

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK



ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

The EPA is responsible for protecting and improving the environment as a valuable asset for the people of Ireland. We are committed to protecting people and the environment from the harmful effects of radiation and pollution.

The work of the EPA can be divided into three main areas:

Regulation: *Implementing regulation and environmental compliance systems to deliver good environmental outcomes and target those who don't comply.*

Knowledge: *Providing high quality, targeted and timely environmental data, information and assessment to inform decision making.*

Advocacy: *Working with others to advocate for a clean, productive and well protected environment and for sustainable environmental practices.*

Our responsibilities include:

Licensing

- Large-scale industrial, waste and petrol storage activities;
- Urban waste water discharges;
- The contained use and controlled release of Genetically Modified Organisms;
- Sources of ionising radiation;
- Greenhouse gas emissions from industry and aviation through the EU Emissions Trading Scheme.

National Environmental Enforcement

- Audit and inspection of EPA licensed facilities;
- Drive the implementation of best practice in regulated activities and facilities;
- Oversee local authority responsibilities for environmental protection;
- Regulate the quality of public drinking water and enforce urban waste water discharge authorisations;
- Assess and report on public and private drinking water quality;
- Coordinate a network of public service organisations to support action against environmental crime;
- Prosecute those who flout environmental law and damage the environment.

Waste Management and Chemicals in the Environment

- Implement and enforce waste regulations including national enforcement issues;
- Prepare and publish national waste statistics and the National Hazardous Waste Management Plan;
- Develop and implement the National Waste Prevention Programme;
- Implement and report on legislation on the control of chemicals in the environment.

Water Management

- Engage with national and regional governance and operational structures to implement the Water Framework Directive;
- Monitor, assess and report on the quality of rivers, lakes, transitional and coastal waters, bathing waters and groundwaters, and measurement of water levels and river flows.

Climate Science & Climate Change

- Publish Ireland's greenhouse gas emission inventories and projections;
- Provide the Secretariat to the Climate Change Advisory Council and support to the National Dialogue on Climate Action;
- Support National, EU and UN Climate Science and Policy development activities.

Environmental Monitoring & Assessment

- Design and implement national environmental monitoring systems: technology, data management, analysis and forecasting;
- Produce the State of Ireland's Environment and Indicator Reports;
- Monitor air quality and implement the EU Clean Air for Europe Directive, the Convention on Long Range Transboundary Air Pollution, and the National Emissions Ceiling Directive;
- Oversee the implementation of the Environmental Noise Directive;
- Assess the impact of proposed plans and programmes on the Irish environment.
- Environmental Research and Development
- Coordinate and fund national environmental research activity to identify pressures, inform policy and provide solutions;
- Collaborate with national and EU environmental research activity.

Radiological Protection

- Monitoring radiation levels and assess public exposure to ionising radiation and electromagnetic fields;
- Assist in developing national plans for emergencies arising from nuclear accidents;
- Monitor developments abroad relating to nuclear installations and radiological safety;
- Provide, or oversee the provision of, specialist radiation protection services.

Guidance, Awareness Raising, and Accessible Information

- Provide independent evidence-based reporting, advice and guidance to Government, industry and the public on environmental and radiological protection topics;
- Promote the link between health and wellbeing, the economy and a clean environment;
- Promote environmental awareness including supporting behaviours for resource efficiency and climate transition;
- Promote radon testing in homes and workplaces and encourage remediation where necessary.

Partnership and networking

- Work with international and national agencies, regional and local authorities, non-governmental organisations, representative bodies and government departments to deliver environmental and radiological protection, research coordination and science-based decision making.

Management and structure of the EPA

The EPA is managed by a full time Board, consisting of a Director General and five Directors. The work is carried out across five Offices:

- Office of Environmental Sustainability
- Office of Environmental Enforcement
- Office of Evidence and Assessment
- Office of Radiation Protection and Environmental Monitoring
- Office of Communications and Corporate Services

The EPA is assisted by advisory committees who meet regularly to discuss issues of concern and provide advice to the Board.



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ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

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FOREWORD BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL

Governance is the system by which organisations are directed and controlled. It is concerned with processes for decision making, structure, accountability, control and behaviour so that stakeholders can be assured that the organisation is operating effectively and efficiently. Governance influences how an organisation's objectives are set and achieved, how risks are identified and mitigated against, and how performance is enhanced.

Governance in the Environmental Protection Agency is based on established principles and clearly defined roles for Directors, senior management and staff. Governance arrangements help to ensure good management, good performance, good stakeholder engagement and good outcomes.

EPA Directors, senior management and staff, all have an important role to play to ensure that good governance is in place and this framework sets out the structures and processes in place to deliver on these obligations.



Laura Burke
Director General

THE PURPOSE OF THIS FRAMEWORK

The purpose of this governance framework is to provide a clear and comprehensive summary of the principal aspects of corporate governance and its oversight within the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

In the context of good governance, the effectiveness of our management systems, the control culture and control environment are subjected to regular external review by internal and external auditors, including the Comptroller and Auditor General (C&AG); external review bodies, such as the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD); and Committees, such as the EPA's Audit and Risk Committee. Additionally, Individual managers and staff within the EPA also play a key role in ensuring management systems and controls are maintained in accordance with management assurance processes.

Corporate governance is vitally important for the EPA in effectively discharging its statutory obligations. This document focuses on key areas of governance and clarifies the structures, processes and oversight which are in place to deliver on these obligations. It is envisaged that the governance framework will be a living document and developed further over time as corporate governance, and the needs of the organisation, evolves.

