Environmental Protection Agency
An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil

EPA Research Annual Highlights 2025






Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Highlights
Addressing Challenges
Investing in Research
Delivering Capacity
Accessible Research
Knowledge Transfer
About EPA Research

Foreword



I am pleased to introduce the first EPA Research Annual Highlights Report, a new annual publication showcasing the impact of EPA-funded research, including activities and achievements. Research plays a critical role in informing evidence-based policy. This report highlights the EPA's well-established position in addressing complex and emerging environmental challenges in Ireland through high-quality, policy-relevant research.

In 2025, EPA Research supported investment in research and partnerships, built research capacity, delivered new knowledge and evidence, while engaging with policymakers, researchers and other research users. The report illustrates how EPA Research supports evidence-informed decision-making by providing robust environmental evidence to those responsible for shaping policy, informing practice and addressing environmental challenges.

In 2025, the EPA invested €16.9 million in 57 new research projects across climate change, the green and circular economy, the natural environment, and environment and health. We published 34 research reports and supported 278 research roles, strengthening Ireland's environmental research capacity. This included 84 postgraduate and postdoctoral researchers, supporting the development of skills needed to protect our environment. Further statistics and case studies throughout the report highlight the impact of EPA-supported research.

Environmental research is inherently collaborative, and the achievements highlighted reflect the expertise and commitment of researchers, research organisations, government departments, public bodies, national and international partners, and the many stakeholders who contribute to the development, communication and use of research evidence.

As environmental challenges become increasingly complex and interconnected, the need for trusted, independent and policy-relevant research is more important now than ever. This first Annual Highlights Report demonstrates the contribution of EPA Research to building knowledge, informing decisions and supporting action to protect Ireland's environment.

Dr Eimear Cotter
Director General
Environmental Protection Agency

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Through investment in research, capacity and knowledge transfer, EPA Research strengthens the evidence and expertise needed to inform decisions, address environmental challenges and support the transition to a climate-resilient, sustainable and healthy society. Find new and existing research by using our online searchable database.

Investing in Research

€16.9 million of funding invested in

57 new projects

Delivering Capacity

278 research roles supported

122 roles directly funded by EPA Research

Women **50%** Men **50%**

Gender of lead researchers on new projects

Accessible Research

31 EPA Research Reports

3 Fast Track to Policy Reports

A Milestone **500th** Research Report

302 Other Outputs
e.g. toolkits, guidance, policy briefs & case studies

All Research **100%** Open and Accessible

Knowledge Transfer

154 Steering meetings with policy and technical experts

212 Focused meetings by researchers with key stakeholders

232 Conferences, events and workshop activities by researchers

Supporting **8** Researchers to contribute to IPCC Reports

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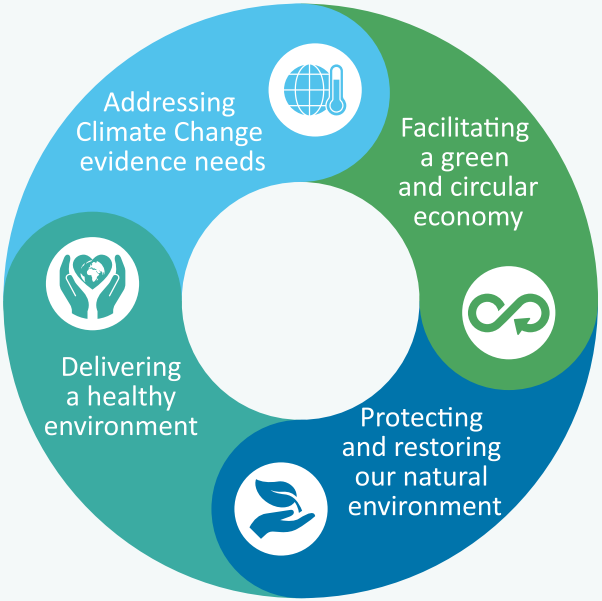
Environmental Research Hubs

EPA Research continues to address key environmental challenges through the four EPA Research 2030 Hubs:

- Addressing Climate Change Evidence Needs
- Facilitating a Green and Circular Economy
- Delivering a Healthy Environment
- Protecting and Restoring Our Natural Environment

The following pages showcase some of the highlights from our research hubs in 2025.

More information on all of the publications and projects for our research hubs can be found on our website.



