



OXFAM
Ireland

OXFAM IRELAND

PRE-BUDGET

SUBMISSION

2027

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FOREWORD

Ireland enters Budget 2027 in a position of extraordinary economic strength. Yet, as the Irish Fiscal Advisory Council warns in its June 2026 Fiscal Assessment Report, the headline figures “mask growing weaknesses in the public finances”. Ireland’s continued reliance on corporation tax paid by a small number of foreign-owned multinationals leaves our economy exposed to external shocks and growing global uncertainty.

Periods of economic strength are the time to prepare for the future, not simply to manage the present. We should make the structural adjustments our economy needs now, from this position of strength, rather than waiting until an energy crisis, geopolitical conflict or global economic disruption limits our fiscal choices.

Ireland has the capacity to build a more resilient economy. We need a broader, fairer and more sustainable tax base. While working families continue to face rising costs, wealth has become increasingly concentrated. A well-designed Net Wealth Tax, alongside a Windfall Tax on extraordinary corporate profits, would help diversify our revenue base, reduce our dependence on volatile corporation tax receipts and ensure that those with the greatest capacity to contribute do so fairly. Windfall corporation tax receipts should then be invested in the long-term assets that will underpin Ireland’s future prosperity and resilience.

The purpose of raising revenue is not simply to strengthen the public finances. It is to invest in Ireland’s future.

In Ireland, this means building a caring economy to ensure that no child grows up in poverty. It means accelerating a just transition to a low-carbon economy. It means investing in gender justice so that women and girls have the opportunity and power to shape their own futures. It means investing in a circular economy that keeps goods in use for longer, creates decent local jobs and reduces emissions - an approach Oxfam Ireland demonstrates every day through its network of 44 shops across the island.

Globally, it means honouring Ireland’s long-standing commitment to spend 0.7% of Gross National Income on Official Development Assistance, recognising that reducing poverty and inequality contributes to a more stable world. Through our external action, Ireland can be an influential actor, not only a principled voice, in building a more just world for generations to come.

Budget 2027 presents a rare opportunity to act from a position of strength. By broadening our tax base today and investing in people at home and abroad, Ireland can build a more sustainable economy, a fairer society and a more secure future for all.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Clarken'.

Jim Clarken,

Chief Executive Officer, Oxfam Ireland

1. INTRODUCTION

This Budget 2027, Oxfam Ireland is calling for a progressive, imaginative and sustainable approach to taxation to enable long-term investment in tackling inequality in Ireland while meeting our commitments on climate action, international development and human rights.

We are proposing a Net Wealth Tax on the top 1% of wealth holders and a permanent Windfall Tax on energy companies. Together, these measures could raise over €1 billion annually. By broadening Ireland's tax base, they would help provide sustainable funding for the long-term investment needed to tackle inequality while supporting a just transition to an economy that operates within planetary boundaries.

Our key recommendations are:

Revenue Raising

- Introduce a Net Wealth Tax on the top 1% of wealth holders in Ireland.
- Implement a Windfall Tax on energy companies.

Climate Action

- Introduce a moratorium on further data centre connections and expansion until data centres can operate within Ireland's legally binding emissions reduction commitments.
- Increase Ireland's international climate finance contribution to at least €500 million per year.

Global Justice

- Accelerate progress towards Ireland's commitment to spend 0.7% of Gross National Income (GNI) on Official Development Assistance (ODA) by 2030.

Equality and Inclusion

- Implement a series of measures to advance gender equality, including rolling out a publicly delivered childcare system, progressing the implementation of Sláintecare, delivering a rights-based Home Support Scheme, introducing a Cost of Disability Payment, and fully resourcing the forthcoming Fourth National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-Based Violence.

Circular Economy

- Remove VAT barriers to the donation of unsold goods by introducing an Input VAT Adjustment Safe Harbour, modelled on the French approach, or a VAT derogation for donated goods, enabling businesses to donate surplus stock to charity retailers without financial penalty.

Corporate Accountability

- Adequately resource the supervisory authority responsible for monitoring and enforcing the obligations under the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive.

Access to Justice

- Allocate additional funding to the Legal Aid Board to recruit and retain staff to provide legal representation, advice, and counselling for international protection applicants.

2. TAXING WEALTH

While the world failed to eradicate poverty over the last decade, the number of billionaires has surpassed 3,000 for the first time, and the level of billionaire wealth is now higher than at any time in history.¹ Since 2015, the richest 1 percent have gained at least \$33.9 trillion in wealth in real terms, enough to end annual global poverty 22 times over. They now own more wealth than the bottom 95% of the world combined.²

The most recent publication of Distributional Wealth Accounts by the Central Bank³ outlines the extent of wealth inequality in Ireland.

