

An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

Existing Buildings: Vacancy, Circularity and Compliance

John Wickham Senior Adviser Building Standards

NBCMSO CPD Day Building Control and the re-use of existing buildings and materials

23 September 2026

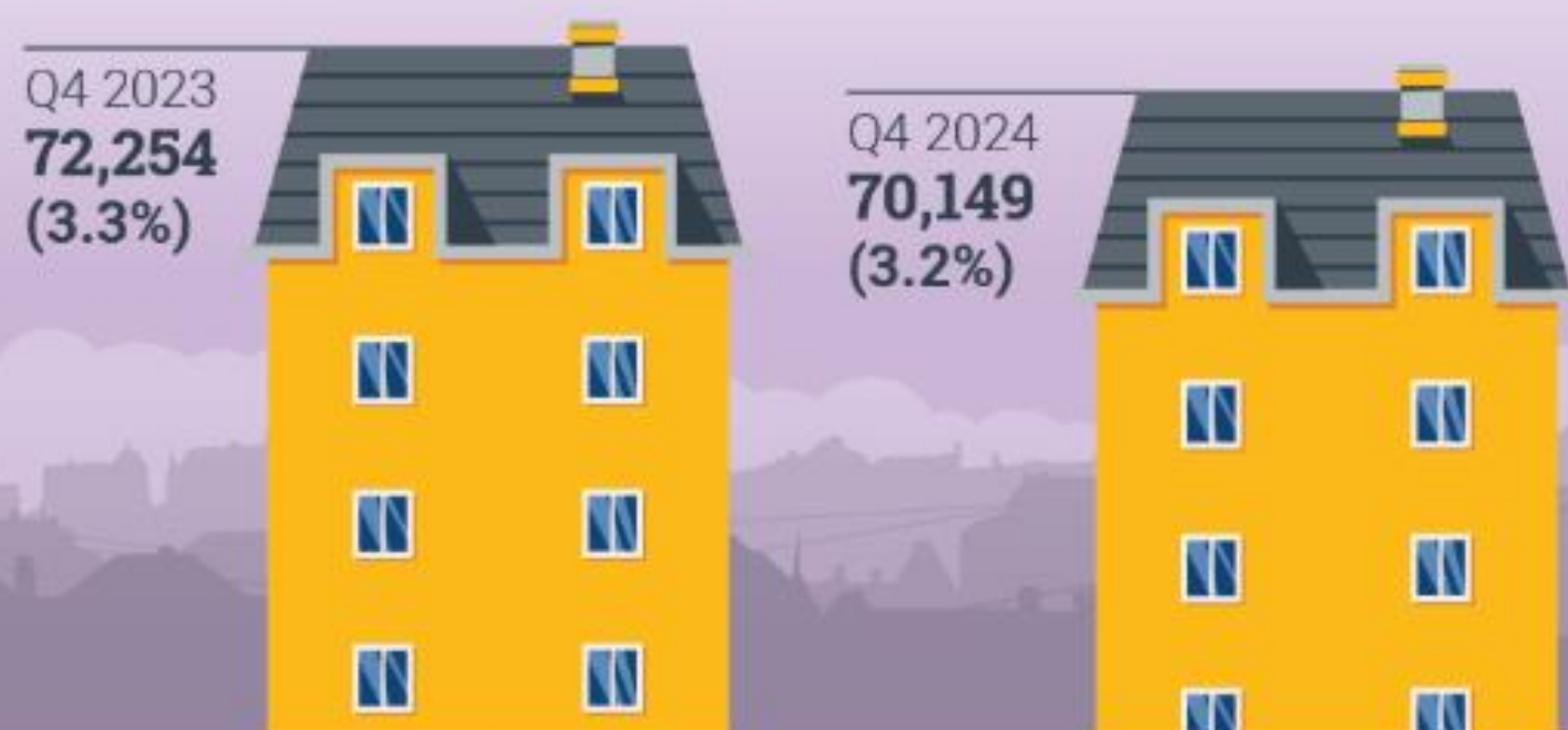


1. Vacancy

Residential Vacancy Based on Metered Electricity Consumption 2024



National Vacant Dwellings Number & Rate



National Vacancy Flows Q4 2024



Local Authority Vacancy Rates Q4 2024 (%)

Highest

- 1 Leitrim 7.8%
- 2 Donegal 6.3%
- 3 Mayo 6.0%



Lowest

- 1 South Dublin 0.9%
- 2 Fingal 1.1%
- 3 Kildare 1.4%

Construction Period of Vacant Dwellings Q4 2024 (%)



Building Energy Rating of Vacant Dwellings Q4 2024 (%)



Policy Context



Chapter 4: Securing Additional Supply, Ending Dereliction & Vacancy

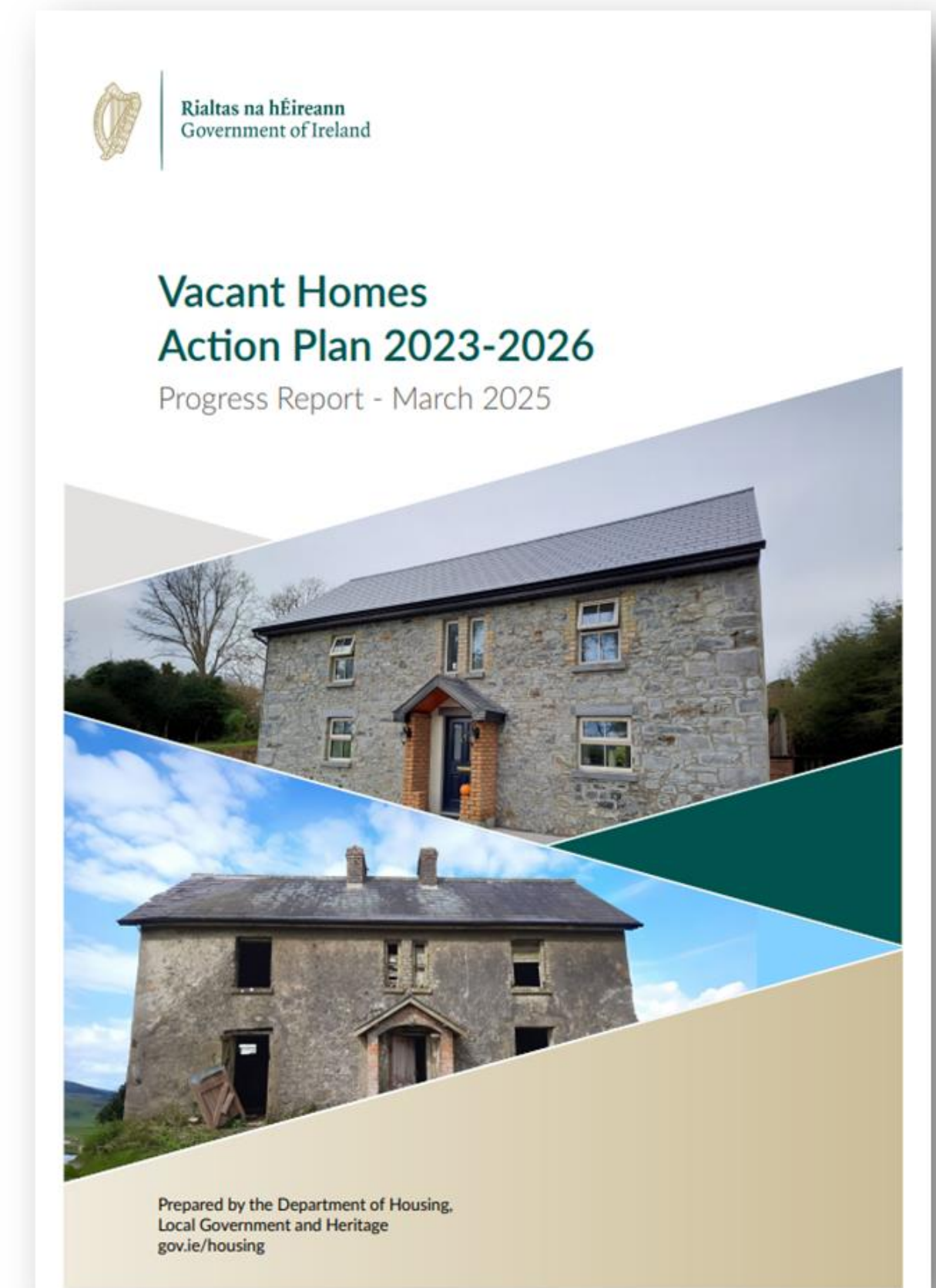
*Work towards ending dereliction
and vacancy.*

Delivering Homes, Building Communities
2025-2030

Measures and Supports in Place



- Dedicated Vacant Homes Unit in the Department of Housing
- Vacant Homes Action Plan in place – identifies actions to be taken across Government
- Full-time Vacant Homes Officer in all 31 local authorities – funded by Department
- Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant (VPRG) – July 2022, grant to owners of vacant/derelict properties.
- Vacant Above the Shop Grant - April 2026, additional support for refurbishing / converting above the shop space for residential use – up to €135,000 available
- Repair and Leasing Scheme – vacant property refurbished and leased to local authority.
- Buy and Renew – local authority purchases vacant property from owner for social housing.
- Planning exemptions for change of use from commercial to residential use.
- €150m Urban Regeneration & Development Fund – for local authorities to acquire vacant / derelict properties and sell on.



