

Economic impacts of the Irish legal profession

October 2025

Foreword

This economic and social impact report by KPMG outlines the legal profession’s contribution to Ireland and its role in supporting the economy.



Eamon Harrington
President of the
Law Society of Ireland



“This report highlights the critical role of the legal profession in facilitating commercial activity and supporting Ireland’s ability to attract and retain global companies. The case studies from key industry sectors demonstrate reliance on Irish legal expertise to thrive.

The analysis also helpfully explores the broader social impact of the legal profession, particularly in safeguarding the rights of vulnerable groups such as children, migrants, tenants, workers, and victims of crime. Across communities, solicitors act as trusted advisors, promoting social cohesion and ensuring access to justice.”



Seán Guerin SC
Chair of The Council
of The Bar of Ireland



“This timely analysis highlights the significant contribution of Ireland’s legal professions - not only to our economic welfare and national competitiveness, but also as a fundamental support to a wide range of key sectors. It emphasises the need for the State to continue to engage with the legal professions, harnessing their unique expertise to support indigenous enterprise and strengthen Ireland’s position as a destination for foreign direct investment.

The essential work of barristers and solicitors secures the rule of law, fosters trust in our independent justice system, and reinforces the social cohesion that underpins a stable and prosperous society - at home and on the global stage.”

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Impact of the Irish legal profession

The legal sector: supporting Ireland's economy through direct, indirect, and induced contributions, creating jobs, and exporting legal expertise.



Key sectors that the legal sector facilitate:



Financial services



Tech



Life sciences



Aircraft leasing



Agri-food

01

Executive summary



The legal profession and Ireland's economy

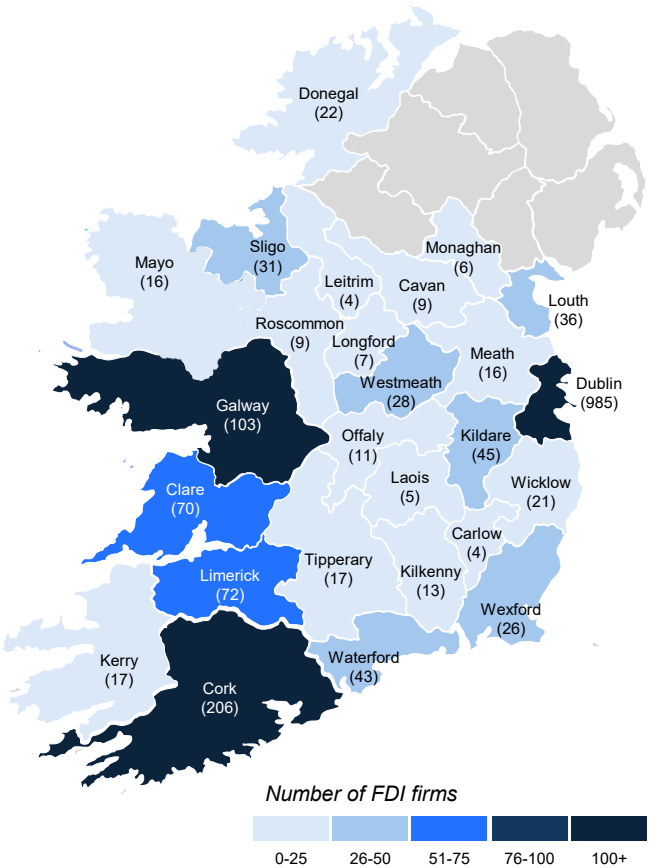
Ireland's legal profession is fundamental to Ireland's economic success.

A legal system that underpins Ireland's economy

Ireland's economy is one of the most open and globally integrated in the world. This is a reflection of a national economic model based on competitiveness, EU membership, a skilled workforce, and, importantly, a trusted and predictable legal system. Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) has been a key driver of growth:

- Ireland is a growing economy, with a GDP of €495bn in 2024. Ireland has the second highest FDI intensity in the OECD, standing at 256% of GDP in 2023.^[a] ^[b]
- Over 1,800 multinational companies operate in Ireland.^[c]
- FDI supports more than 300,000 jobs in Ireland.^[c]
- Irish exports exceed €224 billion annually.^[d]
- The FDI sector accounts for 87% of corporation tax receipts.^[e]
- High-productivity multinationals underpin wage growth and innovation.

Number of FDI firms per county ^[c]



Why our legal sector matters



FDI – Driving Ireland's growth

Over 1,800 multinational companies have chosen Ireland as their European base. They are attracted by talent and tax – but also by legal certainty and trust in the rule of law.



A strategic national asset

Ireland's legal system plays a vital role in national competitiveness, supporting employment, innovation, and economic stability. Government initiatives such as 'Ireland for Law', launched in 2019, promotes Ireland as a global centre for international legal services. Backed by the Law Society, the Bar of Ireland, and the Department of Justice, and supported by several government departments and IDA Ireland, it forms part of Ireland's strategic response to Brexit.



Legal certainty – supporting investment

Ireland's common law system, robust IP protections, and contract enforceability give global investors the confidence to make long-term commitments.

Sources: [a] CSO [b] OECD [c] IDA [d] DETE [e] Revenue

Economic contribution of the legal profession

The legal profession supports and connects Ireland’s wider economy.

Ireland’s legal profession makes a significant economic contribution:

- Over **52,000 people are employed in legal services** across Ireland: 25,000 directly and an additional 27,000 in the wider economy. [c]
- The legal profession supports €6.7bn of Gross Value Added (GVA): €4.2bn directly and an additional €2.5bn in the wider economy. [c]
- Legal expertise hubs in Dublin, Cork, Galway and Limerick support regional economic growth.

Ireland’s legal profession facilitates a broader professional services ecosystem:

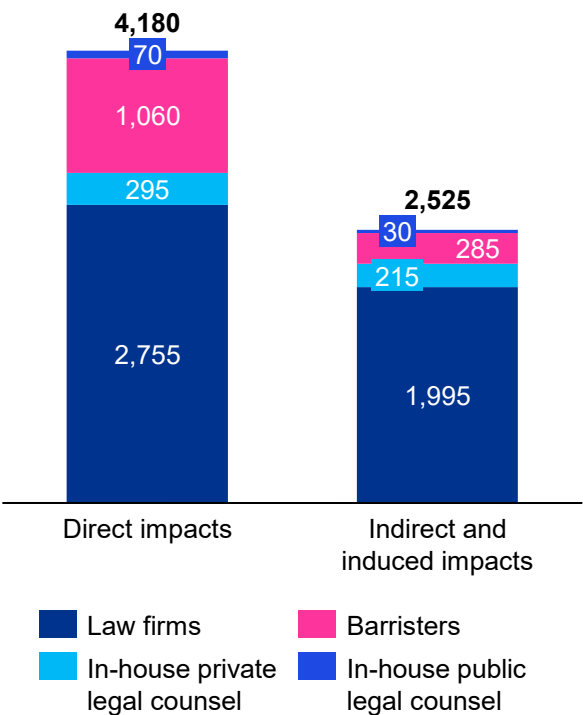
- Legal firms drive demand for other services including accountancy, management consulting, financial services, ICT, real estate.
- They provide essential services to businesses across all sectors, from SMEs to multinationals.
- Corporate clients rely on legal professionals for risk management, dispute resolution, regulatory advice, and transactions.
- A strong legal profession reinforces Ireland’s attractiveness as a place to do business and ensures the wider services economy remains resilient.

Economic contributions of the sector

Economic impacts are typically categorised in terms of the following components:

- a) **Direct impacts:** First-round effects where the legal services sector generates business activity and output through its operations, assessed in terms of economic output, Gross Value Added (GVA), and employment.
- b) **Indirect impacts:** Second-round effects from the legal services sector's procurement of goods and services, assessed in terms of economic output, GVA, and employment.
- c) **Induced impacts:** Multiplier effects from spending by employees in the legal services sector and its supply chain, generating additional economic activity.

Total GVA for the Irish legal profession
€ millions [a] [b] [c]



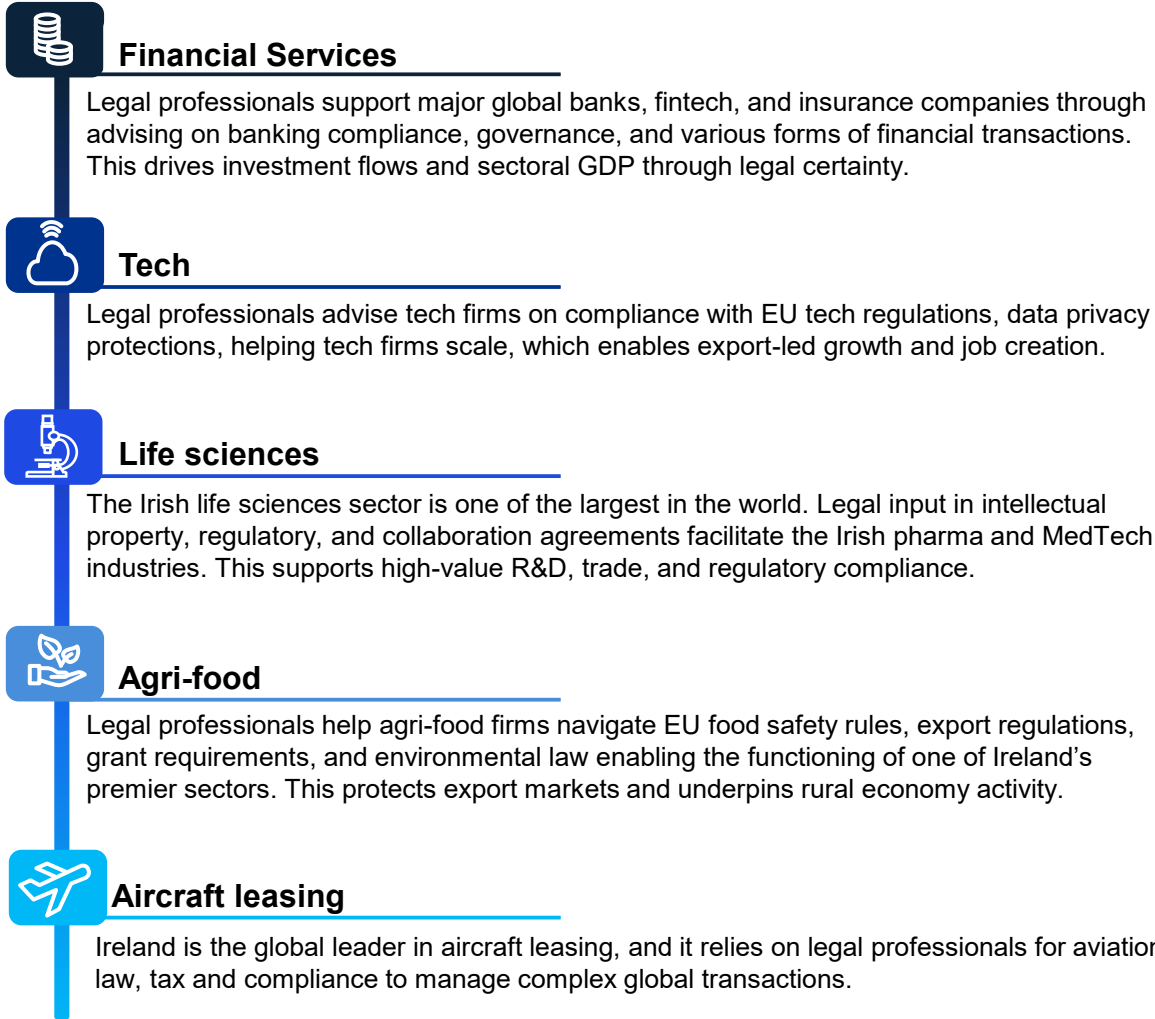
Notes [1] GVA represents the legal sector’s contribution to the economy. It is the value of the sector’s output minus the cost of intermediate goods and services used in production.
Sources: [a] CSO [b] Eurostat [c] KPMG impact model

Enabling the knowledge and service economy

The legal profession is a key enabler of high-value sectors of the economy.



Ireland’s economy depends on knowledge-intensive and export-oriented sectors. The legal profession plays an important role in enabling these sectors to grow, adapt, and remain competitive in a fast-changing global economic environment. Each sector relies on specialist legal disciplines: ^[a]



Sources: [a] KPMG research

Supporting justice and social well-being

Legal professionals in Ireland enhance access to justice and community support through pro bono work and local legal services.

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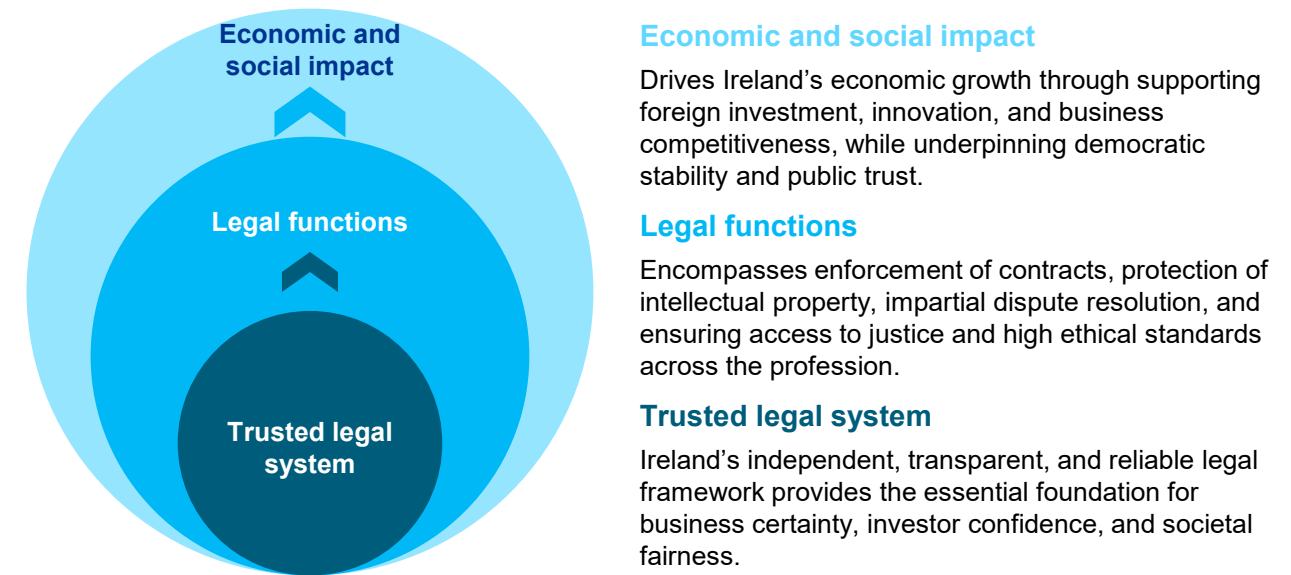
Pro bono contribution: Legal professionals dedicate over 9,300 days each year to pro bono work, providing free legal advice and representation to individuals and groups who would otherwise lack access to justice.^[a] ^[b]
- 

Efficient dispute resolution: This reduces risk and cost for businesses and promotes social cohesion. The legal profession also plays a vital role in access to justice – through legal aid, community law centres, and pro bono work that supports the vulnerable in society.
- 

Community based legal practitioners: Legal practitioners support local communities in urban and rural Ireland with their legal expertise. Conveyancing, criminal, family, wills and the administration of estates are areas of law particularly relevant to local communities. Whilst urban concentration of legal practitioners is tracked to the centralisation of business and superior courts in the cities it is also true that access to justice and social well-being of those living in local communities is vitally served by maintaining a greater availability of legal services.
- 

Improving access to justice: In addition to the Law Society and The Bar of Ireland, organisations such as the Legal Aid Board, Community Law and Mediation, and FLAC are some examples of organisations working to promote equal access to justice and support disadvantaged communities and individuals in Ireland.^[b]

Ireland’s legal system is a national asset. It underpins economic growth, social well-being, and democratic institutions. Continued investment in legal education, high professional standards, and access to justice will help continue Ireland’s economic success.



Sources: [a] World Justice Project [b] KPMG analysis

The background of the slide features a scenic view of a river, likely the River Liffey in Dublin, with a historic building and a bridge visible in the distance. The sky is a clear, vibrant blue. A large, solid blue rectangle is overlaid on the left side of the image, serving as a backdrop for the text.

