



An Roinn Iompair  
Department of Transport

# Department of Transport

## Annual Report

2020



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## Our Mission to June 2020 as Department of Transport, Tourism & Sport

As a central Government Department, serving the Government and the people of Ireland, our mission is to shape the safe and sustainable development of transport, tourism, and sport, to support economic growth and social progress.

### Our Values, Behaviours and Culture

The Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport at all times seeks to instil, develop, and maintain values and behaviours that maximise the organisation's capacity to deliver upon its stated objectives. The department's culture is inherent in its structures and the way it carries out its functions and delivers its services. In addition to its duty to be professional, responsive, open, and accountable, the department is firmly committed to continual reform, innovation, and improvement.

The primary tenets of the department's ethos, which reflects the wider ethos of the Civil Service, are set out below:

- The department upholds the values of the Civil Service, including a deep-rooted public service ethos of independence, integrity, impartiality, equality, fairness, and respect.
- The department supports and implements a culture of accountability, efficiency, and value for money.
- The department commits to the highest standards of professionalism, leadership, and rigour.

### Our High Level Goals

In pursuing this mission, we focus on the High-Level Goals of our Statement of Strategy 2016-2020. These goals are:

- Land Transport: to best serve the needs of society and the economy through safe, sustainable, and competitive transport networks and services.
- Aviation: to maximise air transport connectivity with a safe, competitive, cost-effective, and sustainable aviation sector.
- Maritime: to facilitate safe and sustainable maritime transport and the delivery of emergency management services.
- Tourism: to support the tourism industry to grow in a sustainable way.
- Sport: to contribute to a healthier and more active society by promoting sports participation and by supporting high performance and the provision of sport facilities.

Our corporate support services are key to the successful delivery of our goals.

Our Mission as Department of Transport, following the transfer of tourism and sport functions, is to deliver an accessible, efficient, safe and sustainable transport system that supports communities, households and businesses. More details on the Department of Transport's values and goals are reflected in the department's current [Statement of Strategy 2021-2023](#).

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## Foreword by the Minister

2020 was a year that we will never forget, with the COVID-19 pandemic impacting on every aspect of our lives, both professional and personal. The pandemic highlighted the interconnectedness of our health, climate, prosperity, security, and stability and made us rethink our priorities and values. For this department, it meant rising to the wide-ranging challenges of supporting our connectivity and maintaining transport and logistical links through Covid. At the same time, extensive work was required in preparing for Brexit. Following my Summer appointment, the department quickly worked to deliver on the agenda of a new Government with new priorities, with a particular focus on delivering on our climate change obligations and responsibilities.



The Programme for Government commits us to a fundamental change in the nature of transport in Ireland. To achieve our ambitious emission reduction targets, every effort is being made to ensure active travel and public transport are prioritised and made fully accessible to all.

The pandemic has acted as a catalyst, enabling us to implement radical policies that were considered impossible before now. This has necessitated a step-change in the decarbonisation agenda and strategic re-alignment within the department.

### Climate commitments

In 2020, the department continued to implement measures to change how we travel. It supported investment in sustainable mobility and worked towards decarbonising the transport fleet through the promotion of alternative fuels and technologies.

As well as planning for adaptation to the impacts of climate change and extreme weather events, my department also worked on addressing the impacts of growing transport levels on Ireland's major cities by focusing on demand management and the incentivisation of low emission vehicles.

### Maintaining connections

As a department which is central to enabling connectivity - globally, nationally, and locally - it was crucial that we demonstrated adaptability to COVID-19 related events which influenced and charted the course for 2020.

With the onset of the pandemic, our airports, airlines, and ferry operators faced significant challenges as did public transport operators, public and private. The department and our agencies reacted quickly to ensure services continued and businesses were supported. Measures were introduced across the public transport system, guided by public health advice,

to maintain safe operation of essential services. Additional budgetary allocation enabled the continued operation of public transport services in 2020 including crucial Local Link services. Many “Demand Responsive Services” in rural areas redeployed for ‘collect and deliver’ services, delivering critical medical, food and other supplies from pharmacies and local shops to vulnerable members of the community who were unable to travel.

Whilst international travel was understandably impacted, our ports stayed open and shipping services were maintained to a large extent. Public Service Obligation (PSO) arrangements were introduced to address potential market failure on key shipping routes. Importantly, our airports continued to facilitate cargo services (including the importation of essential medical and Personal Protection Equipment (PPE)) throughout 2020.

### **The evolving nature of transport**

Project Ireland 2040 documents the spatial development and investment framework for the coming years. Within that framework, Government has committed to major investments in improving the efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of the transport network and the National Development Plan (NDP) provides indicative allocations for investment in public transport projects around Ireland over the next 10 years. This will hasten the delivery of a number of significant projects and programmes.

With the closure of many construction sites in 2020, certain initiatives were delayed. However, progress was made on several strategic regional and local road improvement schemes, and crucially, essential and emergency road maintenance and repair continued to be carried out throughout in 2020.

### **Community and Active Travel**

As a result of travel restrictions arising from the pandemic, our day-to-day lives became more localised. With less commuting, citizens became more familiar, and appreciative of, the familiar. Walking and cycling formed part of a new routine and this was underpinned by significant investment to local authorities, particularly the July Stimulus Plan for Active Travel measures. My department will continue to build on this momentum by rolling out enhanced supports for Active Travel and Greenways over the lifetime of this Government.

### **Commitment to Public Service**

Since my appointment in June 2020, I have been impressed by the dedication and talent of the staff in Department of Transport, its Offices and Agencies. I would like to thank them for their commitment during 2020 in difficult and demanding circumstances.

I would like to acknowledge the work of my predecessor Minister Shane Ross, and Minister of State Brendan Griffin, T.D., who contributed to the achievements of the Department in 2020. I would also like to thank my colleague Minister of State Hildegard Naughton for her continuing work, support, and dedication.

**Eamon Ryan, TD**  
Minister for Transport



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## Foreword by the Minister of State

The department's Annual Report highlights an extensive work programme completed in the most challenging of times. Despite the impacts of COVID-19 and the preparations for Brexit, the department remained resolutely focused on serving and delivering for the public.

Maintaining transport connectivity to support the movement of goods into and out of Ireland was a primary objective of the department during 2020. Freight activity levels and global supply chains across land, sea and air were negatively affected by the pandemic and numerous measures were implemented to support the road haulage sector, in particular. Supply lines, including connectivity to distribution centres, factories, retail stores and hospitals, were kept open. This resulted in the continued availability of goods with knock-on benefits for consumer confidence.



### Aviation and Travel

Aviation was one of the most impacted sectors by the Covid pandemic. The department maintained regular contact with key stakeholders throughout the crisis, and Government put in place a range of supports for businesses, which were all of great benefit to this sector. A Refund Credit Note Scheme introduced in June 2020 also helped to assist the liquidity position of Irish licenced travel agents and tour operators during the pandemic.

Early in the crisis, the department established a Taskforce for Aviation Recovery, which advised on a framework for restoring aviation connectivity and for helping aviation enterprises support economic recovery. Arising from the Taskforce, Government announced an €80m package of supports for the aviation sector in November 2020. All passenger airports were covered under this package including Dublin, Shannon and Cork. Targeted supports to Ireland's smallest airports - Donegal, Kerry and Ireland West Airport (Knock) - continued in 2020 through an extended Regional Airports Programme (RAP) 2015 to 2019.

### Maritime and Ports

Reflecting the vital importance of the maritime sector in terms of trade and connectivity, and in relation to fishing and recreational activities, an extensive review of the maritime sector began in January 2020 culminating in the publication of the Irish Maritime Directorate Strategy.

Given Ireland's status as a small open economy, the maritime sector is a critical gateway for the movement of goods and people between Ireland and its trading partners. Out of Ireland's total trade volumes, over 90% is transported by sea. Ensuring Ireland's ports, shipping operations and all elements of the maritime supply chain could continue to function throughout COVID-19 was a priority for the department this year.

### **Search and Rescue**

The Irish Coast Guard coordinated responses to 2,670 incidents in 2020. Owing to the onset of Covid -19, there was a notable decrease in activity during March and conversely a five year high in August.

During 2020, the Coast Guard noted an increase in two activities that gave rise to safety concerns; increases in the number of incidents involving persons using inflatable devices on beaches and inland waterways during summer months, and increased participation in open water swimming in autumn and winter. The Coast Guard acknowledges that safety messages regarding open water swimming have been well heeded with most participants adhering with basic safety precautions.

### **Road Safety and Innovation**

During 2020, the department intensified work with the Road Safety Authority on the development of a 2021 - 2030 Road Safety Strategy. In line with Government commitments, it will adopt a Vision Zero approach and will contain particular measures to protect vulnerable road users.

The number of road deaths was 148 in 2020, which was unfortunately an increase of 8 over 2019. The figures for 2020 were disappointing in light of the reduction of traffic. Nonetheless, the reduction in the number of road deaths over the last few years is one of the most significant social improvements which have resulted from concerted public policy interventions and supports.

### **Delivery in challenging times**

2020 was a different year for us all, a year of loss and challenge. I am proud of the efforts by the department to deliver on our Programme for Government commitments, despite the many obstacles. Work undertaken internationally and cross-departmentally on crucial initiatives such as Brexit and the maintenance of supply chains were notable achievements. In practice this meant that our shops continued to stock bread and our hospitals had the necessary equipment to deal with the pandemic – fundamental work to support the health and wellbeing of all of our citizens.

**Hildegarde Naughton, TD**  
Minister of State

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## Statement by the Secretary General

This is the final Annual Report on the department's Statement of Strategy 2016 to 2020 and outlines the progress made by the department on achieving our goals and objectives in 2020.

A new Statement of Strategy for the period 2021 to 2023 was finalised in January 2021.

We managed significant organisational changes following the election of the new Government in June 2020. The Tourism and Sport functions of the former Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport were transferred to the newly formed Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media.

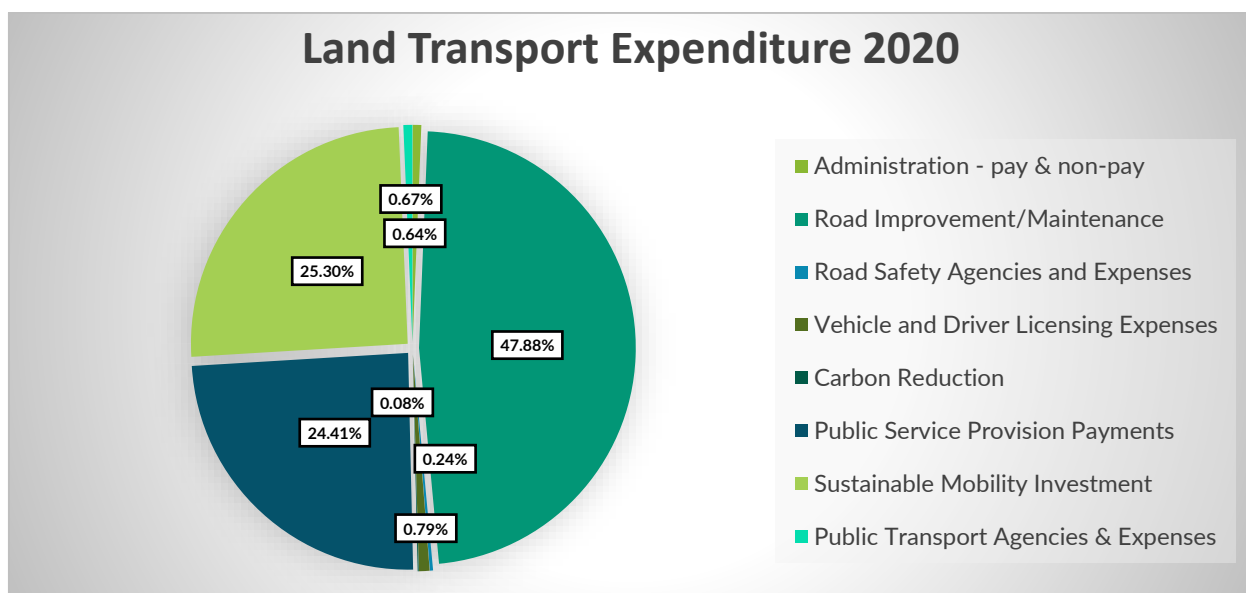
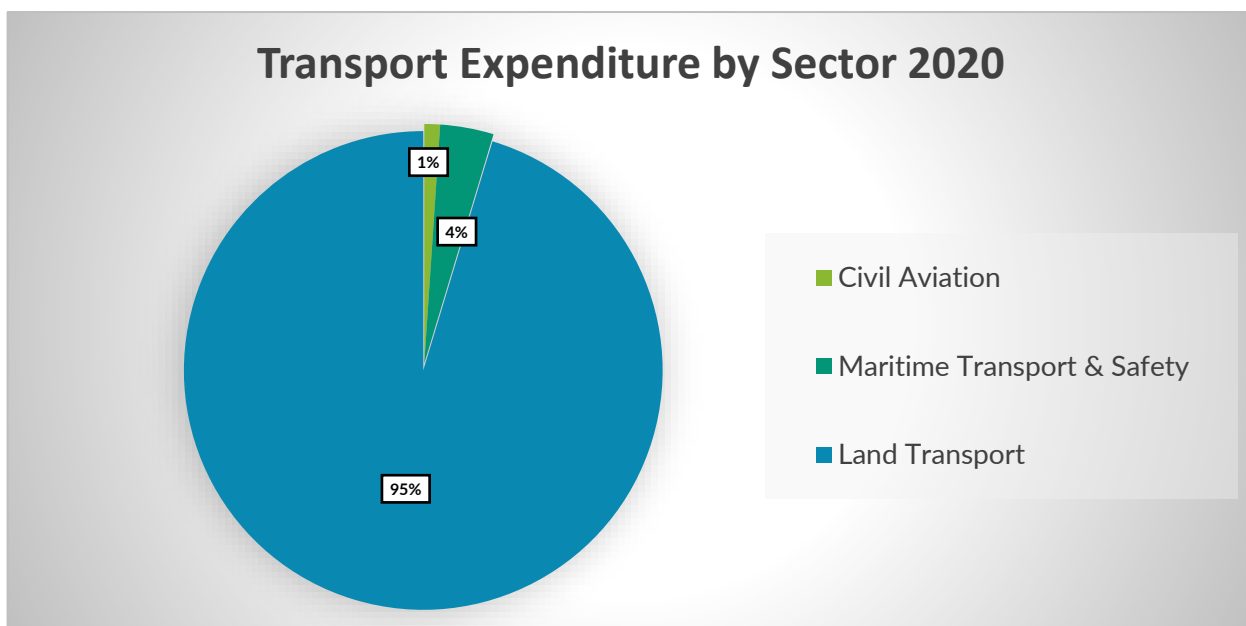
The impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, along with the complexities of Brexit, gave rise to an unprecedented operating environment for the Department of Transport. This report details how we faced those challenges. We moved speedily in dealing with the challenges presented. The achievements outlined in this report are evidence of the productivity that continued throughout the year. I would like to thank all the staff of the Department of Transport for allowing the department to impose its business into colleagues' homes and remote working spaces. I am equally grateful to the leadership and staff of the agencies under the remit of the department. The dedication, diligence and commitment to public service was never more evident than it was during 2020.



**Ken Spratt**  
Secretary General

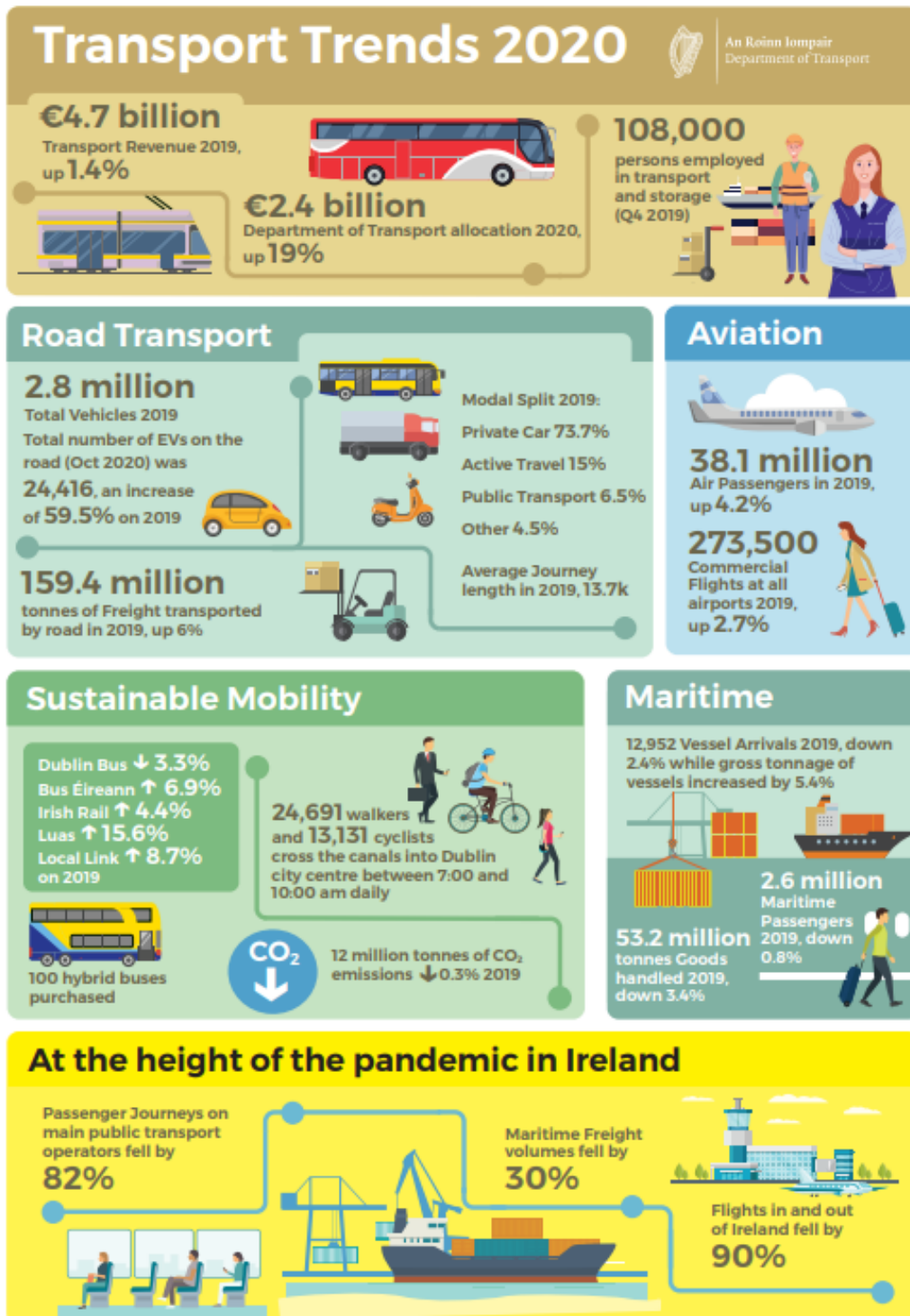
## Spending in 2020 at a Glance

In 2020, €2.6bn<sup>1</sup> of taxpayer funding was spent across the department’s programmes with the sectoral breakdown as below:



<sup>1</sup> €2.4 billion was the initial allocation at start of 2020 but was later revised due to COVID19.

