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Environmental Protection Agency
An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil

Ireland's Environment An Integrated Assessment 2020

Presentation to Certificate in Environmental and Planning legislation

7th October 2021

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Environmental Protection Agency

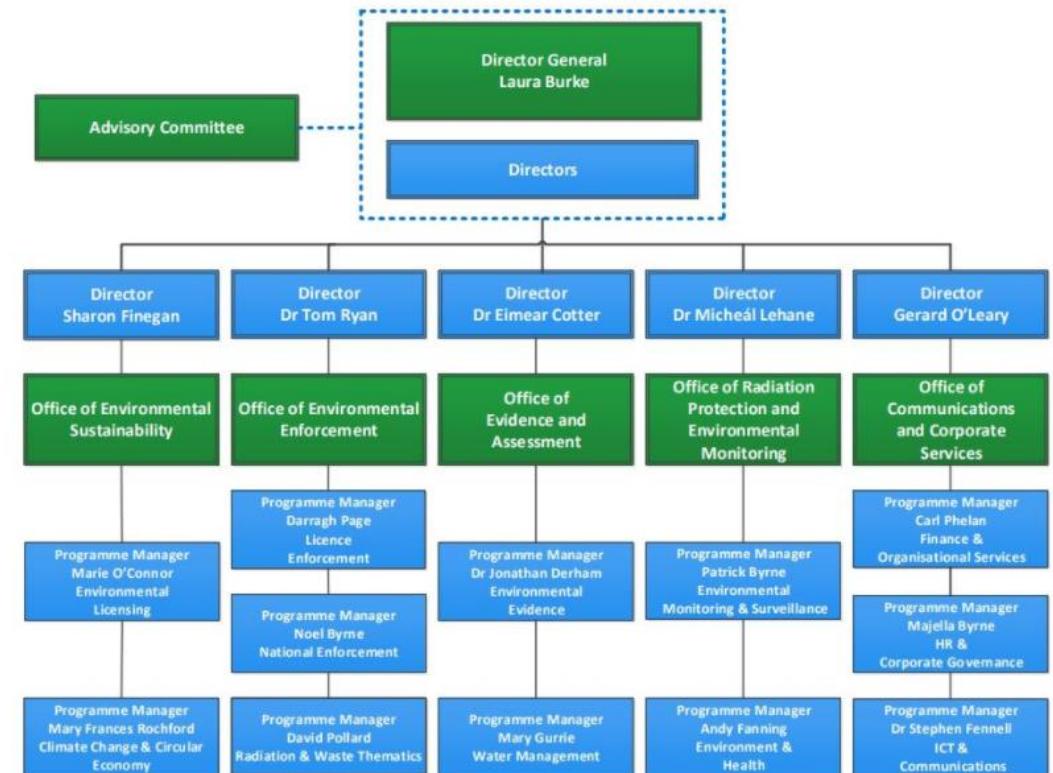


Environmental Protection Agency

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.



Ireland's Environment An Integrated Assessment 2020

Comprehensive, Evidence Based Assessments -
series of reports produced every 4 years.

Based on Extensive data from EPA & others.

Consider all key aspects of Ireland's
environment – climate change, water, marine,
air, biodiversity, land, noise etc.

Set in a context of economic sectors (incl.
agriculture, energy, transport, waste, industry)
and societal developments



The overall quality of Ireland’s environment is not what it should be, and the outlook is not optimistic unless we accelerate action

Date released: Nov 24 2020

- ▶ The outlook for Ireland’s environment is not optimistic unless we accelerate the implementation of solutions across all sectors and society.
- ▶ Climate and biodiversity are two of the key challenges we need to address.
- ▶ An investment in the environment is also an investment in our health.
- ▶ Environmental indicators are going in the wrong direction across many areas.
- ▶ A national Environmental Policy Position will provide clarity on our ambition and commitment to live up to the image of a Clean Green Island.

25 November 2020: Launching the EPA seventh State of the Environment Report today, Laura Burke EPA Director General, said,

“The overall quality of Ireland’s environment is not what it should be, and the outlook is not optimistic unless we accelerate the implementation of solutions across all sectors and society.”

