IGEES Medium Term Strategy 2020 – 2022

IRISH GOVERNMENT ECONOMIC AND EVALUATION SERVICE (IGEES)
FEBRUARY 2020

IGEES
Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service

WHAT WE HAVE ACHIEVED

The Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service (IGEES) – an initiative introduced by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform (DPER) - was established in 2012. IGEES is an integrated cross-Government service that supports evidence-informed policy making in the Irish Civil Service through the provision of policy insights based on data and analysis. Since 2012, IGEES has been working to build analytical capacity across the Civil Service and to embed an evidence-informed approach to policy design and implementation, with the objective of achieving better policy outcomes, better value for money for the public and helping to drive reform. IGEES consists of staff that have been directly recruited through its recruitment stream, as well as other Civil Servants in analytical/policy analysis roles. This new strategy builds on the progress made under the IGEES Medium Term Strategy 2016-2019:

Capacity Building

Since 2012, IGEES has run regular recruitment campaigns at Administrative Officer (AO) and Assistant Principal (AP) levels, with almost 140 persons recruited to date. Where possible, capacity building involved adding to the existing Civil Service analytical resources. Together, those recruited through IGEES competitions and the existing Departmental resources amount to over 200 analysts. IGEES now has a presence in all Government Departments and the Office of the Revenue Commissioners. To encourage the continuous development of its analysts, IGEES developed a comprehensive Learning and Development Programme in 2017, running regular training courses, customised induction, and modules on data and policy analysis for Civil Servants. In addition, IGEES mobility has been facilitated every year to support further skill development of IGEES analysts. In 2018, IGEES introduced the IGEES Internship Programme.

Quality Output

Since its inception, IGEES analysts have published over 200 analytical papers across almost all policy areas. The work that IGEES does has already produced a significant stock of policy insights, including themes such as: impacts of Brexit, social housing, labour market, education, capital investment, healthcare, taxation and crime. In order to encourage cross-Departmental collaboration, IGEES introduced the IGEES Research Fund in 2017. Since then, the Fund has supported several cross-Departmental projects, including ones focused on housing, construction and the use of linked administrative data for policy analysis. To guide the quality of analytical output, in 2017, IGEES published IGEES Quality Assurance (QA) Principles and Guidance.

Dissemination

A significant body of IGEES work is published on the IGEES website. IGEES work is also presented at regular events. These events provide a platform for IGEES work to be discussed, as well as for facilitating broader policy discussion on topical issues. IGEES analysts have also presented their work at external events, including conferences and seminars hosted by the Irish Economic Association (IEA), Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI), Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland (SSISI), Foundation for Fiscal Studies (FFS), Irish Fiscal Advisory Council (IFAC), Parliamentary Budget Office (PBO), Departmental Evaluation Seminars. IGEES members regularly attend and present at the Dublin Economic Workshop (DEW), with a specific session dedicated to IGEES work allocated as part of the programme at DEW 2019.

Collaboration

IGEES has links with the Central Statistics Office (CSO) and its Irish Government Statistical Service (IGSS). IGEES' links with academia are facilitated through the IGEES External Advisory Group (EAG), which consists of representatives from universities, the Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI), the Irish Fiscal Advisory Council (IFAC) and the Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI). IGEES is represented on the managing committees of the Irish Economic Association (IEA), Dublin Economic Workshop (DEW), Statistical and Social Inquiry Society of Ireland (SSISI) and Foundation of Fiscal Studies (FFS). Recently, IGEES has established contacts with the UK Government Economic Service and the Northern Ireland Civil Service Economist. In 2019, in collaboration with the Young Economist of the Year (YEOTY), an initiative run by the Professional Development Service for Teachers, IGEES introduced an IGEES YEOTY Award for the best project in policy analysis.

In 2019, we invited the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) to conduct a review of IGEES. The review found that '*IGEES has had a significant impact overall in strengthening the analytical capacity of the Irish Civil Service and building a robust evidence base for better policy and decision making'*.[1] It also put forward suggestions on how IGEES can progress forward, including facilitating an improved governance structure, increased access and use of data, further capacity building and diversifying of the skill base, and strengthening of policy evaluation and dissemination functions.

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[1] *The Irish Government Economic and Evaluation Service: Using Evidence-Informed Policy Making to Improve Performance*, OECD, 2020

IGEES VISION

A firmly embedded culture of evidence-informed public policy making in the Irish Civil Service.

IGEES MISSION

Over the medium term we will continue to develop the right skills, tools and structures to generate and effectively communicate relevant, high-quality analysis to strengthen independent policy advice to decision makers and other stakeholders.

