

Challenges & Opportunities

Environmental Protection:

- ◆ Valuing and protecting our natural environment by ensuring there is recognition that Ireland's environment has an intrinsic value in its own right.
- ◆ Putting the environment at the centre of our decision making by ensuring that the value of science and environmental research to support evidence-based policy and decision making is recognised.
- ◆ Implementing environmental legislation in a timely and appropriate manner to ensure compliance with national, EU and international commitments.

Economic Recovery:

- ◆ Ensuring that the importance of a good quality environment to the health and well-being of the nation and to economic recovery is recognised.
- ◆ Building a resource-efficient low-carbon economy and society by protecting Ireland's green image while also supporting sustainable development in key sectors such as agriculture, food and tourism.

Society:

- ◆ Mobilising all citizens to engage in a more environmentally responsible way in areas such as waste reduction, water usage and energy consumption.
- ◆ Building relationships and working with others to protect and improve the environment as a valuable asset for the people of Ireland.

Reform:

- ◆ Delivering the public sector reform agenda while continuing to be innovative in our approaches to licensing, monitoring and enforcement.
- ◆ Implementing the Government decision and progressing the merger between the EPA and the RPII.
- ◆ Implementing the recommendations of the Review of the EPA.
- ◆ Continuing to be motivated and open to change in a time of reducing resources while adapting to new environmental challenges and priorities.

Our Mission:

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

Our Vision:

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

Our Values:

- ◆ We are an independent and authoritative voice for the environment.
- ◆ We base our decisions on the best available scientific evidence and information.
- ◆ We regulate in a fair, proportionate and transparent manner, and take decisive action against those who don't comply.
- ◆ We work with others to build effective networks and partnerships to support our mission.
- ◆ We treat people with respect, courtesy and dignity.
- ◆ We are open to change, innovation, adaptation and new ways of working.
- ◆ We are committed to continuous learning and development, and the promotion of excellence in all that we do.



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The Environmental Protection Agency



Strategic Plan 2013 - 2015

Working with others for a Better Environment



Introduction from EPA Director General

This Strategic Plan sets out the priority actions that the EPA will take between now and 2015 to deliver on our mission of protecting and improving our environment as a valuable asset for the people of Ireland.

The Plan:

- Sets out the major challenges we face and our over-riding priorities at a time of profound economic difficulty;
- Identifies the main actions we will take – these actions are comprehensively addressed in our Annual Work Programmes and we will provide detailed updates in our Annual Reports; and
- Describes our key areas of activity, our guiding values, and the outcomes we will continue to deliver for the people of Ireland.

This is our fourth formal strategy since the EPA was established almost 20 years ago. Each strategy has built on previous strategies and each has demonstrated how the EPA has adapted to meet new and evolving challenges. Our last strategy, *2020 Vision: Protecting and Improving Ireland's Environment*, set out a long-term vision for Ireland's environment. It outlined six broad environmental goals and these still remain valid: Limiting & Adapting to Climate Change, Clean Air, Protected Water Resources, Protected Soil & Biodiversity, Sustainable Use of Resources, Integration & Enforcement.

Much has changed in the interim. Economic recession continues to result in cuts right across the public sector. Our staff and financial resources are reduced and meanwhile we face new challenges and have taken on new responsibilities. Despite changed circumstances, we will continue to deliver the valuable societal outcomes for which we are recognised.

In this new Strategy we believe that a clean, healthy and well protected environment lies at the heart of economic recovery. Our over-riding priority for the next three years is to keep the environment centre-stage and support sustainable economic recovery. We will continue to carry out our core functions of environmental regulation, enforcement, monitoring, assessment, research and reporting in an exemplary manner. In addition, we will enhance today's services by expanding our advocacy role, by networking and being an agent for change to effect positive outcomes for the environment. We will do this by promoting the integration of environmental considerations into the decision making processes of public bodies. We will also work with others to build awareness and behavioural changes needed in our homes, communities, businesses and at a policy level to enable us to become a low-carbon, resource-efficient economy and society.

This Strategy has benefited from the input of staff and of many stakeholders including the EPA Advisory Committee. I am confident that by remaining focused on our mission, we can meet the commitments of this ambitious yet achievable Strategy and build on the excellent track record of the EPA.

Laura Burke
Director General
February 2013

WHAT WE DO

REGULATION

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



KNOWLEDGE

Provide high quality, targeted and timely environmental data, information and assessment to inform decision making at all levels.



