Understanding Life in Ireland: The Well-being Framework

Second Report

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1. Overview

The development of a Well-being Framework for Ireland marks a shift in how progress is understood and measured, and provides a tool for policy-making to better understand people's quality of life in an increasingly complex world. It does this through a multi-dimensional framework and supporting Dashboard of indicators, covering a wide spectrum of issues such as climate, housing and health, with a particular focus on sustainability and equality.

Conceptual Framework

This approach allows consideration of different policy areas simultaneously rather than sequentially or in isolation. This can facilitate more joined up policy making with a focus on improving the collective well-being of the people of Ireland over time. Importantly, it provides a holistic understanding of progress beyond economic indicators such as GDP.

As other countries have done, work on Ireland's well-being initiative is being progressed on a phased basis. This is the second report on the development of this initiative to better understand life in Ireland. It builds on the First Report (published in July 2021), which set out the initial overarching vision, conceptual framework and dashboard, alongside next steps for progressing the Framework.

This Second Report details progress since then, in particular the outcomes of a comprehensive Public Conversation and research programme, a refined conceptual framework based on these inputs, and reflects plans to embed the Framework into the policy making system over time.

Significant progress has been achieved over the last number of months, including the development of a [Well-being Portal](#), providing information on the initiative, and an interactive [Well-being Information Hub,](#) produced by the CSO.

The launch of these two tools in October 2021, coincided with the launch of a Public Conversation on Ireland's Well-being Framework, building on the [initial consultation](#) conducted by the National Economic and Social Council (NESC). This second consultation phase ran until January 2022 and focused on testing and building buy-in for the Framework.

Specific research has also been progressed to support the development and implementation of the Framework. A review of the integration of sustainability and how it can be further emphasised in the Framework and dashboard has been completed.[1] The NESC Secretariat has completed forthcoming research on the implementation of well-being frameworks in a selection of countries, including how they are incorporated into the policy-making process and budgeting.[2] An approach to evaluating expenditure and reviewing policies and programmes using the Well-being Framework is also being advanced.

The results of the Public Conversation and relevant research has fed into a refinement of the initial vision and conceptual framework, with a greater emphasis on sustainability and equality. This includes an increased emphasis on environmental, economic and social sustainability, via a tagging system across the Framework, highlighting the areas that are most important for sustainable well-being. This approach will provide insight into intergenerational trade-offs for decision-makers. The Framework also includes adjustments to some of the dimensions and aspects that make up the Framework, and has raised the profile of certain issues such as public transport, trust in Government and creativity.

Overarching Vision and Goals

Enabling all our people to live fulfilled lives now and into the future.

- Enable people to have purposeful lives that support good physical and mental health, enabling development of skills across the life cycle and providing a good standard of living;

- Ensure a sustainable sense of place, including through an appropriate and safe place to live and protection of Ireland's environment, climate and biodiversity;

- Preserve balance, inclusivity and equality of opportunities across society with open and effective government, empowering families, friends and communities to grow, connect and meaningfully engage.

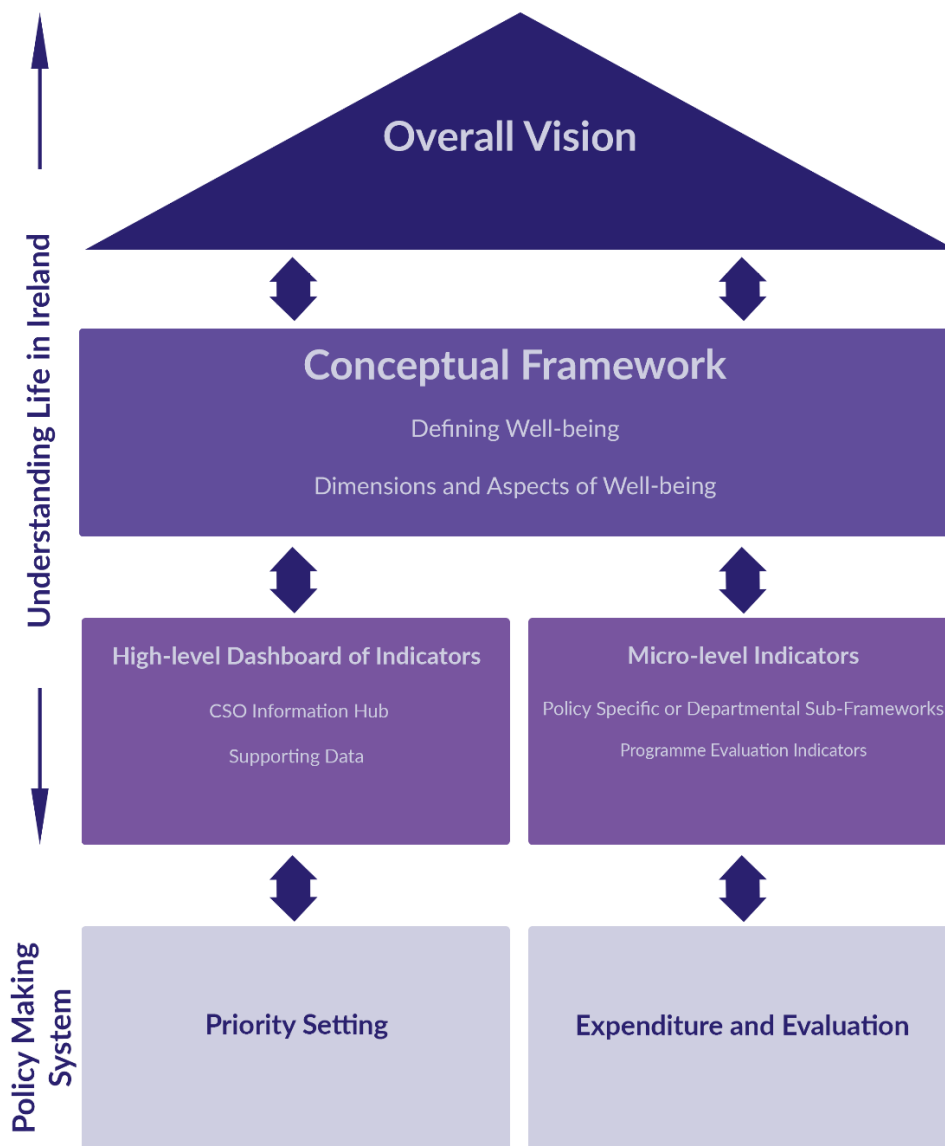[1] Department of Finance (2022), *Sustainability in the Irish Well-being Framework: A Review*
[2] McGauran & Kennedy, forthcoming.

There has also been a focus on understanding and developing linkages with national and international initiatives. Indeed, in line with many other countries, the Irish Framework stems from the OECD's Well-being Framework. This work included linkages between the *Well-being Vision Statements of* Public Participation Network's (PPNs) and the overarching national approach; a mapping the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) to Ireland's Well-being Framework; and highlighting Shared Island research.

The overarching Framework seeks to embed an understanding and measurement of Ireland's overall progress across economic, social and environmental factors into the policy making system.

A Well-being Approach

Overall Vision

Conceptual Framework

Defining Well-being

Dimensions and Aspects of Well-being

High-level Dashboard of Indicators

CSO Information Hub

Supporting Data

Micro-level Indicators

Policy Specific or Departmental Sub-Frameworks

Programme Evaluation Indicators

Priority Setting

Expenditure and Evaluation

Understanding Life in Ireland

Policy Making System

The Report sets out a clear pathway to progress this work over time, including:

1. Annual analysis of the well-being dashboard, feeding into the high-level priority identification phase of the Budgetary process.
2. Developing a broader evidence base and research tools.
3. Continued integration of a Well-being perspective into expenditure and policy evaluation, building on performance and equality budgeting.
4. Oversight structures and approaches for well-being across Government.

Significant progress has been achieved over a relatively short period of time, with the development of a Conceptual Framework and accompanying interactive dashboard for Ireland, supported by two phases of consultation and bespoke research.

Initial work on embedding the Framework has been initiated across Government. This will be further advanced on an incremental basis to become a valuable part of policy-making.

The next phase of work provides a clear pathway to embed a well-being approach into policy-making and elements of the budget process over time. The provision of annual high-level analysis of the Well-being Dashboard will capture Ireland's overall progress on quality of life issues, right across the policy spectrum, drawing out intergenerational trade-offs and inequalities.

A Well-being approach is a new way to better understand life in Ireland, and this report provides a comprehensive picture of what is important for quality of life, and a clear pathway to increasingly incorporate this approach into policy over time.

This cross-Government initiative will continue to be led by the Department of the Taoiseach, jointly sponsored by the Departments of Finance and Public Expenditure & Reform, with the Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Investment and supporting substructures providing oversight.

2. Progress Over Phase 2 of this Work

This section outlines progress on the Well-being initiative. This includes the development and launch of the Well-being Portal and the CSO's interactive Well-being Information Hub, a comprehensive Public Conversation, and the progression of several strands of research.

This work has been led jointly by the Department of the Taoiseach, Finance and Public Expenditure and Reform, working closely with the CSO and also the National Economic and Social Council (NESC), and supported by a wider inter-departmental Group.