[Vacant Homes Action Plan Progress Reports](#)

Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant Delivery to Q2 2026



6,312

Grants paid as refurbishment
works completed



**Almost €349
million**

In grants paid
by local authorities



18,803

Applications
received



14,377

Applications
approved



**Strong pipeline in
2026 as works are
completed and
grants are paid**

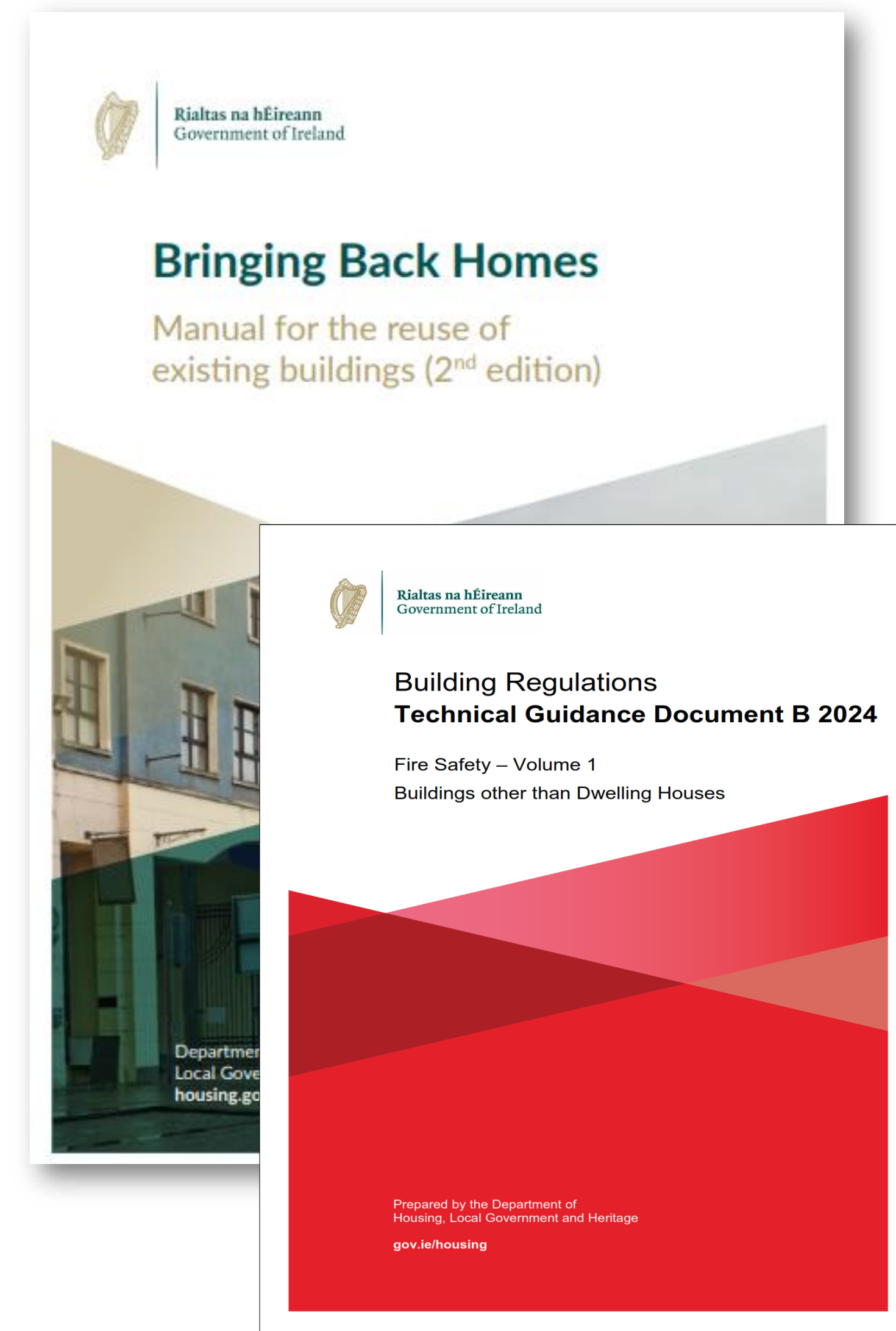
VPRG Quarterly Stats
[Vacant Property Refurbishment Grant
statistics](#)

Measures and supports in place (cont.)



- Town Centre First policy, town teams and plans in place & Town Regeneration Officers in 26 LAs.
- Vacant Homes Tax (seven times base Local Property Tax).
- Local Authority Purchase and Renovation Loan available to first time buyers to cover renovation works for VPRG eligible property.
- Derelict Property Tax to be introduced in Finance Bill Oct 2026
- Bringing Back Homes Manual 2nd Edition published
- Amendments to Part B of the Building Regulations (Fire Safety) – simplifying fire safety measures for existing buildings.
- Planning Exemptions for sub-division of existing dwellings.

Overall, vacancy rates declining.





2. Circularity

Core EU Commission Policy Initiatives – EU Green Deal – December 2019



Circularity Gap Report

- Built Environment Sector operates within a linear economy.
- High material footprint- responsible for nearly half of all domestic material extraction.
- Generates almost two thirds of the country's waste the vast majority of which is not reused or recycled
- Significant portion of construction materials imported from abroad



Circular Economy Strategy - Key Actions & Targets



Includes:

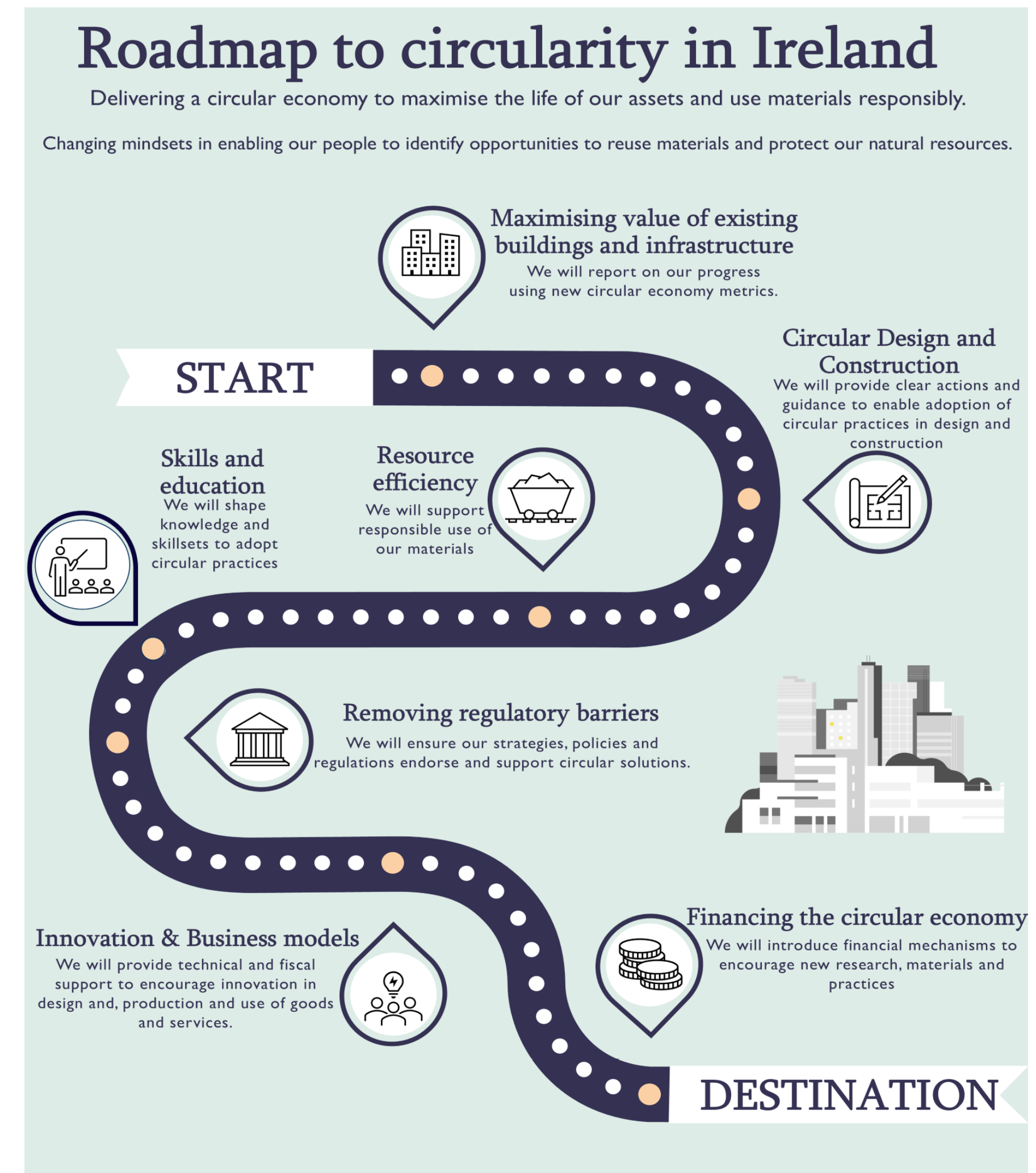
- Development of Circularity Roadmap for the Construction Sector in 2026.
- 12% reduction of C&D waste arisings by 2030.

A5	Support the work of the European Commission CPR Acquis process which will align JRC end-of-waste criteria for recycled aggregates via new standardisation requests under the EU Construction Products Regulation 2024.
A6	Develop a plan across government in line with A5 to support the safe use of recycled aggregates in the construction sector which ensures that inappropriate recycled aggregates cannot be placed on the market.



Circularity for the Construction Sector Roadmap

- Maximising the value of existing buildings and infrastructure
- Circular Design and Construction
- Resource efficiency and waste reduction
- Innovation and business models for circularity
- Skills, education, research and capacity building
- Financing the circular transition
- Policy and regulation
- **Launch of Public Consultation (October 2026)**



More information

Delivery of the Action Plan and Roadmap will be managed by DECC. Please contact us with any questions or suggestions at: customer.service@decc.gov.ie



**An Roinn Comhshaoil,
Aeráide agus Cumarsáide**
Department of the Environment,
Climate and Communications

Construction Products Regulation 2024



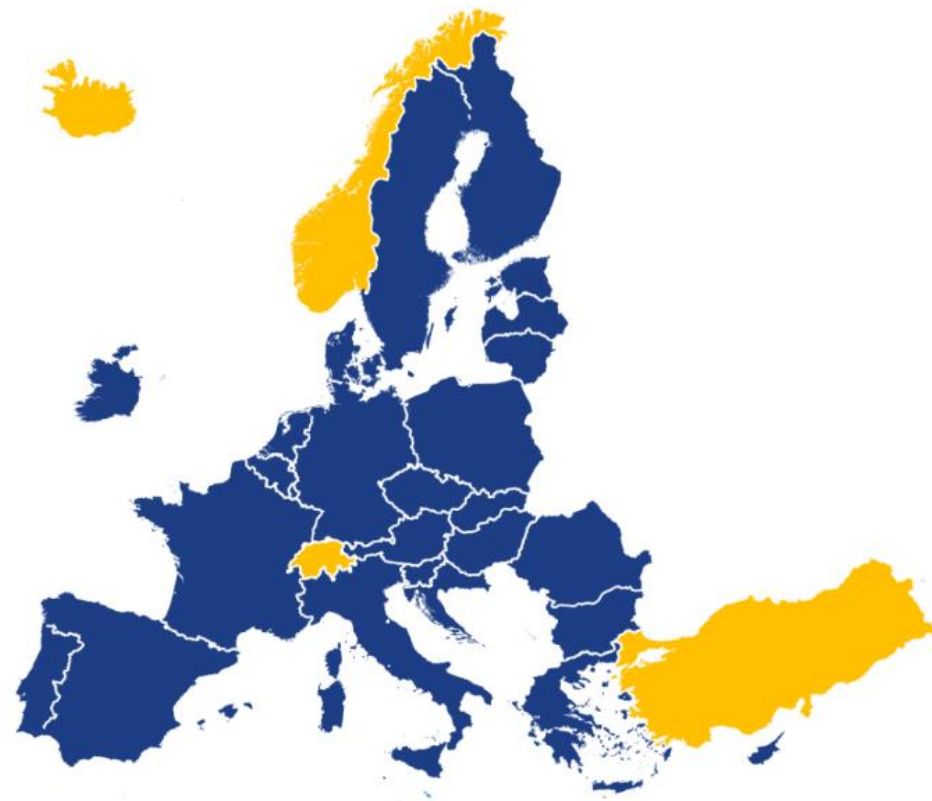
CPR 2024 Objectives

1. Achieve a well-functioning single market for construction products, and
2. Contribute to the objectives of the green and digital transition, particularly the modern, resource-efficient and competitive economy.