IGEES STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Creating a community of policy analysts within the Civil Service with the aim of building an effective bridge between analysis and the policy making process through the production of insights and knowledge brokerage.

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GOAL 1   SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES

By harnessing existing analytical resources, and through recruitment and training, we will support Government Departments to further develop structures, processes and skills needed to deliver evidence-informed policy.

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GOAL 2   DATA

Together with the CSO, we will work towards building datasets and unlocking the power of data to enable policy analysis.

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GOAL 3   ANALYTICAL OUTPUT

We will continue to build the stock of policy insights and manage generated knowledge to inform all stages of the policy cycle.

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GOAL 4   COMMUNICATION AND IMPACT

We will further develop our engagement and interaction with policy makers and other stakeholders through knowledge synthesis, publications, events, online presence and fostering links with policy making structures.

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GOAL 5   GOVERNANCE

We will strengthen IGEES governance structures to ensure IGEES has the direction and influence required for the delivery of its vision.

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GOAL 6   EXTERNAL LINKS

We will foster further links with the public policy analysis community in Ireland and abroad to build relationships and facilitate peer-to-peer knowledge transfers.

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IGEES STRATEGIC DIRECTION

Where We Are

The mission of the Civil Service is to offer objective and evidence-informed advice to the Government. One of the key actions to achieve this is through the strengthening of policy making through using the best approaches to policy design, implementation and evaluation. Recently, this has been evident in an increased focus on the use of data and analysis to inform policy. IGEES has played an important role in the delivery of this action, through supporting and enhancing overall analytical functions across Government Departments, primarily through recruitment, the provision of learning and development opportunities and the production of analytical output.

IGEES recruitment campaigns have been successful, despite a competitive labour market, with the number of recruits growing steadily in recent years. New recruits are enhancing the existing Departmental resources for policy analysis, further supported by a customised Learning and Development programme. IGEES now has a presence in all Government Departments and the Office of the Revenue Commissioners. Since 2012, IGEES policy analysts have been using their skills, and the increasing volume of available data, to produce analytical output across all policy areas. Analysts have been feeding policy insights into the policy arena through internal Departmental channels, existing policy evaluation platforms and IGEES events.

Building on an initial start-up phase, and guided by the last Medium Term Strategy 2016-2019, IGEES has accelerated its activity, output, reach and impact over the last three years. Key achievements include:

- increased analytical capacity in all Government Departments and trebling of the size of IGEES,
- increased participation in learning and development (Box 1),
- increased volume of produced and published analytical output (over 150 papers),
- broadened scope and increased variety of IGEES analytical work,
- increased use of advanced data platforms (e.g. CSO Virtual Desktop Infrastructure and Administrative Data Centre, Jobseeker Longitudinal Dataset in the Department of Employment and Social Protection),
- increased use of policy platforms, with an effective use of the Spending Review initiative,
- increased Departmental engagement with IGEES' initiatives through participation in learning and development, the IGEES Research Fund, discussions, and events,
- increased impact of analytical work on policy deliberations (IGEES work has been used for policy discussions and became an integral part of the budgetary and estimates process) (Box 2),
- enhanced awareness of IGEES and its work across the Civil Service.

BOX 1: LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT OUTPUTS

Data
- To support the development of data skills of Civil Servants in policy roles, IGEES piloted training in **introduction to data;** it also developed and delivered data modules in the Civil Service Graduate Programme.
- To support the development of advanced data skills of its policy analysts, IGEES provided training in **statistical programming** through Stata and R.

Ex-Ante Evaluation
- To support skills development in the area of business case formulation, IGEES designed and delivered specialist **Business Case Training** at introductory and advanced level; this training was delivered through the One Learning platform.
- To support the development of skills in evaluation of policy options, IGEES delivered training in the area of **policy and project appraisal** including Cost Benefit Analysis, Multi Criteria Analysis and Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA).

Ex-Post Evaluation
- IGEES provided training in Counterfactual Impact Evaluation methods and other **evaluation techniques**.

Peer to Peer Learning and Dissemination
- IGEES developed and delivered a customised **induction programme** for new recruits.
- IGEES hosted over 40 **Strategic Policy Discussions** to provide a forum for the discussion of policy issues and analytical work.
- IGEES held 10 **Conferences/Events** to highlight and showcase the analysis produced by IGEES staff across the network.

Championing Evidence-Informed Policy-Making
- IGEES designed and delivered a **module on Evidence-Based Policy Making** which has been delivered as part of the Civil Service Graduate Development Programme to a total of over 700 participants.