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Addressing Climate Change Evidence Needs

Climate change research in the EPA Research Programme focuses on providing the evidence necessary to improve our knowledge systems and inform policy decisions that will advance our ambitions to be carbon neutral and resilient to climate disruption. In 2025, new projects are addressing areas such as indicators to measure policy actions and climate trends, sources and sinks of methane, and the probability of multi-driver floods along Ireland's coastline were awarded funding.

€6.2M
Funding Awarded to New Projects in 2025

18 New Research projects

2 New Fast-track to policy projects

9 Published EPA Research Reports

Reports published in 2025 provided insights for policy development and implementation and addressed priority areas such as:

- Strengthening cross-sectoral coordination, shift from planning to action, and embed participatory decision-making processes into adaptation planning (Research Report 500)
- Guidance for government on ensuring a fair, inclusive and equitable transition to a low-carbon economy (Evidence Synthesis Report 6)
- Data on Ireland's future climate and assessments of impacts across sectors, at regional and local levels (Research Report 471)

The WAS IT US case study provides an example of the research impact of this hub later in this report.

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Impact in Focus: WAS IT US Project

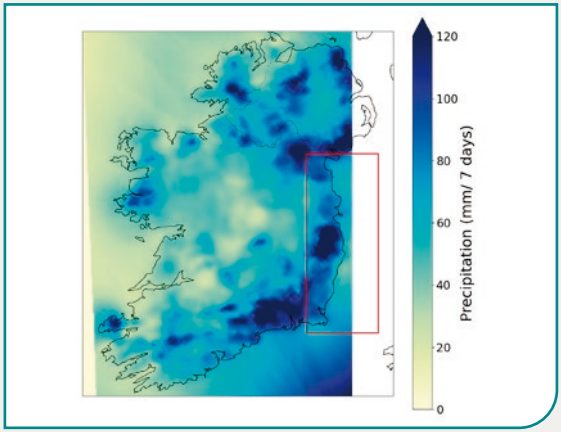
Connecting extreme weather events to human-induced climate change

Lead Researcher: Peter Thorne (Maynooth University)

Co-funded by Met Éireann

The WAS IT US project, co-funded with Met Éireann, is examining how human-induced climate change influences the likelihood and severity of extreme weather events using observations, climate models and statistical analysis. Since commencing in 2025, it has provided rapid attribution studies within days of significant weather events. For example, it showed that the 7-day accumulated rainfall event, that included Storm Chandra, which led to significant flooding in January 2026, was three times more likely to happen now in comparison to a pre-industrial climate.

Attribution studies are important because they connect climate change to its impacts and consequences and are relevant to inform policy as well as for wider society. The project aims to establish the basis for an operational event attribution service in Ireland as well as contributing to international efforts in this area.





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Facilitating a Green and Circular Economy

Research on the green and circular economy seeks to support mainstreaming sustainable management of natural resources and waste, and unlocking the potential of the circular economy and bioeconomy. In 2025, new projects addressing areas such as indicators for the bioeconomy and reusable business-to-business packaging waste and increasing the circularity of urban wastewater treatment plants were awarded funding.

€2.9M
Funding Awarded to New Projects in 2025





8 New Research projects



1 New Fast-track to policy project



2 International projects



5 Published EPA Research Reports

Reports published in 2025 provided insights on the circular and bio-economy and addressed priority areas such as:

- Addressing systemic barriers, fostering innovation and supporting SME and consumer engagement in the Circular Economy (Research Report 499)
- Barriers to the adoption of AI in the circular economy, including awareness, financial limitations, data governance, skills, and uptake (Research Report 492)
- Viability of circular ICT through 'servitisation' – a shift from product-based to service-based business models (Research Report 502)

The Bioeconomy Action Plan case study provides an example of the research impact of this hub later in this report.

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Delivering a Healthy Environment

A clean, vibrant and safe environment is a prerequisite for good health and wellbeing. EPA research in this area explores environmental degradation, pollution, as well as known and emerging substances of concern. In 2025, new projects addressing areas such as reducing the health impacts of radon, developing greener approaches for analytical chemistry in regulatory labs, and new ways of monitoring persistent organic pollutants were awarded funding.