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Overview of the Irish legal system

Overview of the Irish legal profession

For this study, the legal profession is divided into four components: law firms, barristers, and public and private in-house legal counsel.

The Irish legal services sector comprises separate components that uphold justice and provide legal services which protect society and facilitates economic growth for the country. This Report focuses on four main elements of the legal services sector in Ireland: law firms, barristers, in-house private legal counsel, and in-house public legal counsel.



Law firms

Solicitor-led private law firms offer legal expertise to individuals, companies, the State and businesses. They advise on all areas of law, interpret legislation and case law, draft contracts, navigate complex transactions, manage risk, advocate and litigate for their clients. There are approximately 3,100 law firms in Ireland with ~9,350 practising solicitors. ^[a] ^[b]

63% Of legal practitioners work in law firms in Ireland ^[1] ^[a] ^[b]



Barristers

Barristers specialise in court advocacy, representing clients in legal proceedings, and providing expert legal opinions. They play a crucial role in the legal system by drafting legal documents, negotiating settlements, and advocating cases before a judge. There are ~2,100 barristers practising in Ireland today.

14% Of legal practitioners work as barristers in Ireland ^[1] ^[a] ^[b]





In-house private legal counsel

Legal teams within private companies advising on internal legal matters, legal risk and compliance. Their clients are the business they work for. They provide proactive legal advice on many areas of law and help their businesses navigate complex legal landscapes. There are ~2,800 In-house private legal counsel practising in Ireland today.

19% Of legal practitioners work as in-house private counsel in Ireland ^[1] ^[a] ^[b]



In-house public legal counsel

Legal advisors employed by the Government in public sector organisations. They advise their organisations on a wide range of legal matters including administrative and public law, regulatory and compliance and enforcement. There are ~500 In-house public legal counsel practising in Ireland today.

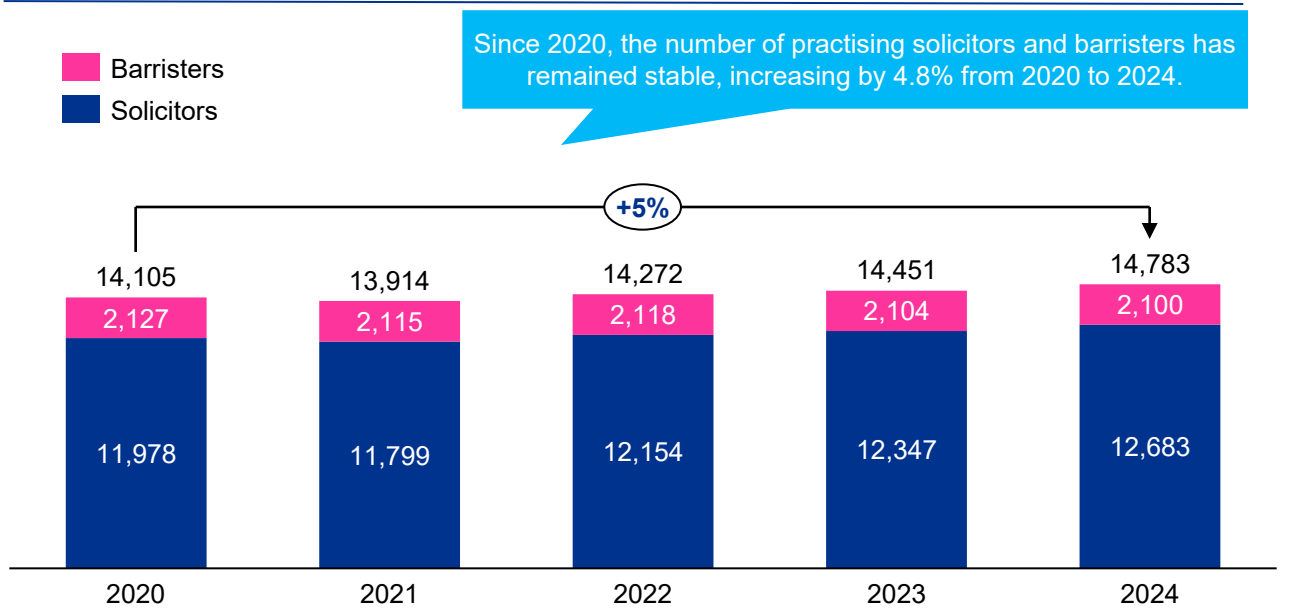
4% Of legal practitioners work as in-house public legal counsel in Ireland ^[1] ^[a] ^[b]

Notes: [1] Legal practitioners refers to both practising solicitors and barristers according to the Law Society and The Bar respectively. [2] For the purpose of this study we have excluded the judicial system.
Sources: [a] KPMG research [b] The Bar of Ireland and the Law Society of Ireland

Employment in the Irish legal profession

Employment in the legal profession remains stable, but trends include firm consolidation and regional concentration.

Solicitors and barristers registered with the Law Society of Ireland and the Bar of Ireland^{[1] [a]}
2020 to 2024, number of practising practitioners



Employment trends in the Irish legal profession

1

Stable employment

The total number of people employed in the legal sector has increased by 10% between the 2011 and 2022 censuses.^{[b] [2]}

This has been driven by an increase in the number of legal support staff. The number of solicitors and barristers practising over the past five years has remained stable, increasing by 4.8% over that time period.

2

Firm composition

While the number of sole practitioner firms and large practices with 21+ practitioners have increased between 2012-2023, large firms have grown by 124% in number, roughly double the growth seen by sole practitioner firms.

This is due to economies of scale, resource availability and the specialised services that large firms can offer.

3

Regional concentration

Solicitors and barristers have become more concentrated in urban centres such as Dublin and Cork accounting for 77% of all solicitors and barristers.

More legal professionals work in Dublin and Cork due to higher levels of economic and commercial activity, creating greater demand for legal services.

4

Changing age profile

The age profile of the legal profession has changed in the past 15 years, with the average age of solicitors increasing from 42 in 2008 to 47 in 2024.

This aligns with the general trend in Ireland of people working to an older age. Between 2019 and 2024 there has been a 55% increase of people aged 65+ in employment in Ireland.^[b]

Notes:

[1] As of 31 December 2024, there were 24,714 solicitors on the Roll. This graph shows the number of practising certificates held by solicitors actively practising law. A solicitor on the Roll is admitted to the legal profession but may not be actively practising law

[2] The census is a count and account of everybody who usually lives in Ireland carried out by the CSO every four years.

[a] The Bar of Ireland and the Law Society of Ireland [b] CSO

Sources:

Regional breakdown of legal services

69% of legal professionals are located in Dublin, however, legal support throughout Ireland is essential to ensure access to justice in rural Ireland.

Key insights

Legal expertise in rural areas

Legal expertise in rural Ireland is essential for ensuring access to justice. Locally available legal professionals play a vital role in maintaining our system of courts (particularly District and Circuit) as well as supporting citizens needs with ADR and advisory work. These professionals help protect individuals' rights and foster equitable communities by providing guidance on property rights, social welfare, employment rights and family law.

For farmers, for example, legal expertise is particularly beneficial in navigating issues relating to land ownership, succession (wills, probate and estates), environmental regulations, and agricultural policies. The imbalance between numbers of practitioners in urban and rural areas has led to the term 'legal deserts' being used to describe areas where legal support is less available.

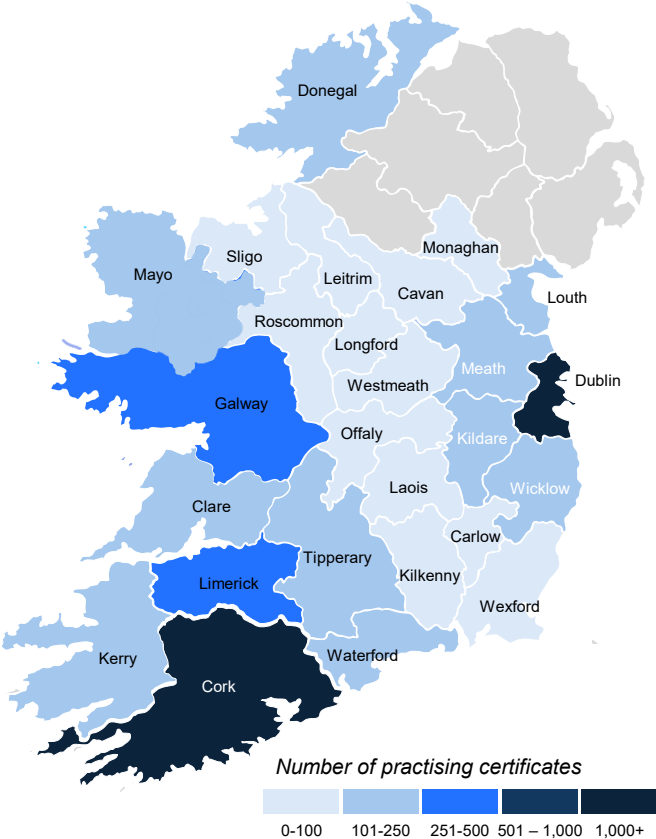
A fall in legal access over time

Since 2011, the number of people working in legal activities per capita has slightly declined across Ireland. However, the West of Ireland has seen the largest change, with an 8% decrease in the past 11 years. This change is indicative of the migration of legal practitioners from rural Ireland to urban centres such as Dublin, Cork, and Galway. For example, in 2022, 14 counties had only one full-time trainee solicitor, while four counties had none.

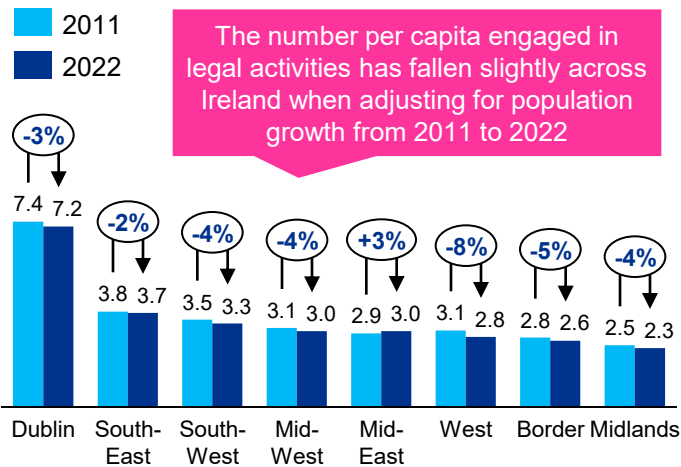
“Solicitors and barristers in regional areas are crucial as they strengthen client relationships by providing local expertise and legal support to the rural community.”

Regional Barrister, Junior Counsel

Distribution of solicitors and barristers across the Republic of Ireland [a] [1]
Number of individuals, 2024



Number of individuals working in legal activities per 1,000 of the population by region [b]
Absolute numbers, 2011 and 2022



Notes: [1] Further information regarding the regional breakdown of solicitors available in the Law Society's Annual Report
Sources: [a] The Bar of Ireland and the Law Society of Ireland [b] CSO censuses

Trends in the legal services sector in Ireland

Key opportunities for growth in the legal profession include AI, data protection and environmental and planning.

The legal services sector is evolving. A 2025 survey by the Law Society identified that the majority of solicitors are optimistic about the future of the profession. The key areas of growth are expected to be in AI, cyber, environmental and planning, and data protection. Corresponding key opportunities include:

- The use of new technologies such as AI.
- Supporting individuals and entities against cybercrime.
- The management and use of data.
- Alternative Dispute Resolution.

Continued growth in the Irish economy and international investments was also recognised as key opportunities for the legal sector.^[a]

AI and access to legal expertise

Artificial intelligence (AI) presents unique opportunities for the legal profession. AI technology, when correctly managed, offers productivity gains through administrative automation, improving legal research efficiency, and document review.

By integrating AI into the legal process, legal professionals can become more efficient, potentially reducing the overall cost of legal expertise and legal case resolution times. Notwithstanding this opportunity, a key element in its adoption will be risk management, how it may impact on the quality of legal services, and how, if any, the wider adoption by the Courts Service and other agencies is being managed. Both professions and wider legal sector will need to continue to invest in member-training, awareness and further analysis.

The adoption of digital solutions in the legal sector has accelerated in recent years, such as remote court hearings and e-signatures. The increasing volume of digital data in litigation has driven law firms to invest in advanced eDiscovery and AI tools.

These technologies have evolved from simple indexing to sophisticated predictive coding and generative AI, significantly improving efficiency in managing large datasets. Law firms are balancing in-house capabilities with outsourcing to maintain control and quality, while cautiously adopting new AI technologies due to their evolving nature and substantial investment requirements.

AI can have application in the following activities:



1

Administrative automation

AI can streamline back-office tasks ranging from scheduling to billing, reducing administrative burdens.

In addition, AI agents can guide individuals through filings, eligibility checks, and provide legal information in multiple languages.



2

Legal research

AI can allow legal professionals to analyse vast volumes of data efficiently.

By sifting through documents in legal research and discovery phases, AI tools can quickly pinpoint relevant information, saving valuable time for legal professionals.



3

Document review

AI can automate the review of legal documents and client records, identifying key information with great efficiency.

AI can be used to scan legal documents for inconsistencies and errors making document review less time consuming.

Sources: [a] Law Society of Ireland survey

Ireland's courts

The key strengths of the Irish court's system include the independence of its judiciary, skilled practitioners and the benefit of a high degree of public confidence.

1



Public trust in the legal system

Ireland ranks 7th out of 30 surveyed countries regarding public trust in the courts and legal system.^[b] Public trust is crucial for the effective functioning of the legal system, economic activities and social cohesion.

2



Highly trained legal community

Court practice and procedures require high standards in legal practice. Specialist legal knowledge enhances trust, enforceability, fairness and supports the efficient operations of the courts.

3



Well-established independence

The Irish legal system is recognised for its independent judiciary. This independence is crucial for upholding the rule of law and ensuring that the justice system is, and is seen to be, fair and unbiased.

The effective and efficient operation of the court system is essential for economic prosperity and upholding individuals' fundamental rights in Ireland. Building on the above strengths, there are various opportunities for improvement of the courts, many of which have been outlined in the "Review of the Administration of Civil Justice Report" published in 2020. While effective, the current court system requires investment to enhance its efficiency and deliver the needed improvements. Currently, as a percentage of GDP, the judicial system budget accounts for 0.07% of Ireland's GDP, the lowest share in Europe in 2022, with European countries averaging 0.28% of their respective GDP. ^[a]

Despite a modest courts service budget, the courts have multiple improvement programmes in place.



Digitalisation of processes

Digitalisation and consolidation initiatives have been introduced to increase efficiency within the court system.

One of these initiatives has already reduced the number of court IT systems by ~14%.^[c]



Increase in judges within the courts

The increase in volume of cases has been responded to by the appointment of additional judges.

For example, the appointment of 20 additional judges in 2024 aims to help alleviate pressures on the Irish court system.^[d]



Simplification of court forms

A process of simplifying certain court forms is ongoing, for instance, reducing the number of District Court forms from 40 to 7, while making them easier to complete.

This reduces administrative errors and the administrative burden which can lengthen case resolution times.

Sources: [a] CSO [b] European Commission for the Efficiency of Justice [c] KPMG consultations [d] Department of Justice

Irish legal system in context

Ireland’s common law system is rooted in judicial precedent, ensuring legal flexibility, strong protections, and international alignment.

The Irish legal system blends judicial precedent, Oireachtas law making and constitutional principles to create a flexible yet stable legal environment, which supports democratic governance, fundamental rights and freedoms and economic activity. ^[a] The quality of a country’s legal institutions, in particular, the independence and competence of its judiciary, are important to investment levels, innovation, and an economy’s GDP growth. ^[b]

Ireland’s legal system has a number of other competitive advantages such as: ^[c]

- Ireland is an English-speaking jurisdiction, offering ease of communication for global businesses.
- Ireland has a competitive cost regime compared to other EU jurisdictions, the UK, and the US.
- Irish court decisions are automatically recognised and enforceable across the EU, with limited exceptions. Ireland is also a party to many international treaties, which further facilitates the cross-border enforceability of judgments.

