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Digital Inclusion in Ireland

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Presentation Outline



- Introduction
- Public Policy objectives underpinning Digital Inclusion interventions by Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC)
- Public Policy interventions other sectors
- NESCC Recommendations and way forward – some observations (personal)

DECC – Digital Inclusion Interventions

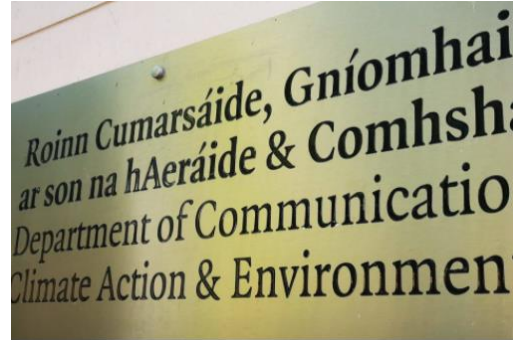


- **National Broadband Plan** – Significant State intervention (up to €2.7 billion) to address objective of ensuring every citizen, school, business and farm in Ireland will have access to a reliable, high quality, high speed broadband service, for at least the next 25 years
- **Trading on Line Voucher Scheme (TOVs) and Digital Skills Programme** short-term demonstration schemes to provide evidence of impact of intervention of this nature, to support development of broader interventions across Government

National Broadband Plan (NBP)



Government Contract was signed on 19 November 2019 with National Broadband Ireland (NBI).



DECC is responsible for oversight of the 25-year contract.



The NBP is the largest infrastructural project in the State, covering 96% of Ireland's landmass.



A network of over 900 strategic connection points (incl. over 600 schools) being passed in the community by end of 2023.



In parallel, a fibre network is being deployed to pass all in-scope premises by the end of 2026.

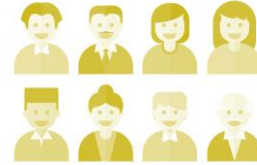


Detailed work is ongoing to seek to accelerate the current timelines.

NBP intervention



Across 100,000km
of road



1.1m citizens
(23% population)



458,000 of the
working population
live in IA



Over 600
schools



Over 290
Broadband
Connection Points

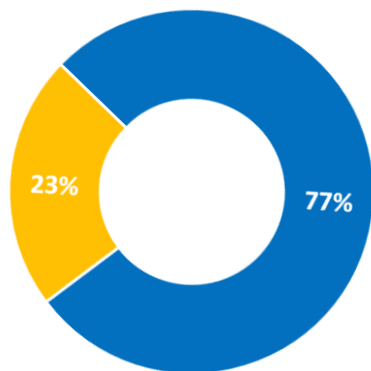


Over 44,000
businesses (mostly
small and micro)