€4.1M
Funding Awarded to New Projects in 2025



13 New Research projects

2 New Fast-track to policy projects

4 Published EPA Research Reports

Reports published in 2025 provided insights on a healthy environment and addressed priority areas such as:

- Scoping human biomonitoring in Ireland, including a priority chemical list, proposed governance, and recommendations for stakeholder engagement, data transparency, and funding (Research Report 491)
- Air quality impacts from ships and port activities in Ireland using continuous monitoring and advanced modelling (Research Report 495)
- Assessment of VTEC and Cryptosporidium in domestic groundwater supplies in Ireland, and guidance for future planning, remediation and mitigation of contamination in private wells (Research Report 477)

The researcher spotlight on Dr Marc Sturrock provides an example of the research impact of this hub later in this report.

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Protecting and Restoring Our Natural Environment

EPA-funded research on the natural environment focuses on cross-sectoral approaches to protecting and restoring our natural environment, regulation of emissions and activities, and the protection of our water, land and ecosystems. In 2025, new projects addressing areas such as streamlining environmental assessments, assessing the impact of landscape fragmentation on ecosystems and the reuse of wastewater for irrigation were awarded funding.

€3.7M
Funding Awarded to New Projects in 2025





13 New Research projects



16 Published EPA Research Reports

Reports published in 2025 provided insights on the natural environment and addressed priority areas such as:

- Optimal targeting and management of riparian margins in agricultural contexts, for effective management of water quality in rivers in Ireland (Research Report 485)
- Conservation of small water bodies and monitoring of favourable conservation conditions in oligotrophic lake habitats under the EU Habitats Directive (Research Report 484)
- Potential impacts of extreme weather events on Ireland's Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas (Research Report 501)

The Lake Blooms Fast-Track to Policy and Peat Hub Ireland case studies provide examples of the research impact of this hub later in this report.

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Impact in Focus: Coastal Lagoons - Ecology & Restoration (CLEAR) Project

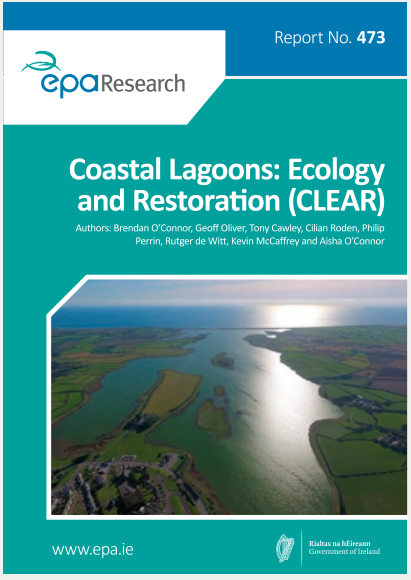
Driving Restoration of Lady's Island Lake

Lead Researcher: Brendan O'Connor (Aquafact)

Co-funded by National Parks and Wildlife Service

Published in January 2025, the CLEAR report on the ecological decline of Lady's Island Lake, Co. Wexford, generated national media coverage and was presented at a meeting of the Joint Oireachtas Committee on Climate, Environment and Energy. The research provided the first comprehensive scientific assessment of the lake's ecological condition, quantifying nutrient inputs from surrounding lands and identifying the reductions in nitrogen and phosphorus needed to support ecological recovery.

The Committee's recommendations, adopted in July 2025, drew directly on the research findings and helped shape a coordinated response by national and local stakeholders. Following publication of the report, Wexford County Council was appointed to lead a multi-agency restoration programme, supported by €700,000 in funding from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Implementation of mitigating measures is now being considered.



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Funding Overview – 2025

In 2025, the EPA awarded €16.9 million in funding for new research through EPA programmes and partnerships, as shown below. Since 2021, EPA Research 2030 has invested over €80 million across 307 projects. This investment is strengthening Ireland's environmental research capacity and generating the evidence needed to inform policy, support environmental decision-making, and drive the transition to a climate-resilient, sustainable and healthy society.



€16.9M
of funding invested in
57
new projects in 2025

EPA Research Calls

€14.1M
invested in new projects

24
Targeted Projects 2025 Research Call

12
Thematic Projects 2024 Research Call

National Partnerships

€2M
invested in new partnership projects

9
Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarships - fully funded with Research Ireland

4
Research Ireland Pathway Programme Projects - co-funded

International Collaboration

€532,000
2 new Horizon Europe Water4All projects

€278,000
5 new Fast-Track to Policy projects

€83,000
To support a co-ordinating lead author on IPCC Special Report on Climate and Cities

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National Partnerships

National partnerships play an important strategic role in EPA Research. They increase investment in policy-relevant environmental research and strengthen collaboration across the research and public sectors. In partnership with government departments and public sector organisations, priority research is co-funded where there is mutual benefit to the organisations involved.