- The wealthiest 10 per cent of Irish households owned 49.2 per cent of total household net wealth in the country.
- The total net wealth of households in the poorest half of the distribution is only 8.9 per cent of the national total.

A key policy intervention to address wealth inequality is through taxing wealth and redistributing proceeds to fund sustainable development in both Ireland and around the world.

The European Commission recently published an analysis of wealth-related taxes in the EU which concluded that: *“Overall, country experiences show that net wealth taxes can support revenue mobilisation and progressivity when they feature broad, coherent bases, high thresholds, strong administrative foundations and effective enforcement.”*⁴

At the UN level, 192 countries are negotiating a United Nations Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation and two related protocols. The Convention, to be agreed by 2027, will include a commitment on taxation of High-Net-Worth Individuals. This approach has been reaffirmed at last year’s UN Financing for Development Conference in Seville.⁵

These approaches internationally are in keeping with the recommendations of an expert Commission on Taxation and Welfare, that was tasked by the Government to come up with recommendations to put Ireland’s budgetary position on a sustainable footing in 2022. The key strategic recommendation of this Commission was:

1 Oxfam (2026), Resisting the rule of the rich.

2 Oxfam (2025), From Private Profit to Public Power: Financing Development, Not Oligarchy | Oxfam International

3 Central Bank of Ireland (2026), Distributional Wealth Accounts for Ireland, Q3, 2025.

4 European Commission, (2026), Wealth taxation, including net wealth, capital and exit taxes, Executive summary.

5 Compromiso de Sevilla for action 16 June.pdf

“In Ireland. In essence, the balance of taxation must shift away from taxes on labour and towards taxes on capital, wealth, and consumption. A strengthening of the PRSI base, to enhance the Social Insurance Fund, is also required. These reforms should ensure the resilience of the tax base into the future and thereby reduce its vulnerability to future shocks.”⁶

This year Oxfam Ireland commissioned leading experts⁷ to develop a workable model for a Net Wealth Tax in Ireland. They proposed the following:

- A Net Wealth Tax (NWT) on net household wealth above approximately €3m. This would target the wealthiest 1 percent of households (approximately 43,000 individuals). Such a tax could be introduced on a flat rate basis with just 1 per cent rate or it could be introduced on a progressive basis with higher marginal rates targeting the even smaller group of the super rich.
- The tax would apply to every tax resident in Ireland and would apply to the entirety of a household’s global wealth holdings.
- In order to safeguard the tax base an Exit Tax should be introduced at the same time in order to prevent high net worth individuals from relocating to other tax jurisdictions to avoid the tax. The Exit Tax should be set at a multiple of the rate set for the NWT itself.
- There should be no exemptions or reliefs for any asset type. This means no exemptions or reliefs for real estate, family-owned farms and businesses, pensions, or other asset family-owned. Introducing exemptions and reliefs will distort investment decisions, open easy opportunities for tax avoidance and undermine the case for the wealth tax on equity grounds.
- The Local Property Tax (LPT) is a pre-existing partial wealth tax and it is therefore reasonable on horizontal equity grounds to offset LPT payments against the NWT.
- A €1 billion yield is estimated per annum for this NWT.⁸

Parallel to introducing an NWT domestically, Ireland can also show leadership in the various multilateral spaces where taxation of ‘High-Net Worth-Individuals’ is being discussed. For example, with the negotiations at the UN on a Framework Convention on International Taxation Cooperation reaching a crucial stage this year, Ireland should adopt a principled position in the UN Tax Convention negotiations - one that supports ambition, stands in solidarity with low-income countries, and contributes to building a fairer global tax system, especially in relation to High-Net-Worth-Individuals. Likewise, Ireland’s Presidency of the Council of the EU this year presents an opportunity for Ireland to increase transparency and coordination around wealth taxation in the EU.

Designing an Effective Net Wealth Tax

A well-designed net wealth tax can help broaden Ireland’s tax base, reduce reliance on volatile corporate tax receipts and support a fairer and more sustainable tax system. International evidence demonstrates that the effectiveness of a net wealth tax depends fundamentally on its design. The European Commission has concluded that net wealth taxes can support revenue mobilisation and progressivity where they feature broad tax bases, high thresholds, strong administrative foundations and effective enforcement.

Capital flight and investment: Concerns about capital flight can be addressed through careful policy design. The proposed model applies to all Irish tax residents, covers worldwide assets, includes a high tax-free threshold and introduces an Exit Tax to discourage tax-motivated relocation. International evidence also suggests that the behavioural effects of wealth taxes depend on their design and administration.