BREXIT	Completed a variety of research projects to assess the potential economic impacts of Brexit including identification of vulnerable sectors of the economy in terms of imports, exports and employment. This research has also modelled the potential macro-economic impact.
	The research provided an evidence base for developing policy measures to respond to the potential negative impact of Brexit. Furthermore, this contributes to the understanding of the potential overall effect on the economy and thereby informing strategy.
LABOUR MARKET	Analysis has been conducted by both DPER and DEASP on the Disability Allowance (DA) scheme. The scheme is a significant quantum of expenditure and has seen significant increases in expenditure since 2012. The analysis detailed the key drivers of expenditure over time.
	As a result of collaborative research by DPER and DEASP a number of reforms were designed to support the future sustainability of DA expenditure. The Departments continue to work together on the roll out/implementation of this reform agenda over the short to medium term.
HOUSING	Produced a suite of research papers assessing the cost effectiveness and operation of social housing delivery mechanisms. Furthermore, research was undertaken on the tenure preference of those living in the private rental market through the IGEES Research Fund.
	This analysis has provided a detailed evidence base to inform policy development. In particular the analysis has highlighted key findings related to the cost efficiency of delivery mechanisms and the social impact of programmes to inform policy debate.
TRANSPORT	Undertook research to inform the development of the Strategic Framework for Investment in Land Transport to inform the development of transport policy. There was a total of 21 publications on a variety of issues including spatial planning, maintenance costs and climate impacts.
	This research provided the basis for the development of a land transport strategy that focused on achieving steady state levels of maintenance expenditure, optimising the use of the transport network and addressing urban congestion.
SPENDING REVIEW	Completed 81 papers as part of the Spending Review between 2017 and 2019 to inform the budgetary and wider policy process. These papers were produced by staff from different Departments and covered a wide range of policy areas.
	The analysis completed through the Spending Review provided a platform for different forms of analysis to be more tied to the budgetary process and led to the development of a wide ranging evidence base to inform policy development and implementation.
ANALYTICAL FRAMEWORKS	IGEES analysts have contributed to the continued development of analytical frameworks that guide policy development. For instance, IGEES analysis provided a key input to the development of the Public Spending Code.
	IGEES analysis assessed the appropriate value for the central discount rate and a number of shadow prices (labour, public funds and carbon) and this updated the central rules. Analysts in the Investment Projects and Programmes Office in DPER and Line Departments are centrally involved in developing apprasial methodology in Ireland.

Where We Want to Be

To achieve its vision, IGEES has to be an integral part of the policy making process, rather than be perceived as separate from it. Whether one is part of the IGEES network should be determined by the type of work one does, one's skills, and one's experience. The key component of IGEES work is the use of data (quantitative and qualitative) and analytical and evaluation methods to generate policy insights, including those related to economic, social and environmental impacts. As such, IGEES consists of persons recruited through the IGEES recruitment stream and other Civil Servants in public policy analysis roles. IGEES' key stakeholders are Civil Servants who are part of the public policy life cycle, particularly policy makers, who are the primary users of IGEES output. In this context, IGEES is a broad and growing network of producers and users of public policy analysis, which at its core has a cohort of staff who have the technical skills required to conduct policy analysis.

While recognising that policy making relies on a variety of inputs — political, economic and social — insights based on data and analysis should form a key part of policy makers' information sets alongside other relevant expertise and knowledge. Moreover, policy makers, the Civil Service as a whole and IGEES itself need to have a shared understanding that IGEES is a constituent part of the policy making process and is not a stand-alone service.

In this context, IGEES should be embedded in all stages of the policy life-cycle, not viewed through the limited lens of a particular platform or methodology. Its role is to use both quantitative and qualitative data and analytical tools to inform policy makers in relation to the definition of the policy problems; evaluation of policy options; monitoring of policy implementation and evaluation of policy efficiency, outcomes and impact (including wider impacts such as citizens' well-being and the environment). This is relevant across all policy levers (expenditure, taxation and

regulation). This is particularly important in the context of increasing complexity facing policy makers, such as climate change, Brexit, changes in the international trade environment, wealth inequality, demographic change, migration, and the impact of artificial intelligence on employment.

IGEES needs to develop beyond being a producer of evidence to focusing on generating, distilling and communicating policy insights and thus becoming a knowledge broker across Departments.

Finally, while establishing a strong foundation in terms of the use of data and technical skills to produce technical outputs and generate insights IGEES will move closer to the policy making arena and create an effective bridge between data and policy. It will also continue to place a particular emphasis on the quality of analysis. As pointed out in the OECD review of IGEES (OECD, 2020), through building a knowledge brokerage capacity and deeper engagement with policy making structures, IGEES can increase its impact and facilitate better targeting of policy formulation and implementation. This will involve developing data and evidence itself and combining these with policy insights generated elsewhere, developing a better understanding of what policies work and how they relate to the broader political, economic and social context, and communicating this knowledge effectively to bridge policy insights with policy development and implementation.