# 2020 Transport Snapshot



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## Integration with Wider Government Policy

Our mission and goals are often closely linked with other important Government policy areas, and many of our spending and investment decisions will have lasting impacts on our societal and economic development.

### Impacts of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic abruptly upended business as usual for the transport sector during 2020. Our international connectivity, so vital for our island economy, hung in the balance throughout the year, and internal transport was also severely curtailed, due to restrictions put in place to protect lives and the health of the population.

In addition to the achievements of the department throughout the year, this report details the steps taken in 2020 to counteract some of the impacts of the global Covid pandemic and to keep Ireland moving and open for business. A summary of the most critical impacts is presented in the following paragraphs.

#### Coordination of COVID-19 Response

The Emergency Planning Unit provided a coordinated function across the department on the COVID-19 response, with input and assistance from all sectors. This included participation in a Senior Officials Group (SOG) chaired by the Department of the Taoiseach, which was set up to support the Cabinet Committee on COVID-19 and work closely with other government departments. The Unit coordinated the department's input to national level policies and plans, including the National Action Plan on COVID-19, the Roadmap for Reopening Society and Business, and Resilience and Recovery 2020-2021: Plan for Living with COVID-19.

#### Supply Chains and Logistics

The on-going COVID-19 pandemic negatively impacted on global supply chains, with freight activity levels across land, sea and air all being affected. Maintaining transport connectivity, to support the movement of goods - particularly essential goods - into and out of Ireland, was a primary objective of the department during 2020.

To ensure the continuity of transport links to and from Ireland and to and from distribution centres, factories, retail stores and hospitals in Ireland, the department implemented a number of measures to support the continued functioning of the road haulage sector, including:

- A temporary derogation from the EU driving and rest hours rules;
- The extension of expiry dates on driver Certificate of Professional Competence cards; and
- The extension of validity periods for driver licenses.

## **Maritime**

The maritime sector is essential to the continued supply of goods in and out of the country, accounting for 90% of Ireland's international trade in volume terms. Port and shipping services, albeit with some reductions in capacity, continued to facilitate the movement of goods (and some passengers) in and out of Ireland during 2020.

## **Aviation**

COVID19 has had a profound and unparalleled impact on the aviation industry. Airline traffic fell by 90% across Europe, bringing activity and associated revenue to an all-time low. With the imposition of travel restrictions and loss of flights, our airports and airlines faced significant challenges throughout the year. Importantly, our airports continued to facilitate cargo services (including the importation of essential medical and Personal Protection Equipment (PPE) and limited passenger services throughout 2020.

## **Public Transport**

Measures were introduced across the public transport system, guided by public health advice, to assist with ensuring the continued safe operation of essential public transport services during the pandemic, including revised schedules, restricted seating, enhanced cleaning regimes and the display of health information aboard buses, trams and trains. During the height of restrictions during the year, daily passenger numbers across the Irish public transport network fell to less than 10% of the equivalent levels in 2019 across all operators.

## **Driving Licence, Driver Testing and Driver Theory Testing**

Due to the pandemic, the National Driver Licensing Service closed. Measures were taken by the department to extend all driving licences and learner permits. Driver testing and driver theory testing were also suspended, with only limited driver testing, on an emergency basis to essential workers on certain vehicle classes continuing during most of 2020.

## **Roads**

All TII funded road construction sites closed in March 2020, with only essential maintenance and operations on the motorway network, Dublin Tunnel and Jack Lynch Tunnel continuing. While local authorities continued to carry out emergency repairs and winter maintenance work on regional and local roads after the introduction of restrictions, all other road construction activities ceased.

## **The Operations of the Department**

From 25 March 2020, all departmental staff who could work from home were facilitated in doing so unless their attendance in the office was deemed essential. The Department of Transport worked quickly to complete a successful transition to home working for the majority of staff within a very short period of time, allowing the department to continue its work and to deliver effective services to the public.

## Brexit

Following the ratification of the previously agreed Withdrawal Agreement during January 2020 by both parties, the UK exited the EU on the 31 January 2020 triggering the commencement of the transition period. During this transition period, the UK no longer participated in the work of the EU institutions however the EU suite of legislation continued to apply to the UK and UK economic operators.

The whole-of-Government approach to coordination of Brexit issues by the Department of the Taoiseach and the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade continued throughout 2020. The Department's EU and Central Policy Division led on the overall preparation and coordination of the response to Brexit to ensure provision of cohesive and inclusive analysis.

Having previously worked on identifying its key priorities for the EU/UK negotiations, the department provided input through the centrally established structures to inform discussions on the agreement of the European Commission mandate to negotiate with the UK. As part of the EU's process for developing the negotiating mandate, a series of horizontal and sectoral seminars were held in Brussels during January 2020. The department participated in the transport seminar which addressed all relevant modes of transport with a focus on air transport and road haulage.

The European Commission's draft legal agreement for the future EU-UK partnership and the negotiating directives were approved by EU Member States in the General Affairs Council on 25 February 2020, paving the way for the commencement of negotiations, which began in March 2020.

Due to COVID-19, the negotiations partially took place through video conferencing but were able to recommence on an in-person basis later in the year. Throughout the latter half of 2020, the focus of the EU continued to be on engaging with the UK in the future relationship negotiations in accordance with the mandate agreed with Member States on 25 February. Despite sustained lack of progress in key areas such as the level playing field, governance and fisheries, discussions continued and toward the end of the year their frequency and intensity heightened. As a result of this intensification, a draft EU-UK Trade and Cooperation Agreement (EU-UK TCA) was reached on 24 December 2020.

Parallel to the ongoing negotiations, and as part of the wider Government preparations, Brexit contingency planning continued during 2020 across all transport sectors. The department continued to participate in this contingency planning, including contributing to the drafting of the State's Brexit Readiness Action Plan which was published on 9 September 2020. This action plan built on the work done in the Government's Brexit Contingency Plans of December 2018 and July 2019 and detailed whole of Government actions undertaken and those to be undertaken by business and individuals in advance of the end of the transition period on 31 December 2020.

As there were no automatic and feasible fall-back arrangements for international connectivity in both aviation and road haulage, the department, along with the Department of Foreign Affairs, continued to advocate for EU level contingency measures at every opportunity, and at



every level. On 10 December, the European Commission published proposals for contingency regulations in the areas of Road Transport Connectivity, Aviation Connectivity and Aviation Safety. If no overarching agreement had been reached, these regulations would have ensured basic reciprocal air and road connectivity between the EU and the UK for a period of six months.

During 2020, the Traffic Management Group continued to work to refine the traffic management plans which had been developed in advance of a possible no-deal Brexit. These plans are a contingency measure that set out the operational response to the additional congestion risk of Brexit related traffic to Dublin Port and its environs.

The plans are grounded in close cooperation of the various State bodies such as Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) who manage the national road network, including the Port Tunnel and M50 and M1 motorways, Dublin City Council, An Garda Síochána, Dublin Port Company, and the Revenue Commissioners who will be overseeing the systems in place for carrying out checks within the Port.

All relevant Divisions within the department participated in Brexit-related work and remained in regular contact with individual agencies and stakeholders on specific Brexit related matters as they arose.

## North South Ministerial Council

Working through the North South Ministerial Council (NSMC), the Irish Government's commitments under the New Decade, New Approach (NDNA) include the delivery of infrastructure projects that will benefit people across the island, achieving greater connectivity, North and South, and investing in the North-West region and in Border Communities.

Prior to 2020, the North South Ministerial Council had last met in December 2016. Following the restoration of the Northern Ireland Executive, and the formation of the new Irish Government, the Council's normal pattern of meetings resumed in July 2020.

A North South Ministerial Council Transport meeting was held in the NSMC Joint Secretariat Offices, Armagh and by video conference on 7 October 2020. The meeting was attended by Nichola Mallon MLA, Minister for Infrastructure, Gordon Lyons MLA, Junior Minister, The Executive Office, and Eamon Ryan TD, Minister for Transport.

Discussions took place on the various commitments outlined in the New Decade, New Approach agreement and associated annexes, in particular in the area of infrastructural investment. These commitments are reflected in the Shared Island chapter of the Programme for Government, ensuring their delivery is at the heart of the work of this Government. Specifically, the Government has recommitted to the funding of £75 million for the A5 project. Work on a strategic review of the rail network on the island of Ireland and the review to explore the potential for re-establishing viable air routes is being advanced by this Department, and the Narrow Water bridge and cross-border Greenways continue to be key priorities. In addition, in Budget 2021, the Government announced the Shared Island Fund, with €500 million to be made available out to 2025, ring-fenced for Shared Island projects

The Council also held two plenary meetings in July and December 2020, respectively.

## Climate Action

### National Development Plan

The National Development Plan (NDP), which was published in 2018 under Project Ireland 2040, committed €8.6 billion for investment in sustainable mobility to 2027 through projects such as MetroLink, BusConnects and the DART Expansion Programme. This investment will encourage modal shift away from private car use. In line with a previous Government decision, the NTA ceased the purchase of diesel-only buses for the urban PSO bus fleets and in 2020 purchased 77 hybrid double deck buses. The forthcoming NDP review will prioritise investment in climate action across the sectors.

### Climate Action Plan

The *Climate Action Plan (CAP)*, published by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment in 2019, set out a series of wide-ranging and significant actions to tackle carbon emissions across the economy, including substantial actions for transport in the short to medium term. The Department of Transport is responsible for 20 measures under 13 actions of the original CAP, across various areas such as public transport, electric vehicles, active travel, and rural transport. Two headline targets for the department include reaching 936,000 electric vehicles on Irish roads by 2030 and increasing the number of daily public or active travel journeys by 500,000 by 2035.

During 2020, work was undertaken to progress these actions and the department contributed to the quarterly Climate Action Plan Progress Report, which is published by the Department of An Taoiseach. The department established the EV Policy Pathway Working Group to determine the optimum pathway for EV deployment. (However, it should be noted that supports for EVs did not fall under the remit of the Department of Transport until the end of 2020.)

### Adaptation

Climate change and extreme weather can threaten critical transport infrastructure, disrupt operations, and potentially lead to unsafe travel conditions. The Sectoral Plan for Transport Infrastructure, developed within the National Adaptation Framework, identifies key areas of possible vulnerability in the transport network because of climate change and promotes the safeguarding of continued transport operations at the level of transport policy development and project appraisal processes. Specifically, better collaboration with a broader range of stakeholders to identify and address possible knowledge gaps, and to have due regard to synergies and impacts on a range of sectors.

In 2020, as part of its work on adaptation, the department participated in several multi-stakeholder adaptation-related working groups and committees. The focus of these groups included consideration of the impacts of climate change, such as flood risks, severe weather impacts and sea level rises on national infrastructure as a basis for further consideration of additional policy research and consideration of further possible mitigations to address these impacts. As part of its work in this area, the department also established a Critical Infrastructure Working Group to identify and consider interdependencies between sectors and how best to increase infrastructural resilience to climate change impacts.

## **Alternative Fuels**

### ***Electric Vehicles***

Electric Vehicles (EVs) were a prominent mitigation measure in the 2019 *Climate Action Plan*, with targets of 180,000 EVs on Irish roads by 2025, and 936,000 EVs by 2030.

Supports for EVs and the supporting infrastructure were under the remit of the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications until the end of 2020.

### ***Low Emission Vehicle Toll Incentive***

Since 2018, the department has supported an *Electric Vehicle Tolling Incentive (EVTI) Scheme*, which provides discounts of, in general, 50% on tolls paid by electric cars and vans. This scheme is expected to run until 31 December 2022 (available only to a maximum of 50,000 LEVs). From January 2020, the maximum annual threshold for small public service vehicles (taxis, hackneys and limousines) was extended from €500 to €1,000 in line with other commercial vehicles. Additionally, a new reduced tolling incentive regime was introduced for heavy duty vehicles, including buses and trucks, fuelled by compressed natural gas, liquefied natural gas, hydrogen or electricity. Heavy duty vehicles will be eligible for a toll refund of up to 50% to a maximum cap of €1,000 per calendar year. €1.5m was allocated to this Scheme in 2020.

There were 13,997 vehicle registrations under the scheme in 2020 with a total of €600,018 being paid out by the Department for 2020.

### ***Electrifying the Small Public Service Vehicle (SPSV) Fleet***

A national Electric Small Public Service Vehicle (eSPSV) Grant Scheme was established in 2018 to support the electrification of the taxi, hackney and limousine fleets. The scheme provided grants of up to €7,000 for battery electric vehicles (BEVs) and up to €3,500 for plug-in hybrid electric vehicles (PHEVs). To encourage greater take-up the grant levels were increased in 2020 to €10,000 and €5,000 for BEVs and PHEVs respectively. Between 2018 and 2020 this initiative supported the registration of 101 electric SPSVs through grants of €627,000.

### ***Electric Vehicle Policy Pathway Working Group***

Further to Action 79 of the Climate Action Plan, an inter-departmental working group was established to produce a potential roadmap to achieving our electric vehicle targets.

### ***Low Emission Bus Trials***

In 2019, Ireland committed to no longer procuring diesel-only buses for our urban public fleet. Since then, an array of different alternatively-fuelled technologies have been assessed as part of the department's Low-Emission Bus Trials to determine their suitability for providing a reliable and greener bus service. While electric vehicles are currently the most mature and proven alternative technology to decarbonise public transport, future procurement on a range of investment options will be informed by the findings of this trial.

The trials, which employed a standardised methodology to compare a range of alternative fuels and technologies under real driving conditions, evaluated the emissions and operational

performance of electric, diesel-hybrid, compressed natural gas/biogas and retrofitted diesel models against a Euro VI diesel baseline. Findings from the first phase of testing were published in December 2019. In 2020, the department tested a single-deck hydrogen fuel-cell bus in the second phase of testing.

### ***Biofuels***

In line with the Climate Action Plan 2019 target to raise the proportion of biofuels in road transport, requirements under the Recast Renewable Energy Directive and following a public consultation in late 2019, work commenced on an updated and expanded Renewable Fuels for Transport Policy Statement. This work transferred to the remit of the Department of Transport at the end of 2020.

### ***Hydrogen***

Green hydrogen is among the emerging technologies, supported by Government, with the potential to contribute to national decarbonisation measures and targets. In particular, with regard to decarbonising hard-to-abate transport sectors with high GHG emissions, such as heavy-duty land transport, and the maritime and aviation sectors. Throughout 2020, the Department continued its participation in the interdepartmental working group on hydrogen led by the Department of Energy, Communications and Climate Action.

The inclusion of hydrogen bus technologies in the Low Emission Bus Trial aligns with the hydrogen policy as set out in the National Policy Framework: Alternative Fuels Infrastructure for Transport in Ireland (NPF). The NPF promotes trials on fuel cell propelled vehicles and establishment of a hydrogen refuelling network, subject to review of technological developments and market uptake.

### **Demand Management Study**

In December 2019, in line with Action 81 of the Climate Action Plan, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport commissioned a Transport Demand Management Study. The purpose of this study is to understand what measures are available to help address the impacts of growing transport levels in Ireland's major cities, namely Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford. The study, known as the Five Cities Traffic Demand Management Study, looked at a range of factors, including congestion levels and air quality issues, and ultimately should recommend options on how we might better manage travel demand in urban areas. Phase 1 of the Study was nearing completion by end 2020.

### **Urban Transport Related Air Pollution (UTRAP) Working Group**

In 2019, the department, working in tandem with the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, convened a Working Group on Urban Transport Related Air Pollution (UTRAP), which draws together stakeholders from a range of national and local authorities. The group was established to identify and consider a range of evidence regarding how transport impacts upon air quality and aims to produce a national policy framework within which Irish cities, including Dublin, can address transport-related air pollution, particularly nitrogen oxides.

In 2020, the Group's work programme included analysis and review of: the nature of Irish transport-related air pollution in general and in cities, public health impacts, the legislative framework, and the nature of the Irish vehicle fleet; available air-pollutant and transport-related pollutant data, on-going research, national and urban-specific air pollutant monitoring processes and models; vehicle emissions standards, tax measures introduced and on-going and projected fleet transition measures in the private and public vehicle fleets, including buses and rail infrastructure; and the profile of transport-related pollutants at critical infrastructure in Dublin on a lessons-learned basis, including major terminal rail stations and the M50, and consideration of the on-going Department of Transport Five Cities Traffic Demand Management Study.

Preparation of the Group's interim report was carried out in Q4 2020.

### **Research Platform**

During 2020, the Department continued its oversight of progress on five co-funded research projects with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI), focussing on climate change and emissions-reductions. These include:

- **DISTRACT (MoDal Shift Reduce Carbon in Transport):** A behavioural analysis study of 4 modal shift measures around Electric Vehicle (EV) Infrastructure in Workplaces; Remote Working; Home Shopping and Tyre Pressure Monitoring. The final report was completed Q4 2020.
- **Eco-HDV Project:** A study on the impacts of the adaptation of eco-driving programs in the Irish HDV fleet including the freight sector.
- **MAP-HDV Project (Mitigation of Air Pollution impacts of Irish HDVs).**

In addition, the department, in conjunction with Transport Infrastructure Ireland, progressed a Freight Decarbonisation Study. A report on the study output was published at the end of 2020.