Family homes, farms and businesses: Concerns about the impact of a wealth tax on principal private

⁶ Commission on Taxation and Welfare (2022), Report of the Commission on taxation and Welfare

⁷ McDonnell, Nugent and McCaughey, (2026), Confronting Wealth Inequality in Ireland, Oxfam Ireland.

⁸ McDonnell, Nugent and McCaughey, (2026), Confronting Wealth Inequality in Ireland, Oxfam Ireland.

residences, family farms and family businesses can be addressed through careful policy design. Rather than creating exemptions for particular asset types, the proposed model relies on a €3 million tax-free threshold.

Asset-rich, cash-poor households: Policymakers could consider a ceiling relief to ensure that combined income tax and wealth tax liabilities do not exceed a defined proportion of annual income.

Administration: Advances in tax administration, valuation methods and international information exchange have made wealth taxes more administratively feasible. Applying the tax only above a high threshold also limits the number of liable taxpayers and helps keep administration proportionate.

Double taxation: A net wealth tax recognises that accumulated wealth provides an additional capacity to contribute to the public finances. Many existing taxes, including VAT, also apply to resources that have previously been taxed, and wealth taxation complements rather than replaces existing taxes.

Revenue: The proposed model would apply to net household wealth above approximately €3 million, targeting around 43,000 individuals (the wealthiest 1%), and is estimated to raise approximately €1 billion annually, helping to broaden Ireland's tax base and strengthen the long-term sustainability of the public finances.

Recommendations:

- **Introduce a Net Wealth Tax on the top 1% of wealth holders in Ireland.**
- **Publicly support and advance efforts at the EU and UN to coordinate taxation of wealth, especially through the UN Framework Convention on International Tax Cooperation.**

3. RESOURCING A JUST TRANSITION AND CLIMATE JUSTICE

It is deeply concerning that Ireland remains on track to miss its legally binding 51% emissions reduction target by 2030 (compared to 2018). The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) estimates that Ireland is on track to achieve a projected reduction of only 13% by 2030, with existing measures in place.⁹ This demonstrates that Ireland is not taking the climate crisis seriously. One example of Ireland's lack of policy coherence in relation to climate action is the current policy supporting rapid data centre expansion.

Data centres are already using up more than 20% of Ireland's electricity, more than all urban homes in the country. This is forecast to grow to a staggering 30% by 2030 - data centres are predicted to consume almost one third of Ireland's grid power. At best estimates, Ireland currently hosts 82 operational data centres, or least 25% of the European data centre market - and this is projected to surge.¹⁰ Research from Prof. Hannah Daly¹¹ has shown that between 2017 and 2023, all additional wind energy generation in Ireland was absorbed by data centres. As data centre demand has expanded at the same rate as renewables generation, renewables are not delivering net reductions in fossil fuel use in power generation. Dozens of data centres have secured or are seeking connections to the natural gas network to overcome local power network constraints. On-site generation of electricity with natural gas is less efficient than grid-scale generation, further increasing emissions intensity, and will sustain fossil fuel demand. Ireland needs to introduce a moratorium on further data centre connection and expansion, until data centres can operate within our legally binding emission reduction commitments.

The great injustice of the climate crisis is that those who are the least responsible for causing it are also the most vulnerable to its effects, including extreme weather events, food insecurity and water scarcity. As an organisation that focuses on eradicating poverty and reducing inequality wherever it exists, we also recognise that, unless action is taken, it will be Ireland's disadvantaged communities who are hit first and hardest as the country becomes increasingly exposed to climate-related risks.

Just and effective climate action requires largescale investment, both in Ireland and globally. Government should commit to applying the polluter pays principle when raising the revenue required to make these investments. This means making sure that it is the corporations, businesses and individuals who have generated profits and wealth from polluting activities who are responsible for paying the largest share of the bill.

We know that energy and fossil fuel companies are making extraordinary profits from the energy crisis that has arisen because of the illegal US and Israeli war with Iran. The estimated windfall war profits for major fossil fuel companies for 2026 is \$234B.¹²

The current situation echoes the circumstances that led to European Commission adopting Council Regulation (EU) 2022/1854, which introduced a temporary solidarity contribution on excess profits in the energy sector. That instrument demonstrated both the feasibility and effectiveness of coordinated EU-level action. An assessment by the European Commission calculated that total revenue collection was in the order of €28 billion during the fiscal years of 2022 and 2023.¹³ €350 million was collected in Ireland from this new temporary windfall taxes in the energy sector.¹⁴

⁹ EPA, (2026), Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Projections 2025-30.

