



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

FUTURE JOBS

IRELAND 2019

The Story so Far



Future Jobs Ireland - the story so far

Future Jobs Ireland, launched in March 2019, is an ambitious, medium-term framework to create a sustainable, resilient and future-oriented economy in Ireland over the years to 2025.

Our strong economic performance of recent years, with record numbers in employment, cannot be taken for granted. We must ensure our economy is well-positioned to adapt to both a low-carbon future and increased digitalisation and automation. Productivity levels in indigenous firms must rise as the best way to achieve sustainable wage and wider economic growth. Our labour force is our greatest asset. We have a strong talent pool but we must ensure skills evolve as the economy changes. We also need to increase labour market participation, in particular among those who are currently underrepresented. All of this needs to be achieved in a time of Brexit, and of increased trade protectionism and geopolitical risk.

Future Jobs Ireland is framed around five Pillars:

1. embracing innovation and technological change;
2. improving SME productivity;
3. enhancing skills and developing and attracting talent;
4. increasing participation in the labour force; and
5. transitioning to a low carbon economy.

Each Pillar has high-level targets to be achieved by 2025:

Pillar 1	Pillar 2	Pillar 3	Pillar 4	Pillar 5
Gross Expenditure on Research & Development to 2.5% of GNP	Increase multifactor productivity in the domestic economy by an average of 1% per year	Double participation in lifelong learning to 18%	Increase participation rates for people aged 25 to 69 to 78%	Share of total energy use from renewable sources to 20%

Specific commitments to contribute towards achieving these targets, which are time-bound and measurable, are developed annually.

Although less than a year since Future Jobs Ireland was launched, there has been significant progress. A selection of these achievements is outlined below.

Funds and Supports

Under Future Jobs Ireland 2019 several competitive calls for Government funding have launched to drive our ambition of a resilient and future-proofed economy. Some are pilots which can be reviewed and developed over the medium term. Others are large multi-annual funds to address long term needs across Ireland.

Examples include the following:

- The Future Growth Loan Scheme was opened for applications in April. This scheme provides long term loans of up to €3 million to SMEs for strategic investment to grow their businesses.
- The first tranche of the Human Capital Initiative has been launched, providing substantive investment in higher education to promote innovative and responsive delivery models.
- The Regional Technology Clustering Fund was launched on 1 July by the Minister for Business, Enterprise and Innovation. It provides an initial €2.75 million to build sectoral clusters of SMEs and Institutes of Technology/Technological Universities.
- The Research and Development Tax Credit has been reviewed and changed in Budget 2020 to make it more accessible to micro and small businesses.
- Launch of the second call of the Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund.

Policy Development

Concrete developments in important policy areas have been achieved. Examples include the following:

- The Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, working with the Department of Justice and Equality, has introduced a streamlined process to ensure spouses/partners of critical skills employment permit holders have immediate access to the Irish labour market without the need for an employment permit.
- Springboard+ and Skillnet Ireland now offer a series of training programmes with a specific focus on the future of work. Courses are now available including leadership and management, blockchain, AI, cybersecurity, Internet of Things, virtual reality and smart factory technology.
- The Cruinniú GovTech Summit promoted greater interaction between Government, academia and industry to leverage the use of digital technology within Government to improve public services.

Stakeholder Events

Over the last year, we have had several high-level stakeholder consultations. In addition, a series of events were held by various Departments throughout the Summer to promote the Pillars of Future Jobs Ireland, including:

- OECD SME and Entrepreneurship Strategy Conference (Pillar 2 event)
- Remote Working Consultation Forum (Pillar 4 event)
- Workshop on a Roadmap for the Creative Industries
- Several consultation events on the AI strategy with industry, academia, civil society and the public sector
- Climate Action Town Hall meeting (Pillar 5 event)
- Open Policy Debate on 'A Strategy for the Agri-Food Sector to 2030'

Future Jobs Ireland 2020

While Future Jobs Ireland will continue to focus on its five established pillars, at this year's Summit three cross cutting areas will be highlighted as particularly important for 2020. These are new modes of working, the impact of transition, and clustering. In 2019 significant first steps have been made in these areas which will be built upon in future years. For example:

- The National Economic Social Council will provide recommendations by the end of the year as to how the Government should coherently and proactively respond to the workers, enterprises and sectors that are vulnerable to the technological and low carbon transition.
- Work is ongoing in the Department of Justice and Equality and the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation on flexible working and remote working so as to promote better work/life balance, and reduce barriers to enter the labour market.
- A cybersecurity cluster was launched in Cork this year and progress is being made on a National Centre of Excellence on High Performance and Nearly Zero Energy Building.
- Three 'Top Teams' are on track to be established this year on Artificial Intelligence, GovTech and Offshore Renewables. This is a pilot approach involving Government and the private sector working together to capitalize on the opportunities these new growth areas present.

The above is just a sample of progress made this year under Future Jobs Ireland and points towards the direction of travel for next year.

Future Jobs Ireland marks a major shift for Government, and this year we have taken important steps towards our goals. In 2020 we will continue to drive changes across the country to make the Irish economy more sustainable, resilient and productive.

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