Partners Supporting EPA Research

In 2025, four new research projects under the EPA Research Call were supported through co-funding from Met Éireann and the Office of Public Works, with a combined contribution of €230,000.

Since 2021, national partnerships have supported 57 research projects with a combined investment of €16.4 million, including more than €5.9 million contributed by nine national partners.

- Met Éireann
- Geological Survey Ireland
- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
- National Parks and Wildlife Service
- Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government
- Office of Public Works
- Office of the Planning Regulator
- Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
- Marine Institute

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP WITH MET ÉIREANN

Met Éireann engages in focused research in weather, climate and hydrology, with a particular emphasis on translating research outputs into operational use. It plays a crucial role in advancing scientific understanding of weather, climate, flooding and environmental systems in Ireland.

EPA Research and Met Éireann have a long-standing strategic research partnership that delivers important climate evidence. Since 2021, Met Éireann has provided €1.6 million in co-funding under EPA Research 2030, supporting 11 research projects with a total value of €4.4 million across topics including climate resilience and action, hydrology, storm extremes, flooding, and weather and climate attribution in Ireland.

In 2025, EPA Research and Met Éireann continued this important partnership, with Met Éireann investing €147,000 in new co-funding for three new research projects.

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Supporting our Research Partners

In addition to receiving funding support from national partners, EPA Research also supports programmes in other national funding organisations where it aligns with our strategic needs. Our partnerships allow us to participate in targeted programmes to build capacity in environmental research, which is a key objective of EPA Research 2030.

In 2025, EPA Research has supported:

- Nine Research Ireland Government of Ireland Postgraduate Scholarships (fully funded)
- Four Research Ireland Pathway Programme projects (co-funded), supporting outstanding early-career researchers to establish independent research careers and develop into future research leaders.

United Nations Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change

In 2025, EPA Research supported eight researchers to contribute as authors and reviewers to IPCC special reports, including support for a Chapter Scientist working with Prof. Peter Thorne (Maynooth University), Coordinating Lead Author of the IPCC Special Report on Climate Change and Cities. This support helps strengthen Irish contributions to international climate science assessments.

Since 2021
€8.1M supporting
5 national research partners
Delivering
58 projects

In 2025
€2M supporting
13 new projects with Research Ireland

8
Researchers from Ireland supported to contribute to IPCC Reports

EPA-ESRI Research Programme

Robust socio-economic research is essential to understand the social, economic, behavioural and governance dimensions of environmental challenges. The EPA–ESRI Research Programme continues a long-standing partnership that brings together a diverse set of research topics, with the current phase addressing issues including those related to climate change, land use, behavioural change and health impacts.



Prof. Anne Nolan
Principle Investigator, EPA-ESRI Research Programme

SPOTLIGHT ON ESRI RESEARCH



Dr. Shane Timmons
(ESRI)

Project: Pre-testing the design of effective eco-labels

Project Lead: Dr. Shane Timmons (Economic & Social Research Institute)

Eco-labels help consumers compare products based on their environmental impact and can encourage companies to adopt more sustainable choices. EPA-funded research by the ESRI's Behavioural Research Unit found that eco-labels can influence purchasing decisions, with colour-coded eco-score labels proving particularly effective. The research showed that consumers were more likely to choose sustainable clothing when environmental information was provided at the point of purchase. It also found that many consumers underestimate the environmental impacts of clothing production and overestimate the sustainability of familiar brands.

The findings provide evidence to support the development of clear, trustworthy and effective eco-labels that help consumers make more informed purchasing decisions. You can read more about this research and other projects supported through the partnership in the EPA Research Report 487 published in 2025.

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International Partnerships

International research partnerships provide Irish researchers with opportunities to collaborate with international partners, leverage additional research funding, and influence global and EU policies and plans. The EPA is a funding organisation in the Horizon Europe partnerships Water4All and Biodiversa+, where we support Irish researchers to participate in Joint Transnational Calls, helping to deliver on our statutory obligation to promote and facilitate participation by Irish researchers in EU funding programmes. The EPA is also a member of the Partnership for the Assessment of Risks from Chemicals (PARC) and the European Partnership for Radiation Protection Research (PianoForte).

