

Country profile 2026: Ireland

Introduction

According to the [Digital Decade 2025: Country reports](#), Ireland's digital landscape is characterised by its significant economic impact and a strong commitment to a human-centred digital environment. The Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) sector is a primary economic driver, accounting for approximately 17% of the nation's Gross Value Added and 13% of its GDP. This economic strength is supported by robust digital infrastructure, with coverage for Very High-Capacity Networks (VHCN) and Fibre to the Premises (FTTP) surpassing the EU average, alongside a 5G reach of 89.9% in 2024. Irish citizens demonstrate high levels of digital competency, with 72.9% possessing at least basic digital skills and 73.8% adopting the MyGovID system for digital identity.

According to the [State of the Digital Decade Eurobarometer 2025](#), 77% of Irish people consider that the digitalisation of daily public and private services is making their lives easier. Regarding actions of public authorities, 92% consider it important to counter and mitigate the issue of fake news and disinformation online. Regarding actions to protect minors online, 98% of adults consider it important to address the negative impact of social media on children's mental health, while 97% consider cyberbullying and online harassment to be urgent. 97% were also in favour of implementing age-assurance mechanisms to restrict age-inappropriate content. Ireland has enacted proactive policies such as the Online Safety and Media Regulation Act (OSMR), which established Coimisiún na Meán as an independent regulator.

BIK policies

Policy frameworks

Policy frameworks describe the overarching goals that shape policies for a better internet for kids.

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Policy priority	X			
Integrated policy		X		
Influence of the BIK+ strategy		X		
Recognition of children’s rights	X			

Table 1: Policy frameworks - Ireland

- **This topic is being comprehensively addressed** with children’s protection, empowerment and participation in the digital environment incorporated into national/regional laws, regulations and policies.
- **There are separate, dedicated policies which address the topic of children and the digital environment** (protection, empowerment, and participation).
- **The BIK+ strategy is an important influence on policy development** on children and the digital environment.
- National/regional policies and policy documents **explicitly recognise children's rights in the digital environment.**

Key developments and policy frameworks

- The Online Safety and Media Regulation (OSMR) Act (2022) has established **Coimisiún na Meán** as an independent regulator for broadcasting, video on-demand and online safety with a role in supporting media development.

- Ireland’s **Online Safety Code** was adopted in 2024 and came into full effect in July 2025. It sets binding rules applying to video-sharing platforms that have their EU headquarters in Ireland.
- In February 2026, the Government adopted a new **Digital and AI Strategy**, which includes a section with commitments in relation to basic digital skills across all levels.
- Ireland’s **Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024-2033** includes a comprehensive five-year implementation plan that will help equip learners from early childhood through post-primary education with the knowledge, skills and competences necessary for success in an increasingly interconnected and information-driven world.

Policy design

Policy design asks whether evidence and research support BIK-related policies and whether systems are in place for monitoring and evaluating those policies.

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Regular data collection			X	
Data on risks, harms, well-being		X		
Information systems	X			
National research fund		X		
Monitoring and evaluation		X		

Table 2: Policy design – Ireland

- **Surveys of children’s digital activities are undertaken**, but only irregularly.
- **Some but not all aspects of children’s experiences of risks**, harms and digital well-being are included in regular surveys.
- **Systems are in place at the government level** to gather information on children and the digital environment.

- **Existing regular national research funding is available** for research on children and the digital environment.
- **Policies are regularly monitored and evaluated**, but not always systematically.

Key national research studies:

- Coimisiún na Meán is currently leading the Irish EU Kids Online survey, which includes a nationally representative face-to-face survey of 1,000 children and their parents/guardians. This is scheduled for release in 2026. An Coimisiún has also commissioned the ESRI to conduct research with post-primary students in 2026 about their experiences of, and perspectives regarding online engagement.
- Government policy development is informed by internal research functions and by regulatory bodies such as the Irish Data Protection Commission and Coimisiún na Meán.
- Coimisiún na Meán has also published its [statement of strategy 2025 - 2027](#) and its work programme for 2025, which set out specific objectives, intended outputs and work priorities.

Policy governance

Policy governance examines how policies are coordinated at the governmental level, whether other implementation bodies are involved in their delivery and coordination.

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Lead ministry for policy development	X			
National coordination body	X			
National action plan or strategy	X			

Table 3: Policy governance – Ireland

- **One central body (e.g., the central ministry office, public agency, or regulatory authority) is officially mandated to lead** and develop policies, guidelines, and programmes.