How Do We Get There

Within this context, the strategic direction of IGEES is to progress from producing policy insights to embedding IGEES activity, output, policy insights and ethos as an integral part of the public policy making process across the Civil Service.

Evidence-informed policy making seeks to ensure that evidence is not just pushed by policy analysts, but also that the demand for it exists. To achieve this, there needs to be a better link between IGEES policy analysts and broader policy making structures and processes. This interaction can foster an openness among policy makers to consider the assumptions underpinning their policies alongside evidence produced by analysts.

IGEES policy analysts need to ensure that their work is high quality, timely and relevant, and synthesised in a way that is usable by policy makers. IGEES, in its broadest sense, needs to progress from being solely a producer of data and policy analysis — a 'knowledge generator' — to becoming the strategic lead for embedding a 'knowledge broker' function in all Departments. This progress involves greater focus on synthesising evidence and understanding what works and how it relates to the broader political, economic, social and stakeholder context, greater ability for knowledge translation, and building of effective connections between evidence and policy making.

IGEES should deepen its engagement with senior management across the Civil Service to support their engagement, use and application of evidence in the policy making process. Ultimately, to add value, IGEES' role is greater than data analysis. Taking into account the political, social and stakeholder context, using its own work and the work of others, IGEES' central aim is to support the analytical function of the Civil Service in providing the best possible advice to policy makers and practitioners.

The challenge of embedding a culture of evidence-informed policy making is shared by many other high-income countries (OECD, 2020). IGEES is well placed to build on the progress made to date and to strengthen its knowledge broker function throughout the Civil Service, and has the technical knowledge and reach needed to drive evidence-informed policy making in Ireland.

The future success of the outlined strategic direction has its foundation in the progress made by IGEES since 2012. This document outlines a number of strategic goals guiding the delivery of the strategic direction including:

1. Skills and Capabilities
2. Data
3. Analytical Output
4. Communications and Impact
5. Governance
6. External Links.

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GOAL 1   SKILLS AND CAPABILITIES

By harnessing existing analytical resources, and through recruitment and training, we will support Government Departments to further develop the structures, processes and skills needed to deliver evidence-informed policy.

IGEES Community

IGEES consists of persons recruited through the IGEES recruitment stream and all other Civil Servants in policy analysis roles. Key stakeholders are Civil Servants who are part of the public policy life cycle, particularly policy makers who are the primary users of IGEES output. In addition, IGEES welcomes engagement with all Civil and Public Servants with a special interest in policy analysis. In this context, it is the responsibility of each Department to identify who is a member of IGEES.

Figure 1. IGEES community

Civil Servants recruited through IGEES recruitment stream working in policy analysis roles

Civil Servants working in policy analysis roles

Civil and Public Servants working in policy making and other policy roles

Civil and Public Servant interested in policy analysis

IGEES Structures

Having properly structured and resourced analytical functions in each Department is critical to producing high quality analysis and ensuring it carries weight and impacts policy making. The IGEES Corporate Support Unit (CSU) will continue to support each Department in building the structures and capabilities required for evidence-informed policy making. This will be done by filling skills gaps through recruitment and L&D, as well as through facilitating the IGEES mobility programme, events, knowledge sharing, and other support activities.

While recognising that there is no one-size-fits-all approach, each Department needs to ensure that their analytical structures reflect the size, grading structures and line of reporting required to ensure a well-targeted analytical work programme, quality control, development of new recruits, resilience to staff attrition, career progression, openness to mobility and impact at senior level. Ultimately, adding new IGEES recruits to the Civil Service can only add value if appropriate structures for their integration and development are in place.

Recruitment

IGEES CSU will continue to work with the Public Appointments Service (PAS) and academia (through

IGEES EAG) to ensure that the size and quality of recruitment intake, as well as the high standard of the hiring process, is upheld. This will include regular reviews of the recruitment process to ensure a high level of quality and diversity among candidates, as well as broadening of the analyst role to include social scientists and related fields of study. Through its internship programme and collaboration with the YEOTY, IGEES will build the pipeline of high calibre recruits for the future.

Learning and Development (L&D)

Building on its L&D Programme 2017, IGEES will review its training offer to ensure it adequately caters for the development of the specialist technical skills of IGEES analysts. Its offerings will ensure that IGEES analysts have access to the necessary training, including statistical programming and quantitative methods, to produce insights needed to inform policy making.