Biodiversa+

The Biodiversa+ Call on ecosystem functioning and connectivity launched in September 2025, with €700,000 in funding available for Irish researchers including co-funding provided by the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The call involves 38 funding organisations, 30 countries and a total call budget of €40 million, supporting international research collaboration to strengthen biodiversity resilience and improve ecosystem connectivity. The outcomes of the call will be announced in 2026.

Water4All

EPA Research funded two Irish partners on two projects in 2025 through the Water4All Call on Water for the Circular Economy, covering topics on resource recovery and reuse of wastewater.

In September 2025, the new Water4All Call on Water and Health launched, with €700,000 in funding available for Irish researchers. The call involves 33 funding organisations, 30 countries and a total call budget of €28 million, supporting collaborative research to improve water management, protect public health and advance sustainable water systems.

Water4All
Water security for the planet

In 2025, EPA funding
€532,000
of **€2M+** in International Funding

Supporting **2** Irish project teams with Partners in **4** European countries

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Building Capacity & Expertise

A key objective of EPA Research is to strengthen Ireland's environmental and climate research capacity by developing the expertise, skills, knowledge networks and scientific infrastructure needed to address current and future environmental challenges.

EPA funding builds capacity across the research system by enabling new and existing researchers to participate in projects, through direct funding as well as indirect support. In 2025, new projects will involve 278 research staff, 122 of whom will be directly funded. Since 2021, EPA-funded projects have involved nearly 1,300 research roles, 624 of which were directly funded.

While most research is supported through Higher Education Institutions, EPA Research also invests in organisations across industry, the public sector, semi-state bodies and other sectors, helping to build and strengthen research capacity throughout Ireland.

Details of projects funded in 2025 under EPA Research Calls are available through the EPA's online Research Awards Database



EPA Research staff meeting researchers at the Environ Conference

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How EPA Funding Supports Research Capacity

Research Roles Supported

278 in 2025

1,314 since 2021

Funded Research Roles

122 new roles in 2025

637 roles since 2021

Postgraduate Researchers Funded

40 PhD and Masters in 2025

171 funded since 2021

Gender of Lead Researchers

Projects	Women	Men
2025	50%	50%
Since 2021	45%	55%

Projects Funded by Organisation Type in 2025

52 Higher Education Institutes

3 Industry

1 Public Sector

1 Sole Trader

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Building Capacity, Delivering Impact

RESEARCHER SPOTLIGHT

Strengthening Capability for Radiological Risk Assessment

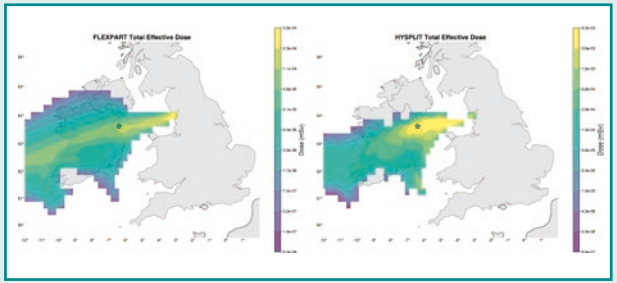
The Research Ireland Public Sector Fellowship Programme supports the secondment of researchers into government departments and agencies, enabling them to apply their expertise to projects that strengthen policy and service development.

Dr Marc Sturrock of RCSI was seconded to the EPA's Emergency Preparedness team 2024 to 2026, where he applied his expertise in biological modelling to atmospheric dispersion, machine learning and radiological risk assessment. His research will support Ireland's preparedness for potential nuclear and radiological incidents.

The fellowship enhanced the EPA's capability to assess complex radiological scenarios, provided valuable new tools as well as training for staff that will continue to support the work of the EPA.



Dr. Marc Sturrock
Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland



Comparison of two dispersion modelling tools showing the predicted total effective dose to the Irish population following a fictional accident at a UK nuclear power plant

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Bringing Research to Users

In EPA Research we aim to deliver timely, credible and actionable evidence that can be readily used by policymakers, regulators, businesses, communities and other stakeholders to make informed environmental decisions. Working closely with funded researchers, the programme translates research findings into a range of defined knowledge outputs that are delivered in accessible formats and made openly available to all end users.

Final project reports, peer-reviewed publications, guidance documents, toolkits, policy briefs, summary videos, one-page summaries and impact case studies all contribute to making new knowledge accessible and transferable to both technical and non-technical audiences.