The Well-being Information Hub
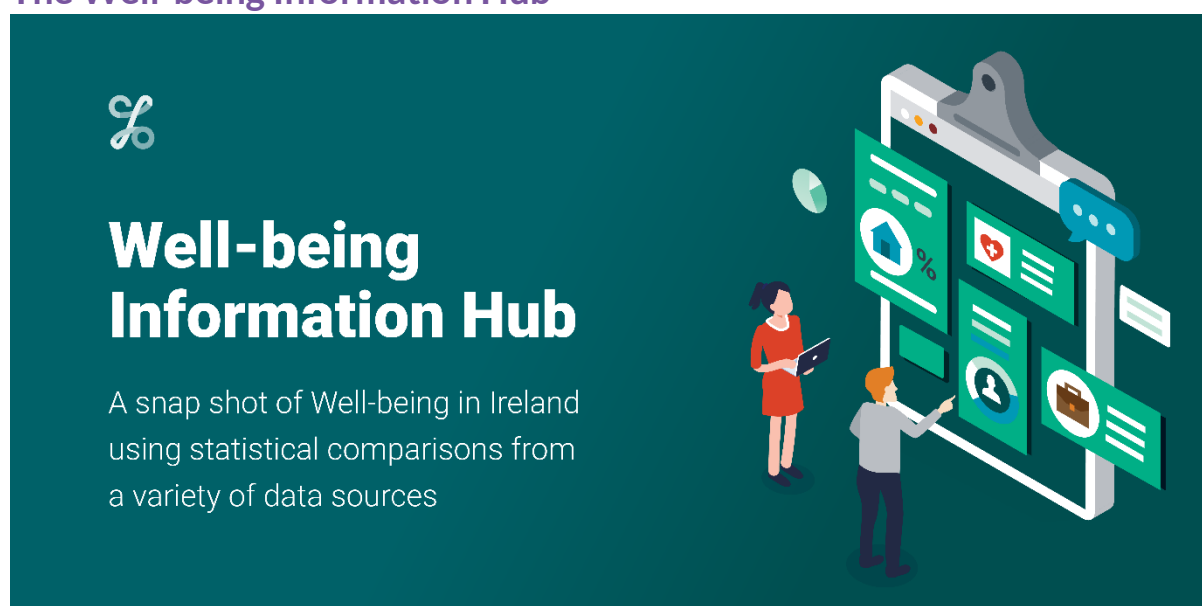
In October 2021, the Government launched a Well-being Portal. This Portal is an important tool for raising awareness of the development of the Framework, including with the wider public. It allows users to explore the project, outlines the vision and goals of the work and gives details on the framework including the chosen dimensions and indicators. The Portal will be a valuable platform to communicate the progression and uses of the Framework over time, including to profile research and complementary policies and initiatives.

The CSO launched the Well-being Information Hub in October, an interactive version of the static well-being dashboard laid out in the first report. This tool allows users to explore the data and develop their own understanding of life and progress in Ireland. This was the culmination of a significant amount of work across the CSO, with inputs from across the organisation, along with close cooperation with external bodies such as the EPA and the OECD.

The development of the Hub resulted in the publication of 16 additional data breakdowns into the CSO data system (details can be found at Appendix 1). The Hub is an interactive and evolving product which updates automatically as new data is published by the CSO. Based on findings from recent research by Department of Finance, the CSO will implement a tagging system for sustainability on the Well-being Information Hub and will include an additional indicator to better cover economic sustainability. [3]

This valuable tool, hosted by the CSO, provides a high-level perspective of life in Ireland, revealing key measures and consideration of living standards, equality and sustainability. It will be the basis for the Well-being dashboard analysis, which will be produced annually, as part of the Budget process.

Public Conversation

An initial consultation on a Well-being Framework for Ireland was carried out by the NESC. This fed into the development of the Framework, in particular how the OECD approach would be adjusted for Ireland.[4]

A Public Conversation was launched in late October 2021 to gain insight, receive feedback and test the Framework with a wider group of stakeholders, including the broader public, and to explore specific issues that were raised in the initial consultation.

This Public Conversation was designed to be as inclusive and wide ranging as possible. It centred around:

- a comprehensive communications campaign;
- online stakeholder event;
- online survey;
- thematic workshops; and
- focused meetings and presentations to specific groups and audiences.

The online stakeholder event held in November 2021, with approximately 100 attendees, included a broad spectrum of voices and provided wide-ranging inputs on the Framework and its potential uses. This event also included a roundtable with diverse participants who shared their practical experiences and expertise[5].

Over the consultation period, there were also thematic workshops and engagements with experts and specific groups.

- Three workshops were held to focus on areas committed to in the First Report, especially: an examination of the linkages between national and local

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[3] Department of Finance (2022), *Sustainability in the Irish Well-being Framework: A Review*

[4] *First Report https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/fb19a-first-report-on-well-being-framework-for-ireland-july-2021/ pp. 38-40.; and NESC Consultation Report*

[5] These included attendees from academia, the business sector, social inclusion groups, those with economic and sustainability interests and those with environmental expertise.

approaches with the Public Participation Networks (PPN); and a focused consultation with two different age cohorts[6] of young people.

- Work on the initiative was presented at a Parliamentary Budgetary Office seminar, an EU/OECD conference "Building on the Economy of Wellbeing: How to promote a resilient and sustainable recovery in Europe?" and to the Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service network as part of a Strategic Policy Discussion.
- Information gathering meetings were held including with the UK Carnegie Trust and the OECD.

In addition, an online survey designed primarily with the aim of gathering the thoughts of the general public on what is important for a good quality of life received a total of 734 submissions.[7]

The central purpose of this phase of consultation was to test the Vision and Framework as laid out in the First Report.

Vision

The overarching vision for the Framework, as laid out in the *First Report*, is *enabling all our people to live fulfilled lives now and into the future*. The vision and goals were discussed explicitly at the Stakeholder Event, the PPN Workshop and in the online survey.

The survey showed 96% support for the vision and goals. 130 survey respondents provided optional feedback on the vision, highlighting the importance of equality, inclusion, health, the environment, housing and ability. The strong focus on equality and inclusion echoes the findings of the initial consultation carried out by NESC and reiterates their centrality to the well-being initiative. The contributions of the PPNs also demonstrated strong support for the vision and goals, in particular emphasising the importance of sustainability and inter-generational equality (See Section 4 'International and Local Linkages' for further details).

Uses of the Framework

The survey found that the most important area of focus for the Framework was deemed to be a better overall quality of life for all (46%), followed by sustainability for future generations (21%).[8]

The most important use, according to survey respondents, was policy and programme development (ranked first), agenda-setting (ranked second) and budgeting (ranked third).[9]

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[6] Two workshops were held – one for 12-18yr olds and one for 18-24yr olds
[7] 572 of the respondents identified themselves as individuals/citizens, 123 as internal stakeholders (public service or Government system), and 29 as representing an external stakeholder organisation. 10 did not identify themselves in the survey
[8] Of 733 responses.
[9] Of 707 responses.

Conceptual Framework

Overall the public conversation showed that the Framework was comprehensive and the vast majority of the issues raised were included in the initial Conceptual Framework. The areas of health (both physical and mental), knowledge and skills, housing, social connections and community, and civic engagement and cultural expression/identity were highlighted across all elements of the consultation as particularly important. Cross-cutting issues around equality, disability and technology were also emphasised. The table in Appendix 2 reflects which of the conceptual framework's dimensions and aspects were key discussion points across the various elements of the public conversation (online stakeholder event, PPN workshop, youth workshops and online survey).

This phase of consultation also revealed some areas that were missing from the initial version, or areas that were included but not sufficiently emphasised or articulated, for example, infrastructure (in particular public transport), creative life, trust in institutions and childcare.

The full conceptual framework has been refined in light of these findings, with particular attention to including or further emphasising areas that have been highlighted as priorities through the public conversation.

The *First Report* also committed to **exploring cultural expression (i.e. identity) and cultural participation**, and how these aspects support national well-being, mainly due to a conflation of these areas. The online survey included two questions related to culture for this reason. The results showed that 57% of respondents felt that culture (as they understood it) related to freedom to express culture and identity, while 23% felt it related to participating in cultural activities[10]. The definition of culture as it relates to well-being was therefore generally closer to expression of identity, with a strong minority that highlighted the importance of cultural participation, and the Frameworks refinement reflects this.

Enhancing Well-being through Research

Developing bespoke research relating to well-being is an important enabler of Ireland's Well-being Framework. Ensuring the process is in line with sound economic and social theory and international best practice requires an evidence-based approach. This section outlines research conducted by sponsor Departments and NESC over the last several months to support the further development and embedding of Ireland's Well-being Framework.

Sustainability in the Irish Well-being Framework: A Review March 2022

The OECD well-being framework includes an additional stand-alone aspect of well-being called the 'Future Capitals' which seeks to highlight resources available for

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[10] Full analysis of this issue can be found under Appendix 2.

future well-being.[11] The *First Report on a Well-being Framework for Ireland* questioned the separation of future and current well-being, while acknowledging its usefulness in examining trade-offs. To provide an initial solution, the first iteration of the Well-being Framework incorporated some aspects of the OECD Future Capitals approach into the existing well-being dimensions. It was agreed that the next iteration of the framework would explore presenting future capitals/sustainable well-being separately to current well-being.

To deliver on this commitment and to ensure that sustainability is emphasised sufficiently in the Framework, a review was carried out by the Department of Finance examining how broad sustainability is integrated into the Framework.[12]

The Review examines sustainability in well-being frameworks by assessing existing literature on the subject, the approaches taken by a selection of countries and institutions, and the views of the Irish public gathered during the Government's public conversation on well-being. The Review shows that much of the literature recommends that the measurement of current well-being should be presented separately to sustainable (or future) well-being. On the other hand, country-level frameworks often integrate sustainability with current well-being for practicality and usability.

The Department of Finance review suggests that the current design of the Framework includes most aspects that should be included to support a focus on sustainable well-being. However, it acknowledges that there is still a risk that sustainability aspects may be overshadowed by current well-being.

The review ultimately recommends a hybrid approach whereby sustainable well-being (economic, social and environmental) remains integrated with current well-being, while allowing separate consideration of sustainability, through a **tagging system** for those dimensions, aspects or indicators which are particularly relevant for sustainable well-being. It also proposes some slight adjustments to the vision, conceptual framework and dashboard to further integrate sustainability into the Framework.

These recommendations have been incorporated into the refined Framework. They aim to provide the benefits of the approach recommended in the literature, clearly demarcating current and sustainable well-being to allow for clearer identification of trade-offs between the two. It also maintains a focus on usability, learning from other countries' approaches that tend to have a thematic, issue-based approach (e.g. health, housing, etc). This will ensure that users are given clear reminders on how to consider the long-term impacts of policy and the implications for sustainable well-being, and will work to prevent sustainability being overshadowed by the priorities of the present.

