



An Roinn Cosanta  
Department of Defence



Óglaigh  
na hÉireann  
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES

# Department of Defence and Defence Forces

## Strategy Statement 2025–2028





# Table of Contents

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Minister for Defence Foreword	2
Secretary General and Chief of Staff Foreword	3
Department of Defence and Defence Forces	4
Department of Defence Mandate	4
Department of Defence and Defence Forces Vision, Mission & Roles	5
Key Policy Documentation	6
Policy Context	7
Strategic Goals	13
Programme for Government Commitments	18
Defence-led Commitments arising from the Programme for Government (PfG) 2025 – Securing Ireland’s Future	18
Cross-cutting Commitments in the Programme for Government 2025 related to the Department of Defence	20

# Minister for Defence

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As Tánaiste and Minister for Defence, I welcome the publication of this Strategy Statement which provides the strategic direction for the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces over the coming three year period and highlights the commitment this Government has to defence and security for our country.

Following the report of the Commission on the Defence Forces (CoDF) published in 2022, the Government approved a move to 'Level of Ambition 2' (LOA2) by 2028, as set out in the capability framework devised by the Commission. This will result in the Defence budget rising from €1.1 billion to €1.5 billion, in 2022 prices, by 2028, as part of the annual Estimates process.

For 2025, the total allocation for Defence is €1.35 billion, the highest ever level and a 22% increase since 2022. This includes a capital allocation of €215 million, an increase of 52% since 2022, with a further increase planned for 2026, to €220 million. This will allow for the required substantial transformation and investment in recruitment and equipment that were identified by the CoDF.

This increase encompasses both current and capital funding, and is supported by a comprehensive transformation programme of work, currently underway throughout the Department and the Defence Forces, as outlined and prioritised in the Defence Policy Review 2024, the Strategic Framework and the Detailed Implementation Plan for the CoDF's Report.

Beyond this timeframe, the Programme for Government (PfG) signals an intention to continue to increase investment in Defence, providing the funding and political support necessary to achieve LOA2 Enhanced Capability, and move as quickly as possible to 'Level of Ambition 3' (LOA3) with commensurate investment as appropriate to develop full spectrum defence capabilities to protect Ireland and its people to an extent comparable to similar sized countries in Europe.

I look forward to working closely with the Secretary General, the Chief of Staff and their respective personnel, civil and military and I am confident that, working together, we can succeed in transforming our Defence Forces and defence provision in Ireland.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Simon Harris', written in a cursive style.

**Simon Harris**  
Tánaiste and Minister for Defence

# Secretary General and Chief of Staff



We are pleased to present this Statement of Strategy 2025-2028 to the Tánaiste and Minister for Defence. This Statement of Strategy was prepared following consultation with Department and Defence Forces staff, other Government Departments and external stakeholders. It sets out the strategic direction and high level work programme of the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces, to be delivered over the next three years, in conjunction with our stakeholders. It outlines our Vision and Mission and is supported by a set of strategic goals and actions designed to deliver on our responsibilities.

We have a unique civil-military structure and responsibility for implementation of this Strategy falls to both military and civil elements working together to achieve our shared goals. Implementation will be overseen by the Strategic Management Committee, comprising both ourselves and our respective management teams. This civil-military approach facilitates a common view of the strategic goals and actions identified within this Strategy Statement. At all times we will remain outward-looking and developmental. This clear focus will ensure that the requirements of Government in respect of defence, across all roles assigned, continue to be met.

The Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces (CoDF) and the Report of the Independent Review Group on Dignity and Equality issues in the Defence Forces (IRG) have given us an opportunity to shape the organisation to deliver in a modern and efficient way, and to transform the way we work. Significant progress has been made to deliver on the recommendations and work is ongoing. The External Oversight Body is fully operational and a Tribunal of Inquiry has been established. The Strategic Framework along with the Detailed Implementation Plan for delivery of the CoDF recommendations, and the Government commitment to increase Defence funding to €1.5 billion (in 2022 prices) by 2028, have provided us with the roadmap needed to deliver on this work. Also, the increase in capital funding of €1.7 billion being allocated to Defence in the National Development Plan for the period 2026-2030 will ensure the ongoing transformation of Ireland's Defence Forces.

The Defence Policy Review 2024 highlighted a number of key priorities including a focus on maritime security, the development of an integrated Monitoring and Surveillance System and implementation of changes to command and control. Significant work is already taking place to deliver on the recommendations made including the development of a National Maritime Security Strategy.

The significant progress being made to date, the dedication of our personnel, both civil and military, and the oversight structures, which have been put in place to support delivery give us great confidence that the transformational change required will be delivered.