In 2025, EPA Research projects delivered more than 430 such research outputs, including 34 published EPA Research reports. A significant milestone was reached in December 2025 with the publication of the 500th EPA Research Report, Operationalising Resilience in Climate Action.

34 New Research Publications

31 EPA Research Reports with simple summaries

3 Fast-track to Policy Reports

A Milestone **500th** Research Report

44 Journal Papers

302 Other Outputs e.g. toolkits, guidance, policy briefs & case studies

All Research **100%** Open and Accessible

25 Summary online videos by researchers

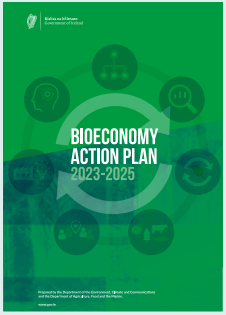
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IMPACT CASE STUDY SERIES

A Roadmap for Ireland's first Bioeconomy Action Plan

This was the first publication in a new Impact Case Study series, showcasing the impact from EPA-funded research. It highlights the contribution of EPA-funded research to Ireland's first National Bioeconomy Action Plan.

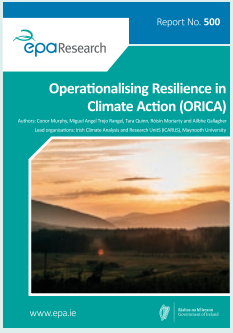
- Provided a roadmap for a sustainable and circular bioeconomy in Ireland out to 2050.
- Directly informed Ireland's first National Bioeconomy Action Plan (2023-2025).
- Highlighted the economic, environmental and social opportunities from new biobased innovations.



Research Report 500: Operationalising Resilience in Climate Action (ORICA)

Lead Author: Conor Murphy (Maynooth University)

Ireland faces growing climate risks, demanding a coordinated and resilient adaptation strategy. In this milestone 500th EPA Research Report, the ORICA project led by ICARUS in Maynooth University examined how resilience is defined and implemented across Irish climate policy.



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Fast-Track to Policy - Evidence Synthesis for Urgent Policy Needs

Environmental and climate policy is developing rapidly with new and important issues continually emerging. Fast-Track to Policy funding is used to deliver short-term, evidence-based research studies where an urgent policy need is demonstrated. Three reports were published in 2025 under the Fast-Track to Policy Programme, as well as five new projects commencing.

FAST–TRACK TO POLICY IN ACTION

Evidence to support early action to protect Ireland's lakes



Philip Taylor presenting his findings at the EPA Water Conference in 2025

Project: Investigating the Likelihood of a Lough Neagh Bloom Scenario Happening in Ireland
Lead Author: Philip Taylor, UK Centre for Ecology and Hydrology

In 2023, Lough Neagh experienced a major harmful algal bloom event driven by a combination of long-term nutrient pollution, rising temperatures, extreme rainfall and invasive zebra mussels. A Fast-Track to Policy study reviewed the factors behind the bloom and assessed the likelihood of similar events occurring in 35 nationally important lakes across Ireland. The findings showed that many Irish lakes already share the same underlying pressures.

By identifying lakes most at risk and highlighting how multiple pressures interact within lake ecosystems, the research has strengthened the evidence available to support targeted monitoring, nutrient management and early intervention.

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Demand and Relevance of EPA Research

In delivering 34 new research reports in 2025, more than 500 policy-focused research publications are now available under the EPA Research Programme, providing stakeholders and research users with a substantial body of environmental evidence and knowledge to support decision-making.

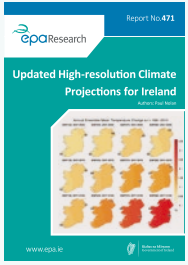
In 2025, more than 29,500 visits recorded across all publications, demonstrating the strong demand for EPA Research publications. The following reports attracted the highest levels of interest, reflecting not only the timeliness of recent publications but also the continued relevance of earlier research outputs.

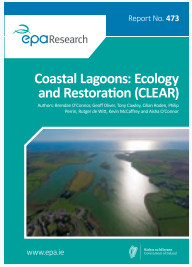
- Report 471: Updated High Resolution Climate Projections for Ireland (Paul Nolan, 2025 - ICHEC)
- Report 473: Coastal Lagoons Ecology and Restoration (CLEAR) (Brendan O'Connor et al., 2025 - Aquafact)
- Report 479: A Review of Circular Economy and Bioeconomy Governance in Ireland (Joanna O'Riordan et al., 2025 - IPA)
- Report 483: Just Resilience and Adaptation in Ireland (JustAdapt)
- Report 75: Sustainable Management of Peatlands in Ireland (Florence Renou-Wilson et. al., 2011- UCD)

A comprehensive list of EPA-funded research publications is available on the EPA's Research Publications webpage.

