendly access to electronic health records for patients, including legal guardians and authorised persons, supported by stronger interoperability, governance and implementation capacity.
- **SME digitalisation:** Strengthen the digitalisation of SMEs by directing existing and future support more explicitly towards SMEs with lower digital maturity, including through tailored outreach, advisory support and implementation pathways; ensuring continuity and visibility of SME digitalisation support beyond the current RRF funding period; and accelerating the practical uptake of more advanced digital tools, including artificial intelligence, through accessible skills, experimentation and implementation support.
- **Cybersecurity:** Strengthen cybersecurity resilience across the economy and public administration by expanding practical cybersecurity support, guidance and preparedness tools for SMEs and other less digitally mature organisations; reinforcing incident response, information-sharing and supply-chain risk management across critical sectors and public services; ensuring that the rollout of AI, cloud and digital public infrastructure is underpinned by secure-by-design procurement, updated risk assessment and strong operational cyber capacity; and accelerating cybersecurity measures to strengthen the cyber posture of critical infrastructure.
- **Connectivity & Resilience:** Support the effective use and resilience of advanced connectivity infrastructure by facilitating stand-alone 5G, mid-band, edge and private-network use cases in strategic sectors, including through stronger demand aggregation and coordination; accelerating migration from legacy networks and addressing remaining final-phase rollout bottlenecks; and strengthening the diversification, repair capacity and resilience of international connectivity infrastructure.
- **Semiconductors:** Strengthen the scale-up of indigenous semiconductor firms and start-ups, including by improving access to scale-up finance, commercialisation support, pilot-line access and specialised skills, and by reinforcing links between research capacity, SMEs and EU semiconductor instruments.
- **Green & Digital**: Strengthen the alignment between digital growth and the green transition, in particular by improving the monitoring and deployment of digital solutions that support decarbonisation, resource efficiency and regional smart-transition projects, including through stronger coordination and scaling of successful local initiatives.

A competitive, sovereign and resilient EU based on technological leadership

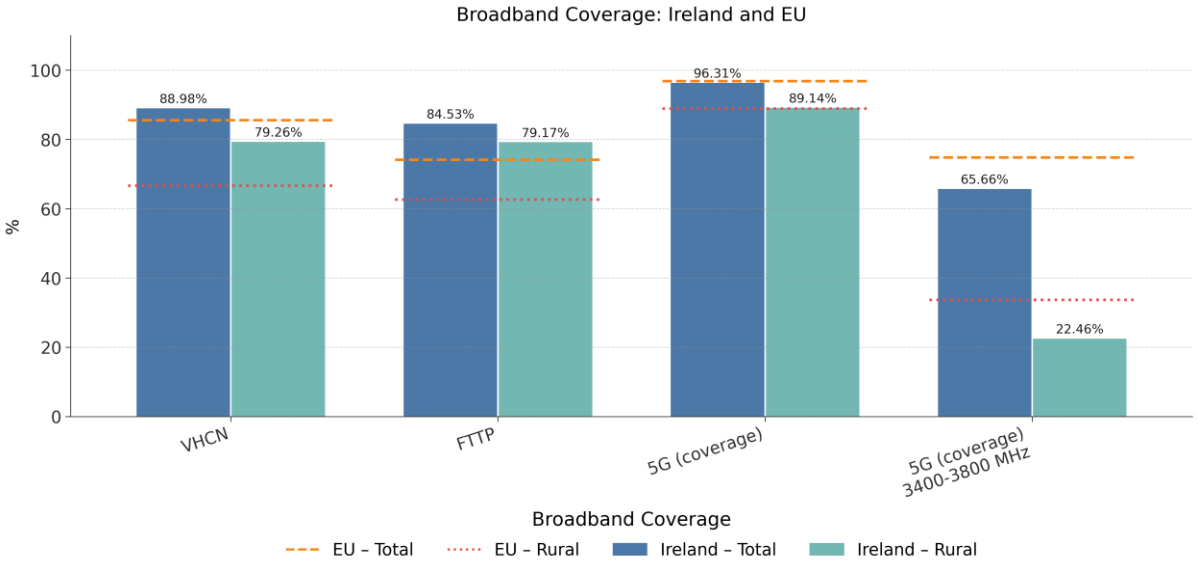
Building technological leadership: digital infrastructure and technologies

Connectivity infrastructure

Performance assessment

In 2025, Ireland achieved a coverage rate of 88.98% for very high capacity networks (VHCNs), surpassing the EU's 85.54%, after a progression of 2.1% compared with 2024. However, annual growth in VHCN coverage was lower than the EU average (3.7% between 2024 and 2025). Ireland's VHCN coverage in sparsely populated areas increased to 79.26% in 2025, while the EU's coverage reached 66.66%. Ireland's annual growth rate of 9.8% between 2024 and 2025 in these areas was above the EU's 7.7%. The country is lagging behind compared to its trajectory presented in the Digital Decade national roadmap.

Ireland's fibre-to-the-premises (FTTP) coverage increased to 84.53% in 2025 (+15.0% since 2024), significantly higher than the EU's average 2025 coverage of 74.13%. In sparsely populated areas, Ireland's FTTP coverage increased to 79.17% in 2025, again above the EU's 62.61%. Ireland's annual growth rate in FTTP coverage of 9.8% in sparsely populated areas between 2024 and 2025 was higher than the EU's 6.5% over the same period. The country did not provide a national trajectory point for 2025 in its Digital Decade national roadmap.



In 2025, Ireland's 5G coverage increased to 96.31% (+7.1% since 2024), while the EU's coverage reached 96.79%. Ireland's annual growth rate in 5G coverage of 7.1% between 2024 and 2025 was higher than the EU's 2.6%. The country is on track with the trajectory presented in its Digital Decade national roadmap. In sparsely populated areas, Ireland's 5G coverage increased to 89.14% in 2025, while the EU's coverage reached 88.88%. The annual growth rate in 5G coverage of 16.7% between

2024 and 2025 in these sparsely populated areas was significantly higher than the EU's equivalent of 11.7%. **Ireland's 5G coverage in the 3.4–3.8 GHz band was 65.66% in 2025, below the EU's 74.75%.** Ireland's annual growth rate of 11.6% between 2024 and 2025 for this band was slightly higher than the EU's 10.6%. In sparsely populated areas, Ireland's coverage in this band increased to 22.46% in 2025, while the EU's coverage reached 33.71%. Ireland's annual growth rate of 21.5% between 2024 and 2025 in this band in sparsely populated areas was lower than the EU equivalent of 32.9%.

Ireland has demonstrated strong performance in VHCN and FTTP coverage, both at national level and in sparsely populated areas, consistently surpassing the EU average. It has also largely achieved broad national 5G availability. However, in terms of 5G coverage in the 3.4-3.8 GHz band, Ireland remains below the EU average, including in sparsely populated areas. This suggests that while fixed infrastructure and headline mobile coverage are strong, Ireland's higher-capacity mobile layer remains less developed.

The table below provides an overview of VHCN, FTTP and 5G coverage across NUTS-2 regions in Ireland. It shows that regional differences are present but more limited than in many larger Member States. The Eastern and Midland region performs most strongly on 5G coverage. The Northern and Western region remains weaker on VHCN and 5G coverage. FTTP coverage is comparatively high across all three regions.

	VHCN coverage (FTTP + DOCSIS 3.1)		FTTP Coverage		5G Coverage	
	Overall	Rural	Overall	Rural	Overall	Rural
National coverage	88.98%	79.26%	84.53%	79.17%	96.31%	89.14%
Eastern and Midland	88.39%	83.00%	79.56%	82.74%	98.93%	94.35%
Northern and Western	87.81%	77.85%	87.81%	77.85%	91.98%	85.48%
Southern	90.47%	78.27%	89.47%	78.21%	95.19%	88.98%

In terms of take-up, 21.12% of fixed broadband subscriptions in Ireland are for speeds of at least 1 Gbps, after an increase of 60.0% in subscriptions at this speed between 2024 and 2025, although this remains below the EU average for 2025 of 26.97%. However, Ireland's annual growth rate in this area between 2024 and 2025 was significantly higher than the EU's growth rate of 21.2%. 5G SIM card subscriptions expressed as a percentage of the Irish population are at 39.71%, below the EU average of 55.55%. The annual growth rate for Ireland on this measure between 2024 and 2025 (24.2%) was significantly lower than the EU's 56.2%. This indicates that, despite strong progress in broadband infrastructure, the effective take-up of advanced connectivity services in Ireland remains weaker than the EU average, especially on the mobile side.

Policy context and recommendation assessment

Because Ireland's National Broadband Plan was designed to target the most remote and least commercially attractive premises, Ireland's remaining fixed-connectivity challenge is now less about initial rural inclusion and more about: (i) identifying and covering the residual premises outside current public and commercial commitments; and (ii) addressing 'endgame' bottlenecks such as blocked ducts, buried legacy infrastructure and other local deployment constraints. At the same time, developments in Ireland's fixed broadband market suggest that the issue is increasingly one of effective migration and competitive take-up rather than rollout alone**: FTTP continues to grow, while copper and fibre to the cabinet (FTTC) continue to decline, but the transition remains uneven.** Stronger fibre availability has therefore not yet translated uniformly into migration and take-up across

the market[1]. Ireland's telecoms regulator, the **Commission for Communications Regulation** (ComReg), reported that there were more than a million FTTP subscriptions in the country in Q4 2025, while gigabit availability reached 90.0% of premises and FTTP availability 84.3%. In the intervention area covered by Ireland's national broadband plan, rollout is progressing ahead of schedule and on budget, with 475 400 premises passed and 176 048 connected. The fixed-connectivity challenge is therefore no longer one of broad national availability, but increasingly one of final-phase delivery, migration and take-up[2].

The effective retirement of legacy copper networks is becoming more important in this context. Following adoption of Ireland's **copper switch-off** framework in November 2023, the Irish telecommunications company Eir submitted a switch-off proposal in May 2025. The framework provides greater clarity for the migration process, but the formal process still requires analysis and approval by the telecommunications regulator ComReg before migration can proceed, and no copper switch-off has yet started in practice. ComReg was unsatisfied with Eir's proposal and a new version is anticipated in H1 2026. There is therefore still no confirmed national switch-off end date. Faster migration to fibre connections would reduce dual-network costs, improve long-term network efficiency and help convert strong fibre availability into stronger productivity gains[3].

Ireland's connectivity framework combines regulatory obligations, targeted enabling measures and a predominantly market-driven deployment model. Under the **National Digital & AI Strategy 2030**, Ireland aims to: (i) enable gigabit broadband connectivity to every premises; and (ii) strengthen international connectivity, including through new subsea cable routes and stronger digital infrastructure resilience. In fixed connectivity, policy in Ireland has focused in recent years on sustaining the rollout of fibre connectivity and facilitating migration from legacy to fibre networks[4].

The **National Broadband Plan** remains the main public intervention in non-commercially attractive areas, while fibre deployment elsewhere in the country is predominantly market-led. Ireland's copper switch-off framework provides an important basis for migration from legacy to fibre networks and, over time, could help reduce dual-network costs and improve long-term network efficiency. However, constraints on the rollout of the final phase of the copper switch-off remain insufficiently addressed in the wider policy framework. This is because permitting delays, legacy infrastructure problems and civil works bottlenecks persist, and the country did not introduce any new measures in the 2024 roadmap to tackle these long-standing barriers[5].

