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Environmental Protection Agency
An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil

Challenges and Opportunities in Protecting Ireland's Environment

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Environment Ireland
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Vision

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



WHAT WE DO

Knowledge

Provide high quality, targeted and timely environmental data, assessments and evidence to inform decision making by citizens, businesses and Government.

Regulation

Implement effective regulation and environmental compliance systems to deliver good outcomes for people and the environment and target those who don't comply.

Advocacy

Work with others to advocate for a clean, healthy and well protected environment and sustainable environmental behaviour.

HOW WE DO IT

Monitoring & Assessment

Research & Expertise

Timely & Accessible Information

Licensing

Enforcement

Guidance

Partnering & Networking

Awareness Raising

Promoting Sustainable Behaviour



State of the Environment Report 2020



- Comprehensive four year assessment
- Overall quality of the environment
 - *Not what it should be*
 - *Outlook not optimistic*



Ireland's Environment

An Integrated Assessment 2020

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.

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A Decade for Action



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.

In summary ...



‘Now is the time for an overarching environmental policy position for Ireland - to be clear on our ambition to protect Ireland’s environment in the short, medium and long-term and on our commitment to live up to the image of a Clean Green Island.’





"The greatest threat
to our planet
is the belief that
someone else
will save it."

Robert Swan OBE



What can you do?

What can I do about Climate Change? Top 5 Things



1

Don't waste **ENERGY** – it helps the environment and saves money



- Be heat and energy savvy:
 - only heat rooms you use, choose energy efficient settings, lights and appliances - turn off when not in use
 - be efficient with hot water usage, service your boiler
 - draught proof windows and doors, swap for double/triple glazing.
- Consider a home retrofit.

Other benefits

- Warmer more comfortable home
- Healthier homes – less damp, better ventilation
- Lower fuel bills.

2

TRAVEL wisely – use exercise opportunities



- Reduce unnecessary trips.
- Use opportunities to walk or cycle.
- Avail of public transport or car-sharing. Invest in an electric vehicle or more fuel-efficient vehicle if an option.
- Consider flying less.

Other benefits

- Reduced congestion, noise and air pollution
- Active travel = good for your health
- Lower transport costs
- Good for local tourism.

3

Plan what you **EAT** – saves time and money



- Reduce food waste:
 - make a shopping list and stick to it
 - make the most of the food you buy and don't forget the leftovers
 - when plans change, freeze your food and use it another time.
- Make space in your diet for more plant-based foods.
- Buy local, in season foods to reduce food miles.

Other benefits

- Saves money
- Good for the local economy.

4

REDUCE, REUSE AND RECYCLE – more and better



- Repair your stuff, buy less, reduce consumption:
 - donate to charities, trade/ sell online
 - avoid single use products and packaging
 - use rechargeable batteries.
- Be smart about recycling:
 - segregate your waste into the correct bins
 - green bin items should be 'clean, dry & loose'
 - use your local recycling centre for batteries, paint, electrics, textiles and more.

Other benefits

- Reduces waste
- Less environmental litter
- Less unnecessary production
- Saves money.

5

Enhance **BIODIVERSITY** – think of your surroundings



- Plant native trees.
- Grow pollinator friendly plants.
- Rewild existing gardens and spaces.

Other benefits

- Good for the overall environment and native species
- Enjoyable and good for the mind.