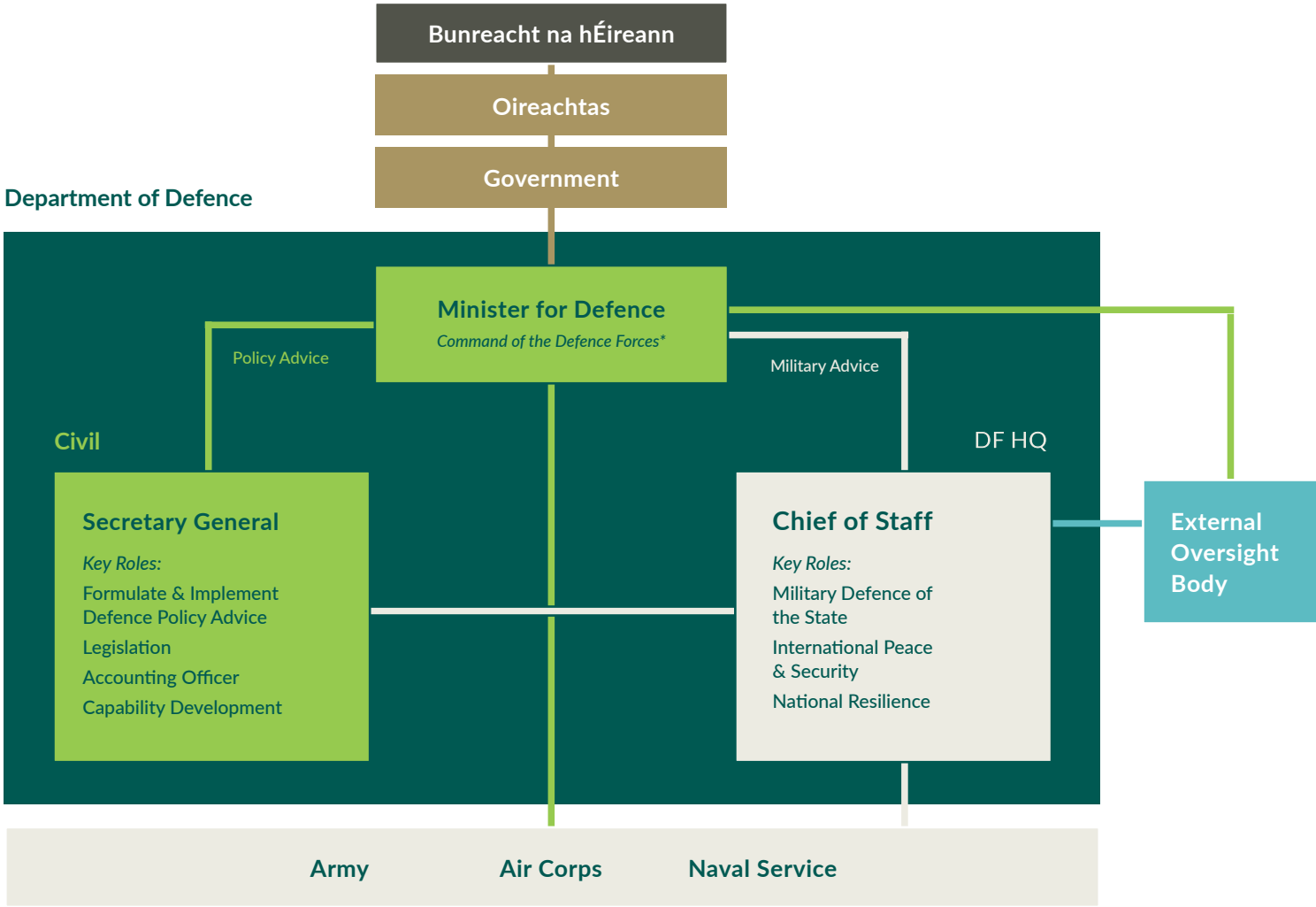
A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'Jacqui McCrum'.

**Jacqui McCrum**  
Secretary General

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'R. Mulcahy'.

**Lieutenant General Rossa Mulcahy**  
Chief of Staff

# Department of Defence and Defence Forces



## Department of Defence Mandate

The Minister and Secretaries Act 1924 states the Department of Defence “shall comprise the administration and business of the raising, training, organisation, maintenance, equipment, management, discipline, regulation, and control according to law of the Military Defence Forces of Saorstát Eireann, and all powers, duties and functions connected with the same”. The Minister for Defence is the head of the Department of Defence and the Secretary General is the “principal officer” of the Department and is also appointed by the Minister for Public Expenditure, Infrastructure, Public Service Reform and Digitalisation as the Accounting Officer for all defence expenditure. Defence Forces Headquarters (DFHQ) is the military element of the Department of Defence, which is headed by the Chief of Staff, who is the Minister’s principal military adviser.

\* Work is currently on-going on high level command and control which will have an impact on the command relationship between the Minister and the Defence Forces

# Department of Defence and Defence Forces Vision, Mission & Roles

## Strategic Level of Ambition

To defend Irish sovereignty, protect Irish Citizens and secure Irish interests in support of Irish society, the Irish economy, our collective well-being and our territorial integrity

### Department of Defence Vision

A secure sovereign Ireland where citizens and Irish interests are protected

### Department of Defence Mission

Support the Minister through policy and military advice and implementation, efficient and effective use of resources and management of defence provision for Ireland

### Defence Forces Vision

Óglaigh Na hÉireann will be a joint, agile fit-for-purpose military force, postured to defend our sovereignty, protect Irish citizens, and secure Ireland's interests

### Defence Forces Mission

To deliver the joint military capability to defend Ireland's interests domestically and internationally

### Roles of the Department of Defence

- » Support the Minister, provide policy advice and support on defence matters, including the formulation of policy and its implementation and drafting legislation
- » Provide a lead role in international policy, in furtherance of Ireland's commitments in the area of international security and peace and security operations
- » Capability Development including major procurement, infrastructural programmes and the lands used by the military
- » Manage the financial and audit functions in connection with the Secretary General's role as Accounting Officer
- » Provide emergency planning coordination and oversight including resilience of critical entities
- » Management of legal, regulatory and litigation policy and related matters on behalf of the Minister
- » Policy oversight for the delivery of security, emergency and community services by the Defence Forces
- » Management of the human resources, civil and military industrial relations and the administration and grant of military pensions
- » Lead engagement with Government Departments, public authorities, the EU and public representatives with the inclusion of the Defence Forces where required
- » Management and development of Civil Defence at national level