This study was based on multi-stakeholder consultation, drawing together representatives from Government, transport agencies, industry, and academia. The objectives of the study were to get a better understanding of the policy and logistics contexts within which the Irish freight industry operates, to identify efficient and effective decarbonising measures for the sector in the medium to long term, and to co-design effective and affordable interventions that will have a meaningful impact in real-world road haulage conditions.

### **Aviation and Maritime Emissions**

The importance of minimising negative impacts of aviation on the environment is increasingly recognised. Achieving a carbon neutral growth scenario for the aviation sector is strongly supported by Ireland and efforts are underway at a global level to implement a coordinated global response.

In 2017, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Council approved the draft standards that will apply in the implementation of a global Carbon Offsetting and Reduction

Scheme for International Aviation (CORSIA). The CORSIA standards have been adopted and Ireland, as part of the 44 member European Civil Aviation Conference, is working towards its implementation of its first phase. Ireland formally signalled to ICAO its intention to participate in the CORSIA in August 2020.

The department continues close engagement with Government partners including the Environmental Protection Agency on matters pertaining to aviation within the framework of the EU Emission Trading System (ETS) including the EU implementation of the international CORSIA scheme.

## European Policy and Investment

### Connecting Europe Facility

The EU's Connecting Europe Facility Regulation (CEF) came into effect on 1 January 2014. Since its inception, transport projects involving Irish beneficiaries are currently in receipt of over €116 million in CEF co-funding. These are in a diverse range of areas including rail, maritime ports, Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS), Single European Sky ATM (Air Traffic Management) Research (SESAR), Motorways of the Sea and alternative fuel innovation.

### *Results and Calls for Proposals*

The results of the 2019 CEF Transport MAP [Multi-Annual Work Programme] Call were announced on 14 August 2020. In total, three projects led by or involving Irish beneficiaries were successful. This included over €8.8 million awarded towards the engineering design phase of the DART+ South-West line and an innovative logistics project on short-sea-shipping routes led by the Irish Maritime Development Office, referred to as the "International Fast and Secure Trade Lane".

During 2020, there was one call for proposals. Launched on 15 December 2020, the call has an indicative budget of €160 million, available under the general envelope, which is open to all Member States. The general objective of this call is to prepare for the implementation of TEN-T core network projects by supporting studies, which means addressing the necessary preparatory steps for forthcoming infrastructure works.

The department worked closely with interested applicants to influence the criteria of the call and continued to collaborate with potential applicants to facilitate the submission of high-quality proposals from Ireland.

Full details of all successful Irish transport projects under the CEF programme can be accessed on the European Commission's website at the following link:

<https://ec.europa.eu/inea/en/connecting-europe-facility/cef-transport/projects-by-country/ireland>

### **CEF2 Work Programme**

The new CEF programme for the period 2021 – 2027, referred to as "CEF2", will have a three-year multi-annual work programme. This will set out the eligibility criteria and indicative budgets across the programme and provide a degree of predictability and transparency for potential applicants.

Led by the European Commission in collaboration with Member States at the CEF Transport Committee, work got underway in earnest to develop and negotiate the work programme for CEF2 in the summer of 2020. These negotiations involved consultations with Irish stakeholders in order to secure a work programme that is in line with Government policy across the various funding areas.

### **Trans-European Network for Transport (TEN-T)**

The Trans-European Network for Transport (TEN-T) is an EU policy directed towards the development of a Europe-wide network of roads, railway lines, inland waterways, maritime shipping routes, ports, airport, and rail-road terminals. Its objective is to remove bottlenecks and eliminate technical barriers that exist between transport networks of EU Member States, strengthening the social, economic, and territorial cohesion in the Union.

In 2019, the European Commission began a review of the TEN-T Regulation by launching a public consultation which received over 600 responses, including 33 from Ireland. Throughout 2020, the Commission carried out more targeted stakeholder consultations through a range of surveys, interviews, and studies. In consultation with our stakeholders, the department actively participated in the process throughout the year as appropriate and in line with the policy direction given in the new Programme for Government.

## **United Nations Sustainable Development Goals**

The Irish government supports the United Nations (UN) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which are implemented through the *SDG National Implementation Plan*, mapping work-streams, activities, and targets across the various government departments with lead responsibility.

In 2020, the department had lead responsibility for four SDG targets concerning sustainable tourism, access to public transport, and road safety. In addition, the department is committed to the whole of government target to encourage and promote effective public, public-private and civil society partnerships, building on the experience and resourcing strategies of partnerships.

In line with the commitment to sustainability in the department's mission statement, progress towards meeting all of these targets is achieved through ensuring the sustainability of investment policy and strategic planning decisions across all of the responsible departmental divisions, and through the work of the department's agencies.



## Strategic Research and Analysis

The department's Strategic Research and Analysis Division (SRAD) provides an analytical and research resource to support the wider department, in line with Government's commitment to evidence-based policy making.

The SRAD carries out research and analysis, disseminates research findings and proposes evidence-informed policy recommendations to support all departmental sectors. Its primary work centres on economic analysis, expenditure appraisal, evaluation and data management and use.

Highlights in 2020 include –

- Continued development of the department's new land transport investment framework, which aims to identify investment priorities for the transport sector to support the delivery of the National Planning Framework's spatial objectives and Ireland's climate change targets.
- Provision of advice and guidance to divisions and agencies on economic appraisals and adherence to the Public Spending Code. In total, reviews of 24 Business Cases and 17 Project Appraisal Plans and Strategic Assessment Reports for planned roads, public transport, tourism and sporting infrastructure improvements were completed.
- Completion of the Quality Assurance 2019 process, which assesses the department's overall compliance with the Public Spending Code and includes an inventory of 423 projects/programmes with a projected total value in excess of €15.9 billion.
- As part of the Spending Review process, SRAD collaborated with members of the Transport Vote in the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform to prepare a Spending Review paper examining PSO-supported transport services provided by State owned operators. The completed paper was published alongside Budget 2021 on October 2020.
- Ongoing research into public transport trends, the carbon impact of PSO air services and pathways to an electric vehicle policy, to support policy divisions in determining public transport and climate change policy.
- Preparation of monthly COVID-19 data dashboards providing access for divisions to recent data of the impact of COVID-19 on sectors within Transport.
- The Irish Presidency of the ITF which was due to finish in May 2020 was extended until May 2021. Ireland continued to chair all meetings of the Transport Management Board, and, in December 2020, the Irish Minister for Transport chaired an informal meeting Minister's Roundtable on Transport and COVID-19 which was attended by 27 Ministers, Deputy Ministers and State Secretaries.

## Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS)

Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS) are the application and integration of advanced communication-based technologies to transport. ITS are broad-based enablers that allow transport operators to better plan, design, operate, maintain, and manage transport systems.

During 2020, the department continued its engagement with national and international ITS organisations and platforms such as ITS Ireland, ERTICO – ITS Europe, and the Association of European Transport.

Our main areas of focus on ITS in 2020 is summarised below:

### ***EU ITS Directive***

The department, along with our agencies, engaged throughout the year with the European Commission on ITS matters and in particular on the development of delegated regulations under the ITS Directive (2010/40/EU). The delegated authority under the ITS Directive allowing the Commission to make Regulations has been extended to August 2022. ITS Regulations have already been adopted in the areas of road safety related traffic information, real-time traffic information and an EU wide multimodal journey planner.

### ***EU Cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems (C-ITS)***

Cooperative Intelligent Transport Systems (C-ITS) focuses on the communication between digital technologies which provide intelligence, placed at the roadside or in vehicles. These systems enable vehicles to communicate with other vehicles, with infrastructure, or with other C-ITS systems. It is envisaged that in the near future vehicles will interact directly with each other and with the road infrastructure. This interaction will allow road users and traffic managers to share information and use it to coordinate their actions. The cooperative element, enabled by digital connectivity between vehicles and between vehicles and transport infrastructure, aims to significantly improve road safety, traffic efficiency and the comfort of driving. These outcomes will be achieved by helping the driver to take the right decisions and adapt to the traffic situation.

### ***C-ITS Pilot***

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII) is currently preparing a pilot project in relation to C-ITS with the overall aim to deploy, trial and evaluate Day-1 and future C-ITS services. The pilot will include development of services to align with Irish priorities, whilst recognising relevant standards and regulation. It will test and evaluate C-ITS services on the Irish Roads Network, predominantly on the Irish TEN-T network and also along urban corridors within Dublin City. The following outlines the start/end dates with projected milestones:

2019/20 Planning, procurement and development of systems/solutions

2020/22 Pilot deployment, operations and trials

2022/23 Pilot evaluation and assessments, including planning for wider deployment

The pilot location will take place along the Core TEN-T corridor between Cork and the border with Northern Ireland (~345 km) and between Shannon and the M8 intersection via Limerick (~120km). The pilot will also take place along urban corridors in Dublin. The pilot has been divided into five sections (see map as follows) to focus on specific use cases.

**Sectional Map:**



**C-ITS Pilot – Proposed Use-cases on TEN-T Network**

Service	Use-case
In-Vehicle Signage	Dynamic speed limit information Other signage information
Hazardous location notification	Animal or person in road Emergency electronic brake light Emergency vehicle approaching Slow vehicle Stationary vehicle Traffic jam ahead Weather condition warning
Road works warning	Lane closure (and other restrictions) Road works mobile
Probe vehicle data	Vehicle data collection Event data collection
Point of interest	Electric vehicle charging spot notification

The C-ITS pilot links in well with the new Future Mobility Campus Ireland (FMCI) that is being established in the Limerick-Shannon metropolitan area at Shannon Free Zone, Co. Clare. FMCI

will create and deliver future mobility testbed facilities for stimulating research, development and innovation in the area of Automated Connected Electric Shared Vehicles, including Connected and Automated Vehicles (CAV) in Ireland. It aims to deliver a test facility located in real-world settings, providing technology companies and researchers with the ability to test and enhance their innovations.

### ***Connected and Automated Vehicles (CAV)***

In 2020, in the area of automated vehicles, the Department of Transport was conducting a review of road traffic legislation with a view to amending it to allow for the testing of automated vehicles. Work had also begun on a CAV Roadmap & Strategy and a public consultation was published for input by early 2021. The work of the Department of Transport will take account of the Smart and Sustainable Transport Strategy published by the Commission in Q4 2020.

Work is underway at EU and international level on the introduction of connected and automated driving and the Department continues to closely follow and engage with these developments.

### ***European Electronic Toll Service (EETS)***

The European Commission proposed a recast of the European Electronic Toll Service (EETS) Directive in 2017 with the aim of ensuring full electronic toll interoperability throughout the EU. The recast EETS Directive contains a new provision for penalties for unpaid fines from non-national vehicles. The recast EETS Directive was adopted in March 2019 and work has continued throughout 2020 on its transposition into national law.

### ***Research Projects***

The importance of digitalisation and data to the transport sector has been clear for many years and it is only going to increase. In February 2020, the European Commission published the European Data Strategy. Under the data strategy, the Commission will support the development of a common European mobility data space to promote an intelligent transport system. European Data Spaces will allow data from across the EU, both from the public sector and businesses, to be exchanged in a trustworthy manner and at a lower cost, thereby boosting the development of new data-driven products and services. Data spaces are composed of both secure technological infrastructure and governance mechanisms. A legislative proposal for the governance of common European data spaces was under discussion at EU level in 2020.

A network of National Access Points exists across Member States where datasets are made available, for free, relating to road safety, traffic information and multi-modal travel information services. The Government open data portal [www.data.gov.ie](http://www.data.gov.ie) serves this purpose in Ireland. Transport-related data is used to provide services such as the multi-modal [www.transportforireland.ie](http://www.transportforireland.ie) journey planner/app as well as similar services provided by companies such as Google and Apple.

In 2020, Ireland contributed to work that was underway for establishing a coordination mechanism to federate the National Access Points, contributing to a single European transport area, with a view to addressing common challenges such as compliance with legislation; licencing and standardisation; and availability, quality and interoperability of data.

Other technological research projects in which the department is a participant are:

- TN-ITS (Transport Network Intelligent Transport Systems) GO project is a pilot project part funded by the EU Commission. It is concerned with the exchange of information on changes in static road attributes – static meaning that the attributes are of a more or less permanent nature, even though they may sometimes change, such as speed limits.
- Arc Atlantique Traffic Management Corridor - This project links the key economic nodes of Belfast, Dublin, Glasgow, Cardiff, London, Calais, Rotterdam, Amsterdam, Antwerp, Brussels, Charleroi, Liège, Lille, Paris, Lyon, Bordeaux, Toulouse, San Sebastian, Bilbao, Valladolid, Santander, A Coruña, Porto and Lisbon. The project focused on the deployment of core ITS services, in particular traffic management and traffic information services that support traffic managers in directing traffic operations.

## Emergency Planning

The department is represented on the Government Task Force on Emergency Planning and on the National Steering Group which oversees the Framework for Major Emergency Management. The department is the Lead Government Department (LGD) for national transport emergencies and also supports other LGDs for emergencies which affect travel and transport e.g., severe weather.

In February 2020, the department participated in the National Emergency Coordination Group (NECG), convened by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage in response to Storm Jorge. The department, transport operators and agencies worked with the NECG to ensure a coordinated response to this event.

The department continues to work closely with the Office of Emergency Planning and other Government departments on a range of emergency planning issues including flooding, humanitarian support and risk assessment.

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## Land Transport

**“To best serve the needs of society and the economy through safe, sustainable and competitive transport networks and services.”**

Ireland’s land transport system - comprising our road and rail networks, together with bus, rail and taxi services - is of fundamental importance to both societal and economic well-being. The objectives in our Statement of Strategy 2016-2019, which also applied in 2020, seek to both address the challenges that exist today and to plan for, and enable, the future development of land transport networks and services, with an emphasis on safety, service enhancements and promoting more sustainable forms of transport such as cycling and walking.

### Transport Investment Framework

Government launched Project Ireland 2040 in February 2018. This sets out both the planned spatial development and investment framework for the coming years, through the National Planning Framework and the National Development Plan (NDP) 2018 - 2027.

Within that framework, Government has committed to major investments in improving the efficiency, effectiveness, and sustainability of the transport network. The investment committed to within the National Development Plan will result in the delivery of a number of significant public transport projects and programmes, such as –

- Heavy rail maintenance and renewal;
- The BusConnects programme of improved bus services and infrastructure in all major cities, including significantly enhanced cycling facilities;
- The MetroLink; and
- The DART+ (formerly DART Expansion) programme.

The large projects and programmes will be complemented by other planned investments, such as the development of a new National Train Control Centre, the roll-out of strategic cycle networks in the major cities and a programme of investment in national and regional roads as detailed within the Project Ireland 2040.

The Department of Public Expenditure and Reform has developed and published a Project Tracker which includes those projects and programmes within Project Ireland 2040 with a proposed expenditure of €20 million or more. The Project Tracker includes progress on relevant public transport and roads investment projects and programmes.

## National Roads

In relation to the national roads investment programme for 2020, the National Development Plan (NDP) 2018-2027, in accordance with Project Ireland 2040, provides a key strategic framework for the continued maintenance of the national road network to a 'steady state' condition, and investment in new national road projects for the period to 2027.

In the main, the national roads investment programme is concentrated on the:

1. Maintenance of the national road network to a robust and safe condition
2. Advancement of new national roads to construction and completion stage,
3. Appraisal of a range of other pipeline projects with a view to prioritising projects for future development

### *Exchequer Resources for 2020*

The total National Roads budget for 2020 was approximately €644 million: €480m was allocated for the Capital Programme, €35m for the current maintenance grant and €129m for contractual obligations associated with Public Private Partnership (PPP) projects.

Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), which has responsibility for the implementation of the national roads programme, in conjunction with the relevant local authorities, undertook appraisals, planning and design, preparatory advance works and the construction of major national road projects in 2020. A table on the next page provides a general outline of some of the projects progressed by TII in 2020.

**National Roads Projects 2020**

<i>N25 New Ross Bypass PPP</i>	The Permit to Use stage was reached and the official opening took place on 29 January 2020.
<i>N4 Collooney to Castlebaldwin</i>	Government approval received to award construction contract on 29 January 2019. This project was progressed in 2020.
<i>M7 Naas to Newbridge Bypass and Sallins Bypass</i>	Three lanes in both directions opened to traffic in October 2019 and the project was completed in 2020. The Sallins Bypass was also near completion by end 2020.
<i>N5 Westport to Turlough</i>	Government approval received to award construction contract on 15 October 2019. Construction activities commenced in early 2020.
<i>N22 Ballyvourney to Macroom</i>	Government approval received to award construction contract on 15 October 2019. Work commenced on site in December 2019 and is ongoing.
<i>N21/N69 Foynes to Limerick (Adare Bypass)</i>	Government approval received on 30 October 2019, to submit the scheme to An Bord Pleanála for planning approval. It may be necessary to proceed with the Adare Bypass element of this project first, in time for the Ryder Cup in 2027.
<i>N8/N25/N40 Dunkettle Interchange</i>	Government approval was received 13 October 2020 to award the construction contract. Construction has commenced and completion of the new upgraded interchange is expected in 2024.
<i>M50 Enhancing Motorway Operation Services</i>	The Minister approved the project 24 July 2020. Implementation is ongoing and is expected to be complete in 2023.



## Regional and Local Roads Investment

Individual road authorities are responsible for the maintenance and improvement of regional and local roads. Most of the National Development Plan (NDP) budget allocation for regional and local roads is directed at the maintenance and renewal of the network under a range of targeted grant programmes.

2020 saw investment of €550 million under the Regional and Local Road Grant Programme. Most of this funding was allocated to road maintenance and rehabilitation to support:

- the maintenance of 3,020 kilometres of road
- the strengthening of 2,517 kilometres of road
- 334 bridge rehabilitation projects
- 252 safety improvement projects
- 56 minor improvement/safety schemes (specific grants)
- 343 community involvement schemes

In addition, ring-fenced funding was provided for drainage works and for maintenance and renewal works on regional roads (formerly classified as national roads) which had a relatively low condition rating.

Under the July 2020 Stimulus Plan, €30 million was allocated for Active Travel measures on regional and local roads and €10 million for climate change adaptation measures.

Some investment also continued on larger scale road improvement schemes. 12 strategic regional and local road improvement schemes were listed in the NDP for implementation and, following on from the completion of 3 schemes in 2019, the following was progressed in 2020:

- Construction of the Sligo Western Distributor Road was being completed
- The Sallins Bypass scheme was also well advanced
- Construction started on the Bettystown to Laytown Road upgrade
- The procurement process for the construction of a number of schemes, including the Coonagh to Knockalisheen Distributor Road and the Athy Southern Distributor Road, was progressed
- Advance works and land acquisition was also underway for other schemes

## Public Transport

An overview of progress on specific public transport projects in 2020.