In addition, IGEES will liaise with OneLearning and extend the L&D scope beyond specialist technical training in two ways:

* supporting the skills development of Civil Servants who are in policy roles and can benefit from introduction to data and policy analysis, in order to produce and/or use analytical output,
* focusing on the capacity of policy makers to integrate analytical insights into the decision making process, through development of knowledge translation skills of IGEES policy analysts, as well as the skills of policy makers to engage with IGEES analytical output.

To augment its training programme, IGEES will develop new strategies for peer-to peer learning, with a particular focus on junior IGEES analysts, through its online platform (HIVE), dedicated resources and events.

Mobility

Moving roles throughout a career is an important component of learning and development. IGEES AOs are encouraged to move after two years in a role to broaden their experience, skills and competencies. IGEES will review its existing mobility programme and introduce protocols to increase participation and buy-in for mobility across the IGEES network. This will also include engagement with other stakeholders (e.g. the CSO) to explore external reciprocal secondment possibilities.

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GOAL 2   DATA

Together with the CSO, we will work towards building datasets and unlocking the power of data to enable policy analysis.

Data is a key building block for evidence-informed policy making and to date, IGEES has been using official national and international statistics, surveys and administrative data to produce insights on public policy. Nonetheless, there is significant room for improvement before the potential of data (particularly administrative data) in informing public policy is fully utilised. Several Government documents have recognised the importance of improving such use of data, including the Civil Service Renewal Plan, the OGCIO Public Service Data Strategy 2019-2023 and the Data Sharing and Governance Act (DSGA) 2019.

Administrative Data and National Data Infrastructure

To unlock the power of administrative data, IGEES will support the CSO and its IGSS in the development of the National Data Infrastructure (NDI). The NDI initiative seeks to create a structured and integrated approach to data management in the public sector, creating an invaluable platform for IGEES work. This will involve the joint effort of the IGSS, OGCIO, and IT departments across the Civil Service to drive the use of unique identifiers (for people, businesses and places) and data linking.

Figure 2. Data for evidence-informed policy making
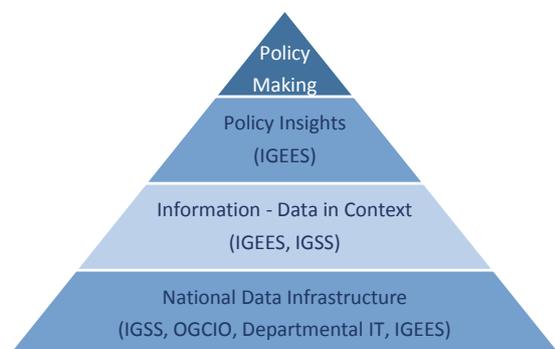
IGEES objectives in relation to unlocking the potential of data for policy analysis through the NDI are threefold:

- **Content** - IGEES will work with policy units towards an improved understanding of what administrative data is currently collected across the Civil and Public Service and drive improvements in data collection to meet the needs of policy analysis

- **Access** – IGEES will support greater sharing of data between Departments and their Agencies within the GDPR rules
- **Linking** – IGEES will work with IGSS to generate joined-up datasets that will allow for better monitoring and evaluation of public policy.

The cohesion between the work of IGEES, OGCIO and IGSS is critical to achieving these goals. As IGSS grows and increases its presence across Civil and Public Service, it is important that each Department creates structures that bring these two complementary services together. It is only through working together that Departmental IT functions and other data holders (through guardianship of Departmental databases and data processes), IGSS statisticians (through delivering the NDI), and IGEES policy analysts and policy units (through identification of policy questions and production of policy insights using data and analytical tools and methods) can create a data infrastructure and adequately support evidence-informed policy making.

IGEES will continue to build collaboration with IGSS through participation and advocacy in relevant fora, such as the DSGA Implementation Board, NDI Champions, Formal Statistician Liaison Group, sectoral data groups (e.g. housing), as well as through collaborations on skills development and on-the-ground collaboration between IGSS statisticians and IGEES policy analysts, using vehicles such as 'pathfinder projects', joint events and other initiatives.

Official Statistics and Research Microdata Files

IGEES will continue to work with the CSO to secure access to the CSO Research Microdata Files (RMFs) for IGEES analysts. Access to RMFs is invaluable for IGEES, allowing for granularity of analysis beyond the published CSO data across many policy areas, including labour market, incomes, transport, health and social care. IGEES will also seek to increase the utilisation of the available longitudinal datasets, such as The Irish Longitudinal Study of Ageing (TILDA) and Growing Up in Ireland (GUI).