- **A clearly defined, formal coordination mechanism exists** with a clear mandate engaging relevant stakeholders and coherent, cross-cutting policy development and implementation.
- **There is a defined national action plan** on children and the digital environment.

Stakeholder involvement

Stakeholder involvement enquires how different stakeholders can participate in policy development.

	High	Medium	Low	Not present
Stakeholder forum		X		
Public consultation on BIK topics	X			
Youth involvement in policy	X			

Table 4: Stakeholder involvement – Ireland

- **Various groups exist across different branches of government**, in which stakeholders may contribute to policy discussion and development.
- **Members of the public are regularly and routinely consulted** as part of the policy development process.
- **Children are actively involved in the design of policies** related to their participation in the digital environment. There are specially designed structures in place for this purpose.

Stakeholder mechanisms

- The **Irish Safer Internet Centre** – a partnership of Irish Internet Hotline, ISPCC, National Parents Council and Webwise, coordinated by the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration and co-funded by the European Union - partner organisations work towards a shared mission of making the internet a safer and more inclusive place for children and young people.

- A **SIC Advisory Group**, co-chaired by the Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration and the Department of Culture, Communications and Sport, fosters a supportive and interactive relationship between SIC members and relevant Government Departments and agencies.
- Coimisiún na Meán has a statutory Youth Advisory Committee, which assists and advises An Coimisiún on matters relating to online safety as they relate to the interests of children and young people under 25 years of age.

BIK+ actions

Pillar 1 – Safe digital experiences

Actions to promote a safe, age-appropriate digital environment that respects children’s best interests.

	In place	In development	Other activity	Not present
Content rating systems for online/video games	X			
DSC measures protection of minors	X			
DSC-SIC working relationship	X			
Definition of harmful online content	X			
Complaints handling mechanism			X	
Intimate image abuse laws	X			
Cyberbullying laws	X			
Age verification requirements	X			
Digital wallet for minors			X	
EU harmonised age verification		X		
Laws on online marketing		X		

Protecting mental health and well-being

X

Table 5: Safe digital experiences - Ireland

Implementing EU laws

- Coimisiún na Meán serves as vice-chair of a [European Board for Digital Services Working Group](#) focused on the protection of minors under the DSA.
- Coimisiún na Meán has launched [formal investigations](#) into the TikTok, LinkedIn and X in relation to compliance with different articles under the Digital Service Act.
- Coimisiún na Meán has entered into [co-operation agreements](#) with the [Competition and Consumer Protection Commission](#) and the [Data Protection Commission](#).

Addressing online harms

- Coimisiún na Meán can [receive complaints](#) about a relevant provider's compliance with its systemic obligations under the Online Safety Framework. The OSMR Act enables An Coimisiún to develop an individual complaints mechanism. An Coimisiún is developing a pilot programme to provide support for children at imminent risk of harm from online content, as a precursor to consideration of a wider individual complaints mechanism.
- [Cineáltas Implementation Reports for 2023 and 2024](#), which includes online bullying, have been published to date.

Age assurance

- As of July 2025, the [Online Safety Code](#) requires video-sharing platforms that allow adult content to implement effective age assurance. Platforms must ensure minors cannot access this content, and a simple self-declaration of age is not sufficient to meet legal obligations.
- Currently, Ireland's plans for the Digital Wallet are tied to the [MyGovID Scheme](#), which is currently limited to those 16 years and over.

- Department officials are currently working with the Office of the Government Chief Information Officer in the Department of Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform, and Digitalisation to explore practical technical solutions for age verification as part of the Government's Digital Wallet, which is being developed using [MyGovID](#).

Supporting digital well-being

- The [Online Safety Code](#) requires video-sharing platforms to protect users—especially children—from harmful content and ensure commercial communications are transparent and ethically presented.
- As the Digital Services Coordinator, Coimisiún na Meán collaborates with the European Commission *to prevent "dark patterns"* (manipulative interface designs prohibited by DSA Article 25), *enhance minor safety* via Article 28 of the DSA and associated guidelines, which promote high privacy and security standards for young users, and *to regulate commercial practices* to prohibit deceptive or subliminal advertising.
- An [Online Health Taskforce](#) was established under the Department of Health in 2024 to develop a public health response to the harms caused to children and young people by certain types of online activity. The [final report of the taskforce](#) was published on 12 December 2025 alongside two accompanying reports, a report on [Digital marketing of health-harming products to children in Ireland](#) by the All Island Institute of Public Health and [a report from the National Youth Assembly](#) on youth online health.