In mobile connectivity, Ireland's main policy instrument remains the **multi-band spectrum award**, which sets phased obligations for 2026-2030 across population centres, transport corridors and strategic locations. This provides a clear framework for further rollout of 5G and already includes coverage obligations on mobile internet providers that require them to cover business and technology parks, hospitals, higher-education campuses, ports, stations and visitor sites. At the same time, monitoring remains prospective rather than conclusive, because the deadlines for meeting the relevant obligations remain in the future. The framework therefore provides a structured basis for

[1] ComReg, Market Monitoring Report – Issue 2: Wholesale Broadband Access Markets, 2026.
[2] ComReg, Irish Communications Market: Summary, Quarterly Key Data Report, Q4 2025.
[3] ComReg, Framework for the Migration from Legacy Infrastructure to Modern Infrastructure, 2023.
[4] European Investment Bank, EIB Investment Survey 2025: Ireland overview.
[5] ComReg, Framework for the Migration from Legacy Infrastructure to Modern Infrastructure, 2023.

rollout of 5G but has not yet translated into a dedicated strategy for large-scale 5G standalone deployment or coordinated sectoral ecosystems[6].

Policy has also advanced in recent years through spectrum management for private and industrial use cases. The development of a **local licensing framework for the 3.8-4.2 GHz** band is an important step, as it creates a route for private, closed-group networks in ports, manufacturing sites and event environments, and aligns national policy with the new EU requirement to make the band available on a non-exclusive basis by September 2026. However, this local licensing framework remains an enabling rather than transformative measure: it does not by itself address weak and fragmented industrial demand, and practical coexistence and coordination issues remain relevant. More broadly, Ireland's policy approach continues to rely on commercial demand to drive advanced 5G functionalities, meaning that policy intervention has focused more on enabling supply conditions than on stimulating adoption or aggregating demand across sectors[7].

On take-up and effective use, the Irish policy framework appears weaker. The evidence points to uneven adoption of advanced connectivity services and limited development of industrial use cases. However, the measures reported by Ireland remain concentrated on deployment conditions rather than targeted, demand-side support. In practice, this means that the framework is stronger on rollout than on ensuring that advanced connectivity translates into productive use, especially in higher-value business applications[8].

In the areas of international connectivity and resilience, Irish policy approach has moved beyond a narrow focus on attracting cable landings and towards a broader resilience agenda, including support for repair modules, smart cable upgrades, a regional cable hub, and closer alignment with the **EU Cable Security Toolbox** and **Cable Projects of European Interest**. This gives Ireland's subsea cable system growing EU-level relevance in the context of sovereignty, security and competitiveness. Discussions at EU level on subsea cable resilience emphasise that resilience increasingly depends on: (i) additional redundancy; (ii) route diversity; (iii) landing diversity; (iv) stronger maintenance and repair capacity; and (v) greater protection of critical cable infrastructure. This means that cable projects of European interest are not only connectivity investments, but also pieces of strategic infrastructure that may require public support where private investment alone is insufficient, particularly in light of AI, HPC, data-centre demand and redundancy needs[9].

This aligns with the New York Joint Statement, which underlines that undersea cable resilience, route diversity, secure providers, and coordinated maintenance and repair are increasingly central to economic security and global digital growth.

2025 recommendation on 5G: Encourage the assignment of 5G mid-band spectrum and promote the deployment of standalone 5G networks and industrial use cases, including in rural and underserved areas.

[6] Comreg, Mobile and Wireless Broadband licences: annual compliance report for the period July 2024 to June 2025, ComReg 26/02, 16 January 2026).
[7] Proposed Licensing Framework for Private Mobile Radio and Wireless Broadband Low Medium Power: Response to Consultation with draft Decisions and draft Regulations, ComReg 26/06, 27 January 2026.
[8] European Investment Bank, EIB Investment Survey 2025: Ireland overview; ComReg, Irish Communications Market: Summary, Quarterly Key Data Report, Data as of Q4 2025, ComReg 26/20, 12 March 2026; National Digital & AI Strategy 2030.
[9] European Commission Expert Group, Security and Resilience of EU Submarine Cable Infrastructures, January 2026.

In 2025, Ireland continued the implementation of existing measures but did not take any new measure. Operator-led rollout under the multi-band spectrum award framework continued in 2025, and there was progress in the 3.8-4.2 GHz local licensing framework for private and industrial use cases. Ireland's existing local licensing framework also includes coverage obligations that require mobile internet providers to guarantee coverage for strategic locations, such as business and technology parks, hospitals, higher-education campuses, ports and transport hubs. However, Ireland reported no major new policy action in 2025 to accelerate large-scale 5G standalone deployment or to develop broader industrial use-case strategies and sectoral ecosystems. The main policy gap therefore lies not in basic rollout conditions, but in support for effective adoption and productive use.

Semiconductors

Ireland hosts a significant semiconductor ecosystem that is deeply integrated into global value chains. The sector comprises more than 80 companies and over 27 000 jobs across semiconductor and microelectronics activities, with particular strengths in: (i) **electronic design automation and design intellectual property**; (ii) integrated device manufacturing; (iii) fabless design; (iv) manufacturing and test equipment; (v) materials; and (vi) photonics-related activities[10]. The **2025 'Silicon Island' strategy** describes a semiconductor and microelectronics cluster in Ireland employing over 20 000 people directly, including around 6 500 in highly skilled technical roles and 3 000 in R&D, making up part of a 175,000-person strong broader ICT sector with overall exports of €13.5 billion worth of products annually [11]. Ireland's position is also reinforced by globally significant anchor investments. Intel's Fab34 wafer fabrication plant is Europe's most advanced cutting-edge EUV-enabled production facility, while Analog Devices' participation in the IPCEI on Microelectronics and Communication Technologies illustrates Ireland's role in collaborative European semiconductor innovation and industrialisation. The broader ecosystem also generates important spillovers through suppliers, service providers, infrastructure, research linkages and skills formation, reinforcing Ireland's role as one of Europe's strategically important semiconductor and microelectronics hubs.

At the same time, Ireland's position remains specialised rather than full-spectrum, but it combines significant strengths across advanced manufacturing, design, equipment, photonics and enabling technologies. The Irish semiconductor ecosystem is concentrated in high-value upstream and enabling segments, while national semiconductor-industry mapping shows that Ireland has no domestic foundry presence and no outsourced semiconductor assembly and test activity. This gives Ireland a strong position in innovation-intensive and enabling niches, including photonics, advanced manufacturing and AI-related applications. However, domestic value capture and resilience remain constrained by dependence on external production stages and concentrated global supply chains.

Ireland also has capability in packaging- and testing-related activities through Tyndall National Institute and associated research infrastructure, adding depth in selected parts of the value chain even

[10] Government of Ireland, Digital Ireland: Connecting our People, Securing our Future. National Digital & AI Centre, I-C3, which was launched in February 2026 with an explicit focus on supporting start-ups and SMEs through access to design tools, pilot-line facilities, training and funding pathways [Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, Ireland launches I-C3, the National Competence Centre in Semiconductors for start-ups and SMEs, 17 February 2026, https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-enterprise-tourism-and-employment/press-releases/ireland-launches-i-c3-the-national-competence-centre-in-semiconductors-for-startups-and-smes/.

[11] Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, Silicon Island: Ireland's National Semiconductor Strategy, 19 May 2025.

if some downstream stages remain externally dependent. Ireland's semiconductor-industry mapping exercise noted that the country has 23 integrated device manufacturers, 18 manufacturing and test-equipment companies, 10 fabless companies and 6 firms active in electronic design automation and design intellectual property. The mapping exercise also showed that Ireland has an indigenous microelectronics layer in: (i) component and systems development; (ii) design; (iii) prototyping and manufacturing; and (iv) assembly, test and packaging services[12].

Ireland benefits from a strong STEM pipeline, specialised research and training capacity linked to centres such as Tyndall and other national research centres, and a growing industry-facing training response. At the same time, discussions with stakeholders in Ireland's semiconductor sector point to continued constraints in SME participation, venture-capital access, commercialisation and some specialised skills. This suggests that Ireland's main weakness lies in the limited diffusion of semiconductor capacity into a broader base of indigenous semiconductor firms[13]. This is also reflected in the design of Ireland's new Chips Competence Centre, **I-C3**, launched in early 2026 under the European Chips Act with an explicit focus on supporting start-ups and SMEs through access to design tools, pilot-line facilities, training and funding pathways[14].

Policy support is now being deployed through several substantial financing and capability-building channels, pointing to a framework that has become more operational and better connected to EU-level industrial instruments. Ireland's **Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund** supports collaborative large-scale research, development and innovation projects involving SMEs, multinationals and research organisations, with over EUR 530 million awarded to 131 projects across seven calls. In parallel, the Irish Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment's December 2025 call for expressions of interest confirms that businesses active in advanced semiconductor technologies are able to seek State aid under the candidate IPCEI on advanced semiconductor technologies (AST).[15]

Ireland's 2025 semiconductor strategy tasked its Expert Group on Future Skills Needs with examining future skills requirements for the semiconductor industry, while over EUR 70 million where invested in EU pilot lines for semiconductor production at Tyndall National Institute's participation in three EU Chips JU pilot lines. In February 2026, Tyndall confirmed: (i) its participation in both the **FAMES** and **NanoIC** pilot lines under the Chips Act; and (ii) its role in the new EUR 50 million **Photonics for Quantum (P4Q)** pilot, where Ireland's contribution focuses on the advanced packaging of quantum photonic chips. Taken together, these measures show clear progress in translating Ireland's strategic positioning into more concrete capability-building, pilot-line participation and European industrial integration. This supports the view that Ireland is building capability in photonics-linked advanced packaging and pilot-line participation, even if the overall Irish policy framework for semiconductors remains more enabling than downstream-manufacturing-oriented[16].

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[12] Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, Mapping of Ireland's Semiconductor & Microelectronics Industry, 24 March 2025.

[13] European Commission, 2026 European Semester Country Report: Ireland – Annex: Innovation to Business.

[14] Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, Ireland launches I-C3, the National Competence Centre in Semiconductors for startups and SMEs, 17 February 2026.

[15] Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund, accessed 1 April 2026,; Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, Call for Expressions of Interest - Important Projects of Common European Interest (IPCEI) on Advanced Semiconductor Technologies, Artificial Intelligence and Compute Infrastructure Continuum, 3 December 2025.

[16] Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, Silicon Island: Ireland's National Semiconductor Strategy, 19 May 2025,; Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, Minister Burke affirms Ireland's support for European Semiconductor Coalition Declaration for European Chips Act 2.0, 29 September 2025.

Overall, the Irish policy framework for semiconductors has become more operational and better targeted in recent years. However, it still appears stronger on ecosystem support, EU integration and enabling instruments than on resolving the remaining downstream constraints around scale-up finance, commercialisation and broader domestic spillovers.

