



**Roinn Cumarsáide, Gníomhaithe
ar son na hAeráide & Comhshaoil**
Department of Communications,
Climate Action & Environment

Ministerial Brief

Communications, Climate Action
and Environment

June 2020

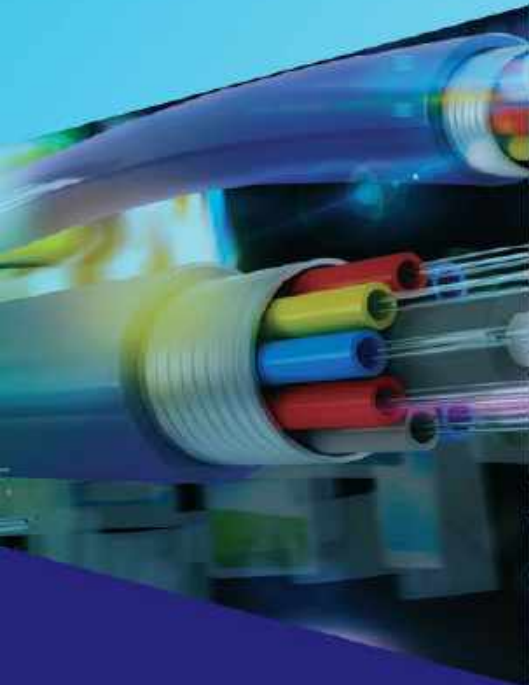


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Overview of Department

Who we are?

Our remit covers telecommunications; postal; energy; climate action; waste management and resource efficiency; environmental policy and air quality; noise and radiation protection policy and natural resources.

The Department's vision is for Ireland to become a leader in delivering climate action, achieving environmental sustainability and bringing the opportunities offered by digital communications to all citizens. This long term vision is focused upon transitioning to a prosperous, modern, competitive and carbon neutral economy, underpinned by flexible well-regulated markets.

Our mission¹ is to develop across Government policies which power economic and social progress, while at the same time improving the environment in a lasting way for future generations.

The Department delivers on its vision and mission by focusing on four key goals:

Goal 1 Climate Leadership

Ireland will deliver a coherent and effective response to climate disruption and seize the enterprise opportunities in a low carbon economy.

Goal 2 Connectivity and Communications

Provide access to a world class communications network with high quality services, supporting connected communities and enabling citizens to embrace digital opportunities in a safe environment.

Goal 3 Environment and Sustainable Resource Use

Use resources with care and responsibility minimising the generation of waste and consistently enhancing our environment in all its dimensions.

Goal 4 Governance and Regulation

Be best in class in creating the policy direction and the regulatory environment for our sectors, so as to ensure good governance, competitive markets, diversity, innovation and sustainable practices.

¹ Our mission is based on our current mandate and Statement of Strategy. Under the Public Service Management Act 1997, the Secretary General of the Department must present a new Statement of Strategy to the Minister within 6 months of the Minister's appointment.

What Do We Do?

The Department undertakes a range of functions to achieve our four goals. These include:

- Policy making
- Programme delivery
- Legislation including transposing EU legislation into Irish law
- Service provision
- Regulation of sectors
- Contract management
- Corporate governance

Who Are Our Stakeholders?

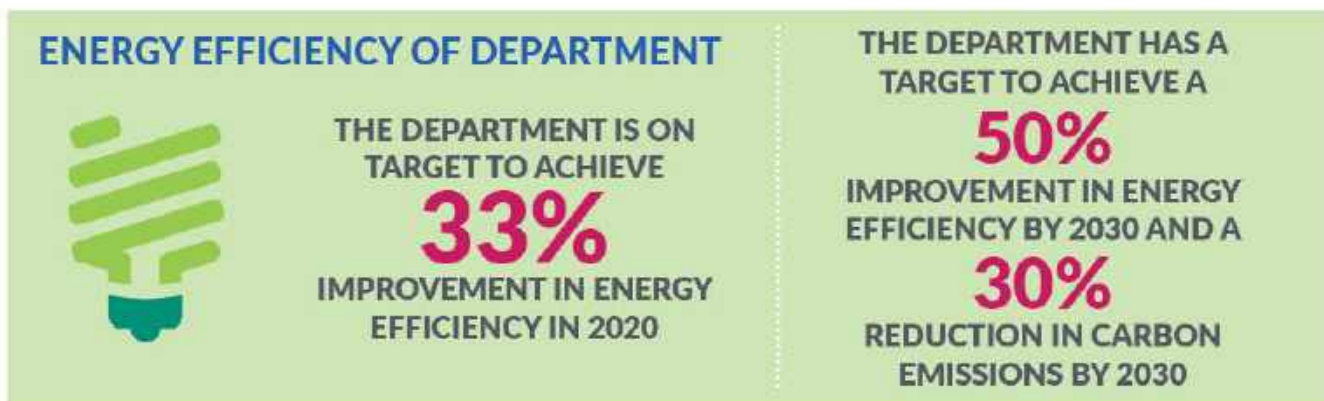
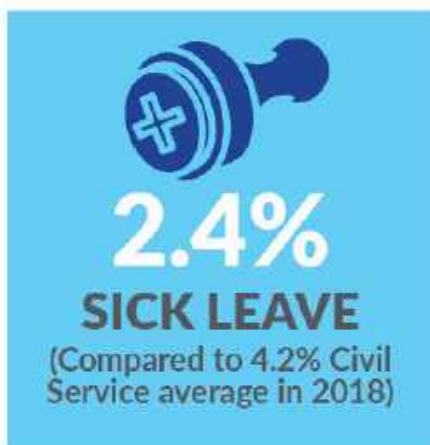
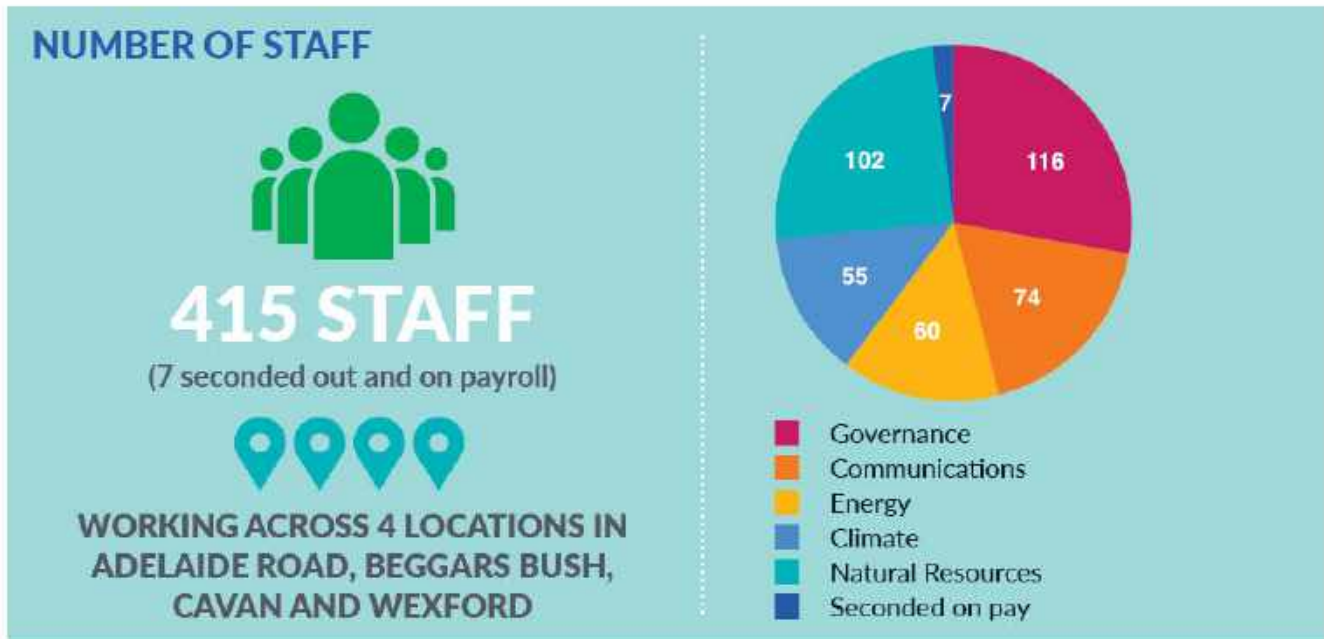
In delivering our goals, the most important stakeholders are the individuals and communities that we serve. Success in achieving our goals and objectives is critically dependent on their understanding of the work that we do and that their actions are key to our success.

We are also supported by 17 State bodies across the sectors for which we are responsible. These range from providers of critical infrastructure such as the ESB and Eirgrid; bodies discharging regulatory functions including CRU, ComReg and EPA; and the national postal operator, An Post.

There is a significant EU and international dimension to our work with much of the policy and legislation in the various sectoral areas of the Department deriving from the EU. This involves working closely with the European Commission and other Member States. The energy, telecommunications and environment sectors are subject to regular appraisal by the EU and OECD in terms of how Irish domestic policy is performing vis-à-vis other countries.

The Department operates in a challenging and complex environment, shaped by economic, social and environmental factors. Collaboration with other Government Departments, agencies and local Government is also critical to achieving our goals. Outside Government, we engage with NGO's, industry bodies and private sector organisations primarily in the sectors for which we are responsible and with individuals and communities.

Department at a Glance



FINANCE



€136m
CURRENT
ALLOCATION
THIS YEAR



€377m
CAPITAL
ALLOCATION
THIS YEAR

Programme	Current	Capital	TOTAL
	€000	€000	€000
Communications	14,331	127,414	141,745
Energy	33,671	184,681	218,352
Natural Resources	12,674	11,775	24,449
Inland Fisheries	31,952	3,127	35,079
Environment and Waste Management	43,876	50,480	94,356
Gross Allocation	136,504	377,477	513,981
Less Appropriations-in-Aid	15,241	10,000	25,241
Net allocation	121,263	367,477	488,740

MULTI ANNUAL CAPITAL CEILINGS FOR DEPARTMENT:



NEW HEADQUARTERS

2023

DEPARTMENT WILL MOVE TO A
NEARLY ZERO RATED ENERGY BUILDING



SOCIAL MEDIA



Website: www.dccae.gov.ie

Twitter: https://twitter.com/dept_ccae

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/DCCAE/>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/department-of-communications-climate-action-environment>

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCNmA1joZADctUgrffR02FCQ>

State Agencies

The Department is supported in our mandate by 17 State bodies, comprising a number of leading commercial, non-commercial and regulatory bodies who play a critical role in delivering a vision for Ireland, as outlined in Project Ireland 2040. The 17 bodies are listed below, with further information provided later:

Communications

An Post
Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg)
Digital Hub Development Agency (DHDA)



Energy

ESB
EirGrid
Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU)
Bord na Móna
National Oil Reserves Agency (NORA)
Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)
Irish National Petroleum Corporation (INPC)



Climate Action and Environment

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)



Natural Resources

Inland Fisheries Ireland
Loughs Agency
Mining Board



Management Board

The Management Board is chaired by the Secretary General and its membership is comprised of five Assistant Secretaries and Heads of Human Resources; Finance; and Communications and Media Relations Divisions.

The current members of the Board are:



Key Departmental Priorities

COVID-19

Since early March the Department has been prioritising its work to support the whole of Government response to COVID-19. In line with Government advice, the Department has been operating remotely with limited attendance at the office. Work is underway to take account of the Government's roadmap for reopening society and business and to ensure a safe working environment for staff on their return to the office.