¹⁰ Friends of the Earth Ireland, (2025), Energy for Who? 5 reasons we don't need so many data centres and why we need to campaign against them.

¹¹ Prof. Hannah Daly, (2025), Data centres in the context of Ireland's carbon budgets, Environmental Research Institute-UCC.

¹² Guardian, 15th April 2026, \$30m an hour: big oil reaping huge war windfall from consumers, analysis finds

¹³ European Commission, (2025) Solidarity contribution and enacted equivalent measures: stocktaking

¹⁴ CSO (2024), Environmental Taxes 2023

Climate finance is an integral element of climate justice. Based on their historic responsibility (wealthy countries' carbon emissions have been the main driver of climate change) and capacity to pay, Global North countries are obligated under the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) to provide finance for climate action in Global South countries. As global warming continues and the impacts of climate change become more severe, current climate finance flows are nowhere near the scale needed.

Ireland's Climate and Environmental Finance Report 2024¹⁵ demonstrates that Ireland continues to be a leader in terms of the quality of its climate finance by prioritising grant-based climate finance focussed on adaptation in Least Developed Countries (LDCs) with the additional commitment to inclusive, gender responsive and locally led climate action. However, Ireland's climate finance contribution of €207.7 million in 2024, falls far short of Ireland's 'fair share' of global climate finance. Based on developed countries commitment to deliver \$100 billion in climate finance to developing countries by 2020 Ireland's 'fair share' of mitigation and adaptation finance is calculated as €500 million per year.¹⁶ This figure does not include Ireland's 'fair share' of Loss and Damage finance. It should also be noted that Ireland's climate finance contributions are counted as part of Ireland's ODA and are thus not additional funding as is required under the UNFCCC. Moreover, at COP29, high income countries, including Ireland, agreed to scale up total climate finance contributions to \$300 billion by 2035. This would require a three-fold increase in Ireland's climate finance contributions.

Recommendations:

- **Introduce a moratorium on further data centre connection and expansion, until data centres can operate within our legally binding emission reduction commitments.**
- **Ireland should propose a renewed and permanent EU-wide windfall profit tax on energy company profits, to ensure a coordinated and timely response to the current energy crisis. Pending an EU-wide windfall tax, Ireland should move ahead with implementing its own windfall tax on energy companies. All revenues raised from such a windfall tax should be clearly and transparently earmarked to support vulnerable households, the clean energy transition and international climate finance.**
- **Increase overall international climate finance contributions to at least €500m per year, in line with best estimates on Ireland's fair share. Develop and implement an ambitious roadmap for 2026-2030 for achieving this target while ensuring that contributions are (i) distinct from and in addition to ODA spending and (ii) distributed to local communities and women-centred organisations as a priority.**
- **Continue to deliver Ireland's climate finance in grants rather than loans and prioritise its distribution directly to civil society organisations. Where support is given through multilateral institutions, provide robust evidence to show that this assistance is targeted, valuable and effective in reaching people and communities on the frontline.**
- **Develop, publish and implement a plan for contributing Ireland's fair share to the Loss and Damage Fund, estimated to be at least €1.5 billion per year by 2030.¹⁷**

¹⁵ Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (2026), Ireland's Climate and Environmental Finance Report 2024.

¹⁶ Dochas (2025), Climate Finance and Ireland

¹⁷ Christian Aid Ireland and Trocaire, (2022), The Cost of Inaction.

4. FULFILLING COMMITMENTS TO OFFICIAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (ODA)

The abrupt closure of USAID and ongoing cuts to Official Development Assistance by several large donors has completely upended the current paradigm of international development and is making the world an even more unequal and unsafe place. Coupled with this, the EU has dramatically shifted ODA focus towards private sector investment under the Global Gateway approach.

This has happened at a time when humanitarian needs are increasing exponentially:

- more than 239 million people require humanitarian assistance globally,¹⁸
- over 117 million people are forcibly displaced by conflict and violence,¹⁹
- over 266 million people face acute food insecurity,²⁰
- around 520 million children—more than one out of five children in the world—are living in or fleeing conflict zones.²¹

Although Ireland has consistently championed human rights, humanitarian response and gender equality on the international stage, our ODA contribution is still below the UN target of 0.7% of Gross National Income in ODA. This commitment has been unfulfilled for many years—in 2006, Ireland reaffirmed its commitment to reach the UN target of allocating 0.7% of its Gross National Income (GNI) to Official Development Assistance (ODA) to developing countries by 2012.²² This year's budget is an opportunity to accelerate progress towards reaching Ireland's commitment to spend 0.7% GNI on ODA.