Edge nodes

Performance assessment

According to the EU's Edge Node Observatory, Ireland is estimated to have deployed 114 climate-neutral and highly secure edge nodes by 2025. Due to the updated methodology of the Edge Observatory, this figure is not directly comparable with previous estimates[17].

Policy context assessment

Ireland's edge-node development remains primarily linked to the rollout of the National Low Latency Platform, which is Ireland's public-sector platform for edge infrastructure. The National Low Latency Platform was developed under the RRF measure on the installation of compute nodes aimed to maximise the benefit from 5G technologies for public administrations using 5G technologies to support a greener and more innovative Ireland. Under this RRF measure, Ireland purchased 19 compute nodes and then installed and integrated them into a platform used to support digital services across six public bodies, including Government Networks, the Irish Prison Service, An Garda Síochána (the Irish national police force), the Department of Transport, the Department of Justice, and Children's Health Ireland. This points to tangible progress in public-sector edge infrastructure.

At the same time, the available evidence still suggests that Ireland's edge-node ecosystem remains mainly public-sector-led, and that the wider competitiveness value of this ecosystem will depend on whether this infrastructure supports broader uptake beyond core public-service use cases. Public reporting in 2025 described the National Low Latency Platform as fully operational and highlighted its role in emergency communications and rural resilience[18].

Policy support remains centred on the public-sector edge-node project included in the national roadmap and financed through the RRF. This is consistent with the wider EU evidence, which shows that edge-node deployment remains uneven across Member States and that public support often focuses on enabling infrastructure, research and targeted rollout rather than mature, market-wide deployment.. This is also consistent with the original policy design of the National Low Latency Platform, which was intended primarily to help public administrations maximise the benefits of 5G, while also envisaging later use cases in public protection, disaster relief and 'test before invest' support for SMEs and start-ups. Potential private-sector spillovers are therefore present in the policy framework, but the evidence available for 2025-2026 still points mainly to public-service deployment[19].

Quantum technologies

Ireland's position in quantum technologies remains centred mainly on **secure communications infrastructure, research coordination and cross-border cooperation**, rather than on broad industrial deployment or domestic hardware manufacturing. Ireland is participating in the European quantum

[17] European Commission, Edge Nodes Deployment Progress Report, January 2026.

[18] Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation, Ministers welcome new emergency communications system to boost rural safety and connectivity, 25 September 2025.

[19] European Commission, Ireland 2025 Digital Decade country report, 16 June 2025, Office of the Government Chief Information Officer, Infrastructure – National Low Latency Platform, accessed 1 April 2026.

communication infrastructure (**EuroQCI)**, while fibre-based quantum communication infrastructure linking **Dublin, Waterford and Cork** is in the final stages of implementation. This quantum communication infrastructure is being used to explore **quantum key distribution** use cases for secure communications with government networks and the **National Cyber Security Centre**. The policy framework has been also strengthened through the National Digital & AI Strategy 2030, which provides for the establishment of a Quantum Centre of Excellence in 2026 to support coordinated investment, agile policy development and implementation of the Quantum 2030 strategy[20].

The main priority for Ireland's quantum ecosystem is now implementation. Ireland has set up a **quantum implementation group and** is expected to launch a shorter-term implementation plan in 2026. A complementary signal is the February 2026 announcement that Tyndall will lead Ireland's participation in the EUR 50 million 'Photonics for Quantum' (P4Q) pilot, with a role in advanced packaging of quantum photonic chips. This suggests that Ireland's quantum pathway may increasingly intersect with its photonics strengths, while remaining focused on collaboration, specialised capability-building and future industrialisation.

Supporting EU-wide digital ecosystems and scaling up innovative enterprises

SMEs with at-least-basic digital intensity

Performance assessment

In Ireland, 79.3% of SMEs have at least a basic level of digital intensity after an average progression of +9.5% in this percentage annually between 2023 and 2025, putting Ireland above the EU average of 71.39%. In 2023, the figure for Ireland was 66.11%, which was also higher than the EU average for that year of 57.90%.
The country is on track according to its trajectory presented in the Digital Decade national roadmap.

On SMEs with a very high level of digital intensity, Ireland was at 10.69% in 2025 after an average progression of +30.2% annually between 2023 and 2025, putting Ireland above the EU average of 9.07%. In 2023, the figure for Ireland was 6.31%, which was also above the EU average for that year of 4.38%. The conclusion here is similar to the conclusion on SMEs with at-least-basic digital intensity: although Ireland remains ahead in absolute percentage terms, its annual growth rate is below the EU average of 43.9%, pointing to weaker momentum despite a favourable starting position.

Policy context and assessment of recommendations

Ireland therefore continues to perform above the EU average on SME digitalisation, including at the more advanced end of the digital-intensity distribution. This supports competitiveness by improving firms' ability to: (i) adopt more efficient business processes; (ii) access wider markets; (iii) strengthen resilience; and (iv) make better use of digital tools for commercial and operational adaptation. At the same time, the slower pace of improvement in digital intensity points to a diffusion challenge across the broader SME base in Ireland, particularly among firms with lower digital maturity. This challenge should be considered in a national context where productivity performance remains uneven between foreign-owned and domestic firms, and where smaller enterprises continue to face more persistent skills, capability and investment constraints.

Ireland's less digitally mature SMEs therefore continue to limit the broader productivity, innovation and resilience gains that the country could derive from digitalisation. Although aggregate performance on digital intensity remains strong, the main challenge appears to lie in encouraging wider adoption

[20] IrelandQCI, IrelandQCI demonstrates quantum-secure communications in first Government Use Case with Local Authority Dublin City Council, 17 February 2026.

across firms with lower levels of digital maturity. This is relevant not only for firm-level efficiency and business model innovation, but also for market access, job quality and the capacity of domestic firms to adjust to external shocks and technological change[21].

In 2025, Ireland continued to support SME digitalisation through a mix of advisory, funding and innovation instruments. These instruments include: (i) the **Grow Digital portal**; (ii) the **Digital Transition Fund**; (iii) **Local Enterprise Office** supports such as the **Grow Digital Voucher** and **Digital for Business** consultancy; and (iv) the **European Digital Innovation Hubs** supporting SMEs in areas such as AI, cybersecurity and high-performance computing[22]. The framework to promote SME digitalisation therefore combines financial and non-financial support and addresses both basic digital adoption and more advanced use cases[23].

Ireland has also sought to support SME digitalisation by promoting a more coherent and proportionate implementation of the EU's digital rulebook. Ireland's digital simplification priorities underline the importance of clearer guidance, streamlined reporting and simplification tools across EU instruments (such as the **AI Act**, **GDPR**, **NIS2**, the **Cyber Resilience Act**, **DORA** and the **Data Act**) particularly for SMEs adopting more advanced digital tools.

At the same time, some constraints remain. **Part of the current support architecture for SME digitalisation is time-limited**, in particular the **Digital Transition Fund**, which is linked to **RRF** financing ending in 2026. Other elements of the SME support framework do not end at that point, including the Grow Digital portal, Local Enterprise Office schemes and the European digital innovation hubs. In addition, Ireland's National Digital & AI Strategy 2030 also sets out plans for further AI- and skills-related actions for business. However, no clear long-term successor scheme has yet been identified for SME digitalisation support beyond the current RRF-backed framework[24].

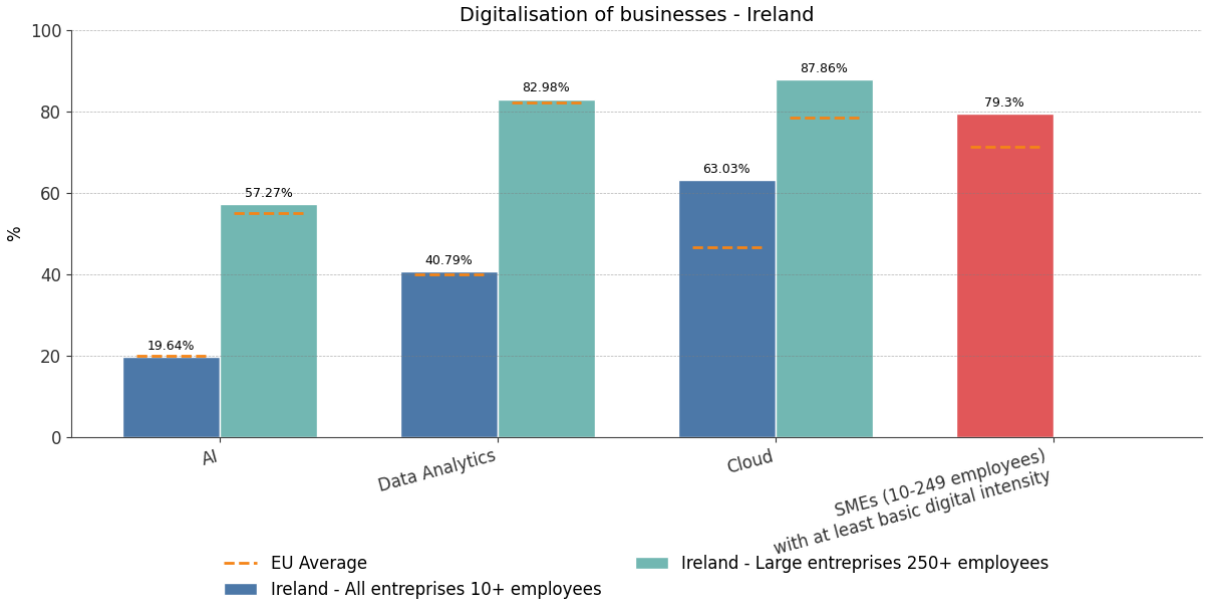
2025 recommendation on SME digitalisation: Improve the digitalisation of SMEs, including by prioritising support to SMEs with lower levels of digital maturity, regardless of their size. Ensure the continuity of existing schemes beyond their current RRF funding deadlines.

In 2025, Ireland made some efforts to address the recommendation through: (i) continued deployment of existing SME-facing schemes; (ii) a stronger focus on AI-related enterprise readiness and skills; and (iii) additional work to facilitate SME uptake under the wider digital regulatory framework. The new **National Digital & AI Strategy 2030**, published in early 2026, further strengthens the policy direction and sets out plans for a wider set of measures to support SME readiness, skills and adoption of advanced digital tools. However, as several of these measures are only beginning to be rolled out, their effect on less digitally mature SMEs is not yet visible**.**

[21] European Commission, Ireland 2025 European Semester Report; National Competitiveness and Productivity Council, Budget 2026 and Competitiveness: Navigating Uncertainty; Ibec, Skills Survey 2025.
[22] Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Digital transformation of business.
[23] These are analysed further in the section on take-up of advanced technologies.
[24] Ireland, Ireland's Proposed Priorities for Digital Simplification, 14 October 2025.

Take-up of advanced technologies

Performance assessment



Ireland performs strongly in the take-up of advanced digital technologies, and remains above the EU average across most indicators in this area. **In cloud technologies, Ireland was at 63.03% adoption among all enterprises in 2025 after an average progression of +9.0% annually since 2023, putting it significantly above the EU average of 46.69%.** In 2023, the figure for cloud adoption by companies in Ireland was 53.07%, which was also above the EU average for that year of 38.97%. The country is on track according to the trajectory presented in its Digital Decade national roadmap. Cloud adoption is therefore one of Ireland's strongest digitalisation indicators. It reflects a favourable environment in the country for the integration of digital services across the enterprise base and supports competitiveness by enabling more efficient business processes, scalability and resilience.