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[11] These are Economic Capital, Natural Capital, Human Capital and Social Capital. For more information please see OECD, (2020) How's Life? 2020: Measuring Well-being.
[12] Department of Finance (2022), *Sustainability in the Irish Well-being Framework: A Review*

Approaches used to embed a well-being approach in policy making

A majority of OECD countries have established 'beyond economics' or well-being initiatives. These initiatives are at various stages of implementation, with some countries establishing such initiatives almost 20 years ago. Ireland is at a relatively early stage in this process and can learn from the experience of other countries. However, there is no common approach to embedding such an initiative as:

- Countries have different policy systems, and the structures and processes put in place must be relevant for those systems (e.g. differing budget processes; use of legislation; relationship with Parliament; civil service capacity, etc); and
- Internationally, there is a view that such initiatives are still a work in progress.

NESC has conducted research on how three countries – New Zealand, Scotland and Wales – have embedded such approaches. This research has identified several common elements of how such initiatives can and have been embedded across the various stages of development (see box overleaf which summarises the key findings).

Work on Expenditure and Evaluation

The Well-being initiative is part of a broader suite of reforms that have contributed to the development of Ireland's performance framework over the course of the last decade or so. These reforms seek to support and enhance the use of evidence within policy making and include the performance budgeting initiative, the ongoing development of the Public Spending Code, the establishment of the IGEES and work in the areas of equality budgeting and green budgeting.

The Department of Public Expenditure & Reform is continuing to develop approaches to utilising the Well-being Framework to examine the relationship between public policy and well-being. This work will feed into Expenditure Reports.

The Department has promoted the use of the well-being approach as part of the **Spending Review process** through the IGEES network and with engagements on the Spending Review with Departments.

NESC Research on Embedding Well-being Frameworks

The research draws from desk research and 35 interviews of academics, public servants and NGO personnel across Ireland, Wales, Scotland and New Zealand. Several key lessons from the research have emerged. The need for **patience, commitment and planning** is emphasised, as the embedding process takes time. Clarity of purpose and expectations can be useful. Common purposes for such initiatives are to support **better decision making** (through building a comprehensive evidence base) and **removing silos** through an outcome-based approach. **Leadership** is important at both political and civil servant level, with initiatives often led by strong, central Departments. Policy-makers and data users (rather than statistical bodies) are the main drivers. Underlying supports for a well-being approach are leadership, dialogue and communication, resources, evidence, guidance and independent arbiters.

Common elements to embed well-being initiatives:

- Drivers for well-being approaches differ and can be internal (e.g. new governments and/or senior civil servants) or external (civil society etc.);
- Change is slow, with many of the more systematic changes occurring after several years of the initiative. The research emphasises the need for patience and commitment. Supports such as dialogue, guidance, independent reporting and resources are developed over time and provided through new or pre-existing structures, particularly centrally located and adequately resourced structures;
- Awareness and buy-in is important across policy makers, the public, disadvantaged groups and politicians;
- Consultation is undertaken at different stages to develop shared understanding of well-being across internal and external stakeholders and the general public;
- Development of a small number of national priorities or outcomes and two levels of indicator suites are typically developed:
  - High-level indicators with regular reporting showing the 'big picture';
  - Micro-level indicators that are used in detailed budgetary and policy-making processes.
- Adoption of well-being frameworks supports development of evidence base (statistics, indicator, spending reviews, audit reports, evaluations, and other research) particularly where there are gaps. A wider range of evidence supports better decision making;
- The well-being approach influences broader budget discussions as well as actual budget allocations, and in several countries long-term strategies and plans link to national priorities in well-being approaches; and
- It is important to set broad parameters at national level but to give agency locally and provide a national-local links.

3. Refining the Framework

This section lays out a refined version of the vision and conceptual framework, in light of the results of the public conversation and the research on sustainability. This includes the implementation of a tagging system to ensure sustainability is at the heart of the initiative. Throughout the section, clear description, and rationale of any changes are included alongside the refined Framework.

Vision

The vision was discussed explicitly at the Stakeholder Event, the PPN Workshop and in the online survey.

> ### *Overarching Vision and Goals*
>
> *Enabling all our people to live fulfilled lives now and into the future.*
>
> - Enable people to have purposeful lives that support good physical and mental health, enabling the development of skills across the life cycle and providing a good standard of living;
>
> - Ensure a sustainable sense of place, including an appropriate and safe place to live and protection of Ireland's environment, climate and biodiversity;
>
> - Preserve balance, inclusivity and equality of opportunities across society with open and effective government, empowering families, friends and communities to grow, connect and meaningfully engage.

Adjustments

> The goals have been adjusted slightly to emphasise mental health, broader skills across the life cycle (rather than formal education), protection of Ireland's environment, climate and biodiversity and a focus on open government with which citizens can meaningfully engage.

Conceptual Framework revisited

The overriding outcome of the Public Conversation was that the Framework was comprehensive and covered the vast majority of issues that are important for good quality of life and well-being. However, there were missing elements identified which have now been included, and alterations made to further emphasise priority areas. There was also a strong focus on implicit cross-cutting issues such as equality, access and ability. The research on sustainability also identified important issues to include,

and recommended a tagging system to emphasise sustainability throughout, which has now been implemented.
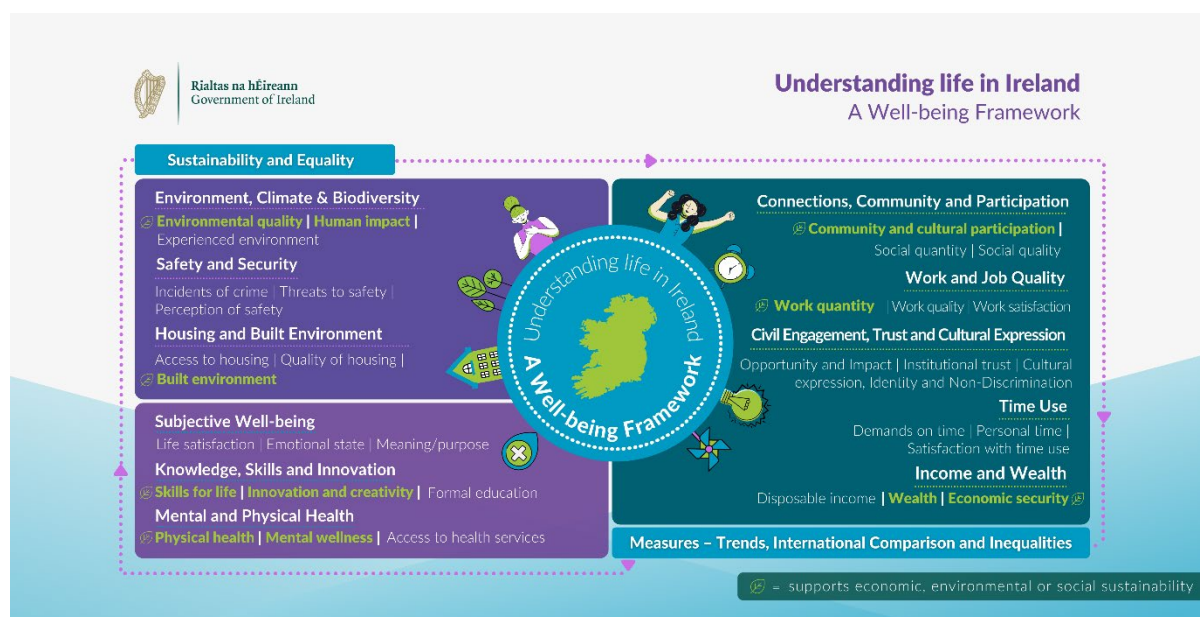
Cross-cutting Issues

There are several cross-cutting issues that exist implicitly within the Framework as laid out in the *First Report* - in particular, equality and sustainability. These have been raised across the phases of consultation and in the research. In the public survey, these two issues were raised as the most important purposes for a Well-being Framework for Ireland.

To acknowledge the centrality of these two issues, equality and sustainability are now more explicitly included in the Conceptual Framework. To further our understanding of the fundamental nature of the issue of equality, NESC will develop further research on how Well-being Frameworks can support a deeper understanding of equality.

Other relevant overarching or cross-cutting issues of interest include digitisation, changing demographics, the impact of the pandemic, and equality issues such as disability and intergenerational equality. These topics, and other significant policy challenges that might arise like cost of living, should be seen as avenues that would benefit from further exploration using a Well-being perspective.[13]

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[13] The OECD has used their Well-being Framework – on which the Irish Framework is based – to explore such challenges. For example, *COVID-19 and Well-being: Life in the Pandemic* or *How's Life in the Digital Age? Opportunities and Risks of the Digital Transformation for People's Well-being*. It has also been used for system analysis for net zero strategies – e.g. *Transport Strategies for Net-Zero Systems by Design*. The OECD is currently undertaking analysis of the Irish transport sector through a well-being lens for the Climate Change Advisory Council.

Cross-cutting issues	
Equality	Sustainability
Equality is a central pillar of the Well-being Framework. The Framework enables and encourages systematic examination of equality issues across all of the dimensions. The Well-being Information Hub disaggregates each indicator – based on the most relevant breakdown and data availability – to highlight where areas of inequality might exist.	Sustainability is at the heart of the Well-being Framework for Ireland. For this purpose, to be fully visible, dimensions, aspects and issues that are particularly important for sustainability have been **colour-coded with green**, as suggested by recent research. This will allow any analysis using the Framework to identify where dimensions are important for future well-being, as well as current well-being.

Dimensions

The dimensions, as outlined below, intend to provide an overall definition of well-being and what is important for quality of life in Ireland, both now and in the future. Each dimension includes a high-level description. The approach set out here has been guided by Sen's capability approach[14] which is concerned with what it is a person can be and what they want to achieve (these descriptions are not exhaustive, and Appendix 4 contains a table with longer capability approach definitions for each dimension, which may be useful for thinking about well-being beyond the conceptual framework outlined below). Each dimension is further developed via three 'aspects', which provides a detailed overview on what is covered.