Moreover, holding the Presidency of the Council of the EU Ireland during the second half of 2026 when discussions about the future of the EU's ODA strategy will take place, affords Ireland a key role in steering these discussions. Ireland should defend a principled and poverty-focused EU international cooperation budget as per its purpose under the EU Treaties, safeguarding the Global Europe instrument from the current trend of external action being influenced by the EU's own security and economic interests, as seen in its Global Gateway Strategy. Positive development outcomes in its partner countries should be prioritised. Adopting short-term migration control objectives that do not consider the complexity of the issue should be avoided, as they risk creating a fundamental contradiction between the primacy of EU law and the EU's practice.

It is noteworthy that at a time when ODA for gender equality is declining (in both volume and share of ODA),²³ Ireland remains focused on gender justice. Ireland is in second place among DAC members of the OECD for share of ODA with gender equality and women's empowerment as policy objective.²⁴ We would encourage Ireland to maintain this focus.

18 OCHA, (2025), Global Humanitarian Overview 2026.

19 UNHCR, (2025), Mid-Year Trends.

20 Global Network Against Food Crisis, (2026), Global Report on Food Crises.

21 Save the Children, (2025), Stop the War on Children: Security for whom?

22 Overseas Development Aid. – Tuesday, 17 Oct 2006 – Parliamentary Questions (29th Dáil) – Houses of the Oireachtas

23 OECD, 2026, ODA for gender equality is plummeting: How can we protect it?

24 OECD, 2024, Development Finance for Gender Equality 2024

Recommendations:

- **Accelerate progress towards Ireland's commitment to spend 0.7% of our GNI on ODA by 2030 and publish a pathway to achieve this and maintain focus on gender equality.**
- **In the new Global Europe Instrument, reinstate a dedicated CSO envelope, ensure direct access for local organisations, and maintain grants-based funding. Make CSO participation mandatory across programming and implementation.**
- **Investing in local organisations and funds that deliver programmes on the front lines, empowers communities, maximises the reach and effectiveness of programmes and supports durable outcomes.**
- **Ireland should ensure that the Council of the EU positions reaffirm that international development cooperation must focus on poverty reduction and inequality, in line with Article 208 TFEU and the EU Consensus on Development.**
- **Ireland should support the Commission's proposal of a €200 billion external action budget, including clearly ringfenced €25 billion for humanitarian aid in the next MFF.**
- **Ireland should push for increased support and structural, flexible, long-term funding to organisations, including movements and networks, to ensure that civic space is maintained. Ireland should push to recognise and ensure that advocacy activities are protected in EU funding in relevant EU policies and processes, including in the MFF. There should also be a strong gender focus and meaningful and sufficient support for women's rights organisations, feminist and LGBTQIA+ movements.**

5. ACHIEVING GENDER JUSTICE

When public services are inadequate or unavailable, it places an inordinate burden on everyone, especially women as primary caregivers, often compromising their health and their opportunities for education and employment. Conversely, quality public systems increase women's economic opportunities and their decision-making power within the household and beyond, which can make a key difference in spreading care responsibilities more equitably.

There is a crisis in care and support in Ireland, with under resourcing, accessibility issues, lack of adequate provision and moves towards commodification and corporatisation affecting all aspects of care and support provision. Care is gendered, with women undertaking twice as much unpaid care work as men and making up the majority of the paid care and support workforce. In 2020, Oxfam estimated that Irish women spend 38 million hours a week on unpaid care work, contributing at least €24 billion to the economy every year – the equivalent of 12.3 percent of the entire annual Irish economy. Globally, women do more than three-quarters of all unpaid care work. Women and girls are putting in 12.5 billion hours of unpaid care work every day, which amounts to a contribution to the global economy of at least \$10.8 trillion a year – more than three times the size of the global tech industry.²⁵

The Government has committed to the state-led delivery of early childhood education and care, and the removal of the Carer's Allowance means-test, which are welcome. However significant progress must be made towards the development of our public services in a way that is universal and inclusive and gender sensitive. The ongoing implementation of Sláintecare must be a priority for this Government, as the current reliance on private hospitals and health services impacts on women's timely access to care. Finally, despite some policy and legislative progress, violence against women continues to be at crisis levels. To be successful, policy change has to be underpinned by adequate resourcing in the form of annual specialised support for Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence (DSGBV) organisations through adequate financing of Cuan.