In **data analytics**, Ireland was at 40.79% adoption among all enterprises in 2025 after an average progression of +4.9% annually since 2023, putting it slightly above the EU average of 39.85%. In 2023, the figure for Ireland was 37.09%, which was also above the EU average for that year of 33.25%. The country is on track according to the trajectory presented in its Digital Decade national roadmap. This points to a comparatively solid starting position, but weaker annual growth momentum than at EU level. Since data analytics is an important input for process optimisation, innovation and better commercial decision-making, slower diffusion of data analytics in Ireland may reduce the productivity gains that could otherwise be expected from digital transformation across the business base[25].

In AI, Ireland was at 19.64% adoption among all enterprises in 2025 after an average progression of +31.8% annually since 2024, meaning the country is broadly aligned with the EU average of 19.95%. In 2024, the figure for Ireland was 14.9%, which was above the EU average for that year of 13.48%. The country is lagging behind in this area compared to the trajectory presented in its Digital Decade national roadmap.

AI diffusion remains uneven across firm sizes. Among large enterprises in Ireland, 57.27% were using AI in 2025, above the EU average of 55.03%, while SMEs stood at 18.34%, slightly below the EU average

[25] 2026 European Semester Country Report: Ireland – Annex: Innovation to Business.

of 18.9%. This points to a more persistent adoption gap for the most advanced and transformative technologies, especially outside the largest firms.

When considering the adoption of AI, cloud or data analytics together, 71.74% of Irish enterprises in 2025 were using at least one of these technologies after an average progression of +5.8% annually since 2023, putting it above the EU average of 63.2%. In 2023, the figure for Ireland was 64.1%, which was also above the EU average for that year of 54.7%. This confirms that Ireland performs strongly in the overall take-up of advanced technologies, and is relatively close to the 2030 target of 75%. However, growth in the take-up of at least one of these three technologies remains slower than at EU level, both for enterprises overall and for SMEs, suggesting that Ireland's lead may narrow over time if diffusion does not deepen further.

Ireland's challenge in the uptake of technologies therefore differs from that of lower-performing Member States. The main issue in Ireland is not weak overall uptake, but the risk that slower growth in uptake, particularly in AI and data analytics, may reduce Ireland's relative lead over time. This matters for competitiveness, as wider and deeper take-up of advanced technologies supports productivity gains, innovation capacity, market access and resilience, especially among domestic firms. This issue should be considered in a national context where: (i) productivity and innovation performance remain uneven between foreign-owned firms and the broader domestic business base; (ii) business R&D is concentrated in large firms; and (iii) SMEs continue to face stronger constraints in the areas of skills, investment and capability[26].

Policy context and assessment of recommendations

Ireland's policy framework has increasingly shifted from general digitalisation support towards support for the adoption of more advanced technologies, and **AI** in particular. The Irish authorities are preparing a targeted **sectoral AI adoption strategy** to identify sector-specific opportunities and policy actions, reflecting the view that the scope for AI integration differs significantly across sectors such as manufacturing, tourism and ICT.

The **National Digital & AI Strategy 2030** – *Digital Ireland - Connecting our People, Securing our Future* strengthens this direction further and sets out Ireland's ambition to become a leading digital nation by 2030. The strategy emphasises strengthening digital innovation, supporting enterprise competitiveness, and ensuring that artificial intelligence and digital technologies are developed and deployed responsibly.

The **AI – Good for Business** initiative serves as a national umbrella framework for artificial intelligence and digital transformation supports. AI – Good for Business centrally promotes programmes including the **Charter for Digital Inclusion**, the Ministerial AI awareness roadshows, financial and training supports, and key legislative developments. The initiative aims to simplify access to information and guidance for businesses progressing their digital transformation journey.

Through enterprise case studies and collaboration with enterprise agencies, industry bodies and education providers, the initiative will showcase how businesses are using AI to boost productivity, innovation and growth, while supporting skills development and awareness of EU digital policy developments, including the EU AI Act, Digital Services Act, Digital Decade Programme and D9+ Group.

[26] National Competitiveness and Productivity Council, Budget 2026 and Competitiveness: Navigating Uncertainty; EIB, Investment Survey 2025: Ireland overview; European Commission, 2026 European Semester Country Report: Ireland – Annex: Innovation to Business.

This demonstrates Ireland's strong comitment to bridging the digital gap, leveraging the strengths of a vibrant tech ecosystem through a wide range of initiatives combining awareness raising, peer learning, voluntary commitments and programatic supports.

Digital Ireland foresees a targeted approach in 2026 to drive AI adoption across key sectors of the enterprise base, including (i) the appointment of **AI sector champions**; (ii) an **AI Adoption Roadmap** differentiated by sector and drawn up by Enterprise Ireland (the Irish government's economic development and trade agency); (iii) the establishment of the **Observatory for Business AI Readiness (OBAIR)**; and (iv) an **AI and digital awareness and literacy campaign** for SMEs. It also sets out plans for building a stronger innovation and experimentation ecosystem through: (i) the scaling of **CeADAR** (Ireland's centre for AI); (ii) the creation of an **AI research centre of scale** and an **AI regulatory sandbox** with a focus on SMEs and start-ups; and (iii) continued investment in advanced computing infrastructure and AI research translation.

More concrete measures are also underway to support the practical uptake of AI. In particular, the Irish authorities refer to the need for **AI-related micro-qualifications** for workplace learners, including courses on the basics of AI and AI leadership. In addition, SMEs were identified as the first target users of the **Irish AI Factory Antenna** and its associated advanced computing support ecosystem. This support ecosystem gives users access to compute and governance arrangements explicitly designed around enterprise and SME participation rather than research-only access.

Ireland also continues to benefit from a wider support architecture relevant to advanced technologies, including the **European Digital Innovation Hubs**, which: (i) provide testing, training, innovation services and access to finance for SMEs and public-sector users; and (ii) remain an important channel for enterprise experimentation and technology diffusion. More broadly, Ireland's policy approach is increasingly oriented towards linking **AI**, **advanced computing**, **research capacity** and **enterprise adoption** into a more integrated ecosystem, including through participation in EU-level initiatives and joint undertakings[27].

At the same time, the long-term impact of these measures will depend on whether they translate into wider uptake across the business base and into more concrete industrial use cases. Ireland's strength in overall adoption, and especially in **cloud**, reflects a favourable environment in the country for digital service integration. However, Ireland's slower pace of growth relative to the EU average, especially in **AI** and **data analytics**, points to uneven diffusion. This is particularly relevant in a national context where productivity and innovation remain concentrated in global and larger firms, while smaller domestic firms continue to face greater constraints in relation to skills, investment capacity and readiness[28].

2025 recommendation on advanced technologies: Support the adoption of advanced technologies (AI and cloud) via regional ecosystems and industrial use-case pilots. Encourage sovereign European solutions.
Ireland fully addressed the recommendation by putting significant policy actions into place in 2025. The direction of Irish policy in this area has now become more explicit and more operational, with a stronger focus on sectoral AI adoption, enterprise experimentation, advanced compute

[27] Government of Ireland, Digital Ireland: Connecting our People, Securing our Future. National Digital & AI Strategy 2030.
[28] European Commission, 2026 European Semester Country Report: Ireland – Annex: Innovation to Business; National Competitiveness and Productivity Council, Budget 2026 and Competitiveness: Navigating Uncertainty; EIB, Investment Survey 2025: Ireland overview.

access and business-facing skills measures. At the same time, many of the newer measures are still at an early stage, and their effect on SME-level diffusion – and on the scaling of industrial use cases – is not yet visible. Therefore although significant policy action was taken in 2025, the depth of implementation and broader enterprise diffusion will be the key determinants of the long-term productivity and competitiveness impacts of this action.
2025 recommendation on AI: 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.
Ireland fully addressed the recommendation by putting significant policy actions into place in 2025. The updated National AI Strategy Refresh 2024 and the National Digital & AI Strategy 2030 strengthened the framework for applied AI innovation, AI skills and business adoption, including through measures on enterprise awareness, sectoral adoption, promoting AI skills, research capacity, advanced compute access and regulatory support. Ireland also continued to build on existing assets such as CeADAR, strong AI-oriented foreign investment, and a vibrant start-up ecosystem. However, many of the newer measures are still at an early stage, and their effect on broad SME-level diffusion is not yet visible. Implementation depth and wider enterprise uptake will therefore determine the longer-term impact of these measures on competitiveness.

Unicorns, scale-ups and start-ups

Ireland's unicorn base has expanded strongly in the past 20 years, rising from **1** in 2008 to **18** in 2025. Growth in the number of unicorns was especially rapid after 2020, moving from **5** unicorns in 2020 to **18** in 2025. The latest annual increase between 2024 and 2025 was **+1 unicorn**, equivalent to annual growth of **+5.9%**. By comparison, the EU total number of unicorns rose from **294** to **324** between 2024 and 2025, an increase of **30 unicorns** or **10.2%**[29]. However, the country did not provide a national trajectory point for 2025 in its Digital Decade national roadmap.

Policy context and assessment of recommendations

Ireland performs well in producing high-growth firms and unicorns. It also records relatively strong start-up survival rates, but lags behind in both the formation of early-stage start-ups and venture-capital access. The support landscape for start-ups and scale-ups also remains fragmented, particularly in incubation and acceleration services, while start-ups and scaling firms continue to face growth barriers linked to staffing, regulatory complexity and access to finance[30].

A central constraint in this area is the availability of risk capital at scale. Some 59.1% of start-ups and scaling businesses in Ireland identify funding as their biggest challenge, while 80.4% report difficulty raising private capital. Ireland estimated it will face an equity financing gap for its start-ups and scale-ups of around EUR 1.1 billion in the next three to five years, with the scaling gap driven both by the small size of available funds and by firms seeking less capital than they need in practice to scale. This creates a risk that promising Irish firms relocate abroad or are acquired early because sufficient scaling finance is not available domestically. A stronger pipeline of start-ups and scale-ups is important not only for innovation performance, but also for: (i) the diffusion of new technologies; (ii) the

[29] Dealroom data downloaded on 21 January 2026.
[30] European Commission, 2026 European Semester Country Report: Ireland – Annex: Innovation to Business.

commercialisation of research; (iii) productivity growth in the domestic enterprise base; and (iv) the creation of high-quality jobs[31].

The policy framework in this area has strengthened in recent years. As part of the action plan on competitiveness and productivity, Ireland announced the establishment of Start-up Ireland as a central coordinating body to reduce fragmentation across the national start-up ecosystem. It also announced that it would launch a national accelerator programme by the end of 2026. The Irish authorities plan to both support a seed and venture-capital programme of EUR 250 million and set up an SME Scaling Fund of EUR 100 million in 2025/2026. These two initiatives will be accompanied by efforts to incentivise pension-fund and institutional-investor participation[32].