Data sharing in IGEES

The intranet platform — IGEES HIVE — will be used to facilitate data sharing, including data maps, statistical code and models to facilitate knowledge transfer across the IGEES network.

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GOAL 3   ANALYTICAL OUTPUT

We will continue to build the stock of policy insights and manage generated knowledge to inform all stages of the policy cycle.

Analysis for all Stages of the Policy Cycle

IGEES will continue to build a stock of evidence to support decisions across all stages of the policy cycle, all policy areas and all policy levers (expenditure, taxation, regulation, communication) in a timely manner. This includes using appropriate analytical tools (e.g. statistics, econometrics, experiments) to support the definition of policy questions, theory of change, ex-ante evaluation of policy options, monitoring of policy implementation through the lenses of efficiency, effectiveness and sustainability, as well as ex-post policy evaluation of outcomes and impact.

Figure 3. Policy Analysis and Policy Cycle
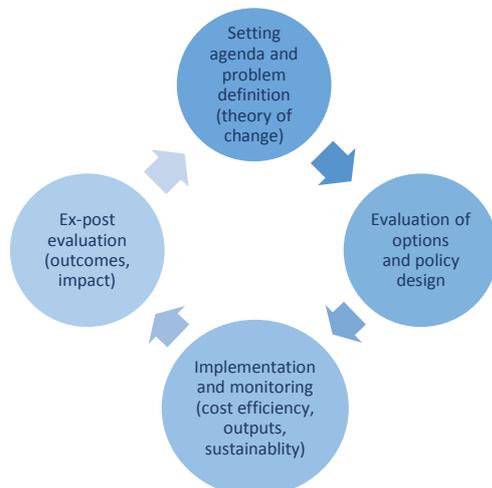
At present, the stock of evidence generated by each department varies in its volume and focus, with some putting more emphasis on ex-ante appraisals of policies, others on cost efficiency and sustainability of expenditure. It is, however, important that all policy areas are examined in a way that evidence underpins each step of the policy life. In particular, there needs to be a significant increase in the focus on ex-post evaluations of policy outcomes and impacts, including the wider impacts of policy on well-being, equality and environment.

Broadening the skills base to include social scientists will enhance the capability of IGEES to provide the evidence base required to develop and evaluate policies regarding a variety of economic and social challenges.

Types of IGEES Analytical Output

The work of IGEES will continue to feed into the policy making process through the existing and new platforms, including Spending Reviews, Evaluations, VfM Reviews, Public Spending Code, Focused Policy Assessments, RIA, and Periodic Critical Reviews. An important body of IGEES work will continue to include analysis, modelling, programming code, frameworks, methodologies, and training, which are not visible in the stock of published IGEES output, but represent an important input into policy deliberations at Departmental level.

Cross-Departmental Policy Analysis

IGEES, through its network of analysts, is well placed to support the strategic assessment of cross-Departmental priority policy issues and better targeting of public policy, through collaboration and cross-cutting analytical work. We will work to extend the role of the IGEES Research Fund and use other policy platforms to support analysis of policy challenges that span Departments (e.g. climate change, social inclusion).

Knowledge Management

IGEES will increase its focus on knowledge management to continue to build the stock of evidence in a way that avoids duplication, adds value to the existing work and identifies knowledge gaps. This will involve new strategies to systematise and synthesise the analytical work of IGEES, as well as the policy research undertaken by others. IGEES, supported by the IGEES CSU, will achieve this by harnessing technology and tailoring its analytical output to be more accessible and easily searchable.

Linking Resources with Analytical Output

As IGEES resources are scarce, it is of utmost importance that the analytical work programme is carefully designed to maximise the utilisation of skills and the impact of analytical output on policy discussions. In this context, the allocation of new IGEES resources should be based on information regarding the utilisation of the existing analytical resources, the analytical output produced and its use in policy making.

Quality of Analytical Output

The factual and methodological soundness of IGEES work is guided through the IGEES QA Principles and Guidelines. Strengthening of IGEES structures, in particular the IGEES AP cohort and above, will allow for analysis of greater technical complexity to be designed, overseen and integrated in the policy discussions at Departmental level. Fostering links with academia will secure access to external expertise and strengthen the quality assurance of IGEES analytical work, methodologies and reporting.

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GOAL 4   COMMUNICATION AND IMPACT

We will further develop our engagement and interaction with policy makers and other stakeholders through knowledge synthesis, publications, events, online presence and fostering links with policy making structures.

As part of our engagement with policy makers and other stakeholders, we will seek to both communicate IGEES research effectively and enhance the extent to which our work is informed by that of others.

