ELECTORAL COMMISSION STUDIES POLITICAL BEHAVIOUR

Ireland has historically lagged behind other countries in relation to availability of reliable and comprehensive data about its elections and political behaviour, with such studies in place in many other countries for well over 50 years. Now An Comisiún Toghcháin (Electoral Commission) has initiated a 25-year programme called the National Elections and Democracy Study (NEDS) to bring Ireland up to speed.

The Commission published a Draft Research Programme in November 2023, which included a commitment to develop a National Election and Democracy Study (NEDS) for Ireland.

The Electoral Reform Act 2022 provides An Coimisiún (The Commission) with a significant research mandate to prepare research programmes and conduct research on electoral policy and procedure including on matters relating to the discharge of its functions.

As a first step An Coimisiún published a Draft Research Programme for public consultation in November 2023, which included a commitment to develop a National Election and Democracy Study (NEDS) for Ireland.

The Commission is building a databank to gather the views, attitudes and experiences of the Irish public regarding electoral events, democracy and the factors that influence these. There is a particular focus on factors increasing turnout and political participation, with a view to informing the Commission's initiatives in these areas.

This data has also informed the separate post electoral event reviews which the Commission is required to prepare and publish after each electoral event with particular requirements to look at the accessibility of the voting process for individuals with disabilities, illnesses or literacy challenges.

The National Election and Democracy Study (NEDS) included questions which were a key focus for political scientists in election studies around whether and how people used their vote and motivations around voting choices.

The data gathered through the NEDS was anonymised and available to provide stakeholders, the public, the media and the political system with high quality information about the state of Ireland's democracy.

For any questions or comments, email ***research@electoralcommission.ie***

NEDS Management Board

This NEDS project is overseen and managed by a management board, composed of a team of electoral experts and academics selected through an application process.

The board members are as follows:

- Dr Rory Costello, Department of Politics and Public Administration, UL
- Dr Johan A. Dornschneider-Elkink, School of Politics and International Relations, UCD
- Prof Georg Lutz, Director Fors (Swiss Centre of Expertise in the Social Sciences), University of Lausanne
- Prof Gail McElroy, Department of Political Science, TCD
- Dr Theresa Reidy, Department of Government and Politics, UCC
- Prof Jane Suiter, School of Communications, DCU

The Board is chaired by Dr Mary-Clare O'Sullivan, Head of Research at An Coimisiún Toghcháin. For further information visit **www.neds.ie**