The National Digital & AI Strategy 2030 strengthens this direction from a digital and AI perspective. Under the 'Grow' pillar of this strategy, Ireland aims to position itself as both: (i) a location of choice for AI and digital start-ups; and (ii) a global hub for applied AI innovation. The strategy supports this through planned measures such as: (i) the creation of Start-up Ireland; (ii) the launch of a national accelerator programme; (iii) the creation of an AI regulatory sandbox; (iv) the scaling of CeADAR; (v) the creation of an AI research centre of scale; and (vi) the launch of an 'AI in research' transformation programme. The strategy also gives more detail on financing support for high-potential start-up and scale-up firms. The policy direction is therefore becoming stronger and clearly focused on reducing fragmentation, strengthening acceleration pathways, improving commercialisation and expanding scale-up finance. At the same time, much of this framework is still recent or being rolled out, while significant constraints remain, including the fragmentation of support, limited scaling finance, uneven commercialisation and weak innovation output among domestic firms[33].

Strengthening Cybersecurity & Resilience

Performance assessment

On the wider digitalisation of businesses, Irish enterprises lag behind the EU average in the uptake of cybersecurity measures. In 2024, 40.85% of enterprises in Ireland used at least five ICT security measures, up from 37.72% in 2022, but still well below the EU average for 2024 of 56.85%. The gap with the EU average is particularly pronounced in the area of backing up data to a separate location (61.98% in Ireland, 79.23% in the EU), network access control (47.18% in Ireland, 65.43% in the EU), VPN use (36.45% in Ireland, 49.64% in the EU), maintaining log files for analysis after incidents (28.42% in Ireland, 45.16% in the EU), ICT risk assessment (29.57% in Ireland, 34.10% in the EU), ICT security tests (27.65% in Ireland, 34.64% in the EU), and monitoring systems to detect suspicious activity (36.83% in Ireland, 45.08% in the EU). Ireland performs relatively better on strong password authentication (75.05%, EU: 83.69%) and is above the EU average on the combination of at least two authentication mechanisms (43.79% in Ireland, 39.84% in the EU)[34].

Policy context and assessment of recommendations

Although basic IT security practices are relatively widespread in Irish companies, the uptake of more structured risk-management, monitoring and resilience-oriented measures remains less developed. This is particularly relevant in a context where cyber resilience is becoming more important for firms

[31] National Competitiveness and Productivity Council, Budget 2026 and Competitiveness: Navigating Uncertainty.
[32] European Commission, 2026 European Semester Country Report: Ireland – Annex: Innovation to Business.
[33] Government of Ireland, Digital Ireland: Connecting our People, Securing our Future. National Digital & AI Strategy 2030.
[34] Eurostat.

adopting AI, cloud and data-driven business models, and where smaller firms may face greater capability and investment constraints. Ireland's main challenge in this area therefore appears to lie in broadening the adoption of more mature cybersecurity practices across the business base, especially among SMEs and firms connected to critical or sensitive systems. Stronger cyber resilience is also important for trust in digital public services, continuity of online transactions and Ireland's attractiveness as a location for digitally intensive activity[35].

Ireland's policy response in the area of cybersecurity and resilience strengthened in 2025-2026. The country made progress on the implementation of NIS2, including by: (i) setting up a national competent authority forum; (ii) drawing up a 2025 national cyber-risk assessment; and (iii) creating practical support tools such as the 'Am I in Scope?' tool to help entities determine whether they fall under the Directive. Initiatives such as Cyber Fundamentals and Cyber CORE are also part of a broader effort to support cyber readiness and resilience in practice.

The new National Digital & AI Strategy 2030 strengthens this direction by announcing: (i) the planned release of a new cyber security strategy in 2026; (ii) additional capacity for Ireland's National Cyber Security Centre; (iii) plans to build a cyber security research centre of excellence; (iv) plans for targeted grant funding linked to NIS2 obligations; (v) updated guidance on AI-related cyber risks; and (vi) preparations for implementation of the EU's Cyber Resilience Act. Ireland's digital simplification priorities also indicate an effort to reduce unnecessary compliance frictions, including through more coherent implementation and more streamlined reporting across the digital rulebook, which is relevant for firms navigating overlapping cyber and digital obligations. The strategy also places cybersecurity more clearly within Ireland's wider digital transformation agenda, presenting it as a key enabler of AI adoption, digital infrastructure and public-service delivery. This broadens the policy rationale from regulatory compliance towards resilience, trust and secure digitalisation[36].

This points to a more structured cyber-resilience framework, with greater attention to regulatory capacity, incident preparedness, cyber-risk management and support for firms and public bodies facing new obligations. At the same time, the enterprise data from Ireland suggest that more advanced cybersecurity practices are not yet diffused as widely in the country as they are in the EU on average. The Irish cyber-resilience framework is therefore becoming stronger on governance and preparedness, but continued efforts will be needed to translate this into broader uptake of mature cybersecurity measures across the business sector, especially among smaller firms.

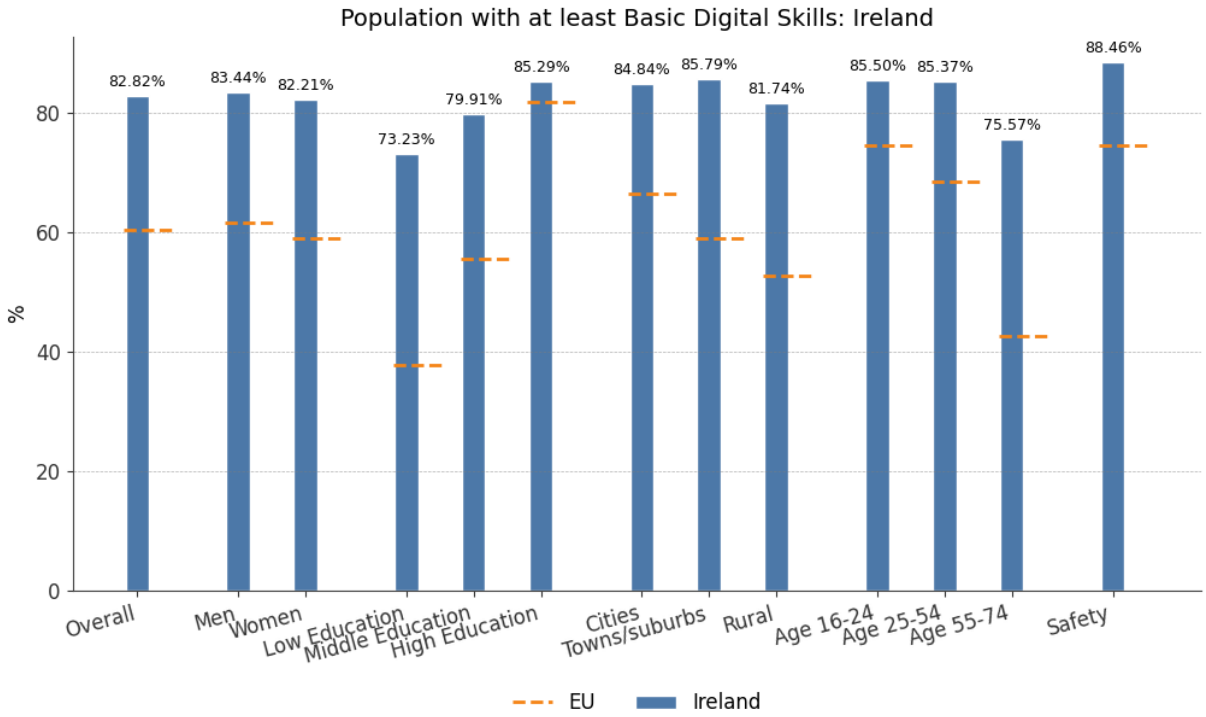
2025 recommendation on cybersecurity: Strengthen efforts to address evolving threats, particularly for SMEs and public services.
Ireland made some efforts to address the recommendation through new policy actions in 2025. The country made these efforts through: (i) progress on **NIS2** implementation; (ii) the launch of practical support tools; and (iii) the creation of a stronger strategic framework in the **National Digital & AI Strategy 2030** (including the planned release of a new **Cyber Security Strategy**, the creation of additional **NCSC** capacity, and plans to support companies linked to cyber obligations). However, the wider uptake of mature cybersecurity practices across SMEs and less digitally mature organisations remains limited.

[35] National Digital & AI Strategy 2030; European Commission, 2026 European Semester Country Report: Ireland – Annex: Innovation to Business.
[36] Ireland, Ireland's Proposed Priorities for Digital Simplification, 14 October 2025.

Protecting and empowering EU people and society

Empowering people and bringing the digital transformation closer to their needs

Equipping people with digital skills



Basic digital skills

Performance assessment

In Ireland, 82.82% of individuals aged 16-74 had at-least-basic digital skills in 2025 after an average increase of 6.6% annually since 2023, putting the country above the EU average of 60.40% and having reached the EU 2030 target of 80%. In 2023, Ireland's figure was 72.91%, compared with the EU's figure for that year of 55.56%. This average annual rate of growth outpaces the EU's annual average growth rate of 4.3%, indicating a robust improvement in Ireland's digital skills landscape. The country is on track according to the trajectory presented in its Digital Decade national roadmap.

On the **gender gap** in digital skills, Ireland exhibited a difference of 1.23 pps in favour of men in 2025, with 83.44% of men and 82.21% of women having at-least-basic digital skills. This gap is smaller than the EU average of 2.75 pps in favour of men.

Education level significantly influences digital proficiency in Ireland. Individuals with no or low formal education had a digital skills rate of 73.23% in 2025, which is substantially higher than the EU average of 37.56% and represents a 9.59 pp. gap relative to Ireland's own national average, which is in turn much smaller than the EU's 22.84 pp. gap.

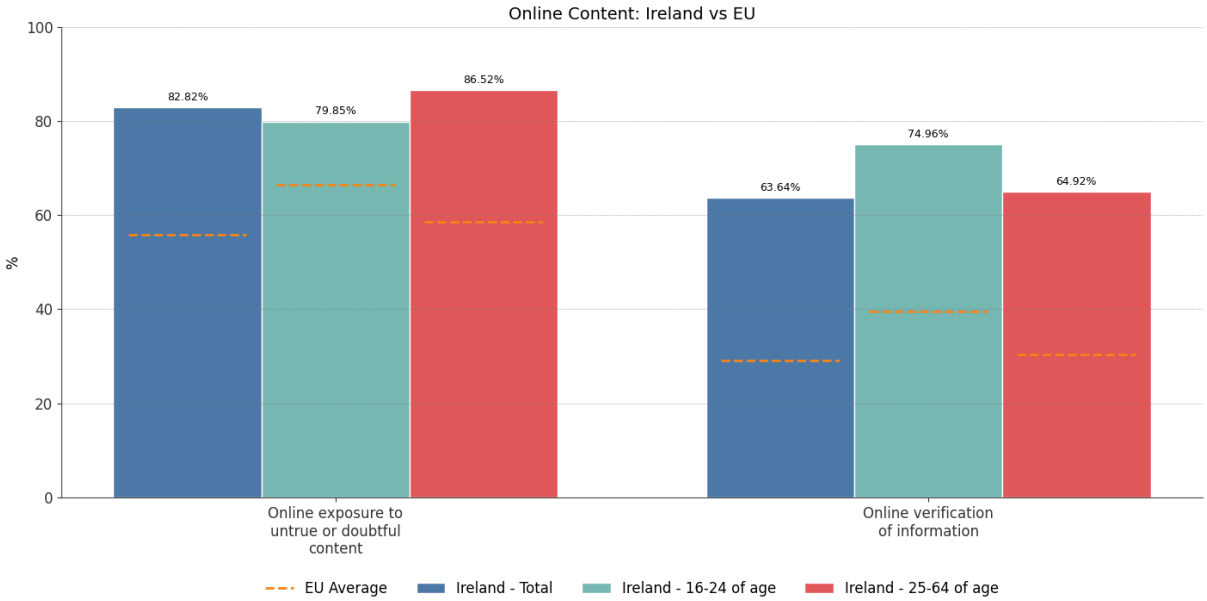
In rural areas, 81.74% of individuals in Ireland had at-least-basic digital skills in 2025, significantly higher than the EU average of 52.83%. The gap between Ireland's towns and suburbs on the one hand and Ireland's rural areas on the other is 4.05 pps, much smaller than the EU's gap of 13.67 pps between cities and rural areas.