### Roles of the Permanent Defence Force

- » Provide for the Military Defence of the State's sovereignty and territorial integrity
- » To contribute to regional and international peace and security operations
- » To contribute to national resilience and whole of Government security objectives
- » To fulfil any other tasks that Government may assign from time to time

### Roles of the Reserve Defence Force

- » To augment the Permanent Defence Force in crisis situations
- » To contribute to State ceremonial events

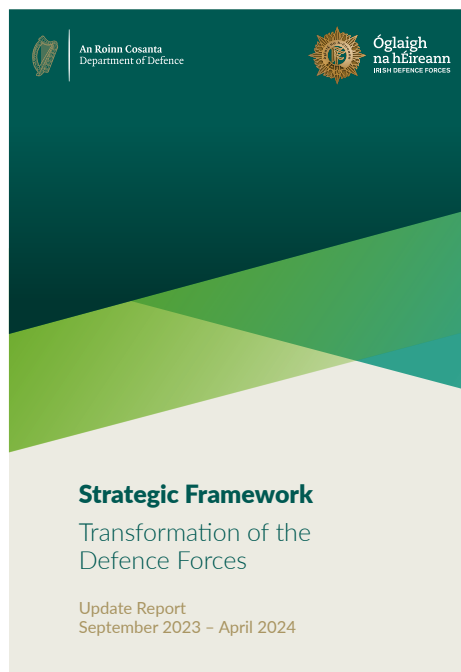
### Strategic goals

# Key Policy Documentation

In addition to the commitments in the Programme for Government, the key national policy documents on Defence are:



Defence Policy Review 2024



Strategic Framework



Detailed Implementation Plan for the Report of the Commission on the Defence Forces

The Defence Policy Review is the latest in the fixed cycle of reviews and lays out Government policy to 2028. This Review reaffirms and, where appropriate, revises Defence policy and the posture of the Defence Forces in response to the prevailing security environment and the wider national and international defence landscape. It is crucial that our Defence policy remains iterative and adaptive to the prevailing threat level and security environment and the fixed cycle of reviews supports this.



# Policy Context

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## Security Environment for National and International Policy

Ireland is committed to a values-based foreign policy, to multilateralism, support of the United Nations and to a policy of military neutrality. Our geographic position and political history does not insulate us from the impacts of a rapidly changing and volatile international security environment that has become the new reality across Europe with increased focus on defence and security at the European level as evidenced by the publication of the White Paper on European Defence Readiness by the EU in March 2025. This changed environment is reflected in the Programme for Government commitments around defence and security.

The Defence Policy Review 2024 '*Adjusting and affirming our Defence policy in an era of change*', was published in July 2024 and is the latest in the fixed cycle of reviews and sets out the Government's policy to 2028. It is based on a Security Assessment carried out by an interagency working group led by the Department of Defence acknowledging the significant changes in the international security environment. These fixed cycle of defence reviews keep Defence policy up to date with the prevailing security environment and to revise policy and posture of the Defence Forces in response to the wider national and international defence landscape.

The Defence Policy Review highlights a number of key priorities for the period to 2028, including:

- » **Maritime Security:** The Department of Defence will lead on the development of the National Maritime Security Strategy for Ireland (in cooperation with national and international stakeholders)
- » **Immediate focus on the development of an Integrated Monitoring and Surveillance System** for Air, Land and Sea domains for Ireland
- » **Implementation of changes to command and control** and required governance and accountability, all of which are vital to the necessary transformation of the Defence Forces
- » Ireland will continue to play its part along with other Member States in **supporting European defence and security**, with cooperation framed in the context of our military neutrality
- » **Defence funding increases must be maintained** as a critical and crucial enabler for the transformation of the Defence Forces and the reinforcement of Ireland's role as a trusted security partner and responsible neighbour.

## Strategic Framework and Detailed Implementation Plan for the Commission on the Defence Forces

The Strategic Framework for the Transformation of the Defence Forces brings together from the multiplicity of plans developed, the immediate actions to be taken to support the transformation of the Defence Forces into a fit for purpose organisation to defend the State and meet the challenges of today and the future. This encompasses the actions from the report of the Independent Review Group on Dignity and Equality issues in the Defence Forces (IRG), Commission on the Defence Forces (CoDF) recommendations and all other current work strands for the transformation of the Defence Forces.

The implementation of the actions in the Strategic Framework, along with Programme for Government and the Update to the Detailed Implementation Plan for the CoDF, are the focus for the Department of Defence and the Defence Forces over the lifetime of this Strategy Statement.

## Tribunal of Inquiry

A Tribunal of Inquiry was established by Statutory Instrument (SI 304 of 2024), on 20 June 2024, to examine the effectiveness of the complaints process in the Defence Forces into workplace issues relating to discrimination, bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and sexual misconduct.

The Tribunal of Inquiry also provides for the investigation of the response to complaints in respect to the use of hazardous chemicals within Air Corps' headquarters at the Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnell and will consider the adequacy of the complaints process in light of the responses to same.