Main Elements

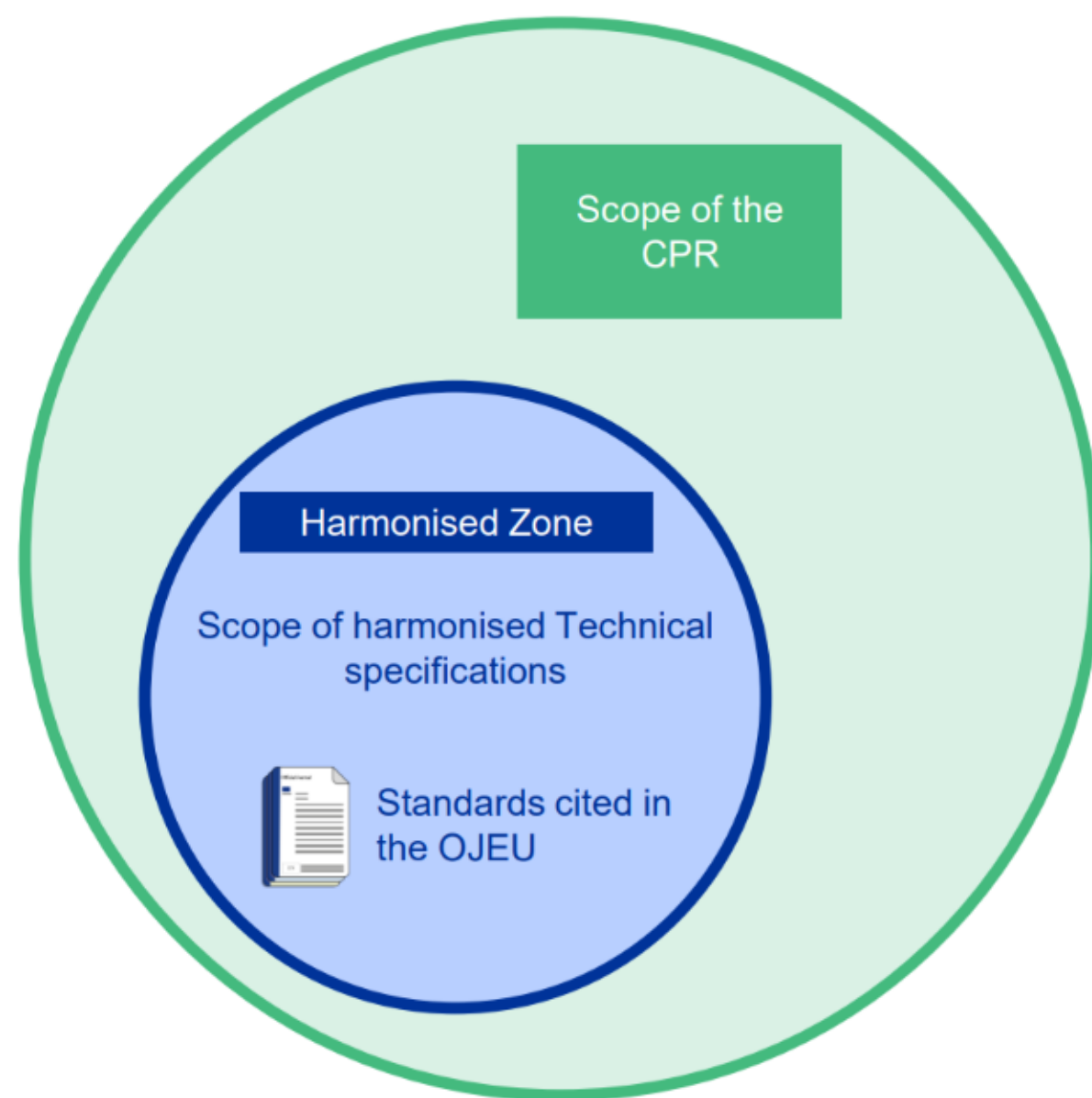
- Mandatory declaration of environmental characteristics
- Fixing the problems in the standardisation system
- Digital passport for construction products
- Includes 3D printed products and extends scope to used products
- Possibility of Specific Product Requirements
- Obligations on economic operators, fulfilment service providers and online marketplaces
- Strengthens Market Surveillance & enforcement powers
- Green Public Procurement

Fixing Problems with EU Standardisation System



- **CPR ACQUIS EXPERT GROUP** ([E03776](#))
- To correct, complete and renew harmonised standards adopted under the CPR 2011
- Pre-standardisation considerations
 - Basic requirements for construction works
 - Regulatory needs of Member States
 - Safety objectives
 - Environmental objectives
 - Circularity objectives
 - Climate objectives

(First) CPR Working Plan for 2026-2029



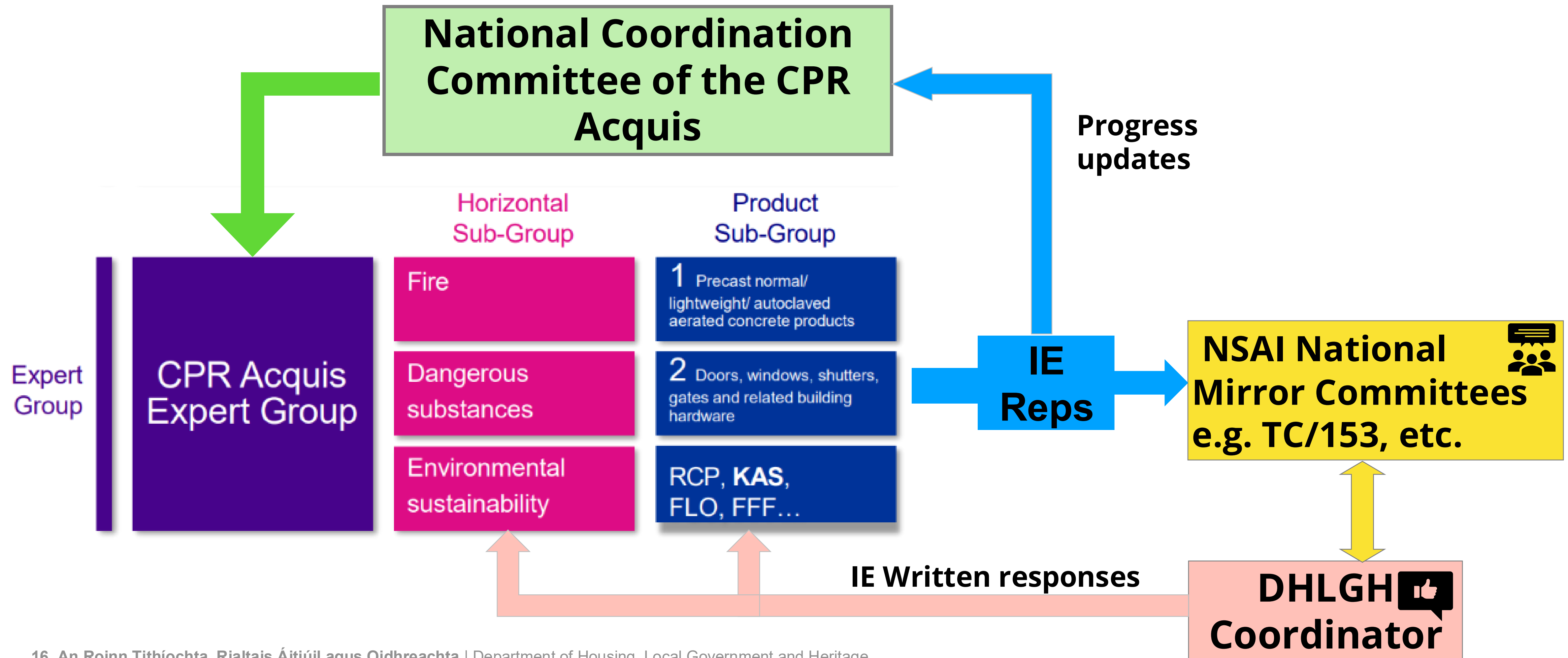
For current list see European Commission webpage: [Harmonised standards](#) and click link to [Products covered by harmonised standards under the CPR](#)