Many of the Departments functions have been involved in ensuring the security and continuity of critical infrastructure throughout the period of the pandemic. Working with our stakeholders, the Department played a central role in ensuring the continuity of electricity, gas and fuel supplies; the maintenance of waste management services; and the functioning of the telecommunications networks. A range of measures were introduced to support businesses operating online.

The priorities listed below are based on existing policies and will need to be updated and amended to reflect the agreed Programme for Government and any changes in Departmental structures.

Climate Action, Energy and Environment

- Finalise Ireland's National Energy and Climate Plan for the period 2021-2030.
- Finalise Long Term Strategy to 2050
- Oversee delivery of the Climate Action Plan including:
 - Completion of the first Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) auction
 - Commencement of planning for offshore wind auction in 2021 including ongoing input into Marine Planning and Development Bill
 - Development of plans to achieve retrofitting

targets (500,000 homes to B2 or equivalent by 2030)

- Publication of the Climate Action Plan 2020
- Publish and support the enactment of the Climate Action Bill
- Just Transition
 - Finalise Just Transition Implementation Plan for Midlands Region in response to Kieran Mulvey's Report
 - Prepare Territorial Just Transition Plan to inform planned investment of EU Just Transition Fund resources for 2021-2027
 - Design and implementation of new enhanced bog rehabilitation scheme for Bord na Móna bogs
 - Support DHPLG in designing and rolling out Midlands Retrofitting Scheme (€20m)
- Lead negotiations on European Green Deal and related legislative proposals
- Implement nationwide smoky coal ban
- Brexit - manage Department's input to Government strategy on future relationship/trade agreement with the UK
- Cooperate on and oversee the development of the integrated all-island electricity market
- Review the security of energy supply of Ireland's electricity and natural gas systems focusing on the period to 2030 in the context of ensuring a sustainable pathway to 2050
- Determine the State's compliance strategy for the 2009 Renewable Energy Directive (RED) including the purchase of statistical transfers, if required.

Circular Economy/Waste Policy

- Municipal solid waste and Construction and Demolition Waste: ensuring adequate capacity and contingency availability
- Circular economy: Development and delivery of a new waste policy and actions in support of reducing single use plastics
- Implement revised oil and gas policy to give effect to phasing out of oil and gas exploration

Communications

- Implementation and oversight of contract with National Broadband Ireland to deliver NBP including c. 300 Broadband Connection Points this year
- Implementation of the 2019 Cyber Security Strategy
- [REDACTED]

Forthcoming Legislation

The Government will settle a legislative programme setting out Bills which are to be published and progressed at any early stage following its formation. There are three Bills currently being managed or developed by the Department which were scheduled for progression. An overview of each Bill is provided here, with further detail under each sectoral brief.

Climate Action (Amendment) Bill 2019

The General Scheme of the Climate Action (Amendment) Bill 2019 was approved by the previous Government in December 2019 and submitted to the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel for priority drafting. As provided in the General Scheme, some provisions are still being refined in terms of ensuring clear drafting instructions; these take account of the inclusion of an emissions reduction target for 2050, flexibility between each carbon budget, and banning the sale of Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicles by 2030. The Department is undertaking further analysis to finalise clear drafting instructions, with a view to return to Government as soon as possible with revised Heads on these outstanding policy matters.

National Oil Reserves (Amendment) Bill

A Bill to amend the National Oil Reserves Agency Act 2007 (NORA Act) has been finalised. The Bill will provide for the establishment of the Climate Action Fund (CAF) on a statutory basis and for the payment of a portion of the levy monies collected by NORA to the CAF. In the absence of the NORA levy payments to the CAF, it will not be possible to fully meet the existing commitments from the first round of funding nor will it be possible to progress the next round of funding from which it is intended, *inter alia*, to support the Bord na Móna enhanced bog rehabilitation scheme. Enactment of the Bill is an urgent priority.

Marine Planning and Development Management Bill (MPDM)

The Department is working closely with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government on the development of a new, streamlined consenting regime for offshore renewable energy called the Marine Planning and Development Management Bill (MPDM).

The enactment of the Marine Planning and Development Management Bill (MPDM) will provide a modern, up-to-date regulatory and marine planning framework for offshore renewable energy developments.

Climate Action and Environment



Climate Action and Environment

The policy objective is to deliver a coherent and effective response to climate disruption whilst, at the same time, seizing the enterprise opportunities in a low carbon economy.

The Climate Action Plan (2019) to tackle climate breakdown sets out the actions which must be taken to make Ireland a leader in responding to climate change. It builds on previous actions and frameworks put in place by the National Mitigation Plan, National Adaption Framework and the National Development Plan.

The objective of ongoing work in this area is to make the step change in climate action real. The Climate Action Plan has a strong focus on implementation over the period 2019 to 2021 including actions with specific timelines and steps needed to achieve each action.

An essential pillar in enabling Ireland to meet its climate commitments will be limiting how much energy we consume across our economy. Many of the actions in the Climate Action Plan therefore fall to be delivered within the Department's own area of responsibility. Delivery of the overall plan however requires action across Government as the policies and measures to deliver the vision of becoming a leader in climate action go beyond the scope of this Department.

The plan contains 183 actions, broken down into 619 individual measures, which Ireland needs to implement to meet our EU 2030 targets, and puts Ireland on a trajectory to achieve net zero emissions by 2050. The climate actions identified will be implemented by 13 Government Departments and 40 agencies under the remit of those Departments. Delivering such an integrated set of actions and policies requires a deep level of collaboration across Government.

Some key governance measures established to drive delivery of the actions include the establishment of a Climate Action Delivery Board within the Department of the Taoiseach to hold designated bodies to account. In support of the Delivery Board, a new Climate Action Unit has also been established in the Department of the Taoiseach to monitor and drive implementation and assist with the preparation of the quarterly progress report.

Each Department is required to report regularly on the status of its actions to the Department of the Taoiseach to service ongoing Senior Officials Group meetings, the Climate Action Delivery Board and the Environment Cabinet Committee in advance of the final progress report publication.



Brian Carroll
Assistant Secretary
Climate Action &
Environment



Climate Mitigation – Carbon Pricing, Cross-Cutting, Just Transition, Buildings and Transport

Head of Division

Frank Maughan

Overview of Division

This division provides sectoral specific climate expertise within the Department to support the implementation and development of the national mitigation policy framework to enable Ireland to meet its EU and international climate change commitments.

The division's functions cover Just Transition and Climate Action Plan implementation for the buildings and transport sectors and for carbon pricing and cross-cutting policies.

Priorities

1. Lead climate policy engagement in Government's Just Transition plan for Midlands Region and support the Just Transition Commissioner to deliver his mandate.
2. Manage the disbursement of monies allocated to the Just Transition Fund in the DCCA Vote for 2020 and undertake programme development for EU Just Transition Fund.
3. Drive development and implementation of the climate mitigation policy framework for the transport and buildings sectors and for carbon pricing and cross-cutting policies.

Key Issues/Ongoing Work Programme

Just Transition

The Climate Action Plan commits to delivering a just transition recognising the significant level of change required and that burdens borne must be seen to be fair. Developing the opportunities in a decarbonising economy is recognised as a key pillar to the Climate Action Plan and in this regard the Plan envisages that existing initiatives and structures will be mobilised to maximise enterprise opportunities.

This division leads climate policy engagement in Government's Just Transition plan for the Midlands region and supports the Just Transition Commissioner to deliver his mandate to work with key stakeholders in the Midlands.

This specifically includes support for the work underway in the Midlands to deal with the challenges facing Bord na Móna, its employees and various contractors and businesses including local services which depend on the current business model. Early and complete phase-out of peat and coal for electricity generation will have a significant impact on the workers, their families and the Midlands region as a whole. In this context, a whole-of-Government approach to addressing this challenge is being implemented working with local stakeholders, to ensure that people impacted can be best supported. €6 million was provided in Budget 2020 for the Just Transition Fund. The fund will initially be targeted at the Midlands. The fund will, inter alia, support:

- Retraining and reskilling workers to assist local communities and businesses in the Midlands to adjust to the low carbon transition;
- Proactive communications with affected communities and other stakeholders in the region and between local communities and the relevant national institutions;
- Best practice sharing networks and frameworks;
- The early development of local transition plans, with local communities at the core of plan

development, based on economic analysis and local scoping of transition impacts and the opportunities it presents, acknowledging that the needs of individual areas across the Midlands will differ, and

- Innovation and investment proposals to generate sustainable employment in green enterprise that do not come within the ambit of the four Project Ireland 2040 funds or the State’s other investment programmes.

In recognition of their longstanding relationship with communities in the Midlands, ESB has agreed to contribute an additional €5 million to this fund bringing its total value to €11 million. The first stage - a call for applications for 2020 funding from the Just Transition Fund- was launched by the Midlands Regional Transition Team on 22 May 2020. The second stage in this process will be managed by DCCAE which will oversee an evaluations process for project proposals for approval by the Minister and manage the disbursement of funding to successful applications. The second stage commenced on 19 June 2020.

Climate Action Plan Implementation

The division drives the implementation and development of the climate mitigation policy framework to enable Ireland to meet its EU and international climate change commitments by providing climate policy oversight of, and analysis for, the transport and buildings sectors and for carbon pricing and cross-cutting policies.

Transport

Year	Emission, Mt CO ₂ eq	Share of Total Emissions
2017	11.7	19.3%
2018	10.4	20.2%
2030 target	7-8	16-17%

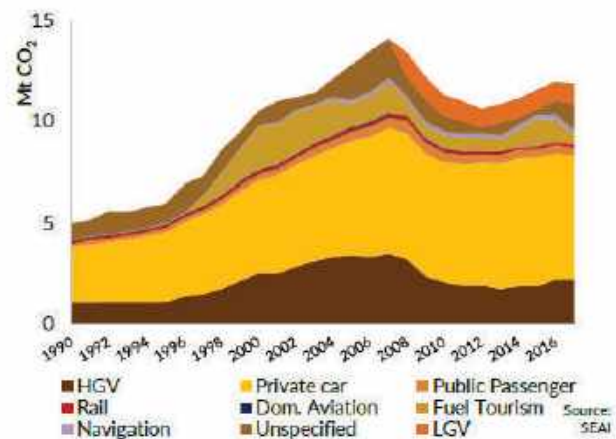
Transport accounted for 20.2% of Ireland's total greenhouse gas emissions in 2018. The sector includes emissions associated with road transport (private, commercial and public transport vehicles), rail,

domestic aviation, and domestic navigation (inland waterways).

Private cars remain the largest source of GHG emissions in the transport sector accounting for 51.5% of total transport emissions. Heavy goods vehicles were responsible for a further 18.5% of emissions while light goods vehicles share of emissions was 8.4%

There was an obvious contraction in emissions following the economic downturn of 2008. However total emissions began to increase again from 2012 onwards reaching 12.3 megatons CO₂ equivalent in 2016. This decreased slightly by 2.4% in 2017 to 12 megatons CO₂ equivalent. These decreases were mainly as a result of lower emissions from fuel tourism and private cars.

Transport CO₂ Emissions by Mode, 1900 - 2017



The Climate Action Plan commits to reducing transport emissions by 45-50% in 2030 relative to pre-Climate Action Plan projections. The key output targets to deliver this reduction are:

- Increase the number of Electric Vehicles (EVs) to 936,000, comprised of:
 - 840,000 passenger EVs
 - 95,000 electric vans and trucks
 - 1,200 electric buses
- Build the EV charging network to support the

growth of EVs at the rate required, and develop our fast-charging infrastructure to stay ahead of demand;

- Require at least one recharging point in new non-residential buildings with more than 10 parking spaces; and
- Raise the blend proportion of biofuels in road transport to 10% in petrol and 12% in diesel.