The Department of Defence and the Defence Forces are committed to cooperating fully with the Tribunal of Inquiry.

## External Oversight Body

An External Oversight Body of the Defence Forces was established in April 2023, initially on a non-statutory basis. The Body was established on a statutory basis from 1 December 2024. The Body continues to monitor and report on progress of the Defence Forces on the delivery of actions required to deliver the transformation to workplace culture and interpersonal behaviour throughout the Defence Forces.

## Legislation

In line with the Programme for Government, the Department is leading an ambitious agenda of legislative reform. This programme of work involves the modernisation and reform of both primary and secondary legislation relating to the Defence Forces and includes two Bills on the Government Legislative Programme focusing on: Despatch arrangements and reform of the "Triple Lock"; Suspension of members of the Defence Forces as required; Command and Control; Courts of Inquiry and Military Intelligence.

## Defence Funding

The Defence Sector is comprised of two Votes – Vote 35, Army Pensions and Vote 36, Defence. As part of annual Estimates processes, funding is provided to the Defence Vote Group, on an annual basis through separate allocations to each vote.

For 2025, the total allocation for the Defence Sector is €1.35 billion, comprising €1,021 million for Vote 36 - Defence, and €329 million for Vote 35 - Army Pensions. As part of Project Ireland 2040, and following a recent review, the National Development Plan sets out the Government's overarching investment strategy and capital budget for the period 2026-2030. As part of this revision, capital funding of €1.7 billion has been allocated to Defence. The funding is an increase of €600 million or 55% on the previous baseline figure of €1.1 billion.

## Maritime Security

The Defence Policy Review highlighted the Government prioritization of Maritime Security which led to the creation of a new Maritime Security Unit within the Department of Defence. This unit will lead the development of the National Maritime Security Strategy, which will require cooperation with national and international stakeholders and is due for publication before the end of 2025. The unit will also have a role in coordinating maritime security matters going forward.

## Office of Emergency Planning

The Government Task Force on Emergency Planning is the top-level structure which delivers policy and direction in relation to strategic emergency management.

The Office of Emergency Planning (OEP) provides a key support role to the Minister in his role as Chair of the Government Task Force on Emergency Planning. The OEP is responsible for the coordination, facilitation and education of all Departments and Agencies on issues relating to strategic emergency management. The OEP achieves this by publishing, and keeping up-to-date, a range of documents titled “Strategic Emergency Management: National Structures and Framework”. These documents ensure a coordinated approach and the best possible use of resources and compatibility across different policy areas. The OEP also provides assistance during national emergencies/crises to the lead government departments and it participates in national-level, inter-agency structured exercises.

The Department of Defence, through the OEP, is leading on transposing the Directive on the Resilience of Critical Entities and, in co-ordination with relevant government departments, is the point of contact for the cross-EU Critical Entities Resilience Group (CERG). The CERG facilitates the exchange of information, including best practices, on issues relating to the resilience of entities providing vital societal functions across the EU and in its Member States.

## Ireland’s Presidency of the European Union

Ireland will hold the Presidency of the Council of the European Union from 1 July to 31 December 2026. Preparations for Ireland’s Presidency are intensifying across both policy and operation strands of planning. The defence elements are being led by the Department of Defence, in close co-operation with the Department of the Taoiseach, Department of Foreign Affairs and with input from all Departments across Government. It is anticipated that the Defence Forces will support these efforts in the provision of operational, ceremonial and subject matter experts as required.

## Civil Defence

Civil Defence is a statutory volunteer based organisation that supports the Principal Response Agencies (local authorities, the Gardaí and the HSE), Government departments and state agencies, during national, regional and local emergency and non-emergency events.

Civil Defence policy is set down by the Minister for Defence, with the Department of Defence charged with the management and development of Civil Defence at national level. In this regard, the Department of Defence will work closely with the Inter Agency Guidance Team, local authorities and Civil Defence officers.

The Department of Defence, in keeping with the “Civil Defence – Towards 2030” policy document, will continue to develop the structures which support Civil Defence.

The Department will also support the continued provision of the Civil Defence role, under the Framework for Major Emergency Management across a range of emergency incidents.

## Cross-Cutting Commitments / Engagement with Subject Matter Experts (SMEs)

There are cross-departmental dimensions to the work of the Department and the Defence Forces and meeting our goals and objectives is often critically dependent on the inputs and co-operation of other Departments and State Agencies, exemplified by the commitments in the Programme for Government. Equally, their success can be dependent on the inputs and co-operation of both the Department and the Defence Forces. Department officials and Defence Forces personnel are represented on a number of inter-departmental groups and committees, which consider a range of cross-cutting issues that impact on Government.

This inter departmental and interagency work cuts across areas as diverse as national security, UN peace support operations, defence industry/dual use strategy, cyber security, fisheries protection, legislation and Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs) and Service Level Agreements (SLAs) as part of Aid to the Civil Power and Aid to the Civil Authority operations.

Given the scale of the expenditure, and the extent of focus at a European level, there is a cross Government imperative to understand, influence and potentially capitalise on the opportunities arising from these new initiatives. The Department has established an EU Industrial Engagement Branch with the intention that this Branch would engage with Irish Industry and support their engagement in EU funding initiatives such as the European Defence Fund. In addition, the Branch will drive engagement with Irish SME's in the security and defence field to address capability requirements for the Defence Forces, in line with our ongoing Capability Development Plan.