Subjective Well-being		
An individual's personal perspective of their mental state, how their life is going and their outlook for the future.		
An **overall life assessment** highlights general feelings of **life satisfaction** across the life cycle – i.e. how satisfied a person is with their life overall.	**Emotional state** covers the feelings the person has had recently – this could cover an average of the positive feelings, negative feelings, or the balance of the two.	The **meaning** or purpose a person feels their life has, or the sense that what one does is worthwhile. This aspect tends to be less studied and more difficult to measure.

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14 Sen, Amartya, (1999), "Commodities and Capabilities," OUP Catalogue, Oxford University Press, number 9780195650389.

As a dimension of well-being, subjective well-being may be seen as an overall, albeit overly general, measure of current well-being that considers circumstances experienced across all of the other dimensions of well-being.

Although the three areas listed above are often reasonably correlated, the interaction between these aspects across the lifecycle and between specific cohorts can vary.[15]

Adjustments

The inclusion of 'across the lifecycle' in this dimension reflects comments on the specific issues confronted by different age cohorts (e.g. in childhood, older age).

Mental and Physical Health

The capacity of an individual to be and feel well, with good mental and physical health, living a life unencumbered by illness. Collectively, the good mental and physical health of the population also contributes to future well-being.

Physical health enables a person to live a healthier, long-lasting life. This encompasses longevity and healthy life years, alongside prevalence, intensity and chronicity of diseases or conditions that cause poor health, disability or death. It can also include the incidence of unhealthy (or healthy) living – for example, smoking or physical activity. Self-perceived health is included here.	Mental wellness is an essential aspect of health and has strong linkages with subjective well-being. This aspect explores good mental health which allows individuals to cope with the normal stresses of life. It also includes the incidence of poor mental health such as the incidence of depressive symptoms, mental illnesses, addiction, or adverse outcomes based on mental health. Mental wellness also promotes resilience, which supports sustainability.	Access to health services (both mental and physical) is important for maintaining a healthy life. For example, the time it takes to be treated for health interventions or the distance to health facilities from a household (including primary and community care centres) are important factors. Access is also related to affordability, for example, whether financial considerations prevent health intervention.

Mental and physical health is a crucial aspect of well-being, as recognised by the World Health Organisation.[16]

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[15] OECD, (2013), *OECD Guidelines on Measuring Subjective Well-being*, OECD Publishing, Paris, https://doi.org/10.1787/9789264191655-en.

[16] The WHO defines health as 'a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity' (WHO, 1948).

Adjustments

> Highlighting access to both mental and physical health services emphasises the importance of mental health, which was raised throughout the public conversation.

Income and Wealth

The financial resources that shape the range of choices an individual or society has to meet their day-to-day needs and wants, and the ability to mitigate personal and broader economic and societal risks, both now and in the future.

| Disposable income indicates what households have to spend after taxes and transfers. Disposable income is explicitly not connected to actual consumption and instead captures the freedom households have (or do not have) to spend. | Wealth can provide a buffer for households to counter the impact of changing income or economic security, in particular over the longer term. It also includes the macroeconomic factors that allow society to mitigate risks now and in the future. This includes available assets and outstanding debt; and the appetite for risk, including the balance between investment/debt and savings. | Economic security refers to the ability to make ends meet, both in the present and into the future. This aspect brings in the cost of living, the burden of debt repayment, and the stability (or lack thereof) of maintaining an adequate standard of living (including common high-cost expenses over the life cycle such as housing and childcare). |

The interplay between income, wealth and economic insecurity is also a factor. Those with higher wealth and lower incomes have higher levels of security than their income alone might suggest. In turn, a society with high incomes but low levels of wealth and security might indicate issues for resilience and sustainability.

Adjustments

> This dimension has been broadened out to include macroeconomic concerns, reflecting the importance of these issues for sustainable well-being. It also now specifically references childcare and housing as common high cost investments, as raised in the public conversation.

Knowledge, Skills and Innovation

The cognitive and motor skills acquired and developed over the course of a person's life that promotes agency and ability to self-actualise and progress in society.

Skills for Life include those basic skills necessary for a person to function in society. This includes literacy, numeracy and digital skills that enable full participation in daily activities. Soft skills that are developed throughout life – for example, resilience or communication skills are also captured here.	Formal education across the life cycle enables recognition and provides an easier transition into the desired area of productive work. It can also be a mechanism for smooth social mobility. This aspect includes, for example, the school readiness of children at the beginning of school. It also captures transitions across education institutions and into the labour force. It recognises the different choices made by people, including through different types of formal education (for example, apprenticeships) and through the ability of people to learn across the lifecycle (e.g. lifelong learning), responding to changes and new realities and opportunities.	Innovation and creativity is the ability to discover, develop and invent new ideas including methods, products, processes and approaches. This ability can create efficiencies or advantages that produce personal, societal and economic benefits both now and into the future. This aspect includes Research and Development and intellectual property and is most concerned with the impact of innovation.

Adjustments

The name of this dimension has been changed to explicitly reference innovation, emphasising its importance for sustainability. The third aspect also now recognises the importance of creativity.

Housing and the Built Environment

The physical infrastructure that shapes the ability of an individual to meet basic needs such as shelter, security and social belonging. The local built environment determines access to infrastructure and broader services, for example safe, sustainable and accessible transport choices.

Access to housing consists of the ability of a person to access and maintain secure housing. For example, a high prevalence of homelessness would indicate a lack of access. Access is also directly related to affordability, for example, the burden of housing costs (i.e. how much income is left over after housing is paid for). The availability of accommodation also arises, including the suitability of accommodation for given demographics, supply and demand.	**Quality of housing** relates to the availability of space in the home and the suitability of a house for healthy living. Having personal space allows for the functions that a home should provide for privacy and activities like cooking, studying, spending time with family or entertaining. The impact of housing quality on healthy living is also included here. For example, the presence (or not) of damp or leaks, or the quality of insulation.	The **built environment** in which a residence is located impacts access to services (e.g. education, transport infrastructure) and can therefore impact an individual's opportunities. Services include utilities such as water and electricity. It also captures access to schools, internet connection, local healthcare, public transport and recreational facilities as well as physical accessibility issues.

Adjustments

The name of the dimension has been changed to refer to the built environment. This allows infrastructure (including public transport) to be more visible. It also allows issues such as recreation areas and accessibility to be more clearly included.

Environment, Climate and Biodiversity

The environment that an individual lives in shapes their ability to interact with nature alongside access to basic needs such as clean water and air. The quality of this environment – both now and in the future – is shaped by human influence and actions.

The **environment as experienced** by individuals relates to a person's perception and experience of the beauty and amenities that are available within their local environment - for example, the availability and quality of local green or blue spaces (including parks and woodlands, coastal areas or other natural amenities) or the presence of litter.	**Environmental quality** of the local environment enables healthy living, reduces illness and includes air, water, and soil quality (measured at a local, regional or national level). The quality of air, water, and soil impact human health. Protecting the quality of the environment is an important aspect of current well-being, and essential for sustainable well-being.	**Human impact** measures the preservation of the natural environment, and the impact of humans on the environment, including through climate change. This aspect captures emissions, land use, waste and biodiversity. Reducing the human impact on the environment, climate and biodiversity is essential to protect sustainable well-being, and promote intergenerational equality.

Trade-offs can exist between these aspects – for example, between how an individual uses their local environment and the related human impact. If society is adapting their local environment to suit their needs, this could impact on biodiversity and ultimately reduce well-being in the long-run.

Adjustments

A minor change to explicitly reference blue spaces (alongside green spaces).

Safety and Security

The factors that shape an individual's ability to live life and engage in activities without fear of harm and to mitigate the risks and impacts associated with infrastructural, mechanical and natural hazards. Harm can come from crime, conflict, violence, terrorism, accidents or natural disasters, and can occur online as well as offline, and can be emotional as well as physical. It tends to be concerned with the risk of victimisation and perceptions of safety.

The actual reported **incidence of crime** indicates the freedom from intentional harm from other people (within the home, community or more widely). There are a broad variety of crimes that can be included here, for example, crimes against property, assault, homicide, hate crime, domestic violence and coercive control, anti-social behaviour or cybercrime.	**Threats to safety** highlight freedom from accidental harm (including infrastructural, institutional, mechanical and natural hazards). This aspect includes, for example, the incidence of road or workplace accidents (including the severity of such accidents) and the prevalence and severity of extreme weather events.	**Perception of safety and security** is of key concern for well-being, as a high level of subjective safety enables people to exist and move through society more freely facilitating societal co-operation. It focuses on how safe a person feels in everyday activities (e.g. on public transport, walking home at night, etc). This aspect also includes trust in the rule of law.

Adjustments

A minor change to note that harm can be both emotional as well as physical.

Work and Job Quality (both paid and unpaid)

The productive activities (both paid and unpaid) that shape how an individual progresses through their life (i.e., develop their skills and abilities, fulfil their ambitions) as well as building and supporting their self-esteem and their sense of contributing to the economy and broader society.

Work Quantity includes the availability of jobs and the size of the labour force, indicating the availability and up-take of work. Some well-known examples of work quantity include levels of employment, underemployment or labour force participation. It also includes the risk of losing a job (be this income or other job-related benefits such as specific working arrangements), and the protections in place that might mitigate the risk. This aspect also covers the ability to start and grow a new business (entrepreneurship).	**Work Quality** includes the material and non-material aspects of work which enables a sense of progress and worth in one's work. These include fair remuneration for employment and non-material aspects of the work environment. Non-material factors include working conditions, physical safety and work intensity. The availability of learning opportunities, type of contract and benefits, career development, and how well a job matches a person's skills are also included. Other institutional factors such as working times and location arrangements, autonomy, and support between co-workers also affect a person's well-being.	Self-perceived **work satisfaction** captures some of the complex interconnections that the material and non-material aspects of work provide to a person's well-being and the motivations that different people have for their work.