In addition, the Climate Action Plan prioritises the role of modal shift in reducing transport emissions and the provision of good quality public transport, cycling and walking infrastructure is essential to reduce reliance on private car journeys. Investment in these modes - already foreseen under the NDP- is forecast to deliver an additional 500,000 public transport and active travel journeys daily by 2035.

While primary policy responsibility for the above objective rests with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, this Department has a key role in the provision of grant support to subsidise the deployment of electric vehicle charging infrastructure; and, through SEAI, to subsidise the purchase of electric vehicles. This Department also has responsibility on the use of biofuels with respect to increasing the amount of renewable energy in support of decarbonising the transport sector. The Climate Action Plan also recognises the role of incentives and regulation as key influencers of vehicle purchase and usage behaviour and the taxation system is therefore a key lever in delivering the objectives set out above. The implementation of the National Planning Framework will also impact on Ireland’s transport emissions by driving changes in future settlement, employment and commuting patterns.

Built Environment

Year	Emission, Mt CO ₂ eq	Share of Total Emissions
2017	7.7	12.7%
2018	8.3	13.7%
2030 target	5-6	11-13%

The built environment (encompassing direct energy consumption in residential, commercial and public sector buildings) accounted for 13.7% of Ireland’s greenhouse gas emissions in 2018. Ireland faces a number of challenges in reducing emissions from our buildings. Our homes use 7% more energy than the EU average and emit 58% more CO₂eq. Our buildings are 70% reliant on fossil fuels, including oil fired boilers; over 80% of our homes and other buildings assessed for their Building Energy Rating (BER) have a rating of C or worse; and the current annual retrofit activity for existing stock is far too limited (approximately 23,000, mainly shallow, retrofits).

Typical shallow and deep retrofit interventions

Shallow (generally single discrete upgrades carried out in isolation)
Typical measure one of:
Attic insulation and ventilation
Cavity wall insulation and ventilation
Ventilation
Heating controls
Oil or gas boiler replacement
Draught proofing
Lagging jacket
Energy efficient lighting
Deep (multiple upgrades in a whole house package approach)
Typical measure generally a package including two or more of:
Attic insulation and ventilation
External or internal wall insulation and ventilation
Window replacement
Floor insulation
Heat pump installation and associate pipework plumbing and electrical works
Oil or gas boiler installation with associated pipework and radiators (where no heating system or only solid fuel heating exists)
Solar PV or solar thermal installation

The Climate Action Plan has committed to a set of output targets for the sector which, if delivered, will lead to a reduction of emissions from the sector by 40–45% in 2030 relative to pre-Climate Action Plan projections. These include:

- Sharply reduce fossil fuel use, given the current heavy reliance on gas, oil, coal and peat in the sector;
- Complete 500,000 building retrofits to achieve a B2 BER /cost optimal equivalent or carbon equivalent;
- Install 600,000 heat pumps (400,000 to be in existing buildings);
- Increase the number of Sustainable Energy Communities to 1,500;
- Complete the rollout of the Support Scheme for Renewable Heat (SSRH), including support for biomass and anaerobic digestion heating systems; and
- Deliver two initiatives of municipal scale which have the potential to provide heat equivalent to the needs of about 50,000 homes.

Policy responsibility for various elements of these commitments is shared between a number of Government Departments and responsibility for meeting these targets and associated actions is assigned, under the Climate Action Plan, primarily to this Department; the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government; the Department of Education and Skills; and the Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and their respective agencies.

Climate Mitigation – Public and Commercial Sectors

Head of Function

Noel Regan

Overview of Division

This division drives the implementation and development of the climate mitigation policy framework to enable Ireland to meet its national, EU and international climate change commitments by providing climate policy oversight of, and analysis for the following sectors: electricity, industry, public sector, agriculture, forestry and land use, waste and the circular economy.

Key Priorities

1. Rollout Public Sector Mandate to all public bodies setting a collective target to reduce CO₂eq by 30% and improve energy efficiency by 50% by 2030.
2. Rollout out toolkit for industry / enterprise sector to support the sector reducing their carbon footprint.
3. Prepare updates for these sectors as inputs to the 2020 Climate Action Plan and also to the proposed 15-year climate strategy envisaged under the General Scheme of the Climate Action (Amendment) Bill.

Key Issues/Ongoing Work Programme

Electricity Generation

Year	Emission, Mt CO ₂ eq	Share of Total Emissions
2017	11.7	19.3%
2018	10.4	17.1%
2030 target	4-5	8-10%

The generation of electricity accounts for one third of Ireland's energy use and 17.1% of our greenhouse gas emissions. The carbon intensity of Ireland's electricity has reduced considerably from 635 CO₂eq per kWh in 2005 to 375 CO₂eq per kWh in 2018, largely due to a shift away from oil and coal generation and increased renewable energy.

Approximately 66% of our electricity presently comes from fossil fuels (gas, peat and coal) which accounts for the greenhouse gas emissions of the sector. Electricity demand is expected to double by 2050 driven by electrification of heat and transport.

The Climate Action Plan delivers a step-up in ambition to meet Ireland's 2030 targets and set us on course to decarbonise the electricity sector by 2050. Implementation of the Climate Action Plan will reduce annual emissions from 12 Mt CO₂eq in 2017 to 4-5 Mt CO₂eq in the year 2030. The plan commits to end the burning of coal in ESB's Moneypoint generation plant by 2025 and a transition away from peat generation by 2028. Since the plan was launched, ESB have announced that two of the countries three peat plants will cease production at the end of 2020.

The central element of the plan is to achieve 70% of renewable electricity by 2030.

While primary policy responsibility for the above objective rests within the energy area of this Department, this division is responsible for the EU Emissions Trading System.

The EU Emissions Trading System is a cornerstone of EU policy on climate change mitigation promoting

cost-effective emissions reduction in heavy industry and power generation.

Sectors covered by the ETS must reduce their emissions by 43% by 2030 compared to 2005 levels. This is to support the EU overall target of reducing emissions by 40% by 2030. In Q3 2020, the European Commission will propose an increase of this overall target to at least 50% and towards 55% and this will require a subsequent amendment to ETS legislation.

Industry

Year	Emission, Mt CO ₂ eq	Share of Total Emissions
2017	8.0	13.4%
2018	8.1	13.4%
2030 target	7.5-8	18-20%

Industry is responsible for 13% of Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions, emitting 8 Mt CO₂eq per annum. The majority share of emissions comes from the manufacturing sector, mostly chemicals, food processing, beverages and cement. Industry emissions are highly correlated with economic activity and have been rising in recent years, following a fall in the years beforehand, as a result of the economic downturn.

Over 5.5 Mt CO₂eq of the emissions in the industrial sector fall under the ETS. Industrial emissions in Ireland outside of the ETS are highly diverse, with a large proportion arising from Small to Medium Sized Enterprises (SMEs), especially those working with industrial gases (also known as fluorinated gases or F-gases).

The Climate Action Plan sets out a list of measures to reduce emissions in the industrial sector in order to meet Ireland's 2030 emissions reduction target of 5-10% by 2030 despite increasing production. The main measures in the plan include the use of alternative fuels; the wide-scale application of heat pumps for low-temperatures uses (<100 °C); and the increased use of solid biomass.

Carbon pricing for those sectors outside the ETS will

also provide an incentive to decarbonise operations and this tax was increased in Budget 2020.

While primary policy responsibility for this area lies with the Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation, this Department has a number of actions in the Climate Action plan to support its decarbonisation. The two Departments are currently collaborating to develop a climate action hub focussed on the SME sector with anticipated roll-out in Q1 2021.

Preparation of the Long Term Strategy has shown that in order to decarbonise this sector several cross-cutting areas will need attention including:

- Supporting the development of a bioenergy supply chain;
- Developing a strategy for negative emissions technologies;
- Defining the future of the gas grid; and
- Developing a strategy on circular and bio-economy.

Agriculture, Forestry and Land Use

Year	Emission, Mt CO ₂ eq	Share of Total Emissions
2017	20.2	33.3%
2018	20.6	34.0%
2030 target	17.5-19	41-43%

In 2018 agriculture emissions were 20.6 Mt CO₂eq, with over 65% of this associated with livestock production, driven by enteric fermentation and manure management in the beef and dairy sectors.

Full implementation of the Climate Action Plan will deliver an emissions reduction from 20.6 Mt CO₂eq in 2018 to 17.5-19.0 Mt CO₂eq in 2030. Key measures included in the Climate Action Plan to reduce on-farm emissions include increased efficiency of fertiliser application; improving slurry management; and establishment of feed modification programmes.

A key element of the policy framework and much of the resources that will enable abatement measures will flow from the successful design and implementation

of the next CAP at EU level, which will operate in the period post 2020. 40% of the overall budget of the new CAP at EU level will contribute to environmental or climate action. In addition, the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine has issued an 'Ag Climatise' policy to enable its delivery of the 2030 targets in the Climate Action Plan. DCCAE have provided DAFM with observations on their draft strategy.

Under the EU Effort Sharing Regulation, Ireland can account for 2.68 Mt CO₂ of carbon sink credits per annum during 2021-2030. This flexibility will become available if Ireland delivers upon specific actions set out in the Climate Action Plan focused on forestry and agricultural land use.

Waste and Circular Economy

Year	Emission, Mt CO ₂ eq	Share of Total Emissions
2017	0.916	1.5%
2018	0.891	1.5%
2030 target	0.45	<1%

While the reported emissions from the waste sector appear relatively low compared to other sectors, this is because these figures only include the direct emissions from enterprises handling waste. However, an OECD study has indicated that greenhouse emissions arising from material management account for between 55% and 65% of national emissions. Therefore, maximising the efficiency of our material usage could deliver significant savings in greenhouse gas emissions throughout the supply chain.

Emissions from the waste sector decreased by 2.8% or 0.03 Mt CO₂eq in 2018.

The Climate Action Plan sets out a range of targets for the sector on landfill reliance, recycling rates, food waste levels and in respect of the use of single use plastics.

Public Sector Leading by Example

Year	Emission, Mt CO ₂ eq	Share of Total Emissions
2017	0.906	1.5%
2018	0.980	1.6%
2030 target	0.6	~1%

Public Sector energy efficiency continues to improve steadily with 24% improvement achieved by end 2017 and similar progress anticipated for 2018. The Climate Action Plan states that the leadership role public bodies can play in taking early action on climate is fundamental to achieving our decarbonisation goals – public bodies must act as exemplars of best practice in taking climate action across all sectors and use their capacities to lead a wider transition.

Under the Plan, a Public Sector Mandate will be issued to all public bodies with a collective target to reduce CO₂eq by 30% and improve energy efficiency by 50% by 2030 with a view to achieving carbon neutrality by 2050. This will also include requirements that every public body has to meet, and a wider set that should be pursued by larger organisations.

Climate Adaptation Policy and Citizen/Community Engagement

Head of Function

Justina Corcoran

Overview of Division

This division manages the ongoing implementation of National Adaptation Framework (NAF) which provides a framework to ensure that local authorities, regions and key sectors can assess the key risks and vulnerabilities of climate change. In that regard, it has oversight of the implementation of sectoral adaptation plans; local authority adaptation strategies and of four Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs).

The National Dialogue on Climate Action supports a system of community engagement to build public support for the action plans that need to put in place over the coming years and decades. Given the long term nature of climate action, much still needs to be settled in terms of long term policy direction and a national dialogue is a useful tool to engage people with the challenge of climate change; motivate changes in behaviour; and create structures at local, regional and national levels to support the generation of ideas and their translation into appropriate cost effective actions.