CPR Acquis Expert Group and its Sub-Groups

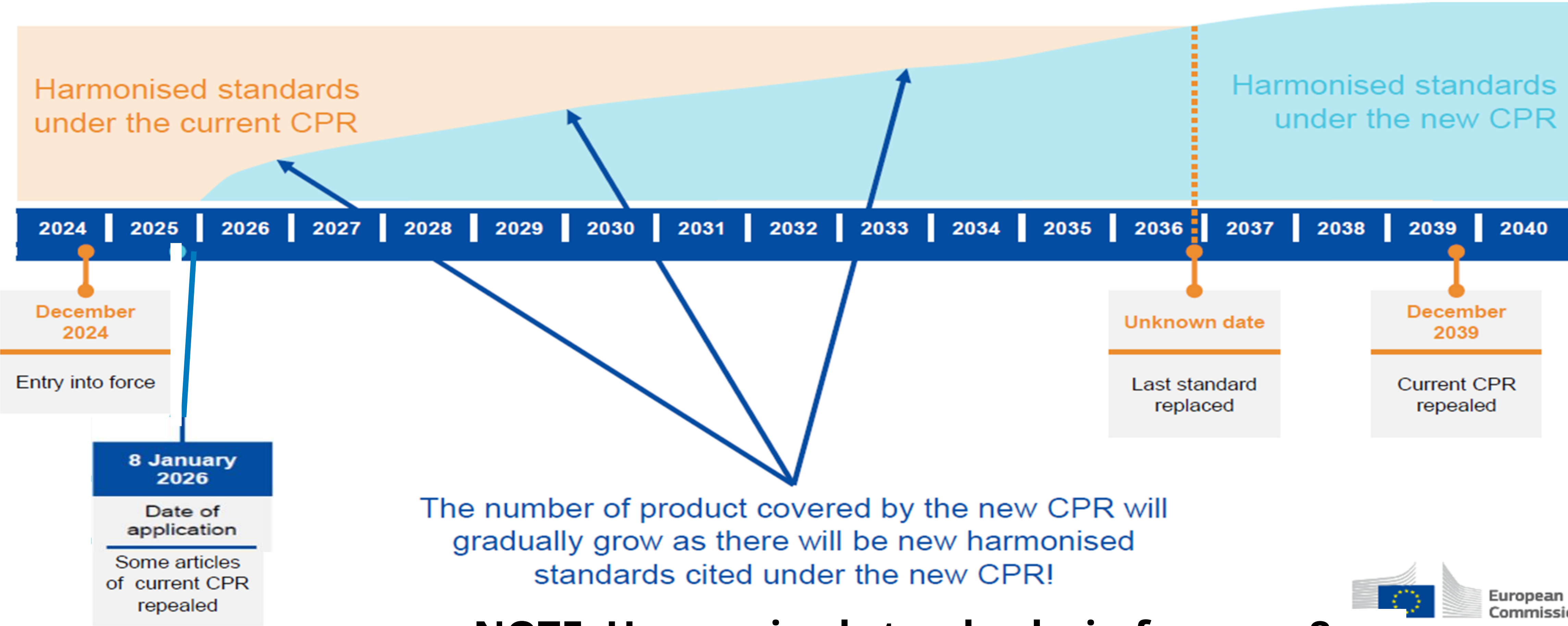


Fire Dangerous substances Environmental sustainability	1 Precast normal/ lightweight/ autoclaved aerated concrete products	9 Curtain walling/cladding/structural sealant glazing	17 Masonry and related products - Masonry units, mortars, and ancillaries.	25 Construction adhesives	33 Fixings
	2 Doors, windows, shutters, gates and related building hardware	10 Fixed fire fighting equipment	18 Wastewater engineering products	26 Products related to concrete, mortar and grout	34 Building kits, units, and prefabricated elements
	3 Membranes, including liquid applied and kits	11 Sanitary appliances	19 Floorings	27 Space heating appliances	35 Fire stopping, sealing and protective products - Fire retardant products
Horizontal subgroups Product families in Annex VII New product family	4 Thermal insulation products - Composite insulating kits/systems	12 Circulation fixtures: road equipment	20 Structural metallic products and ancillaries	28 Pipes-tanks and ancillaries not in contact with water for human consumption	36 Attached ladders
	5 Structural bearings - Pins for structural joints	13 Structural timber products/elements and ancillaries	21 Internal & external wall and ceiling finishes. Internal partition kits	29 Construction products in contact with water intended for human consumption	# Decorative paints and wallpapers
	6 Chimneys, flues and specific products	14 Wood based panels and elements	22 Roof coverings, roof lights, roof windows, and ancillary products. roof kits	30 Flat glass, profiled glass and glass block products	
	7 Gypsum products	15 Cement, building limes and other hydraulic binders	23 Road construction products	31 Power, control and communication cables	
	8 Geotextiles, geomembranes, and related products	16 Reinforcing and prestressing steel for concrete - Posttensioning kits	24 Aggregates	32 Sealants for joints	

National Coordination Committee of the CPR Acquis



CPR Transition – harmonised standards



NOTE: Harmonised standards, in force on 8 January 2026 under CPR 2011, remain valid under CPR 2024, until they are withdrawn or repealed.

Construction Products Regulation 2024



Regulation (EU) 3110/2024

Obligations and responsibilities on economic operators: **manufacturers, importers, distributors, fulfilment service providers, online marketplaces**



Harmonised Technical Specifications and EADs

Harmonised Technical **Specifications – Mandatory**
European Technical Assessments – **Voluntary** route to CE Marking



Product Requirements

Product Requirements – Mandatory



General Product Information

Instructions for use and safety information - **Mandatory**



3rd Party Certification

Updated Assessment and Verification System (AVS)
Incl. AVS 3+ Environmental Sustainability Assessment – Mandatory



Declaration of Performance and Conformity (DoPC) & CE Marking

DOPC (**including Declaration of environmental characteristics**) + CE Marking -
Mandatory



Digital Product Passport

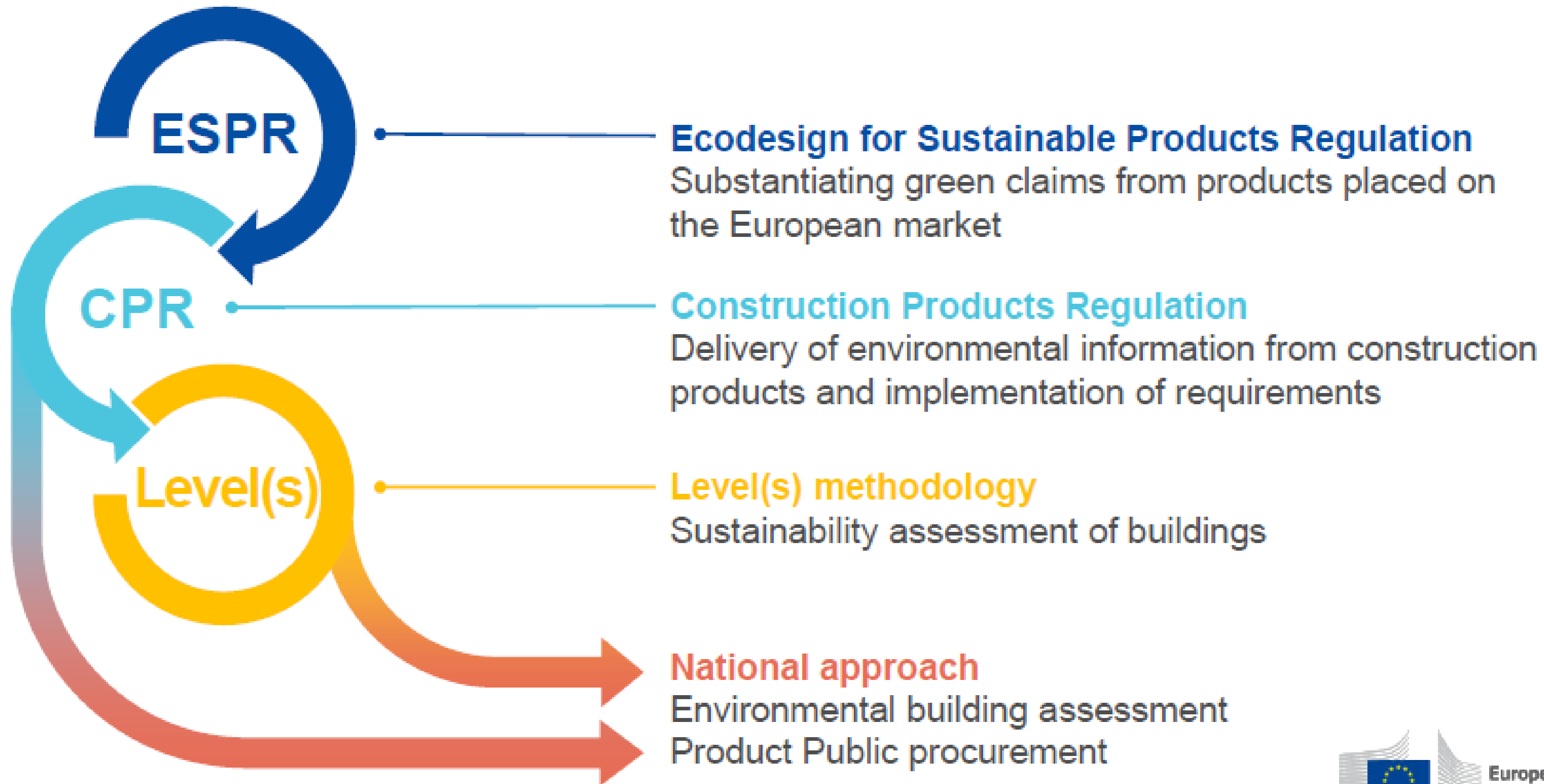
Digital Product Passport – Mandatory (c.2028)

Market Surveillance

Strengthening of market surveillance and enforcement powers (S.I. No. 669 of 2025)



National Regulatory framework





3. Compliance

Building Regulations & Technical Guidance Documents



Requirement

Principal Pathway

Materials and workmanship	D1	All works to which these Regulations apply shall be carried out with proper materials and in a workmanlike manner.
Definition for this Part	D3	In this Part, “proper materials” means materials which are fit for the use for which they are intended and for the conditions in which they are to be used, and includes materials which: (a) bear a CE Marking in accordance with the provisions of the Construction Products Regulation; (b) comply with an appropriate harmonised standard or European Technical Assessment in accordance with the provisions of the Construction Products Regulation; or (c) comply with an appropriate Irish Standard or Irish Agrément Certificate or with an alternative national technical specification of any State which is a contracting party to the Agreement on the European Economic Area, which provides in use an equivalent level of safety and suitability.



Simple, non-complex buildings or works

Technical Guidance Documents – Existing Buildings



- TGD A 2012: Appraisal of existing buildings, Recovering of existing roof structures
- TGD B, 2017: Existing Buildings - Means of escape, linings, external fire spread, access for fire services
- TGD B, 2024 : New Section 7 Existing Buildings
- TGD E, 2014: Protected Structures / Existing buildings
- TGD G, H and J: Provision of services, fittings and equipment (by way of new work or by way of replacement)
- TGD L 2022: Section 2 - Existing Buildings
- TGD M 2024: - Section 2 – Existing buildings

Technical Guidance Documents



Existing Buildings

In the case of material alterations or changes of use of existing buildings, the adoption without modification of the guidance in this document may not, in all circumstances, be appropriate. In particular, the adherence to guidance — including codes, standards or technical specifications — intended for application to new work may be unduly restrictive or impracticable. Buildings of architectural or historical interest are especially likely to give rise to such circumstances. In these situations, alternative approaches based on the principles contained in the document may be more relevant and should be considered.