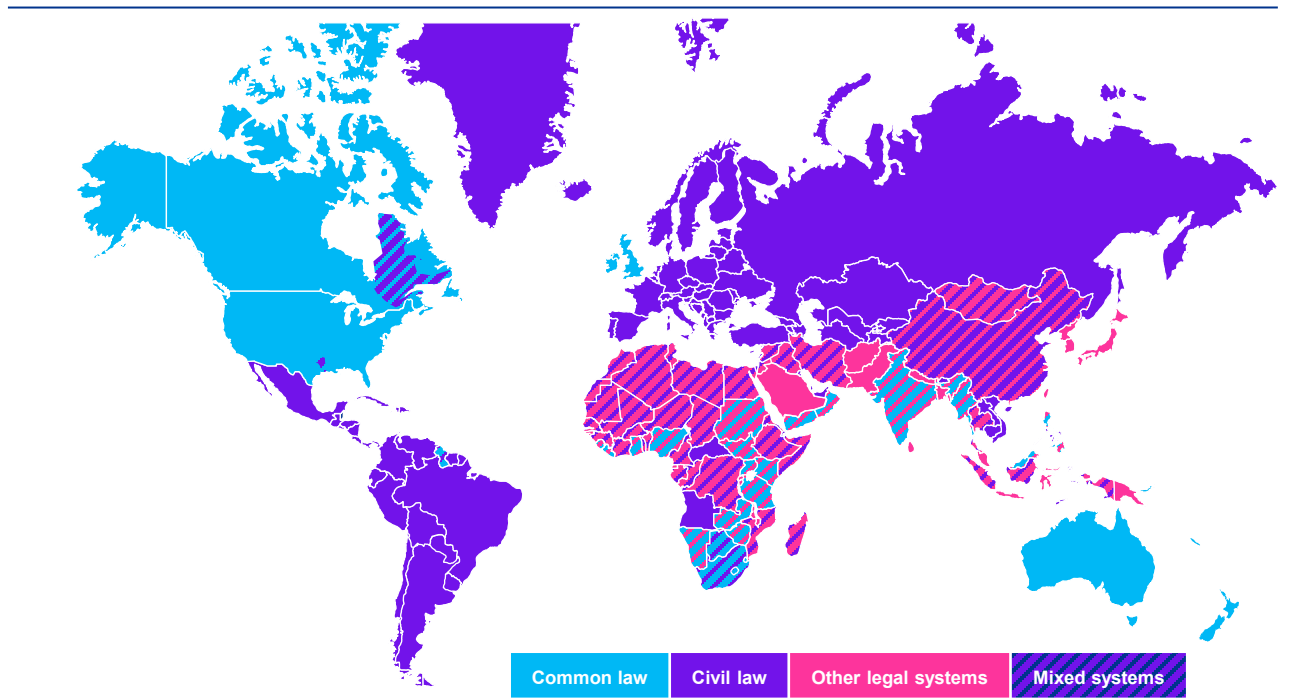
Key benefits of Ireland’s common law system



Other types of legal systems across the world

Civil law	Other legal systems	Mixed systems
Based on legal codes rather than judicial decisions.	Includes religious law (derived from religious texts) and customary law (rooted in local traditions).	Combines different legal traditions within one system.

Types of legal systems, by country ^{[1] [d]}



Notes:

[1] The colour coding provides a directional view of the predominant legal system in each country. Some countries operate mixed or hybrid systems, incorporating elements of common law, civil law, or other legal systems.

Sources:

[a] Bunreacht na hÉireann [b] Lord Hodge, Deputy President of the UK Supreme Court [c] Ireland for Law [d] LibreTexts: Types of Legal Systems around the World

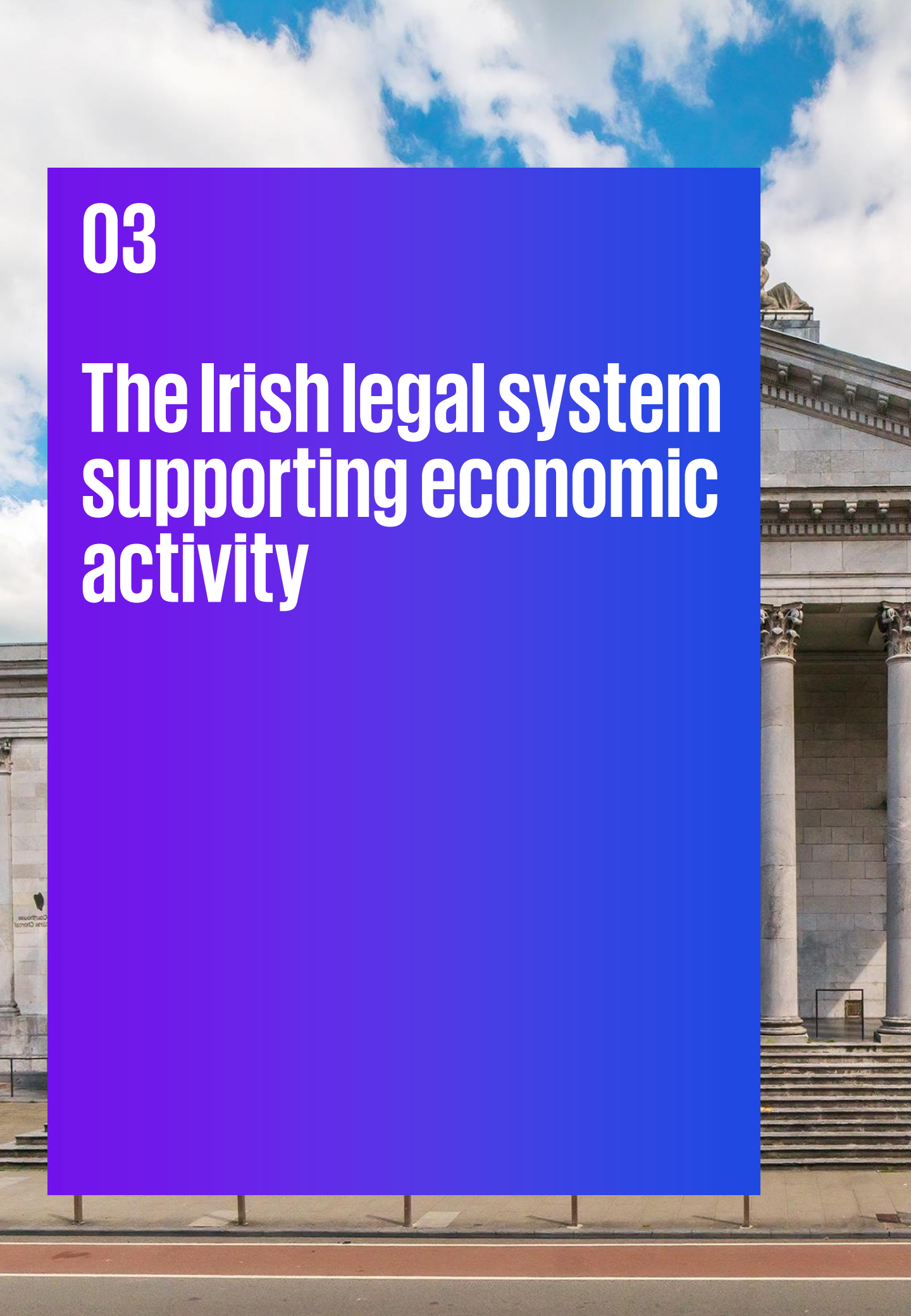
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The Irish legal system supporting economic activity



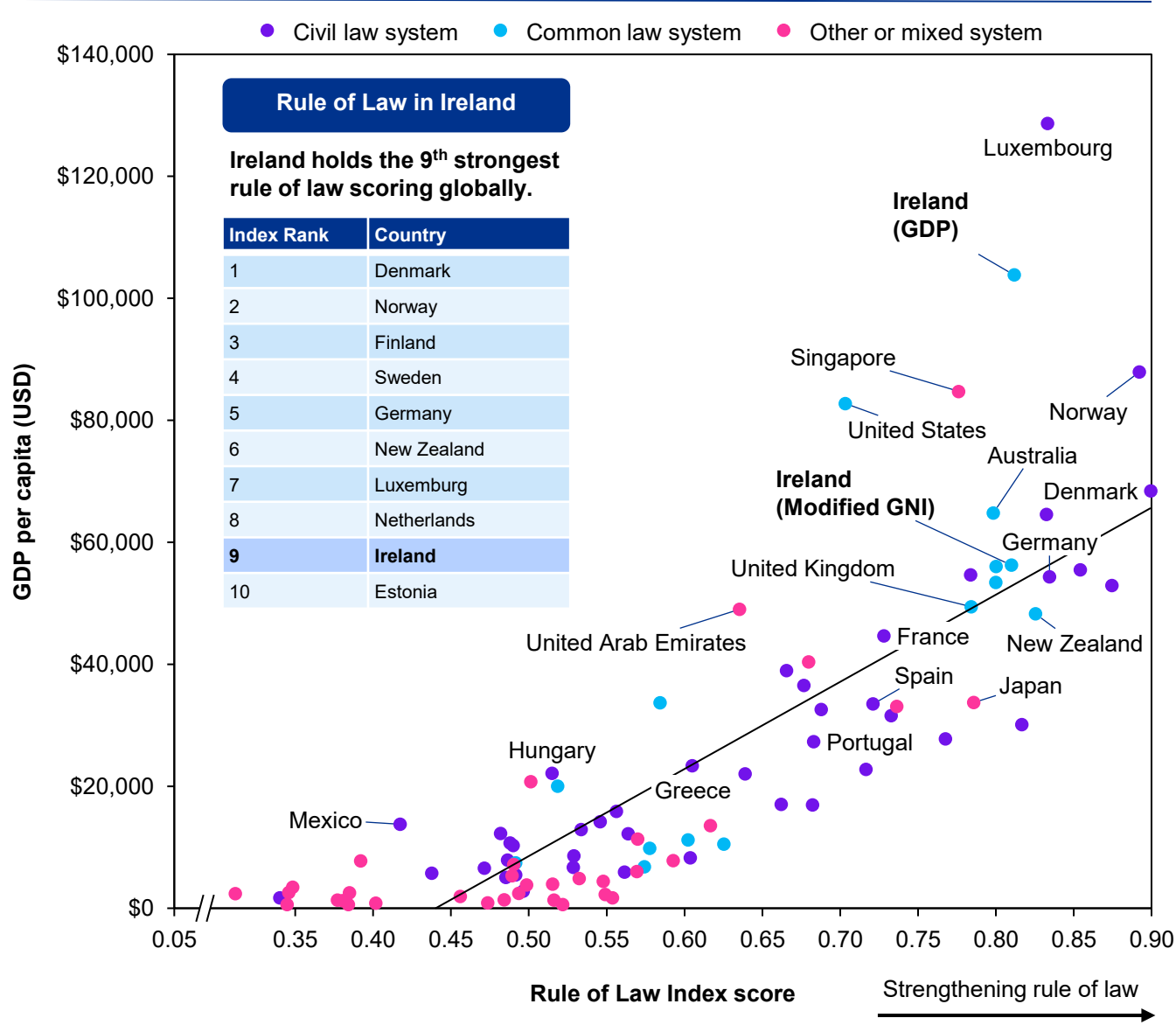
Ireland’s rule of law in a global context

Through its independent legal system and skilled legal practitioners Ireland has achieved one of the highest rule of law scorings in the world.

Countries with strong and impartial legal sectors and a strong rule of law tend to have a high GDP per capita, suggestive of a relationship between a well-functioning legal sector and economic prosperity. Ireland holds the 9th strongest rule of law score globally. Ireland’s index score has steadily increased since 2021, marking particularly high scores in the sub-sectors of order and security and regulatory enforcement.

The WJP Rule of Law Index score and GDP per capita by country [a] [b]

By country, 2024



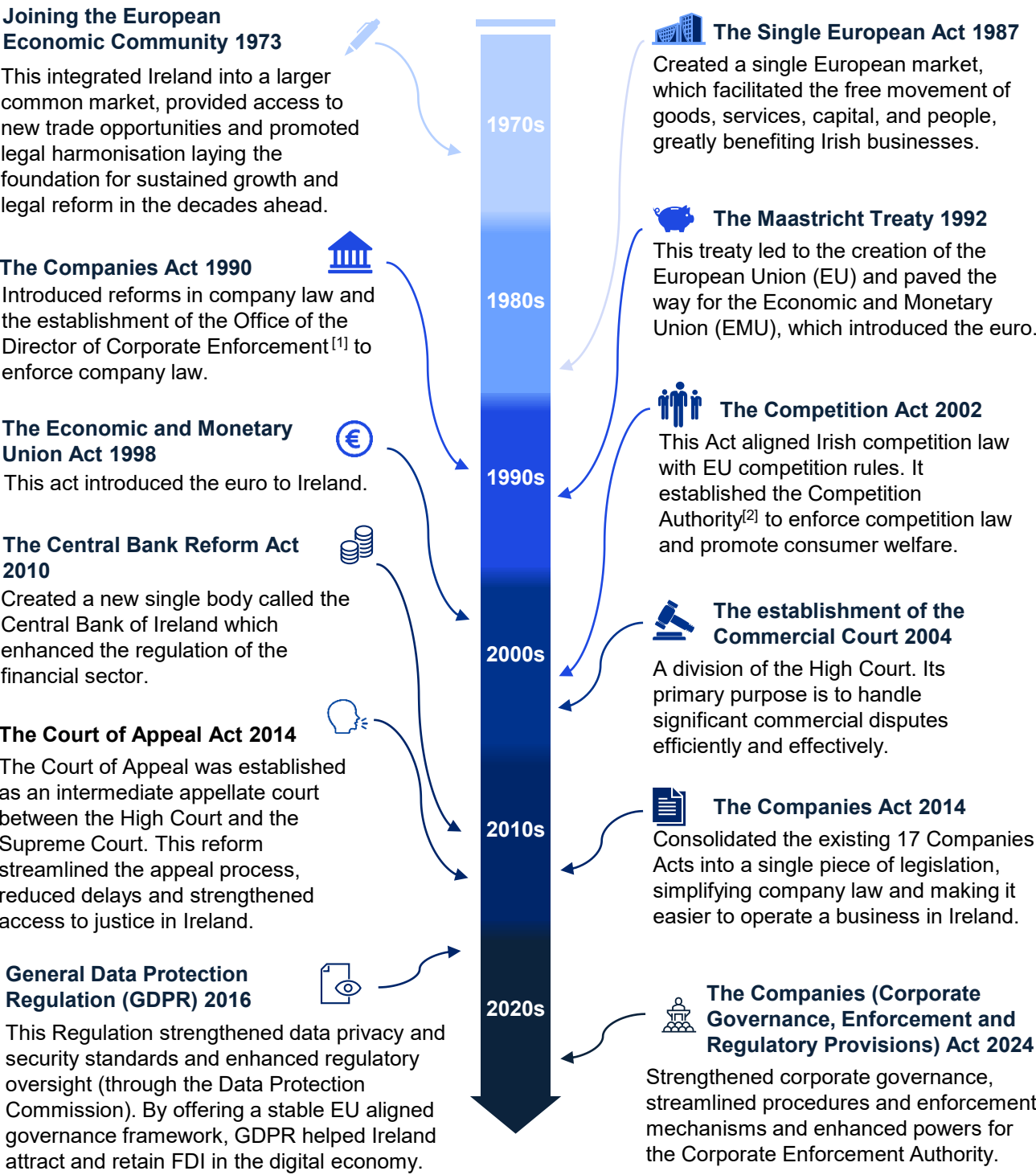
In addition to GDP (Gross Domestic Product) per capita, Modified GNI (Gross National Product) per capita has also been included for Ireland to exclude the globalisation effects from FDI on the Irish economy.

Sources: [a] World Justice Project [b] World Bank - GDP per Capita (2024)

Evolution of the commercial legal landscape

Ireland’s legal sector has helped foster a positive legislative environment for businesses, from EU integration to the Commercial Court.

Timeline of key legal and policy events related to Ireland's commercial landscape (non-exhaustive)^[a]
1970 - 2024



Notes: [1] Office of the Director of Corporate Enforcement is now the Corporate Enforcement Authority [2] Competition Authority is now the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission

Sources: [a] KPMG research

Commercial court activity

The establishment of the Commercial Court in 2004 has increased the speed and efficiency of commercial litigation in Ireland.

