

EPA Strategic Plan 2022–2026



Environmental Protection Agency
An Gníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil



Introduction

Purpose & Vision

Values & Behaviours

Strategic Outcomes

Effective Voice

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Culture of Excellence

Introduction

This strategy, the EPA's sixth, sets out what we intend to achieve over the next five years in delivering our mandate and our purpose to protect, improve and restore our environment through regulation, scientific knowledge and working with others.

Our most recent four-year assessment of Ireland's environment found that the outlook was not good, and we urged the need for a decade of action and transformation, particularly in the context of the escalating climate and biodiversity emergencies. Sustained and focussed action is needed to achieve sustainability not only across sectors such as agriculture, energy, transport and industry but across the whole of society. The assessment also highlighted the greater awareness of the positive benefits of a clean environment for both health and wellbeing.

In developing this strategy, we have reviewed our purpose and vision. Our purpose reflects our three core roles – as an environmental regulator, as a key source of trusted scientific evidence and knowledge, and as a voice for the environment through our leadership and advocacy and our commitment to collaborating and partnering with others to deliver better environmental outcomes.

Our vision for Ireland is indeed ambitious and reflects the transformation needed so that we all live sustainably, that we have an environment which supports our health and well-being, and that is vibrant and healthy in itself. To achieve this, our natural environment must first be valued and then protected by all and this will require action on the part of Government and every household, business, sector and community.



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This strategy sets out what we will do to achieve our vision and purpose – driving action on climate, promoting sustainable consumption and production, and working relentlessly to achieve a clean, healthy environment. We cannot achieve this by ourselves. Our goal to be an effective voice for Ireland’s environment reflects our commitment to be a trusted leader and to work with others towards better outcomes across all environmental issues. We will work to ensure our evidence and information informs policy, is more easily accessible and meets all our stakeholders’ needs.

Our strategic outcomes are at a high level and are very ambitious and all our work will contribute towards achieving them. We have, however, set out a number of key priorities that we will focus on delivering by 2026 and we will report on the progress we are making on these through our annual reports.

We are privileged to have talented, dedicated and professional staff, who are immensely important in delivering our mandate and vision. We are committed to building on our culture of excellence, where our colleagues are supported, and where everyone can give their best. We have set out our organisational values and the individual behaviours that we will commit to and will place at the core of our work.

The development of this Strategic Plan has benefited enormously from the excellent engagement of our staff and the input of many stakeholders, including the EPA Advisory Committee, and I would like to thank all those who provided feedback and suggestions to help us shape our ambitious strategy.

Laura Burke

Director General

May 2022

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Our Purpose

To protect, improve and restore our environment through regulation, scientific knowledge and working with others



Our Vision

We live sustainably in a healthy environment that is valued and protected by all



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Our Values & Behaviours

Professional

We hold ourselves to high standards in our interactions and work

- I take responsibility for my work and am accountable for my decisions
- I listen to others and respect diversity of views



Trustworthy

We act with integrity as an independent leader and advocate for our environment

- I base my decisions on the best available evidence and facts
- I am honest and transparent in my interactions with others



Customer & Stakeholder Focussed

We actively listen to and understand our customers and stakeholders to design and deliver excellent services

- I take account of our customers' and stakeholders' perspectives in everything I do
- I work to deliver public value and our vision



Collaborative

We work together and with others to protect our environment and health

- I work with others to deliver better outcomes
- I share my time, resources and knowledge to support my colleagues



Innovative

We innovate and adapt to deliver our vision and strategy

- I try new ideas to improve how I do my work, knowing that I won't always get it right
- I support and champion innovation to deliver on our vision

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Strategic Outcomes

We are an effective voice for Ireland's environment

We are trusted as an independent and transparent source of environmental evidence and information

We improve the environment through working with others and proactively influencing policy, legislation and behavioural change

By 2026

We will have successfully advocated for a national policy on the environment which sets out the ambition for protecting Ireland's environment in the short, medium and long term

We will have proactively influenced policy and legislation by leveraging our expertise, evidence and research

We will have improved environmental outcomes by working effectively with and through Local Authorities and other organisations

We will be using innovative and accessible ways to deliver timely and targeted data and information to meet our stakeholders' needs

Our communications will have moved beyond awareness raising to actively engaging and empowering people to change behaviour

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Strategic Outcomes

We use our knowledge to drive climate action

We drive the transition to climate neutrality and resilience through our evidence and engagement work

We lead by example by reducing our greenhouse gas emissions

By 2026

We will have actively engaged a wider audience, driving action across all sections of society to address the urgent climate challenge

Our information on greenhouse gas emissions will be more timely and targeted to support national ambitions on climate and to influence policy

We will have reduced the EPA's greenhouse gas emissions by at least 30 per cent on our transition to carbon neutrality

We will have integrated climate priorities with our work on other environmental challenges to optimise co-benefits for the environment and public health

Our evidence and data on the impacts of climate change will inform Ireland's approach to adaptation and enable the transition to a climate-resilient environment, economy, and society

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Strategic Outcomes

We deliver a protected and healthy environment

We deliver cleaner water, cleaner air and have reduced exposure to harmful radiation, noise, chemicals and pathogens through our regulation, enforcement, monitoring and assessment

By 2026

Any regulated operators polluting the environment or impacting public health will be held to account

We will have an agile, effective and responsive regulatory system, delivering timely decisions to promote sustainable and environmentally sound development

The number of waterbodies with high or good water quality will have substantially increased

Air quality in our cities, towns and villages will have substantially improved

Key environmental indicators will be trending in the right direction

People will be less exposed to harmful chemicals and radiation

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Strategic Outcomes

We promote the transition to sustainable production and consumption

Our evidence, engagement and regulatory activities foster and support the public and businesses to use less resources and make better choices for the environment

By 2026

Ireland will have transitioned to having a well-regulated and effective circular economy and will be meeting our recovery, recycling and reuse targets

Waste generation will be substantially reduced and businesses and householders will be supported to make better choices

Practices with a reduced environmental impact will be key considerations in all public sector procurement through Green Public Procurement

We will have been successful in advocating for and supporting the transition to a sustainable food system in Ireland

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Strategic Outcomes

We create a culture of excellence where people are supported and can give their best

We live our values and behaviours in a supportive, inclusive and flexible workplace, to deliver public value and our vision

By 2026

Our values and behaviours will be at the core of how we work and interact

We will have maintained and enhanced our capacity, expertise and skillsets to ensure resilience and deliver our strategic outcomes

We will have a culture of leadership, performance and development that supports our staff and realises their full potential

We will be a highly connected, flexible and innovative organisation positioned to meet the changing and dynamic environment