Young adults aged 16 to 24 in Ireland demonstrate strong digital skills, with a proficiency rate of 85.50% in 2025, surpassing the EU average of 74.55%. Similarly, older Irish people in the 55-74 age group had a digital skills rate of 75.57% in 2025, higher than the EU average of 42.60%.

In terms of **digital safety skills**, 88.46% of individuals in Ireland had at-least-basic safety skills in 2025, higher than the EU average of 74.63%.

On the **use of generative AI**, 44.93% of people in Ireland used it in 2025, above the EU average of 32.66%. And 22.44% of individuals in Ireland used generative AI for professional purposes in 2025, higher than the EU average of 15.36%. Based on the results of the 2026 Digital Decade Eurobarometer, the main obstacles reported by Irish respondents to the use – or greater use – of generative AI tools are concerns about privacy or data protection (44% of Irish respondents agreed), concerns about accuracy or incorrect information (42% agreed), and concerns about potential job losses due to generative AI tools (42% agreed).

In summary, Ireland's digital skills profile reflects inclusive growth across genders and a relatively small territorial and age gap. While educational disparities remain, Ireland's overall performance in digital skills is very strong, with comparatively high outcomes also among lower-educated and older groups. The adoption of generative AI in Ireland is also notable, indicating a strong engagement of the population with the digital transformation.



In Ireland, 82.82% of **individuals were exposed to untrue or doubtful content online** in 2025, marking an average increase of 13.1% annually since 2023, when the figure was 64.75%. This places Ireland above the EU average on this metric, which stood at 55.90% in 2025 and 49.25% in 2023. The average annual growth rate for Ireland on this metric between 2023 and 2025 (13.1%) is markedly higher than that of the EU (6.5%). When examining exposure by age groups, individuals aged 25-64 are more exposed to such content, with 86.52% exposed in 2025 compared with 79.85% for those aged 16-24. This age gap of 6.67 pps in Ireland is narrower than the corresponding EU average gap of 7.77 pps, but

goes in the opposite direction (i.e. older people in the EU are on average more likely to be exposed to untrue or doubtful content than younger people).

However, 63.64% of Irish people said that they **verified the truthfulness of online** content in 2025, following an average annual increase of 27.9% in people doing this in the two years since 2023, when only 38.92% of Irish people did do. This figure is significantly above the EU average of 29.16% in 2025 and 24.29% in 2023. The average annual growth rate in verification for Ireland between 2023 and 2025 (27.9%) exceeds that of the EU (9.6%). Younger people in Ireland aged 16-24 are more likely to verify online content, with 74.96% doing so in 2025, compared with only 64.92% of those aged 25-64. The gap between the percentage of older people verifying the truthfulness of online content and the percentage of younger people doing so is 10.04 pps, with younger Irish people more likely to verify the truthfulness of online content than older people. This gap is slightly larger than the EU average gap of 9.09 pps.

Overall, Ireland combines high exposure to untrue or doubtful content with very strong verification behaviour. A notable trend is that, unlike the EU average, exposure to untrue of doubtful content in Ireland is higher among the core working-age population than among younger individuals. At the same time, younger individuals in Ireland are more likely to verify the information they come across than older Irish people. This suggests a need to continue promoting critical digital literacy and safe online participation.

Based on the results of the 2026 Digital Decade Eurobarometer, 97% of Irish people think it should be a very high or high priority for the EU to further strengthen the protection of children and young people online. Irish respondents identify fake news and disinformation (58% agreed), misuse of personal data (49% agreed), and insufficient protections for minors (44% agreed) as the online issues with the greatest personal impact on them. The same survey shows that 92% of Irish people agree that online manipulation (such as disinformation, foreign interference, AI-generated content and deepfakes) poses a threat to democratic processes.

Policy context and assessment

Ireland's National Digital & AI Strategy 2030 confirms that all learners should acquire foundational digital, digital literacy and media literacy skills across curricula at all levels, while also expanding the focus of digital education towards AI-related capabilities.

In school education, implementation of the strategy is proceeding, but significant constraints remain. Gaps persist in resource and digital infrastructure in some schools and homes, especially for rural or disadvantaged learners, while teacher shortages continue to affect delivery capacity. At the same time, practical steps are already under way to address these issues, including: (i) the training of over 90 'digital champion' teachers in primary schools; (ii) in-person digital citizenship and AI training through a network of 21 education centres; and (iii) strong teacher demand for AI-related training. Guidance on AI in Schools was also published in October 2025 to support teachers and school leaders in the safe, responsible and effective use of AI. In addition, an AI in Education External Advisory Taskforce has been established to support the Department in developing a coherent national approach to the safe, responsible and effective use of AI across the school system and to help inform the development of policy, guidance and supports. Ireland is also one of six beneficiary authorities participating in the EU Technical Support Instrument project FutureProof Education: Supporting Schools in the AI Evolution, which is being undertaken by UNESCO and will deliver an analysis of current AI use in schools, toolkits and continuing professional development for teachers and school

leaders, and policy recommendations. The challenge is therefore no longer strategic orientation, but whether infrastructure, teacher preparedness and access can keep pace with policy ambition[37].

In adult learning, Ireland's policy base is also well developed. The National Digital & AI Strategy 2030 confirms both the continued implementation of the digital-literacy component of the 'adult literacy for life' strategy and a mid-term review in 2026, reflecting the need to adapt the provision of digital education to both AI and the evolving digital literacy landscape. Delivery of policy to promote digital literacy among adults is supported by concrete funding mechanisms: the Adult Literacy for Life Collaboration and Innovation Fund is providing EUR 1 million in 2026 across literacy, numeracy, digital, financial and family literacy strands, while the wider strategy funded 103 community-based projects in 2024 and helped the charity Age Action to expand digital literacy training for older people. The remaining challenge is scale, reach and take-up, especially as time and cost continue to limit participation in upskilling and lifelong learning[38].

Ireland's National Counter-Disinformation Strategy, published in April 2025, provides a cross-sector framework to support media literacy, fact-checking, 'pre-bunking', research and action against foreign information manipulation and interference. Measures under the strategy for 2025-2026 include: (i) public-awareness activity; (ii) support for fact-checking training; (iii) access to data for vetted researchers; and (iv) EUR 1.1 million in government funding in 2026 for research, fact-checking and media literacy. The strategy also connects with wider delivery channels, including Media Literacy Ireland, the 'Be Media Smart' campaign and funding streams such as the Adult Literacy for Life Collaboration and Innovation Fund[39].

Taken together, the policy framework is strong and increasingly forward-looking. The main issue is no longer the absence of a basic digital skills strategy, but whether Ireland can maintain broad-based high performance in promoting digital skills while both: (i) extending provision in digital education to the groups still most at risk of exclusion; and (ii) deepening more advanced capabilities linked to AI, media literacy and safe online participation.

ICT specialists

Performance assessment

ICT specialists accounted for 6.3% of people in total employment in Ireland in 2025 after an annual average progression of 1.6% since 2024, putting Ireland above the EU average for 2025 of 5.0%. In 2023, Ireland's figure was 6.2%. While Ireland's overall level remains above the EU average, the year-year progress between 2023 and 2025 is below the EU's annual growth rate of 4.2%. Ireland is lagging behind in this area compared with the trajectory presented in its Digital Decade national roadmap.

On the percentage of ICT specialists who are women, Ireland performed above the EU average in 2024, at 24.4%, compared with the EU's 19.5%. However, women remain under-represented in the field.

In 2023, 8.4% of all new graduates in Ireland with undergraduate degrees were ICT graduates. More broadly, Ireland also has both: (i) a high employment rate for recent tertiary-level graduates in STEM subjects (at 95.5% compared with the EU average of 89.6%); and (ii) a high ICT enrolment rate at tertiary level (at 22.9% compared to the EU average of 20.3%). And in 2024, 9.56% of Irish enterprises

[37] European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Education and Training Monitor 2025: Ireland, 2025.
[38] European Commission, Annex 11: Labour Market, 2026.
[39] Coimisiún na Meán, Additional Information from Member State on Information Integrity, 2026.

recruited or tried to recruit personnel with ICT specialist skills. Migration remains a critical source of ICT talent, with 40% of ICT jobs in Ireland held by non-Irish citizens[40].

Policy context and assessment of recommendations

Ireland has strengthened its strategic framework for ICT specialists and advanced digital skills. The National Digital & AI Strategy 2030 places skills and talent at the centre of Ireland's competitiveness agenda and **introduces several relevant instruments** in this area, including: (i) plans for a national skills observatory; (ii) a commitment to forecast demand for digital specialists; (iii) plans to set up a one-stop-shop AI skilling platform; and (iv) measures to expand specialist provision in areas such as AI, cybersecurity, data, cloud, semiconductors and quantum.

Ireland's policy response in the area of ICT skills also **builds on an already extensive delivery ecosystem,** including Springboard+, Skillnet Ireland, Skills to Advance, apprenticeships and other tertiary and lifelong-learning pathways. ICT apprenticeships rose from 244 active apprentices in 2023 to 447 in 2024 and 484 in Q1 2025. In addition, the reformed National Training Fund allocates an additional EUR 1 485 billion to tertiary and higher education between 2025 and 2030. The 2025 Springboard+ call also prioritised digital and ICT programmes. Taken together, this indicates a broadening effort to strengthen both formal specialist pathways and reskilling routes.

Authorities are also increasingly focused on Ireland's specialist-skills bottleneck. A new exercise on understanding and forecasting demand for digital specialists is under way, and continued reliance on recruiting ICT workers to Ireland from overseas is explicitly recognised as likely, given limits in domestic intake capacity, course fill rates and retention. This shows that the policy direction is relevant to the challenge identified in the performance assessment, but also that key parts of the Irish response are still being developed rather than fully delivered.