Adjustments

> Minor changes emphasise that both paid and unpaid work is included, and to more visibly recognise working conditions and benefits.

Time Use		
The ability of an individual to manage the demands placed on their time, and their access to time for personal development, leisure or hobbies, subject to the constraint of a fixed quantity of time available in any single day. This includes <u>work-life balance</u>.		
Demands on time (time on) is concerned with the external demands on an individual's time – for example job hours, caring, home duties, volunteering or commuting.	The ability of people to have **personal time** – that is time for their own personal development, hobbies or leisure. This includes the quantity of time available for leisure and recreation (e.g. free time). How a person uses that time – e.g. engaging in sports, culture and arts, individual creative pursuits, socialising etc. – is a personal choice.	**Satisfaction with time use** is also important here, as people value what to do with their time differently. Many people find satisfaction in different aspects of caring duties (unpaid work), paid work or leisure activities which may not be illustrated by focusing exclusively on the amount of time spent on each.

Unpaid work is of particular focus here, including the balance between paid and unpaid work, the level of unpaid work performed by individuals, and specific cohort-based inequalities that exist – in particular gender and age.

Adjustments

Minor changes explicitly recognise volunteering as a demand on time.

Connections, Community and Participation

The ability and opportunities that an individual has to meet the basic needs of personal connection and engagement with family, friends and the wider community. In the modern era, this includes online social connections and interactions. This dimension also covers connection to the community, for example, through volunteering or other community activities.

Social Quantity of social connections covers the frequency and amount of time spent (both online and offline) with other people – including members of a person's household, family, friends, colleagues and other known people.	**Social Quality** of social connections, by comparison, measures the satisfaction that individuals have with their social interactions, including perceived loneliness and feelings of support provided by connections.	**Community and cultural participation** measures the overall connectedness of individuals to their community and includes online activities. This can include volunteering, engaging with heritage, membership of community groups such as sporting clubs, artistic or creative groups, local development networks, etc. This includes cultural participation which tends to be a communal experience.

This dimension includes the importance of family connections throughout an individual's life, and the centrality of social connection on human development.

Adjustments

This dimension has been renamed to improve readability. Cultural participation is now referenced explicitly alongside community.

Civic Engagement, Trust and Cultural Expression

The rights and opportunities an individual has to impact the political functioning of their society, the existence of institutional arrangements that foster cooperation and freedom of expression of identity and non-discrimination, and trust in those institutions and across broader society.

Opportunity and impact	Institutional Trust	Cultural expression, Identity and Non-discrimination
Opportunity and impact covers the ability of individuals to access, and the utilisation of, opportunities to shape their locality and country through civic engagement. Opportunity covers the limits on access to public office or other forms of civic engagement such as voting or public consultation. This could include the frequency of opportunities, and how easy it is to engage (including measures that encourage or discourage engagement). It also includes the take-up of these opportunities, including voter turnout and active membership in political parties or other forms of activism. This should include the presence of grassroots movements that are not associated with political parties. It includes whether civic involvement makes a difference in practice, for example, if the impact of movements or activities results in a change.	**Institutional Trust** covers generalised trust (i.e. trust in others) and institutional trust (including political, judicial, media, police or other institutions) at local, national and European Union level. It refers to the formal political institutions and processes in place which shape the political, social, and economic environment of a country, as well as the informal institutions of social norms and shared values that underpin societal functioning. Good institutions and trust thereof support mutually beneficial cooperation and sustain a healthy and happy society into the future.	**Cultural expression, Identity and Non-discrimination** explores a person's rights to express their identity, including participation in ethnic, spiritual/religious, language or personal expression. This includes activities relating to specific groups, for example, cultural practices and expression of migrant or 'new Irish', alongside traditional Irish communities (including Gaeltacht communities). It also includes the ability to express one's culture/identity or celebrate one's native language. It places a particular emphasis on the Irish language. It also explores the prevalence of discrimination based on factors such as ethnicity (including membership of minority communities), gender identity, sexual orientation, language, religion, political or other opinion.

Some of these aspects are very difficult to measure and therefore are often captured through individual perception, including trust in institutions and whether individuals feel they have a say in what the Government does, alongside measures such as voter registration and turnout.

Adjustments

This dimension has been renamed and reworked to emphasise the importance of trust, which now has a separate aspect. Trust was emphasised in the public conversation, and also as an essential part of sustainable well-being. The findings from the public conversation also show that, when discussing culture as it relates to well-being, the public tend to understand this as meaning cultural expression or identity.

4. International and local linkages

This section further explores linkages with relevant international and local initiatives as committed to in the First Report. At a local level, this included engaging with local structures as part of the Public Conversation, an investigation of a selection of the Public Participation Networks (PPN) Well-being Statements, and a dedicated workshop with the PPNs, which fed into adjustments on the vision and the conceptual Framework. At an international level, an explicit mapping exercise of Ireland's Well-being Framework and the UN SDGs (including indicators) was conducted. In addition, opportunities for increased co-operation across the island of Ireland through a well-being lens has been highlighted by NESC in their recent comprehensive report, *Shared Island: Shared Opportunity*.

Linkages with PPN Well-being Vision Statements

The First Report committed to actively engage with local structures during the second phase of consultation to inform the initiative, provide feedback, and help draw out linkages. This commitment placed a particular focus on the PPNs, given the development of Well-being Vision Statements across many of the PPNs. Linkages were explored primarily though:

- An examination of a sample of the PPN Well-being Statements; and
- A dedicated workshop in which representatives of each of the 31 PPNs were invited to participate to explore the Well-being Framework for Ireland.

PPN Well-being Vision Statements

In January 2019, the PPNs were previously tasked with developing 'Statements of Well-being for this and future generations' to inform local and national policies and projects, aligned with international work on well-being. As of 2020, thirteen[17] PPNs reported having a completed Vision for Community Well-being, supported by funding from the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD).[18]

Many of these statements used the headings of Health (physical and mental); Environment and Sustainability; Values, culture and meaning; Participation, democracy and good governance; Social and Community development; and, Economy and resources to structure their reports. These headings map onto a number of dimensions in the overarching Well-being Framework (see table below). Overall the statements show a strong focus on community and political participation at the local level, alongside questions of values culture and economic resources. Health is, once again, a key component of well-being.

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[17] Those PPNs yet to complete their Statement all reported Covid-19 as a significant factor as to why this work has been delayed and/or postponed. Some PPNs also indicated that they will be revisiting their individual statements in light of the Covid 19 pandemic.

[18] Department of Rural and Community Development and the National PPN Advisory Group, (2021), *Public Participation Networks: Annual Report 2020*, Available at:

https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/2c4a7a-public-participation-network-annual-reports/#2020

Sample of PPN Statement Headings	Relevant Well-being Framework Dimensions
Health (physical and mental)	Physical and Mental Health
Values, culture and meaning	Subjective Well-being Civic Engagement, Trust and Cultural Expression
Participation, democracy and good governance	Civic Engagement, Trust and Cultural Expression
Social and Community Development	Connections, Community and Participation
Economy and Resources	Income and Wealth

Dedicated PPN Workshop

In light of the work the PPNs have done in developing local Community Wellbeing Visions, this workshop was designed to discuss and explore feedback on Ireland's well-being initiative with representatives of each of the PPNs. The outcomes of this dedicated workshop fed into the refinement of the vision and conceptual framework as outlined above in Section 2.

It focussed on the PPN experience in developing their Community Wellbeing Visions and explored linkages with the Well-being Framework for Ireland and its vision and goals.

Throughout the breakout sessions the importance of civic engagement, intergenerational well-being, sustainability, community and inclusion were emphasised. The impact of COVID on how people view and live their lives was discussed, including the impact on overall well-being. The desire for the well-being statements to be living, flexible documents was also highlighted.

Vision and Conceptual Framework

Issues that arose in relation to the PPN Wellbeing Visions included:

- A focus on sustainability and the environment, *and future* generations;
- Access to green space and safe walking routes;
- Connectivity (particularly in a rural context), and the broader impact of infrastructure, including community spaces; and
- The importance of quality work.

Broad accessibility was raised as a key enabler; this included access to fundamental goods and services (such as housing and health), but also access to IT and education. Physical accessibility was also raised, in terms of the built environment.

Ireland's initial conceptual framework was discussed in depth, with areas of particular importance drawn out. These included crime and safety, mental health, civic engagement, poverty, public transport, culture and creativity, education, the built environment and equality. Detail of what was seen as important to the PPNs within the existing conceptual framework, and what was deemed missing or not sufficiently emphasised, is available at Appendix 2.

Mapping UN SDGs to Ireland's Well-being Framework

The *First Report* highlights that the Well-being initiative will serve as an important complement to work on progressing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), and committed to mapping the UN SDG Goals to Ireland's Well-being Framework. While there are conceptual differences between the two, there is a significant degree of overlap, and it is useful to highlight these connections explicitly in order to support both as complementary initiatives.

The table below shows a high level of overlap across the SDGs and the dimensions in the revised Well-being Framework for Ireland. The cross-cutting issues of the Well-being Framework for Ireland – equality and sustainability - clearly crossover with the overall SDGs.

In terms of the 11 dimensions, the 'Environment, Climate and Biodiversity' dimension has the highest level of crossover with the SDGs. It also highlights that this issue is cross-cutting, with clear linkages with SDGs relating to health, industry and infrastructure, the built environment and consumption, alongside other SDGs that are more centrally focused on the environment.

The 'Income and Wealth' and 'Knowledge and Skills' dimensions also show high levels of crossover in the mapping exercise. This emphasises the importance of economic security and education as key drivers of sustainable and equitable progress at an individual and a collective level. 'Housing and Local area', 'Safety and Security' and 'Mental and Physical Health' dimensions also show significant crossover with the SDGs. These areas cover some of the fundamental needs that are particularly important in an Irish context.

