



Development of a Well-being Framework for Ireland

Draft Terms of Reference for Inter-Department Working Group & NESC

01.03.21

Context

The development of new measures of well-being and progress was a commitment in the Programme for Government, in recognition that in order to achieve a well-rounded policy-making system there is a need to move beyond uniquely economic measures.

At its meeting of 9 February 2021, the Government agreed an approach to developing a Well-being Framework for Ireland based on a number of core principles, around building on existing work, making the framework useful and impactful, pursuing an iterative approach, and ensuring buy-in.

Approach

It is intended that an initial output on the framework be submitted to Government in Summer 2021, which will build on the extensive national and international work already undertaken in the area. Full development of the Framework will be an iterative process over a number of years.

The OECD Framework for Measuring Well-being and Progress provides a helpful structure for this work and has been used by many leading countries in this area, most notably New Zealand. As is the case in other countries, it is intended that the Framework will set out the concepts and parameters, and a Dashboard will be the supporting measurement tool within this framework.

This work will be jointly sponsored by the Departments of the Taoiseach, Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform. A Well-being Framework Working Group, chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach, will support the detailed work required for the development of the Framework.

In line with best international practice, it is important that the development of the framework is supported by consultation to ensure it reflects the priorities of Irish society and the diversity of people's lived experiences.



Purpose of a Well-being Framework

An overarching Well-being Framework, in bringing together a broad range of data, is at its essence a different lens to think through different aspects of policy and thus is an important tool in setting out priorities. The Framework does not replace other analytical frameworks or approaches but helps provide more comprehensive policy analysis through a broader perspective. It is important that the output is not overly complex and focuses on priority areas to maximise usability.

There will be an emphasis on developing a Framework which is integrated with policymaking, including through the links to the ongoing work by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in the area of performance budgeting and equality budgeting.

Membership of the Well-being Framework Working Group

It has been agreed that work on developing the Framework will be supported through a Working Group chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach with membership as follows:

- Department of Finance
- Department of Public Expenditure and Reform
- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
- Department of Health
- Department of Tourism, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media
- Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth
- Department Environment, Climate and Communications
- Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
- Department of Education
- Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
- Department of Social Protection
- Department of Justice
- Department of Rural and Community Development
- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Department of Defence
- Department of Transport
- Central Statistics Office
- National Economic and Social Council



Terms of reference:

- Supporting the production of an initial output on the well-being framework by Summer 2021, to include a conceptual Framework, an initial Dashboard focused on priority areas, and recommendations on future work for improving the framework as well as additional data requirements. Given the development of the overarching framework is an iterative process, the recommendations within this report for progressing the framework will be particularly important in guiding the evolution of this work.
- Promoting awareness, benefits and use of the Framework by policymakers. As the development of the framework is an iterative process, feedback on the framework, in particular from those using it to inform policy approaches, will help inform and improve future iterations.
- Delivering the conceptual framework will involve taking the dimensions of the OECD Framework as a starting point, and determining and defining the dimensions deemed most relevant for Ireland across social, environmental and economic considerations.
- Designing a supporting dashboard, will require prioritisation of high-level indicators under each of the agreed dimensions, including identifying data sources and assessing suitability and timeliness of the data, as well as identifying any significant data gaps that may need to be addressed.
- The CSO will have a central role to play in the development and management of the dashboard and underlying data.
- The Working Group will also support the provision of discussion papers for consultation purposes.

Terms of Reference NESCS

- NESCS will provide a vehicle for consultation with stakeholders on the framework.
- It will convene a subgroup drawing on members of the Council representing different social partnership pillars and external experts as required.
- It will also consult more widely with external parties.
- This consultation will be done in close cooperation with the Department of the Taoiseach and feed back into the Working Group.
- NESCS will also compile a report summarising the key findings from their engagements. This report will be included in the initial output from the Working Group which goes to Government in Summer 2021.