Key Priorities

1. Coordination of climate adaptation and climate action more broadly across the local authority sector. This includes oversight of the work programme of the Climate Action Regional Offices, and implementation of the local authority climate change training strategy which is being funded by DCCAE during 2020.
2. Implementation of the National Adaptation Framework, including oversight of the transition of Climate Ireland – Ireland’s Climate Information Platform – into the Environmental Protection Agency, to ensure that it is developed to its full potential as a long term operational support for climate adaptation in Ireland, utilised across the whole of Government.
3. Publish report on the National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA) for the period 2017-2019

and agree a new programme for the dialogue to be implemented by the EPA as per the requirements of the Climate Action Plan.

Key Issues/Ongoing Work Programme

Climate Adaptation

Climate adaptation addresses the current and future risks posed by a changing climate, aiming to reduce the vulnerability of our environment, society and economy and increase resilience.

Ireland’s first statutory National Adaptation Framework (NAF), prepared under the 2015 Climate Act, was published in January 2018. It provides a framework to ensure that local authorities, regions, and key sectors can assess the key risks and vulnerabilities of climate change; implement climate resilience actions; and ensure that climate adaptation considerations are mainstreamed into all local, regional and national policy. It identifies 12 priority actions and related supporting objectives to advance the implementation of climate adaptation policy.

Sectoral Adaptation Plans

Under the NAF, seven Government Departments with responsibility for priority sectors were required to prepare sectoral adaptation plans in line with the requirements of the Climate Act. These plans were approved by Government in October 2019 and cover:

- Seafood, Agriculture and Forestry (Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine);
- Biodiversity (Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht);
- Built and Archaeological Heritage (Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht);
- Transport Infrastructure (Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport);
- Electricity and Gas Networks (DCCAE);
- Communications Networks (DCCAE);
- Flood Risk Management (Office of Public Works);
- Water Quality and Water Services Infrastructure (Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government).

- Health (Department of Health).

Development of the plans was monitored by this Department via the National Adaptation Steering Committee. Implementation of these plans is an action in the Climate Action Plan.

Local and Regional Adaptation

In recognition of the need to build capacity to engage on climate action and of the obligation placed on local government to develop and implement climate action, DCCAE entered into a five-year financial commitment in 2018 of €10 million to establish four Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs):

1. Atlantic Seaboard North.
2. Atlantic Seaboard South.
3. Dublin Metropolitan Region.
4. Eastern and Midlands.

These are operated by a lead local authority in each region and focus on the predominant risk(s) in each geographical area.

The CAROs play an important role in ensuring that cross-sectoral issues are identified and addressed, and in community engagement. Their role has expanded to include facilitating local authorities in meeting both mitigation and adaptation commitments under the Climate Action Plan 2019.

Under the NAF, each local authority developed its own adaptation strategy. These local authority adaptation strategies were approved by their Councils in 2019; their implementation is an action in the Climate Action Plan 2019.

Climate Ireland

The provision of accurate and authoritative information and expertise is a crucial element in ensuring that Government, local authorities, communities and the private sector can plan ahead and respond effectively to the challenges of climate change.

Ireland's Climate Information Platform, 'Climate

Ireland', developed by UCC, provides a central source of climate data for Ireland, combining authoritative information from a variety of sources such as Met Éireann, OPW, EPA, the European Environmental Agency and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, to assist stakeholders in planning ahead for the likely impacts of climate change.

Climate Ireland also provides decision making frameworks and tools for adaptation planning.

Climate Ireland is in receipt of interim funding from the EPA, following the cessation of the research phase. Following a discussion paper based on the views of the members of Climate Ireland's Technical Advisory Group, a business case recommending transition of Climate Ireland into the EPA, was developed in collaboration with the EPA. The intention is to finalise arrangements shortly.

Climate Adaptation Subgroup of British Irish Council Environment Working Group

The division currently chairs the climate adaptation sub-group of the Environment working group of the British Irish Council (BIC), and in this capacity planned to host a symposium on climate resilient infrastructure on 22nd April 2020. This was postponed due to COVID-19 to 20th October 2020. An introduction by the Minister is highly recommended.

Mainstreaming of Climate Adaptation

Integrating climate adaptation into key national plans and policies is a priority under the NAF. A specific area that will require input in 2020 is a scoping exercise relating to coastal change and sea level rise, which will report to an Inter Department Group on Coastal Change, chaired by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government and the OPW. The Department is also required in 2020 to develop guidelines on climate adaptation for Strategic Emergency Management (SEM).

Citizen/Community Engagement

The Climate Action Plan requires the Department

(and the EPA) to enhance the effectiveness of climate-related communications, network building and deliberative capacity within and through the National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA). Work in this area includes:

- Publication of the NDCA Report 2017-2019;
- Agreement and implementation of a new work programme for the NDCA;
- An enhanced Green Schools National Climate Change Action and Awareness Programme;
- Collaboration with DCYA for the establishment of a Youth Climate Council; and
- The Tidy Towns award made for “Climate Action and Air Quality”.

National Dialogue on Climate Action

The Dialogue Secretariat is provided by the EPA. The objectives of the National Dialogue on Climate Action are to:

- Create awareness, engagement and motivation to act (locally, regionally and nationally) in relation to the challenges presented by climate change;
- Create structures and information flows to facilitate people gathering to discuss, deliberate and maximise consensus on appropriate responses to these challenges, and to enable and empower appropriate action;
- Establish, on a long term basis, appropriate networks for people to meet periodically to consider evidence-based inputs on the economic, social, behavioural, environmental and public aspects of climate and energy policy; and
- Provide regular input, through the NDCA, into the prioritisation and implementation of climate and energy policy which can be reported and monitored at local/regional/national levels.

Climate Action Policy Communications Group

Under the Department of the Taoiseach led Climate Action Delivery Board, a Climate Action Policy Communications Group has been established. Key

communications and policy experts from each Department are represented.

Climate Action related communications in other Departments include:

- The Department of Children and Youth Affairs will establish a National Youth Council for Climate Action and Climate Justice as well as a new special Fund for Youth Action on Climate Justice in close collaboration with this Department. This will provide more channels for direct engagement between young people and decision-makers across Government and beyond.
- The Department of Culture, Heritage and the Gaeltacht is collaborating with this Department on a proposal under the Creative Ireland Programme to engage the public on Climate Change through the cultural & creative sectors.

Climate Governance Planning and Coordination Division

Head of Function

Brian Kirwan

Key Priorities

1. Coordinate and finalise the 2020 Climate Action Plan (CAP) for Government approval and publication.
2. Coordinate and finalise the Long Term Strategy for submission to the EU.
3. Enactment of the Climate Action (Amendment) Bill 2019.
4. Support increasing ambition to reduce greenhouse gas emissions at both EU and international level.
5. Ensure Ireland's compliance with emission reduction targets set under the EU Effort Sharing Decision.

Key Issues/Ongoing Work Programme

Governance of the Climate Challenge

As DCCA and its agencies are responsible for over 50% of all actions and measures for delivery, the overall progress of each quarterly report is principally determined by the DCCA delivery rate. As a consequence, maintaining focused and continual delivery of the Department's actions will be critical for the overall delivery of the objectives of the Plan and requires considerable tracking and engagement across the Department through its own internal governance arrangements.

Long-Term Strategy

A comprehensive draft Long Term Strategy for greenhouse gas emissions reduction out to 2050 has been prepared. The Long Term Strategy builds on the decarbonisation pathway to 2030 that is detailed in the Climate Action Plan and reflected in the National Energy and Climate Plan.

Each Member State was required to prepare and submit to the European Commission its Long Term Strategy by 1st January 2020. Following Government formation, Ireland's strategy will be sent for Government approval and subsequent submission to the European Commission at the earliest possible opportunity in Q3 2020.

The Long Term Strategy sets out decarbonisation pathways beyond 2030, towards decarbonisation to 2050, underpinned by analysis of transition options across all key sectors of the economy, including energy, buildings, transport, enterprise, waste, agriculture and land-use.

The strategy also examines the opportunities and implications of the deployment of innovative technologies and of facilitating alternative choices for consumers. It considers investment costs and socio-economic factors, including impacts on citizens and communities and the need to support a just transition. McKinsey were commissioned to carry out the modelling work underpinning the decarbonisation

pathways and extensive consultation and engagement has taken place with Departments, agencies, commercial semi-states and the public for their views and input.

This included a public consultation process between November and December 2019 whereby respondents were asked to consider 26 specific questions on key issues to be addressed in the strategy in relation to potential decarbonisation pathways for Ireland to mid-century. A total of 404 responses were received and were used to inform the development of the strategy.

Following submission, the European Commission will assess whether the national long-term strategies are adequate for the collective achievement of the objectives and targets of the Energy Union and shall provide information on any remaining collective gap.

Climate Action (Amendment) Bill 2019

The Climate Action Plan committed to bringing forward a new Climate Action (Amendment) Bill for publication in Q1 2020. The General Scheme of the Bill was approved by Government in December 2019 and submitted to the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel for priority drafting.

The objective of the Bill is to build on the existing 2015 Act and provide for a strengthened statutory framework for continual long term planning for the realisation of Ireland's 2050 vision, enforcing climate targets and reporting progress on the way. Some of the key changes provided in the Bill include the establishment of a 2050 emissions reduction in law; establishing the Climate Action Council as a successor organisation to the Climate Change Advisory Council with implications for revised governance and remit, including advising on carbon budgets and making the adoption of carbon budgets a legal requirement.

There is concerted effort to return to Government as soon as possible with revised Heads on certain outstanding policy matters such as the inclusion of an emissions reduction target for 2050, flexibility between each carbon budget, and the sale of Internal

Combustion Engine (ICE) vehicles, for inclusion in the final text of the Bill. In parallel to this work, the Department continues to engage with the Office of the Parliamentary Counsel on the drafting of the Bill.

International Climate Policy

Paris Agreement and COP26

The main focus of COP25 which took place in Madrid in December 2019 was to finalise the outstanding elements of the Paris Agreement and clear the path for raising ambition at COP26. COP26 has been deferred until November 2021

The EU is committed to presenting an updated Nationally Determined Contribution later this year as required under the Paris Agreement rules. Efforts between now and COP26 will focus on how best to maintain momentum and focus on the climate challenge. In this regard, a number of high level engagements scheduled between now and November 2021 have been set out in a provisional roadmap by the UK, COP26 President, to ensure focus does not shift from the climate crisis despite immense disruption faced by COVID-19.

EU Effort Sharing Decision

The 2009 EU Effort Sharing Decision (ESD) established binding annual greenhouse gas emission targets for Member States for the period 2013–2020. These targets concern emissions from most sectors not included in the EU Emissions Trading System (EU ETS), such as transport, buildings, agriculture and waste. For the year 2020 itself, the target set for Ireland is that emissions should be 20% below their value in 2005.

The ESD allows Member States to meet their targets using unused emissions credits from earlier years or through purchasing credits from other Member States or on international markets.

Ireland met its emissions targets from 2013-2015, and will meet its targets for 2016-2018 using banked allowances from earlier in the period. However,

the latest projections of greenhouse gas emissions, published by EPA in June 2019, indicate that Ireland will exceed the cumulative carbon budget set by our 2020 targets, by around 14-15Mt. Ireland will therefore need to purchase additional allowances to meet projected shortfalls. DCCAE currently estimates the additional costs of this requirement to be in the region of €6 million to €13 million, depending on the price and final quantity of credits required. The Department is currently in discussion with the NTMA in relation to purchasing additional carbon credits from the market to make up this expected shortfall.