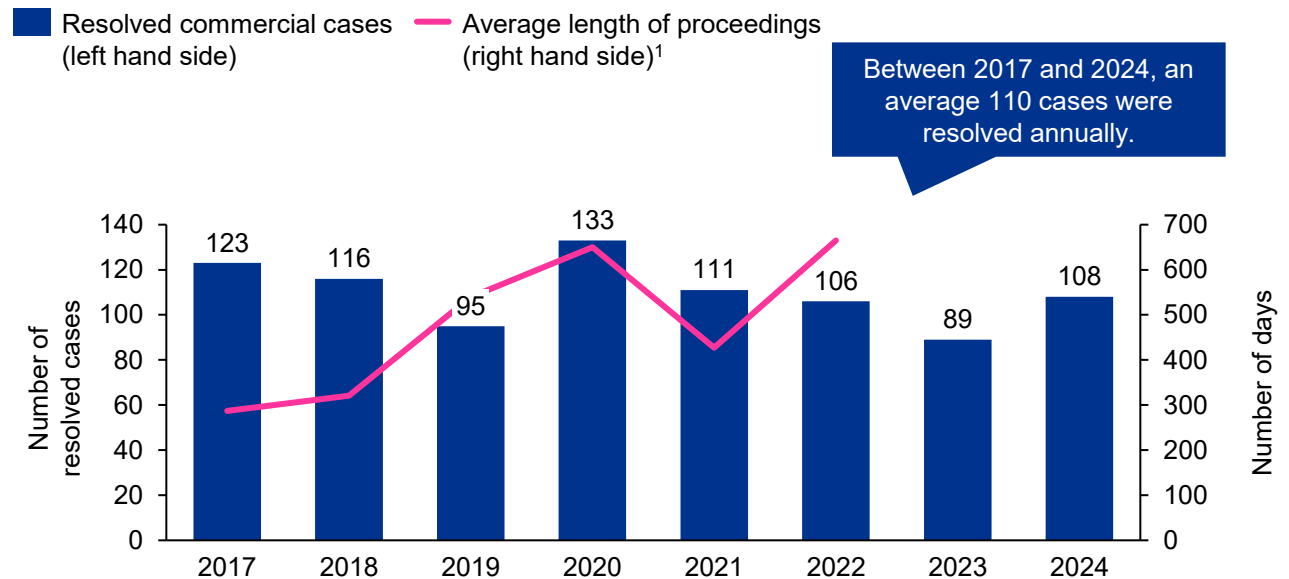
Since 2004 the Commercial Court has provided a valuable reassurance to national and international entities that high-value disputes can be efficiently dealt with in Ireland. With distinct procedures and a thorough case management approach, the Commercial Court operates as a centre for excellence in both judicial and legal expertise.

Key Developments for Commercial/High-Value Disputes:

- The Commercial Court has an Intellectual Property and Technology List with specialist judges familiar with these growing areas of law.
- There are also specialist lists dealing with Competition, Arbitration, and Insolvency.
- The Planning & Environmental Court, established in 2023, provides a specialised mechanism to process commercial and strategic infrastructure cases across a broad planning and environment legislative backdrop including the Aarhus Convention, the EU law right to an effective remedy and other applicable domestic, European and international standards.

Expertise & Efficiency	Stability	Economic Development
With increasingly specialist judges, solicitors and barristers - consistently dealing with business, corporate, and other commercial disputes – judicial functions and client outcomes are more rapidly and efficiently supported.	The Commercial Court provides consistency and predictability to litigants and lawyers. Specialised judges along with sophisticated case management can bring stability to an otherwise uncertain and complex environment.	Promotion and attraction of inward investment, or continued investment is bolstered with the recognition of the strategic value of local, expert and world class commercial litigation infrastructure.

Average duration and the number of resolved commercial court cases in the High Court ^[a]
2017-2024, days



Notes: [1] Data on the average length of proceedings in 2023 was not available at the time of writing.
Sources: [a] The Courts Service of Ireland

Alternative dispute resolution

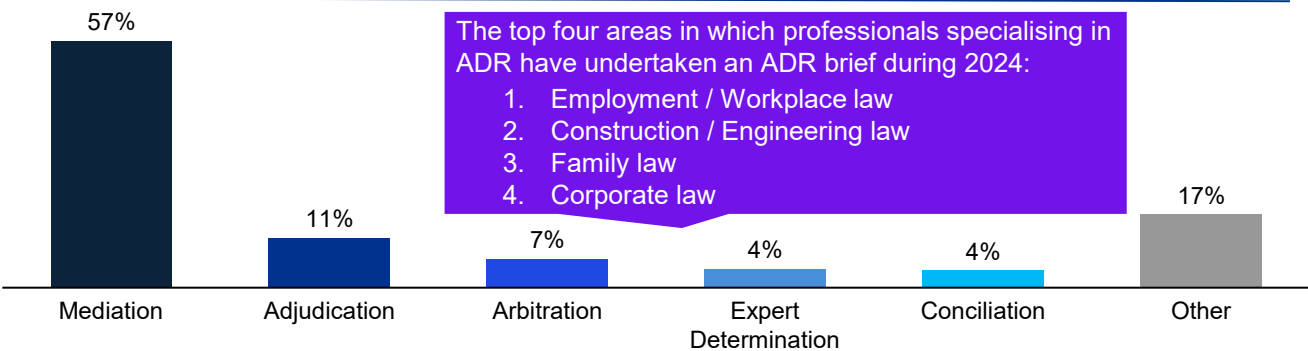
Alternative dispute resolution is offering a wider choice of dispute resolution to businesses and citizens.

Continued investment by the legal professions in alternative dispute resolution (ADR) skills and expertise, alongside court and accreditation developments reflect growing client demand and use cases. Legal professionals have been supporting the use of ADR methods alongside traditional litigation so that now ADR has become a standard step in legal disputes. Ireland's ADR infrastructure and expertise is a key strategic asset to business leaders, as well as to private clients. In a recent survey by the Bar of Ireland, 86% of respondents confirmed a proficiency in more than one ADR practice, indicating a strong and dynamic talent pool.

The key advantages of ADR

- 1 Cost-effective
- 2 Time efficient
- 3 Preserves relationships
- 4 Confidentiality
- 5 Flexibility

Breakdown of ADR by area during 2024 [a]
%, split of number of instructions received by survey respondents



Mediation	A voluntary, non-binding, process where a neutral mediator helps the disputing parties communicate and negotiate to reach a mutually acceptable solution. The mediator does not make decisions but facilitates dialogue.
Adjudication	A legal process where an appointed adjudicator reviews evidence and arguments from both sides and makes a binding decision. It's commonly used in construction disputes.
Arbitration	A dispute resolution process where an impartial third-party, known as the arbitrator, makes a binding decision after hearing both sides' arguments and evidence. It's often used in commercial disputes.
Expert Determination	A confidential method of dispute resolution through which disputing parties appoint an expert to determine a matter of fact, valuation, or law, in a final and binding manner.
Conciliation	While similar to mediation and not legally binding, the conciliation process involves a conciliator who typically plays a more active role in suggesting solutions and guiding the parties towards an agreement.

~€200m

Potential value of ADR to the Irish economy

Based off the UK value of ADR it is estimated that the Irish economy has the potential to reach €200m per annum.^{[1] [b] [c]} In addition to the direct economic contribution to the Irish economy, ADR also contributes indirectly to the Irish economy through offering businesses and individuals in Ireland cost-effective and efficient dispute resolutions.

Notes:

Sources:

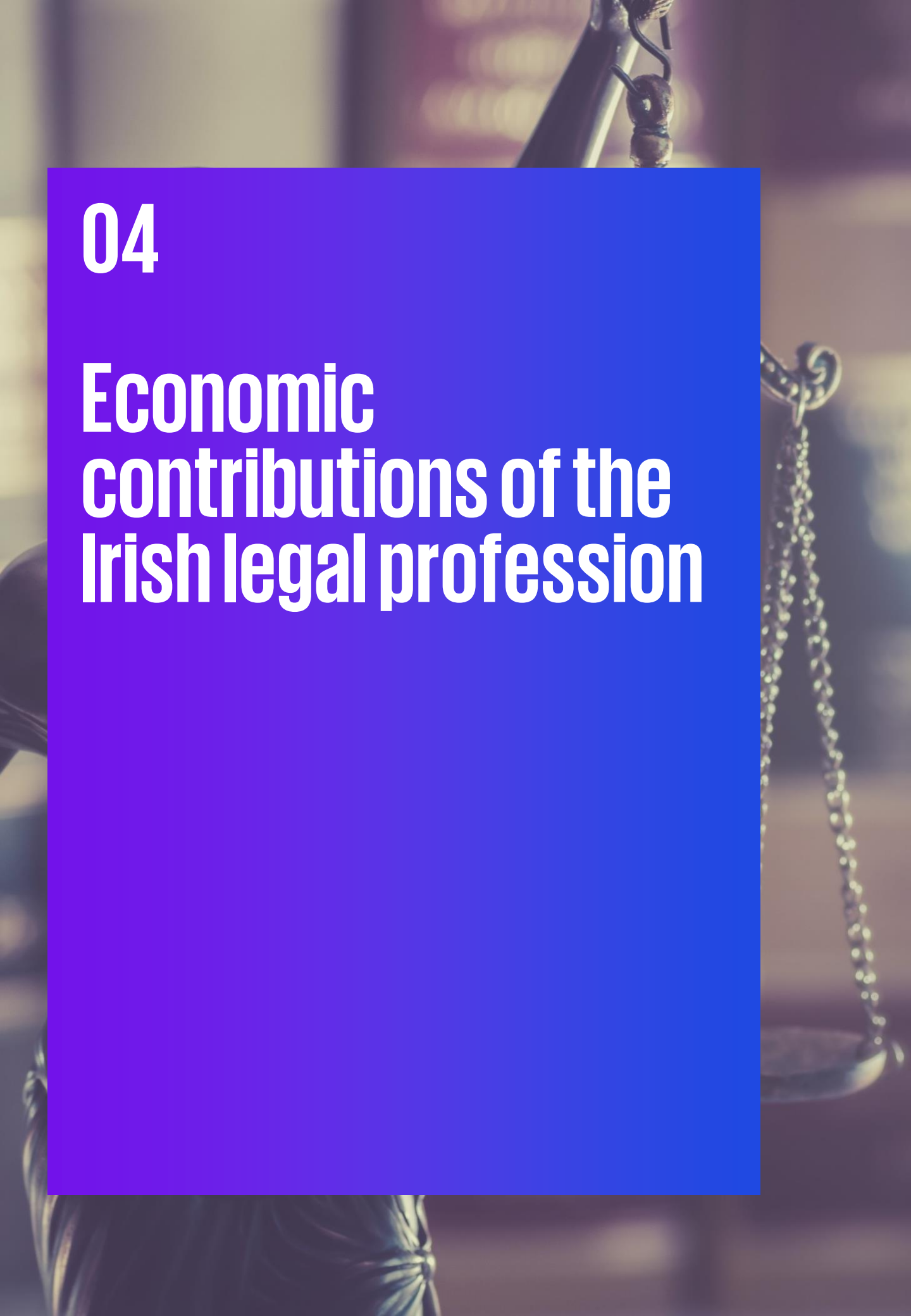
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[1] The estimated value of ADR in Ireland is intended as a suggestive value extrapolated from scaling the UK value of ADR to an Irish standard through various methods.

[a] The Bar of Ireland survey [b] Gov.uk [c] KPMG analysis

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The background of the slide features a blurred image of a statue of Lady Justice, which is a figure blindfolded and holding a set of scales of justice. The scales are visible on the right side of the image. A large, solid blue rectangle is overlaid on the left and center of the image, containing the text.

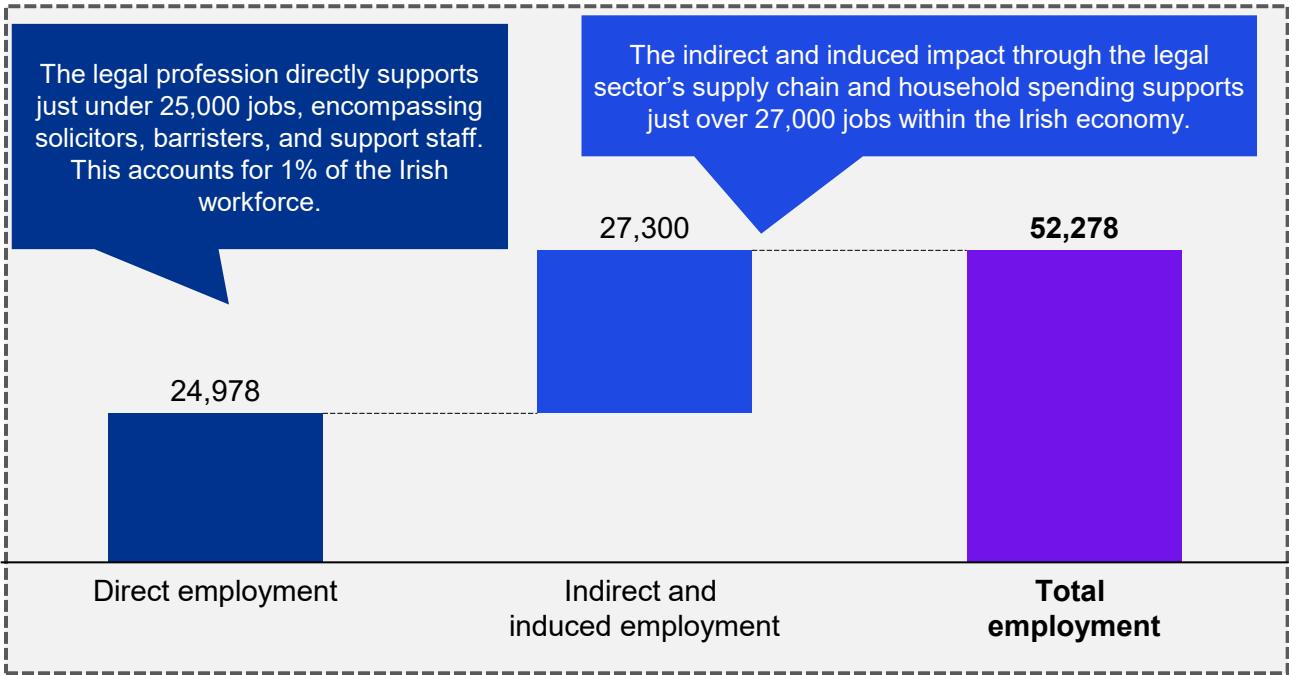
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Economic contributions of the Irish legal profession

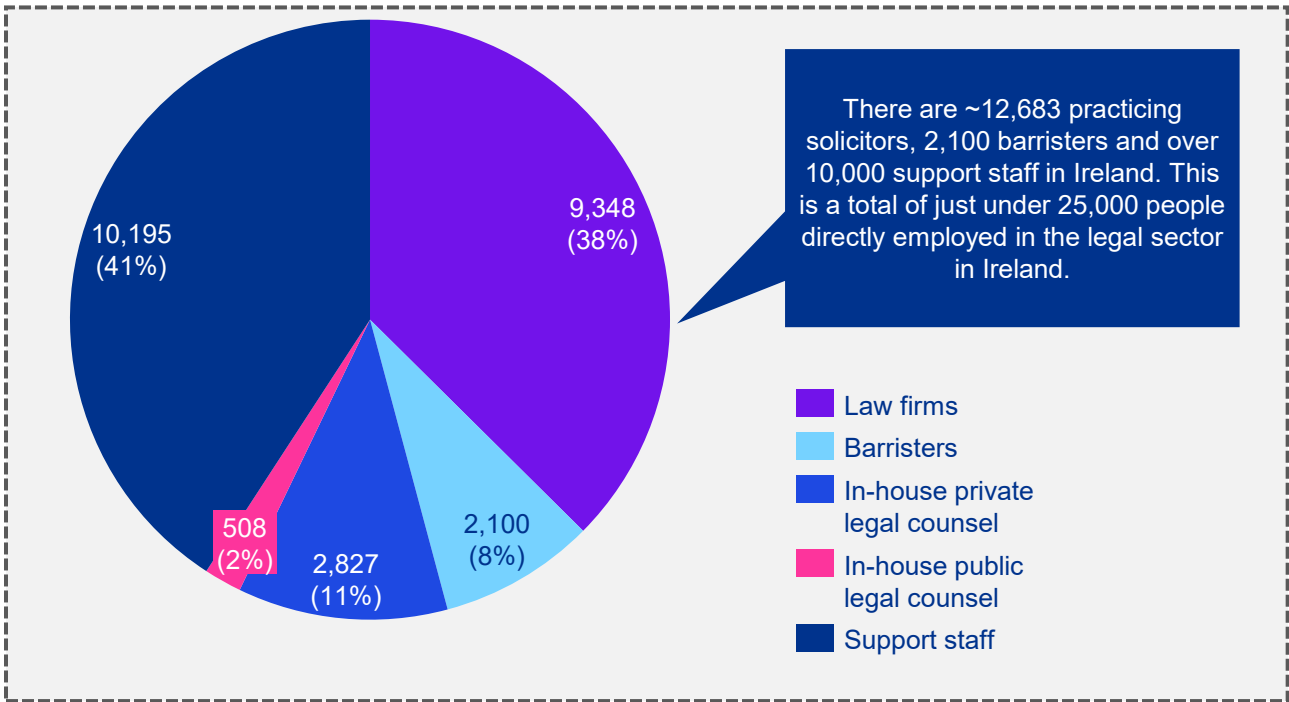
Employment

The Irish legal profession supports over 52,000 jobs, including over 10,000 support staff.