### Progress on Public Transport Capital Plan Projects in 2020

<i>Dublin City Centre Resignalling</i>	Work continued in 2020 on a major upgrading of the Dublin City Centre rail signalling. The programme is a central element of the upgrading of rail services within the Greater Dublin Area. The project will provide for increased train frequencies by replacing outdated equipment with more modern technologies. The project will also facilitate an increase in the level of service along the Belfast and Maynooth Lines, and through the City Centre.
<i>DART+ (formerly DART Expansion)</i>	In August 2020 both the overall DART+ plan and the public consultation document for DART+ West (Maynooth line) were published. Work continued on the preparation of the Preliminary Business Case for submission to Government for approval in 2021 in line with the requirements of the Public Spending Code. The NTA, in collaboration with Iarnród Éireann, continued to progress the 10-year procurement framework for bi-mode (electric and battery-electric) units which will expand the fleet. Separately, NTA and Iarnród Éireann proceeded with the purchase of 41 additional carriages for the GDA commuter rail fleet. This project will increase capacity by approximately 34% across the Kildare, Maynooth and Northern Lines.
<i>Metro Link</i>	Work continued throughout 2020 on the development of the “Final Route” and a preliminary business case for MetroLink.
<i>BusConnects</i>	The BusConnects Dublin Network Redesign was published in September 2020, with roll-out beginning in 2021. The NTA completed a series of public consultations on the 16 core bus corridors (bus lanes) proposals in Q1 2020 and Q4 2020.
<i>National Train Control Centre</i>	Construction commenced in 2020 on the National Train Control Centre (NTCC). The NTCC will modernise and integrate signalling and communications control across the entire rail network. A significant customer benefit of the NTCC will be increased train performance and the availability of accurate real time travel information for trip planning. The NTCC is a key enabler of DART+ and will underpin both the planned and potential future expansion of rail services across the entire rail network.
<i>PSO Bus replacement programme</i>	Approximately 120 new buses for the PSO bus fleet were delivered in 2020, including 77 double deck hybrids. Around 8% of the new buses are additions to the fleet rather than steady state replacement
<i>Rail network maintenance</i>	<p>€197 million was provided to Iarnród Éireann for the maintenance and renewal of the heavy rail network nationwide under the Infrastructure Manager Multi-Annual Contract (IMMAC). This meant that the steady state funding requirement (as measured on an annualised basis) was met for 2019 which represents significant progress in terms of the overall funding of the heavy rail network. In 2020 additional funding of €21 million was also provided to Iarnród Éireann through the July Stimulus.</p> <p>The vast majority of this was used to assist with track relaying on the Dublin-Cork mainline with a smaller amount being used to accelerate station improvements across the network.</p>

### ***Leap card***

Although January and February showed continued growth in the use of the TFI Leap Card, from March onwards the decrease in public transport patronage due to COVID-19 was reflected in usage of the TFI Leap Card scheme as volumes and activity levels fell in all areas.

The number of TFI Leap Cards issued fell by 62% to 347,166 and the total value of top-ups processed almost halved to €136 million. Whilst the overall value of top-ups fell by 49%, the shift to mobile top-ups continued with a 5% increase in the share of total top-ups by value performed via the Top-Up App.

Ticket sales were the most affected by COVID-19, with total sales falling to just over €36 million, a drop of 66%. In August, the National Transport Authority (NTA) secured Government approval to extend the current TaxSaver annual tickets for a further six months in response to COVID-19. This facilitated many customers who were taking infrequent trips. In parallel, all subsidised operators continued to offer refunds to customers. Overall, the total value of TaxSaver ticket sales fell by 66% to just €29 million.

A further consequence of COVID-19 was that the Authority cancelled the annual *Kids Go Free* campaign, which had been offered every year since 2014.

### ***Light Rail***

The Green Line Capacity Enhancement Project progressed with the delivery, throughout the year, of tram extensions and the commencement of delivery of the 8 new additional trams. A public consultation on the Emerging Preferred Route for Luas Finglas was held and a design team was appointed to begin work on light rail proposals for Cork City.

### ***Next Generation Ticketing (NGT)***

The NTA is seeking to implement new and more flexible ticketing systems through its NGT project, which is a key element of the BusConnects Programme.

This project will incorporate the latest developments in account-based ticketing technology, potentially allowing use of credit/debit cards or mobile devices as a convenient means of payment. This will also allow integration with other transport payments such as parking facilities and bicycle hire.

In June 2020, a new mobile ticketing solution was piloted on a Bus Éireann service. This solution enables intending passengers to purchase a bus ticket on one route but represents a significant step forward in adding another sales channel to the market.

In September, the Authority commenced the public procurement process that will enable the Authority to award a contract to supply and operate a new ticketing solution nationally, enabling customers to use their smartphones, contactless debit and credit cards as well as bar codes to access public transport.

While the project is being implemented as part of the BusConnects Dublin programme, it will be scalable to allow for implementation across the wider public transport network in the future.

### ***Public Service Obligation services***

Most public transport services in the country are contracted by the NTA and are known as PSO services, including Local Link services in rural areas. These bus and rail services operate under contracts between the NTA and each operator. The defining feature of PSO transport services is that, although they are socially desirable to have, they are largely uneconomic to provide, because their costs exceed the revenues they can generate.

In Budget 2020, and prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, almost €289 million was provided for PSO services, including approximately €8 million for Local Link rural regular services which is in addition to €14.9 million already provided separately for Local Link under the Rural Transport Programme (RTP). This was a slight increase on the 2019 allocation.

Due to the impact of COVID-19, a further €370 million (in addition to the c. €300m already provided in Budget 2020) was allocated to enable the continued operation of public transport services during the pandemic in 2020.

### ***Commercial Bus Operator Supports***

Prior to the COVID-19 health emergency, services provided by private bus companies were operating on a commercial basis. However, due to the impact of COVID-19 on passenger numbers, and the associated drop in fare revenue, these services were no longer commercially viable.

In light of this, in June 2020, new temporary financial supports were initially introduced for a period of 6-months for certain licensed commercial services, with a view to protecting capacity across the public transport sector throughout the crisis. The NTA, on behalf of the department, entered into 16 direct award contracts with the largest providers of commercial bus operators in the country and 48 'de minimis' grant aid contracts with smaller operators in line with State Aid rules. The Exchequer provided €32.3m to the NTA for allocation to the operators that met the funding criteria.

### ***Passenger Numbers and Revenues***

COVID-19 had a devastating impact on public transport patronage from March 2020 onwards due to the necessity to impose restrictions on people's movements and on the number of passengers permitted on public transport vehicles in order to ensure the safety of passengers and prevent the spread of COVID-19. Overall, passenger numbers on contracted bus and rail services fell by 156.8 million (-53.3%), while revenues fell by €337.7 million (-51.2%) compared to 2019. Luas operating costs exceeded revenues for the first time in several years. An operating deficit of €0.65 million was incurred.

## Public Transport Accessibility

The department has responsibility for policy and overall funding in relation to public transport accessibility. The NTA has statutory responsibility for developing an integrated, accessible public transport network.

During 2020, the Department's Accessibility Consultative Committee (ACC) met on a quarterly basis. The ACC brings together Officials from the Department, from relevant agencies, representatives from organisations representing people with disabilities and members of the Disability Stakeholder Group (DSG). The DSG members are appointed under the Government's National Disability Inclusion Strategy. The minutes of these meetings, the ACC Work Programme and other related documentation are available online on [www.gov.ie](http://www.gov.ie).

Accessibility features, such as wheelchair access and audio/visual aids, are built into all new public transport infrastructure projects and vehicles from the design stage. Newer systems such as LUAS are fully accessible. However, there are legacy issues in relation to older infrastructure and facilities, for example Victorian era railway infrastructure. To address these legacy issues, the department funds an on-going programme of accessibility improvement grants, managed by the NTA, to upgrade existing older infrastructure and facilities.

Several initiatives were undertaken in 2020 towards progressively making public transport services and infrastructures fully accessible, in accordance with the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCPRD). These included:

- Irish Rail continued to rollout Customer Service Officers (CSOs) on inter-city routes which would eliminate the advance notice requirement for people with disabilities who require assistance on such services – 64 of the 115 required CSOs were in place by year end.
- Bus Éireann fleets, since 2015, have been fitted with multimedia screens which show route progress and stop information. A project is underway to roll out on-board audio and visual announcements for all 6,000 bus stops in rural and regional areas. Bus Éireann have next stop on board announcements at 51% of their stops presently. The company implemented other routes in the GDA and Cork in 2020.
- Whilst all DART trains are equipped with Passenger Information Systems (PIS), 47% of the fleet requires an upgrade of its PIS. The tender was awarded by Irish Rail in Q4 2020.
- A pilot wayfinding project was undertaken at Killester station with directional and wayfinding signage installed in ten rail stations in 2020.
- In 2019, the NTA took delivery of 52 of a new type of low floor bus for shorter regional commuter routes, which allows wheelchair users to board with normal ramp access and has a dedicated wheelchair space (seats do not need to be removed). Additional single deck regional commuter vehicles were purchased, with a dedicated wheelchair space (seats will not need to be removed) which allows wheelchair to board with normal ramp access. COVID-19 caused a delay to the delivery of the 2020 order of these vehicles. However, delivery of another 40 vehicles commenced during Q4 2020.

### **Accessibility Retro-Fit Programme**

The 4-year capital envelope for public transport announced under Budget 2018, included a multi-annual allocation of almost €28m for the accessibility retro-fit programme for the period 2018 to 2021. This funding is a trebling of the previous allocation for accessibility under the Capital Plan. €7 million was allocated to this programme in 2020 and progress included:

**Bus stops in rural areas:** In 2020, the NTA set a target to deliver accessible bus stops (one stop in each direction) in 43 towns that have populations of over 5,000, by end 2021. By end 2020, 23 stops were completed.

**Accessible bus bays at bus stations/train stations:** The NTA has been working with Bus Éireann and they have completed an upgrade of wheelchair accessible bays at Cavan, Monaghan, Sligo and Ballyshannon Bus Stations. Works are nearing completion for the provision of wheelchair accessible bus bays and external accessibility improvements at Rosslare, Killarney, Tralee and Waterford Stations. Designs have been agreed on the provision of wheelchair accessible bays and external accessibility improvements at Ballina, Athlone, Tramore and Wexford Bus Stations and tender documents are prepared. Design discussions were held in relation to seven stations - Busáras, Dundalk, Parnell Place (Cork), Macroom, Ennis, Clonmel and Longford.

- **Accessible Bus Stations:** The NTA asked Bus Éireann to carry out accessibility audits on 18 of their bus stations buildings. These have been listed and prioritised for future works.
- **Rail Accessibility Retrofit:** There were some delays due to COVID-19 restrictions, but construction continued on a new overbridge and lift at Ennis and Carlow stations. Accessibility works to Coolmine station were completed. Construction work started for the installation of a footbridge at Edgeworthstown Station. Detailed design work on improving the accessibility to 15 additional railway stations commenced in 2020.
- In 2020, €3.3m was ring fenced under a rail lift refurbishment/replacement programme established by the NTA under the Capital Programme. The intent of this programme is to renew and replace life-expired lifts and lifts in poor condition, to ensure that the reliability and availability of lift access. A major part of the programme is the complete lift renewal at 12 stations in the Dublin Suburban area. Works at Malahide, Donabate, Raheny, Rush, and Lusk are completed. Further information on these works – called “The Big Lift “- can be found on the Irish Rail website at <https://www.irishrail.ie/news/major-lift-investment-programme-at-iarnrod-eireann>
- **Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles (WAVs)/Taxis:** The (WAV) Grant Scheme first introduced in 2014 and operating annually since then, provides grants for the acquisition or conversion of suitable vehicles to operate as wheelchair accessible taxis and hackneys. It has helped to increase the number of WAVs in the fleet from a low of 4% in 2014 to over 16% currently.

***Rural Transport Programme/Local Link***

The NTA has national responsibility for integrated local and rural transport, including the management of the Rural Transport Programme (RTP). As with all other public transport services, passenger numbers on Local Link services in 2020 were affected by the COVID-19 pandemic with a total of 1.4 million journeys in 2020 on 1275 service routes compared with 2.5 million passenger journeys on 2,500 service routes in 2019, across a mixture of Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) and Rural Regular Services.

In 2020, the total amount allocated for Local Link services is €23.4m, comprising RTP funding of €14.9m and €8.5m PSO funding for Rural Regular Services. The additional funding since 2016 has enabled the introduction of 85 new Rural Regular Service routes, as well as improvements to DRT services and the piloting of evening/night-time services in certain rural areas which have now been mainstreamed. The new Rural Regular Services operate at least five times per day over a 5,6,7 days per week schedule. They are specifically designed to ensure connectivity with other public transport services and better linkage of services between and within towns and villages.

In addition to its initiatives to improve Local Link bus services, the NTA, through Local Link, has also designed two pilot initiatives to cultivate the provision of local hackney and community transport services in rural areas with grant funding being provided towards the costs of providing such services in certain rural areas – take up of both schemes has been very limited. The Pilot Local Area Hackney and Pilot Community Transport Service Schemes were due to run for twelve months to end December 2020 but were suspended for a time during 2020 due to COVID-19, with the Community Transport Services being operated as a ‘collect and deliver’ service for vulnerable members of the community who are unable to travel.

COVID-19 impacts on public transport services in rural areas included impacts and measures to assist people with disabilities. However, all Local Link Rural Regular services continued to run as normal. All Demand Responsive (DRT) daytime services also continued to run. However, many were redeployed for ‘collect and deliver’ services, delivering critical medical, food and other supplies from pharmacies and local shops to vulnerable members of the community who were unable to travel.

This also included six pilot community car schemes, that were approved for 2020 in Cork, Kerry, Offaly, Longford and Mayo. As a result of COVID-19 restrictions, most of these pilots, which utilise cars as opposed to buses, operated primarily as a ‘collect and delivery’ service i.e., delivering grocery shopping, prescriptions, other essential items etc. to people who could not travel.

## Road Transport Operator Licensing

The Department of Transport manages the licence process for road haulage operators and road passenger transport operators in Ireland. At the end of 2020, there were 3,787 haulage licence holders with a total of 20,182 authorised vehicles and 1,622 passenger licence holders with 11,589 authorised vehicles. During 2020, 810 Road Haulage Operator Licences and 281 Road Passenger Transport Operator Licences were issued.

In 2020, approximately 60% of licence applications and 80% of applications to amend existing licences were made through the department's online application service. The use of the online application service has steadily grown year on year, pointing to the sector's gradually increasing adoption of electronic application systems. Income from licence fees for 2020 totalled approximately €1m.

RTOL continued preparatory work for the EU's Mobility Package I, which was finalised in 2020. Among the developments to be introduced in this new EU legislation is the licensing of Light Commercial Vehicles engaged in international transport for hire or reward; this is a significant modification of the electronic licensing system. RTOL also worked closely with the Department's Brexit Unit on Brexit matters in the context of the expiry of the Brexit transition period on 31 December 2020.

On matters of broader road transport policy, the Logistics and Supply Chain Skills Group continued its work in 2020, meeting on a quarterly basis. The group, established in 2019, comprises key haulage and logistics sector industry representatives (including the main haulage representative organisations), education and training providers, and all the relevant Government Departments and Agencies. The Department of Transport currently chairs the group. Its primary aim is to work together to support the promotion of careers, skills development and sustainable employment in the logistics and supply chain sectors in Ireland, providing a forum for practical action and collaboration to address the skills needs of the industry.

## Road Safety Strategy

The Government's fourth Road Safety Strategy 2013 -2020 aims to make Ireland one of the safest countries in terms of road deaths in the EU. The number of road deaths was 148 in 2020, which was sadly an increase of 8 on deaths in 2019. The figures for 2020 were disappointing in light of the reduction of traffic. Lessons will be considered in the development of the next Road Safety Strategy

During 2020, in anticipation of the expiration of the Road Safety Strategy 2013-2020, the Department intensified its work with the Road Safety Authority on the development of a successor Road Safety Strategy. This will run for a longer period than usual – 2021-2030 – in order to align it with the EU's road safety strategy. In line with Government commitments, it will adopt a Vision Zero approach and will contain particular measures to protect vulnerable road users.



### **Legislation**

27 pieces of secondary legislation across a wide variety of road safety areas were introduced during 2020. The unusually high number reflects the need to bring in a wide range of emergency measures due to Covid.

### **Cost of Insurance Working Group**

The department participated in the Cost of Insurance Working Group (CIWG), established in 2016 under the Chairmanship of a Minister of State of the Department of Finance. This group was tasked with examining the reasons for the recent rises in the cost of motor insurance, and to make recommendations on how these costs might be reduced. The CIWG has made 23 recommendations, with 71 associated actions to be carried out within agreed timeframes.

The main outstanding recommendation under the remit of the Department of Transport is the establishment of a fully functioning insurance database to be maintained by the insurance industry.

Phase one of the insurance database project relating to privately owned motor vehicles is now completed. Work is underway on phases 2 – capture of driver numbers – and 3 – fleet policies. Completion of the database will depend on legislation now in preparation.

### **Fixed Charge Notices and Penalty Points**

The penalty points system for certain driving offences was introduced in Ireland on 31 October 2002. The offences selected for inclusion in the system all relate either directly or indirectly to road safety and the principal focus of the system is to influence and improve driver behaviour in Ireland and reduce the levels of death and serious injury on our roads.

Difficulties can sometimes be encountered with the allocation of penalty points offences dealt with in the Courts to the relevant driver records, in particular those who go to court to challenge their penalty points but do not bring their licence with them.

The Garda Inspectorate report 'The Fixed Charge Processing System (FCPS), a 21st Century Strategy' contains a recommendation that a system be introduced to ensure that all penalty points are endorsed on driving licences. Vehicles and drivers are currently accommodated on separate databases reflecting the historical way in which vehicle and driver services were delivered.

The Master Licence Record (MLR) system seeks to link vehicles with drivers on the National Vehicle and Driver File (NVDF) and is envisaged as a key element to deliver on a system to ensure all offences are successfully endorsed on driving licences. The MLR, however, will not cater for situations where the offender has no direct association with the vehicle.

