



An Roinn Comhshaoil,
Aeráide agus Cumarsáide
Department of the Environment,
Climate and Communications

The Department of Environment, Climate and Communications Research and Innovation Survey — Public Consultation

Fields marked with * are mandatory.



**An Roinn Comhshaoil,
Aeráide agus Cumarsáide**
Department of the Environment,
Climate and Communications

Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications Research and Innovation Strategy — Public Consultation

The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications has set out a vision of a climate neutral, sustainable, and digitally connected Ireland. This will involve leading ambitious climate and environment action across Government and society together with a fundamental shift in sustainable resource use and a transformation of our energy system while at the same time delivering world-class connectivity and cyber security. The Department has identified research and innovation as important enablers of its goals, and is one of a group of five Government Departments which invest significantly in research and innovation. Impact 2030, the national research and innovation strategy, outlines a strong role for the Department in delivering on Strategic Objectives in Climate, Environment and Sustainability (including Energy), and in Digital Transformation (including cyber security). During 2023, the Department is now developing its inaugural Research and Innovation Strategy.

Please complete this survey by 5:30 pm on Friday 11th August.

Note 1: There are no mandatory consultation questions. Fields can be left blank if you do not wish to answer a particular question.

Note 2: Responses to each of the consultation questions is limited to 2000 characters.

Note 3: Copying and pasting text into the boxes directly from Microsoft Word may cause user experience issues. To avoid this, it is recommended to 'paste as plain text'.

Note 4: You can download a PDF copy of your completed survey after you have submitted it.

* Please enter your name

Text of 5 to 200 characters will be accepted

* Please enter your email address

* Please enter your occupation

If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please enter the name of that organisation.

200 character(s) maximum

Job Title (if applicable)

What gaps do you see in the Department's current research and innovation activities? How should we address those gaps in the Department Research and Innovation Strategy?

2000 character(s) maximum

SFI welcomes the opportunity to input on DECC's Research and Innovation Strategy. Many of these suggestions are opportunities and challenges of which DECC (Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications) is already aware. The development of the CAP24 R & I chapter provides a collective Cross-Government Research and Innovation space which is providing good insights and breakthroughs discussions which can inform future direction as well as this consultation.

SFI has identified a number of gaps for investment in greenhouse gas / climate and climate related research, called out in SFI's submission on the long-term strategy on greenhouse gases (available on request) which is an avenue for DECC to consider.

The DFHERIS Creating Our Future public consultation, administered by SFI and curated by an Research Expert group provides insights into the citizen agenda which could inform DECC's gap analysis.

There is a need for comprehensive mapping of the current research and innovation initiatives underway and to understand where the strengths and weaknesses are in the system, as well as gaps. This would require the adoption and rollout of the new national research classification system, introduction of a national research information system (NRIS), APIs into existing Government departments and their agencies systems and analytic skills to map insights.

Moving to an NRIS would streamline reporting across 40 set of stakeholders and would lead to a reduced administration burden to all involved and create a better environment for real time data decision making on investment and opportunities. A 1-2 year investment to get this up and running would makes sense for the 27 odd years of reporting which will be required.

What actions can the Department take to identify future trends in the areas under our remit?

2000 character(s) maximum

The recent submissions on Long Term Strategy on GHG (Greenhouse Gas reduction) provides an up-to date and fertile ground to look areas of opportunities identified by each government department and their agencies. A distillation of these inputs would provide a good start to the process. For example, SFI identified some novel approaches in the use of the Public Service Fellowship who could work cross government on big challenges or gaps in the system.

Are there specific thematic areas relevant to the Department's remit which you would like to see more research and innovation activity in? How can this be achieved?

2000 character(s) maximum

No additional specific thematic areas from SFI's perspective. There is still a need for transformative approaches which are multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary in CAP research initiatives, and which are also multinational and multifaceted. A COVID type multilateral cross-government platform for allowing breakthrough ideas to emerge and reduce replication. Capacity building and talent management of researchers in this area is also recommended.

Have you views on the impact of disruptive technologies such as AI, Quantum and 6G as part of the digital transformation agenda and the implications of these technologies for the Department?

2000 character(s) maximum

SFI's view is that all these technologies will feature in creating an infrastructure for real-time data and scenario-based analysis for measurement of anticipatory actions and climate mitigation plans steps involving large volumes of data. However, these infrastructures still need human governance and oversight to ensure high data quality, and that pragmatic trusted data action and interpretation methodologies are being used.

How can the Department better communicate its research and innovation needs?

2000 character(s) maximum

SFI recommends continue growth in cohesion in the national Research and Innovation system. SFI welcomes continued bilateral discussion with the DECC research team and have offered provide a co-ordination role on the management and oversight of research needs. There are also other avenues of collaboration as part of Impact 2030, Ireland national Research and Innovation Strategy i.e., the DFHERIS Evidence for Policy unit as well as the Civil Service Research Network to communicate research needs.

How can the Department work more effectively to source evidence from the national research and innovation community to support its work in policy development, policy implementation, and the uptake of new technologies?

2000 character(s) maximum

As outlined in response to Q1, effective policy development requires an effective store (database) of intelligence and knowledge across the R & I system. There is a need for better ledger management of GHG emission at the national level and the associated carrot and stick approaches to allow for effective policy implementation. The adoption and uptake of new technologies would ideally have a bottom up driven approach by consumers of technology, as well as top-down approaches. This requires quite inverse thinking and the use of distributed systems and pushing the activity to the end users and allowing for the intelligence and data capture in the middle.

As already mentioned, the Department should continue to work closely with DFHERIS's Evidence for Policy Unit, not only to progress the Department's priorities as specified in question 6, but also to share the Department's good practice with other Departments (via the Evidence for Policy Unit).

How can the Department engage more effectively with all stakeholders in the national research and innovation system? If you are responding on behalf of an organisation, please state how the Department could more effectively engage with your organisation.

2000 character(s) maximum

SFI and DECC hold an ongoing consultative and collaborative relationship. As mentioned in point 5 SFI can provide a service to DECC to coordinate its research and innovation requirement and provides the value add of having data and understanding of the current ecosystem. The cross- government approach whereby we collectively pull together priorities rather than individually would streamline the process on budget allocations and sign off.

Should the Department seek to grow its capacity to carry out in-house research? If yes, how can this be achieved?

2000 character(s) maximum

The SFI Public Sector Fellowship provides an opportunity to start experimenting with in-house research capacity and as mentioned in point 5 and 7 there are other options on outsourcing also.

Are there examples internationally of Government strategies on research and innovation in climate, communications / digital, circular economy, cyber security, energy or environment that we should examine? If so, can you provide details?

2000 character(s) maximum

Denmark's green research strategy
Sweden's Research Council for Sustainable Development: Strategic Agenda for the National Research Programme on Climate: Knowledge for a climate transition
Norway's portfolio plan for climate and polar research (in Norwegian)

Are there any other matters you wish to raise in relation to the development of the research and innovation strategy?

2000 character(s) maximum

Investment in the national R & I system has not grown proportionately to the growing climate crisis. A transformative R & I fund needs to be explored to ensure that the nation's CAP plan has the required share of the continuum of activities as part of the €120bn investment needed between now and 2050.

Contact

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