Jobs supported [a] [b]



Breakdown of direct employment by the legal sector [a] [b]

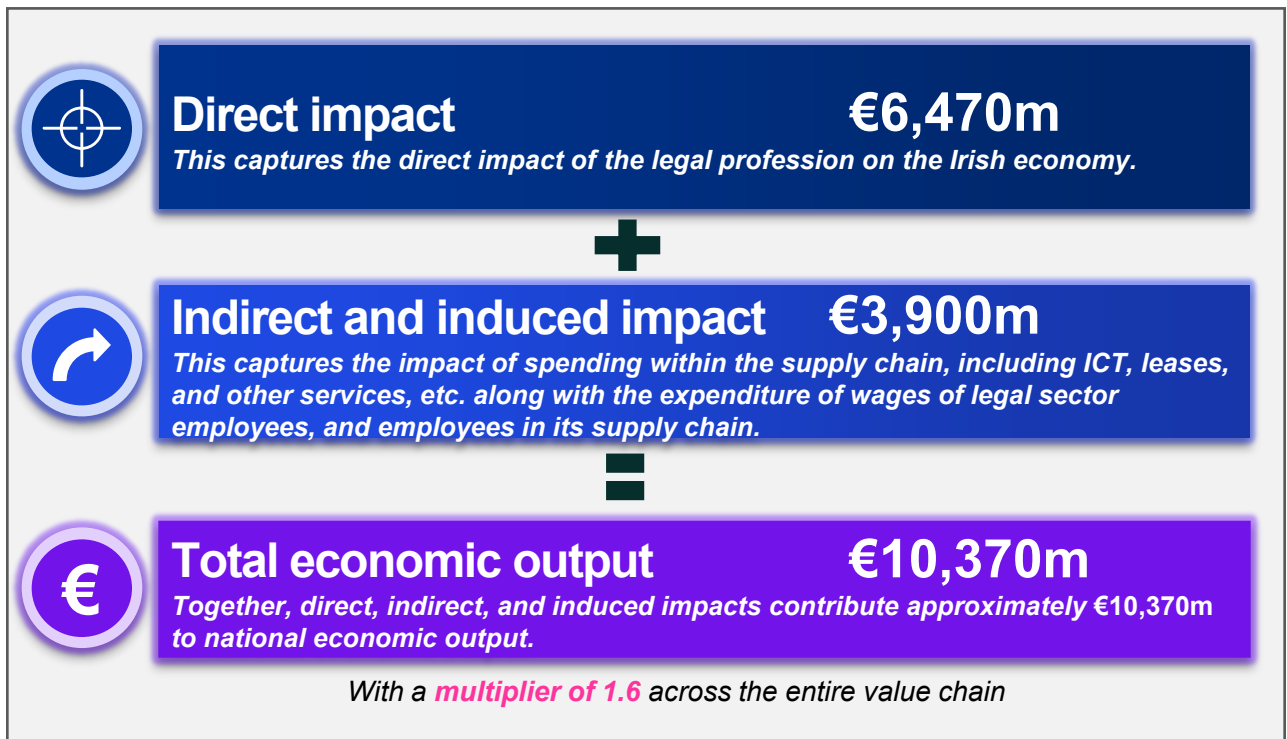
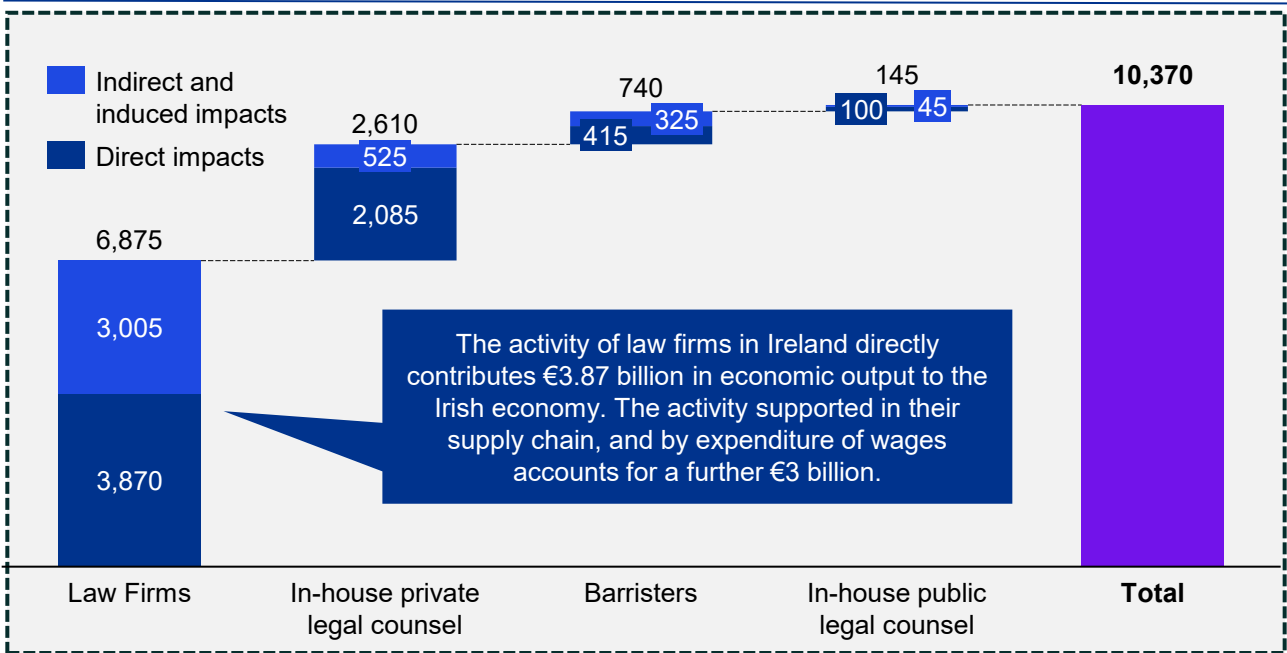


Sources: [a] CSO [b] KPMG analysis

Economic output

Across law firms, in-house counsel, and barristers the legal profession contributes ~€10.4bn in economic output annually to the Irish economy.

Total economic output for the Irish legal profession, 2022 [a] [b] [c]
€ millions

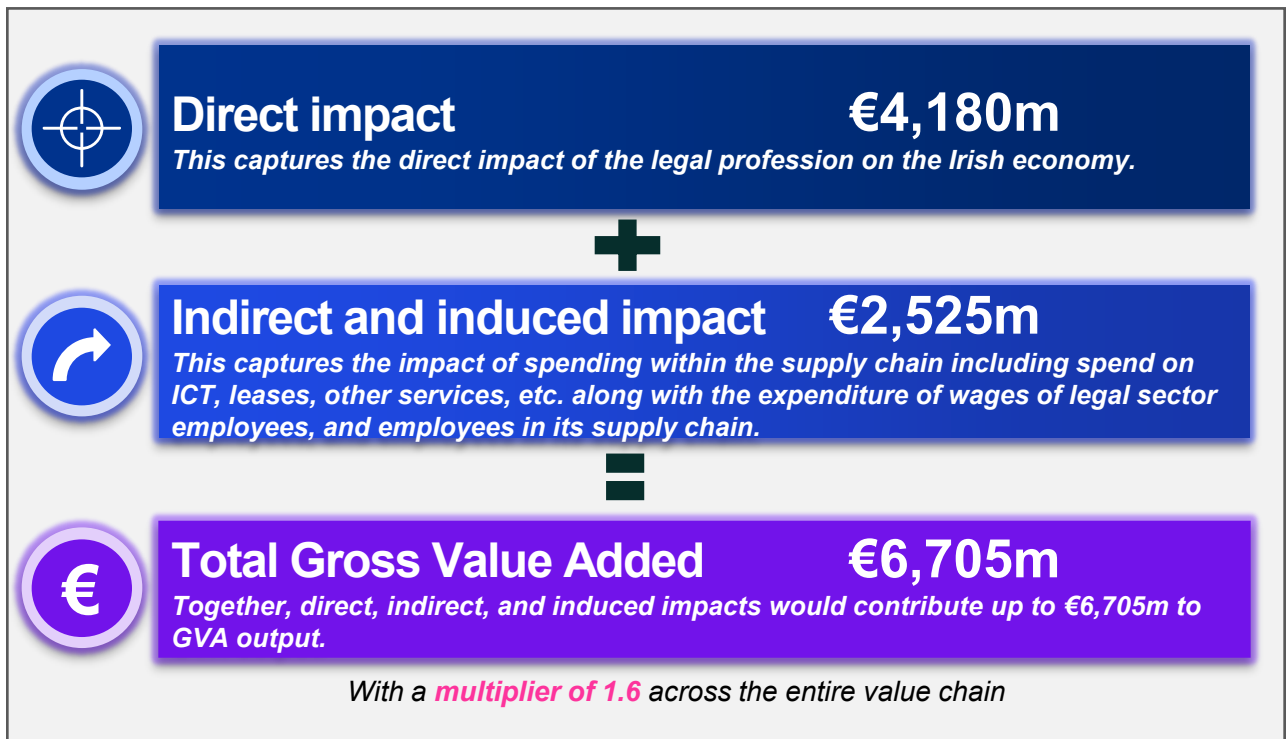
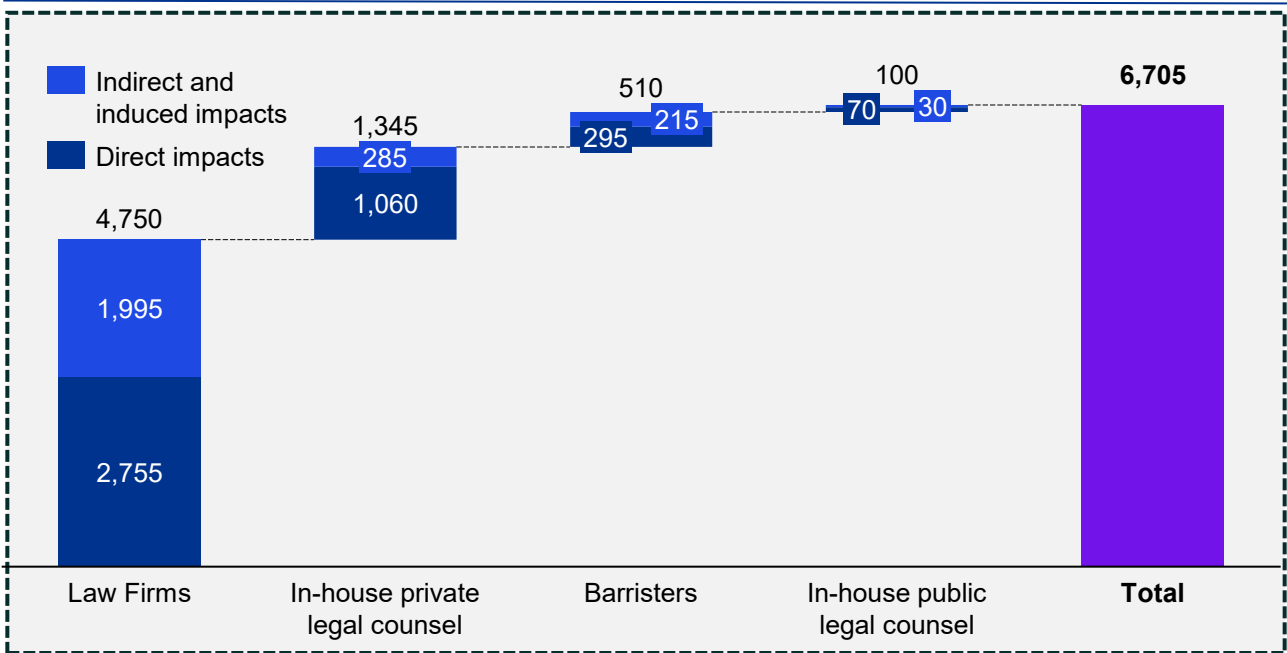


Sources: [a] CSO [b] Eurostat [c] KPMG impact model

Gross Value Added (GVA)

Across law firms, in-house counsel, and barristers the legal profession contributes ~€6.7bn in Gross Value Added annually to the Irish economy.

Total Gross Value Added for the Irish legal profession, 2022 [a] [b] [c]
€ millions



Notes: [1] GVA – Gross Value Added
Sources: [a] CSO [b] Eurostat [c] KPMG impact model

Exports and domestic inter-sector trade

The legal sector is vital to Ireland's economy, supporting international trade and domestic industries.

Legal sector exports [a] [b]

 **Up to
€1.4bn**
of legal services
were exported
during 2023

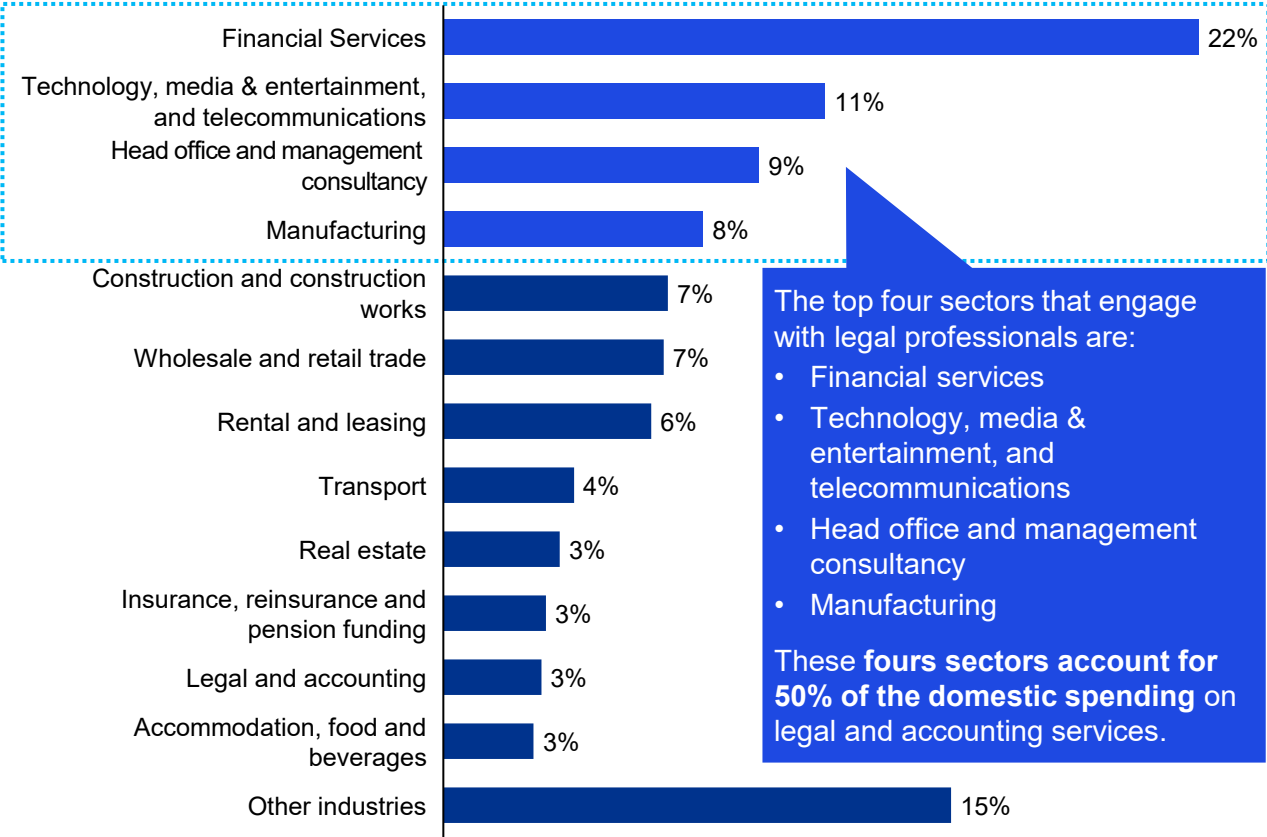
In Ireland, the value of “exported” legal services is typically from entities located outside of Ireland engaging with legal services based in Ireland. The CSO collects data on the “exports of business services” which include legal, accounting and consultancy services.