European Green Deal and Climate Law

The EU Commission's Communication on the European Green Deal, published in December 2019, set out a new European Commission growth strategy which aims to transform the Union and ensure that by 2050 it is a modern, resource efficient and competitive economy with no net greenhouse gas emissions and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use. The Communication confirmed the Commission's ambition to make the EU the world's first climate neutral continent by 2050.

The Commission's proposal for the first European Climate Law, published in March 2020, aims to write into law the goal set out in the European Green Deal – for Europe's economy and society to become climate-neutral by 2050.

In addition, as part of the European Green Deal, the Commission will put forward a comprehensive plan to increase the EU's 2030 climate target in September this year. The plan will propose to increase the EU's current 2030 target of at least 40% greenhouse gas emission reductions to at least 50% and towards 55%, compared to 1990 emission levels.

Ireland's position on the European Green Deal and Climate Law

Ireland is supportive of the EU's ambition to increase the current EU 2030 target of a 40% reduction of greenhouse gas emissions to at least 50% and towards

55% compared to 1990 levels, in line with the Paris Agreement.

Ireland welcomes the Commission's work in carrying out a comprehensive impact assessment on increasing the EU 2030 target to 50-55%, including on how this would relate to the pathway beyond 2030. It will be important that any increase in EU ambition is achieved in the most cost effective manner.

Ireland also supports the publication of the European Climate Law proposal, including a target of net zero greenhouse gas emissions at EU level by 2050. It is consistent with the national approach as we draft the Climate Action Bill, which will enshrine a national 2050 emissions reduction target into law.

Climate Finance

A key element of the Paris Agreement, as well as predecessor COP decisions is the provision of financial support by developed countries to developing countries. Developed country parties to the UNFCCC committed in 2009 to a goal of mobilising jointly USD 100 billion a year by 2020, and a further commitment by 2025. Against this backdrop, the Government set out Ireland's commitment to scale up its public climate finance support of €175 million from 2016 to 2020.

Ireland has already overachieved on this commitment, with financial support for international climate action totalling €197 million between 2016 to 2018. A new collective quantified goal is required for the next period, between 2020 to 2025, taking account of the needs and priorities of developing countries. This will be of further importance and scrutiny as we move to the implementation phase of the Paris Agreement against the backdrop of increasing public pressure to deliver on global climate objectives.

DCCAE provides coordination and oversight of public climate finance provision across Government Departments and Agencies in support of the national climate finance objectives, as well as EU and UNFCCC reporting requirements, and manages climate finance expenditure through DCCAE Vote.

2020 EU Reference Scenario - Modelling

There is a complex EU modelling framework that is used by the European Commission to assess the impacts of varying levels of ambition in emissions reduction on the EU as a whole and for individual Member States. To date the modelling baseline has been the *2016 EU Reference Scenario*. The Commission is updating this scenario to develop the *2020 EU Reference Scenario*. This has resulted in the re-establishment of an EU Reference Scenario Expert Group, comprised of European Commission and Member State experts. This Department, the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport and the Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine are currently represented on this group. This Department coordinates Ireland's engagement.

A key objective of the group is to ensure that Member States' policies and specificities are well reflected in the new modelling framework and analysis. The first and only meeting to date of the 2020 Expert Group took place in November 2019. Member States were invited to submit responses to a detailed policy questionnaire by 29 January 2020 to identify existing and planned measures relevant to climate policy. With a key input being Ireland's final National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP), which is subject to Government approval, we have been delayed in submitting our response. As coordinator, DCCAIE has notified the Commission of this delay.

It was agreed with with the European Commission that we would submit a response to the questionnaire regarding measures in place by 15 June 2020 with further material to follow upon government approval of the final NECP. A bilateral meeting took place on 19 June 2020 between the Commission and relevant Government Departments to provide an opportunity to discuss with the Commission the policies and measures and other analytical inputs to be considered in the development of the new reference scenario.

Air Quality, Noise and Environment Radiation Policy Unit

Head of Division

Terry Dunne

Overview of Division

The division manages and implements air quality, noise and radiation protection policy. A significant part of this work is achieved through the transposition and implementation of EU Directives. The division manages Ireland's participation in, and compliance with, international conventions on air quality and noise, supported by the Environmental Advisory and Research Unit of the Department.

Priorities

1. Publication of National Clean Air Strategy.
2. Manage and coordinate Ireland's participation at the Convention for Nuclear Safety 2020 (CNS), the International Convention on Nuclear Security 2020 (ICONS), and the Review of the Non-Proliferation Treaty Conference (NPT).
3. Continue to develop and implement policy and legislation to mitigate public health and well being from the harmful effects of Environmental Noise.

Key Issues/Work Programme

Air Quality

The division manages and implements Departmental policy matters relating to air quality. This includes oversight of implementation of the National Emission Ceilings (NEC) and EU Directives which set limits on emissions of key pollutants and maximum concentration levels in ambient air for a range of priority pollutants that impact on human health. They also set minimum assessment and measurement requirements. Air quality monitoring is carried out by the EPA.

Smoky Coal Ban

Previous Ministers signalled their intention to extend the existing domestic solid fuel/smoky coal ban nationwide. However, in May 2018, three coal companies from outside the State threatened legal action in response to any such move, threatening not only the national extension but also the existing ban. Legal advice from external counsel engaged by Attorney General indicated that as the ban does not encompass peat and wood, there is a real risk it would (absent further evidence as to their lesser public health impacts) "*very likely be found to contravene Article 36 TFEU*", and expose the State to significant levels of damages. This delayed any extension of the ban until December 2019 when a decision was taken by Government to introduce a partial extension, to 13 new towns, to take effect from September 2020. This extended the existing ban to all conurbations with a population in excess of 10,000. The process of drafting the necessary Regulations is currently under way.

Clean Air Strategy (CAS)

The Department has been working on Ireland's first National Clean Air Strategy, to provide a strategic policy framework to identify and promote integrated measures to reduce air pollution and promote cleaner air, while also delivering on wider social and economic objectives. It will contain measures aimed at pollution from a range of sources, including the agriculture, transport, and residential sectors. While implementation of the strategy and air quality

measures in general may incur some costs, these must be weighted against the significant ongoing cost of air pollution.

National Air Pollution Control Programme (NAPCP)

The NAPCP sets out Ireland's proposed pathway to meeting its 2020 and 2030 emissions targets under the NEC Directive. A draft NAPCP was submitted to the European Commission in April 2019, and the final version was submitted in February this year. As EPA projections indicate that Ireland is not on course to meet its 2020 and 2030 obligations for a number of target pollutants (ammonia, NOx and NMVOCs), a second NAPCP will be need to be submitted by September 2020. Of these pollutants, ammonia is of greatest concern. 99% of Ireland's ammonia emissions come from agriculture.

Radiation Policy

This division contributes to the Department's efforts to achieve a high quality environment through effective nuclear safety and environment (radiation) protection including transposition of relevant Directives.

The division is also responsible for managing the development of effective environmental radiation policy and legislation. The division ensures that Ireland's position is properly communicated at national and international level through active participation in international conventions relating to nuclear policy under the auspices of bodies such as the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA).

Euratom Treaty

The peaceful use of nuclear energy within the EU is governed by the 1957 Euratom Treaty, which established the European Atomic Energy Community (Euratom). While Euratom is a separate legal entity from the EU, it is governed by the EU's institutions.

The European Commission deals with nuclear activities from three angles:

1. nuclear safety is about the safe operation of nuclear installations. It is complemented by radiation protection and radioactive waste management;
2. nuclear safeguards are measures to ensure that nuclear materials are used only for the purposes declared by the users; and
3. nuclear security relates to the physical protection of nuclear material and installations against intentional malicious acts.

As a member of Euratom, Ireland is required to meet its legislative and reporting requirements including through the transposition into national law of various Directives on nuclear safety, radioactive waste management etc.

Relationship with the UK on Radiological Matters

The UK has formally exited from the terms of the Euratom Treaty in addition to the European Union. During the transition phase, the UK and the UK nuclear industry remain subject to oversight by the EU institutions.

However, post-Brexit, the UK will, like Ireland, continue to be a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) which establishes and monitors adherence to standards on nuclear safety, security and safeguards. Through the various conventions, partnerships, agreements and inter-Governmental Treaties under the auspices of the IAEA, Ireland will continue to play a role in directly analysing and peer-reviewing UK nuclear safety procedures to ensure that the UK meets its international obligations. Participation by Ireland at the IAEA and at other international fora will become increasingly important post-Brexit.

The UK-Ireland Contact Group on Radiological Matters, comprising officials from UK and Irish Government Departments and scientific agencies responsible for ensuring radiological safety, will continue to meet biannually to discuss matters of interest to both parties; including existing and planned nuclear installations, transport of radiological materials

and long term strategies to safely store radiological and nuclear waste. The Group last met in London in November 2019.

It has been agreed with the UK that an Irish delegation, comprising representatives from DCCAE and the EPA, will visit the Sellafield complex to assess progress in the decommissioning of the facility.

UK new nuclear build

Eight proposed sites for new nuclear power plants have been identified by the UK Government. The Government asked the Radiological Protection Institute of Ireland (RPII), now merged with the EPA, to prepare a report on the potential radiological implications for Ireland from the proposed new nuclear power plants in the United Kingdom.

A principal finding of the report, published in May 2013, is that the routine operation of the proposed nuclear power plants will have no measurable radiological impact on Ireland or the Irish marine environment. This report continues to inform Irish engagement on the UK new nuclear build programme.

Radon and the National Radon Control Strategy

Radon gas is linked to approximately 300 lung cancer deaths in Ireland each year and is responsible for more lung cancer cases than any other factor except smoking. Efforts to promote radon testing in homes and businesses, and to carry out remediation works where necessary, are ongoing.

A four-year National Radon Control Strategy (NCRS) was published in 2014. It contained 30 recommended actions, while another was subsequently added. The Strategy had a four-year timeframe, from April 2014 to April 2018. The second phase of the NCRS, covering the period 2019 to 2024, has started with themes including radon prevention in new buildings and the use of property transactions to drive action. The priorities under Phase 2, currently being rolled out, are as follows:

1. Translating awareness into action;
2. Supporting householders financially;
3. Government regulation; and
4. Passive prevention systems.

Noise

Environmental noise is ‘unwanted or harmful sound’ arising from all areas of human activity. Although noise is a product of many human activities, the most widespread sources of environmental noise exposure in Ireland are those from transport. The World Health Organisation has identified noise as an important public health issue and the second most significant environmental cause of ill-health in western Europe, after air pollution. Research is underway in Ireland considering the health impacts in a national context. The Department promotes the proactive management of noise where it is likely to have significant adverse effects on health and quality of life and supports the aims of the Environmental Noise Directive 2002/49/EC. The Environmental Noise Regulations 549/2018 focus on three action areas:

- the determination of exposure to environmental noise;
- ensuring that information on environmental noise and its effects is made available to the public; and
- preventing and reducing environmental noise where necessary and preserving environmental noise quality where it is good.

A key priority in 2020 will be initiating the transposition of three new pieces of EU Legislation. The Department is also scoping out the possibility of establishing a Noise Policy Statement for Ireland to set out a long term vision of Government noise policy, to promote good health and a good quality of life through the effective management of noise.

Environment Policy Division

Head of Function

Les Carberry

Overview of Division

This division is responsible for the promotion of Sustainable Development Goals and overseeing their coherent implementation across Government. It also manages the Environment Fund which supports environmental initiatives. The fund is supported by the Plastic Bag Levy and the Landfill Levy and revenue into the fund is expected to be in the region of €12.6 million in 2020.