## Human Rights and Equality Issues

Sections 42(1) and 42(2) of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 requires that the human rights and equality issues that are relevant to the performance of the functions of the Department of Defence have been considered in the preparation of this Strategy Statement. The approach to human rights and equality issues is being pursued through a number of programmes.

In relation to equality, the Defence Forces' Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Statement and Action Plan; the Defence Forces' Equity policy; the Defence Forces' Values in Action Programme and the Defence Forces' Action Plan on Women, Peace and Security, all facilitate a focus on equality, diversity and inclusion within the Defence Forces. A significant body of work involving both civilian and military branch engagement has been undertaken to revise and implement the existing Defence Forces policy relating to maternity and other forms of protected leave. Future initiatives include the development of a Defence Forces Inclusion policy with accompanying actions. The Defence Forces have also embarked on a Culture Transformation Programme, which culminate in a consumable Defence Forces Culture Vision Statement and strategy.

Underpinning the approach to supporting its employees, the Department's People Strategy launched in June 2025 has at its core a commitment to equality of opportunity. Department employees are supported in working in a safe, inclusive environment through a Dignity at Work policy and through a range of learning and development opportunities, including unconscious bias training. There are also additional supports available through the Civil Service Employee Assistance Service and the Department's Disability Liaison Officer.

Policies are also in place to ensure the right of each individual, civil or military, to dignity in their work environment and in all activities arising from their service, whilst provisions also exist for dealing with internal complaints and the disclosure of information under the Protected Disclosures Act 2014. Members of the Defence Forces have access to a statutory grievance process under section 114 of the Defence Acts 1954-2015. In addition, members of the Defence Forces can bring complaints to the Ombudsman for the Defence Forces. In early 2025, a new independent Interim Grievance Manager (IGM) process was launched for serving members of the Defence Forces for complaints of an interpersonal nature. The new process will be in place initially on a non-statutory basis for a pilot of 12 months, with a view to implementing a more permanent statutory based complaints scheme, pending changes to the primary legislation.

## Official Languages Act

The Department of Defence is committed to fulfilling the obligations set out in the Official Languages Act 2003 and the Official Languages (Amendment) Act, 2021 with regard to the level of service provided through Irish. The Department of Defence has in place its fourth Language Scheme in accordance with the Official Languages Act 2003 covering the period 2022 - 2025. The primary objective of the Act is to ensure better availability and a higher standard of public services through Irish. Events are held regularly to promote the use of the Irish language within the Department and the Department offers Irish language training to staff on a regular basis. The Defence Forces appoints an 'Ofígeach Sinserach Gaeilge', who coordinates Defence Forces Irish Language training and engagement fora and advises and supports the Chief of Staff and the Defence Forces Board as required.

## Sustainable Development Goals and Climate Action

In September 2015, 193 UN Member Countries, including Ireland, adopted the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) which consist of 169 targets around the 17 high level goals. While the Department of Environment, Climate and Communications has lead responsibility for promoting and overseeing the coherent implementation of the SDGs, the whole-of-Government approach to implementation means all Departments are responsible for implementing the SDGs related to their functions.

We will continue to contribute to the implementation of the relevant SDGs and targets, as set out in the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) is an integral part of social and economic development and has been recognised by several global documents on DRR and sustainable development. The Office of Emergency Planning (OEP) has responsibility for coordinating disaster risk reduction measures across Government using the Strategic Emergency Management: National Structures and Framework as the policy guide. The OEP is also responsible for the production of the National Risk Assessment, using the Lead Government model. The latest National Risk Assessment identified 22 key strategic risks, the top four being Cyber-Attack, Disruption to Critical Supply Chain, Pandemic and Anti-Microbial Resistant Infection.

We will support Ireland's fourth National Action Plan (NAP4) on UNSCR 1325, Women, Peace and Security 2025-2030 and we recognise the importance of supporting efforts and actions identified to enable the National Action Plan be implemented, in order to achieve gender equality. We support the role of the Oversight Group as a mechanism to facilitate and monitor the implementation of the Plan and representatives of the Department and the Defence Forces will engage with and contribute to the Group. This NAP4 will also inform the development of the next Defence Forces Action Plan for the Implementation of UNSCR 1325 which will also address gender equality in all aspects within the Defence Forces.

The NAP aligns closely with A Better World, Ireland's international development policy, where gender equality stands as one of our four core priorities, alongside climate action, reducing humanitarian need, and strengthening governance. We continue to take a proactive approach to climate action. The Climate Action Plan 2021 (CAP21) committed that public sector bodies will reduce Green House Gases (GHG) by 51% by 2030 (Baseline average 2016-2018), improve energy efficiency from 33% (2020) to 50% by 2030 and produce a Climate Action Roadmap. The Climate Action Mandate 2024 also requires all public bodies to ensure sustainability is considered across all aspects of their work.

## Sustainable Development Goals and Climate Action (continued)

The Defence Sector accounts for 3% of the total Public Sector CO<sub>2</sub> emissions, with the Defence Forces making up 98.6% of these emissions and the Department accounting for 1.4%. In 2024, the Department surpassed its energy efficiency 2030 reduction goal, 6 years ahead of schedule. The Department's target for achieving 51% reduction in GHG by 2030 is well underway and projects we are considering currently such as Solar PV and Electric Vehicle Charging Ports for the Newbridge office and eventually our other sites, should see us surpass our targets by 2030.