On gender participation, the Irish policy response appears more broad than targeted. The National Digital & AI Strategy 2030 includes commitments to diversify the talent pipeline, encourage women's enrolment in ICT courses, increase the number of female ICT apprentices and support return pathways into ICT careers. However, the available evidence does not point to a strong new set of dedicated national measures specifically targeted at reversing stagnation in the level of women's participation in Ireland's digital sector. Although some higher-education initiatives have been identified as good practices, these initiatives remain institution-led rather than systemic national reforms. From a competitiveness perspective, the issue is whether Ireland can translate strong labour-market demand and a favourable education base into a broader and more sustainable domestic pipeline of advanced digital talent[41].

2025 recommendation on ICT specialists and advanced skills: Make digital training and reskilling opportunities more accessible and more relevant to job market needs. Address stagnation in gender participation in the digital sector through dedicated national measures.
Ireland made some efforts to address the recommendation through new policy actions in 2025. The updated National Digital & AI Strategy 2030 strengthens the strategic framework for ICT specialists and advanced digital skills through new commitments on: (i) skills forecasting; (ii) AI skilling; (iii) diversification of the talent pipeline; and (iv) expansion of specialist provision in areas such as cybersecurity, data and semiconductors. This builds on an already substantial delivery system, including Springboard+, Skillnet Ireland, Skills to Advance, apprenticeships and increased

[40] European Commission, Directorate-General for Education, Youth, Sport and Culture, Education and Training Monitor 2025: Ireland, 2025.

[41] European Semester 2026: Education and Skills.

support for tertiary provision from the National Training Fund. However, progress remains partial. Parts of the response, including the exercise on forecasting digital specialist demand, are still under development. Moreover continued reliance on inward talent is explicitly expected, and Ireland's response to gender participation remains broad rather than targeted, with limited evidence of dedicated national measures specifically aimed at reversing stagnation in women's participation in the ICT sector.

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

Performance assessment

In 2025, Ireland's total score for digital public services for citizens (which covers both national and cross-border users) reached 91.42/100 points. This represents a 5.0% increase compared with 2024. This puts Ireland above the 2025 EU average for this measure of 84.64/100 points. The country is on track according to the trajectory presented in its Digital Decade national roadmap. When looking specifically at digital public services for national citizens, Ireland reached a score of 90.09/100 points in 2025. This is below the EU average of 94.01/100 points, and it marks a 2.0% increase from 2024. For cross-border digital public services for citizens, Ireland's 2025 score was 92.74/100 points, which is above the EU average of 75.28/100 points. This reflects an 8.0% increase on Ireland's score in 2024.

Ireland scores particularly well on digital public services related to certain citizen-related life events, such as career (100.0), transport (96.88), and family (94.44). Conversely, digital public services related to health (72.26), moving (91.70), and starting a small claims procedure (91.67) show the most room for improvement. Across different levels of government for national citizens' digital public services, Ireland's central government services scored 87.83/100 points in 2025, while its regional government services scored 69.05/100 points, and local government services scored 75.0/100 points.

Ireland also presents a mixed picture in the auxiliary e-Government indicators. The gap with the EU average is particularly pronounced in pre-filled forms (57.45 for Ireland, 75.93 for the EU) and transparency of service delivery, design and personal data (65.66 for Ireland, 69.56 for the EU), whereas Ireland is above the EU average for both user support (97.62 for Ireland) and mobile friendliness (99.42 for Ireland).

Ireland's total digital public services score for businesses (covering both national and cross-border businesses) was 100.0/100 points in 2025, standing above the EU average of 88.59/100 points. This represents no change from 2024. The country is on track on this measure according to the trajectory presented in its Digital Decade national roadmap. Ireland scores a full 100 points for both the business-related life events, namely business start-ups and regular business operations. In particular, Ireland's cross-border digital public services score for businesses reached 100.0/100 points in 2025, reflecting no change compared with 2024. These results are above the EU average of 78.37/100 points. Digital public services for businesses available to national users in Ireland also scored 100.0/100 points. This represents no change since 2024 and places the country above the EU average of 98.81/100 points.

Across the two Digital Decade KPIs, Ireland's indicator for digital public services for businesses performs better than its counterpart for citizens. The lower scores are concentrated in some of the auxiliary indicators for citizen-facing services and in the lower scores recorded at regional and local level. The digitalisation of justice indicator in the EU Justice Scoreboard, shows that there is room to improve digitalisation of the justice system to achieve greater access for citizens and businesses. Ireland has also suffered difficulties and delays with deploying the necessary decentralised IT systems that form the basis for the Justice Digital Exchange system, a key reform for the digitalisation of cross-border public judicial services.

Ireland's access to electronic health records scored 44.03 in 2025 after growth of 79.5% compared with 2024, but the country is still below the 2025 EU average score in this area of 86.5. Ireland scored 24.52 on this measure in 2024 and 11.37 in 2023, so the recent improvement is rapid, albeit from a very low base. The country did not provide a national trajectory point for 2025 for this measure in its Digital Decade national roadmap. Despite this strong growth, Ireland remains the weakest performer in the EU in this area.

Policy context and assessment of recommendations

Ireland's policy approach to digital public services is moving beyond front-end digitalisation and towards a broader model of public-service transformation. The main strategic anchor for this policy approach is Ireland's **Digital Public Services Plan 2030**, launched in November 2025, which sets out a whole-of-government roadmap to ensure that all key public services are available online by 2030 and that 90% of applicable services are accessed digitally. This direction is strengthened by the **National Digital & AI Strategy 2030**, which commits to: (i) implementing the two policy initiatives on digital public services (i.e. Better Public Services 2030 and Digital Public Services 2030); (ii) adopting a new Public Service Data Strategy; (iii) introducing digital-readiness checks for legislation; (iv) expanding structured digital publication of legislation; and (v) widening the use of AI in public-service delivery. The strategy also identifies public-service AI deliverables, including: (i) plans to create an AI advisory unit and a National AI Fellowship Programme; (ii) plans to introduce AI training for public servants; and (iii) a commitment to launching a Government Digital Wallet. Ireland's wider simplification agenda similarly emphasises clearer rules, greater coherence across digital legislation and lower compliance burdens for firms operating across the single market.

On digital identity, Ireland has continued to build on a strong domestic ecosystem centred on **MyGovID**, while positioning the **Government Digital Wallet** as a flagship element of the wider public-service transformation agenda. The National Digital & AI Strategy 2030 commits to launching the wallet by end-2026, aligned with the EU Digital Identity Wallet framework. By March 2026, Irish authorities reported that: (i) MyGovID had reached **3.3 million verified users**; (ii)the public-service card is already used by **20 public bodies** for authentication services; and (iii) pilot tests of wallet functionality had already been carried out, including with **500 public servants** and through controlled public testing. Ireland is also testing **age-verification use cases** with the EU.

At the same time, the legal and interoperability dimension remains incomplete. **Ireland has not yet formally notified an e-ID scheme under the eIDAS Regulation**, including for legal persons. The Irish authorities have indicated that securing a legal basis for going live with the wallet is a government priority, with a general scheme expected by the end of 2026, followed by national legislative steps and self-certification for national deployment, while European certification is anticipated in 2027. The absence of a national identity scheme is acknowledged as a complicating factor. More broadly, Ireland is technically ready to enable exchanges through the **EU's Once-Only Technical System**, but is not yet fully active in the Once-Only Technical System Community to continue the Irish rollout of the **Single Digital Gateway Regulation**.

Ireland's strong performance in digital public services for businesses is underpinned by this broader transformation agenda. Ireland remains one of the EU's strongest performers in this area, including for cross-border business services, while work is ongoing on digital public services in the area of permits, business registration and inspections (including with support from the EU's Technical Support Instrument). Ireland has also strengthened implementation of the interoperability framework and the once-only principle in selected sectors. The Irish authorities have presented public-service infrastructure consolidation under **OGCIO** governance, including use of a secure government cloud environment, as a process that supports resilience and strategic control. This work on digital public services has been complemented by **updated government guidance on cloud computing and cloud-services procurement** published in May 2025, which provides a more structured framework for

procurement, data protection, security, contractual governance, auditability, exit management and risk control.

2025 recommendation on e-ID: Notify an e-ID scheme under the eIDAS Regulation to the Commission.
Ireland made some efforts to address this recommendation in 2025 through: (i) continued development of the Government Digital Wallet; (ii) pilot and preparatory work linked to the EU Digital Identity Wallet; and (iii) steps towards the legal basis needed for rollout. However, progress remains partial, as formal notification under eIDAS has still not been completed and the remaining legal and interoperability challenges continue to delay full implementation.

Healthcare digitalisation is accelerating but remains Ireland's most significant structural gap within the digital public-services pillar together with the justice system which is still relying heavily on paper. Nationwide rollout of **e-Dispensations** (i.e. the electronic distribution of medical prescriptions) is already under wayand broader work to put in place electronic health records. By early 2026, authorities reported: (i) deployment of a national **health app**; (ii) procurement of a **National Shared Care Record**; (iii) ring-fenced cyber-resilience funding; and (iv) preparation of an **AI framework for healthcare**. The National Digital & AI Strategy 2030 strengthens this direction through implementation of Ireland's **'Digital for Care' 2030** strategy; (ii) an '**AI for Care' strategy** in 2026; (iii) nationwide **e-Prescribing** Iby 2028; and (iv) full delivery of the **national electronic health record** by 2032. The Irish authorities also reported that: (i) Ireland's **Health App** had exceeded **122 000 registered users** and **200 000 downloads**; (ii) the **Maternal and Newborn Clinical Management System** is live in five major maternity hospitals; and (iii) national procurement has begun for the electronic health-record system. Several of these digitalisation measures were rolled out in 2025, including the Health App, the national payroll system, the IFMS financial management system, and the maternity electronic health-record system. In addition, a chief officer for data was appointed and a centre of excellence was established to drive automation and AI deployment in healthcare (a framework for AI in healthcare is due in Q1 2026). At the same time, the central challenge is not only to provide patients with access to data, but to digitalise the underlying records and workflows across a historically fragmented and still-partly-paper-based health system[42].

2025 recommendation on 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.
Ireland made some efforts to address this recommendation in 2025 through: (i) implementation of the **Digital for Care** strategy; (ii) rollout of **e-Dispensations**; (iii) the development of the **Health App**; (iv) procurement of a **national shared care record**; and (v) further work on the national electronic health record, supported by **EUR 75 million** in RRF funding. These measures indicate that Ireland is now in a more active implementation phase and should support faster progress in the coming years. However, progress remains partial. Ireland's score on access to e-health records, although improving, remains far below the EU average, and the available evidence indicates that provider onboarding, interoperability and effective full access are still incomplete.

[42] Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan – Latest state of play, EPRS, November 2025; European Commission; Government of Ireland, Department of the Taoiseach.

Leveraging digital transformation for a smart greening

Ireland's ICT sector has a particularly high emissions footprint, although the country is performing somewhat better in the recycling of electronic equipment. Eurostat recently published sectoral data on emissions which show that **the ICT** sector in Ireland emitted **76.8 kg CO_2 eq per capita**, which is far above the EU average of **22.8 kg CO_2 eq** (data from 2022). Of these emissions, **35.6%** come from ICT manufacturing activities, compared with **18.2%** in the EU, meaning that most of Ireland's ICT emissions still come from ICT services activities. However, Ireland's ICT sector represented only **0.63%** of 2022 GHG emissions in the total economy, above the EU average (**0.35%**). And **84.69%** of ICT-related waste collected (corresponding to two categories of waste electrical and electronic equipment) are recycled or prepared for reuse. This is slightly above the EU average (**80.23%**). According to the 2026 Digital Decade Eurobarometer, **54%** of Irish people consider that green digital technologies (e.g. energy-saving technologies) will have the most positive impact in the next 10 years.