We Need Vision and Implementation to Protect Ireland's Environment and our Health and Wellbeing



SOE 1: Environmental Policy Position

A national policy position for Ireland's environment.



SOE 2: Full Implementation

Full implementation of existing environmental legislation and a review of the governance around the coordination on environmental protection across public bodies.



SOE 3: Health and Wellbeing

Protecting the Environment is an Investment in Our Health and Wellbeing.

Step Up to Protect the Environment Around Us as it is Under Increasing Threat



SOE 4: Climate

Systemic change is required for Ireland to become the climate-neutral and climate-resilient society and economy that it aspires to be.



SOE 5: Air Quality

Adoption of measures to meet the World Health Organization air quality guideline values should be the target to aim for in the Clean Air Strategy.



SOE 6: Nature

Safeguard nature and wild places as a national priority and to leave a legacy for future generations.



SOE 7: Water Quality

Improve the water environment and tackle water pollution locally at a water catchment level.



SOE 8: Marine

Reduce the human-induced pressures on the marine environment.

System Change – Delivery on Sectoral and Societal Outcomes Needs to be Accelerated



SOE 9: Clean Energy

Ireland needs to move rapidly away from the extensive use of fossil fuels to the use of clean energy systems.



SOE 10: Environmentally-sustainable Agriculture

An agriculture and food sector that demonstrates validated performance around producing food with a low environmental footprint.



SOE 11: Water Services

Drinking water and wastewater infrastructure must meet the needs of our society.



SOE 12: Circular Economy

Move to a less wasteful and circular economy where the priority is waste prevention, reuse, repair and recycling.



SOE 13: Land Use

Promote integrated land-mapping approaches to support decision-making on sustainable land use.