Technical Guidance Document B 2024

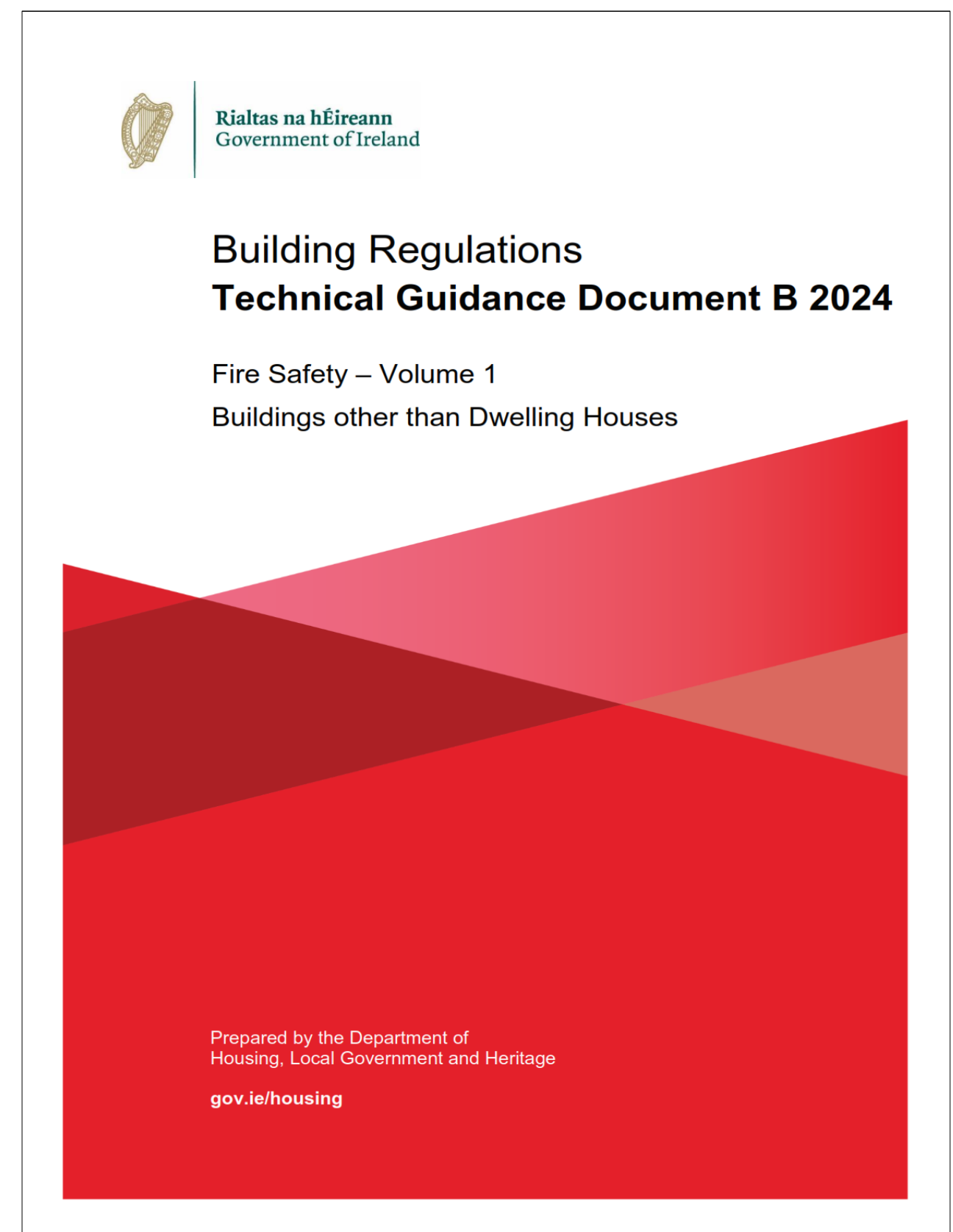


- Measured Approach

Apply Sections 1 – 6

Apply prescriptive provisions of Section 7

Apply compensating measures



Section 7 - Existing Buildings



- Consolidation of existing TGD B provisions relating to existing buildings
- Section 1 – 6 – Classification to EN 13501 for new building elements
- Retention of classification to BS 476 for existing building elements
- External escape stairways
- Buildings containing flats
 - *Specific requirements for change of use to flats (< 4 storeys, single stairs) – 11m height restriction removed*
 - *Reduced stair width 0.8m < 50 persons, 0.9m < 100 persons*

Section 7 - Existing Buildings



- S 7.3 Compartmentation
 - *Timber floors in existing buildings*
 - BR 128 Guidelines for the Construction of Fire-Resisting Structural Elements
 - BRE Digest 208 Increasing the Fire Resistance of Existing Timber Floors
 - BS 5268 - Part 4 - Structural use of timber Recommendations for calculating fire resistance of timber stud walls and joisted floor constructions
 - *Compartment floors in existing buildings > 11m*
 - *Compartment walls in existing buildings > 11m*
 - *Retention of 'Diagram 17', 'Diagram 22' – for existing buildings / situations*
 - *Doors in separating walls*

Technical Guidance Document B

Section 7.3 (Internal Fire Spread - Structure)



- TGD B – Appendix A – Fire resistance performance
- TGD B 2024 - Section 7.3 – citation of standards for historic build-ups, tabulated values for fire resistance performance:
 - BR 128
 - BRE Digest 208
 - BS 5268-4
- TGD D – Section 1.1 (c) – Performance in use

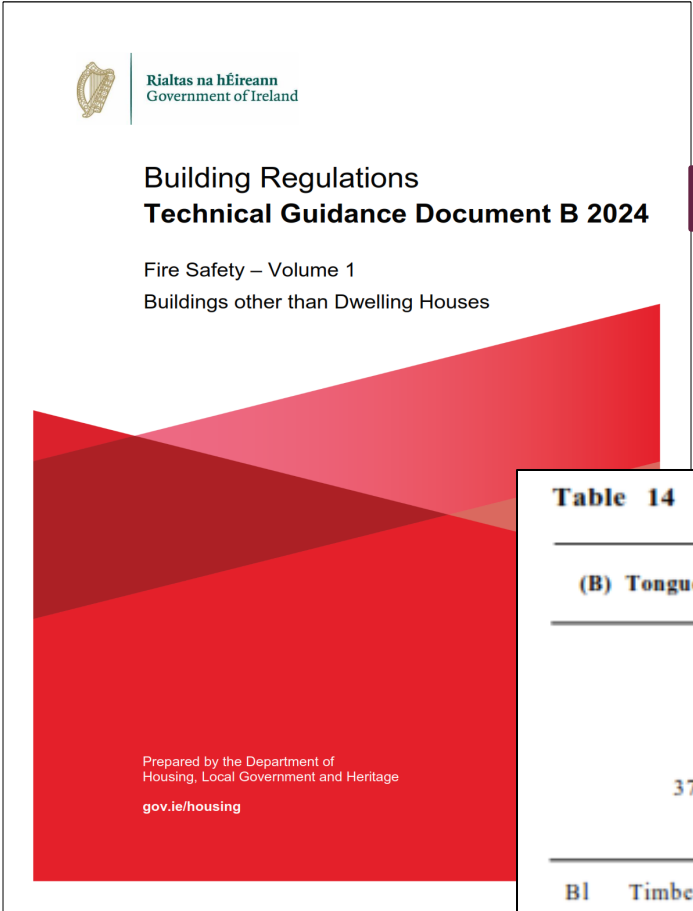
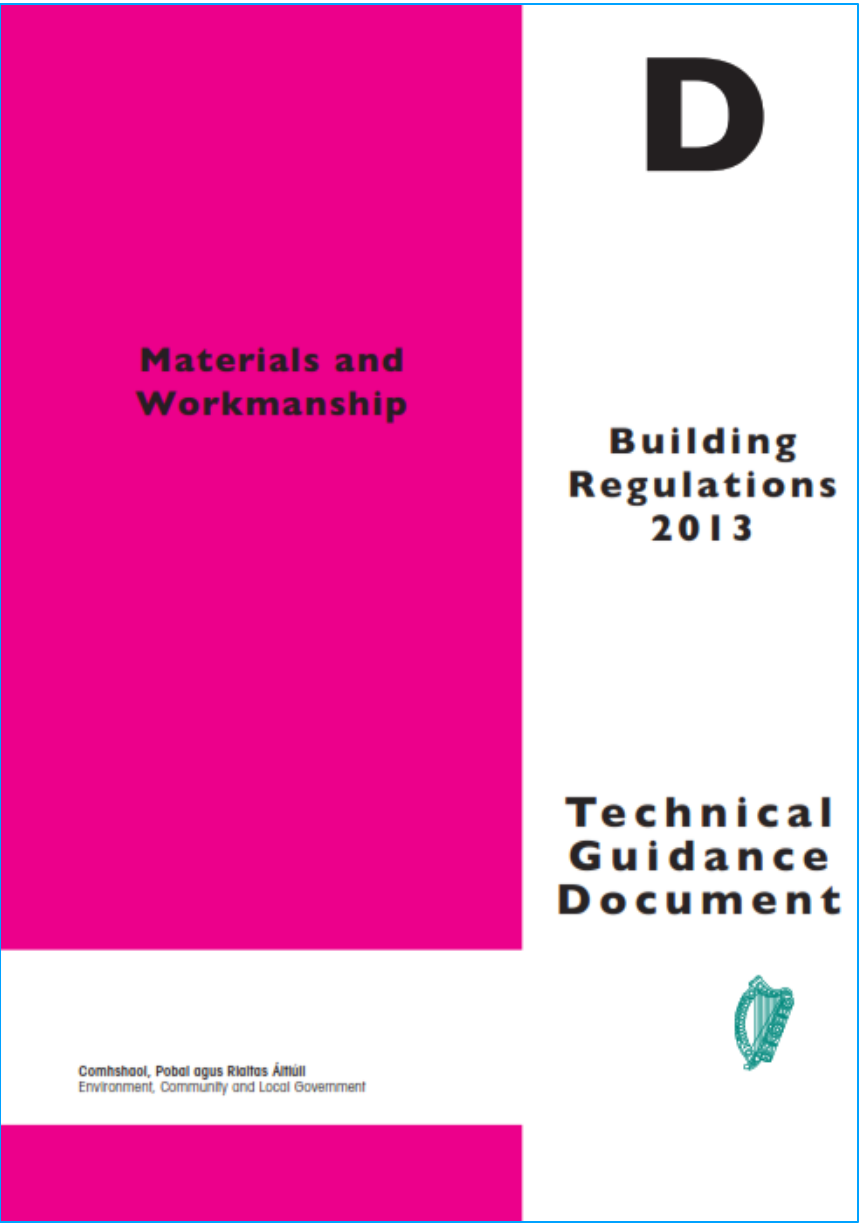


Table 14 Timber floors (continued)

(B) Tongued and grooved softwood of not less than 15 mm finished thickness (19 mm nominal)*

Nature of construction and materials 37 mm (minimum) Timber joists (except where indicated) with a ceiling of:	Minimum thickness (mm) of protection for a fire resistance of:			
	modified ½ h	½ h	1 h	1 ½ h
B1 Timber lath and plaster – thickness of plaster	15			
B2 Expanded metal lath and lightweight aggregate gypsum plaster (metal lathing grade) – thickness of plaster		13	19	
B3 One layer of plasterboard with joints taped and filled and backed by timber	12.5	15		
B4 Two layers of plasterboard with joints staggered, joints in outer layer taped and filled – total thickness	19*	22*	30**	
B5 Two layers of plasterboard (type F) with joints staggered, joints in outer layer taped and filled – total thickness		12.5	25**	30**
B6 One layer of plasterboard not less than 9.5 mm thick*, finished with lightweight aggregate gypsum plaster – thickness of plaster		10	19	
B7 One layer of plasterboard not less than 12.5 mm thick, finished with (a) gypsum board finish plaster – thickness of plaster (b) lightweight aggregate gypsum plaster – thickness of plaster		5 10	15	
B8 One layer of asbestos insulating board, with any transverse joints backed by fillets of asbestos insulating board not less than 9 mm thick, or by timber		9"		

