

Strategic Plan 2016 - 2020



*Our Environment
Our Wellbeing*



Environmental Protection Agency
An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil



Introduction from EPA Director General

This Strategic Plan sets out what we intend to achieve over the next five years in delivering our mandate and our mission to protect and improve our environment as a valuable asset for the people of Ireland.

This is our fifth formal strategic plan since the EPA was established. It builds upon the success and achievements we have delivered through our previous strategies. It is being published at a time when we are seeing the signs of an economic recovery in Ireland. Now, more than ever, it is vital that the environment is placed centre-stage at the heart of everyday decisions.

Sustainable development means linking the environment, health, wellbeing and the economy. A thriving, clean environment provides the very basis for good lifestyles. This means an Ireland that has a vibrant economy, people and communities that help and respect each other, and as an essential foundation, a protected environment that is valued for itself and the benefits it provides for us to live safe, healthy lives. We must learn from the lessons of the past and ensure that economic renewal is achieved in a sustainable way and that we decouple economic growth from environmental pressures.

It is in this context that we have identified the overarching theme for this Strategic Plan, *“Our Environment – Our Wellbeing”*. To support this theme we have identified five strategic goals that will provide a clear focus for our work in the next number of years. Through these we are committed to strengthening and enhancing our core functions, including regulation, enforcement and assessment. We are placing a particular emphasis on tackling key environmental priorities in which we have a significant role to play, including air and water quality, climate change and enhancing the radiation protection framework in Ireland.

Many of today’s environmental problems are complex and require a broader cross-sectoral and societal response. Protecting and managing Ireland’s environment is a shared responsibility involving all of us living and working in Ireland. In the EPA we are committed to playing our part and we will be expanding our influencing, advocacy and partnering roles to help achieve our mandate and vision. We will further engage the public in the protection and improvement of the environment and mobilise communities in developing solutions for more sustainable production and consumption.

Clear, accurate and timely information is a vital component in raising awareness about the environment among the public and key policy and decision makers. As part of our strategic priorities we will be accelerating the development of new approaches and tools, with a particular emphasis on the provision of accessible information to allow people to make informed choices for themselves, their families, their communities and their businesses.

The EPA is privileged to have a highly talented, professional and committed staff, who are vitally important in delivering on our mandate and ambitions. We are committed to providing the necessary supports to our staff to allow them excel in their work and to embed the culture of leadership, innovation and reform across the organisation in the delivery of our strategic goals.

The development of this Strategic Plan has benefitted enormously from the excellent engagement of our staff and the input of many stakeholders, including the EPA Advisory Committee. I look forward to working with all of you to deliver on this ambitious strategy.

Laura Burke
Director General
January 2016



VISION

A clean, healthy and well protected environment supporting a sustainable society and economy.

MISSION

To protect and improve the environment as a valuable asset for the people of Ireland.

To protect our people and the environment from the harmful effects of radiation and pollution.

VALUES

Our Stewardship

We are a trusted, independent and authoritative advocate for the environment.

We make objective decisions based on the best available scientific evidence and information.

We manage our resources effectively and efficiently to deliver value to the public.

Our Work

We regulate in a fair, proportionate and transparent manner and target those who don't comply.

We make a difference by working with others to foster trust and build networks and partnerships to deliver effective outcomes.

We strive continuously for improvement and excellence through learning and development.

Our Service

We are innovative, adaptive and open to new and flexible ways of working.

We design and deliver services from the citizen's point of view.

We provide our services in a manner that is competent, courteous and responsive.

Our Colleagues

We work together to deliver effective outcomes.

We support, trust and value our colleagues and empower each other to make decisions.

We are open and honest with each other.

We constructively challenge and encourage each other to do better.

WHAT WE DO

Knowledge

Provide high quality, targeted and timely environmental data, assessments and evidence to inform decision making by citizens, businesses and Government.

Regulation

Implement effective regulation and environmental compliance systems to deliver good outcomes for people and the environment and target those who don't comply.

Advocacy

Work with others to advocate for a clean, healthy and well protected environment and sustainable environmental behaviour.

HOW WE DO IT

Monitoring & Assessment

Research & Expertise

Timely & Accessible Information

Licensing

Enforcement

Guidance

Partnering & Networking

Awareness Raising

Promoting Sustainable Behaviour

Strategic Goals for the period 2016-2020

Goals	Objectives	Outcomes What we will have achieved by 2020
Trusted Environmental Regulator	<p>Ensure the on-going development of a proportionate and effective regulatory approach.</p> <p>Align EPA resources to target interventions and reduce environmental risk.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ A risk-based, responsive regulatory approach that engages stakeholders and protects the environment and people. ▲ Reduced environmental risks at EPA regulated facilities through tailored interventions and by ensuring appropriate financial provisions are in place. ▲ Driven the improved delivery and management of water and waste infrastructure.
Leader in Environmental Evidence & Knowledge	<p>Realise the full potential of the EPA's knowledge, skill, expertise and regional presence as key national resources in the protection of the environment and human health.</p> <p>Accelerate the provision of timely and tailored information to meet the specific needs of stakeholder groups.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ More timely evidence-based environmental assessments to inform policy and decision making at national, regional and local levels. ▲ Better provision of online, up-to-date and accessible information on the environment to stakeholders. ▲ A research programme that addresses knowledge gaps and helps identify solutions to emerging and complex environmental problems.
Effective Advocate and Partner	<p>Strengthen the EPA's capability and capacity to influence, advocate and partner to help achieve a clean, healthy and well protected environment.</p> <p>Engage the public in the protection and improvement of the environment.</p> <p>Promote a greater awareness of the impact of environment quality on human health.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Targeted opportunities to integrate environmental priorities and sustainability into sectoral, economic and social policies. ▲ Developed public participation programmes to increase awareness of environmental issues and support the engagement of the public in environmental protection. ▲ Collaborated with health agencies and other bodies to realise the benefits of a good environment for health and wellbeing.
Responding to Key Environmental Challenges	<p>Tackle the challenges to deliver improved water quality in Ireland.</p> <p>Engage with other strategic partners to promote the development of a holistic national response to climate change.</p> <p>Enhance air and radiation protection in Ireland.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Effective and resilient structures in place to deliver better outcomes for water quality. ▲ Established a climate change secretariat in the EPA as a centre of excellence that supports the national transition to a low carbon economy. ▲ Strengthened the air quality and radiation protection frameworks to further protect people and the environment.
Organisationally Excellent	<p>Develop our staff and align our organisation to deliver best environmental outcomes.</p> <p>Focus on the development and promotion of organisational health, wellbeing and safety at work.</p> <p>Promote a culture of leadership, reform and innovation.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▲ Our functions and resources aligned to be responsive and adaptable to meet emerging challenges. ▲ Engaged all staff to foster a supportive workplace environment. ▲ Enhanced capacity in the area of organisational change and in the use of ICT to support reform and innovation.



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