



Environmental Protection Agency
An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil
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EPA Strategic Framework 2003 – 2006

2003 – 2006

Introduction

by Director General

This year marks the tenth anniversary of the establishment of the Environmental Protection Agency, and it is timely and apt that we also now publish our strategic framework for 2003 – 2006.

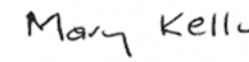
In 1993, the EPA was established with a wide range of functions to protect the environment. These include monitoring and reporting and a mandate to licence and control activities with the potential for serious pollution. Since then our remit has expanded and developed. In the past ten years, the EPA has come to play a pivotal role in establishing and maintaining high environmental standards in Ireland. We participate actively at European level and continue to aim for best international practice in environmental protection. In addition, we have a key role in the coordination of environmental research and development.

It is my intention that we continue in this vein over the next ten years. In particular, I am excited about the establishment of the Office of Environmental Enforcement, which further enhances our remit and expands our enforcement capacity. The designation of the EPA as National Allocation Authority for emissions trading allowances is a further vote of confidence in the independence of the EPA and its ability to deliver on challenging targets.

The pages that follow set out the strategic framework within which the EPA will operate over the coming years. This framework reflects the input and expertise of all our staff and is underpinned by a detailed plan setting out how each of the goals and objectives will be achieved. Responsibility for implementation and target dates for achievements have been agreed and each Office within the EPA will develop and implement a detailed workplan to enable us to turn our vision into reality.

In the last year, we have carried out a comprehensive strategic review exercise in which all of our staff participated. It has allowed us to anticipate the future in an inclusive way, recognising our strengths as an organisation and assessing those areas in need of improvement. It has also provided me, in the first year of my tenure as Director General, with the opportunity to get to know the staff in a very meaningful way. This strategic framework is the result of the review process and covers the period September 2003 to September 2006. I would like to personally thank each member of staff for their commitment and support in developing the strategic framework. I am also grateful for the input and support of the Advisory Committee and look forward to working with both groups over the coming years.

Is Mise, le meas



Mary Kelly
Director General





Mission and Vision

Our mission is:

to protect and improve the natural environment for present and future generations, taking into account the environmental, social and economic principles of sustainable development.

Our vision is to be:

A powerful agent for change, both in attitudes to the environment and in actions on environmental protection.

An organisation that works to place environmental issues at the heart of international, national and local decision-making processes.

A credible and respected organisation, speaking out courageously for the protection of the environment.

A world-class organisation in which people are proud to work.



Values

Our mission and vision are underpinned by our values, the principles and beliefs by which we operate.

Values

OUR VALUES ARE:

Integrity, independence and professionalism.

We make decisions based on objective and independent evaluations, and are committed to openness, fairness and transparency in our decision-making. We develop the necessary competence and confidence in our people to enable them to carry out their jobs in a professional manner.

Service to stakeholders.

We are committed to providing an excellent service to our various stakeholders, which is courteous, helpful and timely in dealing with queries and requests. We aim to make information readily available to our stakeholders. We respect the needs of our different stakeholders and seek to strike a balance between the high levels of environmental protection to which we are committed and the need for economic and social development.

Value for Money.

We work in an efficient and effective manner, and provide real value for money to the taxpayer.

Respect and support for colleagues.

We believe that people flourish in an open and supportive workplace. We respect our colleagues as individuals with important contributions to make to our overall goals. We encourage teamwork, discussion and debate to help make the best decisions. We want to be an employer of choice where our people can achieve fulfilling careers in a workplace with a high work ethic, and without discrimination on any grounds.

Openness to learning.

In all of our activities we are open to new insights and greater understanding of ways to improve our organisation and ourselves. We do this by keeping abreast of new developments and incorporating them into our work practices.



Goals and Objectives

Goals

- To be a powerful agent for change.
- To build a high performance organisation.
- To meet the needs of our stakeholders.
- To continually evaluate and improve what we do.



A Powerful Agent for Change

Be a powerful agent for change, proactively influencing national policy, independently licensing activities and enforcing compliance.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

Looking Forward

Focusing on long-term environmental policy with a particular emphasis on leadership and advocacy.

Setting the agenda for research and development in environmental matters within the context of the National Development Plan.

Networking

Working with others nationally and internationally to develop and apply best practice in environmental protection.

Public Awareness

Ensuring that the role of the EPA is understood by our various stakeholders.

Ensuring that the EPA is a positive force for the promotion of culture change on environmental issues.

Enforcement

Having a clear focus on the EPA's protection of the environment through enforcement of licences.