By comparison, there are other SDGs that appear, through this mapping exercise, to be less of a focus or priority in an Irish context. For example, 'zero hunger' is less aligned with the Well-being Framework. This is likely due to Ireland being a developed economy, however these issues are still represented in the Well-being Framework through the 'physical health', 'Income and Wealth' and 'Environment, Climate and Biodiversity' dimensions.

The 'Peace, Justice and strong institutions' goal is linked to two Well-being dimensions, highlighting that crossovers exist, but again has a different emphasis for Ireland in the current national context given the developed nature of its institutional and political systems and the relatively high level of trust documented by the Irish people in these institutions[19].

Some of the SDGs are less aligned due to the different levels of the two initiatives (international versus national). For example, while the SDG foal (number 17) 'partnerships for the goals' can be mapped to two Framework dimensions, the focus for these Framework dimensions are very clearly related to the national outcomes of a strong communities and functioning democracies rather than, for example, international partnerships as is found in that particular goal. This goal clearly has a

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[19] Eurobarometer Standard 95 Factsheet Spring 2021

strong international focus. However, communities and political systems have a role in this SDG, and therefore this goal has been mapped to the 'Connections, Community, and Participation' and 'Civic engagement, Trust and Cultural expression' dimensions. The 'life below water' and 'life on land' SDGs similarly are only linked to one and two Well-being dimensions respectively.

As part of this exercise, the 35 indicators in the CSO's interactive dashboard were compared to the c.230 Sustainable Development Goal indicators.[20] The table in Appendix 5 shows indicators that were identified as comparable. While there is crossover in the indicators, there are clear differences illustrated through this exercise. For example, indicators in the Well-being dashboard relating to subjective well-being, mental health, wealth, innovation, housing, time use, community, social connections, and civic engagement do not have clear comparator indicators with the SDG indicators. Similarly, issues relating to food security, international inequality, and global connections in the SDGs are not as relevant for the current Irish context. Also, some indicators in the SDGs are focused on outputs (e.g. net development assistance, number of agreements, etc.) rather than outcomes, which the Well-being Framework seeks to focus on.

This explicit mapping of linkages between Ireland's Well-being Conceptual Framework and indicators and the SDGs shows the commonalities across both initiatives. Embedding the Well-being Framework into the policy-making process will clearly support progress towards the SDG's. However, one of the important attributes of Ireland's Framework is that it reflects the quality of life issues that matter most to the people of Ireland in order to help inform national priorities.

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[20] Available at: https://sustainabledevelopment.un.org/content/documents/11803Official-List-of-Proposed-SDG-Indicators.pdf

UN SDG Goals	A Well-being Framework for Ireland Dimensions										
	Subjective Well-being	Mental & Physical Health	Income & Wealth	Knowledge, Skills & Innovation	Housing & the Built Environment	Environment, Climate & Biodiversity	Safety & Security	Work & Job Quality	Time Use	Connections, Community & Participation	Civic Engagement, Trust & Cultural Expression
SDG 1. No Poverty		▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪			
SDG 2. Zero hunger		▪	▪			▪					
SDG 3. Good health and well being	▪	▪			▪	▪				▪	▪
SDG 4. Quality education	▪			▪				▪			▪
SDG 5. Gender equality	▪	▪	▪				▪				▪
SDG 6. Clean water and sanitation		▪			▪	▪					
SDG 7. Affordable and clean energy				▪		▪		▪			
SDG 8. Decent work and economic growth	▪	▪	▪					▪			
SDG 9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure				▪		▪					
SDG 10. Reduced inequalities	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪	▪
SDG 11. Sustainable cities and communities					▪	▪					▪
SDG 12. Responsible consumption and production				▪		▪					
SDG 13. Climate action		▪				▪					▪
SDG 14. Life below water						▪					
SDG 15. Life on land					▪	▪					
SDG 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions							▪				▪
SDG 17. Partnerships for the goals										▪	▪

Shaded boxes show where clear crossovers between Well-being Framework dimensions and the Sustainable Development Goals occur.

Shared Island and Well-being

Well-being approaches are identified in the 'Shared island: Shared Opportunity NESC Comprehensive Report' as one of five areas with potential for strengthened cooperation across the island of Ireland. This is alongside the economy and investment, social policy, climate and biodiversity, and data co-ordination. The box below sets out the recommendations relating to Well-being approaches found in the report.

Recommendations on Well-being
'Shared Island: Shared Opportunity NESC Comprehensive Report'

- Scope and potential to develop cooperation around the shared interest in developing well-being measures of progress which move beyond narrow GDP-based assessments;
- Potential to use the well-being frameworks as a tool to facilitate engagement with a wide range of stakeholders across the island, to inform priorities in relation to key challenges, and to learn from each other;
- Potential to use the work of the Community Planning Partnerships in Northern Ireland and the Public Participation Networks in Ireland to advance cooperation on well-being frameworks at local levels;
- In the longer term, there may be the opportunity for the well-being frameworks, North and South, to become more aligned on common and shared concerns;
- The CSO and NISRA could cooperate in the development and application of well-being indicators and other measures (differing legislative authorities are highlighted as inhibitors for this); and
- a north-south (and east-west) element should be built in to groups that are set up to design and refine the respective well-being frameworks.

National Economic and Social Council (2022), Shared Island Shared Opportunity: NESC Comprehensive Report, No. 157.

This comprehensive and wide-ranging report provides options to further develop linkages and collaboration across the island through a Well-being lens. It specifically highlights the benefits of Well-being Frameworks to support discussion, cooperation and engagement across the island in identifying priorities.

5. Next Steps: Embedding and Implementation

This section provides an overview of how the Irish Well-being Framework will be further embedded into the policy-making system over time. It has considered recently completed research by NESC on international experiences of embedding such initiatives (see Section 2). It covers several strands that will support the embedding process. As emphasised in the NESC research, this process will take time and patience.

Ireland is at a relatively early stage of this work. A lot has been achieved over the last year and a half, with the development of a Conceptual Framework and accompanying interactive dashboard, supported by two phases of consultation and bespoke research. Initial work on embedding the Framework has also been initiated across Government.

The steps outlined below provide an outline of the next phase of work, rooted in ensuring that sustainable well-being for Ireland becomes an important part of the policy-making process over time.

Understanding Life in Ireland- Embedding a Well-being Approach

Through promoting a better understanding of life and progress in Ireland, Ireland's Well-being Framework can provide objective simultaneous evaluation of competing priorities such as the climate, housing, education, and health. By facilitating broad sustainability considerations and drawing out inequalities it provides insights into people's lived experiences and how they differ.

Embedding a well-being approach over time will be achieved through a number of parallel streams. High-level annual analysis of the well-being dashboard will help inform the context and priority identification phase of the Budgetary process. Complementing this will be the continued consideration of a Well-being perspective into expenditure and policy evaluation, building on performance and equality budgeting. The Well-being initiative will be further advanced over time through the development of a broader evidence base and research tools. Clear oversight structures and approaches for well-being across Government will support progress.

Feeding into high-level Budget Priorities:

- **Annual high-level analysis** of the Well-being Dashboard will be conducted and published at an **early stage of the budget process**. This will provide high-level evidence and context for the identification of potential priorities, highlighting progress or lack thereof across a wide range of policy issues that are important for longer-term quality of life and sustainability over the medium-term. It will serve as a complement to standard economic and fiscal reporting. This approach will commence for Budget 2023.

- **The analysis will explicitly feed into the Annual National Economic Dialogue,** which will include a focus on Well-being issues, to help inform budgetary discussions across longer-term economic, social, and environmental factors.

- **Budget Day** documentation will include the most up-to-date version of the Well-being dashboard.

Well-being Framework and the Expenditure Report

The Department of Public Expenditure & Reform is developing an initiative that will set out an initial approach to using the well-being framework to develop a cross-governmental description of resources. For 2022, this will be developed through a pilot project.

The purpose of this initial approach is to inform subsequent discussions about how to best embed a well-being perspective into the expenditure side of the budgetary process. The initial approach seeks to:

- Develop a cross-governmental description of the final budgetary expenditure decisions in terms of well-being dimensions (complementing the existing Vote Group approach of presenting such decisions);

- Locate this information in the context of how well-being in Ireland has progressed by utilising the Framework and data from the dashboard.

Following the 2022 pilot, in order to progress this approach, a coding exercise will be explored over time so that (a) budgetary decisions can be associated with the appropriate well-being dimension; and (b) allocations can be aggregated by well-being dimension.

Developing Evidence Base and Research tools

Ireland's Well-being Framework for Ireland can be used as a tool for understanding the impact of policies, high-level challenges or systems.

The continued development and promotion of such research tools using a well-being lens will be supported by individual Departments, IGEES and the Inter-Departmental Working Group on the Well-being Framework.

Linking in with other jurisdictions, where similar well-being initiatives are being advanced, can also provide opportunities for sharing research, approaches and learnings.

Internationally, the OECD has led the way on using the well-being perspective as a tool for policy[21], which provides helpful resources for progressing Irish specific research. For example, the OECD is currently applying the well-being lens to the Irish transport sector for the Climate Change Advisory Committee. Further research has also been

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[21] For example, *COVID-19 and Well-being: Life in the Pandemic,* *How's Life in the Digital Age? Opportunities and Risks of the Digital Transformation for People's Well-being,* or *Transport Strategies for Net-Zero Systems by Design.* The OECD is currently undertaking analysis of the Irish transport sector through a well-being lens for the Climate Change Advisory Council.

committed to by NESC and Government Departments. For example, NESC will investigate how well-being frameworks can address the factors that lead to inequality.

In addition, the Department of Public Expenditure & Reform is continuing to develop approaches to utilise the Well-being Framework as an approach to policy analysis and support the design and implementation of public policy.

By promoting the use of the Well-being Framework in research and analysis, and through related initiatives to over time improve data right across the system, the practical use of the Framework will be re-enforced. As evidenced internationally, fully developing a Well-being approach and related data improvements are considerable pieces of work and require significant time and resources, and are best approached in a phased manner.