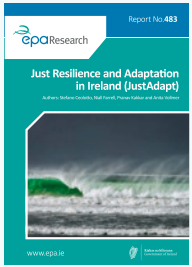
Demand for EPA Research Publications

+ 29,500
web views in 2025









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Connecting Researchers & Research Users

Research delivers the greatest value when it informs decision-making and leads to tangible action, and as such, we place a strong emphasis on knowledge transfer, research utilisation and policy uptake.

Our funded research projects are designed with impact and uptake in mind. During the development of research calls, policy experts contribute to call design and subsequent proposal evaluations, helping to select projects for funding that will have with the greatest potential to inform policy and have impact.

Knowledge transfer is a core component of all funded projects and is embedded within project deliverables. Steering committees, comprising national policy experts and international subject matter experts, are established to guide the development of high-quality, policy-relevant research outputs and to facilitate the effective transfer and uptake of research findings. In 2025, our funded projects undertook approximately 600 user engagement and knowledge transfer activities.

Engagement by Project Steering Committees

477 policy and technical experts

Providing knowledge inputs

Receiving knowledge outputs

162 organisations

53 National

109 International

154 meetings in 2025

716 meetings since 2021

Knowledge Transfer by Researchers

Focused meetings with key stakeholders

212 in 2025

759 since 2021

Conferences, events and workshops activities

232 in 2025

892 since 2021

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KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER IN ACTION: EPA–IMPACT Project

In support of EPA Research's ambition to proactively transfer knowledge, the EPA-IMPACT project (2021-2025), led by ERINN Innovation, piloted approaches to improve the translation of EPA-funded research into environmental policy and regulatory decision-making in Ireland. EPA-IMPACT reviewed over 200 completed EPA research projects to identify alignment with national environmental policy. Based on this, projects were prioritised and further engagement was undertaken with researchers to identify accessible and actionable knowledge outputs, such as data, models and toolkits that can be used beyond the project. Engagement with key stakeholders then helped to develop potential uses and pathways to impact.

Knowledge transfer activities undertaken as part of the EPA-IMPACT Project:

200+ EPA-funded research projects reviewed

53 national environmental policies assessed

90+ knowledge outputs captured

120+ policy and scientific experts engaged

35 pathways to impact with knowledge transfer plans

250+ researchers trained in knowledge transfer

The project highlighted the importance of embedding knowledge transfer throughout the research lifecycle. Key recommendations include strengthening capacity-building efforts, supporting structured engagement processes, fostering a stronger knowledge-sharing culture, and improving impact measurement. EPA Research is working to incorporate these learnings to enhance existing knowledge transfer processes.

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Impact in Focus: Peat Hub Ireland Project

Supporting Better Decisions for Ireland's Peatlands

Lead Author: Dr. Florence Renou-Wilson (University College Dublin)

Co-funded by Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

The Peat Hub Ireland project created a shared evidence base for peatland policy and management in Ireland. By bringing together research, policy and practitioner knowledge, it identified key research gaps and priority actions, and developed practical resources to support decision-making. The project's outputs have the potential to inform future National Parks and Wildlife Service peatlands policy.

Ireland's peatlands are vital for climate regulation, biodiversity, water quality and cultural heritage. To make existing knowledge more accessible, Peat Hub Ireland developed an open-access database, a shared glossary and a suite of factsheets to support policymakers, practitioners and communities. The project also identified 71 research gaps and 96 priority actions, highlighting the need for stronger coordination, continued investment in research and monitoring, and greater collaboration across government, academia and communities.



Peat-Hub-Ireland Glossary

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National Environmental Research Coordination

The EPA-led National Environmental Research Coordination Group (NERCG) provides a national forum that brings together research funders, government departments and state agencies to coordinate environmental research, identify policy and evidence needs, and strengthen knowledge transfer to maximise the impact of publicly funded research.



In 2025, the 40-member group met on two occasions to discuss shared priorities and areas of common interest, including statistical modelling and approaches to translating evidence into policy. Members also supported the publication of the Climate Research in Ireland 2024 report, which highlights climate-related research funded by member organisations during the year. Find out more about this and other data in the report on our website.



