

Briefing Note: Establishing the Cost of the Public Sector Building Upgrade Programme



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There are approximately 15,000 public buildings in Ireland. These buildings are comprised of a wide variety of building archetypes from Victorian era schools and hospitals, to relatively modern office buildings.

To date, energy efficiency measures implemented have typically included behavioural change programmes, energy management and some equipment upgrades. The commitment that the entire public building stock will reach a high-energy efficiency performance level by 2030 is a step change in ambition and the majority of buildings are likely to require significant fabric upgrades to reach this standard. Many public sector buildings have high occupancy rates, making significant retrofit more challenging again.

The NDP allocates €750m to the task over 2018–2027. However, the total level of investment necessary to meet the commitment is likely to be significantly higher. In order to establish this cost, the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform, working with the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment and through the Structural Reform Support Service of the European Union, has established a research project which will provide further clarity on this question later in 2020.

The aim of the research project is to develop a Framework for implementing a comprehensive building update programme for the Public Sector, in consultation with key stakeholders. This should result in:

- An assessment of the scale of investments needed and funding options to reach 2030 energy efficiency targets;
- The development of an implementation framework for the retrofit programme including project selection (technical and economic analysis), tendering processes and procurement, implementation of works and contract management, and creating the structures for monitoring and ex-post project evaluation; and
- Proposals for an effective cross-agency organisational governance structure for implementing the energy efficiency retrofit programme. This is to include recommendations on:
 - how the relevant agencies currently playing a role in public sector energy efficiency can most effectively engage with each other to deliver upgrades of expected scale;
 - how to tackle gaps in terms of necessary skills and expertise, administrative capacity and human resources;
 - how to ensure sufficient capacity for identification and formulation of potential projects;
 - how to develop the structures for decision-making required to prioritise investments.

The project commenced in November 2019. A draft report is expected by end-June, while the final report is expected by end-September.

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