ADVOCACY

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



HOW WE DO IT

- Licensing
- Enforcement
- Guidance



- Monitoring and Assessment
- Research
- Reporting



- Education
- Awareness Raising
- Behavioural Change



STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

- **Clean Water:** Provide for a holistic approach to water protection and management and the effective implementation of the Water Framework Directive. Adapt EPA activities to new water governance structures including requirements arising from the establishment of Irish Water.
- **Better Regulation:** Expand our better regulation activities and risk based approaches to licensing, enforcement and monitoring. Use the full range of enforcement tools including education and advice, warnings, civil sanctions, criminal sanctions and licence revocation.
- **Preventing Environmental Damage:** Prevent future environmental damage from the closure of activities and drive the remediation of contaminated sites.
- **Accessible Information:** Provide timely and easily available environmental information to all our stakeholders.
- **Evidence based decision making:** Continuously improve the timeliness and quality of our environmental data and inventories to support evidence-based decision making, integrated environmental assessment and reporting.
- **Research Programme:** Maintain a vibrant and relevant environmental research programme to influence policy, identify pressures and develop solutions to environmental challenges.
- **Working with Others:** Engage and network with other sectors and organisations interacting with the environment.
- **Behavioural Change:** Influence positive behavioural change by supporting businesses, communities and householders to be more resource efficient.
- **Human Health:** Develop stronger and more robust approaches to understanding and promoting the essential role that protecting the environment plays in improving the health of the population.

INTERMEDIATE OUTCOMES

- Clearly defined roles, responsibilities and resourcing for the EPA in water governance and as a regulator for Irish Water in relation to drinking water quality and waste water discharges.
- Better Regulation Policy developed and implemented with regulatory effort focused on environmental outcomes, a reduced administrative burden, targeted inspections and effective use of sanctions and other deterrents.
- Adequate financial provision in place to manage environmental liabilities arising from the closure of potentially polluting activities. Licensees making the necessary investments in both remediation and financial provision.
- New EPA website with more user friendly, timely and local environmental information available.
- Delivery of timely and targeted environmental assessment and information to policy and decision makers, using new technologies to streamline and automate the collection and management of environmental data. Scientific resources will be focused on assessment, reporting and knowledge transfer.
- A research programme focused on and addressing the major environmental challenges of Climate Change, Water and a Sustainable Environment.
- Better and more meaningful integration of environmental issues in policy and decision making at national, regional and local levels.
- Greater engagement by householders, communities and businesses in resource efficient behaviours through participation in EPA BeGreen initiatives including, Green Homes, Greening Communities, Green Business, Green Hospitality, Stop Food Waste, Cleaner Greener Production and resource efficient farming.
- Establishment and operation of an EPA Health Advisory Committee to further integrate and improve consideration of human health and environmental protection activities across EPA functions.

ENVIRONMENTAL GOALS

- Limiting and Adapting to Climate Change
- Clean Air
- Protected Water Resources
- Protected Soil and Biodiversity
- Sustainable Use of Resources
- Integration and Enforcement

VISION

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

ENABLING CHANGE AND REFORM

Implementing the following actions will enable the EPA to continue to be a High Performance Organisation

1. PEOPLE AND STRUCTURES

- **Reduced Resources:** Adapt to reduced resources through on-going review of activities and priorities through regular work-force planning.
- **New Ways of Working:** Match structures and skills to identified priorities. Develop effective cross-office and cross-agency solutions to deal with complex challenges.
- **Skills and Capabilities:** Further strengthen individual and team capabilities, skills and performance through applying the EPA Performance, Learning and Development Model.
- **Strong Leadership:** Continue to develop and embed a strong leadership and management culture in the EPA through implementing the EPA Leadership Framework.
- **Communicate What We Do:** Continue to develop new means of communicating our information and key messages to a wider audience in accordance with the EPA Communications Strategy.

2. PROCESSES AND TECHNOLOGY

- **Efficient Business Processes:** Generate greater efficiencies through continuous business analysis and adoption of new business processes.
- **Service Delivery Channels:** Maximise the number of electronic transactions stakeholders can have with the EPA through data automation. Implement the e-Government strategy to enhance customer service, improve information sharing and reduce transaction costs.
- **Adopt Leading Edge Technologies:** Develop and deploy leading edge information and communication technologies to facilitate and drive excellent performance and delivery.
- **Shared Services:** Seek opportunities to build synergies and shared services with other public bodies.

3. GOVERNANCE

- **Best Practice:** Continue to comply with best practice in Corporate Governance across the EPA through ongoing implementation of the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.
- **Public Sector Reform:** Continue to focus on customer service, value for money, and new and innovative service delivery through implementing the Public Service Reform Plan and the Public Service Agreement.
- **Risk Management:** Continue to implement robust risk assessment and management practices in accordance with our Risk Management Policies and Procedure.
- **Monitor and Evaluate:** Continually monitor and evaluate our progress in meeting our objectives through our management and reporting systems.

4. MERGER WITH THE RPII

- **Integrate Resources:** Implement the Government decision to integrate the expert resources of the RPII – the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland – with those of the EPA.
- **Manage Risks:** Manage any risks associated with the merger.
- **Radiation Protection:** Recognise the important role of the RPII in ensuring that the people of Ireland are protected from the harmful effects of radiation.
- **Reputation and Expertise:** Maintain the coherence and effectiveness of the RPII, its scientific expertise, its high level of trust and stakeholder satisfaction.
- **Vision for a strengthened organisation:** Create a vision for the strengthened scientific organisation that will result from the merger of the RPII and the EPA.