Ensuring that other public authorities carry out their environmental obligations.

Information Resource

Producing and sharing user-friendly information that makes an impact.

Being the recognised resource for information on environmental matters.

A High Performance Organisation

Be a highly efficient organisation with a proud and committed workforce.

WE DELIVER ON OUR MANDATE BY:

Developing People

Continuing to develop and enable our workforce to deliver on our mission.

Optimising Structure

Designing the optimum organisation to fulfil our responsibilities and meet new challenges.

Maximising Strategic Input of the Board

Delivering on the technical and corporate governance elements of the Board's role.

Empowering the Management Team

Ensuring role clarity and high performance behaviour throughout the organisation.

Increasing the role of our senior managers in the strategic management of the organisation.

Communicating Effectively Internally

Ensuring our staff have the necessary information to allow them to perform effectively in their individual roles and to understand what's happening elsewhere in the organisation.

Using Technology Support Systems

Providing technology and information tools to get the job done smartly, reflecting best practice in the e-Government Strategy.

Implementing Financial Control Systems

Ensuring that the financial control systems in place represent best practice in corporate governance.

Fostering EPA Culture

Ensuring that the EPA's 'can do' attitude continues to reflect the importance of high standards and professionalism in everything we do.

Change



Meeting the Needs of Our Stakeholders

While the nature of our role will sometimes generate conflict, we strive to be a customer-focused organisation.

WE MAINTAIN THE HIGHEST QUALITY SERVICE BY:

Setting High Standards of Service

Ensuring that the breadth of coverage and quality of reporting is world-class.

Building streamlined, user-friendly systems in all areas of our work.

Maximising the use of new information technologies in our monitoring and reporting processes and in communications with our stakeholders.

Interacting with Stakeholders Openly and Professionally

Being an independent voice.

Providing clarity about our services.

Ensuring that our stakeholders can access our services easily and efficiently.

Maintaining positive and professional relationships.

Taking account of our stakeholders' views.



Continually Evaluating and Improving What We Do

Continually monitor our performance, seeking to improve the products and services delivered in a cost-effective way.

WE ENSURE DELIVERY BY:

Working Smartly

Agreeing, monitoring and reporting on Key Performance Indicators for each work area on a 6-monthly-basis.

Measuring Individual Performance

Obtaining the commitment of all staff to perform to their highest potential.

Expecting Excellence

Building an organisational culture where avoidable slippage against plans is not accepted.

Listening to the Customer Voice

Engaging with customers to assess their level of satisfaction with our organisation and responding appropriately to their feedback.