Empowering Departments to Develop Well-being Approaches

Ireland's Well-being Framework has clear linkages with existing and emerging policies, strategies and initiatives right across Government. Departments will be encouraged to consider a Well-being approach in future work. A Well-being approach includes initiatives that acknowledge sustainable well-being as a policy goal, are focused on evidence and outcomes, and promote cross-Government work beyond traditional Departmental silos or policy areas.

Sustainable well-being and quality of life is a central goal of good public policy – either implicitly or explicitly. Government Departments will be encouraged to reflect on how new policies or initiatives impact the various dimensions of sustainable well-being, and to consider these linkages as part of new strategy documents. The sustainability tagging system also provides a tool to better understand whether new initiatives are focused on current living standards and/or supporting future quality of life.

Work will continue to support better outcome-focused data across Government. This includes encouraging Departments to develop, strengthen or formalise detailed frameworks or outcome-based indicator sets on specific policy areas or cohorts. This would support deeper understanding of policy areas that are not possible through the overarching Well-being Framework for Ireland alone. Using the Framework as an overarching type structure in policy research and analysis will also be actively encouraged. The forthcoming Equality Data Strategy from the CSO and the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth, will support this effort.

Focusing on well-being outcomes (both now and in the future) can also support the identification of shared policy goals beyond traditional Departmental silos. Cross-Departmental agreements and initiatives will be promoted.

The box below gives some examples of the types of initiatives across Government that can be viewed as being part of a Well-being approach. This list is not exhaustive, and some initiatives listed below could fall into more than one category (for example, cross-government focus and well-being as a policy goal).

Sample of Existing Initiatives across Government

Well-being as a Policy Goal
- Creative Ireland
- Focus on improved work and job quality including research reports on a living wage and basic income, and improved Sick Leave via legislation
- Disaster Risk Reducing policy
- Sustainable Mobility Policy
- Supporting Parents: A National Model of Parenting Support Services
- National Sports Policy

Data, Research and Sub-Frameworks
- Health Service Performance Assessment (HSPA) Framework
- Systems research on net zero for transport sector
- Better outcomes, Brighter Future Indicators
- Research programme accompanying the pilot Basic Income for the Arts
- Department of Rural and Community Development research agreement with the ESRI to inform the monitoring and development of rural and community policy

Shared Goals and Cross-Government Focus
- Healthy Ireland
- Harnessing Digital: The Digital Ireland Framework
- Health and Environment Research – EPA and HSE
- Climate Action Plan 2021
- Housing for All
- The successor policy framework for children and young people, 2023-2028 (forthcoming)[22]
- Impact 2030 Ireland's Research and Innovation Strategy to 2030
- Roadmap for Social Inclusion 2020-2025

Oversight

The Cabinet Committee on Economic Recovery and Investment and supporting substructures will provide an overarching clearing house for the Well-being initiative.

This cross-Government initiative will continue to be led by the Department of the Taoiseach, jointly sponsored by the Departments of Finance and Public Expenditure & Reform.

In line with international practice, the Framework should be reviewed, with supporting consultation, approximately every 4-5 years.

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[22] Successor to: Better Outcomes, Brighter Futures: The National Policy Framework for Children and Young People, 2014-2020

6. Conclusion

The development of the Well-being Portal and CSO's Well-being Information Hub provides widespread access to the Well-being initiative and supporting information and data.

The changes made to the Framework, based on additional consultation and research, means that the Framework focuses on the issues that matter most to the people of Ireland. It captures a broad suite of areas right across the policy spectrum that are important for people's quality of life, while maintaining a high-level focus rooted in usability. Importantly, it provides a holistic way to consider whether quality of life is sustainable for future generations through sustainability tagging. This approach draws out intergenerational trade-offs and ensures sustainability is central to this approach. Importantly, its focus on outcomes and outputs ensuring that tangible progress rather than efforts are measured; and it puts a spotlight on equality right across all elements of the Framework.

The report also explores the important linkages with existing international and local approaches, including the UN SDGs and the PPN Well-being Vision Statements and also the potential for usage across the island of Ireland. The overlap across these initiatives are clear, and implementing and using the Framework will support the goals identified across these initiatives, while still allowing for differences in purpose and approach.

The next phase of work provides a clear pathway to embed a well-being approach into policy-making and elements of the budget process over time. For example, analysis of the CSO's Well-being Information Hub will help inform and contextualise priority identification and discussions, including through the National Economic Dialogue. It is anticipated that over time, incorporating the Well-being initiative into expenditure and evaluation, including through the Spending Review, will provide an indication of how expenditure is allocated relative to the Well-being Framework. Promoting the use of the Framework in policy and research will provide an additional tool to explore the challenges that face the country. Significant issues like digitisation, an aging population, intergenerational inequality and the move to net zero carbon emissions can benefit from the Well-being approach by systematically identifying those issues that are important to people's living standards and broad sustainability.

The Well-being approach is a new way to better understand life in Ireland, and this report provides a comprehensive picture of what is important for quality of life, and a clear pathway to increasingly incorporate this approach into policy over time.

Appendices

Appendix 1: New indicators published on CSO's pxstat system as part of the development of the CSO Well-being Information Hub

1. **Labour Underutilisation Rate** – QLF43
2. **Long Working Hours in Main Job** – QLF45
3. **Life Long Learning Rate** – QLF40
4. **Murder Rate per 100,000 Population** – CJA08
5. **Healthy Life Year**s - WBD02
6. **A or B Domestic Dwelling Energy Rating** - WBD06
7. **Households Making Ends Meet with Great Difficulty** - SIA55 and SIA56
8. **Population who feel Lonely** - WBA42, WBA43 and WBA44
9. **Reading and Maths Performance in 15 Year Olds** - WBD05 and WBD04
10. **Research and Development Personnel** - BSA72 and BSA73
11. **Pollution, Grime and Other Environmental Problems** - HAS07 and HAS08
12. **Water Bodies Assessed as High or Good** - WBD03
13. **Satisfaction with how Democracy Works in Ireland** - WBD01
14. **Population rating their Overall Life Satisfaction as High** - WBA37 and WBA38
15. **Population who did not feel Depressed or Downhearted in the Previous 4 Weeks** - WBA41 and WBA45
16. **Population satisfied with Time Use** - WBA39 and WBA40

Appendix 2: Results of Public Conversation – Testing the Conceptual Framework

Shaded boxes indicate where specific issues were raised in the various elements of the Public Conversation.

Element of Public Conversation		Online Public Survey — Relevant survey questions	Stakeholder Event	PPNs	Youth 12yrs-18yrs	Youth 18yrs-24yrs
Dimensions	**Aspects**					
Subjective Well-being	Overall life assessment	▓				▓
	Emotional state				▓	
	Meaning or purpose				▓	
Mental and Physical Health	Physical health	▓	▓	▓	▓	
	Mental wellness	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
	Access to health services	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
Income and Wealth	Disposable income					
	Household wealth					
	Economic security	▓	▓	▓		▓
Knowledge, Skills and Innovation.	Skills for life	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
	Formal education	▓	▓	▓	▓	
	Innovation	▓				
Housing and The Built Environment	Access to housing	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
	Quality of housing	▓	▓	▓		
	Local area	▓	▓	▓	▓	
Environment, Climate and Biodiversity	Experienced environment	▓	▓	▓	▓	
	Environmental quality		▓	▓		
	Human impact		▓		▓	
Safety and Security	Incidence of crime	▓				
	Threats to safety	▓				
	Perceived safety and security	▓	▓	▓	▓	
Work and Job Quality	Work quantity	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
	Work quality	▓	▓	▓	▓	▓
	Work satisfaction	▓	▓	▓	▓	

| Element of Public Conversation		Online Public Survey	Stakeholder Event	PPNs	Youth	
		Relevant survey questions			12yrs-18yrs	18yrs-24yrs
Dimensions	**Aspects**					
Time Use	Demands on time				X	X
	Personal time	X	X	X	X	X
	Time use satisfaction	X	X	X	X	
Connections, Community and Cultural Participation	Social quantity		X	X	X	X
	Social quality	X	X	X	X	X
	Community activity	X	X	X		
Civic Engagement, Trust and Cultural Expression	Opportunity and take-up	X	X	X		X
	Impact		X	X		
	Culture and non-discrimination	X		X	X	X
Cross-cutting issues						
Equality	Equality and equity	X	X		X	
	Inclusion	X				
	Intergenerational (elderly, youth and children)	X				
	Ability	X	X	X		
Technology/ Digital Transition		X		X		
Data			X	X		
Issues raised outside of current Framework						
Infrastructure	Overall			X		X
	Public Transport	X		X		X
	Access to energy	X				
Creative and artistic life		X		X		
Immigration		X				
Childcare		X				
Crime and Justice system		X				
Basic/fundamental needs					X	X

Results of Cultural questions

The *First Report* committed to exploring cultural expression (i.e. identity) and cultural participation, and how these aspects support national well-being. The online survey included two questions related to culture for this reason.

The first question on this topic asked respondents to describe culture and how it relates to well-being, followed by a question asking whether their description related more to 'freedom to express culture and identity' or 'participating in cultural activities'.

Of the 693 respondents who answered these questions, 57% felt that their description of culture related to freedom to express culture and identity, while 23% felt it related to participating in cultural activities.

Word Cloud of Descriptions of Culture as it relates to Well-being
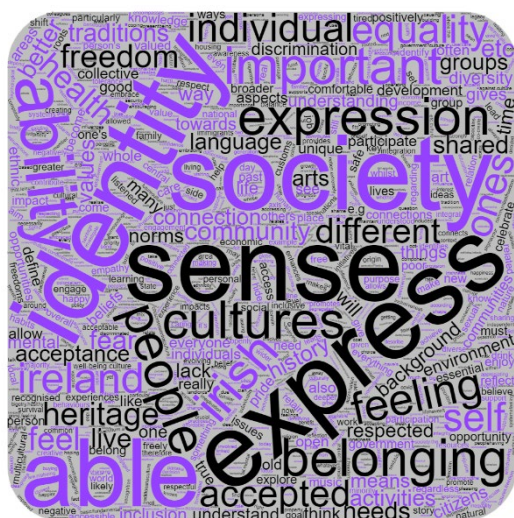
Freedom to express culture and identity   **Participating in cultural activities**

The words 'culture', 'cultural' and 'well-being' have been excluded.