The number of cross-border transactions handled, international arbitration cases based in Ireland or the presence of multinational clients help estimate the export value of legal services.

The value of exported legal services is a statistical estimate based on firm-reported data and national accounting methods, reflecting revenue earned from legal expertise delivered to clients abroad. The figure of €1.4bn reflects the value of legal services exported in 2023 and is indicative of Ireland's growing knowledge-based economy.

Breakdown of domestic spending on legal services by industry (inter-sector trade) [a] [b]
% of total spend, 2021

Examining the interdependencies between the legal services sector with other sectors within the Irish economy (inter-sector trade), we can identify the sectors that have the greatest reliance on the legal profession and engage extensively in legal services.



Sources: [a] CSO [b] KPMG analysis

Case study: Financial services sector (1/2)

Legal professionals are essential for the financial services sector due to extensive regulation and the complex nature of many financial products.

Overview

Major global banks and insurance companies have substantial operations in Ireland, making it one of the largest exporters of financial services in the EU. There are over 120,000 people employed in the financial services sector in Ireland and this sector contributes €11 billion in annual exports to the Irish economy. ^[a] ^[b]

Legal advisers in Ireland collaborated with the Irish government in the 1980's and 1990's to establish the Irish Financial Services Centre (IFSC) in Dublin. This partnership created a favourable legal, regulatory and fiscal environment, positioning Ireland as a leading global hub for the industry. Irish legal professionals have developed excellent expertise over decades of work with the sector. **In 2023, the total value of Irish domiciled funds reached €4.1tn.** ^[c]

The legal profession plays a crucial role in helping the financial services industry navigate the complex regulatory framework that this sector operates within. From helping financial services firms establishing regulated entities in Ireland to facilitating securitisations, **the Irish legal infrastructure** is essential to the sector.

Key figures of the financial services sector in Ireland:



8,800+^[a]

Financial services companies operate in Ireland in 2025



120,000^[a]

People are employed in the financial services sector in 2025



17/20^[b]

Of the top global banks operated in Ireland in 2022



€11bn^[b]

In annual exports in 2024

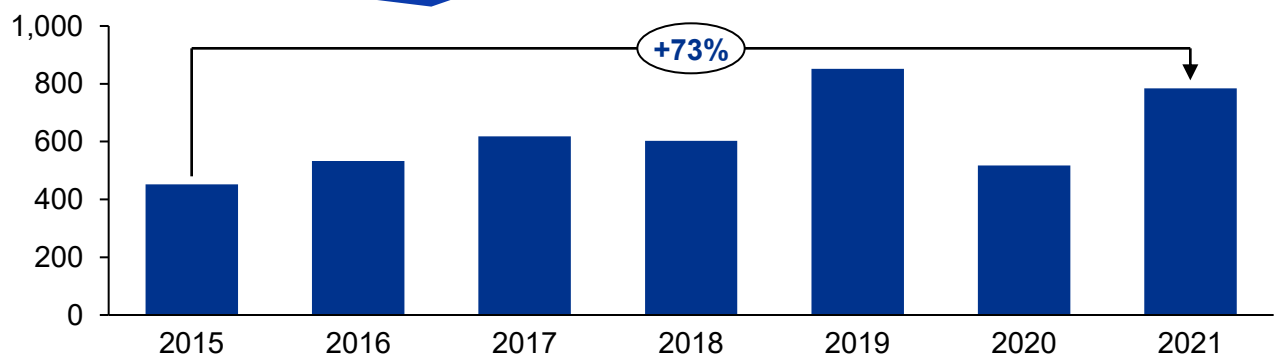


22%^[d]

Of domestic spend on legal and accounting services was from financial services in 2021

Estimated spend on legal sector by the financial services sector, €m, 2015 – 2021 ^[d] ^[e]

Between 2015 and 2021, the purchase of legal services by the financial services sector increased by 73%.



Sources: ^[a] IBEC ^[b] IDA ^[c] Irish Funds Industry Association ^[d] CSO Supply and Use Tables for Ireland 2021 ^[e] KPMG research

Case study: Financial services sector (2/2)

Key legal profession supports for the financial services sector in Ireland (non-exhaustive):

Regulatory compliance

The legal profession ensures that Irish financial institutions comply with complex national and international regulations. This ranges from helping clients establish regulated entities in Ireland to helping clients comply with new EU payment regulations.

Capital markets

Legal professionals act for Irish and international issuers, originators, lead managers, and arrangers on a variety of debt and structured finance transactions from securitisations to CDO/CLO transactions ^[1] ^[2].

Asset management and investment funds

Solicitors advise financial institutions on all aspects of investment management issues and the establishment and ongoing operation of investment funds in Ireland, ranging from money market funds to exchange traded funds.

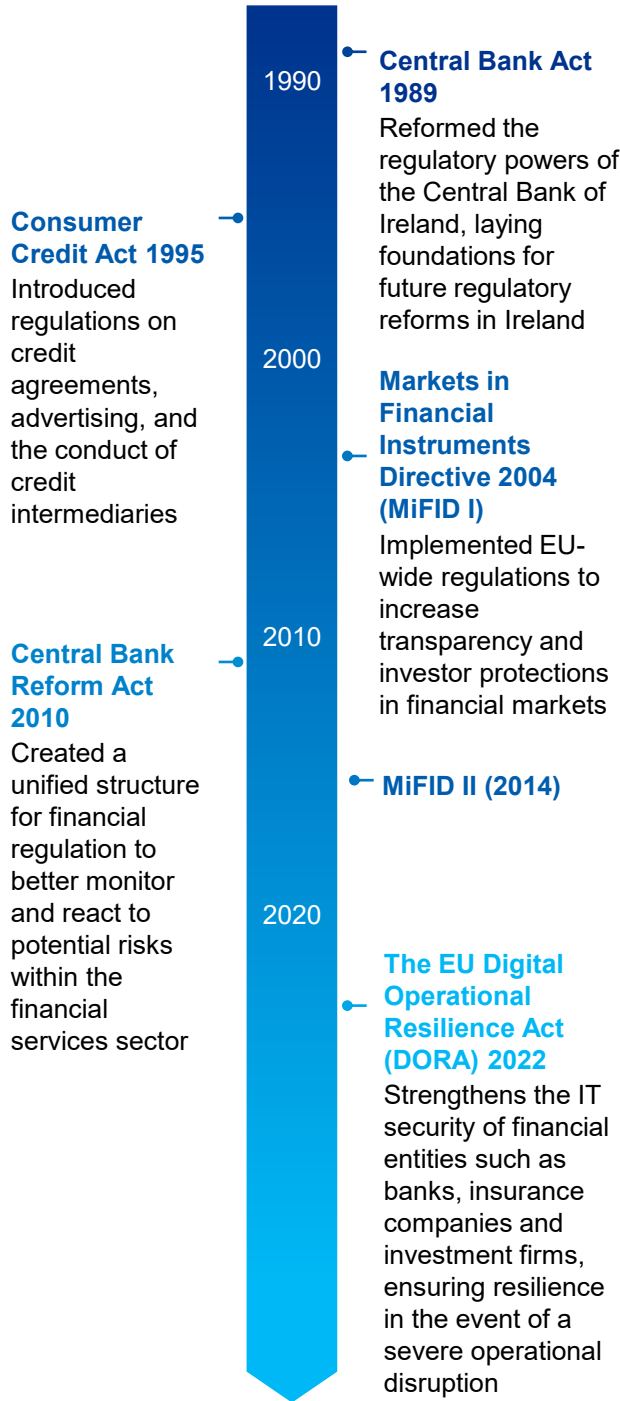
Key insight from legal professionals in the sector:



The Irish legal sector has been very innovative in the areas of financial services and aviation, offering international firms a sophisticated legal system.

Partner, Law Firm

Timeline of key legal and policy events related to Ireland’s financial services sector (non-exhaustive) 1980 – 2024 ^[a]



Notes: [1] Collateralised Debt Obligation (CDO) [2] Collateralised Loan Obligation (CLO).
Sources: [a] KPMG research

Case study: Tech sector (1/2)

Ireland’s tech sector is supported by a robust legal profession, which ensures regulatory compliance, protects IP and fosters innovation.

Overview
The technology sector in Ireland continues to be an important part of the economy. The sector encompasses a wide range of industries, including software development, information and communications technology (ICT), and digital services. Ireland hosts the European headquarters of numerous global tech giants, with Intel, Microsoft and Apple establishing in Ireland, up to 50 years ago. Leading internet companies like Google, Meta and TikTok have also chosen Ireland as their European base. A new generation of AI-focussed companies, including Open AI and Anthropic, are now following in their footsteps. Ireland also boasts a vibrant domestic tech start-up scene with an estimated 2,000 start-ups in Ireland employing 45,000 people.

A number of Irish founded tech companies have achieved notable international success, including Stripe, Intercom and Tines. Ireland's tech sector benefits from a highly skilled workforce, supportive government policies, and a strong emphasis on research and development. This has positioned the country as a leading hub for technological innovation and investment in Europe. The tech sector is a cornerstone of the nation's economic success, driving economic growth and creating high-value jobs.

Key figures of the ICT^[1] sector in Ireland:

**20%^[a]**

The ICT sector accounted for 20% of corporate tax revenue in 2022

**18%^[a]**

The ICT sector accounted for 18% of Ireland's GVA in 2022

**12%^[a]**

The ICT sector accounted for 12% of income tax revenue in 2022

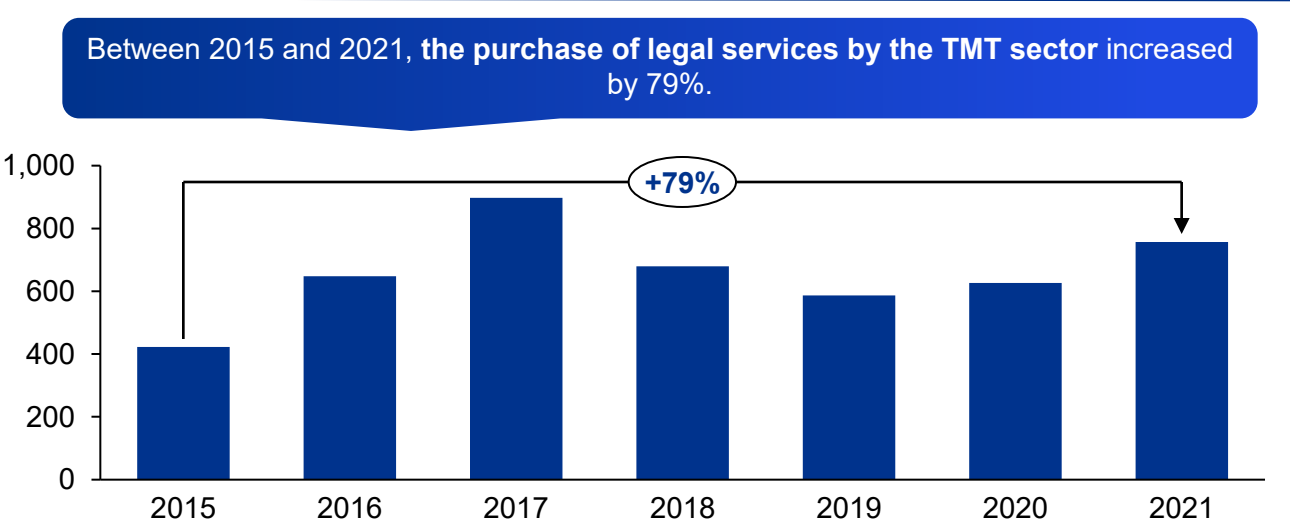
**165,000^[a]**

The ICT sector employed 165,000 people in 2022

**16/20^[b]**

Ireland was home to 16/20 of the top global tech companies in 2023

Estimated spend on legal sector by the Technology Media and Telecommunications (TMT) sector, €m, 2015 – 2021 ^{[1] [c] [d]}



Notes: [1] The ICT sector represents a significant proportion of the broader tech industry and is used here as a proxy for relevant data.
Sources: [a] Central Bank of Ireland [b] IDA [c] CSO Supply and Use Tables for Ireland 2015 – 2021 [d] KPMG analysis

Case study: Tech sector (2/2)

Key legal sector supports for the tech sector:

European Regulatory Hub

EU regulation of the tech sector works on a “country of origin” principle meaning that global tech companies are subject to regulation in the EU member state of their establishment. As a consequence, most of the world’s leading tech companies are regulated from Ireland. For example, the Irish Data Protection Commission serves as the lead regulator in the EU for Meta, Google, TikTok, LinkedIn, Apple, X, Airbnb and other leading companies. More recently, Coimisiún na Meán (Ireland’s media regulator) has taken on a lead role under EU legislation governing online content and safety.

Investigations and Litigation

Ireland has become an important international centre for technology investigations and litigation. The Irish Data Protection Commission conducts large-scale investigations under the GDPR’s “one-stop-shop” regime. The presence of the world’s leading tech companies in Ireland has resulted in the Irish courts hearing many ground-breaking cases in the tech sector. For example, the leading European case on the validity of data transfers from the EU to the US was decided by the Irish courts.

Facilitating Growth and Investment

The thriving Irish domestic tech scene is supported by legal experts that assist tech companies in securing funding through various investment rounds. They provide advice on structuring deals, negotiating terms, and ensuring legal compliance.

Key insight from legal professionals in the sector:

“The Irish legal profession has responded to the huge growth in EU technology regulation by developing specialist legal expertise to support the global tech companies headquartered in Ireland.”

Partner, Law Firm 

Timeline of key legal and policy events related to Ireland’s tech sector (non-exhaustive) 2016 – 2024 ^[a]



Sources: [a] KPMG research

Case study: Life sciences sector (1/2)

The legal profession is essential in supporting the life sciences sector, one of the largest sectors in Ireland, which accounts for over 60% of Irish exports.

Overview

Ireland’s life sciences sector is one of the largest in the world, with Ireland becoming the world’s third largest exporter of pharmaceutical products, and the sector accounting for over 60% of all Irish exports in 2023.^{[a] [b]} The pharmaceutical sector in Ireland is diverse, encompassing biopharmaceuticals, MedTech, diagnostics, medical devices, and digital health companies.

Both indigenous and international firms have long been a feature of the Irish life sciences corporate scene. Notable life sciences companies located in Ireland include Perrigo Company plc (formally Elan Corporation plc) and Icon plc, who expanded internationally and are listed on the world’s main stock exchanges. Companies such as MSD, Pfizer and GSK have significant international operations in Ireland for many decades.

Key legal profession supports for the life sciences sector in Ireland (non-exhaustive):

Intellectual property rights

The legal profession enables life sciences companies to navigate complex IP laws and advises companies on IP ownership, licensing, development, and ownership strategies.

Regulatory issues

Stringent quality standards within the life sciences sector create a complex regulatory landscape, encompassing clinical trials, market authorisation applications, and post-market surveillance. Companies need legal advice to navigate these processes successfully.

Industry Collaboration

Collaboration between life sciences companies and the research arms of Irish universities is common due to the highly technical nature of product development in the life sciences sector. Collaborations can often involve a complicated suite of agreements between institutions that require legal help.