Recommendations:

- **Roll-out of publicly-delivered childcare system.**
- **Progress implementation of Sláintecare, including additional investment of 10%.**
- **Deliver a rights-based Home Support Scheme alongside a clearly defined system.**
- **Statutory right to personal assistance for disabled people, along with investment including recurring cost of disability payment, that addresses actual cost of disability.**
- **Fully resource implementation of the forthcoming 4th National Strategy on Domestic, Sexual and Gender-based Violence (DSGBV). Resource Cuan to provide secure and multi-annual funding to frontline and DSGBV specialist services supporting victims-survivors of DSGBV in all their diversity and lived experience, including organisations working on frontline services, advocacy, awareness, and research.**

²⁵ Oxfam Ireland (2020) Investing in our care system will help tackle gender inequality

6. MOVING TO A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

Oxfam Ireland is playing a vital role in Ireland's transition to a circular economy, particularly in addressing the environmental and social impacts of the fast fashion industry. By facilitating the reuse of textiles, Oxfam Ireland extends the life of clothing and household goods, reduces demand for new production, and avoid associated carbon emissions.

In 2025 alone, merchandise processed by Ireland's charity retail sector prevented 131,850 tonnes of CO₂ emissions, similar to preventing the production and disposal of tens of millions of garments, keeping valuable materials in use and out of landfill or incineration.²⁶ Charity retailers like Oxfam are a core component of Ireland's circular economy for textiles, embedded in communities across the country and driving behaviour change towards reuse.

Oxfam Ireland is also playing an increasing role in shifting behaviour and mindset around consumption, helping to normalise reuse, making donation simple and repositioning second hand as a first choice. The PostBack system, which Oxfam commenced in 2025 in partnership with An Post, has added a new dimension to how post-consumer textiles are collected in Ireland, improving accessibility and strengthening flows into charity retail systems. It demonstrates how logistics innovation can support circular economy outcomes by increasing convenience and expanding collection reach.

In its first year 44,000+ households have ordered a PostBack bag to donate from home, collecting over 156 tonnes of textiles via post alone, that may have otherwise ended up in landfill. Further investment is required to scale this system deeper and wider across Ireland.

The policy context to advance the circular economy in Ireland is advancing. Key developments include the Roadmap for a Circular Economy, Ireland's Whole-of-Government Circular Economy Strategy, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) for textiles, the Ecodesign for Sustainable Products Regulation (ESPR), and the ban on destruction of unsold goods. Under Irish VAT law, businesses who given away goods free of charge as a donation (a "self-supply"), are still liable for VAT unless a specific exemption applies. Gifts of very small value are excluded (under €20), but larger donations can trigger a VAT liability.²⁷

Moreover, Ireland is currently implementing the Waste Framework Directive requirement for separate textile collection. This marks a significant shift in how post-consumer textiles are managed and places greater emphasis on collection, sorting, and reuse systems. A key opportunity is the development of an open loop textile system in Ireland, where materials are continuously captured, sorted, and directed into reuse or recycling pathways. Together, these measures signal a transition towards a circular system. Delivery will depend on investment in infrastructure that supports reuse, sorting, and recycling at scale.

Recommendations:

- **Remove VAT barriers to the donation of unsold goods via either**

Option 1: Introduce an Input VAT Adjustment Safe Harbour, modelled on the French approach.

²⁶ From forthcoming Charity Retailers Ireland, Impact Report for 2025.

²⁷ Charitable and Voluntary Organisations – Tuesday, 14 Oct 2025 – Parliamentary Questions (34th Dáil) – Houses of the Oireachtas

This would provide certainty that businesses are not required to make an input VAT adjustment when unsold goods are donated to approved charitable reuse organisations, provided appropriate documentation and traceability requirements are maintained. This approach preserves VAT neutrality, removes uncertainty around donations, and supports the diversion of unsold goods into verified circular economy pathways without creating a new VAT exemption or subsidy.

Option 2: Introduce a VAT derogation for donated unsold goods. This would remove VAT barriers where businesses donate surplus products to approved charitable reuse organisations, encouraging greater product reuse, extending the life of goods, and supporting Ireland's transition to a circular economy. Similar approaches already operate in a number of EU Member States.²⁸

- **Expand the Circular Economy Fund to enable increased investment in preparation for reuse systems, Automated Sorting Technologies for Post-consumer Textiles (ASTP), and systems that separate reusable and recyclable textiles at scale.**
- **Develop domestic textile recycling and material recovery solutions. This includes converting textile waste into insulation, construction materials, and other industrial applications.**