Ireland's policy response in the area of green technologies is increasingly shaped by the need to reconcile a push for strong digital growth with energy and infrastructure constraints. Data centres consumed **22%** of national metered electricity in 2024, up from 5% in 2015, and the **National Digital & AI Strategy 2030** states that data centres' share of total electricity demand is forecast to exceed **30%** by 2034..Large energy users, including data centres, also contribute to the development of Ireland's energy system, including through financing security-of-supply measures and supporting renewable deployment via corporate power purchase agreements. At the same time, fossil fuels still accounted for **54%** of Ireland's electricity generation in 2025, wholesale electricity prices remained high, and renewable dispatch-down reached **10.5%**[43]. The environmental footprint also extends to water use, although the direct share of data centres in Uisce Éireann's annual supply remains limited; the more relevant issue is that additional demand arises in a context of high leakage and wider water-infrastructure pressures.

The main issue is therefore not weak digitalisation, but weak alignment between digital growth, electricity infrastructure and the green transition In that respect, **Large Energy User Action Plan (LEAP)** marks a significant shift: rather than simply facilitating further expansion of energy-intensive digital infrastructure, it seeks to steer future large-scale investments, including data centres, towards a more resilient and sustainable model. This is also reflected in implementation: while the LEAP introduces a plan-led approach for very large energy-intensive investments, including data centres, its impact remains constrained because the relevant requirement applies only to new or expanding facilities and depends on the availability of power purchase agreements. More broadly: (i) Ireland's framework for encouraging flexibility on the part of large energy users remains incomplete; (ii) demand-side response is not yet fully enabled; and (iii) investment in electricity storage continues to face policy and tariff barriers[44].

Ireland's wider policy framework on electricity usage is becoming more structured. The **2022 government statement on data centres** had already recognised the sector's strategic importance

[43] Government of Ireland, Department of the Taoiseach, Digital Ireland: Connecting our People, Securing our Future: National Digital & AI Strategy 2030, 2025; European Commission, Annex 9: Affordable energy transition, 2026; European Commission, Annex 10: Climate adaptation, preparedness and environment, 2026.

[44] Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, Government publishes Large Energy User Action Plan (LEAP), laying the foundation for future investments in energy-intensive sectors, published 13 January 2026, updated 20 March 2026).

alongside the pressures it creates for renewable policy, generation adequacy, regional security of supply, community acceptance and consumer costs. This recognition has since been complemented by: (i) a revised **CRU** connection policy for large energy users; and (ii) new reporting obligations on data-centre energy and sustainability performance under the Energy Efficiency Directive framework. [45].

Ireland's revised **RRP** also devotes **53.5%** of costs to climate objectives and **33.3%** to digital measures. This expenditure on climate and digital measures includes: (i) a public-sector retrofit pathfinder; (ii) digital transformation of enterprise; and (iii) a shared government data centre. European Semester discussions further indicate that Ireland is prioritising capital 'deepening' in the green and digital transitions and using regional channels such as Smart Specialisation, Digital Innovation Hubs and technology gateways.[46]

Overall, Ireland's framework for linking digitalisation and smart greening is becoming more coherent and more realistic about the trade-offs involved. The key challenge in this area is whether implementation can catch up with the policy goals. If Ireland is to keep digital growth compatible with decarbonisation objectives it will need to ensure: grid expansion, renewable deployment, planning reform, water and infrastructure resilience, and stronger coordination for digital-for-greening projects [47].

[45] *Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres in Ireland's Enterprise Strategy, 2022; Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment, Data Centre Energy and Sustainability Performance Reporting Obligations, published 24 February 2025, updated 9 June 2025*

[46] European Parliamentary Research Service, Ireland's National Recovery and Resilience Plan: Latest state of play, November 2025.

[47] European Commission, Annex 9: Affordable energy transition, 2026; European Commission, Annex 10: Climate adaptation, preparedness and environment, 2026; European Commission.

Annex I: National roadmap analysis

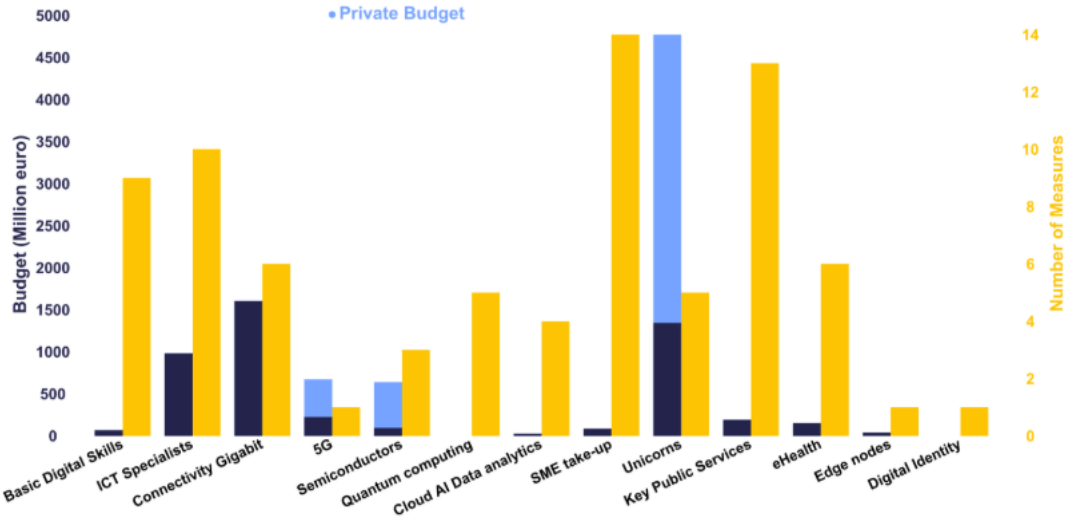
Ireland's national Digital Decade strategic roadmap

The adjusted roadmap addresses a limited number of roadmap recommendations issued in 2024. Ireland did not revise its 2030 targets in its adjusted roadmap, but it instead submitted a detailed update to: (i) the narrative outlining the national responses to each of the recommendations; and (ii) the progress made under the original strategic framework. The revised roadmap was not resubmitted as a new standalone document.

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

As part of the adjustment to its original roadmap, Ireland significantly expanded the repository of national measures. The adjusted roadmap now comprises 81 measures, including 22 new ones introduced since the original submission, with a total investment for all 81 measures of EUR 9.24 billion. Several of the new measures focus on the digitalisation of SMEs, including: (i) the introduction of a dedicated national voucher scheme; (ii) improved advisory support through a new enterprise hub; and (iii) 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 Ireland's forthcoming SME digitalisation action plan.

Measures and budget in national roadmap[48]



Other new measures added to the adjusted roadmap 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 additional actions are complemented by measures to promote digital inclusion, particularly for socio-economically disadvantaged groups. Further additional measures support the 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 adjusted roadmap now reports plans for 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 impact evaluation. However, evaluation frameworks are still not applied consistently across the full set of measures in Ireland's adjusted roadmap.

Although the adjusted roadmap makes some efforts 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 to the Declaration on Digital Rights and Principles. In this respect, Ireland's updated roadmap 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.

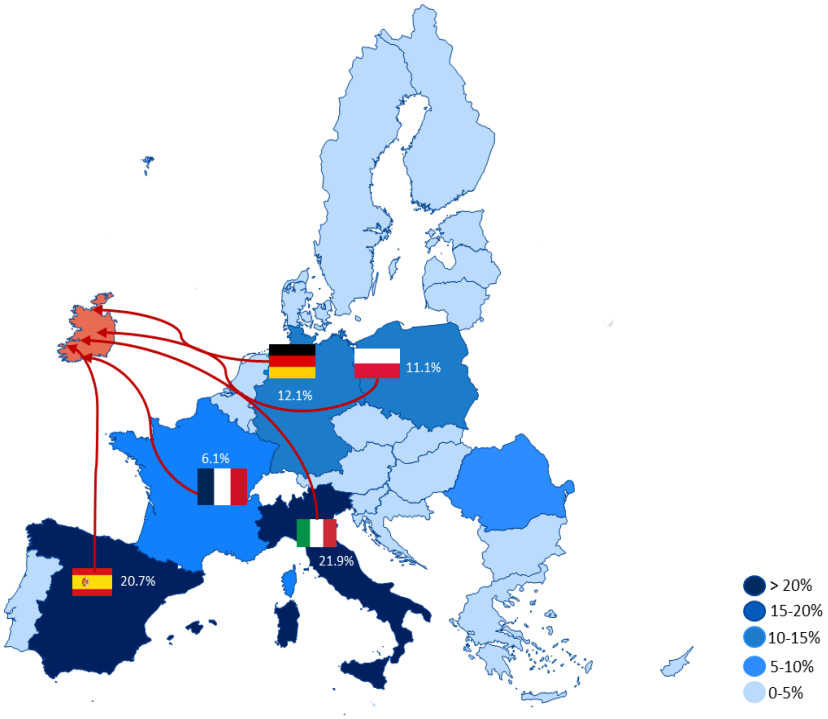
[48] When referring to national roadmaps, data used in this report are those declared by the Member States in their national roadmaps, on the basis of the Commission's guidance (C(2023) 4025 final). Data might reflect possible variations in reporting practices and methodological choices across Member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

Annex II: Funding, economic impacts & Multi-Country Projects

Country results from the study 'Assessing the Economic Impact of Digital Investments under the Recovery and Resilience Facility'

A modelling study conducted by the European Commission services, with the FIDELIO model, assesses the economic impact of the digital component of the RRF. As of November 2025, the digital part of the Recovery and Resilience Plan of Ireland was evaluated to EUR 312 million with EUR 19 million for digital infrastructures, EUR 64 million for digital skills, EUR 146 million for the digitalisation of businesses, and EUR 85 million for the digitalisation of public services.

The total economic impact of RRF digital measures is estimated to EUR 4.72 billion for the national economy. Of this, EUR 1.25 billion stems from the direct effects of Ireland's own RRP and EUR 3.47 billion corresponds to spillover effects from the implementation of other EU Member States' plans. Ireland benefited the most from spillover effects from RRPs of Italy (EUR 759 million), Spain (EUR 718 million), Germany (EUR 419 million). The most impacted sectors are Manufacturing (EUR 2.36 billion), ICT Services (EUR 529 million), and Administrative Services (EUR 414 million).



RRF spillover effects to Ireland

Funding from the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF) & Cohesion Policy

Ireland is allocates 33% of its total RRP funding to digital (EUR 0.3 billion)[49]. In addition, under cohesion policy, EUR 40 million, representing 4% of the country's total cohesion policy funding, is dedicated to advancing Ireland's digital transformation[50].

Multi-Country Projects

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

[49] 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: 23 April 2026.

[50] 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 (including Interreg), the Cohesion Fund, the European Social Fund Plus, and the Just Transition Fund.