Priorities

1. In relation to Sustainable Development Goals, the priorities are to conclude the outstanding actions from the current plan; continue stakeholder engagement and launch stakeholder consultation on the development of the next National Implementation Plan 2021-2023, with a view to publishing same in Q4 2020.
2. In relation to the Environment Fund, finalise 2020 allocations, having regard to diminishing fund reserves and revenues, and the fact that bids significantly exceed available funding.
3. Working with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government on implications following the striking down of January 2019 Peat Extraction Regulations by the High Court in October 2019.

Key Issues/Ongoing Work Programme

New Environmental Levies

A Review of the Environment Fund was completed in November 2019 and a public consultation was then initiated, on the basis of a three-phase programme for the introduction of new environmental levies. New and/or additional measures in relation to coffee cups, plastic bags and waste recovery and export activities were planned for the first phase in 2020/21. This consultation is now closed. The submissions received are currently being analysed and Regulatory Impact Assessments (RIAs) on changes to the Plastic Bag Levy and a Coffee Cup Levy are in preparation. Both the consultation submissions and the RIAs will be reflected in any final proposals to Government for approval of the new levies. Proceeds from any levies introduced will go to the Environment Fund, and their introduction will require a mix of primary and secondary legislation. It is proposed that changes to the Plastic Bag Levy will be the first measure introduced.

Environmental Awareness/Litter

The Department provides a range of grant funding, on an annual basis, to environmental NGOs via the Irish Environmental Network and Environmental Pillar, the Green Schools programme and the Local Agenda 21 Scheme (LA21) to support environmental awareness. Funding is provided from the Environment Fund and 2020 funding will be submitted for approval as a part of the overall 2020 Environment Fund allocations process.

The Department also funds a range of anti-litter initiatives, again supported by the Environment Fund, including the National Litter Pollution Monitoring scheme which provides information on the national picture regarding litter pollution and the Local Authority Anti-Litter & Anti-Graffiti Awareness Grant Scheme which provides grants intended to assist local authorities in their efforts to raise awareness of the litter and graffiti problems in their respective functional areas.

Bioeconomy

DCCAE and DAFM co-chair a cross-Departmental Bioeconomy Implementation Group and are responsible for supporting the development of Ireland's bioeconomy. While a number of policy initiatives currently under development will require Ministerial/Government approval to progress (see below for further details) significant progress has been made during 2018/19 in establishing stakeholder relationships with industry and the research community. In March 2020, a meeting between the EIB's European Circular Bioeconomy Fund Meeting (ECBF) and Irish Bioeconomy Stakeholders was facilitated. The €250 million ECBF will provide access to finance for circular bioeconomy companies and projects of various sizes.

Aarhus Convention

This division has an oversight role for policy and legislation for the effective implementation of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters. In 2020 it will be necessary to submit draft Heads of an Aarhus Convention Bill to Government by Q3 2020 subject to progress on the Housing and Planning and Development Bill 2019.

Soils, GMO's and Chemicals

The division is responsible for the development and oversight of national and international environmental policy in the areas of soils, Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) and chemicals. Much of this work is developed at EU and UN level and coordinated nationally by the Department. This ensures that national strategies are developed which are in keeping with EU law and the requirements of UN Conventions signed by Ireland and which aim to protect and safeguard human health and the environment.

Work this year includes providing input into the development of a new Sustainable Chemical Strategy as part of the European Commission's European Green Deal, with DBEI acting as lead Department. In May

2020, the division published new national Regulations to implement the recast EU Persistent Organic Pollutant (POPs) Regulation.

In June, the division finalised new GMO regulations to give effect to EU Directive 2015/412. This provides Ireland with the right to prohibit or restrict the cultivation of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) on a wide variety of policy grounds including on the basis of socio-economic considerations.

Regarding mercury and the environment, the Department is continuing to engage with key stakeholders including the EU; the Department of Health; the Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authorities (WERLAs); the HSE; and the EPA to ensure the ongoing enforcement of the Mercury Regulations and ensuring Ireland complies with its obligations under the UN Minamata Convention.

Meeting cancellations in 2020 due to COVID 19 means that the division will participate in a large number of international meetings in 2021:

1. The tenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties serving as the meeting of the Parties to the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety (COP-MOP 10), May 2021 (TBC).
2. The Fifth International Conference on Chemicals Management (ICCM5) July 5 - 9 2021 (TBC),
3. Meetings of the Conferences of the Parties (COP) to the Basel, Rotterdam and Stockholm conventions on 19 to 30 July 2021 (TBC)
4. Meeting of the Minamata Convention on 30 October - 5 November 2021.

Governance and Oversight of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

DCCAE has responsibility for oversight of the governance of the Agency, and for monitoring the performance delivery agreement. It also has responsibility for the management of the Agency's Vote and Environment Fund allocations. An OECD review of the agency has recently been completed.

Bioeconomy

The Bioeconomy Forum is to be launched (subject to joint Ministerial approval of arrangements by the Minister for Communication, Climate Action and Environment and the Minister for Agriculture, Food and Marine). Preparatory work is also under way regarding the development of a National Bioeconomy Strategy 2021-2025.

Peat Extraction

Regulations introduced in January 2019 by both the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment and the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government had the net effect of making the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) the single competent authority for monitoring large-scale peat extraction through its Integrated Pollution Control (IPC) licencing process. They also had the effect of exempting large scale peat extraction (+30 hectares) from planning permission.

In April 2019, Friends of the Irish Environment (FIE), by way of a judicial review, sought a stay on the operation of both sets of regulations. The hearing of the substantive case took place in September 2019 and a ruling was delivered in favour of FIE. The judgement set aside both of the 2019 regulations with immediate effect.

As a result of the judgement, the regulatory system for large scale peat extraction has reverted to that which applied before the introduction of the 2019 regulations, i.e. one based primarily on the planning system. In order to regularise the planning status of their activities, both Bord na Móna (BnM) and large scale private operators will be required to seek substitute consent from An Bord Pleanála under the Planning Acts.

BnM received leave to apply for substitute consent from An Bord Pleanála on 1 May 2020 and submitted applications for substitute consent in early June. BnM has suspended peat harvesting pending the decision by An Bord Pleanála.

Environment Advisory and Research Unit

Head of Function

Errol Close, Principal Advisor

Overview of Division

The Environment Advisory and Research Unit provides technical and scientific advice to the various policy units.

The work priorities of the unit cuts across the agendas of many divisions within the Department. EAU works closely with all the administrative units in the Climate Action and Environment sector, as well as the Waste Policy and Energy divisions. The areas advised on include climate change, air, noise, chemicals management, soil, pollution prevention, waste policy, resource efficiency and the circular economy.

In addition to supporting the work of the policy units, EAU has a role in co-ordinating engagement with the research sphere in Ireland, including researchers, research funders and Department of Business, Enterprise and Innovation under the National Strategy for Research and Innovation and the Horizon programmes. The unit is also the national contact point for the EU LIFE programme funding climate and environment projects and the EU Innovation Fund.

The unit also has a role as a functionally independent Decision Maker responsible for carrying out environmental screening and any environmental assessments determined as being required following screening, in accordance with the requirements of national and EU legislation, related to oil and gas exploration activities and activities related to production, i.e. Corrib.

Priorities

1. Continue to provide high quality, timely advice to client divisions in the Department.
2. Deliver a research framework to co-ordinate the Department's input to research activity and to maximise the benefit of research to policy making.
3. Support the successful engagement of Irish

projects with the EU LIFE programme and EU Innovation Fund to maximise funding to Irish projects.


4. Maximise the recertification of F-Gas individuals and companies in advance of the end of the transition period for the UK's withdrawal from the EU.

Key Issues/Ongoing Work Programme

LIFE Programme

The LIFE programme is the only EU funding programme exclusively dedicated to the environment, nature protection and climate action.

The LIFE Programme was launched in 1992. To date 63 'traditional' projects (which are the normal scale of projects in LIFE) led by Irish organisations have been funded. The total drawdown of EU financing by these projects is approximately €70million.

In addition, agreements for two Integrated projects (one water and one nature) which are more significant projects leading to the implementation of national policy were signed in 2019 with a combined drawdown of €21.5million. 

A call for project proposals is launched in April every year. The current 2020 call is the last one under the current Regulation. The Department is engaging prospective applicants to support their applications and held a virtual LIFE information day in June. LIFE has a budget of €3.4 billion for 2014-2020, and the Commission has proposed an increase to €5.45 billion for the period 2021-2027 (subject to MFF discussions).

Under the seven years of the new LIFE regulation there will be two multi annual work programmes (MAWP) – the first for four years and the second for three years – which set out the framework for the annual calls including allocation of funding and the

criteria/areas for target for the calls. In addition to the existing Climate and Environment sub-programmes, it will also introduce a third sub-programme focused on the 'Clean Energy Transition'. The first MAWP will be finalised in 2020 which this division will feed into.

Innovation Fund

The Innovation Fund is a new fund established by regulation in 2019 and is funded through allowances taken from the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (EU-ETS) with a possible value for EU Member States of €10 billion over the 10 years to 2030. The Commission is currently focused on the design of the first call for projects to be launched in July 2020, with a subsequent call for small scale projects (<€7.5m) to follow in late 2020/early 2021. The unit is engaging with this process whilst seeking to raise awareness of the fund with potential Irish projects.

Given that this is a new programme there have been no successful applications as yet and the focus of the Department as a national contact point has been on seeking to raise awareness of the fund amongst industry; the role it could play in funding projects in advance of the first calls this year and to seek feedback on the development of the fund.

The fund will support projects in the area of renewable energy; carbon capture utilisation and storage; energy storage and energy intensive industry to reduce GHG emissions.

Research

The unit manages the Department's engagement with the EPA Research Programme which in 2020 will include inputting to the process by which the EPA develops its new research strategy for post 2020.

The unit continues to seek opportunities to strengthen the Department's engagement with the broader research community in relation to environment and climate research and to better align research with policy makers.