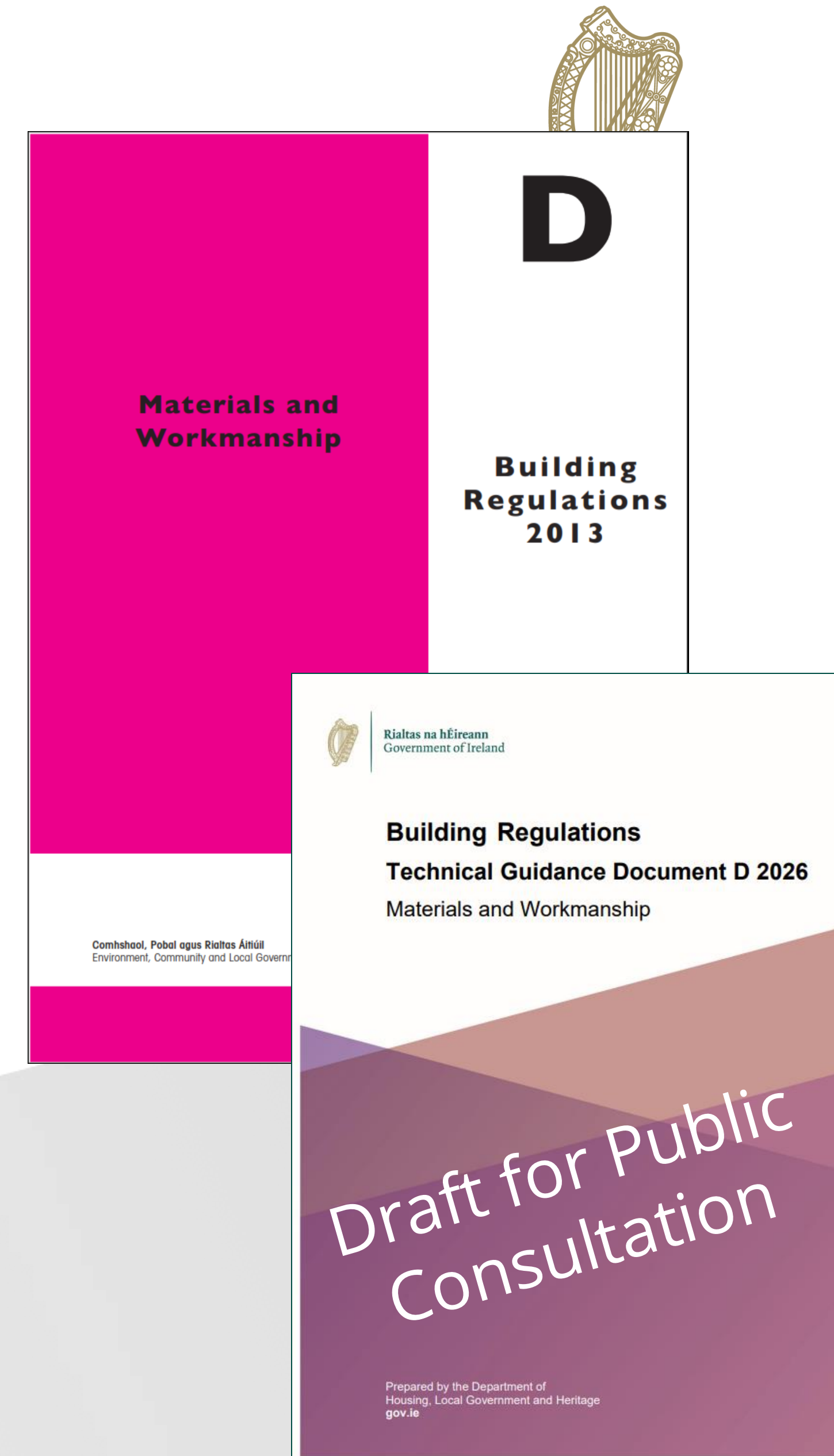
* Or sheets of tongued and grooved plywood/wood chipboard 15 mm (minimum) thick.
* Supports not to exceed 450 mm centres.
**In conjunction with 50 mm (minimum) joists and plywood or wood chipboard flooring.
**In conjunction with 47 mm (minimum) joists.



Extract from BR 128, BRE, 1988

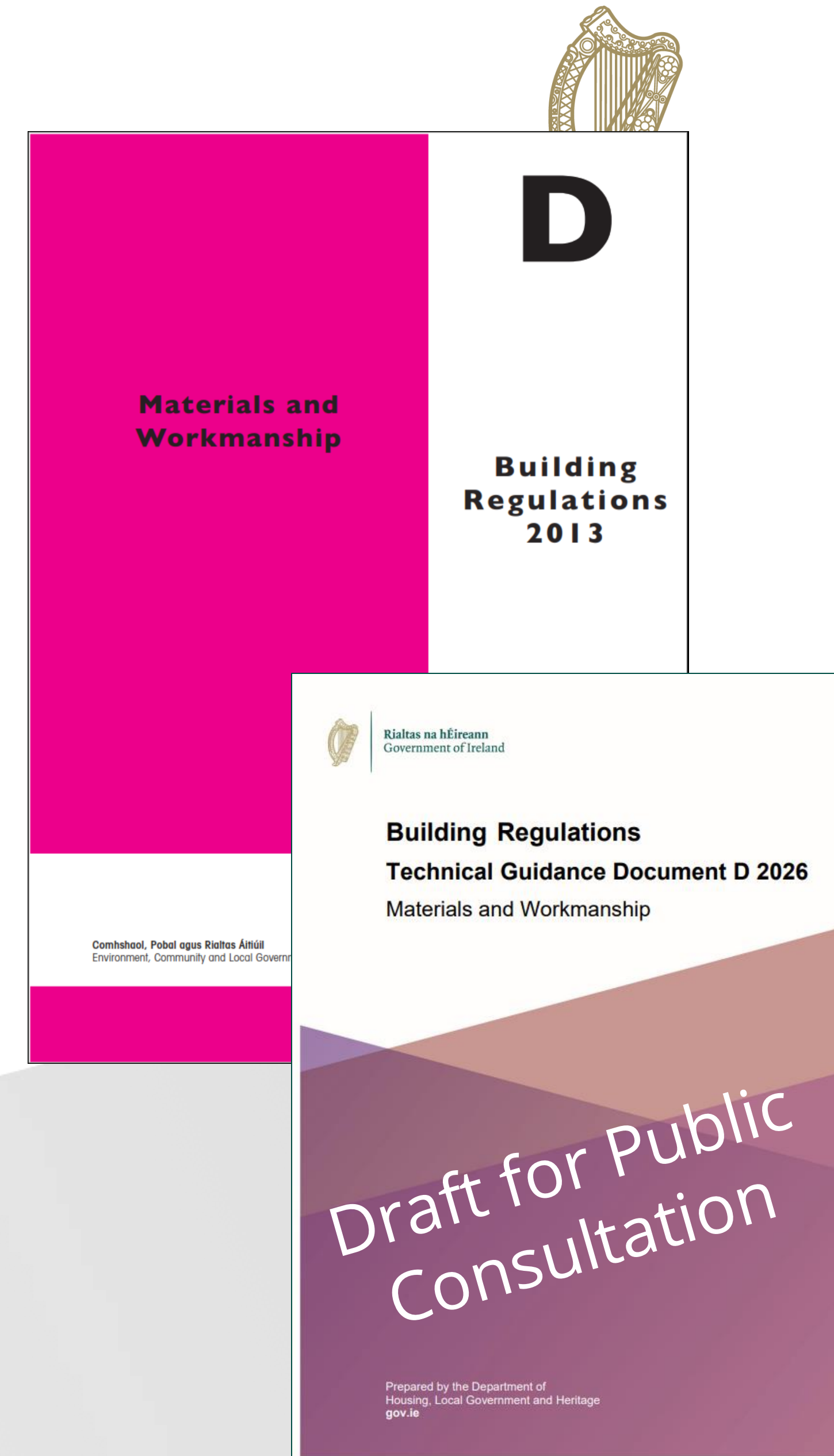
Materials and Workmanship

- Proper materials & workmanlike manner
- Part D defines “proper materials” as materials which are fit for the use for which they are intended and for the conditions in which they are to be used.
- Irish or European Standards
- Part D Review – to incorporate provisions of Construction Products Regulation 2024



Innovative Materials and Systems

- **NSAI Agrément Certification** - enables new innovative construction products, processes and building systems, not covered by existing construction standards, with a **means of demonstrating compliance with Irish Building Regulations**.
- **European Technical Assessment (ETA)** is the documented assessment of the performance of a construction product in relation to essential characteristics agreed by the manufacturer and EOTA undertaken to CE-mark the product. An ETA does not assess performance against the requirements of national Building Regulations but does provide reliable information that can be used as part of that assessment.