This proactive approach is also reflected in the Defence Forces Built Infrastructure Programme 2022 – 2027 which commits that all future projects will endeavour to achieve NZEB status for both new builds and deep retrofits of existing buildings across the Defence Sector, with improved thermal performance, decarbonised heating and Renewable Energy Sources (RES) specified as standard. The Defence Forces are implementing plans to achieve a 7% year on year reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions. Through improvements in efficiency, the installation of RES projects, the upgrading and retrofit of electrified heating systems and the roll out of EV road transport, the Defence Forces is committed to becoming exemplars and leaders in this area.

The Defence Forces Climate Action Roadmap, identifies what measures need to be in place to meet the 2030 targets, and have outlined that annual savings of 21,828,000 kgCO<sub>2</sub> need to be achieved in order to meet our targets. The Defence Forces are committed to developing measures under this roadmap and shares the ambition in the EU Green Deal to create a carbon neutral continent by 2050, and over the next decade will transform from a high to low carbon organisation without compromising operational outputs. The Defence Sector will publish its Climate & Defence Strategy, a document that is required by the EU Strategic Compass in 2025, which will further strengthen the commitments to meeting these targets. The Defence Forces have engaged with external agencies such as SEAI, EDA, EEAS and NATO PfP to exchange information and best practice on decarbonisation and energy efficiency, and have strived to be exemplars in the Sustainable Energy sector across the public sector and partner nations. The Defence Forces was the first military in the world to achieve ISO50001 certification for its Energy Management System, and has been actively involved in assisting partner nations achieve this important benchmark of efficiency.

# Strategic Goals

Theme	No.	Strategic Goal	Action
1. Defence Policy	1.1	Provision of timely and relevant policy and military advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Continuous review of the defence and security environment to ensure the provision of timely and relevant policy and military advice to the Minister</li> <li>B. Ensure that appropriate responses in the delivery of defence outputs are identified and pursued to address changes in the defence and security environment including those arising at EU level following the publication of the EU White Paper on Defence</li> </ul>
	1.2	Complete the Strategic Defence Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. The next stage in the cycle of defence reviews will be initiated in 2025</li> </ul>
	1.3	Contribute to national and international security and defence policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Pursue measures in support of national security and engage fully with new national security arrangements</li> <li>B. Advance Ireland's strategic interests and values in international fora</li> <li>C. On-going whole of Defence assessment of Ireland's contribution to and engagement in international peace support and crisis management operations</li> <li>D. Department and Defence Forces support for Ireland's Presidency of the EU from 1st July to 31st December 2026</li> </ul>
	1.4	Enhance cross- cutting policy collaboration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Support the Government Task Force on Emergency Planning</li> <li>B. Deliver the Critical Entities Resilience Strategy in Q1 2026</li> <li>C. Deepen synergies with other Departments and Agencies, including through MOUs and SLAs</li> <li>D. Meet cross cutting Programme for Government commitments</li> <li>E. Continue to support and develop Civil Defence around its central strategic policy "Towards 2030"</li> <li>F. Continued Department and Defence Forces support in the development of a National Security Strategy</li> <li>G. Lead in developing National Maritime Security Strategy</li> <li>H. Continued proactive approach in the support of Climate Action including in domestic and foreign military planning considerations for operations, procurement and capability development (including infrastructure)</li> </ul>

# Strategic Goals (continued)

Theme	No.	Goal	Action
1. Defence Policy	1.5	Implement the Strategic Framework for the transformation of the Defence Forces	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Complete each action set out in the Strategic Framework</li> <li>B. Implementation of Programme for Government commitments</li> <li>C. Complete actions within the Detailed Implementation Plan for the Commission on the Defence Forces by the end of 2028</li> <li>D. Implement the Government approved recommendations of the IRG report including; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Tribunal of Inquiry</li> <li>ii. The External Oversight Body for the Defence Forces</li> </ul> </li> <li>E. Strategic HR and Cultural Change to be delivered</li> <li>F. Transformational change to modernize the Organisational Culture, its Human Resources strategies and practices</li> <li>G. Services to be reformed and restructured</li> <li>H. Fit for Purpose, agile and interoperable Future Force Design at a strategic, operational and service level to be established within each of the three services</li> <li>I. Reserve Defence Force to be revitalized</li> <li>J. To create a reserve force that can seamlessly train, operate and deploy with the Permanent Defence Force, nationally and internationally</li> </ul>
	1.6	Continue the programme of Legislative changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Continue the programme of legislative changes to underpin the whole of transformation agenda, including Cultural Change. Priority enabling changes includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Triple Lock provisions</li> <li>ii. Suspension of members of the Defence Forces as required</li> <li>iii. High Level Command and Control (C2) and Defence Forces Governance arrangements</li> <li>iv. Courts of Inquiry</li> <li>v. Military Intelligence</li> <li>vi. All other required legislative changes</li> </ul> </li> </ul>