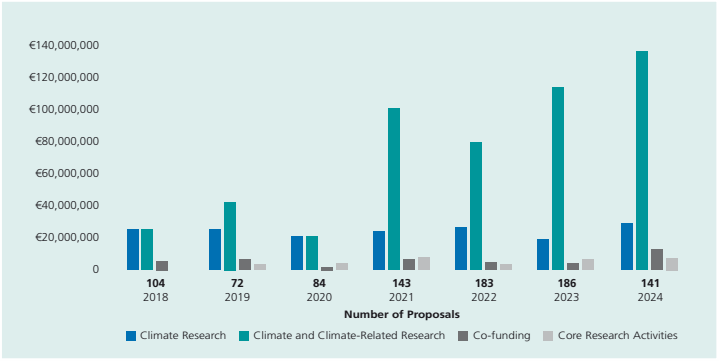


Figure 1 NERCG Funding Activities 2018-2024

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Communications & Engagement

Outreach and engagement activities enhance the visibility and impact of EPA-funded research by connecting researchers with research users, fostering collaboration, and supporting the uptake of research evidence. They also broaden engagement with students, future researchers, interest groups and the public, raising awareness of environmental research and its benefits.

In 2025, outreach activities included showcasing impactful EPA-funded research through exhibition stands and presentations at the Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition and the EPA Water, Circular Economy, and Environment, Health and Wellbeing conferences. We were also proud to sponsor and exhibit at the annual ESAI ENVIRON Conference.

Funded project teams also actively engaged with stakeholders by organising or contributing to 90 conferences, 73 events and 69 workshops.



EPA Research Staff at the Circular Economy Conference in 2025



Gavin Smith, Senior Manager, EPA Research and Professor Olaf Schmidt, UCD

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EPA Research Programme

Environmental research is a statutory function of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Through the EPA Research Programme, operating since 1994, we coordinate and fund independent scientific research that addresses environmental challenges, identifies emerging issues and knowledge gaps, informs the development and implementation of environmental policy and practice, and builds national research capacity.

Guided by the EPA Research 2030 Framework, the Programme aims to:

- Address existing and emerging environmental pressures and challenges;
- Deliver impactful, timely and policy-relevant research and evidence for policymakers and other end users to support informed decision-making;
- Strengthen Ireland's environmental research capacity;
- Support the EPA's assessment, knowledge and regulatory functions; and
- Promote open access to environmental knowledge, data and research outputs.

The EPA Research Programme is a Government of Ireland initiative funded by the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment and administered by the EPA.

Delivering EPA Research

EPA Research is structured around four thematic research hubs:

- Addressing Climate Change Evidence Needs
- Facilitating a Green and Circular Economy
- Delivering a Healthy Environment
- Protecting and Restoring Our Natural Environment

Research needs are identified through consultation with government departments, public bodies, researchers, industry and other stakeholders. Robust independent scientific evaluation and assessment of policy relevance ensure that funded projects deliver both scientific excellence and practical value. Steering committees comprising policy and technical experts support projects in delivering impactful research.

Research is funded through targeted and thematic projects, evidence-based synthesis studies, fellowships and postgraduate studies, as well as national and international partnerships.

We work with other research funders across the Irish research and innovation system to co-fund mutually beneficial research and to coordinate research activities. We are also engaged in a number of European research partnerships, which enables Irish researchers to contribute to and benefit from international research collaboration and funding.

Research and Policy

EPA Research Reports and other research outputs provide independent scientific evidence and insights to support environmental debate, policy development and decision-making. They are intended to inform policy and practice but do not constitute EPA positions.

Any opinions, findings or recommendations expressed in EPA Research Reports are those of the authors and do not reflect a position or recommendation of the EPA.

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Acknowledgements & Disclaimer

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This report is based on research data capture by the EPA Research Programme and reported by research project leads to the EPA between 2021 and 2025, the data within reflects information available at the time of publication. More recent data may have become available since the publication, in particular peer reviewed publications often experience a reporting time lag while publication is finalised.

The EPA Research Programme addresses the need for research in Ireland to inform policymakers and other stakeholders on a range of questions in relation to environmental protection. This publication showcases research activities, outputs and impacts supported by the EPA Research Programme and is intended as a contribution to the necessary debate on the protection of the environment. Any personal data included in this publication has been processed by the EPA in accordance with the EPA's Privacy policy.

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