

Ireland's Environment An Assessment



Environmental Protection Agency

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is a statutory body responsible for protecting the environment in Ireland. We regulate and police activities that might otherwise cause pollution. We ensure there is solid information on environmental trends so that necessary actions are taken. Our priorities are protecting the Irish environment and ensuring that development is sustainable.

The EPA is an independent public body established in July 1993 under the Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1992. Its sponsor in Government is the Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government.

OUR RESPONSIBILITIES

LICENSING

We license the following to ensure that their emissions do not endanger human health or harm the environment:

- waste facilities (e.g., landfills, incinerators, waste transfer stations);
- large scale industrial activities (e.g., pharmaceutical manufacturing, cement manufacturing, power plants);
- intensive agriculture;
- the contained use and controlled release of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs);
- large petrol storage facilities;
- waste water discharges.

NATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL ENFORCEMENT

- Conducting over 2,000 audits and inspections of EPA licensed facilities every year.
- Overseeing local authorities' environmental protection responsibilities in the areas of – air, noise, waste, waste-water and water quality.
- Working with local authorities and the Gardaí to stamp out illegal waste activity by co-ordinating a national enforcement network, targeting offenders, conducting investigations and overseeing remediation.
- Prosecuting those who flout environmental law and damage the environment as a result of their actions.

MONITORING, ANALYSING AND REPORTING ON THE ENVIRONMENT

- Monitoring air quality and the quality of rivers, lakes, tidal waters and ground waters; measuring water levels and river flows.
- Independent reporting to inform decision making by national and local government.

REGULATING IRELAND'S GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS

- Quantifying Ireland's emissions of greenhouse gases in the context of our Kyoto commitments.
- Implementing the Emissions Trading Directive, involving over 100 companies who are major generators of carbon dioxide in Ireland.

ENVIRONMENTAL RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

- Co-ordinating research on environmental issues (including air and water quality, climate change, biodiversity, environmental technologies).

STRATEGIC ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

- Assessing the impact of plans and programmes on the Irish environment (such as waste management and development plans).

ENVIRONMENTAL PLANNING, EDUCATION AND GUIDANCE

- Providing guidance to the public and to industry on various environmental topics (including licence applications, waste prevention and environmental regulations).
- Generating greater environmental awareness (through environmental television programmes and primary and secondary schools' resource packs).

PROACTIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT

- Promoting waste prevention and minimisation projects through the co-ordination of the National Waste Prevention Programme, including input into the implementation of Producer Responsibility Initiatives.
- Enforcing Regulations such as Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment (WEEE) and Restriction of Hazardous Substances (RoHS) and substances that deplete the ozone layer.
- Developing a National Hazardous Waste Management Plan to prevent and manage hazardous waste.

MANAGEMENT AND STRUCTURE OF THE EPA

The organisation is managed by a full time Board, consisting of a Director General and four Directors.

The work of the EPA is carried out across four offices:

- Office of Climate, Licensing and Resource Use
- Office of Environmental Enforcement
- Office of Environmental Assessment
- Office of Communications and Corporate Services

The EPA is assisted by an Advisory Committee of twelve members who meet several times a year to discuss issues of concern and offer advice to the Board.



Ireland's Environment 2012

- An Assessment

Editors

Mícheál Lehane and Barbara O'Leary

ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil
PO Box 3000, Johnstown Castle, Co. Wexford, Ireland

Telephone: +353 53 916 0600

Fax: +353 53 916 0699

Email: info@epa.ie

Website: www.epa.ie

LoCall 1890 33 55 99



June 2012
ISBN 978-1-84095-439-5
€20

© Environmental Protection Agency 2012

Although every effort has been made to ensure the accuracy of the material contained in this publication, complete accuracy cannot be guaranteed. Neither the Environmental Protection Agency nor the author(s) accepts any responsibility whatsoever for loss or damage occasioned, or claimed to have been occasioned, in part or in full as a consequence of any person acting or refraining from acting, as a result of a matter contained in this publication. All or part of this publication may be reproduced without further permission, provided the source is acknowledged.

IRELAND'S ENVIRONMENT 2012 - AN ASSESSMENT

Published by
Environmental Protection Agency, Ireland

Design
Clever Cat Design

Foreword

This fifth EPA State of Environment report provides an integrated 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. The EPA State of Environment reports are important milestones for Ireland, as they provide a snapshot of the environment at a particular point, as well as showing trends and changes in the environment over time. The reports also assess progress in meeting the main environmental challenges facing the country, evaluate how national policies are being implemented and if they are operating and delivering as intended. The evidence base and assessments provided by State of Environment reports facilitate policy makers and decision-makers across all sectors of the economy to review developments in their respective areas, so that changes to existing policies can be made if necessary, or new policies and approaches brought forward which take into account the main environmental priorities.