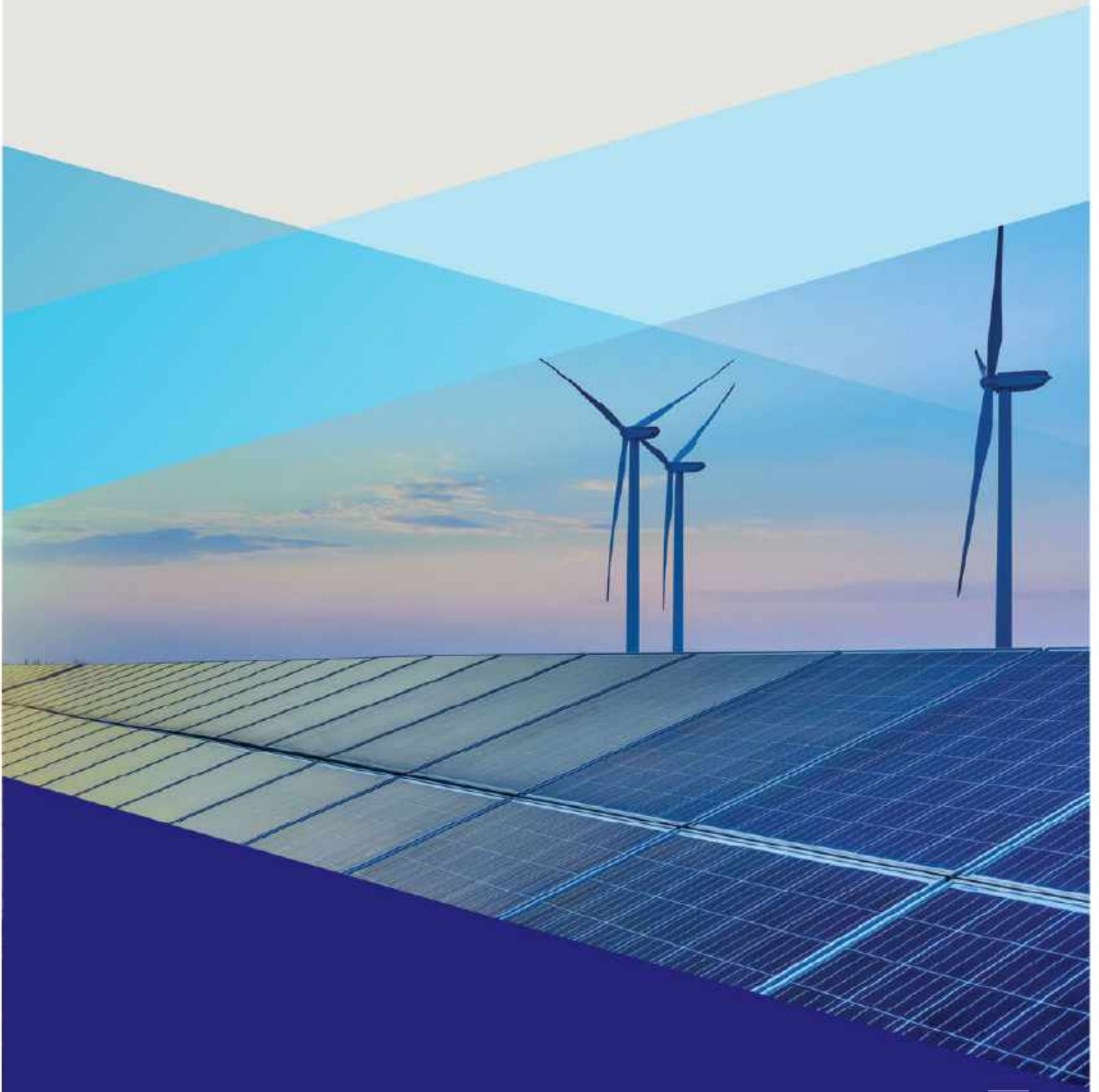
The unit is also co-ordinating the Department's input into the DBEI processes around the successor to the National Research and Innovation Strategy (Innovation 2020) and DBEI inter-departmental groups on EU funding such as Horizon 2020 and its successor Horizon Europe, including as the representative on the climate mission process under Horizon Europe.

Environmental Assessment

EAU will continue to provide the functionally independent environmental assessment process for any oil and gas exploration or production related activity applications as they arise and is currently retendering for the environmental consultancy services to support that brief.



Energy



Ireland's energy policy has three core objectives: sustainability, security of supply and competitiveness. These objectives apply across the energy sectors – electricity, heat and transport – each of which constitutes approximately one third of Ireland's energy requirement.

The objective is to ensure a secure, competitive and sustainable energy system which supports the transition to a low carbon economy while minimising costs. The transition will, over time, see the energy system change from one that is almost exclusively Government and utility led to one where citizens and communities will increasingly be participants in renewable energy generation, distribution and energy efficiency. In order to achieve this, the strategic focus of energy policy is:

- To develop national energy policy in the context of Climate Action Plan commitments for the sector.
- To optimise the opportunities presented by our onshore and offshore renewable energy potential.
- To ensure national energy policy alignment with the requirements of the European Clean Energy Package and policy objectives of the European Green Deal.

There is a significant EU dimension to the work of the energy sector and much of the policy and legislation derives from the EU. The European Commission's Clean Energy Package for All Europeans (CEP) (2018) sets out the EU energy model for the next ten years. As part of the CEP all EU countries are required to develop a National Energy and Climate Plan which includes trajectories for renewable energy and electricity, energy efficiency and national emissions. It also sets the policies and measures required to achieve these trajectories. The Department is currently finalising Ireland's National Energy and Climate Plan 2021–2030.

The European Commission adopted its 2020 work programme in late 2019 (revised in May 2020 to take account of COVID-19 impacts). It sets out the actions which the Commission will take in 2020 to turn six headline ambitions of the new Commission into concrete initiatives. These will then be negotiated and implemented in cooperation with the European Parliament, Member States and other partners. Two of the six initiatives relate directly to the work of this Department, one of which is in energy, the other telecommunications.

The communication on a new *European Green Deal*, was published in December 2019. The communication sets out the policy and legislative agenda for climate and environment in the new Commission's term and is framed as a new growth strategy that aims to transform the EU into a fair and prosperous society, with a modern resource-efficient and competitive economy where there are no net emissions of greenhouse gases in 2050, and where economic growth is decoupled from resource use.



ENERGY USE



ECONOMIC GROWTH
(modified domestic demand)

+1.7%



OVERALL ENERGY USE

+1.6%



ENERGY-RELATED CO₂ EMISSIONS

-1.2%

Energy-related CO₂ Emissions

Category	Change
Residential	+6.8%
Transport	+2.6%
Industry	+4.7%
Services	+6.4%

RENEWABLE ENERGY TARGETS



Notes: Figures are all 2018 compared with 2017, unless otherwise stated.



To download the full report, visit: www.seai.ie/press/energy-in-ireland

Transport

LARGEST ENERGY USERS



AIR TRAVEL

Energy use reached all time high in 2018



Heat

CO₂ emissions

from energy use for heat increased by

6.4%

Oil +7% | Gas +7% | Coal +4% | Peat +4%

Electricity

CO₂ IN TENSITY OF ELECTRICITY

-14%

to a new low of 375 gCO₂/kWh

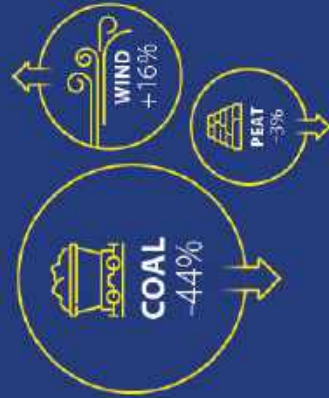
ELECTRICITY GENERATED

+2.9%

ENERGY USED FOR ELECTRICITY GENERATION

-4.0%

FUELS FOR ELECTRICITY GENERATION





Matt Collins
Assistant Secretary
Energy



Robert Deegan
Principal Officer
Residential Energy Efficiency



Eamonn Confrey
Principal Officer
Electricity Policy



Martin Finucane
Principal Officer
International & Offshore Energy



Kevin Brady
Principal Officer
Business Energy & Gas Policy



John O'Neill
Principal Officer
Transport Energy and Climate Action Fund



Úna Nic Giolla Choille
Principal Officer
Electricity Regulation

Residential Energy Efficiency Division

Head of Division

Robert Deegan

Overview of Division

The division's main function is to contribute towards achievement of our 2020 and 2030 energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) emissions targets as set out in the Climate Action Plan, National Energy and Climate Plan and Long Term Renovation Strategy.

This involves taking, promoting, and encouraging action to improve the energy efficiency of and ultimately decarbonisation of the residential sector.

The division is also responsible for implementing Government action on addressing energy poverty through the improvement of the energy efficiency of the home. This supports the achievement of measurable improvements in comfort, health outcomes and energy cost for those households.

Priorities

1. Effective oversight and management of the SEAI home and community energy efficiency support and grant schemes.
2. Support the Retrofit Taskforce in developing a plan to achieve our national retrofit targets and support the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government on delivering €20m retrofit scheme in the Midlands.
3. Transposition of relevant aspects of the 2018 Energy Efficiency Directive (EED) and compliance with relevant EED requirements.

Key Issues/Ongoing Work Programme

SEAI residential and Community Grant Schemes

Effective oversight and management of the capital funds allocated to the SEAI home and community energy efficiency grant schemes (approximately €118 million in 2020) including through:

- Analysis of expenditure and activity reports submitted by SEAI;
- Monthly review meetings with programme managers across the grant schemes.

Reform of grant schemes in line with the policy direction of the Climate Action Plan including:

- A review of the Warmer Homes Scheme to ensure that it is targeted at those most in need;
- The introduction of a new 'homes only' strand of the Better Energy Communities Scheme targeted at private homeowners. The key characteristics of this new strand will include:
 - One-stop shop approach including innovative financing approaches;
 - Aggregated delivery; and
 - B2 or cost optimal level of retrofit.

Design of reforms to the Better Energy Homes Scheme that will facilitate a 'bundling of measures' approach to facilitate homeowners undertaking deeper retrofits in 2020. This will cut down on the administrative burden for the homeowner and will promote the concept of whole house retrofits leading to more fuel switching and aid in the transition to the new retrofit model envisaged by the Retrofit Task Force.

Management of the Warmth and Wellbeing research project.

Reduction of Greenhouse Gas Emissions

The division supports the Retrofit Taskforce and subgroups in the development of a plan to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from the residential sector from 6Mt CO₂e in 2017 to 3-4Mt CO₂e in 2030.

The Climate Action Plan indicates that this will be achieved through the retrofitting 500,000 homes to Building Energy Rating B2/cost optimal or carbon equivalent and the installation of 400,000 heat pumps in existing buildings by 2030. Development of the plan will be focused on four key pillars as follows, each underpinned by principles of quality and fairness:

- Enhanced customer/homeowner propositions;
- Scale-up of the supply chain and skills availability;
- Financing and funding the retrofit programme; and
- Programme design, delivery, evaluation and governance at the national and local level.

The division assists the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government with the design and implementation of a pilot aggregated retrofit scheme in the midlands, focussed on social housing but providing opportunities for private homeowners to participate. This is funded through a budget allocation from ring-fenced carbon tax receipts of €20 million in the DHPLG Vote.

Maximising the potential for the Building Energy Rating (BER) system to help householders decarbonise their building by:

- Development of initiatives to increase the number of homes with BER certs; and
- Introduction in 2020 of a newly designed advisory report for Building Energy Ratings (BER) to make it easier for householders to engage in energy efficiency activity through the provision of easy to understand information with signposts to supports and grants available.

Transposition of relevant aspects of the 2018 Energy Efficiency Directive

This includes consultation on how to meet Ireland’s Article 7 energy savings targets; design of any new policies and measures to meet the Article 7 targets, including a revised energy efficiency obligation scheme on energy suppliers and drafting of new legislation to implement the Directive.

The Energy Efficiency Directive (EED) aims to moderate energy demand across the EU. The target is a 32.5% reduction in 2030 measured against a projection made in 2007 for 2030. It is non-binding

but each Member State must contribute to it. In the latest modelling for our NECP, Ireland will be putting forward an ambitious and challenging contribution representing a 38.9% reduction against projections for Ireland made in 2007.


Article 7 is one of the binding target requirements within the Energy Efficiency Directive. The target for Article 7 is an end-use energy savings target – i.e. the policies used must result in measurable and verifiable savings. For Ireland, achievement of our 2030 Article 7 target is equivalent to 3MT of CO₂ abatement. A revised obligation scheme will be designed to help achieve the retrofit and carbon reduction targets set out in the Climate Action Plan.

Other Work

- Oversight of the existing Energy Efficiency Obligation Scheme.
- Preparation of residential chapters of a Long Term Renovation Strategy.
- Work with the International Energy Agency in relation to the Global Commission for Urgent Action on Energy Efficiency

Activity to date

Since 2000 over 400,000 homes across Ireland have been upgraded with support from Government funding provided by DCCAE through the SEAI. Separately, over 71,000 Local Authority Homes have been upgraded to end 2019 under the Social Housing Retrofitting Programme. The table below presents the number of homes upgraded for the past 5 years across the SEAI-funded schemes.