The Governance Framework is reviewed annually and updated as necessary and is available on our website - www.epa.ie

CHAPTER 1 OVERVIEW OF THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

THE ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY (EPA)

The EPA is an independent public body established under the Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1992 (the EPA Act). The EPA is managed by a full time Executive Board consisting of a Director General and five Directors. Its sponsor in Government is the Department of Environment, Communications and Climate (DECC) and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) also has responsibility for a number of areas of direct relevance to the EPA's remit.

The EPA's Audit & Risk Committee comprises seven members, with all except one member being external, non-executive members. Also, as per sections 27 and 28 of the EPA Act, 1992, the EPA is supported by an Advisory Committee, with all except one member (the Director General) being external, non-executive members. As such, the Agency benefits from external input and advice through these fora.

OUR MISSION, OUR VISION, OUR VALUES

OUR MISSION IS:

To protect and improve the environment as a valuable asset for the people of Ireland. To protect our people and the environment from harmful effects of radiation and pollution.

OUR VISION IS:

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

OUR VALUES ARE:

- ▶ 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;
- ▶ 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 build trust, networks and partnerships to deliver effective outcomes;
- ▶ We strive continuously for improvement and excellence through learning and development;
- ▶ 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;
- ▶ 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.

OUR ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

The EPA's headquarters is located in Wexford and it operates five Regional Inspectorates, located in Castlebar, Cork, Dublin, Kilkenny and Monaghan. It also has two Regional Hydrometric Offices located in Athlone and Limerick.

For Organisational purposes the work of the EPA is divided into the following five areas:

- ▶ Office of Communications and Corporate Services;
- ▶ Office of Environmental Sustainability;
- ▶ Office of Environmental Enforcement;
- ▶ Office of Evidence and Assessment;
- ▶ Office of Radiation Protection and Environmental Monitoring.

OUR MANDATE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The EPA is responsible for protecting and improving the environment as a valuable asset for the people of Ireland. We are committed to protecting people and the environment from the harmful effects of radiation and pollution. We play key roles in environmental regulation, provision of knowledge and advocacy for the environment.

The EPA provides environmental data, assessments and evidence to inform decision making and implements effective regulation and environmental compliance systems – while working with others to advocate for a clean, healthy and well protected environment and sustainable environmental behaviour. The EPA is an independent public body established under the Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1992. The other main instruments from which we derive our mandate are the Waste Management Act, 1996, and the Protection of the Environment Act, 2003 and Radiological Protection (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2014.

We have a wide range of functions to protect the environment, and our primary responsibilities include:

- ▶ Environmental licensing;
- ▶ Enforcement of environmental law;
- ▶ Environmental planning, education and guidance;
- ▶ Monitoring, analysing and reporting on the environment;
- ▶ Regulating Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions;
- ▶ Environmental research development;
- ▶ Strategic environmental assessment;
- ▶ Waste management;
- ▶ Radiological protection;
- ▶ Partnership and networking.

CHAPTER 2 EPA EXECUTIVE BOARD ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

STRUCTURE OF THE EPA BOARD

The EPA consists of the Director General and five Directors.

The EPA Act does not use the term 'Board' to designate the organisation's governing body; instead, the Act refers to 'the Agency' and designated 'Directors of the Agency'. The Directors of the Agency are referred to as 'Executive Board Members', and the Agency's governing body is known as its Board or Executive Board.

The Executive Board fulfils both governance and management roles. Their activities are organised into five Offices, with each Director having operational responsibility for an Office.

The Director General serves as Chair of the Executive Board and operational chief executive of the EPA, serving both governance and management roles and is responsible for running the Agency. The Director General is accountable to the Oireachtas through the Public Accounts Committee.

The Executive Board of the EPA is supported by an Advisory Committee which is chaired by the Director General and includes eleven externally appointed members, nominated by prescribed organisations and appointed by the Minister for Environment, Climate and Communications.

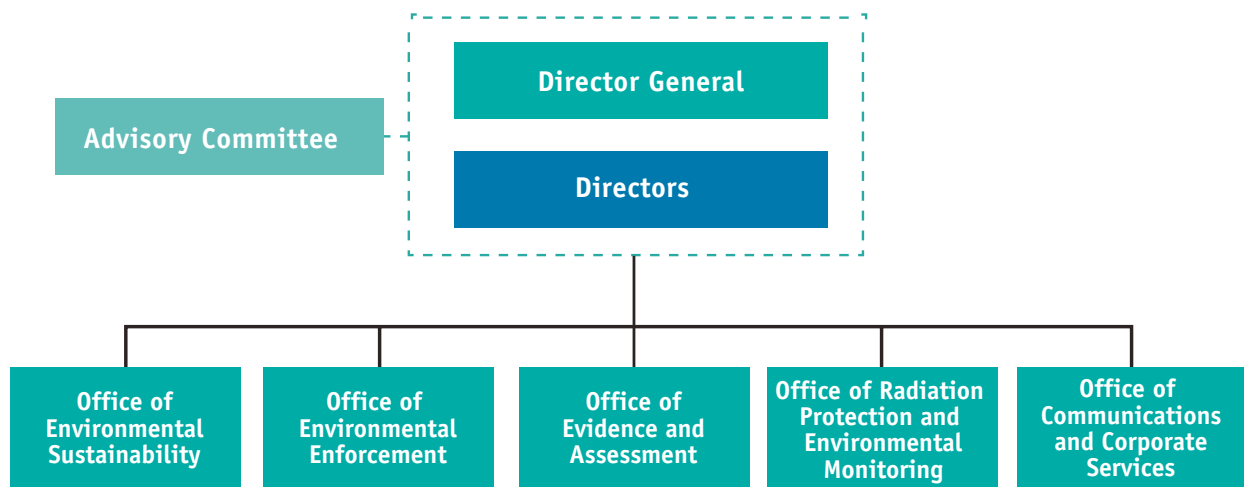


Figure 1: EPA organisational structure

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

FUNCTIONS OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL AND DEPUTY DIRECTOR GENERAL

Section 23 of the **EPA Act** states that the function of the Director General or, where he/she is not available, the Deputy Director General is

- ▶ to ensure the efficient discharge of the business of the EPA; and
- ▶ to arrange the distribution of the business of the EPA among its Directors.