Pillar 2 – Digital empowerment

	In place	In development	Other activity	Not present
Teaching online safety	X			
Digital skills training		X		
Policies on digital use in schools	X			
Adequate teacher training		X		

Non-formal online safety education	X
Critical media literacy	X
Creative digital skills	X
Supports for parents	X

Table 6: Digital empowerment - Ireland

Digital empowerment in formal education

- The [Primary Curriculum Framework](#) outlines “being a digital learner” as one of seven key competencies. This seeks to support children in becoming curious, creative, confident, and critical users of digital technology while fostering responsible, safe, and ethical use of technology. A new [Well-being Specification](#) at the primary level was published in September 2025, incorporating the areas of SPHE and PE.
- The [Primary Language Curriculum](#) highlights the importance of Digital Literacy, which supports the child’s ability to locate, select and critically analyse relevant information in text, visual and audio.
- In February 2023, the NCCA published the updated [Junior Cycle SPHE Curriculum](#), which takes an increased focus on online safety and helping students safely navigate the online world.
- Online safety in Irish schools is supported by an [Acceptable Use Policy \(AUP\)](#) that addresses all rights, privileges, responsibilities, and sanctions associated with the use of the internet and digital technologies within the school, including both online and offline use.
- The [Cineáltas: Action Plan on Bullying](#) sets out a comprehensive roadmap to ensure zero tolerance of bullying in Irish schools and that schools are places where every child and young person feels welcome, valued and understood.
- A national policy, “[Keeping Childhood Smartphone Free](#)” provides a guide for parents and parents’ associations who wish to engage with their school community regarding internet safety and access to smartphones for primary school children. The initiative also includes

additional provisions for parents and teachers around supporting children online. National [guidance](#) was issued to all schools in June 2025 on restrictions on mobile phone use during the school day.

Digital empowerment and lifelong learning

- Coimisiún na Meán ran a [campaign for parents](#) from November 2025 to February 2026 across radio, social and digital. This campaign helps parents identify the types of harmful content that can be reported and highlights the importance of reporting to hold platforms to account.
- The [Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024-2033](#) is set across all stages of the learner's journey from early learning and care to post-primary school. It aims to promote the development of essential literacy, numeracy, and digital literacy skills, knowledge, and dispositions, including the ability to navigate the digital world effectively.
- The [National Counter Disinformation Strategy](#), published in April 2025, includes clear actions to empower people of all ages with media literacy skills, in line with Commitment 4. Actions aimed at children include implementing Ireland’s Literacy, Numeracy and Digital Literacy Strategy 2024-2033: Every Learner from Birth to Young Adulthood (Action 4.5), as well as the Digital Citizenship Champions primary-school programme (Action 4.6).

Pillar 3 – Active participation, respecting children’s rights

	In place	In development	Other activity	Not present
Promoting civic engagement	X			
Promoting children’s rights	X			
Child-friendly policy documents		X		
Addressing digital inequalities	X			
Positive digital content			X	

Table 7: Active participation, respecting rights - Ireland

Active participation

- Webwise and Oide Technology in Education deliver the [Digital Citizenship Champion Programme](#). This was expanded for 2025 to reflect the [European Year of Digital Citizenship](#). Approximately 75 primary teachers were trained as Digital Citizenship Champions. Champions deliver workshops and training events to support schools and education centres across Ireland in digital citizenship and online well-being.
- Since 2023, Coimisiún na Meán has engaged with its [Youth Advisory Committee](#)—comprising young people under 25 and representatives of organisations working with and/or on behalf of children and young people — to seek its advice and assistance on a range of matters, including matters relating to children and young people’s online safety.
- Ireland has a strong track record in promoting and fostering youth participation in public decision-making. At the policy level, this is articulated in the [Participation of Children and Young People in Decision Making Action Plan 2024-2028](#). Implementation of the Action Plan is overseen by the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Inclusion and Youth (DCEDIY) and is aimed at supporting departments, agencies and organisations in improving their practice in listening to children and young people and giving them a voice in decision-making.

Addressing digital inequalities

- Action 4 of the [Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce Work Programme for 2024-2025](#) focused on “Progressing Delivery of Quality, Secure and Resilient Digital Connectivity”, through which progress on broadband and mobile coverage was monitored and key challenges identified. The most recent iteration of the Taskforce has now concluded, with next steps under consideration.

Best practices

Example 1

Casting the Net

Casting the Net is a new youth-led audio series hosted by teens for teens exploring the breadth and depth of our online worlds. In each episode, the series casts the net wide to learn about the opportunities and challenges the internet brings and hears from experts from around the globe. The series focuses on topics that matter to teenagers, what they want to know, and how they can make the most of their time online.