Publishing IGEES Analysis
The publication of papers on the IGEES website and IGEES events have been key vehicles for the communication of IGEES work to its stakeholders. However, published work constitutes a subset of all IGEES work that is carried out across the Civil Service. While recognising that not all activities are suitable for publication, IGEES will continue to strive to have as much of its work as possible published — both to add value to the debate on public policy, as well as to uphold the principle of transparency.

Dissemination Channels
IGEES will continue to strengthen its dissemination channels to make its analytical work accessible. This will include continuous review of IGEES events to ensure that the format, venues, content, target audience, attendance, frequency and quality of the debate it generates are aligned with its strategic objectives. IGEES will seek to introduce new platforms for discussion, drawing on its own network of analysts and external speakers.

The IGEES CSU will seek greater engagement of all Government Departments in organising, participating in and hosting IGEES events. It will also include a review of the IGEES website and its improvement to ensure IGEES output is easily searchable and accessible. We will explore the role of social media as a transmission channel for the dissemination of IGEES output.

We will ensure the IGEES logo is displayed on all of its output, events and other activities, to further foster IGEES as a recognised brand and acknowledge the contribution of IGEES analysts in the public policy debate. In addition, IGEES will work on ensuring that the format of its papers and other material is tailored in a way that is easily accessible by policy makers. This will include carefully crafted summaries and key findings sections of the papers.

Generating Demand for IGEES Work
While cognisant that the policy making process draws on a variety of inputs, including economic, political and social, IGEES will strive to increase the role of data and policy analysis in the design, implementation and review of public policy. IGEES will introduce new strategies to link, horizontally and vertically, with the policy making structures and processes, including with Departmental Policy Units and Management Boards, Senior Official Groups and Cabinet Committees. IGEES will also endeavour to increase the involvement of senior Civil Servants in its events, primarily through roles of speakers, chairs and discussants.

Through this engagement, IGEES will seek to generate demand for its work and progress from a position where the evidence produced is pushed up the line, to creating a pull effect from the all quarters of the policy making community. In this way, IGEES will be better able to target its analytical efforts, support the NDI development and integrate evidence in to the policy making process.

IGEES will continue to play an important role in the delivery of the Our Public Service 2020 framework (see action on embedding a culture of evidence and evaluation) and the implementation of the Civil Service Renewal Plan (see Action 22: strengthen policy making skills and develop more open approaches to policy making).

In this context, IGEES will seek to develop a measure of its success beyond its outputs, focusing on the degree to which it is embedded in the public policy process and effective in the bridging of evidence and policy.

IGEES and Parliamentary Structures
IGEES will build on its relationship with the PBO, as well as the Oireachtas Library and Research Service, to create channels through which its work can feed into the deliberations on public policy at the parliamentary level. In particular, IGEES will seek to have greater presence at the PBO information seminars, which represent an important platform for the dissemination of IGEES analytical work within the parliamentary structures.

Internal Communication
The use of intranet platform (IGEES HIVE) will be invigorated to ensure IGEES activities are visible to its network and to facilitate improved sharing of information, outputs, data and research. This will involve improving the HIVE content and introducing strategies aimed at increasing members' engagement with the HIVE content and the IGEES network. In addition, IGEES will increase the frequency and review the format of its newsletter.

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GOAL 5   GOVERNANCE

We will strengthen IGEES governance structures to ensure IGEES has the direction and influence required for the delivery of its vision.

IGEES Governance Structure 2016-2019

IGEES is overseen by the Policy Oversight Group, which is chaired by the Secretary General from DPER and has representatives, at Secretary General level, from the Department of Finance and one rotating post, currently held by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. The CSO is also represented on the group.

The implementation of the IGEES Medium Term Strategy and the management of the IGEES Corporate Support Unit is the responsibility of the Head of IGEES (Principal Officer level in DPER).

IGEES is advised by the External Advisory Group, which consists of representatives from seven universities, Nevin Economic Research Institute (NERI), Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) and Irish Fiscal Advisory Council (IFAC). This group was instrumental in the roll out of the IGEES internship programme in 2018 and continues to support IGEES in relation to L&D and recruitment. The group is chaired by the representative from the University of Limerick.

IGEES Internal Advisory Group (IAG), which is chaired by the Head of IGEES and consists of representatives from all Government Departments, the CSO and the Office of the Revenue Commissioners at Principal Officer level, as well as a representative from the IGEES AP cohort, has been the driving force behind the implementation of the IGEES Medium Term Strategy 2016-2019. The group has worked on all pillars of the strategy, including recruitment, IGEES L&D programme 2017, IGEES QA Principles and Guidelines 2018, IGEES Internship Programme 2017, IGEES Mobility and IGEES events. The IAG has made significant progress in placing IGEES on the map of the Irish Civil Service, building analytical capacity and driving inclusion of analytical work in the policy deliberations in their respective Departments.