GENERAL ROLE OF THE BOARD

The role of the Board of any public body is to provide strategic leadership, direction, support and guidance for the body and promote commitment to its core values, policies and objectives. In addition to the special Board responsibilities set out in the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016 (the Code) and in the EPA Act, the EPA's Board holds specific governance and management responsibilities as the Board of a State body which include:

- ▶ to ensure that the body carries out its responsibilities as set out by statute or by ministerial order;
- ▶ to provide leadership, vision and direction for the body;
- ▶ to define the mission of the body, decide its strategic goals and develop the policies required to achieve those goals;
- ▶ to ensure good management, to monitor the achievements of management and to ensure that a proper balance is achieved between the respective roles of board and management;
- ▶ to set performance targets, including key financial targets and, in particular, to agree and closely monitor the budget;
- ▶ to ensure that the body behaves ethically and in a manner that accords with the core values of the body; and
- ▶ to define and promote the body's role in the community by developing mechanisms for gathering the views of customers and stakeholders and by keeping people informed in an open, accountable and responsible way.

ROLE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE BOARD

The Code stipulates the requirement for a Board Secretary. The Code's 2016 update expands the functions of the Secretary beyond secretariat duties to include reporting to the Director General on all governance matters and assisting in ensuring relevant information is made available to the Board and its committees.

The EPA has assigned the roles and responsibilities of a Board Secretary to two individuals, as follows:

1. Statutory duties, duty to exercise due care, skill and diligence, and duty of consulting the Executive Board through the Director General in all matters of governance: Programme Manager of the Corporate Governance Unit;
2. Duty of disclosure and administrative duties: Board Secretary.

ROLE OF THE ACCOUNTABLE OFFICER

The Director General of the EPA in her or his role as Accountable Officer is responsible to Dáil Éireann, through the Public Accounts Committee (PAC), for the proper expenditure of funds by the Agency. The Director General is responsible for the safeguarding of public funds and property under their control, and for the regularity and propriety of the transactions of the Agency. The Director General as the EPA's Accountable Officer cannot delegate this responsibility to subordinate officers.

The Accountable Officer must, when called upon, appear before the PAC to answer any questions arising from her or his responsibilities.

DELEGATION OF DISCRETIONARY POWERS

Delegation requires the assignment of responsibility and accountability for specific outcomes or achievements to a specific individual or unit.

Legislatively, the Board has responsibility for the management of the EPA, but for practical purposes it is empowered to delegate responsibility to other staff for operational purposes. Section 25(6) of the EPA Act provides that the Agency may perform or exercise any of its functions through or by any director or other person or body who has been duly authorised by the Agency in that behalf.

Since the establishment of the Agency, the Board of the Agency has delegated discretionary powers to various levels in the Agency. The delegation of powers continues to grow as the Agency acquires further legislation over time. The Board has also a set of decisions reserved to it to meet with its governance responsibility for the direction and control of the EPA, in compliance with Section 1.7 of the Code which states that such functions should include the following:

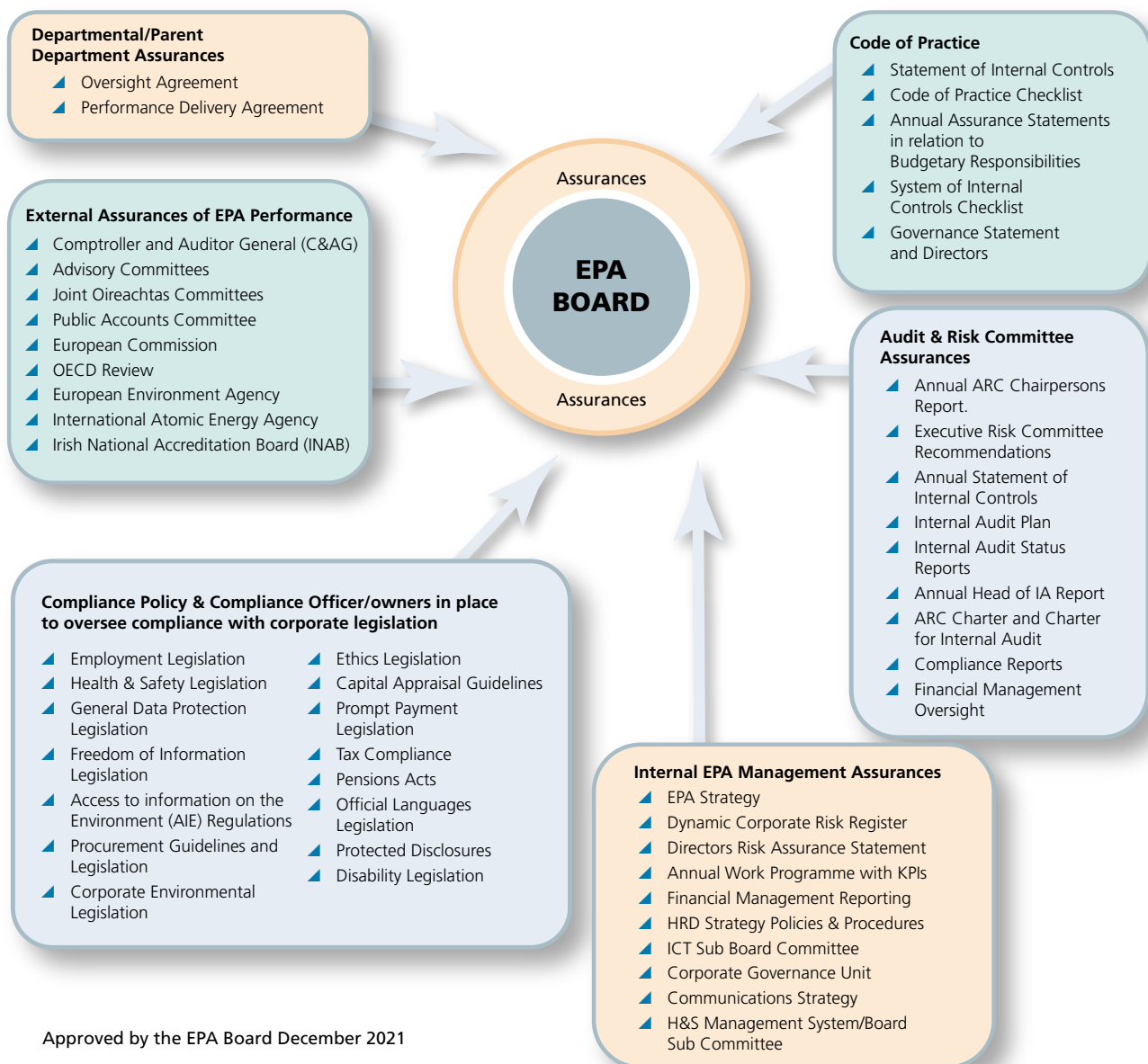
- ▶ significant acquisitions, disposals and retirement of assets of the State body or its subsidiaries; the schedule should specify clear quantitative thresholds for contracts above which Board approval is required;
- ▶ major investments and capital projects;
- ▶ delegated authority levels, treasury policy and risk management policies;
- ▶ approval of terms of major contracts;
- ▶ assurances of compliance with statutory and administrative requirements in relation to the approval of the number, grading, and conditions of appointment of all staff;
- ▶ approval of annual budgets and corporate plans; and
- ▶ approval of annual reports and financial statements.

CHAPTER 3 CORPORATE GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK

Corporate Governance is concerned with the structures and processes for decision-making and accountability throughout an organisation. The Board draws assurances on the effectiveness of its internal control system from a range of sources and processes within the EPA. An assurance framework is a structured means of identifying these structures and processes and mapping the main sources of corporate assurance in an organisation. This enables the Board to have greater confidence in the robustness of its systems and reporting mechanisms and provides a visible audit trail to support the Board’s conclusions. The current framework for Assurance of the EPA is shown below.

EPA Framework of Assurances

An assurance framework is a structured means of identifying and mapping the main sources of corporate assurance in an organisation.



Approved by the EPA Board December 2021

Figure 2: EPA Framework of Assurances which maps the main sources of corporate assurance.

CHAPTER 4 EPA COMPLIANCE & GOVERNANCE STRUCTURES

As previously explained the Executive Board is responsible for the overall day to day governance and management of the EPA and the Framework of Assurance identifies and maps the main sources of corporate assurance in the organisation. The following organisational processes and governance structures are in place within the EPA to assist Directors in discharging these roles and maintain compliance with all statutory and administrative requirements.

COMPLIANCE WITH CORPORATE LEGISLATION

A Compliance Officer and Compliance Owners have been assigned for the different categories of corporate legislation within the EPA. The Compliance Officer coordinates reporting of the EPA's compliance with legal obligations and works closely with the designated Compliance Owners. Compliance Owners are required to undertake a review of compliance with statutory obligations yearly to provide the EPA's Board with reasonable assurance that compliance risks are appropriately addressed.

CORPORATE GOVERNANCE

Corporate Governance comprises the systems and procedures by which organisations are directed, controlled and managed. The EPA is specifically required by its founding legislation to act in accordance with a range of legislative and other requirements which apply to it in the context of its various roles, including those of employer, statutory authority and provider of services. The Corporate Governance Unit is responsible for overseeing and reporting on the implementation of these systems and procedures including adherence to the Code.

The Code sets out the corporate governance responsibilities for the operation of all state bodies, and it encourages boards of State Bodies to apply the highest standards of governance applicable in the business world generally. The Code sets out the basic framework of rules to achieve good governance and requires each State Body to comply with its provisions and to confirm annually that this is being done.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT

The role of the Finance Unit is to keep proper books and financial records for the EPA and to assist with the overall management of the financial affairs of the EPA. This is achieved by:

- ▶ Embedding a system of financial controls, segregation of duties and accountability;
- ▶ Gathering the input of all budget holders and preparing the annual Budget for approval by the EPA Board, with two formal restatements of the annual budget in June and September;
- ▶ Monitoring, analysing and reporting to the Board on expenditure against the agreed budget in the form of the monthly Financial Management Report; and
- ▶ Preparing the Annual Financial Statements at year end for audit by the Comptroller & Auditor General.

The Finance Unit also operates a Business Partnering Model to assist Budget Holders in the management of their Financial Responsibilities.

HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Human Resource Management is about the management of our staff. The Human Resources Unit is responsible for preparing and implementing a range of Human Resource Policies and Procedures to maintain compliance with a wide range of employment law. The EPA is committed to building an organisation which focuses on having competent committed people and recognises that our staff are our most important resource. As a scientific organisation, we base our decisions and actions on facts and evidence. It is essential that we continue to build the depth of skills and knowledge across the organisation to help achieve our environmental goals. To achieve this, the Human Resources Unit places a focus on:

- ▶ Recruiting and retaining people with the depth of skills to help us deliver on our vision and goals;
- ▶ Giving managers and staff access to high quality professional and managerial training and the ongoing opportunity for personal development and growth; and
- ▶ Setting clear goals to manage the performance of individuals.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

A Performance Management Development System (PMDS) is in operation in the EPA. The aim of PMDS is to help managers and staff to manage and improve performance. PMDS is a two-way collaborative process which encourages staff and their managers to think about, discuss and agree what needs to be done to strengthen individual performance, the performance of the EPA and the services provided.

PMDS is designed to be a fair and effective way of measuring and developing performance, through regular open, honest and constructive discussions between managers and staff. The key elements of PMDS, i.e. setting goals, selecting competencies, learning goals and formal reviews of performance, are all fundamental aspects of managing performance. Effective performance management requires constant and ongoing, evidence-based review and feedback on performance throughout the year.

RISK MANAGEMENT

Risk management is the process by which risks are identified, evaluated and controlled and is an integral element of managing an organisation. A sound system of Risk Management provides assurance that the EPA will not be hindered in achieving its objectives or in the orderly and legitimate conduct of its business, by risks and circumstances which may be reasonably foreseen.

An Executive Risk Committee (ERC) (chaired by the Chief Risk Officer) is in place and is made up of two directors and three programme managers. The ERC Identifies and reviews the key strategic risks and key issues within and across the EPA and make recommendations to the ARC with regard to the Corporate Risk Register.

The EPA's Risk Management Policy outlines the risk management framework and process. It sets out how the EPA ensures, in as far as practicable, that the culture, processes and structures in the organisation are directed towards the effective management of potential risks and opportunities. It is a statement also of the overall intentions and direction of the EPA related to risk management.

Within the EPA, the Board sets the EPA's Risk Appetite. It recognises that the appetite for risk can vary according to the activity undertaken and has developed a Risk Appetite statement for each of its key categories of risk.

The Corporate Risk Register identifies the key risks facing the EPA and details the controls and actions needed to mitigate risks while responsibility for the operation of such controls is assigned to specific staff. The Corporate Risk Register is monitored, maintained and reported on by the ERC, reviewed by the Audit and Risk Committee and presented to the EPA Board for approval.

PROCUREMENT

The EPA has appointed a Procurement Officer whose role is to provide support and advice as and when required to staff and to ensure, in as far as practicable, that procurement is compliant with EU law and National Guidelines. The Procurement Officer is responsible for drafting procurement policies and procedures, in addition to the EPA's Corporate Procurement Plan. The role also involves the development of the EPA's procurement training programme in conjunctions with external service providers and the Procurement Officer communicates regularly with staff on procurement related matters.

HEALTH AND SAFETY

While the Director General is charged with overall responsibility for staff safety, health and welfare, responsibility for the practical implementation of the EPA's Safety Management System is delegated to the Safety Manger, the Safety Coordinator, the Executive Safety Team, Local Safety Managers and Local Safety Teams. The EPA has appointed a Health & Safety Officer. The role of the Health and Safety Officer is to provide advice to managers and staff to enable them to complete their work safely. The Health and Safety Officer assists Directors, Programme Managers and Managers in ensuring compliance with legal requirements and the implementation of the Safety Management System requirements.

The Board of the EPA established a Board Sub-Committee to oversee the work of the Executive Safety Committee and give assurance to the Director General on matters pertaining to safety, health and welfare. The Board Sub-Committee is responsible for providing leadership and communicating & promoting a safety culture throughout the organisation. They support the EPA's Executive Safety Team and oversee the implementation of the EPA's Safety Management System.

ICT BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE

The EPA has established an ICT Board Sub-Committee which consists of three Directors, including the Directors with responsibility for ICT and Analytics. The Board Sub-Committee oversees governance of all ICT related work in the EPA and also oversees the deployment of all staff and contractors dedicated to ICT work in the EPA.

The Board Sub-Committee manages supply and demand issues by making decisions about the allocation and prioritisation of ICT resources and expenditure. The Board Sub-Committee is also responsible for overseeing that commitments are within the overall financial parameters set by the Board through the budget, forecasting and budget revision processes, while taking account of the need for balance in investment decisions to support and grow the EPA. The Committee is supported by a secretariat.

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION & ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON THE ENVIRONMENT

The Freedom of Information (FOI) Act provides a legal right for members of the public to access information held by the EPA. The Access to Information on the Environment Regulation (AIE) provides similar rights in relation to Environmental information. The EPA has a dedicated FOI/AIE Officer who manages access to information under these statutes. The FOI/AIE Officer is responsible for maintaining policies and procedures and developing training programmes for EPA staff involved in responding to request under both regimes.

DATA PROTECTION

The EPA is committed to ensuring that all employees comply with the relevant Data Protection legislation. The Agency has assigned responsibility for data protection to a Data Protection Officer (DPO). The DPO's role is to maintain and update policies, procedures and associated documentation; advise EPA staff and management on compliance with the legislation; manage any data subject access requests; manage any data security breaches or data loss incidents; oversee the provision of data protection training and guidance for staff; provide advice and assistance for staff on data protection issues and where necessary commission legal advice; and manage personal data audits if required.