Bringing Back Homes Manual

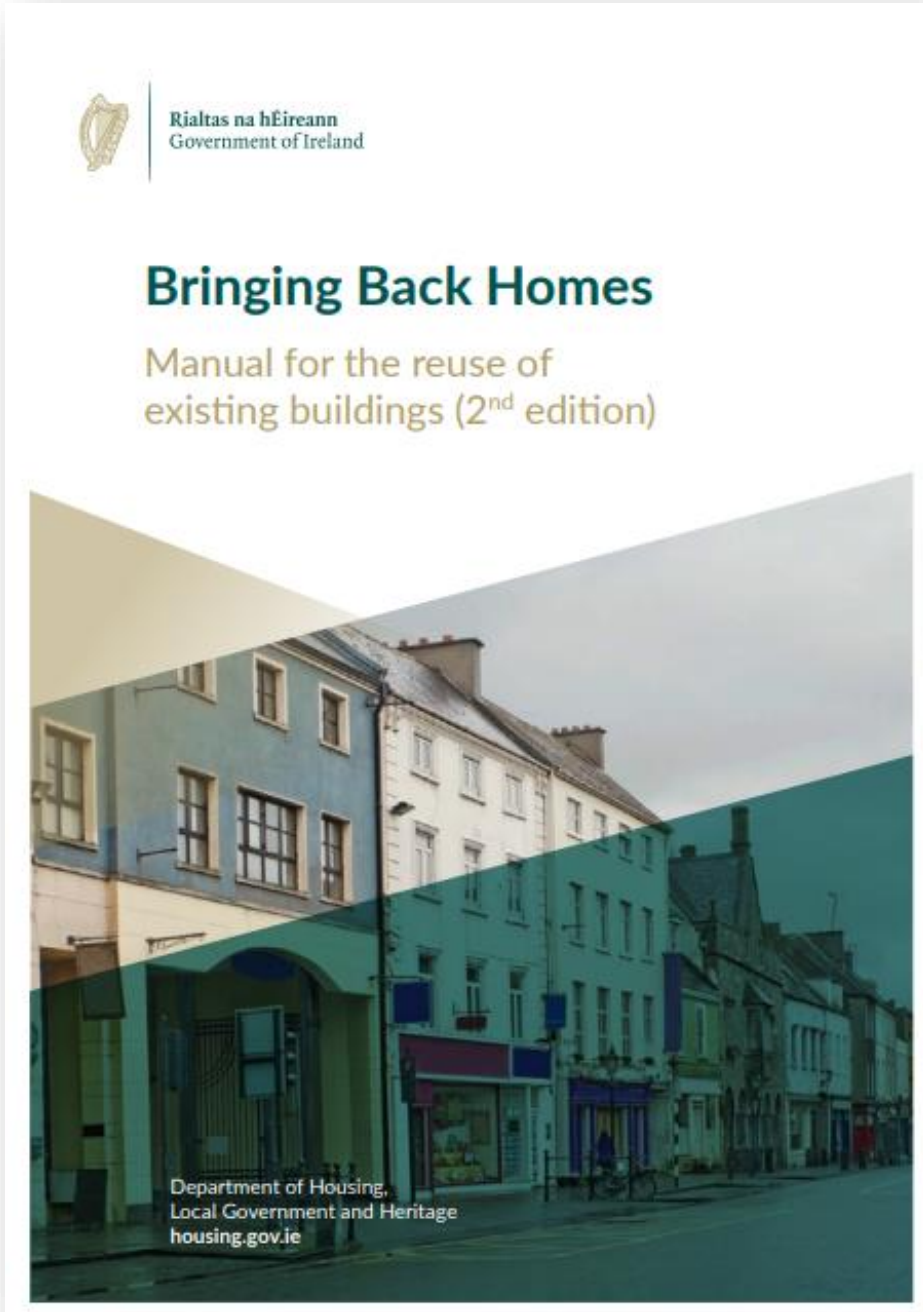
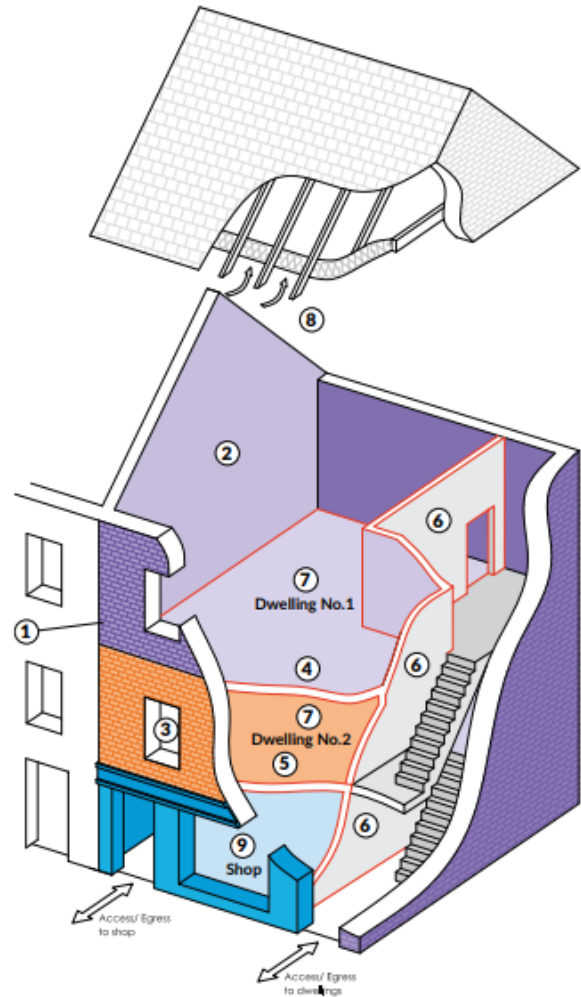


Figure 10 - Type 3 Three-Storey Building with Over-the-Shop Accommodation

Reuse Option d
Conversion of an ancillary shop to an independent shop unit with multiple dwellings overhead

Existing Building – Typically solid walls, timber floors, pitched roof, un-insulated throughout



Ref	Element (dwelling)	Main Requirements (non-exhaustive) ^{1,2,3,4}
1	External wall	- Confirmation that existing walls are structurally sound - Confirmation of Class 1 (or Class C-s3,d2) Internal fire spread of flame (subject to the transitional arrangements of TGD B 2024) - Confirmation of Class 1 (or Class C-s3,d2) External fire spread of flame (subject to the transitional arrangements of TGD B 2024) - Confirmation that existing walls are not showing evidence of ingress of moisture from ground or external source - U-value – 0.35 W/m²K for solid walls
2	Separating wall	- Confirmation that existing wall is structurally sound - Confirmation of Class 1 (or Class C-s3,d2) Internal fire spread of flame (subject to the transitional arrangements of TGD B 2024) - 60 minute fire-resisting construction with fire stopping at roof level and at eaves (No penetrations or openings) - Confirmation that existing walls are not showing evidence of ingress of moisture from ground - Sound Insulation – Airborne 53 D_{itw} dB (min)
3	Windows	- Purge ventilation – total openable area ≥ 1/20th floor area - Background ventilation may be provided via trickle vents or wall vents - U-Value ≤ 1.4W/m²K
4	Separating floor between dwellings	- Confirmation that existing floor is structurally sound - 60 minute fire-resisting construction with no penetrations. Surface mounted services or service zone to be provided below floor construction for lower dwelling. Vertical pipes to be fire stopped at floor level - Sound Insulation – Airborne 53 D_{itw} dB (min), Impact 58 L_{itw}dB (max)
5	Separating floor above shop	- Confirmation that existing floor is structurally sound - 60 minute fire resisting construction with no penetrations. Service zone to be provided below floor construction for shop; vertical pipes to be fire stopped at floor level and pipes >40 mm ø (PVC) fitted with fire collars - Sound Insulation – Airborne 53 D_{itw} dB (min)
6	Protected Stairwell	- 60 minute fire resisting construction to plane of roof or fire resisting ceiling throughout - Confirmation of Class O (or Class B-s3,d2) Internal fire spread of flame (subject to the transitional arrangements of TGD B 2024) - 30 minute self-closing fire door at entrance to dwellings - All doors on escape route to be readily openable (incl. dwelling entrance door and main entrance door)

		- Sound Insulation – Airborne 53 D_{itw} dB (min) - Reverberation control in common area - Fire detection and alarm system to common area - Emergency escape lighting and smoke ventilation
7	Dwelling No.1 and No.2	- Travel distance within apartment protected corridor with self-closing fire doors up to 9 m long - Integrated mains powered smoke/ heat alarms (with battery back-up) in living room, kitchen and entrance hallway (subject to the transitional arrangements of TGD B 2024) - Potable water to sink with water storage serving appliances - Dual flush toilets with adjacent wash-hand basin and appropriate drainage system - Heating system (boilers) to comply with minimum energy efficiency of 90% - Where there are existing open-flued appliances (fireplace, stoves etc.), CO alarms should be fitted in the room and the corridor - Where a new mechanical ventilation system is installed as part of a major renovation, the system should be designed by competent designers, installed balanced and commissioned by competent installers and when commissioned and balanced, it should then be validated to ensure that the design flow rates are achieved by an independent competent person, e.g. NSAI certified or equivalent.
8	Roof	- Confirmation that roof is structurally sound, with no moisture ingress - Confirmation that existing slates/ tiles meet AA, AB or AC (National Class) or B_{slat}t4 for roof covering - U-value – 0.16 W/m²K (pitched roof) for insulation at ceiling level - Adequate roof ventilation at eaves level
9	Shop / Commercial unit	- See Figure 9 and associated table of requirements for shop unit

NOTE:

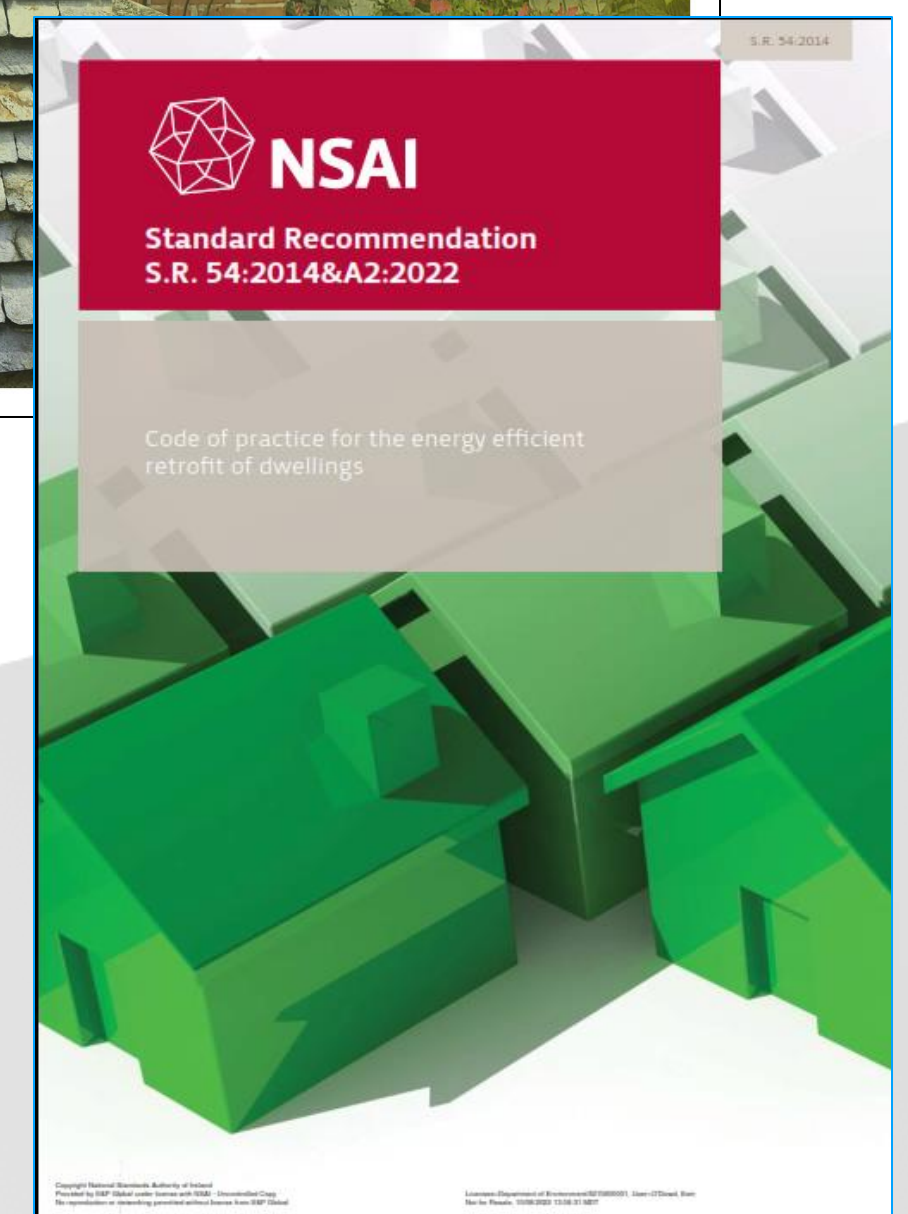
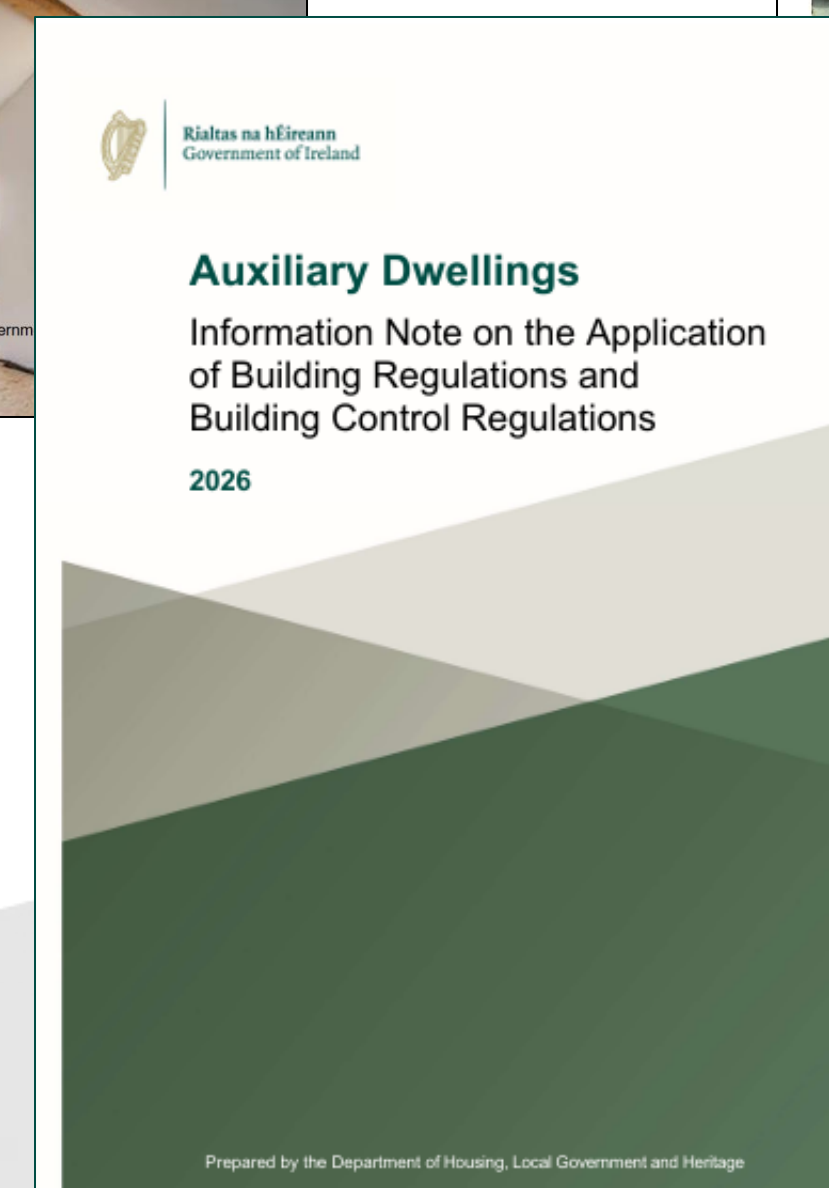
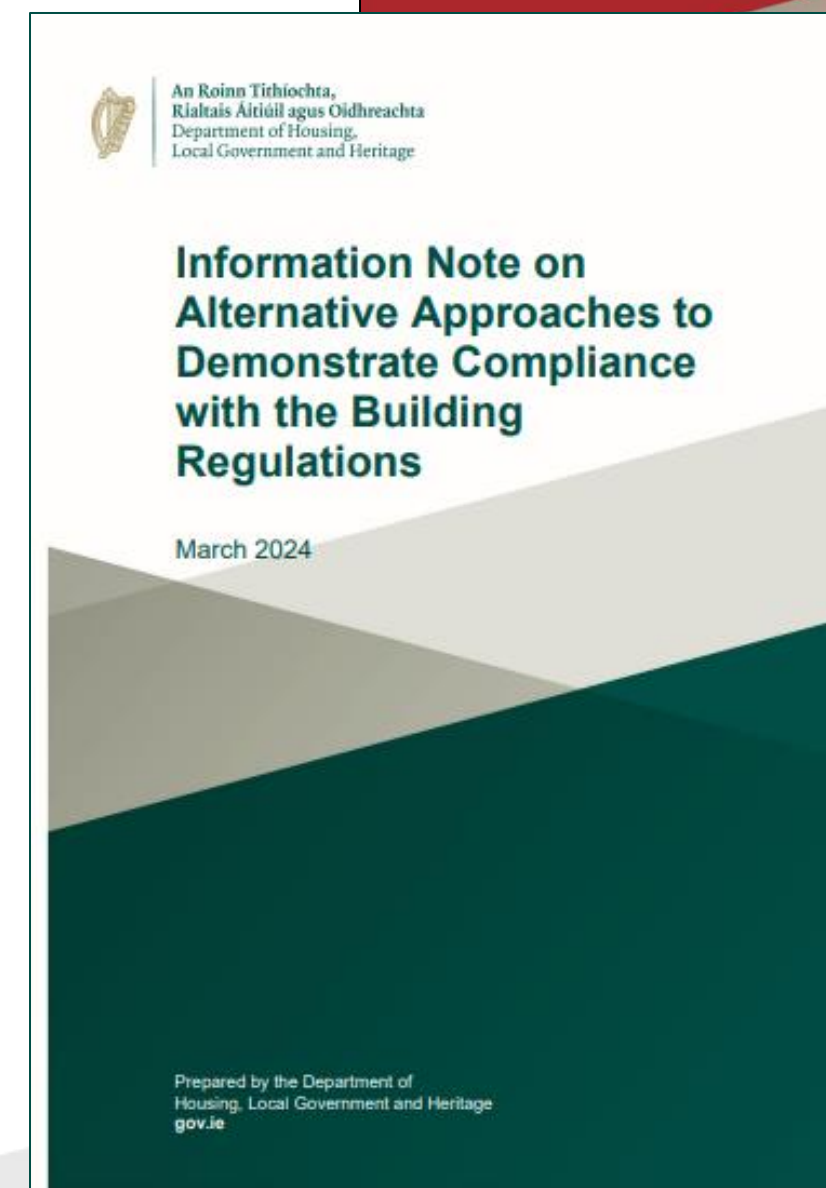
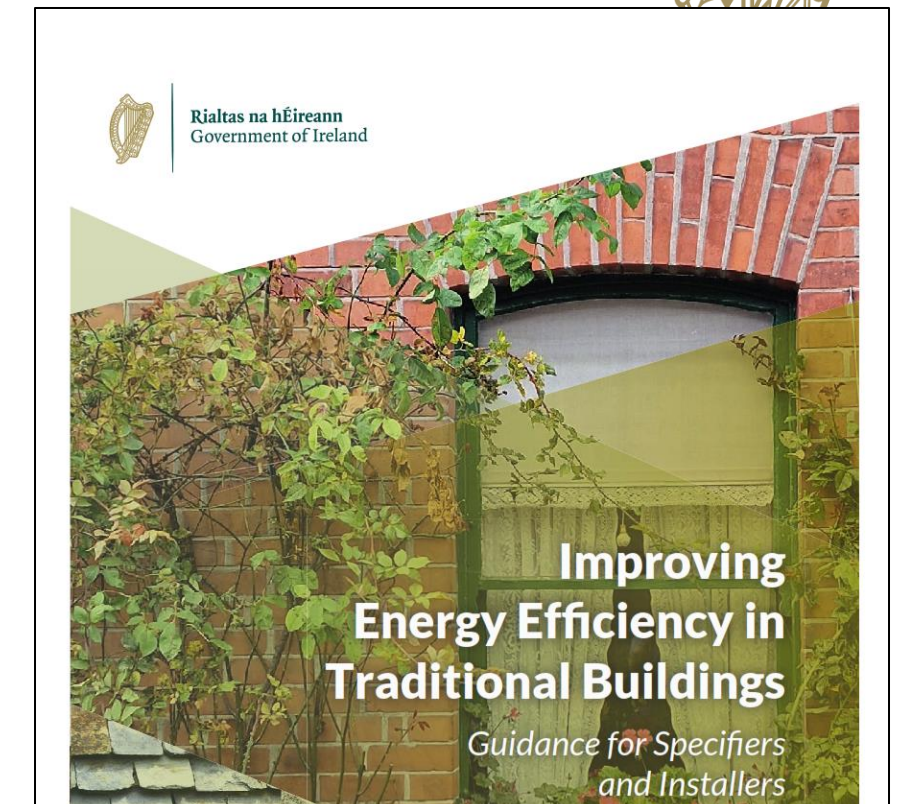
- As this is a material change of use to the whole building, requirements for the shop are as specified in Figure 9 and the associated table.
- For renovations involving thermal upgrades, see S.R. 54+A2:2022 Code of Practice for the Energy Efficient Retrofit of Dwellings.
- Rental standards regulations apply where a dwelling(s) is proposed to be rented. See Appendix 3 Minimum Standards in Rented Accommodation.
- Where more than 25% of the surface area of the building envelope undergoes renovation, the energy performance of the whole building should be improved to cost optimal level in so far as this is technically, functionally and economically feasible.



Appendix 2 The Application of the Building Regulations and Specific EU Legislation to Works to Existing Buildings

Useful Publications – Existing Buildings

- Improving Energy Efficiency in Traditional Buildings
- Loft Conversion Guidelines
- S.R. 54 – Code of Practice for the Energy Efficient Retrofit of buildings
- Auxiliary Dwellings
- Information Note on Alternative Approaches to Demonstrate Compliance with the Building Regulations



Reducing Vacancy + Increasing Circularity + Securing Compliance = Sustainable Housing Delivery



Vacancy

- Existing buildings represent a significant housing resource.
- Bringing vacant and derelict properties back into use strengthens communities and town centres.

Circularity

- Reuse retains embodied carbon, reduces waste and minimises demand for virgin materials.

Compliance

- Building regulations provide pathways, not barriers, to reuse.
- Appropriate standards, professional judgement and proportionate solutions can support safe and sustainable adaptation.

Thank You



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