

Environmental Protection Agency
An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil



EPA Research Programme 2021-2030 Steering Committee Terms of Reference

July 2025 – Version 1

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

EPA Research Programme 2021-2030

Steering Committee Terms of Reference

Description

For each EPA-funded research project (excluding scholarships and smaller non-competitive awards), a Steering Committee is set up to assist the EPA in the monitoring of their funded projects. Steering Committees have an advisory function.

Purpose & Mandate

Steering Committees provide advice to the research team and the EPA on the overall direction and approach of the project as well as providing an external view of the research.

The Steering Committees also advise on the contents and structure of the final report and other deliverables / outputs arising from the project.

Steering Committee members are asked to provide critical input based on their knowledge, experience, and/or expertise to maximise the impacts of the research project.

Specific responsibilities include:

1. Providing independent, timely expert advice and guidance;
2. Understanding key aims, objectives and desired outcomes of the project and ensuring that the integrity of the scope of the research remains;
3. Actively participating in meetings through attendance, discussion, and review of minutes, papers and other relevant materials;
4. Providing input / review in advance of meetings - if unable to attend a meeting in person;
5. Reviewing and providing timely feedback on key project outputs throughout the course of the project;
6. Reviewing and providing timely advice on the contents, structure and recommendations of final outputs;
7. Assisting the Project Team and the EPA in identifying synergies with complimentary research expertise/projects, as well as key stakeholders, data resources, etc. which may benefit the project, therefore assisting the EPA in its knowledge transfer activities.

Lifetime

The term of Membership to the Steering Committee will be for the full duration of project, inclusive of any requested project extensions, up to the time of sign-off of final report(s).

In the event that a Steering Committee member is no longer able to provide the services required as a member of a project Steering Committee, the Steering Committee member should immediately inform the EPA in writing. The EPA reserves the right to change the composition of the Steering Committee at any stage during its lifetime.

Steering Committee members not employed by public bodies in Ireland will be eligible to make a claim to the EPA for the reimbursement of time spent undertaking relevant duties of the Committee, as well as related vouched travel and subsistence expenses.

Membership

Membership of the Steering Committee is by invitation from the EPA Research Programme. The EPA Research Team is responsible for the selection of the Steering Committee members.

The Steering Committee comprises of:

- Individuals with appropriate expertise and experience, including international/national experts; and
- Representatives from national organisations, relevant Government Departments, Local Authorities and research bodies (such as Teagasc, Marine Institute, etc.).

Steering Committee members should not be in receipt of EPA-funding (Live awards). If their expertise is essential and critical to the success of the project, they may attend the meetings as an Observer, with the agreement of the Project Team and the EPA.

The EPA Research Team (EPA Research Project Manager) or External Project Manager, where relevant, chairs the Steering Committee meetings.

Selection Criteria

Steering Committee members not based in Ireland are selected based on their:

- Publications and involvement in relevant EU/international research projects for academics, experience in previous evaluation panels/committees at national and EU/international level; and/or
- Experience (knowledge transfer, etc.) for non-academic evaluators.

Steering Committee members based in Ireland are selected based on the relevance of their area of work and experience and include end-users of the research outputs.

Frequency of meetings

The Steering Committee are invited to attend the kick-off meeting for the project which formally initiates the project, reviews the project plan, discusses reporting requirements and introduces the Project Team, EPA Research Officer and other Steering Committee members. The project kick-off meeting is usually held within 2 months of project commencement.

Steering Committee meetings to review and advise on project progress are then normally held half-way through the project for Desk-Studies up to 12-month duration, and once per year for larger projects.

All meeting documentation will be made available to all attendees in advance of meetings via the EPA's Grant Management and Application portal (SmartSoimple).

Review of Outputs

Steering Committee members will be invited to submit their reviews/comments on draft outputs via SmartSimple, within 28 days of these outputs being made available for review.

Occasionally, additional independent reviewers may be requested to participate in the review of an output, based on the expertise required.

Acknowledgements

The contributions of the Steering Committee members (past and current) will be acknowledged in any EPA Research Reports arising from the research project. Steering Committee members who do not wish to be listed should inform the EPA in writing at least 28 days before the intended date of publication of the report, or upon resignation from a committee.

Confidentiality Statement and Conflict of Interest Declaration

Steering Committee members must agree to the EPA Privacy Policy¹ and Terms of Use of the EPA Website² and certify to a declaration of absence of conflict of interest as well as a declaration of confidentiality before getting access to the project documentation on SmartSimple.

Decision-Making Process

Not applicable (i.e. Steering Committees have an advisory function)

¹ <https://www.epa.ie/footer/privacypolicy/>

² <https://www.epa.ie/footer/termsofuse/>