Climate Change



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Air Quality



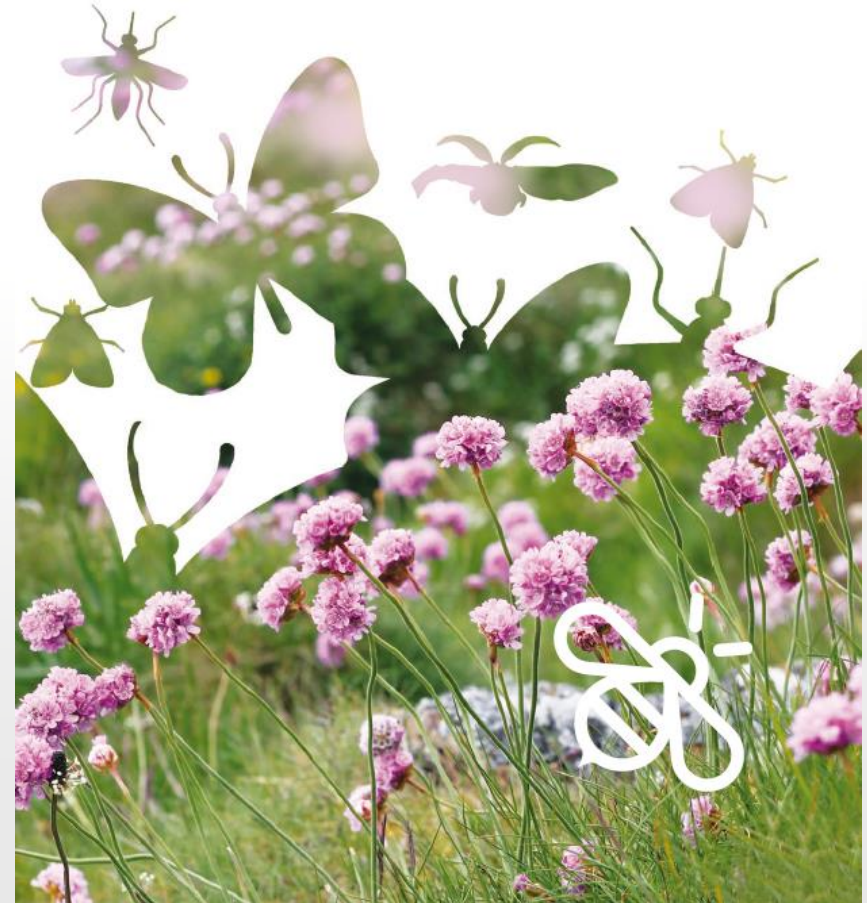


SOE 6: Nature

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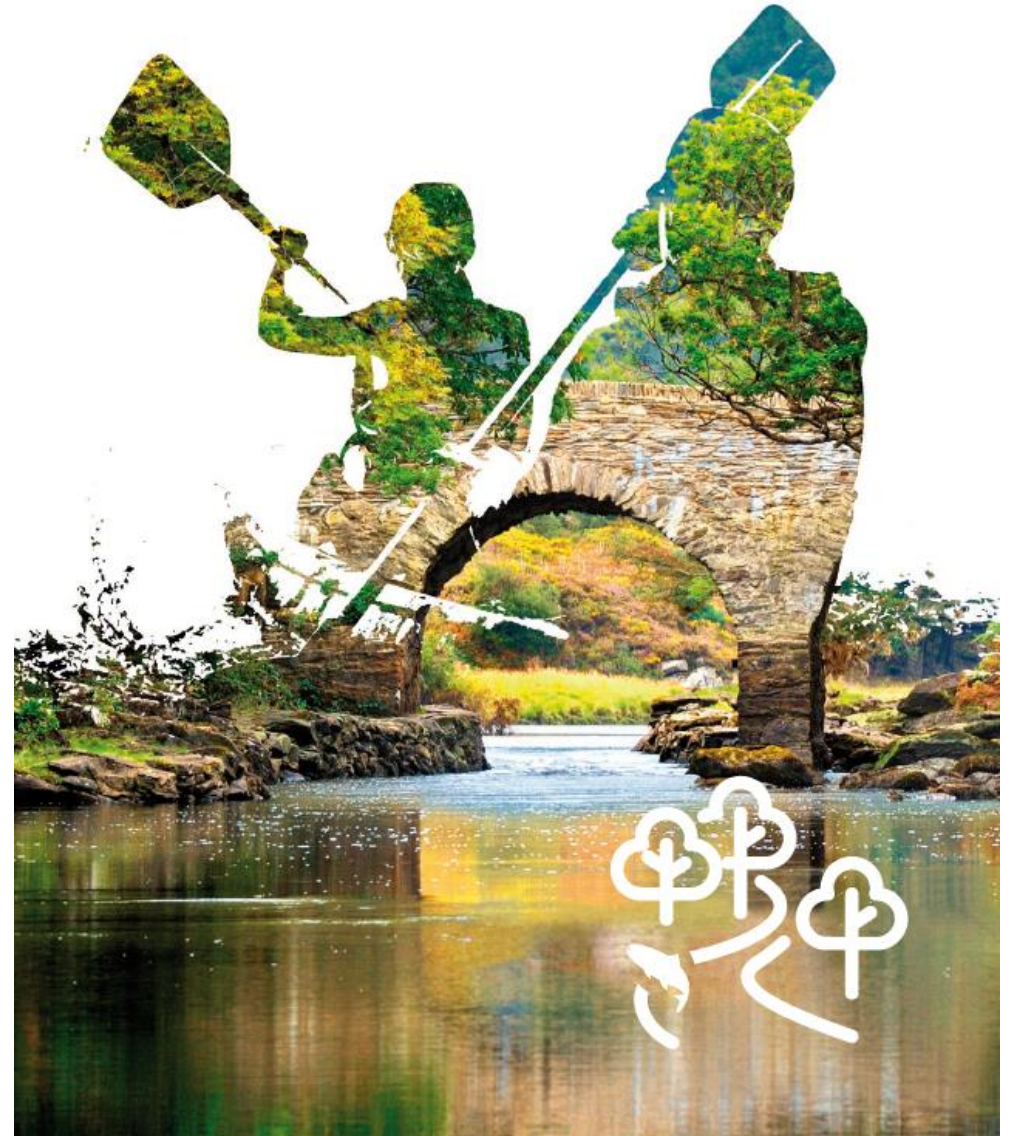


Nature





Water Quality



SOE 7: Water Quality

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The Marine Environment



SOE 8: Marine

Reduce the human-induced pressures on the marine environment.