## Rail Regulation

The EU adopted the Fourth Railway Package in 2016 which provided for national implementation dates ranging from December 2017 to October 2020. The measures consist of 3 Directives and 3 Regulations covering:

- The governance of rail infrastructure and operation
- Updating and streamlining of processes and systems for railway safety and interoperability
- Market opening for domestic passenger rail transport
- The introduction of mandatory competitive tendering for Public Service Obligations (PSO) passenger service contracts from 2019 for most rail services by Member States but permitting direct award PSO contracts in certain circumstances
- An expanded role for the European Railway Agency (renamed as the European Union Agency for Railways -EUAR).

The six proposals of the EU Railway Package fall into two groups – a Market Pillar and a Technical pillar.

The Market pillar introduces changes to governance of railway infrastructure management to support domestic passenger market opening and changes to the regulation on awarding public service contracts. Work on the preparation of draft national regulations continued in 2020 and transposition was finalised in September 2020.

The Technical pillar recasts and updates the earlier Railway Interoperability Directives and the Railway Safety Directives. A new EU Regulation expands the role of the EUAR as a ‘one stop shop’ for safety certification of railway undertakings. The objective is to improve the functioning of the Single European Railway area by removing remaining barriers and to reinforce harmonisation of interoperability and safety arrangements. The Technical Pillar was transposed under a number of national regulations in October 2020, which implemented the provisions regarding railway safety and interoperability on a national level, including providing for the statutory powers of the Railway Accident Investigation Unit (RAIU) to investigate railway accidents and incidents involving heavy rail for the purposes of the EU Railway Safety Directive.

The Railway Safety (Reporting and Investigation of Serious Accidents, Accidents and Incidents Involving Certain Railways) Act 2020 (No. 18 of 2020) was also enacted in October 2020 in order to provide for the continued reporting and investigation powers of the RAIU in respect of light rail and heritage railways. While such measures had been included in earlier EU legislation, these types of railway are outside the scope of the Fourth Railway Package, meaning that primary legislation was required to ensure that the RAIU continues to have the necessary statutory powers to investigate accidents on these railway systems.

Throughout 2020, the department, with its Permanent Representation officials in Brussels, continued engagement with the EU Commission and engaged with national stakeholders in

negotiations on EU proposals to recast the EU Regulation on Rail Passengers' Rights and Obligations.

## Railway Accident Investigation Unit

The purpose of the Railway Accident Investigation Unit (RAIU) is to independently investigate occurrences on Irish railways with a view to establishing their cause and make recommendations to prevent their reoccurrence or otherwise improve railway safety.

Forty-eight preliminary examinations were carried out in 2020. Seven investigations were commenced in 2020, these related to:

- Collision between an Iarnród Eireann passenger train and rail mounted maintenance equipment, Rosslare, Wexford - 11<sup>th</sup> January 2020
- Collision between a car and a train at Kilnageer level crossing XM240, Mayo - 29<sup>th</sup> April 2020
- Person entrapped in lowered CCTV level crossing, Ashfield, Co. Offaly - 24<sup>th</sup> May 2020
- Collision between a Bord na Mona flat wagon and Kilcolgan level crossing gate, Offaly - 8<sup>th</sup> June 2020
- Chassis plate fracture on General Motors Class 201 Locomotive 224 - 7<sup>th</sup> July 2020
- Overhead line detachment, Pearse Station - 1<sup>st</sup> October 2020
- Overhead line equipment failure, Stillorgan - 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020
- Trend investigation into signals passed at Stop on the LUAS network

The RAIU published four investigation reports in 2020, one investigation related to an occurrence that took place in 2019 and three related to occurrences that took place in 2020. The investigations were as follows:

- LUAS passenger trap-and-drag occurrence at Heuston Stop - 26<sup>th</sup> March 2019
- Near miss with a patrol ganger near Woodlawn, Galway - 4<sup>th</sup> June 2020
- Near miss with an Iarnród Eireann SET worker, Rush and Lusk Station - 20<sup>th</sup> June 2020
- Collision between an Iarnród Eireann passenger train and rail mounted maintenance equipment, Rosslare, Wexford - 11<sup>th</sup> January 2020

As a result of the four investigation reports, the RAIU issued eighteen new safety recommendations in 2020.

## Small Public Service Vehicle (SPSV) Regulation

Small public service vehicle (SPSV) is a legislative term which refers to taxis, hackneys, local area hackneys, and limousines. The SPSV sector is regulated by the National Transport Authority (NTA) under the provisions of the Taxi Regulation Act 2013. Under the Act, the NTA is the licensing authority for the SPSVs. An Garda Síochána is the licensing authority for drivers of SPSVs.

The SPSV sector was very badly affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. Passenger demand for services, particularly dependent on the tourism and hospitality sectors, was severely impacted throughout this period as public health restrictions necessarily discouraged people from travelling generally. For much of the 2020, passenger demand for SPSV services was estimated to be about 30% of pre-pandemic levels and as many as half of all drivers stopped working.

Throughout the year, the NTA took action to support the SPSV sector, with measures including licence extensions, the waiver of late renewal fees, and the facilitation of the suspension of SPSV insurance for those operators who decided to temporarily stop working and suspend their licence. The NTA also extended age limits for vehicles that were due to reach them from March until the end of 2020.

SPSV operators were generally able to avail of the horizontal economic supports the Government put in place due to the pandemic such as the PUP and the COVID-19 Enterprise Support Grant.

The department also advanced sector-specific measures in 2020 leading to an increase in supports for the sector in Budget 2021 including a waiver of standard vehicle licence renewal fees and an enhancement of the eSPSV Grant Scheme. The latter had its allocation increased from €1 million to €15 million. The department also worked closely with the Department of Health to develop regulations under the Health Act 1947 requiring passengers and drivers to wear face coverings in SPSVs.

### Bus and Coach Regulation

In 2020, the Minister signed two statutory instruments in the area of bus and coach regulation.

#### ***S.I. No. 635 of 2020 - European Union (Rights of Passengers when travelling by Bus and Coach Transport) (Amendment) Regulations 2020***

The purpose of these Regulations was to give effect to Regulation (EU) 2017/2394 of the European Parliament and of the Council, concerning cooperation between national authorities responsible for the enforcement of consumer protection laws and repealing Regulation (EC) No 2006/2004, in so far as it relates to Regulation (EU) No. 181/2011 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerning the rights of passengers in bus and coach transport. These Regulations provide the National Transport Authority (NTA) with the investigation and enforcement powers required under EU Regulation 2017/2394 in so far as it relates to bus and coach transport. This S.I. was signed by Minister and came into effect on 15 December 2020.

### ***S.I. No. 694 of 2020- European Union (Interbus Agreement) Regulations 2020***

These Regulations give effect to the Agreement on the international occasional carriage of passengers by coach and bus (Interbus Agreement). The Interbus Agreement is an agreement which provides for the international occasional carriage of passengers by coach and bus between EU Member States and third countries. The Interbus Agreement Regulations were made in the context of Brexit, and therefore were required to be made by the 31st of December 2020, prior to the end of the transition period to allow for the continuation of occasional bus services between Ireland and the UK. The Regulations implemented the Interbus Agreement in Ireland with effect from the 1 January 2021.

There was a significant amount of work carried out in 2020 relating to Brexit preparations including engagement on Part 13 of the Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union (Consequential Provisions) Act 2020, which provided for the continuation of cross-border bus services between Ireland and the UK in the event that no agreement was in place between the EU and the UK at the end of the transition period. Input on passenger road transport was also provided to the Trade and Co-operation Agreement.

## **Sustainable Mobility Policy**

Throughout 2020, work continued on a review of sustainable mobility (walking, cycling, and public transport) policy to succeed Smarter Travel: A Sustainable Transport Future 2009-2020 and National Cycle Policy Framework 2009-2020. This work commenced in 2018 when the former Minister hosted a Round Table Discussion on active travel and public transport policy in the Mansion House. This event allowed for an initial exchange of views between a broad range of organisations and individuals closely connected with the sustainable mobility sector. Following the discussions at that event, the Department commenced work on a comprehensive suite of background documents to inform a public consultation on Ireland's sustainable mobility policy.

A total of 253 submissions were received as part of the public consultation which was launched on 14<sup>th</sup> November 2019 and ran until 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020. The call for views was supported by the publication of the background papers prepared by the department. Each background paper included a number of questions to generate ideas about the extent to which the present approach to sustainable mobility is working well, the areas which are not and future priorities.

Submissions were received from a wide range of stakeholders from the public, private and non-profit sectors. Throughout 2020, the department analysed the submissions received and a public consultation report was published on the department's website. The department also held meetings with several stakeholders to get their views on sustainable mobility in Ireland and any items of concern they may have. Submissions received are feeding into the development of the new Sustainable Mobility Policy.

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## Active Travel

Funding for Active Travel (cycling and walking) related programmes increased substantially in 2020 with an increase of over 300% in funding compared with 2018. In total approximately €107 million was allocated to walking and cycling initiatives, smarter travel initiatives and transport elements of the Green Schools programme.

## Infrastructure

The department recognises that the provision of high-quality Active Travel infrastructure is key to growing the numbers of people who choose to walk or cycle as part of their daily journey.

The 2020 Active Travel programme delivery was impacted by the COVID-19 outbreak which resulted in significant changes to how people travelled. This brought increased focus on provision for cycling and walking.

Furthermore, as a result of the COVID-19 public health emergency, urgent measures were introduced to support businesses within our towns and cities to facilitate the safe resumption of business. As a result, two new Active Travel funds were established to assist local authorities:

- **July Stimulus Programme:** An allocation of €52 million was made available to local authorities in the Greater Dublin Area and the metropolitan areas of Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford for eligible projects to support pedestrian and cyclist movement and enhancing accessibility.
- **COVID-19 Mobility Measures:** The National Transport Authority (NTA) wrote to all Local Authorities in May 2020 offering technical and financial support in the development of COVID Mobility plans and importantly to also support the local authorities in their delivery of required infrastructure improvements. Improvements introduced under these plans played an important role in facilitating increased Active Travel, and social distancing in urban areas.

The vast majority of Active Travel infrastructure expenditure was delivered by local authorities in the five cities (Dublin, Cork, Limerick, Galway and Waterford) through funding provided by the NTA. In line with its statutory remit, the NTA also funded infrastructure in counties Meath, Kildare and Wicklow. The NTA's funding was provided by the Department of Transport through the Sustainable Transport Measures Grants (STMG) Programme.

Below are some of the key projects delivered through the STMG Programme in 2020:

- Royal Canal Greenway Phase 2
- Fitzwilliam Street Cycle Route (Interim Measures)
- Coastal Mobility Route
- Wellington Lane Protected Cycle Route
- Cork: Daly's ("Shakey") Bridge Refurbishment and Enhancement

- Horgan's Quay Cycle Lane
- Limerick: Shannon Bridge – COVID-19 Protected Cycle Lane
- Galway: Scoil Iognáid - School Street
- Barna Woods – Pathway
- Waterford: River Suir Trail Development, Waterford City

## Behavioural Change Programmes

In addition to the infrastructure programme, the department also supports a number of behavioural change/promotional programmes as detailed below.

### ***Bike Week***

Bike Week is a campaign which has been running since 2009 and is partially funded by the Department of Transport and run by Local Authorities and cycling groups in each county. The goal of Bike Week is to encourage cycling, especially among those who may not have cycled in a long time or those who have never cycled. With the impact of COVID-19 in 2020, there was a large decrease in participants (28,359 from 62,727 in 2019) but it also saw a move to virtual activity which going forward has the potential to take the campaign beyond the traditional means and reach a large cohort of people.

### ***Smarter Travel Workplace & Campus***

Smarter Travel Workplaces and Smarter Travel Campus continued to be supported in 2020. These are national voluntary behaviour change programmes, supporting employers and third level institutions to implement workplace travel plans. These plans focus on encouraging staff and students to walk, cycle, take public transport and carpool on the commute and beyond, and for organisations to consider flexible working arrangements. Campuses are also encouraged to promote smarter travel as part of the curriculum and through student projects. Behaviour change interventions such as the annual step challenges and cycle challenge promote active travel and support organisations in encouraging their staff and students to be more active on the commute and for leisure purposes.

The programmes have supported 225 workplaces which includes the public sector (and semi-state) organisations and 25 third level institutions to date. The NTA operates the Smarter Travel Workplaces and Smarter Travel Campus behavioural change programmes on behalf of the Department of Transport.

### ***CycleRight***

This is a national cycle training standard which aims to ensure a standardised level of cycle training around the country. Launched in January 2017, CycleRight helps increase the number of children and adults choosing cycling as a preferred mode of transport. CycleRight also provides training and registration under Cycling Ireland for cycling trainers, and is supported by the Department of Transport, Cycling Ireland, the RSA, Healthy Ireland, various central and local agencies and by interested groups. Over 15,000 pupils were trained in Cycle Right training

in 2017, increasing to 20,000 in 2018 and to 25,000 in 2019. There was a drop in the number trained to 12,970 in 2020 due to the COVID-19 outbreak.

### ***Green Schools***

This programme commenced in September 2008 following a 2-year pilot programme in the Greater Dublin Area (GDA) and is Ireland's leading environmental management and award programme, working with primary and secondary schools across the country. The Travel theme is funded by the Department of Transport and supported by the NTA. The ultimate aim of the theme is to increase the number of students walking, cycling, scooting, using public transport or carpooling on the way to school. In 2020, a total of 174 schools joined the Green Schools Travel Programme which was down from the 2019 figure of 229 as a result of the impact of COVID-19.

### ***Interreg***

The INTERREG VA Programme is one of a number of EU funding programmes that have been designed to address problems that arise from the existence of borders. The Programme is managed by the Special EU Programmes Body which has offices based in Belfast, Monaghan and Omagh. The eligible area for funding includes Northern Ireland, Donegal, Sligo, Leitrim, Cavan, Monaghan and Louth, and Western Scotland. Projects include the Derry Multi-modal Hub, NW Greenway, Carlingford Lough Greenway and the Ulster Canal Greenway in Monaghan and Armagh.



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## Aviation

**To maximise air transport connectivity with a safe, competitive, cost-effective, and sustainable aviation sector**

Our aviation strategy aims to promote safe, cost-effective, and competitive air services linking the country with key business and tourism markets. The policies and actions to achieve this goal are set out in our National Aviation Policy.

### National Aviation Policy for Ireland

The National Aviation Policy (NAP) was published in August 2015. This was followed by two progress reports published in 2016 and 2019. The principal goals of the policy are to enhance Ireland's connectivity, to foster the growth of aviation enterprise and to maximise the contribution of aviation to Ireland's sustainable economic growth and development.

These objectives remain valid but clearly much has changed since 2015 in terms of the overall challenges for the aviation sector in Ireland with a renewed focus on environmental performance and of course the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020.

Before the COVID-19 crisis, officials at the Department of Transport had commenced scoping work on a revised version of the full National Aviation Policy. This work was paused during 2020 to focus on the resilience of the aviation sector to survive the crisis. A full National Aviation Policy will be revisited in due course. A key part of the policy development process will be a comprehensive public consultation as well as close engagement with the industry through the structures of the National Civil Aviation Development Forum.

### Aviation COVID-19 Response

The aviation sector was one of the most affected by the COVID-19 pandemic, with all airlines seeing a severe depletion of revenue and facing various degrees of financial challenge.

Department of Transport officials maintained regular contact with key stakeholders throughout the crisis, and Government put in place a range of supports for businesses, including the aviation sector. These supports include the wage subsidy scheme, waiving of commercial rates, deferral of tax liabilities, the COVID Restrictions Support Scheme, the Credit Guarantee Scheme, and the SBCI Working Capital Scheme. Liquidity funding was also made available through the ISIF Pandemic Stabilisation and Recovery Fund for medium and large enterprises.

#### *EU Regulation*

Several amending regulations for European aviation were introduced throughout 2020 in response to the impact of COVID-19.

In Europe, traffic constrained airports are required to become classified as slot coordinated. This regulates the control of take-off, parking and landing slots in order to best orchestrate the movement of aircraft, with the goal of maximising the operations possible day-to-day.

An element of this process is a system of historical precedence, which guarantees air operators access to specific slots, particularly if they were operated in the previous scheduling period. EU regulation also places a legal obligation on air operators to utilise a minimum of 80% of their assigned slots at such airports, otherwise they risk the loss of all their historical precedence for the next scheduling period.

Due to the impact of COVID-19 and the associated collapse in aviation, many air operators were in a position that threatened their historical precedence because of the legal obligation to use slots. Recognising this problem, the European Commission proposed slot usage waivers which removed the obligation to use slots for the summer and winter seasons of 2020. This provision gave surety and security to air operators and facilitated the temporary shutdown of routes while also providing for the eventual recovery by the relevant air operator.

In addition to the slots usage waivers, further regulations were introduced which relaxed financial oversight rules and facilitated short term ground handling contracts. Most importantly was the European Commission's amendment to the emergency measures open to Member States which facilitated the restrictions on travel that were adopted by multiple Member States in response to the emergence of COVID-19.

### ***Flight Authorisations***

The department engages on a daily basis with third country air operators to authorise their commercial air transport operations. COVID-19 placed enormous pressure on this team as there was a significant increase in such operations throughout 2020. As 2020 progressed and scheduled air services shutdown, there was an increase in the use of non-scheduled flights, which included cargo flights carrying PPE and repatriation flights for those foreign nationals that had a limited window to return home.

### ***PPE for Ireland***

As the pandemic progressed, the pressure on our health services increased. One area that presented difficulties was shortages in the Personal Protection Equipment for our health staff. Because global aviation was effectively closed, and maritime transport was too slow to accommodate the immediate need, the Government contracted the services of Aer Lingus to transport PPE from China back to Ireland. Aer Lingus planned this major operation which required over 200 separate flights between Ireland and China.

While the Department of Transport was not involved in the PPE contract itself, contact had to be established with the aviation authorities of China to facilitate the operations themselves and Russia to facilitate overflights. Through diplomatic contact and working with Aer Lingus, the department was able to establish the required lines of communication with both countries which allowed the operation to begin. This brought the necessary PPE to our health services which allowed them to continue their fight against COVID-19.

