



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

Overall I see a deficit in a strategic national ambition in relation to upgrading ALL of Ireland's infrastructure for future progress, peace, prosperity and quality of life for all our citizens and for those we welcome to Ireland, either as tourists or newcomers.

Here is what I have in mind as a environmentally sound infrastructural plan for Ireland:

(a) We need a new electric train network across the entire country that fully replaces the existing old rail network. This will not only shorten the time between destinations for all commuters across the country but will help ease the housing crisis at one level, tick the box in relation to green energies and have social and economic benefits.

(b) We need an innovative way of looking at housing and the right to a home as a national strategic green plan - with multiple approaches, such as apartments, duplexes, traditional houses and other types of dwellings but all within and supported by green areas for leisure activities [walks, etc.]. This new and older housing stock to be retrofitted using a multiplicity of government led approaches, including grant assistance. For example, Limerick city appears to have a good number of four story Georgian houses that look empty. Could there be a new type of grant for modernizing these buildings?

(c) We need to see a Strategic Action Plan going alongside all policy documents in relation to suggested change. Otherwise we continue to run the risk of having great policy plans but little or no funded implementation policies. For example, to support people moving to electric cars they need to feel confident that they will not run out of power points on their journeys.

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

2000 character(s) maximum

The Department needs to start to listen to the people of Ireland and hold back from always looking for evidence and seeking the advice of experts. While we need the advice of experts, and we need to reason with evidence we are also missing so much if we confine ourselves to just that. We will have lost a moral and ethical framework for our actions at national level if we fail to consider opinions from ordinary people and from philosophy and theology. We claim to live in a democracy. This means that the Department should actively seek the opinions of all people, through a number of national consultation public fora around the country. If this is done as a genuine listening exercise it will bring now only some innovative thinking but will ensure that changes made have national support.

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

Thematic areas that come to mind are:

A new national electric train network.

New green and sustainable science laboratories in each school and college.

Research on Water, preserving and conserving rainwater in particular for a number of different national purposes including supporting areas of drought in the global world.

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

These new disrupting technologies are here to stay, we need to lean into the change, and modulate it and challenge it ethically. The question is what do we need to do in Ireland so that we address their consequences and that we can hold them back ethically:

We need a strategic national plan to examine their consequences, in relation to the future of employment /unemployment and the supports needed to ameliorate this.

We need to work with the new legislation planned at European level and develop our own laws and regulations to get out ahead of this.

We need to be a national voice for ETHICS in the regulation of this sector at global level.

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

2000 character(s) maximum

N/A

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

The Department needs not only to source evidence but to hold ethical and democratic conversations in this regard. Evidence is important but so is ethical debate and philosophical reasoning. We lose culture and heritage, and deep macro ethical considerations if we narrow the play book to scientific evidence only. We also lose our democracy, which after all is a system of government, albeit imperfect that seeks to have reason trump power.

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

Through the public forum, providing all citizens and all those in the system with an opportunity to contribute, not only those who have elite privilege because of position and power. This is in keeping with the spirit of democracy which is upstream of any system or expertise.

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

Why does the Department need to do this when it has a publicly funded higher education sector on its doorstep?

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

The national electric train system in Spain is one that comes to mind.

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

2000 character(s) maximum

Thank you for this opportunity.

Contact

evan.argue@decc.gov.ie