The overall finding of this report is that Ireland's environment is in a generally good condition overall. However, there is no room for complacency and the country faces tough challenges in the coming years to meet EU commitments and targets across a range of areas including water, waste, air quality and greenhouse gases to name but a few. The current recession has meant that levels of emissions and waste generation rates have paused and in some cases reduced. However, we must not assume that recession-induced reductions mean that environmental pressures are being managed in a sustainable way. We need to learn from the mistakes of the past and ensure that we do not repeat them in the future. Ultimately, Ireland needs to ensure that its economic renewal and recovery is based strongly on the principles of sustainable development, and that we decouple future economic growth from environmental pressures. In this context, the report has identified four key environmental challenges for Ireland: Valuing and protecting our natural environment; Building a resource-efficient, low-carbon economy; Implementing environmental legislation; and Putting the environment at the centre of our decision-making.

This current State of Environment report is being published at a time when the country is facing severe economic challenges and where the public finances are under considerable pressure. At times such as this, it may be tempting to view the protection and management of our environment as a luxury. However, it should be remembered that not only does Ireland's natural environment have an intrinsic value in its own right; it is also a key strategic asset for the country. For example, our valuable and abundant water resources are predicted to become of increasing strategic importance to the Irish economy and

have the capacity to position Ireland well in terms of competitiveness. Similarly, Ireland's biodiversity is valued in excess of €2.6 billion per annum, from which the economy and society derive a variety of services including food production, and recreation. In addition, a healthy, protected and well managed environment underpins the development of our key economic sectors, such as tourism and agri-food industry which thrive on the clean and green image of Ireland.

Meeting the challenges that we have identified is important to preserve and protect this valuable national asset. By doing so, we can ensure that the natural resources and environmental conditions essential to the economic and social well-being of Ireland's future generations are protected and are not degraded or exhausted. This is fundamental to sustainable development to which we, as a country, should aspire. However, addressing the challenges will not be easy and nor can all of them be resolved in the short or even medium term. It will require concerted and determined action across a range of Government Departments, State agencies and local authorities, working together to tackle these complex, issues and implement the right policies and solutions. Such an approach is all the more pertinent now, given the pressure on resources across the public and civil service.

The responsibility of protecting and managing Ireland's environment lies not only with Government Departments and agencies; it is a shared responsibility involving all citizens of Ireland. Businesses, industry, farmers, and members of the public all have a role to play. We need to mobilise each of the more than four and a half million people living in Ireland and ensure that the environment is placed at the heart of our decisions and actions.

Clear, accurate and timely information is vital in raising awareness among the public and among key policy and decision makers. This report is an essential part of this process. The EPA has also developed an online environmental indicator-based resource to accompany this report to provide regularly updated information on key environmental indicators. This resource is available on the EPA's website at www.epa.ie/irelandsenvironment

Finally, a report of this nature would not be possible without the information provided through the expertise of the many people involved at local and national levels in the monitoring, research and assessment of Ireland's environment. I would like to express my thanks and appreciation to all those concerned.

Laura Burke *Director General*
Wexford, June 2012

Acknowledgements

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) wishes to express its appreciation to the following for their assistance in various ways towards the preparation of this report.

- Botanic Gardens
- Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Department of the Arts, Heritage and Gaeltacht
- Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources
- Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government
- Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport
- Economic and Social Research Institute
- Forest Service, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
- Health Service Executive
- Marine Institute
- National Parks and Wildlife Service
- National Biodiversity Data Centre
- National Roads Authority
- Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland
- Teagasc

Special thanks are due to the following who provided material for the report or commented on specific aspects:

- Dr Olivia Crowe, Birdwatch Ireland
- Dr Matthew Jebb, Botanic Gardens
- Ms Nuala Bannon, Mr Darren Byrne, Mr Pat Duggan, Mr Kevin Greene, Mr Gary McGuinn, Mr John O'Neill, Ms Fiona Quinn, Mr Micheal Young, Mr David Walsh, Department of the Environment, Community and Local Government
- Dr Deirdre Lynn, Dr Ferdia Marnell, Dr Ciaran O'Keefe, National Parks and Wildlife Service, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht
- Professor Micheal Depledge, Department of Environment and Human Health, Peninsula College of Medicine and Dentistry, Universities of Exeter and Plymouth
- Dr John FitzGerald, Dr Sean Lyons, Dr Edgar Morgenroth, Economic and Social Research Institute
- Mr Liam Cashman, Mr Micheal Ó Brian, European Commission
- Ms Cliona O'Brien, Heritage Council
- Ms Breda Naddy, Health Research Board
- Dr Una Fallon, Dr Tessa Grealley, Dr Ina Kelly, Dr Patricia McDonald, Dr Mary O'Mahony, Health Service Executive
- Mr John Evans, Marine Institute
- Dr Liam Lysaght, Dr Eugenie Regan, National Biodiversity Data Centre
- Mr David Dawson, Mr David Fenton, Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland
- Mr David O'Brien, South Dublin County Council
- Dr John Finn, Dr Rogier Schulte, Teagasc
- Dr Julian Aherne, Trent University, Ontario, Canada
- Dr Padraic Larkin, Former EPA Director