## Aviation Safety

The aviation safety regulatory framework is constantly being updated to improve safety and efficiency. Throughout 2020, the department continued to contribute to the development of international aviation safety policy and legislation through active participation in European fora and committees, and in particular engaging with the European Union Aviation Safety Agency (EASA).

Through Statutory Instrument No. 195 of 2020, which came into force in May 2020, the Minister ensured that the “just culture” requirements of Regulation (EU) No 376/2014 are fully implemented. The European Regulation 376/2014 is aimed at encouraging the reporting of occurrences in civil aviation by ensuring just culture is embedded in organisations and there are appropriate protections for persons reporting or persons mentioned in occurrence reports. The reporting of information by front line professionals is crucial to identify aviation safety trends and risks, as a basis for ongoing safety improvements. The Minister designated the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) as the body responsible for oversight and implementation of ‘just culture’ functions in Ireland. Employees and contracted personnel may report to the just culture body in the IAA alleged infringements of the rules on protection of information sources as detailed in Article 16 of Regulation (EU) 376/2014.

In 2019, the Minister, in accordance with section 32 of the Irish Aviation Authority Act 1993, appointed consultants Helios/Egis Avia to carry out an examination of the performance by the IAA of its functions in so far as they relate to the application and enforcement of technical and safety standards in relation to aircraft and air navigation. The periodic examination is a safeguard to ensure that safety standards are upheld. The final report of the examination, which provided a snapshot of the state of play of IAA performance of its statutory functions at the time of the examination (Q2-Q3 2019), was published in May 2020. The report provides assurance regarding the performance of the IAA of its functions in respect of the areas examined.

The department continued to liaise closely with the Safety Regulation Division of the IAA on civil aviation safety matters. In line with the commitment under ICAO Annex 19 on Safety Management, the Department along with the IAA form the State Safety Programme Co-ordination Committee. The Committee serves as the State’s on-going State Safety Programme (SSP) platform to provide for coordination between state entities responsible for SSP activities in Ireland. The Committee met 4 times during 2020 to facilitate the ongoing work between the Department and the IAA on aviation safety policy and regulation to ensure Ireland’s high standing in aviation safety is maintained.

In 2020, the department continued consultation with other government departments and agencies with a view to the development of a national policy framework for unmanned aircraft systems (drones).

## Air Accident Investigation Unit (AAIU)

The AAIU is the body responsible for the investigation of aviation occurrences in Ireland and provides assistance to foreign states who conduct investigations into Irish registered/operated

aircraft abroad. The fundamental purpose of such investigations is to determine the circumstances and causes of these events, with a view to the preservation of life and the avoidance of similar occurrences in the future.

A total of 12,791 Mandatory Occurrence Reports (MORs) were received and assessed in 2020, of which 24 were of interest to the AAIU. With priority given towards the investigation and reporting of accidents and serious incidents, a total of 16 occurrences were the subject of an investigation in 2020. 7 of these occurrences were national and 9 were foreign investigations into Irish registered/operated aircraft abroad with assistance provided by the AAIU.

The following table shows a breakdown of the total national and international occurrences and fatalities recorded by the AAIU in 2020.

	Accidents	Serious Incidents	Incidents	Total
<b>National</b>	6	1	0	7
<b>International</b>	2	1	6	9
<b>Total</b>	8	2	6	16

The general reduction in MORs and the associated investigations was directly related to the fall-off in aviation travel which was brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic. However, this reduction in activity did allow the AAIU to work through its backlog of investigations and also update manuals and documentation.

There were no aviation fatalities in 2020. Three persons suffered serious injuries in two separate accidents, two in a general aviation accident in Galway and one in a commercial aircraft in Belgium. Two persons suffered minor injuries in two separate general aviation accidents at Kerry and Sligo.

With regard to the foreign occurrences, the AAIU provided assistance to these investigations through the appointment of 9 Accredited Representatives.

A total of 28 Reports, made up of 17 national and 11 international, where assistance was provided to the foreign state by the AAIU, were published on the Unit website [www.aaiu.ie](http://www.aaiu.ie). Five safety recommendations were issued to various aviation entities by the AAIU in 2020.

A Draft Final Report into the tragic loss of the Irish Coast Guard Helicopter R116 at Black Rock, Co. Mayo, Ireland was issued to interested parties on the 13 September 2019. Under the provisions of Section 15 (1) of S.I. 460 of 2009, one interested party sought a Re-Examination of specific Findings and Conclusions of the Draft Final Report. The Re-Examination was granted by the Minister and this Re-Examination was on-going during 2020.

### ***National Civil Aviation Security Programme and Committee***

The department continued to contribute to the development of international aviation security policy and legislation through active participation in fora and committees in the EU and the

European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC)), including the hosting an ECAC Workshop on policy development of aviation security for European states at Dublin Castle in February 2020.

The National Civil Aviation Security Programme sets out national and international aviation security requirements for civil aviation in the State. The Department conducted the annual review of the Programme in 2020 in consultation with the National Civil Aviation Security Committee (NCASC).

The NCASC, which is chaired by the department, coordinates the implementation of the National Programme for civil aviation security and advises Government on all matters pertaining to aviation security. The Committee comprises representatives of key Government Departments, An Garda Síochána, the Office of the Revenue Commissioners, the Defence Forces, the Irish Aviation Authority and the aviation industry sectors. The Committee met in plenary on two occasions in 2020, with a number of topic focused working group meetings held to progress the work of the Committee. In reaction to the commencement of Covid 19 public health restrictions in March 2020, the department also held weekly meetings with NCASC airline, airport and cargo members in regard to aviation security legislative changes and other measures in response to COVID-19.

## **National Air Transport Facilitation Committee**

The National Air Transport Facilitation Committee (NATFaC) provides a forum for issues to be aired by the aviation sector and to find ways of addressing them to improve the passenger experience, as well as ensuring compliance with Annex 9 of the Chicago Convention which is monitored by ICAO.

Due to the COVID-19 crisis, additional ad hoc FAL Committee meetings were held as well as the two standing meetings of the FAL Committee with all relevant airport authorities, airlines, Government Departments and agencies represented. The Committee produced the National Air Travel Protocols in June 2020 which were updated in October 2020. During the crisis, the Committee members maintained open and ongoing discussions with aviation stakeholders that were affected by COVID-19 public health measures.

## **European Civil Aviation Conference (ECAC) Facilitation Working Group**

The ECAC Facilitation Working Group is composed of members and observers from the civil aviation sector, including users, customs, immigration, cargo and public health specialists from the 44 ECAC Member States and works to improve passenger experience and facilitate trade and travel through airports. During COVID-19 restrictions, the Working Groups were unable to meet in person. However, a number of virtual meetings were convened and officials from the department represented Ireland at those meetings throughout the course of 2020.

## **National Civil Aviation Development Forum**

In line with the NAP, commitment to establish closer collaborative links with the industry, the National Civil Aviation Development Forum (NCADF) consisting of senior aviation stakeholders

continued its work in 2020. The Regulatory Framework Working Group (RFGW) met six times in 2020, continuing effective stakeholder debate across a range of regulatory and policy issues, including COVID-19 and Brexit.

## Brexit

Ireland is heavily dependent on aviation links with the UK for trade and tourism. Pre covid, some 44% of all flights to or from Ireland, approximately 113,000 flights per annum, were to or from the UK. The sector contributed more than €4 billion directly to Ireland's GDP. The tourism sector is critically reliant on aviation connectivity and spending by overseas visitors was approximately €5 billion. Visitors from the United Kingdom (UK) accounted for just over €1 billion of this spending.

The withdrawal of the UK from the European Union (Brexit) had the potential for substantial negative impacts on both the Irish aviation sector and the Irish economy.

During 2020, the department contributed to EU level negotiations with the UK via central structures and remained engaged with industry stakeholders on the evolving shape of a Brexit deal.

At the end of 2020, EU and UK negotiators reached a deal on a Trade and Co-operation (TCA) Agreement, which includes a chapter on Air Transport. This provided for continued connectivity by air between the European Union and the United Kingdom and allowed for practical cooperation in the areas of aviation safety, security and air navigation.

Market access is provided by way of so-called third and fourth freedom traffic rights which allow for point-to-point access between the two jurisdictions e.g., DUB-LHR and return for both EU and UK airlines. In addition, the Air Transport chapter of the TCA allows EU Member States to conclude 'bilateral arrangements' with the UK covering certain categories of air services, namely for fifth freedom traffic rights for all cargo services on extra EU routes and for authorisations in respect of non-scheduled services. This is being progressed by the department during 2021.

## North Runway Project

In line with the aim to enhance Ireland's connectivity and take strategic steps to ensure sufficient capacity for the increasing air traffic demand, work on the second parallel runway project at Dublin Airport continued in 2020. The work was interrupted for a period during 2020 due to COVID-19 restrictions. The runway is expected to be complete in 2022.

## U.S. Preclearance

An amended Preclearance Agreement entered into force on 6 September 2019. These amendments, which were the result of extensive negotiations over a number of years, allow for additional and enhanced preclearance services in Irish airports including the potential for additional staff numbers. US authorities will continue to fund a baseline level of service. The revised arrangements also reflect agreement reached on a number of other issues, including

merchandise compliance agreements, the designation of preclearance areas and new signage to be placed in preclearance areas.

Just prior to the pandemic additional Customs and Border Protection (CBP) officers had taken up post in Dublin.

The 8th US Ireland Preclearance Consultative Group (PCCG) Meeting was due to be hosted by the US in 2020, but given the crisis, arrangements were made for an online meeting. The Group provides a forum to review any issues related to the operation of US Preclearance in Ireland.

In addition to a number of key Irish stakeholders, the US delegation comprised officials from Custom and Border Protection and Transportation Security Administration from the USA Department of Homeland Security, and officials from the US Department of State and the US Embassy in Ireland.

## Aviation Statistics

In line with commitments outlined in the NAP, the department published quarterly aviation statistical information on its website throughout 2020 in relation to State and Regional Airports, including passenger numbers, cargo carried and airport commercial movements. With the onset of the pandemic, more statistics were gathered for central government and other departments, and additional statistics were published for a period of time.

## Airport Charges

The Commission for Aviation Regulation (CAR) published its Final Determination on the maximum level of airport charges at Dublin Airport for the period 2020 to 2024 on 24 October 2019. Two appeals were received by the Minister and An Appeal Panel was established on the 4 February 2020. The Appeal Panel largely found the grounds for appeal unsubstantiated but referred two items, one from each appeal, back to CAR for review. Under the legislation, the Appeal Panel can only confirm the original decision or refer it back to CAR. On referral, CAR then varied its determination. This reduced the price cap by €0.13 in 2022 and €0.07 in 2023. As the Determination had pre-dated the COVID-19 pandemic, the impact of the pandemic was not taken into account in the appeals process.

Therefore, in publishing their revised decision, CAR signalled the likelihood that at least one Interim Review would be required and the regulatory settlement for the later years of the period 2020-2024 would likely not apply in its current form.

Following a consultation period, CAR published a Draft Decision on the Interim Review in October 2020 with respect to the regulatory settlements for 2020 and 2021. CAR proposed to amend certain aspects of the regulatory settlements for 2020 and 2021 which were not fit-for-purpose in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. CAR did not propose to make any changes, at this time, to the regulatory building block allowances which make up the base price caps in the 2019 Determination.

Following a further period of consultation, CAR published its Decision on the Interim Review on the 22 December 2020. The Decision was broadly in line with the Draft Decision published

in October. In this review, CAR sought to address the immediate unintended consequences that the pandemic had created. The impact of COVID-19 clearly constituted substantial grounds to carry out such a review.

## Air Transport Agreements

A key component of the EU's external aviation policy is to develop a wider European Common Aviation Area by incorporating neighbouring countries. To this end, a number of air transport agreements have been negotiated between the EU and many neighbouring countries and regions in recent years.

During 2020, the EU Commission continued negotiations on a comprehensive EU air transport agreement with the Association of Southeast Asian Nations Member States (ASEAN). Ireland fully supported the efforts of the European Commission in this area. Throughout 2020, officials from the department engaged in these negotiations and in discussions with other third countries via the Aviation Special Committee and the Aviation Working Group of the European Council.

In addition to EU Agreements, the department continued to pursue measures to enhance Ireland's bilateral aviation relations with emerging markets, such as Egypt. In addition, work on the domestic procedures necessary for the completion of the bilateral agreements with Saudi Arabia and Oman was undertaken.

## Aviation Leasing

The National Aviation Policy (NAP) seeks to foster the growth of aviation enterprise as a key contributor to Ireland's economic growth and development.

Aviareto is the joint venture between the Irish Government and the Société Internationale de Télécommunications Aéronautiques (SITA) which has operated the International Registry of Aircraft Assets since its launch in 2006, contracted to and under the guidance of ICAO. The International Registry allows for the secure registration of financial interests in high value aircraft assets. Ireland, through its representation on the ICAO Council helped to secure an extension to the Aviareto contract to operate the International Registry until at least 2026. This is a strong endorsement of the company's exemplary record in operating the International Registry to date.

The department, as a shareholder, continued to support the development of Aviareto in its role as operator of the International Registry. The department also participated as an active member of the Commission of Experts of the Supervisory Authority (ICAO) of the International Registry, known as CESAIR.

## Regional Airports

The Regional Airports Programme (RAP) 2015 to 2019 was extended into 2020 to provide targeted Exchequer supports to regional airports; Donegal, Kerry and Ireland West Airport (Knock). These supports were provided through grant aid schemes and were limited to safety and security related capital investments and operational costs. The Programme also supported



a Public Obligation Scheme (PSO) on two air routes; Donegal/Dublin and Kerry/Dublin. The process to develop a successor to the incumbent RAP was finalised in 2020.

In 2020, grant aid to the regional airports of Donegal, Kerry, and Ireland West amounted to approximately €5.7m, consisting of €3.4m in operational supports and €2.3m in capital grant assistance. A further €7.3m was provided to meet the costs of the PSOs.

In November 2020, a funding package for Irish aviation was announced by Government. This consisted of €80m in supports for Irish airports to be disbursed through a number of programmes and schemes including the Regional Airports Programme, the Covid19 Regional State Airports Programme and the Covid-19 Supplementary Support Scheme.

## Travel Trade

In order to assist the liquidity position of Irish licenced travel agents and tour operators during the COVID-19 pandemic, a Refund Credit Note Scheme was introduced by the department in consultation with Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment in June 2020. The Scheme is in line with the EU Commission recommendations of May 2020 regarding assisting tour operators' liquidity positions by ensuring that refund vouchers or similar had protection against insolvency. Under the Scheme, a customer can agree to accept a credit note rather than a cash refund, and that credit note is guaranteed by the State should the issuer (an Irish licenced travel agent or tour operator) go out of business before it can be redeemed. The credit note is valid for up to two years, once accepted, it can be redeemed for cash after 9 months and upon the expiry date, and at any stage it can be used against a new booking. The value of credit notes issued under the Scheme peaked at €19m during 2020.

## Restructuring of Aviation Regulation

Under the National Aviation Policy, the department committed to restructuring Ireland's aviation regulation regime to reflect best practice and developments at EU level. Government subsequently approved the Department's proposal to implement this by merging the Safety Regulation Division (SRD) of the Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) with the Commission for Aviation Regulation (CAR) to form a single, standalone regulatory authority. The residual commercial functions of the IAA, primarily Air Navigation Services, are to be retained as a regulated, State-owned enterprise. Progress on this project continued in 2020, with the recruitment of Mr. Diarmuid Ó' Conghaile to the role of Aviation Regulator (Chief Executive Designate of the IAA).

The aviation regulatory reform programme is supported by the Air Navigation and Transport Bill. The detailed drafting of the Bill continued in 2020. The text of the Bill received Government approval and it was published in December.

## Taskforce for Aviation Recovery

In June 2020, the Government announced the formation of a Taskforce for Aviation Recovery, in the context of the unprecedented challenges facing the aviation industry due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Membership was drawn from sectoral stakeholders, including the two main Irish airlines, the airports, the aviation regulator, aircraft leasing, maintenance, repair and operations

(MRO) companies and academia. The Taskforce was charged with advising on a framework for promoting the return of aviation connectivity and aviation enterprises to support the wider economic recovery, and it delivered this through a number of recommendations in its report published on 10 July 2020.

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## Maritime

### To facilitate safe and sustainable maritime transport and the delivery of emergency management services

Given Ireland's status as a small open economy, the maritime sector is a critical gateway for the movement of goods between Ireland and its trading partners. Out of Ireland's total trade volumes, over 90% is transported by sea. The sector also plays a significant role in the movement of people to and from Ireland, with almost 3 million people travelling by sea in a normal year, and is, therefore, key to the development of the tourism sector. Our role in respect of maritime transport encompasses not only the facilitation of the development of maritime transport but also the implementation and assurance of safety, technical, labour and enforcement standards and procedures that provide assurance for all who are reliant on the sea.

Ensuring that Ireland's ports, shipping operations and all the elements of the maritime supply chain could continue to function throughout COVID-19 was a priority for the department in 2020. A number of steps were taken over the year to ensure that maritime services could continue uninterrupted in order to keep the supply chain moving with the delivery of essential goods and services.

### COVID-19 Response

The COVID-19 pandemic resulted in a near total collapse of ferry passenger traffic and a precipitous fall in freight activity. In the early months of the pandemic, passenger movements dropped by over 95% and freight volumes by approximately 40%. This placed the commercial viability of combined passenger and freight ferries, known as ROPAX, on the Continental and Southern shipping corridors in doubt. Operators at that time raised concerns about their ability to maintain the current level of service on these routes.

A temporary Covid PSO arrangement was introduced to address potential market failure on certain key ROPAX routes for 3 months, ensuring shipping services remained operating. Ports in addition to shipping services continued to remain operational throughout 2020 despite the impact of COVID 19. Both ensured the continued transportation of lifeline supplies, goods and essential personnel in and out of the country and the repatriation of citizens.