Key figures of the life sciences sector in Ireland:



700+

Biopharma, MedTech, and digital health companies in Ireland in 2025^[a]



102,000

People employed in life sciences companies across Ireland in 2025^[c]



19/20

Of the top global pharma companies are based in Ireland in 2025^[c]



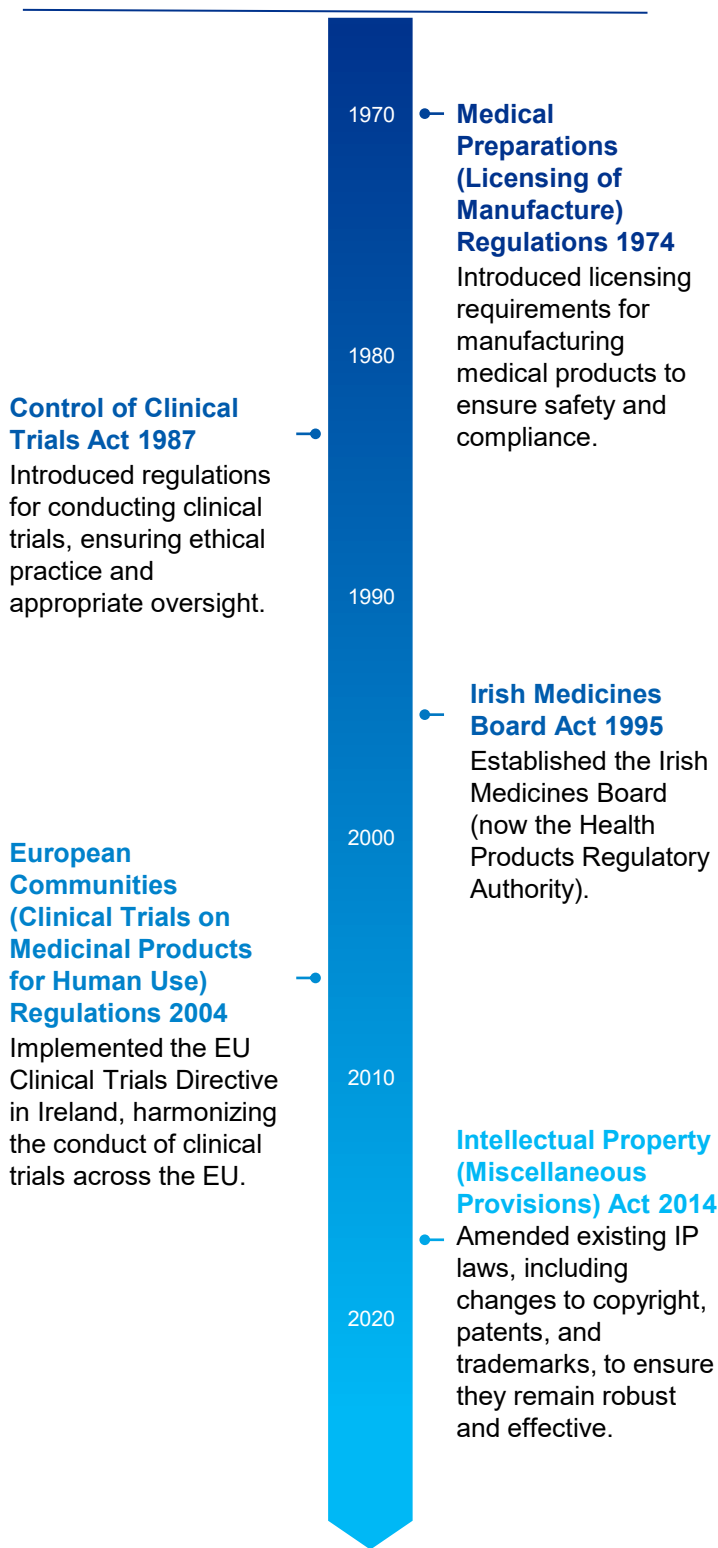
€116bn

Worth of pharmaceutical goods exported annually^[b]

Sources: [a] IDA [b] CSO [c] Stakeholder consultations [d] IBEC

Case study: Life sciences sector (2/2)

Timeline of key legal and policy events related to Ireland’s life sciences sector (non-exhaustive) [a]
1970 – 2024 [a]



Key insight from legal professionals in the sector:

“The Irish legal profession is known for its **quick and efficient responses**, which is highly valued by its **life science clients**.”

GC, Life Sciences Company 



Sources: [a] KPMG analysis

Case study: Agri-food sector (1/2)

The legal profession provides vital support to Ireland’s agri-food sector, enhancing its economic performance, compliance, and international competitiveness.

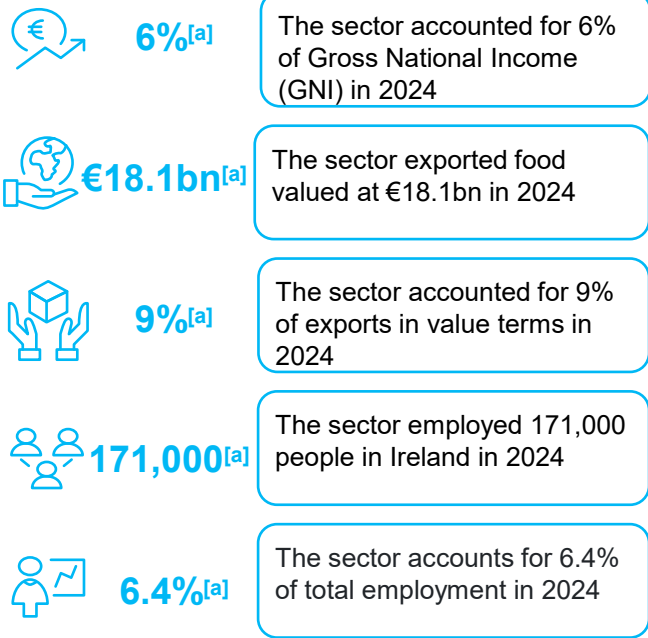
Overview

The agri-food sector in Ireland is a vital part of the economy and society, especially for rural and coastal communities. Ireland’s agri-food sector is renowned for its **high-quality produce** and **sustainable practices**. The sector encompasses a wide range of activities, including farming, forestry, fishing, and food processing. There are approximately 135,000 farms, over 770,000 hectares of forest, and more than 2,000 fishing vessels and aquaculture sites, each requiring legal profession support at different stages of the business cycle.^[a]

Dairy is the largest category of output by value, accounting for 30% of total agricultural output by value in 2023, with a value of €3.5bn.^[b] The favourable climate and soil in Ireland supports extensive livestock farming.

The agri-food sector is **highly export-oriented**, with around 90% of Irish beef, sheep meat, and dairy produce being exported each year. In 2023, the sector exported goods valued at €18.1bn, reaching over 180 countries worldwide.^[a]

Key figures of the agri-food sector in Ireland:

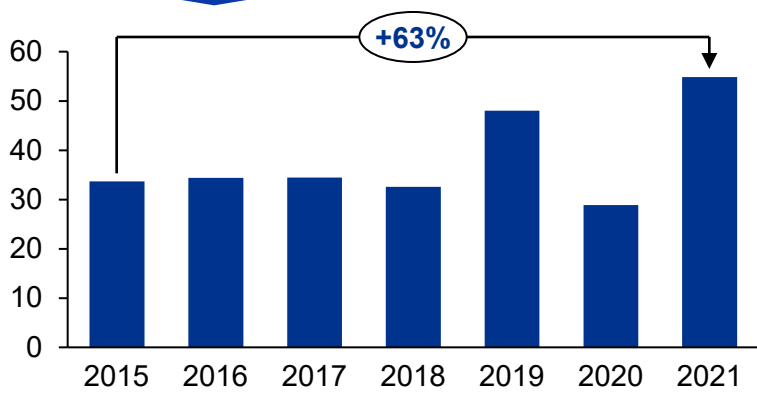


Sources: [a] Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine [b] CSO

Case study: Agri-food sector (2/2)

Estimated spend on legal sector by the agri-food sector, €m, 2015 – 2021 ^[1] [a] [b]

Between 2015 and 2021, the purchase of legal services by the agri-food sector increased by 63%.



Key insight from legal professionals in the sector:

Irish law firms have a strong understanding of their agri-food clients, both on paper and at a personal level. This historical knowledge is invaluable, especially for companies with complex histories like cooperatives that have merged and divested over the years.

Solicitor, Agri-food Company 

Key legal profession supports for the agri-food sector in Ireland (non-exhaustive):

Contract Management and Dispute Resolution

The legal profession drafts and reviews contracts for supply chains, land use, and employment. This ensures that agreements are clear, enforceable, and beneficial for all stakeholders, reducing the risk of conflicts. The legal profession provides avenues for resolving disputes, including mediation, arbitration, and litigation services if they do occur.

Intellectual Property Protection

Legal experts help agri-food businesses protect their intellectual property, including trademarks, patents, and copyrights. This is important for safeguarding innovations and branding that differentiate Irish products in the global market.

Financial Support Advice

The legal profession advises on loans, grants, and subsidies that support the growth and sustainability of agri-food enterprises. There is **substantial support** from the government and various agencies to promote agricultural development and innovation. From 2020-2023 the government invested €100m across 34 capital projects under the Capital Investment Scheme for the Marketing and Processing of Agricultural Products. This scheme aims to help food producers and processors diversify their product offerings and access new markets.^[b]

Regulatory Compliance

The legal profession helps agri-food businesses navigate complex regulations related to food safety, environmental standards, and sustainability. This ensures that companies comply with national and EU laws, avoiding penalties and fostering consumer trust.



Sources: [a] CSO Supply and Use Tables for Ireland 2015 – 2021 [b] Gov.ie

Case study: Aircraft leasing sector

The aircraft leasing sector in Ireland is a global leader which is underpinned by our strong legal profession.

Overview

Ireland is a global leader in the aircraft leasing industry, managing over 60% of the world's leased aircraft. ^[a] The assets of the aircraft leasing sector rose by €96.8b, from €43.2b in 2009 to €140b in 2018. ^b 2025 is a significant milestone for the aircraft leasing industry in Ireland as it marks 50 years of aircraft leasing in Ireland. ^[c]

The legal sector is integral to Ireland's aircraft leasing industry. The country's strategic location and strong aviation infrastructure further bolster its position as a premier hub for aircraft leasing. This thriving sector supports thousands of jobs.

Ireland is a signatory to the Cape Town Convention and Protocol which is an international legal framework for the registration, recognition, and enforcement of security interests in aircraft assets. This gives Irish lessors confidence that their rights in aircraft are recognised globally, improving asset recovery and reducing borrowing costs. Some of Boeing's biggest customers include Irish companies such as Ryanair and AerCap.

Key figures of the aircraft leasing sector in Ireland:



€901m^[d]

Annual economic contribution to the economy in 2021



€291m^[d]

Annual spend with Irish suppliers in 2021



8,543^[d]

The number of FTE jobs in the aircraft leasing industry in 2021



60%^[a]

Ireland's share of the global aircraft leasing market in 2025



14/15^[a]

14/15 of the world's top lessors are based in Ireland in 2025

Key legal profession supports for aircraft leasing sector in Ireland (non-exhaustive):

Specialised Legal Expertise

Irish law firms have dedicated aviation finance teams that design and execute intricate leasing agreements, including sale-and-leaseback deals, asset-backed securitisations, and cross-border financings. These arrangements often involve special purpose vehicles (SPVs) and require meticulous legal oversight to navigate international regulations and tax considerations.

Regulatory Compliance

Law firms in Ireland provide guidance on compliance with international aviation laws, tax regimes, and local regulations, ensuring that leasing operations adhere to global standards.

Industry Collaboration

Law firms often collaborate with industry bodies like Aircraft Leasing Ireland (ALI) to advocate for policies that benefit the sector and ensure Ireland remains a leading hub for aircraft leasing.

Tax and Structuring Advice

Ireland offers a favourable tax environment for aircraft leasing. Ireland offers a 12.5% corporate tax rate for active trading companies. There is an 8-year tax depreciation rate, allowing leasing companies to recover the cost of aircraft more quickly. Ireland has 70+ double tax treaties in place, this helps mitigate withholding taxes on lease payments. The Irish legal profession provides an important role; advising on tax structuring and helping companies optimise its operations.

Dispute Resolution and Restructuring

The legal sector plays a pivotal role in resolving disputes arising from leasing agreements. For example, recently the Commercial Court and many legal practitioners were central in settling complex aviation cases involving billions of euros in assets, over aircraft stranded in Russia due to the war in Ukraine.

Sources: [a] IBEC [b] CSO [c] Irish Business Post [d] ALI



05

The social impact of the Irish legal profession

The legal profession’s social impact

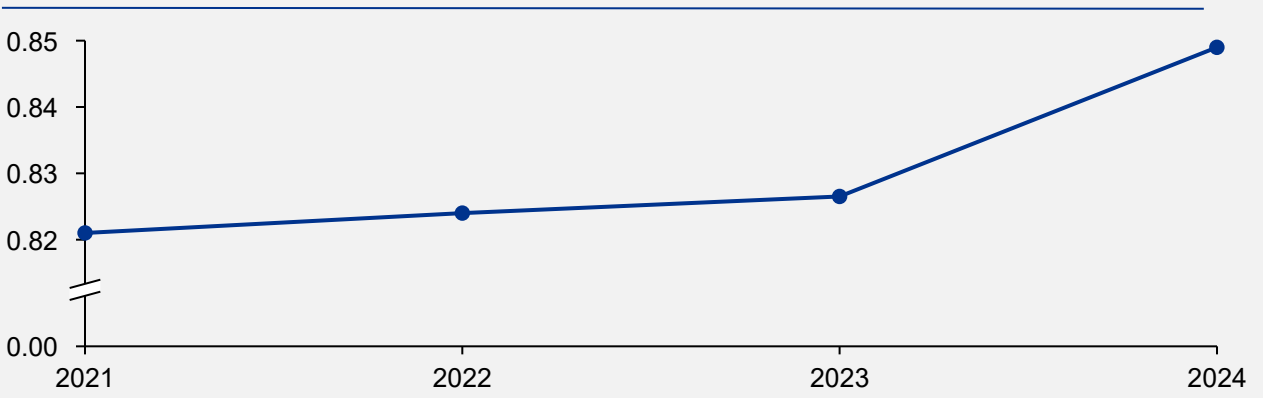
Through legal advisory and representation, legal practitioners facilitate the functioning of a fair and prosperous society.

The legal profession in Ireland plays a key role in advancing social well-being and equality. It upholds the rule of law, ensuring that individuals and communities can access justice regardless of income or background. Through legal aid services, pro bono work, and advocacy, lawyers help protect the rights of vulnerable groups such as children, migrants, tenants, workers, and victims of domestic violence. The profession also contributes to legal literacy by supporting public education and awareness campaigns. In rural areas, solicitors serve as trusted advisors, fostering social cohesion and continuity.

World Justice Project

The World Justice Project (WJP) Rule of Law Index measures the strength of rule of law experienced in practical, everyday situations by the public worldwide. It measures various factors, from checks on government powers and regulatory enforcement to civil and criminal justice fairness. The Rule of Law Index compares 142 countries and jurisdictions globally. Ireland is ranked 7th in the world in terms of the strength of its fundamental rights. This is an improvement from 10th in 2021. These rights range from the absence of discrimination to freedom of opinion and expression.

WJP scoring of the strength of Irish Fundamental rights ^{[1] [a]}
2021 – 2024, Index Score (from 0 to 1)



Key fundamental individual rights upheld by the legal sector (non-exhaustive):

**Property rights**

Property rights refer to the legal rights to acquire, use, and transfer property. These rights ensure that everyone can live with dignity and security.

**Right to personal liberty & due process**

The right to personal liberty ensures freedom from arbitrary detention, while due process guarantees fair legal procedures.

**Employment rights**

Employment rights protect workers from unfair treatment, ensure fair wages, safe working conditions, and reasonable working hours.

**Right to a fair trial and access to justice**

The right to a fair trial ensures justice through impartial courts, and access to justice means everyone can seek legal help.

**Right to privacy and data protection**

The right to privacy protects personal life from intrusion, while data protection ensures control over personal information.