Reviewing the word clouds of the two categories reveals similarities in the words used including 'express', 'identity' and 'able' – these words highlight the fundamental aspects of culture, and how it relates to identity and expression. Words such as 'able' and 'access' highlight another recurring theme of the consultation relating to ability and access to services – including culture.

The differences across the two categories are also revealing. In the first category words like 'identity', 'equality', 'belonging' and 'accepted' can be compared with 'arts', 'activities', 'community' and 'engagement'.

A further 20% chose 'other' rather than putting their description into either category. Respondents specified their own category, and these were qualitatively tagged. Of these 140 responses, 42 felt their description of culture represented both expression of identity and participation in cultural activities. 23 felt it related to belonging, 22 to inclusion and 17 to respect.

Overall, there is a clear result that the definition of culture as it relates to well-being is generally closer to expression of identity. However, there was a strong minority that highlighted the importance of cultural participation.

Appendix 3: Capability Approach (Description of Dimensions)

Subjective Well-being	High Level Definition	An individual's personal perspective of their mental state, how their life is going and their outlook for the future.
	Capability Approach Definition	Subjective well-being includes an individual's personal view of their well-being. The cognitive and affective responses of individuals to their immediate circumstances as well as to retrospective and prospective reflections of how their life is progressing.
Mental and Physical Health	High Level Definition	The capacity of an individual to be and feel well, with good mental and physical health, living a life unencumbered by illness. Collectively, the good mental and physical health of the population also contributes to future well-being.
	Capability Approach Definition	Mental and physical health is a crucial aspect of well-being. It includes the physical and mental factors that shape the ability of the individual to engage in economic, social, cultural, community and family life. Collectively, good mental and physical health of the population also contributes to future well-being as a form of human capital.
Income and Wealth	High Level Definition	The financial resources that shape the range of choices an individuals or society has to meet their day-to-day needs and wants, and the ability to mitigate personal and broader economic and societal risks, both now and in the future.
	Capability Approach Definition	The income and wealth dimension relates to the financial resources that shape the range of feasible choices available to an individual to meet their day-to-day needs and wants and the opportunity to mitigate personal, economic and societal risks and vulnerabilities, both now and in the future. More broadly, this dimension encompasses the resources available to society that support investment and allow for the mitigation of broader economic and societal risks.
Knowledge, Skills and Innovation	High Level Definition	The cognitive and motor skills acquired and developed over the course of a person's life that promotes agency and ability to self-actualise and progress in society.
	Capability Approach Definition	The cognitive and motor skills acquired and developed over the course of a person's life that shape their ability to achieve material or economic progress and meet needs relating to esteem (e.g. feeling of accomplishment) and self-actualisation (e.g. fulfilling one's full potential), as well as cope with and address change in their lived experience and in society more generally. As a dimension of well-being, the knowledge and skills dimension seeks to capture cognitive and non-cognitive skills, encompassing knowledge and skills learned across the life cycle.
Housing and the Built Environment	High Level Definition	Housing captures the physical infrastructure that shapes the ability of an individual to meet basic needs such as shelter, security and social belonging. The local built environment determines access to infrastructure and broader services, for example safe, sustainable and accessible transport choices.
	Capability Approach Definition	Housing captures the physical infrastructure that shapes the ability of an individual to meet key physiological needs (e.g., shelter), safety needs (e.g. personal security) and social belonging needs (e.g., a space for family, intimacy and a sense of connection). The built environment refers to the infrastructure and services (e.g., street furniture, accessible transport) that provide people with the opportunity to move freely and easily within their own local area and beyond.
Environment, Climate and Biodiversity	High Level Definition	The environment that an individual lives in shapes their ability to interact with nature alongside access to basic needs such as clean water and air. The quality of this environment – both now and in the future – is shaped by human influence and actions.
	Capability Approach Definition	This dimension covers the environmental hazards and amenities that can impact well-being, including the impact of humans on the climate and environment in the long-term. The nature of the place in which an individual lives and works shapes their ability to meet physiological needs (e.g. clean water and air) as well as more transcendental needs (e.g. relating to and interacting with nature). Humans can also hold considerable influence over the environment and can impact it positively (e.g. sustainable living; low carbon lifestyles in food, transport, energy use etc.; conscious consumer, limits waste etc) or negatively (e.g. pollution, climate change, biodiversity loss).

Safety and Security	High Level Definition	The factors that shape an individual's ability to live life and engage in activities without fear of harm and to mitigate the risks and impacts associated with infrastructural, mechanical and natural hazards. Harm can come from crime, conflict, violence, terrorism, accidents or natural disasters, and can occur online as well as offline and can be emotional as well as physical. As a dimension of well-being, safety tends to be concerned with the risk of victimisation and perceptions of safety.
	Capability Approach Definition	Safety and security cover the social, cultural, natural and institutional factors that shape the ability of an individual to live life and engage in activities without fear of harm from other people and to mitigate the risks and impacts associated with infrastructural, mechanical and natural hazards. Harm can come from crime, conflict, violence, terrorism, accidents or natural disasters, can occur online as well as offline, and can be emotional as well as physical. As a dimension of well-being, safety tends to be concerned with the risk of victimisation and perceptions of safety.
Work and Job Quality	High Level Definition	The productive activities (both paid and unpaid) that shape how an individual progresses through their life (i.e., develop their skills and abilities, fulfil their ambitions) as well as building and supporting their self-esteem and their sense of contributing to society.
	Capability Approach Definition	The work and job quality dimension examines the productive activities (both paid and unpaid) that shape how an individual progresses (i.e., develop their skills and abilities, fulfil their ambitions) as well as building and supporting their self-esteem and informing their sense of contributing to society more generally.
Time Use	High Level Definition	The ability of an individual to manage the demands placed on their time, and their access to time for personal development, leisure or hobbies, subject to the constraint of a fixed quantity of time available in any single day. This includes work-life balance.
	Capability Approach Definition	Time use is about combining family commitments, leisure and work (both paid and unpaid). This dimension covers the efforts of an individual to both meet and combine the demands that others place on their time (e.g. work, family and other caring commitments), and meet their own needs (e.g., personal care and development), subject to the constraint of a fixed quantity of time available in any single day.
Connections, Community and Participation	High Level Definition	The ability and opportunities that an individual has to meet the basic needs of personal connection and engagement with family, friends and wider community. In the modern era, this includes online social connections and interactions. This dimension also covers connection to the community, for example, through volunteering or other community activities.
	Capability Approach Definition	This dimension highlights the quantity and quality of time spent with others and how much support individuals feel. This dimension includes the importance of family connections throughout an individual's life, and the centrality of social connection on human development. It highlights the opportunities that an individual has for engaging with other people and sharing activities to meet their basic needs and psychological and self-fulfilment needs. In the modern era, this includes online social connections and interactions. This dimension also covers connection to the community, for example, through volunteering or other community activities.
Civic Engagement, Trust and Cultural Expression	High Level Definition	The rights and opportunities an individual has to impact the political functioning of their society, the existence of institutional arrangements that foster cooperation and freedom of expression of identity and non-discrimination, and trust in those institutions and across broader society.
	Capability Approach Definition	The rights and opportunities that an individual has to express their voice and participate and contribute to the functioning of their society. This also captures the extent to which such engagement enables people to shape the community in which they live. This dimension also includes incidences or feelings of discrimination alongside the freedom to express cultural, personal or political views. As a dimension of well-being, the civic engagement dimension tends to be concerned with people's behaviour, subjective evaluations of various institutions including trust, and experiences of unfair behaviour. The opportunities that people have to express their voice will in part be shaped by trust in public governance (e.g., its institutions, rules and norms) and how this fosters cooperation between people.

Appendix 4: Comparison of indicators in the CSO's interactive dashboard to the Sustainable Development Goal indicators

Irish Dimensions	Irish Indicators	Sustainable Development Goals indicators
Mental and Physical Health	Unmet need for medical attention	3.8.1 Coverage of essential health services
Income and Wealth	Median real household disposable income	10.1.1 Growth rates of household expenditure or income per capita among the bottom 40 per cent of the population and the total population
		10.2.1 Proportion of people living below 50 per cent of median income, by age, sex and persons with disabilities
Knowledge Skills and Innovation	Reading and maths performance in 15-year olds	4.1.1 Proportion of children and young people: (a) in grades 2/3; (b) at the end of primary; and (c) at the end of lower secondary achieving at least a minimum proficiency level in (i) reading and (ii) mathematics, by sex
	Lifelong learning rate	4.3.1 Participation rate of youth and adults in formal and non-formal education and training in the previous 12 months, by sex
Work and job Quality	Mean weekly earnings	8.5.1 Average hourly earnings of female and male employees, by occupation, age and persons with disabilities
	Labour underutilisation rate	8.5.2 Unemployment rate, by sex, age and persons with disabilities
Environment, Climate and Biodiversity	Water bodies assessed as high or good	6.3.2 Proportion of bodies of water with good ambient water quality
	Waste to landfill	11.6.1 Proportion of urban solid waste regularly collected and with adequate final discharge out of total urban solid waste generated, by cities
Civic Engagement, Trust and Cultural Expression	Persons who experienced discrimination in the previous 2 years	10.3.1 Proportion of the population reporting having personally felt discriminated against or harassed within the previous 12 months on the basis of a ground of discrimination prohibited under international human rights law
Safety and Security	Population who worry they could be a victim of crime	11.7.2 Proportion of persons victim of physical or sexual harassment, by sex, age, disability status and place of occurrence, in the previous 12 months
	Murder rate per 100,000 population	16.1.1 Number of victims of intentional homicide per 100,000 population, by sex and age
	Persons killed or injured on roads	3.6.1 Death rate due to road traffic injuries