## Strategic Goals (continued)

Theme	No.	Goal	Action
2. Ensuring the Capacity to Deliver	2.1	Development and maintenance of capabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Implement top-down capability development planning process with the delivering of longer term Capability Development Programme 2028 to 2040, and shorter term Capability Development Plan 2028 - 2032</li> <li>B. Continue to manage the increased investment in Defence, with the corresponding funding and political support necessary to achieve Level of Ambition 2, and preparations for the move to Level of Ambition 3 with commensurate investment</li> <li>C. Deliver key capability projects including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Military radar capability programme to enable an Integrated Monitoring and Surveillance System (IMSS) across Maritime, Land and Air Domains</li> <li>ii. Anti-Drone/Unmanned Aerial System/Remote Piloted System</li> <li>iii. Armoured Fleet Replacement</li> <li>iv. Naval Fleet Management &amp; Replacement</li> <li>v. Enhancement of Air Corps Fleet</li> <li>vi. Replacement of Existing Medium Lift Helicopter Fleet</li> <li>vii. Progress on Super Medium Helicopter Fleet</li> <li>viii. Subsea awareness capability</li> </ul> </li> <li>D. Delivery of the Defence Forces Cyber Defence Strategy</li> <li>E. Regeneration and growth of Ireland's Naval Service, Air Corps and Army</li> <li>F. Continue the increased Defence infrastructure investment including coastal basing options for the Naval Service</li> <li>G. Delivery of the Joint Military Intelligence Service and Military Intelligence School</li> <li>H. Digital Transformation Strategy for the Defence Forces to be delivered and implemented</li> </ul>

## Strategic Goals (continued)

Theme	No.	Goal	Action
2. Ensuring the Capacity to Deliver	2.2	Develop our people and enhance planning for future HR requirements	<p>A. Strategic HR and Cultural Change to be delivered in the Defence Forces</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Implement HR strategies to ensure that the Defence Forces, both Permanent Defence Force and Reserve Defence Force, attract, train, educate and retain personnel and to increase the strength levels of the Defence Forces towards the Commission on the Defence Forces LOA 2 envisaged establishment of 11,500</li> <li>ii. Develop and implement a civilianisation strategy and associated civilian workforce plan for the Defence Forces</li> <li>iii. Develop, resource and implement measures to ensure a strategic approach to recruitment and retention of Defence Forces personnel</li> <li>iv. Support the effective functioning of the C&amp;A Scheme for the PDF</li> <li>v. Ensure that the provisions of the Working Time Directive are, where appropriate, applied to the Defence Forces</li> </ul> <p>B. Implementation of the Department's People Strategy</p> <p>C. Finalisation and implementation of the Department's Communications Strategy</p> <p>D. Fulfil all commitments arising from public service reform initiatives including the Better Public Services – Public Service Transformation Strategy 2030 and Civil Service Renewal 2030</p> <p>E. Office of Veterans Affairs established</p>
	2.3	Efficient and innovative management of resources	<p>A. Comply with financial management, audit, assurance, risk assessment, the Government's Procurement Reform agenda and other requirements, including the Public Spending Code, Public Financial Procedures and governance standards as well as Protected Disclosures</p>

# Strategic Goals (continued)

Theme	No.	Goal	Action
3. Delivery of National Military Defence and Resilience	3.1	Ensuring credible national defence capacity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Provide a resilient and credible defence posture to underpin national defence and deterrence</li> <li>B. Establish integrated command and control systems linking the strategic, operational and tactical levels</li> <li>C. Create robust intelligence capabilities, providing early warning and cross domain situational awareness</li> <li>D. Continue to develop comprehensive Special Operations capacity for strategic tasks</li> <li>E. Develop and maintain a revitalised Reserve Defence Forces to augment the Permanent Defence Forces</li> </ul>
	3.2	Enhance International Defence and Security Cooperation and Crisis Response Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Deploy Defence Forces capabilities to multi-national peace support, crisis management and humanitarian relief operations in accordance with Government direction and legislative provision</li> </ul>
	3.3	Contribute to whole of Government defence and security resilience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Establish, maintain and develop comprehensive multi-domain defence and security capabilities, addressing traditional and emerging threats</li> <li>B. Contribute to national capacity for critical infrastructure protection and emergency/crisis response</li> <li>C. Support and develop agreed response mechanisms for complex security challenges and in support of other Government departments</li> </ul>
	3.4	Enabling flexible support to Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A. Develop and maintain flexible, scalable response capacities for diverse Government requirements e.g. Ministerial air transport service and ceremonial services</li> </ul>

# Programme for Government Commitments

## Defence-led Commitments arising from the Programme for Government (PfG) 2025 – Securing Ireland’s Future

The Programme for Government (PfG) agreed in January 2025 contains a number of commitments in the defence area and these are listed below. Much of our work over the lifetime of this Strategy Statement will prioritise the continued progression of these commitments.

No.	Commitment
1	<p>The role and contribution of our Defence Forces at home and abroad is a source of enormous pride for the Irish people. They are central to the nation's security and a projection of Ireland's values overseas, with an unbroken commitment to peacekeeping in often very challenging circumstances. Ireland's Defence Forces have the longest unbroken record of overseas service with the United Nations.</p> <p>Building on the progress achieved by the previous Government, this Government is committed to the ongoing transformation and modernisation of Oglagh na hÉireann across land, air, sea and cyber domains.</p> <p>We recognise the need to continuously strengthen our Defence capabilities in light of the changed geopolitical landscape since Russia's invasion of Ukraine.</p>
2	<p>The Government will preserve and protect Ireland's policy of active military neutrality. We also recognise that while we strongly value our military neutrality, we are not politically neutral. We will continue to engage with international partners and we will reform the Triple Lock legislation whilst also ensuring that amendments to the legislation are in keeping with our values and policy of active military neutrality.</p>
3	<p>We will also continue to co-operate with international partners in pursuit of our security interests and in line with our values, focussing on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>» International security and peacekeeping</li><li>» Protection of critical undersea infrastructure</li><li>» More efficient procurement of military equipment</li><li>» Cyber security and countering hybrid threats</li><li>» Training, upskilling and knowledge sharing</li></ul>
4	<p>Continue to increase investment in Defence, providing the funding and political support necessary to achieve Level of Ambition 2 Enhanced Capability, and move as quickly as possible to Level of Ambition 3 with commensurate investment as appropriate.</p>
5	<p>Deliver continued reform of the military leadership structures, including the changes necessary to establish a new Chief of Defence (CHOD) role.</p>
6	<p>Continue to support the High Level Action Plan on the implementation of the Commission on Defence Forces, including the identification of HQ locations.</p>
7	<p>Ensure full delivery of the new Joint Cyber Defence Command strategy published by the last Government.</p>