PROTECTED DISCLOSURES

The EPA has appointed a Protected Disclosures Officer to provide advice and guidance on the implementation of the Protected Disclosures Act. Relevant processes and procedures are also in place to address any Protected Disclosures received by the EPA. Additionally, pursuant to Statutory Instrument No. 339 of 2014, the Director General of the EPA, is prescribed to be the recipient of disclosures of relevant wrongdoings in relation to all matters relating to the protection of the environment in the State. In accordance with section 22 of the Protected Disclosures Act 2014 the EPA publishes an Annual Report each year relating to the number of protected disclosures made to it in the preceding year and any actions taken in response to such disclosures.

PARTNERSHIP 'MEITHEAL' COMMITTEE

The EPA Partnership Committee is called Meitheal to reflect the traditional Irish philosophy of working together towards a common purpose. Today's workplace is one that involves constant change and Meitheal provides a forum to ensure there is a collaborative approach to managing this change and to building a more productive and innovative workplace.

Ensuring a culture of collaboration is key to delivering on our goals, a workplace that is customer focused, responsive to employee needs, and proactively diverse. The objectives of Meitheal are to:

- ▶ Enhance the performance of the organisation through partnership;
- ▶ Facilitate collaboration among staff, unions and management;
- ▶ Enhance the quality of the work environment;
- ▶ Identify issues/topics to be addressed by the committee and agree action plans; and
- ▶ Champion equality and diversity in the workplace.

CHAPTER 5 EXTERNAL AUDIT AND OVERSIGHT STRUCTURES

External Audit and Oversight are the tools used to review and monitor public sector organisations, their policies, programmes and projects to ensure that they are achieving expected results, representing good value for money and are in compliance with applicable policies, laws, regulations and ethical standards. This oversight is a crucial governance function performed by those external to the organisation and represent an external voice on the operations of the State Body.

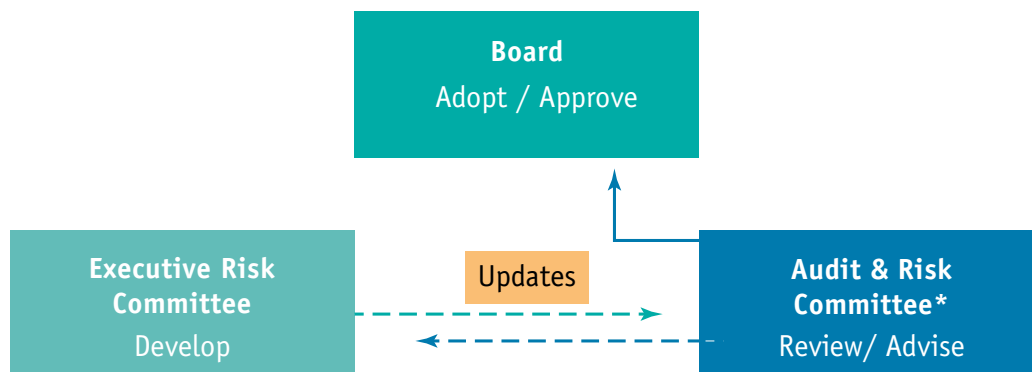
The following are external audit and oversight structures in place at the EPA which provided the EPA's Board, Parent Departments and the public with assurance that the EPA governance structures are robust.

AUDIT & RISK COMMITTEE

It is the policy of the Board to support the progressive development and strengthening of an effective control environment, governance, risk management systems and the Internal Audit function. The Board recognises the important contribution to good governance and effective internal control made by an efficient and effective Audit & Risk Committee (ARC).

The ARC is appointed by the Board of the EPA, in consultation with the Chairperson of the ARC, and consists of not less than four members including at least two independent external members and one internal member. Membership is selected having regard to the characteristics which members would need to ensure independence from the executive, to avoid conflicts of interest and to achieve a suitable balance of skills and experience.

The ARC has an independent role in the provision of assurance to the Board on internal control, risk management, efficiency & effectiveness, audit and assurance matters, as part of the systematic review of the control environment and governance procedures of the EPA. The ARC operates under an agreed charter and is obliged to prepare a formal annual report for the Director General for submission to the Board.



*External Independent Advisory Role constituted in accordance with the Charter

Figure 2: Relationship between the Audit & Risk Committee, the Executive Risk Committee, and the EPA Board

INTERNAL AUDIT

The Internal Audit function is an independent unit established within the EPA to examine and evaluate the various activities and systems of control, with the objectives of providing assurances to the Board and senior management that:

- ▶ the EPA's activities are being carried out in a proper, orderly and efficient manner;
- ▶ the EPA's policies and procedures are being followed;
- ▶ the EPA's assets are being safeguarded;
- ▶ legislative requirements and established standards are being met; and
- ▶ the EPA's records are complete and accurate.

The Head of Internal Audit reports organisationally to the Director General of the EPA and functionally to the Audit & Risk Committee. The Internal Audit function engages external assistance to conduct internal audits, as required.

REPORTING ON INTERNAL CONTROLS

A Statement on Internal Financial Control is produced each year in conjunction with the EPA's Finance Unit. It is subject to external audit and independent review. The objectives of the review are to evaluate the adequacy and effectiveness of the EPA's system of internal financial controls and to ensure that the EPA is complying with all relevant legislation, the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies (2016) and with DPER Circulars and that Government policy requirements are being complied with in all respects.