7. BUSINESS AND HUMAN RIGHTS: PROTECTING PEOPLE AND PLANET

With the effects of the climate crisis, growing inequality and concerns about our digital rights, it is crucial to ensure that regulations on business are fit for purpose. The EU's competitiveness agenda promises simplification but unfortunately has delivered significant deregulation including lifting of protections for the climate. This was highlighted by the Joint Committee on Enterprise, Tourism and Employment whose Political Contribution on the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive (CSDDD) stated they were *"concerned that the Omnibus proposals extend far beyond the simplification of burdensome regulations for small and medium enterprises and instead severely weaken the obligations of very large companies to undertake due diligence throughout their supply chain."*²⁹ We must learn lessons from Omnibus 1 which stripped the CSDDD of some crucial provisions, such as climate transition plans for the EU's biggest companies. All future measures aimed at increasing competitiveness must not extend into deregulation and instead reflect the Irish government's commitments to combatting climate change and to protecting human rights.

Despite the damage done by Omnibus 1, the CSDDD remains an important tool for corporate accountability. EU member states now have until July 2028 to incorporate the Directive into national law. Transposition is an opportunity to limit the uncertainties and close the gaps the Omnibus 1 introduced, including by financing the transposition and state authorities concerned.

²⁸ <https://www.vatcalc.com/eu/eu-vat-on-donated-goods-reforms/>

²⁹ Joint Committee on Enterprise, Tourism and Employment, 2025, Political Contribution on COM (2025) 81

Recommendations:

- **Adequately resource the supervisory authority responsible for monitoring and enforcing the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence's obligations.**
- **Ensure that national authorities are resourced to receive and investigate complaints, carry out investigations and issue penalties related to the Corporate Sustainability Due Diligence Directive.**

8. MIGRATION AND INTERNATIONAL PROTECTION

From July 2026, the EU Pact on Migration and Asylum transitions from political commitments to implementation. The new systems will require investment in order to function smoothly guaranteeing respect for fundamental rights and legal commitments. The Pact, implemented via the International Protection Act (2026) establishes decision making bodies (IPO and TARA), screening centres, vulnerability assessments and legal counselling, all of which will only function with investment in personnel and institutions.

It is unacceptable for any person in Ireland to be forced to sleep on the street, including people who have just lodged a claim for international protection. The right to claim international protection has never been more important, with conflict and oppression displacing people around the world. Ireland's resettlement scheme provides a crucial lifeline for displaced people, as re-affirmed by the Irish Refugee Protection Programme's Mid-Phase Review Report of May 2026 which *"highlights its significant and positive contribution to global humanitarian efforts, with strong commendations from national and international stakeholders."*³⁰ Ireland has not met its resettlement pledges and while the housing crisis is one obstacle, sustained investment in the programme is also needed.

Recommendations:

- **Allocate additional funding to the Legal Aid Board to recruit and retain staff to provide legal representation, advice, and counselling for international protection applicants. This is needed in line with shorter timeframes and increased responsibility for the Legal Aid Board under the International Protection Act 2026.**
- **Ensure adequate funding for each stage of the international protection process including for those identified as vulnerable and therefore having reception needs or special procedural**

³⁰ Department of Justice, Home Affairs and Migration, (2026), Mid-phase review of the Irish Refugee Protection Programme.

guarantees, provide adequate support to create the conditions necessary for the genuine and effective access to procedures (in accordance with Recital 20 Asylum Procedures Regulation).

- **Resource the Irish Refugee Protection Programme, including the local authorities who participate, to ensure that Ireland meets its resettlement pledges.**

9. ADVANCING DIGITAL RIGHTS

Digital technologies increasingly shape how people access services, work, learn, express themselves and organise for change. When designed and governed well, they can expand rights and opportunity. When they are not, they can deepen inequality, silence voices, and concentrate power.

A digital divide persists across the world, including in Ireland³¹ where older and poorer cohorts of the population are more at risk of being left behind in the digital transformation. As an organisation that focuses on eradicating poverty and reducing inequality wherever it exists, we have documented³² how barriers such as affordability, limited digital skills, and gender norms constrain who can safely and meaningfully use digital tools. For historically marginalised and vulnerable groups including women, LGBTQIA+ individuals, people with disability, ethnic, racial and religious minorities, the barriers – as well as the opportunities – are often greater.