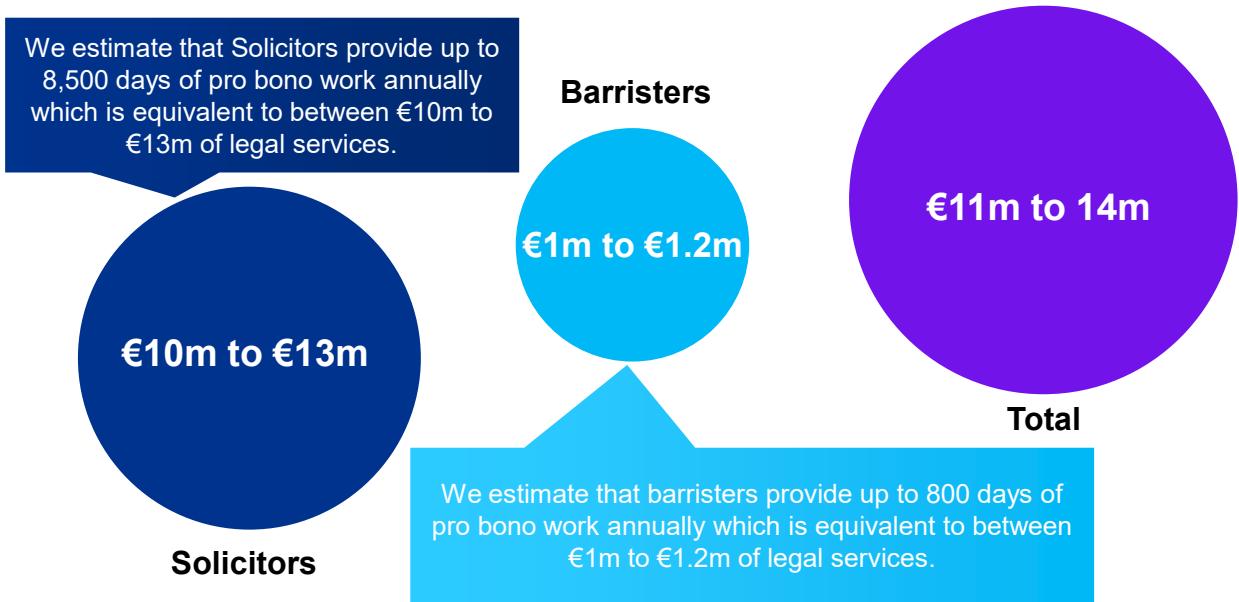
**Consumer rights**

Consumer rights protect individuals who purchase goods and services, ensuring they are treated fairly and honestly in the marketplace.

Pro bono work

The provision of pro bono legal services enhances access to justice for the less well off in society.

Estimated annual value of pro bono work carried out by solicitors and barristers in Ireland [a]



Pro bono work in Ireland [b] [c]

Pro bono legal services are provided to individuals, charities or community groups who are unable to access legal help owing to the absence of private funds or legal aid. There are legal aid schemes available to a narrow cohort of vulnerable citizens in civil matters (primarily in family law) and in criminal matters. Pro bono legal services reflect a strong tradition of lawyers giving back to the community and help to bridge the **justice gap** by making legal assistance available to those who cannot pay.

Evidence suggests that the practice of undertaking pro bono legal services is common among law firms and individual lawyers in Ireland. The provisions and recognition of pro bono legal services is increasing in importance to solicitors and barristers with more and more large law firms engaging and reporting on pro bono activities.

There have been a number of initiatives to increase the number of pro bono hours offered by lawyers. The **Pro Bono Pledge Ireland** encourages legal professionals to dedicate a minimum of 20 pro bono hours per lawyer annually.

The Pledge was developed by law firms, barristers, and in-house legal teams who came together under the coordination of **PILA** (the Public Law Alliance), a project of **FLAC**. The **Voluntary Assistance Scheme (VAS)** operated by The Bar of Ireland, connects NGOs and civil society groups with barristers who provide free legal assistance. All these efforts ensure that vulnerable communities can access essential legal expertise, from initial advice to court representation, thereby enhancing access to justice. While pro bono work helps bridge the justice gap, it will never fully meet the need and requires further government intervention in the form of effective legal aid schemes.

Unmet legal needs in Ireland are currently being assessed through a Department of Justice project, supported by the European Commission and carried out by the OECD, called 'Enhancing Access to Justice through People-Centred Justice in Ireland'. As part of this project, an unmet legal needs survey will be carried out, promising to quantify for the first time the volume of unmet legal needs in Ireland.

Sources: [a] KPMG analysis [b] Pro bono Pledge Ireland [c] KPMG consultations with legal sector stakeholders

Access to legal support

Early legal support helps to protect rights and foster a stable, prosperous society.

Importance of access to legal support

The Irish legal profession provides important services to the public, especially in criminal and family law, ensuring that individuals can exercise their legal rights and access justice. By addressing legal issues early, individuals and businesses can navigate complex legal landscapes more effectively, contributing to a more stable and prosperous society. There are several barriers to accessing legal expertise in Ireland.

A lack of access to legal aid can deter individuals from seeking assistance and often leads to further complications, as legal rights aren't understood from the outset. This contributes to an access to justice gap, particularly affecting marginalised and low-income cohorts of society. An urgent priority exists across the profession in respect of a sustainable rate of remuneration for legal aid work. In the absence of a sustainable fee schedule, the burden on the pro bono sector will increase, and the justice gap will likely widen. A number of programmes and additional supports are under development to address these barriers, and are detailed on the following page. These aim to enhance early and timely access to legal advice and support.

Key social impacts by the legal profession

The legal profession has both a social and economic impact on society. Legal professionals' social contributions are often under recognised, even within the profession. There is a need to raise public awareness of the legal profession's vital role.^[a]

1

Peace, justice and institutional strength

Legal professionals are essential for maintaining peace, justice, and institutional strength. Their impact depends on effective and accessible justice systems. Enhancing access to legal representation, combating corruption, and promoting effective policymaking can further strengthen their contribution.

2

Equality and inclusion

Legal professionals are key to advancing economic and social equality. Income inequality and access to justice are interrelated, with research showing that higher legal aid as a percentage of GDP reduces income inequality.

3

Environment and sustainability

Legal professionals support environmental sustainability through policymaking, representing parties in planning and environmental cases, advocacy, and community work.

4

Health and well-being

Legal professionals enhance health and well-being by shaping healthcare policies, guiding new medicine approvals, representing parties in negligence cases, advocating for better healthcare provision for vulnerable groups, representing victims of crime and defending those accused of crimes.

Key services

Civil and criminal legal aid

Mediation

Advisory & Advocacy

Legal education

Research

Family support

Pro bono services

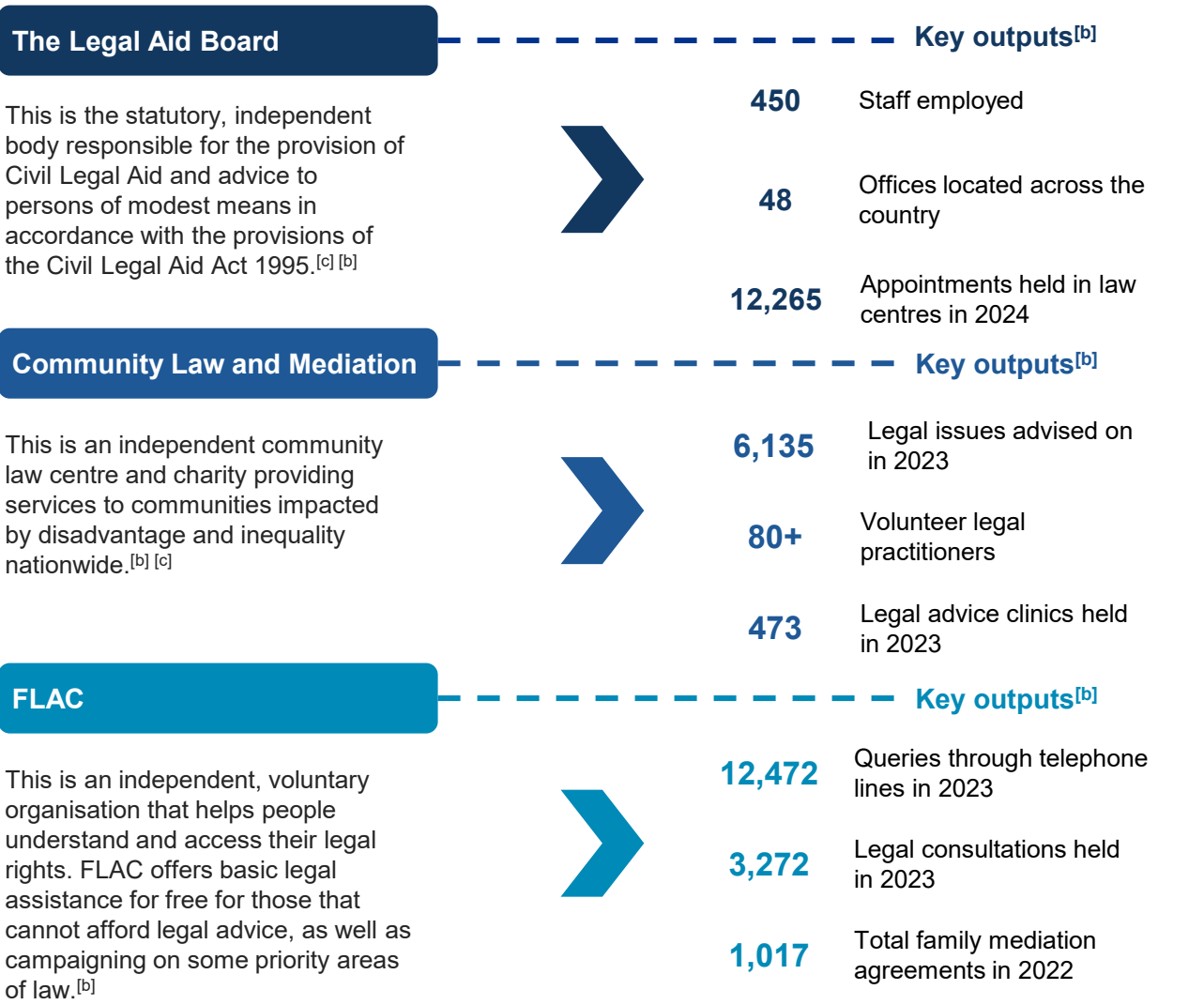
Sources: [a] International Bar Association

Legal supports in place

Across Ireland there are many organisations working to enhance access to legal advice and support.

Improving access to legal advice and support

The Law Society and The Bar of Ireland are advocating for many improvements to increase access to justice, including advocating for higher income thresholds for civil legal aid eligibility and broadening the scope of civil legal aid. In addition, the Legal Aid Board, Community Law and Mediation, and FLAC are some examples of organisations working to promote equal access to justice. ^[a]



Sample of other organisations improving legal access to all

Mercy Law Resource Centre

Ballymun Community Law Centre

Immigrant Council of Ireland

These organisations go a long way to ensuring access to justice and fair representation. They help protect rights, resolve important legal issues, and support vulnerable communities.

Sources: ^[a] This report does not address criminal legal aid ^[b] Organisation annual reports ^[c] KPMG consultations with legal sector stakeholders

06

Appendix



Report overview

The overall context for this report and key inputs are summarised below.

Overview and scope

The Law Society and The Bar of Ireland jointly commissioned KPMG to conduct an independent assessment of the legal profession's economic and social contributions to the Irish economy. Together, they represent over 26,000 members.

Quantification of the legal sector's contribution to the Irish economy

Articulation of the role the legal sector plays in supporting the growth of the economy

The legal system's role in enabling commercial activity

Analysis of the legal sector's wider social impacts

Key sources for this report



Information sources include:

- **Legal profession information:** Information from the Law Society, The Bar of Ireland, law firms, and entities' websites.
- **Industry data:** The Central Bank of Ireland, The Courts Services of Ireland, CSO, Eurostat, IBEC, IDA Ireland, Legal Aid Board, Word Bank, OECD (full list of sources is provided in the appendix).



Our collective knowledge of the sector, enhanced by:

- Consultations with the Law Society, The Bar of Ireland, individual solicitors and barristers, public bodies, non-governmental organisations, professional bodies, businesses, and industry associations.

Economic impact assessment methodology

Overview of economic impact assessment methodology.

What is an economic impact assessment?

Economic impact assessments measure how an event, policy, or industry affects the economy. This happens when businesses spend money on wages, supplies, and services. That spending then circulates as employees and suppliers make further purchases, creating jobs and boosting economic activity. This is known as **the multiplier effect**.

In the case of the legal profession, an increase in expenditure on legal services boosts demand for goods and services in the sector's supply chain. As law firms and barristers spend more on suppliers, those suppliers buy more materials and services to meet that demand. Individuals employed in the legal profession, and in its supply chain, spend their wages – further driving consumption.

These repeated cycles of spending lead to more economic activity, higher output, and job creation.

Our economic impact assessment methodology

Eurostat provides data on the direct economic output of the legal profession, but this underestimates the sector's true direct economic contribution. Many legal professionals work as in-house counsel in industries like technology, agri-food, pharmaceuticals, and government. To account for these in-house counsel roles, their contribution is calculated by estimating the share of legal professionals within each sector's workforce. This percentage is then applied to the sector's total output to determine the legal profession's impact within that sector.

The broader economic effects, including indirect and induced impacts, are estimated using our impact model. This model maps out the purchasing patterns between sectors of the economy and is based on data published by the Central Statistics Office (CSO).

What metrics are reported on?

Economic impact results are primarily reported in terms of economic output and Gross Value Added (GVA).

Economic output measures the total value of goods and services generated by Ireland's legal profession. It reflects the total spending within the sector and its supply chain.

Gross Value Added (GVA) is similar to GDP and represents the legal sector's contribution to the economy. It is the value of the sector's output minus the cost of intermediate goods and services used in production.

Other key metrics include the number of jobs supported across the legal sector's value chain, and earnings.

How are the results presented?

Economic impacts are typically categorised in terms of the following components:

- a) Direct impact:** the economic activity that the legal sector itself generates in Ireland.
- b) Indirect impact:** the supply chain impact that occurs as the legal sector purchases goods and services from other sectors of the economy.
- c) Induced impact:** the wage-financed impact generated by the expenditure of wages of legal sector employees, and employees in its supply chain.

Assumptions

Methodology for the economic impact analysis.

Approach to estimating economic impacts

The direct output for the legal profession is provided by Eurostat. However, this underestimates the contribution of the Irish legal profession as this classification excludes the contribution made by legal professionals who work in other sectors of the economy (e.g. legal professionals working in tech, Agri-Food, pharmaceutical businesses, etc.)

We estimated the direct contribution generated by in-house legal services sector by taking the number of legal professionals divided by the total labour force in each sector (information supplied by the Law Society of Ireland and The Bar of Ireland). This percentage is then multiplied against the respective sectors output to estimates the legal profession’s contribution to each sector.

Direct output
(per sector)

=

(Direct Output [per respective sector]) ÷ (Total employed in the sector) x (number of solicitors or barristers working in respective sector)

In order to estimate the indirect and induced impacts generated by the Irish legal profession we used an input-output modelling approach, using supply & use tables and multipliers sourced from the CSO.

Indirect and induced output
(per sector)

=

(Direct output [respective sector]) x (Type 2 output multiplier - 1)

To estimate GVA impacts, we calculated the ratio of GVA to total output for each relevant sector. This ratio was then applied to the total output impact from the legal profession to derive its GVA contribution.

GVA impacts
(per sector)

=

(Direct output or Indirect and induced) x (GVA ratio per each sector)

Approach to estimating employment

Direct employment in the Irish legal services sector was estimated by using CSO census data, information supplied by the Law Society and The Bar of Ireland, and industry stakeholder engagement. Direct employment in the sector includes: legal professionals in the legal profession (barristers, solicitors, associates, legal secretaries) and in-house counsel working outside the ‘legal activities’ sector.

Indirect and induced employment associated with the legal sector refers to jobs supported in the wider economy through the sector’s supply chain, and the wage-financed spending of those directly and indirectly employed. Indirect employment captures jobs supported in sectors that provide goods and services to legal firms (e.g. IT, office supplies, professional services), while induced employment reflects jobs supported by the consumer spending of legal sector employees, and employees of those in its supply chain. These are estimated using input-output modelling, which traces the ripple effects of legal sector activity through the economy.

Pro bono approach

In order to estimate the monetary value of the time dedicated to pro bono work by the Irish legal services sector, we sourced data from:

- FLAC
- Pro Bono Pledge Ireland
- Number of solicitors and barristers
- Average charge out rate of solicitors and barristers

We estimated the monetary value of the time dedicated to pro bono following the below formula:

Monetary Value

=

(Hours spent by solicitors/barristers working on pro bono work) x (% of solicitors/barristers conducting pro bono work) x (total number of solicitors/barristers x hourly charge out rate)

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