The Webwise Youth Panellists speak to a range of guests including Susan Daly, Managing Editor with Journal Media; Julie Ahern, Legal, Policy and Services Director, Children's Rights Alliance; Professor Richard Layte, Trinity College Dublin; Ciarán O'Connor, Senior Analyst at the London-based Institute for Strategic Dialogue; Elaine Burke, Science and Technology Journalist; Jennifer Dolan, Assistant Commissioner (Head of Children's Data Protection Policy) in the Data Protection Commission; Dr. Colman Noctor; Mark Little, Journalist and Entrepreneur; Orla Twomey, CEO, Advertising Standards Authority; and Sianna Williams and Alex Black from the Consent Ed Programme.

Example 2

Ireland's Online Safety Code

On 21 October 2024, Coimisiún na Meán published and adopted its first **Online Safety Code**, following extensive public and stakeholder consultation, as well as engagement with its statutory Youth Advisory Committee. The code applies binding obligations to designated video-sharing platform services and gives practical effect to the requirements as set out in Article 28b of Directive 2018/1808/EU (revised Audiovisual Media Services Directive). In particular, the code requires designated services to operate effective complaint-handling mechanisms, age assurance systems, parental control features, and content rating systems. Coimisiún na Meán holds robust monitoring and enforcement powers to ensure compliance with the Online Safety Code, including the power to impose administrative financial sanctions in accordance with the Online Safety and Media Regulation Act.

Example 3

Webwise Online Safety Review Tool

The [Webwise Online Safety Review Tool](#) is designed to help schools review their online safety policies and practices. The Review Tool is designed to support schools at all stages of the journey in identifying strengths and areas for improvement across key areas, including culture and environment, relationship and partnerships, and policy, planning and practice

BIK+ index 2026: Ireland

The BIK+ index has been developed to provide an aggregated at-a-glance overview of the levels of implementation across the two dimensions, BIK policies and BIK+ actions, in Ireland compared to the EU27+2 average. Values are shown in per cent.

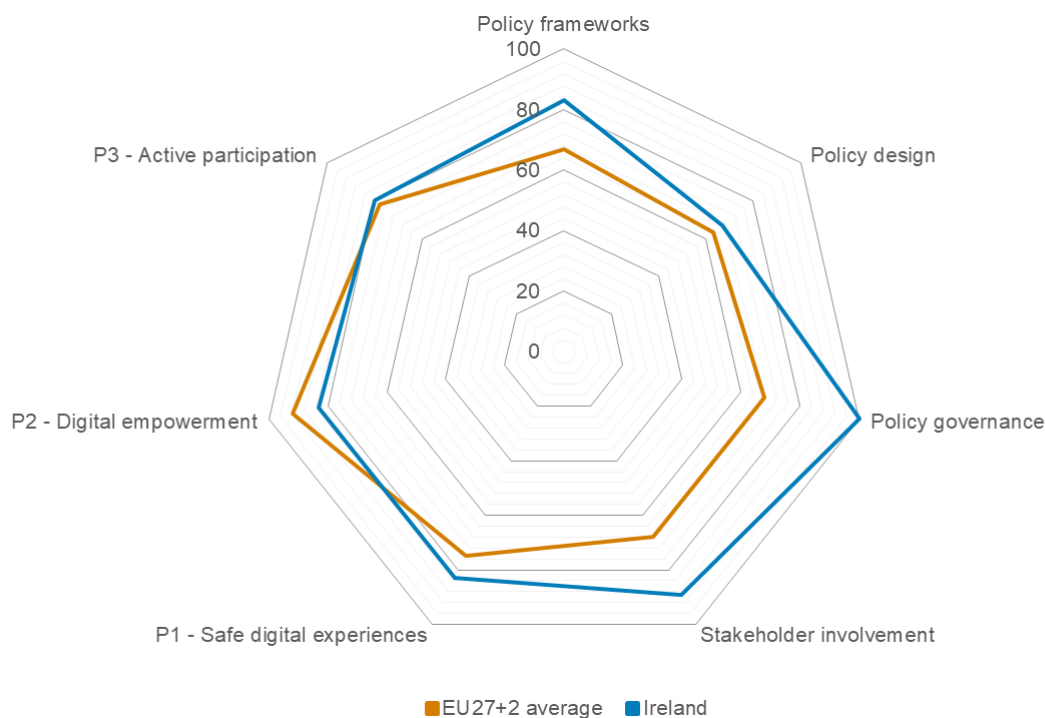


Figure 1: BIK+ index 2026: Ireland - EU27+2 average comparison