Other measures include:

- establishment of a forum for regular engagement with port and shipping stakeholders and continuous monitoring of the situation - with the assistance of the Irish Maritime Development Office (IMDO) - to resolve issues arising where possible, get stakeholder views on proposals and keep them up to date on developments
- a general extension to ensure seafarers' documentation and vessel certification remained valid throughout the crisis;
- facilitation of crew changes at Irish Ports;
- publication of Guidance for Supply chain workers, in collaboration with the Department of Health, recognising port and maritime staff as essential workers and not subject to COVID-19 travel restrictions
- establishment of a National Logistics Forum which was chaired by the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport to allow for discussion around the provision of commercial/technical solutions to issues affecting the wider logistics and transport sector in the early part of the pandemic
- contributions at EU level with regard to flexibility on passenger rights legislation, proposed changes to the ports regulation, and implementation of the 'green lanes' initiative to ensure unrestricted movement for essential supply chain workers
- development and publication of an agreed maritime travel protocol, in consultation with the public health authorities and with industry, for the safe management of passengers in light of COVID-19, The protocol set out the expectations and requirements on industry to ensure public health safety of passengers, staff and crew
- publication of a COVID-19 Frequently Asked Questions document relating to Maritime.

## National Ports Policy

In accordance with National Ports Policy and the provisions of the Harbours Act 2015, work continued on progressing the transfer of the five Ports of Regional Significance to local authority control with the successful transfer of Galway Harbour Company to Galway City Council on 1st January 2021. This follows the transfer of the other four ports to the relevant local authorities in 2016 (Wicklow Port Company), 2017 (Drogheda Port Company), 2018 (Dun Laoghaire Harbour Company) and 2019 (New Ross Port Company).

Despite the impacts of COVID 19, Irish ports handled 51.4 million tonnes of goods in 2020. In line with the aim to enhance Ireland's connectivity and to ensure sufficient overall national port capacity, the three Tier 1 Ports of National Significance continued with major infrastructure development in 2020, with the Alexander Basin Redevelopment Project at Dublin Port, the Ringaskiddy Redevelopment Project at the Port of Cork and Capacity extension works in Shannon Foynes. In addition, in July 2020, An Bord Pleanála granted Dublin Port a 15-year planning permission for the MP2 Project, the second of the three strategic infrastructure development projects required to deliver their Masterplan 2040. Works envisaged under the

MP2 Project are currently being planned and construction on the first elements is expected to commence in 2022. The third and final Masterplan Project – the 3FM Project – primarily involves the development of port lands on the Poolbeg Peninsula and the company has started the first stage of stakeholder and public consultation. These investments will allow the ports to increase capacity and throughput, facilitate larger vessels and to optimise maritime connectivity.

Work on the Ports Capacity Study, commissioned by the Irish Maritime Development Office, continued in 2020 but was delayed due to the impact of COVID-19. The Study will take account of Brexit and future capacity requirements of the ports to facilitate long-term planning for port infrastructure.

## Irish Flagged Vessels

The internationally trading Irish merchant shipping fleet increased during the year with 43 vessels (greater than 500 gross tonnage) on the Irish flag at the end of 2020. Ireland maintained its position on the “white list” of the Paris Memorandum of Understanding on Port State Control. The Irish flag also maintained its “low risk” status.

## Review of the Maritime Sector

An extensive review of the role of the Department’s Maritime sector began in January 2020 culminating in the publication of the Irish Maritime Directorate Strategy a little over a year later. This review was timely given the need to consider the department’s approach to the International Maritime Organization’s International Instruments Implementation (III) Code and the associated audit. The vital importance of the maritime sector to Ireland in terms of trade and connectivity, and in relation to fishing and recreational activities, is widely acknowledged, and the COVID-19 pandemic only served to reinforce that position. The pandemic also made clear the value of reviewing maritime strategy in order to ensure appropriate structures were in place to enable the sector to operate as safely and effectively as possible in order to deliver for the public and the wider maritime sector.

The Strategy evolved as the review progressed to take account of the wide range of functions carried out in the sector and to take a more holistic integrated approach to maritime transport and maritime safety. With the formation of a new Government there has also been an emphasis placed on new environmental technologies as well as digitalisation, which is a growing theme in the sector.

## Maritime Safety Legislation

In 2020, 19 statutory instruments were made in the maritime area. The vast majority of these statutory instruments (13) were made to meet various requirements under EU law.

The statutory instruments made related to matters including the organisation of working time, marine equipment, navigation and tracking, a safety regime for passenger ships of less than 24 metres in length when engaged on domestic voyages:

- S.I. 41 of 2020 – Harbours Act 1996 (Section 23) (Dublin Port Company) Order 2020 relating to the level of borrowing permitted by Dublin Port Company.
- S.I. No. 88 of 2020 – Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention) (Shipowners' Liabilities and Repatriation) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 which provide for updates to the Maritime Labour Convention and gives effect to EU Directive 2018/131 regarding insurance requirements to cover financial liabilities for seafarer abandonment as well as cover in the event of death or long-term disability arising from occupational injury or illness.
- S.I. No 236 of 2020 – European Union (Rights of Passengers when Travelling by Sea and Inland Waterway) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 to give effect to EU Regulation 2017/2394 on cooperation between national authorities responsible for consumer protection law.
- S.I. No. 441 of 2020 - European Union (Workers on Board Seagoing Fishing Vessels) (Organisation of Working Time) (No. 2) Regulations 2020 set out the maximum hours of work and minimum hours of rest for workers under contract on board seagoing fishing vessels, along with enforcement powers for authorised officers and requirements to notify the relevant flag state of any breaches to the Regulations.
- S.I. No. 444 of 2020 – European Communities (Merchant Shipping) (Investigation of Accidents) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. These regulations gave further effect to Directive 2009/18/EC of 23 April 2009 in response to a Court of Justice of the European Union Judgment on 9 July 2020 concerning the independence of the Marine Casualty Investigation Board.
- S.I. No. 527 of 2020 - European Union (Marine Equipment) (Amendment) Regulations 2020. These regulations update the list of marine equipment, and the related design, construction, performance requirements and testing standards, which come within the scope of the Marine Equipment Directive.
- S.I. No. 585 of 2020 - European Union (Workers on Board Seagoing Fishing Vessels) (Organisation of Working Time) (Share Fishermen) Regulations 2020 set out the maximum hours of work and minimum hours of rest for sharefishers working on board seagoing fishing vessels, along with enforcement powers for authorised officers and offences and penalties for non-compliance.

- S.I. No. 589 of 2020 - Merchant Shipping (Navigation and Tracking) (Heading Systems and Testing of Steering Gear) Rules 2020 implement Regulations 24, 25 and 26 of the International Convention for the Safety of Life at Sea relating to the use of heading and track control systems and the operation and testing of steering gear.
- S.I. No. 640 of 2020 - Merchant Shipping (Passenger Ships) Rules 2020 include safety standards and requirements in relation to ship construction, fire protection, life-saving appliances and radiocommunications for passenger ships of less than 24 metres in length, constructed of steel or aluminium on or after 1 July 1998, and engaged on domestic voyages.
- S.I. No. 686 of 2020 - Merchant Shipping (Pilot Transfer Arrangement) Rules 2020 to ensure that pilot transfer arrangements are put in place and that pilot ladders and arrangements, use and maintenance conform to IMO standards.
- S.I. No. 661/2020 - Harbours Act 2015 (Galway Harbour Company Transfer Day) Order 2020 relating to the transfer of the shareholding of Galway Harbour Company to Galway City Council.
- S.I. No. 669/2020 - Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union (Consequential Provisions) Act 2020 (Part 12) (Commencement) Order 2020 setting out the date on which Part 12 of that Act comes into operation which was 23 December 2020.

## Living and Working Conditions in the Fishing Sector

On 31 January 2017, Council Directive (EU) 2017/159 was published in the Official Journal of the European Union. This Directive contains a social partnership agreement, concluded on 21 May 2012, which aims to implement the Work in Fishing Convention setting out decent working and living conditions for fishers. In 2020, the following S.I.s were published as part of a package of regulations required to transpose the Directive:

- S.I. 179/2020 European Union (International Labour Organisation Work in Fishing Convention) (Minimum Age) Regulations 2020, which prescribes the minimum age for work on board a fishing vessel, including hours and type of work applicable to young persons during summer holidays and provisions around night work.
- S.I. 258/2020 European Communities (Minimum Safety and Health Requirements for Improved Medical Treatment on board Vessels) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 and S.I. 259/2020 European Union (International Labour Organisation Work in Fishing Convention) (Health Protection and Medical Care on Board Fishing Vessels) Regulations 2020, which implements the medical care on board vessels provisions of the Directive. In particular, the Regulations require that consideration must be given to the length of voyage and area of operation when making provision for medical supplies and equipment and that a separate sick bay is provided where appropriate.
- S.I. 266/2020 European Union (International Labour Organisation Work in Fishing Convention) (Medical Examination) Regulations 2020 which implements the provisions

requiring fishers to have a medical examination and deemed fit for their role in advance of commencing work aboard a fishing vessel including hearing and eye-sight testing, and colour vision screening.

- S.I. 267/2020 European Union (International Labour Organisation Work in Fishing Convention) (Food and Accommodation) Regulations 2020, which place an onus on the master to ensure that the food and water carried and served on board fishing vessels is suitable and sufficient in terms of quality and quantity and that the standard of accommodation on both new and existing fishing vessels, as well as fishing vessels which have been substantially altered or reconstructed on or after 16 November 2017, meet the requirements of these Regulations.
- S.I. 332/2020 European Union (International Labour Organisation Work in Fishing Convention) (Fishing Vessel Owner Liability and Repatriation) Regulations 2020 require the fishing vessel owner to ensure that a fisher receives appropriate medical attention and is taken ashore in a timely manner in order to receive appropriate treatment. In addition, the vessel owner is required to provide medical care and health protection when landed in a port outside the State and cover the costs of such care and any other material assistance. They also place an onus on the vessel owner to make provision for the repatriation of a fisherman from a port outside the State. The costs of repatriation are to be borne by the vessel owner.
- S.I. 333/2020 European Union (International Labour Organisation Work in Fishing Convention) (Crew List and Fisherman's Work Agreement) Regulations 2020 which set out the minimum requirements of the information to be included in the crew list and that a copy of the crew list must be carried on board and be available for inspection by an Authorised Officer of the Marine Survey Office. There is a further requirement for the crew list to be communicated ashore, either prior to departure or immediately after departure, to an appropriate person for the purposes of search and rescue. There is also a requirement placed on the owner to ensure that every fisherman employed aboard the fishing vessel is provided with a Fisherman's Work Agreement, which is a contract to ensure decent working and living conditions aboard.



## Codes of Practice

Fishing Vessels of less than 15 metres constitute the vast majority (c. 90%) of the Irish fishing fleet. In 2020, work was initiated on a review of the **Code of Practice for Fishing Vessels less than 15m in length overall**, with the aim of updating the standards of safety and protection for all persons on board small fishing vessels, which go to sea to fish for profit.

The current Code of Practice was published in January 2014. This latest revision aims to ensure all relevant recommendations of the Marine Casualty Investigate Board, the Working Group on the Irish Fishing Industry and the Maritime Safety Strategy are incorporated into the Code of Practice.

Once finalised a copy of the revised Code of Practice will be made available on the Department's website and a Marine Notice will issue, informing stakeholders of the same

A new edition of the **Code of Practice for the Safe Operation of Recreational Craft** has been available since November 2017. Distribution of the Code of Practice to interested individuals and organisations continued throughout 2020.

The Code is a valuable source of information, advice and best practice operational guidance for owners, operators and users of pleasure and recreational craft operating in Irish coastal and inland waters including sail and motorboats, sailing dinghies, personal watercraft (e.g., jet skis), power boats, canoes, kayaks, rowing boats, charter boats, windsurfers, stand-up paddle boards and other non-powered craft.

## The Consolidation of the Merchant Shipping Act 1894

The Merchant Shipping Act 1894 is a key piece of legislation under which the Maritime Safety Policy Division and the Marine Survey Office makes and enforces safety legislation. Since its publication, the Merchant Shipping Act 1894 has been amended numerous times. In 2020, in collaboration with the Law Reform Commission, a project was initiated which aimed to bring together in a single text all amendments and changes to the Act and to produce a consolidated version of the Merchant Shipping Act 1894.

## Marine Notices

In 2020, a total of 61 marine notices were published on the Gov.ie website. These notices are published by the department to draw attention to important safety, regulatory and other relevant information relating to maritime affairs in Ireland. In addition to publishing marine notices on the Gov.ie website, the department also circulates these notices directly to over 700 recipients, including fishers, harbour masters, ferry companies and interested members of the public.

## Maritime Greenhouse Gas Emission Reductions

The Department of Transport has been, and continues to be, active in promoting ambitious targets for maritime greenhouse gas emission reductions within the IMO's Marine Environment

Protection Committee (MEPC), and in co-operation with our EU partners. In 2018, the IMO adopted an initial strategy on the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions from ships. The development of measures in order to meet the ambition of that strategy continued throughout 2020.

## Paris MoU State Control Inspections

The main objective of the Paris MoU (Memorandum of Understanding) is to eliminate the operation of sub-standard ships through a harmonized system of port State control inspections carried out on board foreign ships in the Paris MoU ports. The basic principle is that the prime responsibility for compliance with the requirements laid down in the international maritime conventions lies with the shipowner/operator and that responsibility for ensuring such compliance remains with the flag State. Port state control inspections provide an additional enforcement regime to ensure that the ships meet international safety, security and environmental standards, and that crew members have adequate living and working conditions.

222 foreign flagged ships were inspected by the MSO in 2020 under the Paris MOU Fair Share arrangement, less than the set target of 281. This was due to the restrictions in place on foot of COVID-19 and was necessary to protect the health and safety of Port State Control officers, PSCOs, as well as ensuring that the seafarers were protected from unintended transfer of COVID-19. The inspection results for 2019 and 2020 are as follows:

Year	2019	2020
Total number of port state control inspections	276	222
Total number of deficiencies identified during inspections	439	466
Average of deficiencies/inspection	1.6	2.1
% of total deficiencies arising on ships < 5 years old	1%	2%
% of total deficiencies arising on ships >=5 - 13 years old	14%	24%
% of total deficiencies arising on ships >=13 years old	85%	74%
Number of vessels detained	12	16
Vessel detention rate	4.3%	7.2%
Average age (years) of detained vessels	22.5	20.25

## Ship Survey Applications

The total number of ship-related statutory surveys and inspections carried out by the Marine Survey Office in relation to compliance with the Merchant Shipping Acts, Sea Pollution Acts

and legislation derived from the European Union etc. for 2020 was 458. The surveys are driven by the number of customer applications. COVID-19 reduced inspections in 2020. Most vessels are on survey cycles ranging from 1 – 5 years, consequently annual variations can be expected in the statistics. Maritime Education and Training Scheme

The Irish Maritime Education and Training Scheme (MET) is certified by the Department in accordance with the International Maritime Organization (IMO) and EU requirements for seafarers' training and certification.

Ireland continued its implementation of the 2010 Manila amendments, the International Convention on Standards of Training Certification and Watchkeeping for Seafarers (STCW), and Ireland maintained its position on the "white list" of the IMO for States giving full and complete effect to the STCW Convention. This means that Irish Certificates meet the highest standards internationally and are recognised as such throughout the EU, the EEA and globally, by means of bi-lateral agreements with the main flag states.

In 2020, developments were made to the Seafarers' Information System and its accompanying website, [www.seafarers.ie](http://www.seafarers.ie) to allow greater access for both service providers and seafarers. A total of 1,273 certificates were issued by the Mercantile Marine Office in 2020, a reduction of roughly 300 on the identified target.

## Maritime Security

Throughout 2020, the implementation of maritime security measures including oversight for ships, port facilities and ports continued to ensure compliance with the EU Regulation 725/2004/EC and Directive 2005/65/EC on port security. There were 39 port facility inspections completed in 2020; these were associated with the programme for the renewal of security approvals, which commenced in 2019.

## Search and Rescue (SAR)

In 2020, the Irish Coast Guard, using a combination of own and declared resources, coordinated the response to 2,670 incidents compared to 2,500 in 2019. Owing to the onset of COVID - 19, there was a notable decrease in activity during March and conversely the number of incidents coordinated in August reflected a five year high.

In responding to the 2,670 incidents, primary SAR resources were tasked as follows – Coast Guard helicopters were tasked on 810 occasions, the Royal National Lifeboat Institution (RNLI) on 802 occasions and Volunteer Coast Guard units were tasked on 1415 occasions (Note: in a number of incidents more than one resource was tasked).

### **Lives Saved**

The Coast Guard attaches particular attention to what is categorised as Lives Saved i.e., assistance provided that, prevented loss of life, severe risk to life, or protracted hospitalisation. In 2020, the Coast Guard recorded those 401 individuals were categorised as Lives Saved.

During 2020, the Coast Guard noted an increase in two activities that gave rise to safety concerns; increases in the number of incidents involving persons using inflatable devices (Lilos

/Dinghies etc.) on beaches and inland waterways during summer months, and increased participation in open water swimming in autumn and winter. The Coast Guard acknowledges that safety messages regarding open water swimming have been well heeded with most participants adhering with basic safety precautions. Public safety messaging was promoted via the revamped website and other social media platforms in conjunction with stakeholders from the Marine Safety Communications Sub-Group (Coast Guard, Water Safety Ireland, RNLI, Bord Iascaigh Mhara, Commissioners of Irish Lights, Met Eireann and Irish Sailing)

Coast Guard Helicopter services, provided under contract by CHC Ireland, operate day and night services out of bases at Sligo, Shannon, Dublin and Waterford. In 2020, CHC flew a total of 810 missions. In addition to Search and Rescue services these missions include 24/7 emergency medical support to the island communities). The Coast Guard also provides Helicopter Emergency Medical Service (HEMS) support (68 in 2020) and inter hospital transfers services to the HSE including emergency paediatric transfers to the UK.

### ***Island Communities***

Coast Guard helicopters provide a day and night aeromedical service to the island communities and a total of 107 island medevacs were conducted in 2020.

### ***Coast Guard Volunteer Units - Modernisation***

The process for the construction of Coast Guard buildings in Greystones, Westport, Kilmore Quay and Castlefreke have commenced and a building and maintenance programme with the OPW is on-going.

The development of a drone capability within Irish Coast Guard units for aerial search continues and the rollout of the drone service amongst the volunteer units which commenced in 2019 now extends to eight units.

Significant investments were made in the Coast Guard to implement a safety management system to achieve ISO 45001 and considerable progress was made during 2020. The contract for the Volunteer Information Management System (Irish Coast Guard E-systems ICE), to support the work of Coast Guard volunteers, was awarded in March 2019 and the rollout of the new system to Coast Guard volunteers continued during 2020.