A number of EPA staff provided input to specific aspects of the report: Catherine Bradley, Regina Campbell, Colman Concannon, Niamh Connolly, Eimear Cotter, Matthew Craig, Karen Creed, John Curtis, Donal Daly, David Dodd, Kevin Delaney, Brian Donlon, Paul Duffy, Kieran Fahey, Andy Fanning, David Flynn, Nigel Hayes, Sandra Kavanagh, Odile Le Bolloch, Aoife Loughnane, John Lucey, Kevin Lydon, Ian Marnane, Patricia McCreesh, Tom McLoughlin, Sorcha Ní Longphuirt, Caoimhin Nolan, Kirsty Nolan, Shane O'Boyle, Marie O'Connor, Cian O'Mahony, Tadhg O'Mahony, Pol Ó Seasnáin, Brian Quirke, Leo Sweeney, Deirdre Tierney, Alice Wemaere, Suzanne Wylde.

The report was prepared under the direction of Mr Micheál Ó Cinnéide, Director, Office of Environmental Assessment. Advice and comment on the report were also received from the other Directors of the Agency: Ms Laura Burke (Director General), Dr Matt Crowe, Mr Dara Lynott and former Director General Dr Mary Kelly.

The principal EPA authors of individual chapters were as follows:

- Chapter 1 Helen Bruen and Mícheál Lehane
- Chapter 2 Ken Macken and Maria Martin
- Chapter 3 Mícheál O'Dwyer and Paul Duffy
- Chapter 4 Martin McGarrigle
- Chapter 5 Jonathan Derham and Gerry Byrne
- Chapter 6 Conor Clenaghan and Wayne Trodd
- Chapter 7 Phillip O'Brien and Barbara O'Leary
- Chapter 8 Mícheál Lehane
- Chapter 9 Shane Colgan and Barbara O'Leary
- Chapter 10 Shane Colgan, Mícheál Lehane and Barbara O'Leary

The report was edited by Dr Mícheál Lehane and Ms Barbara O'Leary.

Production of the report was managed by Deirdre Murphy, Helen Bruen, Annmarie Tuohy, Eileen Monahan and Sarah Culleton.

Maps in this report were produced by Aisling McElwain and provided by other sources as acknowledged through the report.

EPA and former EPA personnel who provided photographs were: Dermot Burke, Regina Campbell, Ray Cullinane, Sarah Culleton, Jonathan Derham, David Dodd, John Doheny, Kieran Fahey, Gary Free, Donal Grant, Ger Hussey, Martin Kerr, Ruth Little, John Lucey, Cormac MacGearailt, Ian Marnane, Martin McGarrigle, George McHugh, Aidan O'Hanlon, Niamh O'Neill, Mary Sheehan, Larry Stapleton, Wayne Trodd, Robert Wilkes.

Other photographs were provided by:

Botanic Gardens
Golden Eagle Trust
Office of Public Works
and
Mary Falvey
Hannah Glynn
Inez Mahony

Contents

Executive Summary	x	Tourism and Hospitality	13	Emissions Trading Scheme	25
		Energy	14	Renewable Energy	26
Section I		Public Perceptions and the Environment	15	Carbon Tax	27
Introduction		Conclusion and Future Challenges	15	Land Use and Forestry	27
Chapter 1		References	16	Climate Change Impacts and Adaption	28
Introduction and Socio-Economic Context	3			Climate-Change Research	28
Introduction	4	Section II		Outlook	29
Environmental Policy Context	5	Thematic Assessments		Conclusion and Future Challenges	31
Climate Change	6	Chapter 2		References	31
Air Quality	6	Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change	21	Chapter 3	
Waste	6	Introduction	22	Air Quality and Transboundary Air Emissions	33
Water	7	The Current Situation	22	Introduction	34
Biodiversity	7	Drivers and Pressures	23	The Current Situation	35
Sustainable Development	7	Ireland's GHG Emissions and the Kyoto Protocol	23	Air Quality – Main Pollutants	35
Environmental Goals and Challenges	7				
Socio-economic Context	8				

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码

<https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?re>