SOE 12: Circular Economy

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Waste



Environmental Performance, Policy and Implementation



ENABLERS FOR IMPROVING IMPLEMENTATION



Governance

Strong implementation structures and governance arrangements are needed to ensure that legislation and policy is implemented and plans and programmes are delivered at the appropriate levels. There is a need for coordinated and integrated approaches as the delivery of many of the targets will require cross-sectoral action



Measurable targets

Implementation improves when plans/ programmes contain objectives and measures that are measurable, verifiable and reportable



Enforcement

Greater oversight and enforcement is needed to address a lack of implementation and poor compliance in a number of key environmental policy areas such as those as identified in EPA enforcement reports



Investment

Far greater investment is needed to fully implement all of Ireland's environmental legislation, policies, plans and programmes, including increased public funding for critical services, nature and community projects, monitoring, regulation and oversight and sustainable finance options to fund solutions in green technologies

ENABLERS FOR IMPROVING INTEGRATION



Overall vision

A long-term vision is needed for Ireland's environment and a coherent overarching and ambitious plan for achieving this



Collaboration

With many of the key environmental challenges requiring coordinated cross-sectoral action, greater collaboration is needed across government departments and public authorities



Development planning

The National Planning Framework and reformed governance structures should facilitate more coordinated long-term development planning. The new Office of the Planning Regulator will undertake independent reviews of all local authority statutory development plans to ensure consistency with relevant regional and national policies, including on climate action



Integrated land mapping

An integrated approach to land mapping at national and regional level would enable Ireland to plan, coordinate and deliver the various datasets and interventions needed for sustainable land use management and to tackle key environmental challenges



New data and evidence

High-quality, accessible and up-to-date environmental information is needed to inform better, more integrated plan-making action at different levels. This includes new decision support tools, mapping capabilities, etc.



Closing gaps

There are gaps in Ireland's environmental policy that need to be addressed. Notable examples include the National Clean Air Strategy, which is yet to be published, and the continuing lack of a national landscape characterisation map



Role of SEA

Promote and strengthen the role of SEA and improve the effectiveness of these assessments in influencing planning policy decisions at national, regional and local levels

Ireland's Environment

An Integrated Assessment 2020



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EPA Website Resources

<https://www.epa.ie/irelandsenvironment/stateoftheenvironmentreport/>



STATE OF ENVIRONMENT REPORT

Ireland's Environment - An Integrated Assessment 2020 report provides an assessment of the overall quality of Ireland's environment, the pressures being placed on it and the societal responses to current and emerging environmental issues.



DOWNLOAD FULL REPORT



VIEW EBOOK



VIEW KEY MESSAGES



PUBLICATIONS & REPORTS

AIR REPORTS

WATER REPORTS

WASTE REPORTS

CLIMATE CHANGE
REPORTS

RESEARCH
REPORTS

Actions for a Cleaner Greener Environment

Over the next decade, the challenges facing us are to:

- Halt any further deterioration in our natural environment while supporting our economy and accommodating our growing population.
- Accelerate action to decarbonise and green our economy and society, so achieving climate neutrality by 2050.
- Protect ourselves against the inevitable consequences of climate disruption.
- Start restoring the precious habitats and water bodies that we have lost.
- Leave space for nature as part of a new approach to biodiversity protection.
- Designate more of our marine area as protected areas.
- Protect air quality by switching to cleaner fuels and energy for transport and heating homes.
- Massively reduce our annual one million tonnes of food waste.
- Foster more sustainable agricultural production and land-use systems and management.
- Invest in essential water services infrastructure that protects drinking water supplies and eliminates discharges of raw sewage.
- Achieve greater efficiency in our production and consumption activities when using raw materials.
- Secure the improvements in our natural environment that we have made through regulation and investment.
- Integrate measures to protect against radon into our built environment.
- Leverage a growing public engagement with environmental issues.
- Act on the highlights identified in this report. Covering thematic, sectoral and integrated areas, these highlights are identified at the end of each chapter and they outline the scale of the challenges to be tackled. These key highlights are also collated in a table at the end of this report.