This review forms part of the EPA Board's Review of Internal Controls which is scheduled to be completed by the end of February each year, in accordance with the requirements of the Code. The review also entails an assessment of the EPA's effectiveness of the system of internal financial controls and related assurance systems and identifies opportunities for improvements to processes having regard to best practice. As part of the Annual Reporting process, there is also a requirement to prepare a Governance Statement and Board Members' Report.

EPA ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Section 27 of the EPA Act provides for the establishment of an Advisory Committee which is chaired by the Director General of the EPA and includes eleven other members. Seven members are appointed by the Minister from nominations received from a number of prescribed organisations under section 27(5) of the EPA Act, with the remaining four members appointed directly by the Minister. The Advisory Committee has a wide range of advisory functions under the EPA Act, including making recommendations to the EPA, or the Minister, relating to the functions of the EPA.

OVERSIGHT AGREEMENT & PERFORMANCE DELIVERY AGREEMENT

Under the Code, Government Departments are required to have written oversight agreements with State Bodies under their aegis which clearly define the terms of the State Body's relationship with the relevant Minister / parent Department.

The Oversight Agreement includes details of the Performance Delivery Agreement which acts as a performance contract between the relevant Departments and the State Body and an agreed level of performance is formalised including specific performance targets and indicators. The information contained in the agreements together with annual reports is used to monitor performance versus targets year-on-year. Signed copies of both the Oversight Agreement & Performance Delivery Agreement are published on the EPA's website.

EXTERNAL AUDIT

The Office of the Comptroller and Auditor General (OCAG) act as external auditor to the EPA. Their role is to provide independent assurance that public funds and resources are used in accordance with the law, managed to good effect and properly accounted for and to contribute to improvement in public administration. The OCAG undertakes an external audit of the EPA's Statutory Accounts on an annual basis.

ORGANISATION FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT (OECD) REVIEW

The OECD published a review of the Agency in 2020. The aim of the review was "to assess and strengthen the EPA's organisational performance and governance structures."

Overall, the OECD findings are that: "The EPA has established itself as a trusted and respected body for environmental and radiological protection that is recognised for its scientific integrity. It has been given responsibility for regulating an increasing number of areas on account of its reputation to deliver and it operates with a strong culture of independence. EPA data and reports are the reference for knowledge on Ireland's environment and the EPA is seen as an authoritative voice on environmental issues. It networks effectively at the European level, where it has gained a reputation as an innovative, open organisation with many good practices to share".

The Review recommended a number of opportunities for the Agency to follow up on to greater strengthen its overall effectiveness. The Agency, in collaboration with its parent departments will address the opportunities identified in the review for the Agency to build on its strong reputation and continue to ensure its effectiveness as a modern regulator and employer.

AN GHNÍOMHAIREACTH UM CHAOMHNÚ COMHSHAOL

Tá an GCC freagrach as an gcomhshaol a chosaint agus a fheabhsú, mar shócmhainn luachmhar do mhuintir na hÉireann. Táimid tiomanta do dhaoine agus don chomhshaol a chosaint ar thionchar díobhálach na radaíochta agus an truaillithe.

Is féidir obair na Gníomhaireachta a roinnt ina trí phríomhréimse:

Rialáil: *Rialáil agus córais chomhlíonta comhshaol éifeachtacha a chur i bhfeidhm, chun dea-thorthaí comhshaol a bhaint amach agus díriú orthu siúd nach mbíonn ag cloí leo.*

Eolas: *Sonraí, eolas agus measúnú ardchaighdeán, spriocdhírthe agus tráthúil a chur ar fáil i leith an chomhshaol chun bonn eolais a chur faoin gcinnteoireacht.*

Abhcóideacht: *Ag obair le daoine eile ar son timpeallachta glaine, táirgiúla agus dea-chosanta agus ar son cleachtas inbhuanaithe i dtaobh an chomhshaol.*

I measc ár gcuid freagrachtaí tá:

Ceadúnú

- Gníomhaíochtaí tionscail, dramhaíola agus stórála peitрил ar scála mór;
- Sceitheadh fuíolluisce uirbigh;
- Úsáid shrianta agus scaoileadh rialaithe Orgánach Géimhódhnaíthe;
- Foinsí radaíochta ianúcháin;
- Astaíochtaí gás ceaptha teasa ó thionscal agus ón eitlíocht trí Scéim an AE um Thrádáil Astaíochtaí.

Forfheidhmíú Náisiúnta i leith Cúrsaí Comhshaol

- Iniúchadh agus cigireacht ar shaoráidí a bhfuil ceadúnas acu ón GCC;
- Cur i bhfeidhm an dea-chleachtais a stiúradh i ngníomhaíochtaí agus i saoráidí rialáilte;
- Maoirseacht a dhéanamh ar fhreagrachtaí an údaráis áitiúil as cosaint an chomhshaol;
- Caighdeán an uisce óil phoiblí a rialáil agus údaruithe um sceitheadh fuíolluisce uirbigh a fhorfheidhmíú
- Caighdeán an uisce óil phoiblí agus phríobháidigh a mheasúnú agus tuairisciú air;
- Comhordú a dhéanamh ar líonra d'eagraíochtaí seirbhíse poiblí chun tacú le gníomhú i gcoinne coireachta comhshaol;
- An dlí a chur orthu siúd a bhriseann dlí an chomhshaol agus a dhéanann dochar don chomhshaol.