Busting Bureaucracy

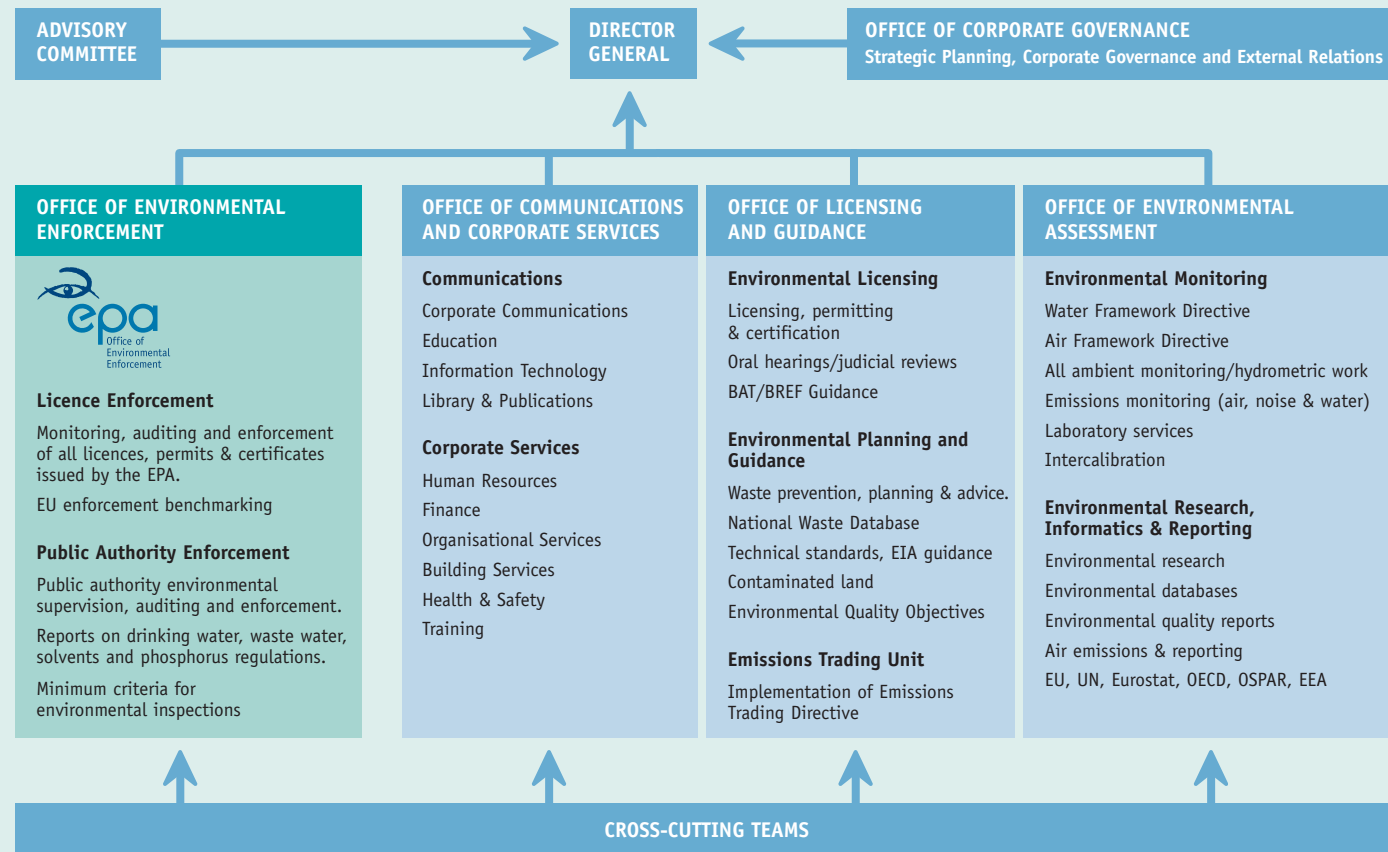
Maximising our resources by freeing up our people to work on priority areas.

Benchmarking

Building a world-class organisation by continually benchmarking best practices in matched organisations worldwide.



Organisational Structure



Environmental Analysis / Context Setting

The EPA's strategic framework is framed in the context of the following challenges.

International Context

Sustainable development, balancing social, economic and environmental considerations, is internationally accepted as a high level goal.

Environmental issues are high on the agenda for government, business and individual citizens.

Assessment of progress on the path to sustainable development is necessary for sound policy-making.

Decoupling economic growth from environmental degradation is Irish government policy, driven by the EU and international commitments.

Key Environmental Challenges

Reducing pollution of inland waters.

Managing waste.

Protecting the urban environment particularly from transport impacts.

Responding to the threat of climate change.

Protecting natural resources.

New Directions for the EPA

Establishing the Office of Environmental Enforcement.

Implementing the Emissions Trading Directive.

Building in organisational flexibilities such as effective and efficient resource deployment and issue prioritisation while remaining focused on environmental protection.

Public Sector Context

Working within the constraints of the public service to deliver value for money services to our stakeholders.

Meeting the ever-increasing demands of environmental protection within our resources.

Providing a quality customer service to meet customer demands.

Meeting the challenges posed by the Sustaining Progress Social Partnership Agreement 2003 including benchmarking, e-government and organisational flexibility.

Selected Milestones

To achieve the goals of our strategic framework, we have identified 80 individual actions with specific deadlines. A sample is given below.

| GOAL | ACTION | DEADLINE |
|--|---|----------|
| Being a Powerful Agent for Change | • Establish an in-house communications / public relations resource. | Q4 2003 |
| | • Establish a strategic planning and policy unit. | Q4 2003 |
| | • Establish an Office of Environmental Enforcement. | Q3 2003 |
| Building a High Performance Organisation | • Implement organisational restructuring. | Q3 2003 |
| | • Ensure financial and control systems represent best practice in corporate governance. | Q1 2004 |
| | • Develop an information management and technology strategy. | Q4 2003 |
| Meeting the Needs of Our Stakeholders | • Issue quality customer service plan. | Q1 2004 |
| | • Review release times of reports. | Q3 2004 |
| | • Maximise the use of automated reporting and data transfer. | Q2 2005 |
| Evaluating and Improving What We Do | • Review work programmes and reports. | Q4 2003 |
| | • Develop a survey to assess perception of current services among stakeholders. | Q3 2005 |
| | • Define key areas to benchmark against other agencies. | Q2 2005 |