### ***National Search and Rescue Review***

In 2019, the then Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport published a major Review of Search and Rescue (SAR) in Ireland which included a new National SAR Plan (NSP) aimed at placing Ireland at the forefront of international best practice

The plan replaced the National Maritime Search and Rescue Framework dating from 2010. The NSP provides a baseline guide for all Search and Rescue (SAR) organisations in Ireland. It underpins agreed methods of coordinating and conducting all Search and Rescue activities in Ireland and provides for a robust governance and oversight regime for Search and Rescue into the future.

A key conclusion of the Search and Rescue review, which underpins the new National Search and Rescue Plan (NSP), is that roles, responsibilities and inter-dependencies within the overall Search and Rescue system need to be clear, explicit, and understood by all those concerned. A new Governance and Oversight chapter in the plan sets out these roles very clearly, from strategic, tactical through to operational levels. It also recommends that Search and Rescue stakeholders meet at least annually to review the plan.

The NSP delivers on a new mechanism of assurance in relation to standards and practices and oversight of the overall Search and Rescue system. This includes the creation of a support network to assist those involved in search and rescue to develop minimum standards and practices and to embed principles of continuous improvement and safety within their organisations. It also creates a new Search and Rescue Regulators' Forum, a unique initiative which brings transport regulators in the Search and Rescue domain together to exchange good practice and seek to improve the overall system assurance mechanisms.

A new chair of the National Search and Rescue Committee was appointed during 2020. This group monitors the performance and adequacy of the Search and Rescue system and advises on any necessary improvements. Its members include senior representatives from the Department of Transport, Coast Guard (IRCG), Irish Aviation Authority (IAA) and An Garda Síochána (AGS), their parent departments and other strategic partners in both the State (Departments of Defence, Health and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage) and the voluntary Search and Rescue sector (RNLI). This work is supported by a SAR Consultative committee which enables a wider engagement with the SAR community. It is chaired by the Director of the IRCG.

### ***National Maritime Oil & HNS Spill Contingency Plan***

The National Maritime Oil & HNS Spill Contingency Plan (NCP) was published in June 2020 by the Department of Transport after extensive consultation with stakeholders. The principal objective of the NCP is to develop an effective national preparedness and response regime in line with the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Cooperation, 1990 (OPRC Convention) and its Protocol on Preparedness, Response and Cooperation to Pollution Incidents by Hazardous and Noxious Substances, 2000 (OPRC-HNS Protocol). The NCP provides a stepwise approach for the planning, preparedness, and implementation process at national and regional levels in response to spills in the maritime domain. The delivery of a proactive annual national exercise regime is a core support to achieving this objective. Following the publication of the NCP in 2020, the Coast Guard developed plans for an exercise programme, as well as establishment of national coordination and consultation committees.

### ***Procurement process for the new Coast Guard SAR Aviation Service***

The procurement process for the new Coast Guard SAR Aviation Service is progressing well. A Steering Committee has been set up to include all relevant stakeholders to oversee the development of the parameters for the provision and procurement of the next SAR Aviation Service.

A Prior Information Notice was published on eTenders in May 2020 to alert the market to the upcoming procurement. A live Webinar was conducted in early September and bilateral meetings were conducted throughout that month with parties who had submitted Expressions of Interest via eTenders. Bilaterals were also held with stakeholders/beneficiaries of the SAR service.

As a first step in the Public Spending Code process, a Strategic Assessment and Preliminary Appraisal was prepared by the Department's Strategic Research and Analysis Division in close consultation with the Steering Committee and in line with "Gate 0" of the Public Spending Code. Having been agreed by the aforementioned Steering Committee, this went to Government for information in July 2020. Before approval can be given to proceed with procurement, a detailed Business Case is required under the Code. In November 2020, KPMG were contracted to prepare the associated Business Case to include a Cost Effectiveness Analysis of the various options that could provide the required Coast Guard service.

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## Tourism and Sport

During 2020, sport and tourism responsibilities transferred to the new Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media. Progress made in these areas is reflected in their [Annual Report for 2020](#).

Cooperation between the transport, tourism and sport functions continued across many policy issues in the latter half of 2020. For example, a high level of demand for aviation services is derived from inbound tourism. During 2020, as Covid impacted on both of these sectors in a significant way, this department and the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sports and Media continued to cooperate on issues of shared interest and concern arising from the pandemic and in planning for recovery post COVID-19.

Transport projects, infrastructure and services have the capacity to both support and generate tourism e.g. cycle greenways funded under the Carbon Tax Fund 2020. Similarly, there are overlapping objectives from the perspective of policies on sport, active lifestyles and active travel. Good cooperation between the two departments continues to exist in many of these policy areas.

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## Our Commitment to Performance

We are committed to providing the best possible support to our Ministers and to our staff, and to successfully deliver our mission and high-level goals.

Our corporate supports are key to the successful delivery of our goals, and cover functions such as human and financial resources, information technology, records management and customer service.

Throughout 2020, the department continued to provide effective administrative, systems and advisory support to Ministers in discharging their statutory and wider Government functions.

In 2020, the Ministers answered 2,823 parliamentary questions and over 18,000 pieces of correspondence.

## Civil Service Renewal

The department has continued to proactively engage with and support key developments/actions in the Civil Service Renewal Plan including management of service level agreements for shared services for HR and payroll.

The department continued its implementation of a number of actions arising from the findings of the Organisational Capability Review (OCR) process of the department undertaken in 2017. Substantial levels of engagement were undertaken with staff in 2020 to co-create the HR Development Strategy 2020 - 2021.

## Finances of the Department

It is essential that the department has the financial resources to meet its goals, that those resources are monitored and controlled and that investments in key economic and social infrastructure is made as and when it needs to be.

We engage with the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform in relation to the allocation of funds to meet the investment needs of the department. This ensures that our policy areas have sufficient funding to invest in much needed infrastructure and services across the Transport areas. We are also heavily involved in the coordination of the department's rollout of Project Ireland 2040.

In 2009, the Government agreed that payments by public sector bodies to suppliers should be made within 15 days of receipt of invoices. During 2020, 18,422 transactions were processed in 278 payment runs. 98.19% of those were paid within the 15-day prompt payment legislation and 100% of those were processed within the 30-day deadline. Details of these payments are published quarterly and can be found [here](#) on the department's website.

ISO accreditation for the department's financial management systems (ISO: 9001:2015) was also retained in 2020.



## Reporting and monitoring of Green Public Procurement

The department's procurement policy references the department's ambition to incorporate Green Public Procurement wherever possible.

The Department had a number of contracts in place with green procurement elements in 2020. Of those, 2 contracts with a combined value of €479,334 (ex-VAT) were commenced in 2020 and these were included in a report on green procurement, which was submitted to the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

## Protected Disclosures Summary Report

Section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 requires a public body to prepare a report setting out the number of protected disclosures made to it in the course of the immediately preceding year and certain other information relating to any such protected disclosures.

This report therefore covers the period 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2020.

- A total of four disclosures invoking the Protected Disclosures Act were received.
- All cases were still in progress at year end.

The department's Head of Internal Audit is notified of allegations/disclosures received which invoke the Act and monitors them to ensure they are processed on a timely basis.

## Workforce Planning

The department continued to operate within the delegated sanction arrangements for pay and staffing for both the department and the non-commercial State Agencies. This facilitated progress on decisions on staffing assignments to ensure that critical business needs were met.

At the end of 2020, the department employed a total of 557 staff equating to 534 full-time equivalents. During 2020, 56 sport and tourism staff and responsibilities transferred to the new Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport & Media.

## Learning and Development

The COVID-19 pandemic temporarily hampered formal training and development opportunities for staff, particularly in the first months of lockdown in 2020. The department's Staff Development Unit, with OneLearning (the Irish Civil Service Learning and Development Centre), focused on adapting a number of courses from in-person/classroom delivery to on-line delivery. There was also a need to develop and deliver training solutions for staff to support them in working effectively and safely outside of the office environment.

OneLearning began preparations for launching a second generation of the Learning Management System in 2021. To contribute to the upgrade, HR hosted a series of focus groups with staff in November 2020 to gauge priorities and further refine the course choices that will be available from 2021.

The department continues to support staff undertaking a variety of third level studies, where such courses were considered relevant to their role and of benefit to the department.

One 12-month cycle of the departmental mentoring programme concluded in late 2020. The department will conduct an evaluation of the programme to gain learnings for adapting the programme to a remote and hybrid working environment.

Overall expenditure on learning and development decreased by 42% from 2019 due to the effect of COVID-19 throughout 2020.

## Corporate Governance of our Agencies

In March 2018, the department adopted a new internal framework for the oversight of both commercial and non-commercial State agencies under our aegis, in respect of governance. This document outlines roles and responsibilities of all stakeholders in keeping with the governing legislation of the State bodies involved. The Framework takes into account a number of developments including the Revised Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies and also the Organisational Capability Review of the department.

## State Board Appointments

The process for State Boards appointments is operated by PAS under the DPER Guidelines on State Board appointments 2014 and applies to all State Boards both commercial and non-commercial. A total of 19 State Boards operated under the aegis of the Department of Transport over the course of 2020.

Following the publication in March 2019 of the Gender Balance on State Boards Options and Recommendations for Government and the Annex to the Code of Practice on Gender Balance, Diversity and Inclusion published in 2020, it is an objective of Government to achieve 40% representation of each gender on State boards.

In 2020, 43 appointments were made, of which 74% were male and 26% were women. Chairs were appointed to 4 boards, with 100% being male and 0% being female. The average gender balance in the serving membership of these State Boards as of 31 December was 68% male and 32% female. Overall, 7 or 36.8% of boards had met the Government target of 40% representation of each gender in the serving membership of each State Board.

As of 31 December 2020, the following Board had either an all-male or an all-female membership:

- Galway Harbour Company 100% male and 0% female

In addition, the following Boards did not meet the 40% gender balance target for board membership in 2020:

Agency	Male	Female
Bus Éireann	78%	22%
Córas Iompair Éireann	67%	33%
daa plc	73%	27%
Dublin Port Company	75%	25%
Transport Infrastructure Ireland	80%	20%
Irish Aviation Authority	62%	38%
National Transport Authority	80%	20%
Port of Cork Company	86%	14%
Medical Bureau of Road Safety	75%	25%
National Transport Authority	80%	20%
Port of Waterford Company	71%	29%
Shannon Foynes Port Company	62%	38%
Taxi Advisory Committee on Small Public Service Vehicles	82%	18%

The Department of Transport actively engages with Chairs to promote better gender balance, diversity and inclusion on State Boards under their auspices, including discussing gender balance and skills mix with Chairs.

## Public Sector Duty

The Public Sector Duty, as provided for in Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014, places a legal obligation on all public bodies, including all central government departments, to promote equality, prevent discrimination and protect the human rights of their employees and everyone affected by their functions and services.

The department is committed to ensuring that there is a culture of respect for human rights and equality among our staff and for the people to whom we provide services.

In 2020, the department worked closely with the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission (IHREC) in the development of our Public Sector Duty Assessment and Action Plan, which was published in October 2020. A copy of the Assessment and Action Plan is available [here](#).

The Public Sector Duty is an ongoing duty that must be continuously monitored, reviewed, and developed and the department will continue to work with IHREC in this regard, and progress on its implementation will be reported in future department's Annual Reports

## Information Services

High quality, professional IT support at every customer contact point, along with technological solutions, are critical to the delivery of the department's services.

2020 brought a sudden focus on remote working in the context of Covid restrictions and the department moved swiftly to complete a successful transition to home working for all staff in a very short period of time. This was crucial in allowing the department to continue to work effectively and deal with specific challenges posed by both Covid and Brexit. In particular, a hardware replacement programme was instituted to equip all staff with mobile devices (laptop or tablet) in order to facilitate more flexible working arrangements into the future. This complimented video conferencing, remote access, and filesharing applications that had been already deployed to provide greater agility to staff.

The department also continuing to strengthen ICT governance capabilities in 2020 through the work of its ICT Digital Strategy and Information Security Management Groups.

## Accommodation

The department continued to provide holistic accommodation solutions for the department across all its locations in 2020, with a particular emphasis on the health and safety of employees in response to the Covid 19 Pandemic. Attendance of essential personnel onsite as necessary was supported in accordance with public health restrictions and guidance. A number of accommodation projects were progressed in anticipation of the return of staff to onsite working including a capacity review of each location to facilitate the increased number of staff in the department and the requirement for social distancing onsite. A Resource Efficiency Action Plan was also developed for all sites focusing on waste, water, fuel and electricity for each of our locations.

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## Appendix 1

### Ministers and Senior Management

The links below provide further information on the Ministers and Senior Management of the Department of Transport.

#### ***Minister of Transport***

[Eamon Ryan TD](#) is the Minister for Transport (and the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications). He was appointed to these roles in June 2020.

#### ***Minister of State***

[Hildegard Naughton TD](#) is Minister of State at the Department of Transport with responsibility for International and Road Transport and Logistics.

#### ***Senior Management Team***

The departments' organisational structure features five policy/management areas, each headed by an Assistant Secretary who, in addition to the Secretary General, make up the department's [Senior Management Team](#).

## Appendix 2

### Departmental Legislation

A list of all the Primary and Secondary Legislation enacted by the department in 2020 is provided below. All legislation is available on [www.irishstatutebook.ie](http://www.irishstatutebook.ie).

#### Primary

Railway Safety (Reporting and Investigation of Serious Accidents, Accidents and Incidents Involving Certain Railways) Act 2020 (Act 18 of 2020)

#### Secondary

Statutory Instrument	Title
41/2020	Harbours Act 1996 (Section 23) (Dublin Port Company) Order 2020
88/2020	Merchant Shipping (Maritime Labour Convention) (Shipowners' Liabilities and Repatriation) (Amendment) Regulations 2020
179/2020	European Union (International Labour Organisation Work in Fishing Convention) (Minimum Age) Regulations 2020
236/2020	European Union (Rights of Passengers when Travelling by Sea and Inland Waterway) (Amendment) Regulations 2020
258/2020	European Communities (Minimum Safety and Health Requirements for Improved Medical Treatment on Board Vessels) (Amendment) Regulations 2020
259/2020	European Union (International Labour Organisation Work in Fishing Convention) (Health Protection and Medical Care on Board Fishing Vessels) Regulations 2020
266/2020	European Union (International Labour Organisation Work in Fishing Convention) (Medical Examination) Regulations 2020
267/2020	European Union (International Labour Organisation Work in Fishing Convention) (Food and Accommodation) Regulations 2020
332/2020	European Union (International labour Organisation Work in Fishing Convention) (Fishing Vessel Owner Liability and Repatriation) Regulations 2020
333/2020	European Union (International labour Organisation Work in Fishing Convention) (Crew List and Fisherman's Work Agreement) Regulations 2020

<b>Statutory Instrument</b>	<b>Title</b>
<b>441/2020</b>	European Union (Workers on Board Seagoing Fishing Vessels) (Organisation of Working Time) (No. 2) Regulations 2020
<b>444/2020</b>	European Communities (Merchant Shipping) (Investigation of Accidents) (Amendment) Regulations 2020
<b>527/2020</b>	European Union (Marine Equipment) (Amendment) Regulations 2020
<b>585/2020</b>	European Union (Workers on Board Seagoing Fishing Vessels) (Organisation of Working Time) (Share Fishermen) Regulation 2020
<b>589/2020</b>	Merchant Shipping (Navigation and Tracking) (Heading Systems and Testing of Steering Gear) Rules 2020
<b>640/2020</b>	Merchant Shipping (Passenger Ships) Rules 2020
<b>686/2020</b>	Merchant Shipping (Pilot Transfer Arrangements) Rules 2020
<b>661/2020</b>	Harbours Act 2015 (Galway Harbour Company Transfer Day) Order 2020
<b>669/2020</b>	Withdrawal of the United Kingdom from the European Union (Consequential Provisions) Act 2020 (Part 12) (Commencement) Order 2020
<b>205/2020</b>	Road Vehicles (Registration and Licensing) (Amendment) Regulations 2020
<b>218/2020</b>	Transport (Tour Operators and Travel Agents) Act 1982 (Disbursements from Fund) Regulations 2020
<b>219/2020</b>	European Union (Package Travel) Regulations 2020
<b>398/2020</b>	European Union (Regulation of Railways) (Amendment) Regulations 2020
<b>430/2020</b>	European Union (Railway Safety) (Reporting and Investigation of Serious Accidents, Accidents and Incidents) Regulations 2020
<b>476/2020</b>	European Union (Railway Safety) Regulations 2020
<b>477/2020</b>	European Union (Interoperability of the Rail System) Regulations 2020
<b>543/2020</b>	European Union (Cableway Installations) Regulations 2020
<b>635/2020</b>	European Union (Rights of Passengers when travelling by Bus and Coach Transport) (Amendment) Regulations 2020
<b>636/2020</b>	European Union (Rail Passengers' Rights and Obligations) (Amendment) Regulations 2020
<b>694/2020</b>	European Union (Interbus Agreement) Regulations 2020

## Appendix 3

### Irish Coast Guard Statistics – Six-year Trend

Year	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
<b>Incidents</b>	2,664	2,582	2,502	2,647	2,500	2,670
<b>Persons saved* / assisted**</b>	290/3,609	377/4,080	340/3,634	398/4,592	379/3,546	401/3886
<b>Incidents involving Pleasure Craft</b>	600	482	521	411	407	340
<b>Incidents involving Merchant Craft</b>	52	62	69	67	61	59
<b>Incidents involving Fishing Craft</b>	185	212	169	162	186	132
<b>IRCG Coastal Units tasked</b>	1,289	1,065	1,072	1,192	1,082	1415
<b>IRCG Helicopter tasked</b>	1,013	898	755	669	718	810
<b>RNLI tasked</b>	836	854	842	843	815	802
<b>IRCG Tasked for HEMS</b>	-	-	-	107	102	68
<b>Community Rescue Boats Ireland tasked</b>	219	131	88	112	116	85
<b>False Alarms</b>	135	245	434	411	393	478

\*Lives saved are those where assistance provided that, prevented, loss of life, severe risk to life, or protracted hospitalisation.

\*\*Lives assisted were those not in imminent danger but assisted by IRCG to alleviate the predicament in which they found themselves.





**An Roinn Iompair**  
Department of Transport