At the same time, digital technologies are increasingly used to target, censor and silence activists, human rights defenders and even ordinary people, both online and offline, contributing to the erosion of civic space. Considering rapidly decreasing funding and increased hostility towards human rights and civil society organisations, cybersecurity threats such as ransomware, social engineering and disinformation operations are more worrying than ever.³³ Digital technologies have also been used in the workplace to exploitatively surveil and monitor workers, despite the promises that advances in automation would improve the worker experience.³⁴

Equally alarming is the outsized corporate power and influence of a handful of giant technology corporations (i.e. “Big Tech”) over the global economy, politics, and whose ambitions threaten ecological health and sustainability in the era of climate change.³⁵ This has generally been enabled by the technology industry’s reliance on monopolistic models and tax avoidance practices, alongside pushback against oversight mechanisms to address problems like mis- and disinformation online and resource-intensive polluting behaviour, prioritising control and profit over social impacts and human rights. As a hub for many “Big Tech” companies and chief enforcer under the EU’s “country of origin” principle, Ireland has a particular role, expertise and interest in holding technology companies accountable and ensuring the application of critical EU-level protections such as the General Data

31 Irish Times, 29.06.24, Class-based digital divide persists in Ireland, research finds.

32 Oxfam Ireland, 2026, Summary assessment report: The Digital Landscape, Threats, and Opportunities.

33 NetHope, 2025, 2025 State of Humanitarian and Development Cybersecurity Report.

34 Oxfam America, 2024, At Work and Under Watch-Surveillance and suffering at Amazon and Walmart warehouses.

35 Oxfam America, 2024, Rights and Responsibilities: Understanding the impact of the tech industry on economic inequality.

Protection Regulation, Digital Services Act and AI Act and the broader digital rights framework, including provisions under the Global Digital Compact.

Today's status quo is not sustainable and, unless decisive and concerted action is taken, the current Government will fall short of meeting its commitments to safety and inclusion in the digital age.³⁶

Recommendations:

- **Support civil society organisations and initiatives domestically and in the field of international partnerships and development to build digital literacy and safety, support locally-led responses to digital harm, and strengthen the digital civic space, ensuring that all advances in digital technologies and AI systems contribute to overcoming inequality rather than entrenching it.**
- **Sustain Ireland's international engagement in multistakeholder discussions and digital governance processes, including the Internet Governance Forum and AI Summit initiatives, facilitating civil society participation to ensure these processes are accountable, inclusive and informed by lived experiences.**
- **Adequately resource the state authorities responsible for enforcing digital regulation to carry out their duties effectively, including the meaningful consultation of civil society and affected communities on harmful corporate practices and the provision of necessary awareness and skills initiatives.**

³⁶ Department of the Taoiseach, 2026, Digital Ireland-Connecting our People, Securing our Future.

OXFAM IRELAND

Oxfam Ireland is part of Oxfam International, a global confederation of 22 independent and interconnected affiliates working across over 70 countries [MC9.1] to end poverty and injustice. Oxfam Ireland mobilises the power of people to build a global movement that transforms lives and creates lasting change.

Oxfam Ireland is an all-island organisation embedded in communities across both the Republic of Ireland and Northern Ireland. We operate 45 charity retail shops selling clothing, books and homewares, providing responsible, affordable shopping options to people while supporting climate action and poverty alleviation. These shops are powered by a volunteer network of over 700 people and are supported by the generosity of approximately 350,000 individuals who donate pre-loved goods every year for use in our shops. In addition, during 2025, 22,487 individual donors and 68 organisations donated to support our work and over 40,000 people took campaign actions. These donations and campaign actions combined with the revenue generated in our shops, support Oxfam Ireland's life-changing long-term development projects; life-saving humanitarian assistance and campaigning and advocacy to tackle the root causes of poverty and injustice. We are both humbled and inspired at the level of civic participation that Oxfam Ireland fosters throughout the island. This high level of participation provides a clear demonstration of the broad public support for our actions and approaches.

We believe that everyone has the right to thrive in a just and sustainable world. To this end, we work collaboratively to challenge discrimination, exclusion and exploitation; we empower communities to build better lives for themselves, and we continue to provide direct, life-saving assistance to people facing crisis and disaster.

In all of this, we work to fight inequality, recognising that ending poverty is only possible by tackling systemic inequality and injustice. Poverty arises from the violation of people's basic human rights. When someone is denied the right to own land, the right to education, access to basic services like clean water, a fair price for the crops they grow, or a fair wage for the work they do, the result is poverty.

Last year, Oxfam Ireland, supported 2.8 million people across 17 countries with development, humanitarian, influencing, global citizenship education and public engagement projects and initiatives.

At EU level, Oxfam challenges EU policies to make them work for people in poverty. In Brussels, we work to influence key decision-makers in the EU institutions to ensure that EU policies affecting poor countries have a far reaching, positive impact on the lives of those most in need.

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