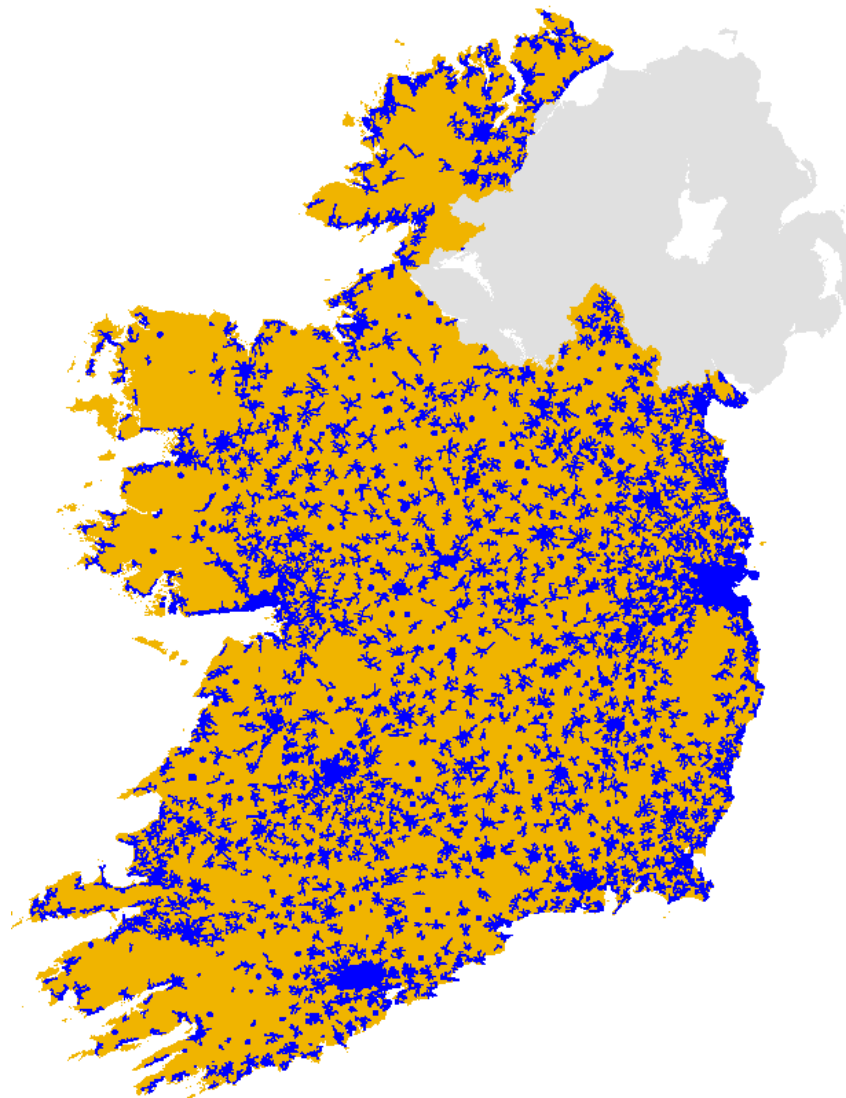


55,804 (68%)
farms

Intervention Area Map



Blue – Commercial coverage
Amber - NBP Intervention Area



Program Intervention Area :

- Over 540k premises
- Over 1.1m citizens = 23% population
- 700 primary schools

Programme Challenges:

- Very dispersed nature of homes and businesses across every townland
- Building around and beyond the commercial FTTH footprint

DECC – Digital Inclusion Interventions



Trading Online Voucher

- **Focus:** small and micro companies to develop an eCommerce presence

Number of Grants approved and Investment

2019: 1,200 grants at a cost of 2.4 million

2020: 12,900 grants at a cost of €30.8 million

Digital Skills Programme:

- **Focus:** people who had never used the internet before
- Since 2017 almost 60,000 people have received training – State investment

€5.5 million

Wider Digital Inclusion Interventions



- Extensive range of interventions underpinned by very significant investment
- Well documented in report and in presentation by Dr Anne-Marie McGauran
- Number, scope, scale and breadth of interventions increased in recent years
- Shift towards delivering schemes at a local level – closer to citizen
- Wider variety of measures – some with good potential to be complementary (or duplicating) – others with more singular focus, or supporting a wider goal

NEESC Recommendations – Observations (personal)



- “Inclusion” a core policy objective for successive Governments
- Inclusion, along with other core cross-cutting policy objectives embedded across Government in policy making and implementation
- Digital Inclusion should be embedded in sectoral level strategies and implementation measures
- National Digital Strategy – digital inclusion to be amongst core principles

NESC Recommendations – Observations Ctd (personal)



A National Strategy for Digital Inclusion

- What would it look like compared to other national strategies? - recent examples: *Rural Development Policy 2021-2025 – National Remote Working Strategy*
- Core purpose of the strategy? How would it add value?
- How to develop against backdrop of extensive range of existing actions?
- How would it sit with existing sectoral strategies where digital inclusion is already a key principle – (fit with future sectoral strategies)?

Conclusion



- NESC Report – a valuable contribution to inform delivery of existing actions and future policy decisions
- Includes very clear recommendations to inform debate on how to address digital divide
- Recognises that challenge of digital inclusion will continue into future
- Challenge = How to cohesively build on significant actions taken to date

End