No.	Commitment
8	Prioritise the regeneration and growth of Ireland's Naval Service, including the Naval Reserve, with a focus on protecting our significant and expanding sub-sea data cabling infrastructure and emerging offshore energy sector.
9	Review our military intelligence structures to ensure that our intelligence services are optimised to protect national security.
10	Plan for the interoperability of specialist Defence Forces with specialist units of An Garda Síochána on national defence matters.
11	Continue to drive forward modernisation and cultural change, fully supporting the External Oversight Board in its work, implementing outstanding IRG recommendations and making our military a modern, effective and attractive employer of choice.
12	Cooperate fully with the Tribunal of Inquiry into Certain Matters relating to the complaints processes in the Defence Forces.
13	Continue the process of improving pay and conditions for serving personnel, while also continuing to build on improvements in the recruitment process including a nationwide programme for Transition Year and Third Level students, with a view to achieving the target of 11,500 personnel and better representation of women at all levels of the Defence Forces.
14	Continue to examine incentives and structural changes to make a military career accessible to a wider range of candidates, and to encourage existing personnel to extend their military careers, including Rewarding Long Service and broadening eligibility criteria.
15	Establish a properly resourced Office of Veterans Affairs, based within the Department of Defence and working across Government to assist with the needs of our veterans.
16	Enhance the Personnel Support Service (PSS), which provides essential support to the families and partners of Defence Force members, recognising the importance of their contribution.
17	Ensure the further development of our Reserve Defence Force, ensuring that the newly established Office of Reserve Affairs and the Regeneration and Development Plan is fully resourced and equipped and take all steps to increase the number of reserves.
18	Introduce financial supports for Irish SMEs who facilitate staff to be members of the RDF and explore the potential of our higher and further education institutions as centres for promoting a geographically dispersed reservist culture across the country.
19	Ensure effective implementation of the Working Time Directive.
20	Deliver enhanced radar capability for the country, with an integrated Monitoring and Surveillance System across Maritime, Land and Air domains.
21	Upgrade the military transport fleet, deliver additional Air Corps capacity, and deliver next generation radio communications and signal equipment.
22	Progress the Naval Service Vessel Renewal and Replacement Programme, replacing secondary armament across the fleet and enhancing our subsea capabilities.
23	We will continue to develop our maritime support infrastructure, investing to future proof Haulbowline Naval Base, and establishing an additional East Coast Base for the Naval Service.
24	We will continue the transformational investment in the military estate and the upgrading of barracks across the country, including major upgrade of Casement Aerodrome, Baldonnell.
25	We will audit the existing military estate and examine the feasibility of developing new accommodation on the estate for military personnel.
26	Implement the 'Civil Defence – Towards 2030' policy, including delivery of a new centralised volunteer and equipment management system.

# Programme for Government Commitments (continued)

## Cross-cutting Commitments in the Programme for Government 2025 related to the Department of Defence

No.	Commitment
1	Prioritise early review of the National Development Plan which will be completed in July 2025.
2	Review and reform the prioritisation process of capital projects in key agencies.
3	Accelerate the transfer of under-utilised state lands appropriate for residential development to the LDA.
4	Implement a Conservation Plan for the Curragh, establishing a management plan to ensure its preservation, with careful consideration of which agency is best suited to manage this historic landscape.
5	Increase the co-ordination role of the Department of the Taoiseach in relation to national security and establish a new National Security Committee, which will meet regularly and be chaired by the Taoiseach and comprised of the Tánaiste, the Minister for Justice and the Minister for Defence.
6	Examine the existing national security structures and consider how they can be further strengthened and complete this work within six months.
7	Bring the National Centre for Cyber Security and the National Security Authority under the remit of the Department of Justice to ensure proper alignment of national security infrastructure.
8	Publish plans for our upcoming Presidency to deliver against strategic priorities for Europe and Ireland.
9	Host an informal meeting of the European Council and a meeting of the European Political Community in Ireland during the Presidency, as well as a programme of between 16 and 20 informal Council meetings at Ministerial level.
10	Seek to bring some of the high-level meetings of our Presidency to cities and counties across Ireland, ensuring the entire country benefits from the profile the Presidency brings.
11	Prepare a revised National Security Strategy which reflects the changed geo-political landscape that Europe and Ireland confronts. This will ensure a whole of Government approach to defence and deterrence.
12	Establish a Cyber Security Centre of Excellence around a Cluster of Third Level Education facilities and related industry.





Óglaigh  
na hÉireann  
IRISH DEFENCE FORCES



An Roinn Cosanta  
Department of Defence