The IGEES CSU act as secretariat for the IGEES governance groups and supports the IGEES network through activities including: IGEES recruitment campaigns, procurement and delivery of IGEES L&D, the IGEES induction programme, IGEES events, the IGEES internship programme, the IGEES website and HIVE site, IGEES mobility, the IGEES Research Fund, and liaising with national and international stakeholders.

IGEES Governance Structure 2020-2022

Cognisant of the recommendations put forward in the OECD Review of IGEES, we will review the membership and the terms of reference of its current governance groups.

At the senior Civil Service level, IGEES will seek to include greater cross-Departmental representation, engagement and championing of IGEES across the system. IGEES will use its own and the existing Civil Service governance structures (Civil Service Management Board, Departmental Management Boards, line management etc.) to champion the strategic importance of the role of evidence in ensuring efficient use of scarce resources and the delivery of responsive and people-centred public services. Through the support of senior Civil Servants, IGEES can extend its reach and create greater demand and use of its work at senior levels.

IGEES will seek to expand input into IGEES governance from the relevant external stakeholders from academia and beyond, with objectives including greater collaboration on research, quality assurance, knowledge transfers, and joint events.

The IAG will continue to be the driving force of IGEES development and will have a critical role in the implementation of all pillars of the IGEES Medium Term Strategy 2020-22.

IGEES will increase its engagement with the IGEES AP forum, as well as encourage formation of an IGEES AO forum, to ensure successful implementation of the IGEES Medium Term Strategy 2020-22.

To increase engagement and derive more value from its governance structures, IGEES will create necessary links to ensure dialogue and feedback flows between the governance groups.

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GOAL 6   EXTERNAL LINKS

We will foster further links with the public policy analysis community in Ireland and abroad to build relationships and facilitate peer-to-peer knowledge transfers.

IGEES' role as a knowledge broker will be enhanced by a deeper engagement with the national and international public policy research community. The work of IGEES will both be informed by, and will seek to influence, the work of external stakeholders.

IGEES and Professional Associations
In terms of involvement with the broader research community, IGEES is a member of the Social and Statistical Inquiry Society of Ireland (SSISI), Economic Association of Ireland (EAI), Dublin Economic Workshop (DEW) and the Foundation for Fiscal Studies (FFS). IGEES analysts have presented numerous papers and benefited from IGEES memberships with these associations through peer-to-peer exchange. Going forward, IGEES will seek to increase involvement with relevant associations and to increase input into policy deliberations through the platforms these associations provide.

This will also include continued liaisons with international professional associations, such as IGEES links with the Competence Centre on Microeconomic Evaluation at the European Commission's Joint Research Centre, the European Economic Association and European Network for Social Policy Analysis.

IGEES and academia
Over the years, Departments have developed many links with academia, some of which precede IGEES. Looking ahead, we will seek to further foster knowledge transfer and skills development of IGEES policy analysts and expand the evidence base for policy development via building more extensive links with academia, through collaborative research, IGEES Research Fund, IGEES events, postgraduate programmes and other opportunities that academia provides.

IGEES and other public bodies
IGEES, supported by the IGEES CSU, will seek to create links with other relevant public bodies, including the Central Bank, National Economic and Social Council, National Treasury Management Agency, Comptroller and Auditor General and other State bodies which have strong policy analysis capacity (e.g. Teagasc, SOLAS), in order to join a wider community involved in the work relevant for public policy development.

Better links between IGEES, academia and other relevant public bodies should ensure that the analytical work of IGEES and the research agenda of other institutions working on public policy analysis are complementary. Greater awareness of the research and findings produced by others will also support IGEES' role of a knowledge broker in the Civil Service.

International links
IGEES, supported by the IGEES CSU, has developed links with the UK Government Economic Service and the Northern Ireland Civil Service Economist Group. Through these links, IGEES has shared experiences and learnings about the institutional and operational challenges in embedding evidence informed policy making with the international colleagues. IGEES, supported by the IGEES CSU, will build on this by reaching out to the relevant EU bodies and relevant counterparts in other jurisdictions (e.g. Denmark, France, New Zealand). The objective will be to learn more about international experience in developing systems of evidence informed policy making in the public sector and broadening ex-post evaluation methods to include concepts of well-being, equality and environmental impacts.

IGEES will build on its recent collaboration with the OECD to ensure continued knowledge transfers regarding international developments and best practices in embedding evidence into public policy making. Through this collaboration, we will aim to gain greater visibility and recognition at the international level.