Bainistíocht Dramhaíola agus Ceimiceáin sa Chomhshaol

- Rialacháin dramhaíola a chur i bhfeidhm agus a fhorfheidhmíú lena n-áirítear saincheisteanna forfheidhmíthe náisiúnta;
- Staitisticí dramhaíola náisiúnta a ullmhú agus a fhoilsiú chomh maith leis an bPlean Náisiúnta um Bainistíocht Dramhaíola Guaisí;
- An Clár Náisiúnta um Chosc Dramhaíola a

fhorbairt agus a chur i bhfeidhm;

- Reachtaíocht ar rialú ceimiceán sa timpeallacht a chur i bhfeidhm agus tuairisciú ar an reachtaíocht sin.

Bainistíocht Uisce

- Plé le struchtúir náisiúnta agus réigiúnacha rialachais agus oibriúcháin chun an Chreat-treoir Uisce a chur i bhfeidhm;
- Monatóireacht, measúnú agus tuairisciú a dhéanamh ar chaighdeán aibhneacha, lochanna, uiscí idirchreasa agus cósta, uiscí snámha agus screamhuisce chomh maith le tomhas ar leibhéil uisce agus sreabhadh abhann.

Eolaíocht Aeráide & Athrú Aeráide

- Fardail agus réamh-mheastacháin a fhoilsiú um astaíochtaí gás ceaptha teasa na hÉireann;
- Rúnaíocht a chur ar fáil don Chomhairle Chomhairleach ar Athrú Aeráide agus tacaíocht a thabhairt don Idirphlé Náisiúnta ar Ghníomhú ar son na hAeráide;
- Tacú le gníomhaíochtaí forbartha Náisiúnta, AE agus NA um Eolaíocht agus Beartas Aeráide.

Monatóireacht & Measúnú ar an gComhshaol

- Córais náisiúnta um monatóireacht an chomhshaol a cheapadh agus a chur i bhfeidhm: teicneolaíocht, bainistíocht sonraí, anailís agus réamhaisnéisiú;
- Tuairiscí ar Staid Thimpeallacht na hÉireann agus ar Tháscairí a chur ar fáil;
- Monatóireacht a dhéanamh ar chaighdeán an aeir agus Treoir an AE i leith Aeir Ghlain don Eoraip a chur i bhfeidhm chomh maith leis an gCoinbhinsiún ar Aerthruailliú Fadraoin Trasteorann, agus an Treoir i leith na Teorann Náisiúnta Astaíochtaí;
- Maoirseacht a dhéanamh ar chur i bhfeidhm na Treorach i leith Torainn Timpeallachta;
- Measúnú a dhéanamh ar thionchar pleananna agus clár beartaithe ar chomhshaol na hÉireann.
- Taighde agus Forbairt Comhshaol
- Comhordú a dhéanamh ar ghníomhaíochtaí taighde comhshaol agus iad a mhaoiniú chun brú a aithint, bonn eolais a chur faoin mbeartas agus réitigh a chur ar fáil;
- Comhoibriú le gníomhaíocht náisiúnta agus AE um thaighde comhshaol.

Cosaint Raideolaíoch

- Monatóireacht a dhéanamh ar leibhéil radaíochta agus nochtadh an phobail do radaíocht ianúcháin agus do réimsí leictreamaighnéadacha a mheas;
- Cabhrú le pleananna náisiúnta a fhorbairt le haghaidh éigeandála ag eascairt as taismí núicléacha;
- Monatóireacht a dhéanamh ar fhorbairtí thar lear a bhaineann le saoráidí núicléacha agus leis an tsábháilteacht

raideolaíochta;

- Sainseirbhísí um chosaint ar an radaíocht a sholáthar, nó maoirsiú a dhéanamh ar sholáthar na seirbhísí sin.

Treoir, Ardú Feasachta agus Faisnéis Inrochtana

- Tuairisciú, comhairle agus treoir neamhspleách, fianaise-bhunaithe a chur ar fáil don Rialtas, don tionscal agus don phobal ar ábhair maidir le cosaint comhshaol agus raideolaíoch;
- An nasc idir sláinte agus folláine, an geilleagar agus timpeallacht ghlan a chur chun cinn;
- Feasacht comhshaol a chur chun cinn lena n-áirítear tacú le hiompraíocht um éifeachtúlacht acmhainní agus aistriú aeráide;
- Tástáil radóin a chur chun cinn i dtithe agus in ionaid oibre agus feabhsúchán a mholadh áit is gá.

Comhpháirtíocht agus líonrú

- Oibriú le gníomhaireachtaí idirnáisiúnta agus náisiúnta, údaráis réigiúnacha agus áitiúla, eagraíochtaí neamhrialtais, comhlachtaí ionadaíochta agus ranna rialtais chun cosaint comhshaol agus raideolaíoch a chur ar fáil, chomh maith le taighde, comhordú agus cinnteoireacht bunaithe ar an eolaíocht.

Bainistíocht agus struchtúr na Gníomhaireachta um Chaomhnú Comhshaol

Tá an GCC á bhainistiú ag Bord lánaimseartha, ar a bhfuil Ard-Stiúrthóir agus cúigear Stiúrthóir. Déantar an obair ar fud cúig cinn d'Oifigí:

- An Oifig um Inbhuanaitheacht i leith Cúrsaí Comhshaol
- An Oifig Forfheidhmíthe i leith Cúrsaí Comhshaol
- An Oifig um Fhianaise agus Measúnú
- An Oifig um Chosaint ar Radaíocht agus Monatóireacht Comhshaol
- An Oifig Cumarsáide agus Seirbhísí Corparáideacha

Tugann coistí comhairleacha cabhair don Ghníomhaireacht agus tagann siad le chéile go rialta le plé a dhéanamh ar ábhair inní agus le comhairle a chur ar an mBord.



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