	2015		2016		2017		2018		2019	
	Homes Completed	Amount Paid (€)	Homes Completed	Amount Paid (€)	Homes Completed	Amount Paid (€)	Homes Completed	Amount Paid (€)	Homes Completed	Amount Paid (€)

*Number of additional non residential or 'non domestic' buildings completed under the BEC programme – counted separate to homes

Electricity Policy Division

Head of Division

Eamonn Confrey

Overview of Division

The division is responsible for the progressive delivery of renewable electricity targets and facilitating the growth and diversification of renewable electricity technologies to 2030 and beyond, in line with the Climate Action Plan.

The division is also responsible for overseeing delivery of appropriate grid infrastructure/network development and future interconnection policy.

Priorities

1. Complete the first Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) Auction by July 2020.
2. Assess possible support mechanisms for micro-generation differentiated by market segment including the completion of a public consultation and call for evidence on the basis of that assessment.
3. Decide on the future of the Solar PV Scheme, in light of budgetary challenges and ensuring alignment with the policy approach for an enduring micro-generation support framework.
4. Determine and execute the State's compliance strategy for the 2009 Renewable Energy Directive (RED) which is likely to require an appropriate level of Exchequer funding to enable the purchase of statistical transfers.

Key Issues/Ongoing Work Programme

Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS)

Deliver on the RESS-1 auction timetable for the first half of this year (H1) in order to achieve first auction completion by July 2020.

In H2 the priority will be to oversee auction result publication, commence the operational elements for RESS-1 and commence RESS-2 auction design.

RESS Community Enabling Framework

Prioritise which pillars from the community framework can realistically be delivered in 2020. Current area of focus is on the Community Benefit Fund, Community preference category in RESS-1 auction and working with the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) to deliver capacity building (supports) in local communities to facilitate renewable energy generation.

Renewable Energy Directive (RED) 2009 Compliance

Determine and execute the State's compliance strategy for RED which will require engagement with the European Commission and relevant Member States on statistical transfers, along with securing an appropriate level of Exchequer funding to enable the purchases required.

Micro-Generation

Assess possible support mechanisms for micro-generation differentiated by market segment including the completion of a public consultation and call for evidence on the basis of that assessment.

Solar PV Scheme

Decision required urgently to secure additional funding for the Scheme in 2020 or implement measures to manage existing 2020 commitments, given the acute budgetary position. This follows a 'surge' in applications in December 2019.

Wind Energy Guidelines

Represent the Department's interests in the finalisation of the Wind Energy Guidelines being led by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government. The Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) public consultation closed on 19 February and approximately 500 submissions were received. These will now be subject to detailed review and analysis by both DHPLG and DCCAE.

Assess implications for the onshore wind industry based on consultation feedback and for the achievement of 70% Renewable Energy Sources from electricity (RES-E) ambition by 2030.

National Smart Metering Programme

Oversee the phased roll-out of replacement smart meters which is being led by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities and project-managed by ESB Networks. Phase 1 will see 250,000 meters installed by end-2020.

International and Offshore Division

Head of Division

Martin Finucane

Overview of Division

This division is responsible for framing the policy development for offshore renewable energy including existing commitments to connect at least 3.5GW of offshore wind by 2030.

Priorities

1. Finalise Ireland's National Energy and Climate Plan for the period 2021-2030.
2. Enactment of Marine Planning Development Management Bill (led by D/HPLG).
3. Commence planning for offshore wind auction in 2021 and subsequent auctions.

Key Issues/Ongoing Work Programme

Offshore Renewable Energy

This division is working closely with the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government on the development of a new, streamlined consenting regime for offshore renewable energy called the Marine Planning and Development Management Bill (MPDM). At present, only offshore renewable energy projects within the limits of the foreshore (12 nautical miles) may be licenced under the Foreshore Act 1933, as amended. The Foreshore Act is administered by the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government.

The enactment of the Bill will provide a modern, up-to-date regulatory and marine planning framework for offshore renewable energy developments beyond the limits of the foreshore (12 nautical miles).

This will be an important foundation for investment in the offshore renewable energy sector as well as providing a more transparent, participative system for all marine stakeholders. The General Scheme was approved by Government in December 2019. The Bill has since been published and will go to pre-legislative scrutiny as soon as the new Committee structures are set up.

The division chairs a Working Group on the Framework for Offshore Electricity Grid. This group is assessing the options available for a suitable offshore grid model for Ireland allowing us to develop an offshore grid model informed by and aligned to Government policies such as the National Marine Planning Framework (a maritime spatial plan being developed by Department of Housing and Planning). Informed by expert advice and public consultation, the group will provide a recommendation for Government decision on offshore grid later this year, in line with the Climate Action Plan.

To support a route to market for offshore wind, the division has commenced work on the terms and conditions of holding an offshore specific Renewable Electricity Support Scheme (RESS) auction in Q2 2021

pending sufficient competitive projects being available. The intention is to have a separate auction for offshore wind under the overall RESS framework.

Ireland's Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (OREDPP) published in 2014 sets out key principles, policy actions and enablers for delivery of Ireland's significant potential in this area. The OREDPP provides a framework for the sustainable development of Ireland's offshore renewable energy resources. This division will commence a full review of the Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan in mid-2020.

Governance Regulation and NECP

The division is the file holder for the Governance of the Energy Union Regulation and are considering how best to implement and transpose, as necessary, this and other relevant instruments of the Clean Energy Package, recognising that further changes may emerge through the European Green Deal Package.

The National Energy and Climate Plan, 2021-2030, is one of the key provisions of the Governance of the Energy Union Regulation. The NECP includes trajectories for renewable energy (including renewable electricity), energy efficiency and national emissions, as well as setting out the policies and measures required to achieve these trajectories. The final plan will be formally submitted to the European Commission further to a final public consultation and Government approval. The final NECP was due for submission by end 2019. As of June 2020, Ireland is the only Member State that had not submitted their final NECP to the Commission. The Commission have been updated on an ongoing basis on the reasons for this and have been provided with key data to allow them carry out an overall assessment of compliance with 2030 targets at an EU level. Submission of the NECP to the Commission is urgent.

International and European Energy Policy

The division is responsible for the management and coordination of Ireland's contribution to the development of EU and International energy policy.

This involves preparation for Energy Council and informal meetings of energy Ministers. The division provides support to our energy attaché in Brussels in respect of energy working group meetings. The European Green Deal is expected to re-open some Clean Energy work packages (the renewable energy and energy efficiency packages).

Ireland is a member of the North Seas Energy Cooperation. The development of an offshore grid linking the countries in the North Seas region (Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Sweden and previously the United Kingdom up to Brexit) is a long-standing energy policy priority for Ireland and the EU. The division represents Ireland on each of the four steering groups together with the general coordinators group and provides briefing in respect of the North Seas Ministerial.

Business Energy and Gas Policy Division

Head of Division

Kevin Brady

Overview of Division

The division's responsibilities can be categorised into two areas – business energy policy (which encompasses energy efficiency and renewable heat in the non-residential sector) and gas policy (which also includes electricity security of supply and safety).

Priorities

1. Review the security of energy supply of Ireland's electricity and natural gas systems, developing a business case for a market support for renewable gas; a policy framework for district heating; a long-term renovation strategy for the national stock of buildings, and carrying out a review to inform the development of a comprehensive building retrofit programme for the public sector.
2. Transpose and implement European directives and regulations in particular elements of the EU's Clean Energy Package.
3. Overseeing the implementation of policy including capital support schemes for energy efficiency in the public sector, energy efficiency in the commercial sector and renewable heat in the commercial sector.

Key Issues/Ongoing Work Programme

Business Energy Policy

Ireland has a target of 20% improvement in energy efficiency by 2020 – within which the public sector has a target of 33% (increasing to 50% by 2030).

Ireland also has a target of 12% of heat energy to come from renewable sources by 2020. This contributes to Ireland's overall 16% target for renewable energy by 2020. National targets in energy efficiency and renewable energy for the period up to 2030 will be set as part of Ireland's National Energy and Climate Plan.

The division develops policies and provides funding to support the non-residential sector's contribution to the energy efficiency and renewable heat targets. This includes:

- Overseeing the implementation of the Public Sector Energy Efficiency Strategy including providing €9 million of capital supports via the SEAI;
- Completing a review to inform the development of a comprehensive building retrofit programme for the public sector in the context of the target of upgrading all public sector buildings to a BER B rating by 2030;
- Completing and submitting to the European Commission the Long Term Renovation Strategy which will set out how Ireland will mobilise investment in the renovation of the national stock of residential and commercial buildings;
- Overseeing the €5 million capital support programme provided to the commercial sector which primarily consists of the Excellence in Energy Efficient Design (EXEED) scheme ensuring an energy efficiency design management process is followed;
- Completing the first annual tariff review of the Support Scheme for Renewable Heat (SSRH) which is operated by SEAI and financially supports the adoption of renewable heating systems by non-residential heat users through the provision of an installation grant for heat pumps and an

operational support – paid over a period of 15 years – for biomass boilers and anaerobic digestion heating systems;

- Developing the necessary secondary legislation to implement the renewable heat elements of the European Union’s Renewable Energy Directive.
- Developing a policy framework for district heating in Ireland;
- Carrying out the Minister’s role as Market Surveillance Authority in relation to energy efficiency and progressing the legal reallocation of this role to SEAI.

Gas Policy

Natural gas provides over 30% of Ireland’s energy needs, heating and powering 700,000 homes and businesses and generating over 50% of electricity. The phasing out of electricity generation from peat and coal will lead to an increase in natural gas use in the near term and increase its importance to the operation and stability of our electricity supply.

The operation of the gas network in Ireland is the responsibility of Gas Networks Ireland which is regulated by the Commission for Regulation of Utilities. The division is focused on developing gas policy and policy in relation to electricity security of supply and safety. This includes:

- Working to ensure the post Brexit EU/UK framework provides for continued security of supply of natural gas from the UK to Ireland (including in emergency situations such as supply shortages);
- Carrying out a review of the security of energy supply of Ireland’s electricity and natural gas systems with a focus on the period to 2030 in the context of ensuring a sustainable pathway to 2050. The review will include a full updated technical analysis of the security of supply challenges and a public consultation. The outcome of the review will inform future policy;
- Developing the necessary secondary legislation to implement European gas policy and security of supply policy including the Gas Directive, the

elements of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive relating to gas, the Gas Security of Supply Regulation and the Electricity Risk Preparedness Regulation;

- Developing a business case for a potential market intervention to incentivise the production (and injection into the gas network) of renewable gas and examining the potential future role of hydrogen in the decarbonisation of the gas network;
- Consideration of the role of hydrogen in the decarbonisation of the natural gas network in the context of the upcoming European Commission strategy on hydrogen; and
- Developing the regulatory framework for gas and electricity safety including potential changes to the role of the Commission for Regulation of Utility in relation to liquefied petroleum gas (LPG) and liquefied natural gas (LNG).

Transport Energy and Climate Action Fund Division

Head of Division

John O'Neill

Overview of Division

The division's main responsibilities are the Climate Action Fund (CAF), transport energy and oil security of supply.

Priorities

1. Enacting primary legislation to amend the National Oil Reserves Agency (NORA) Act 2007 in order to create a legislative basis for the Climate Action Fund while also including the necessary provisions required on repurposing of the NORA levy so as to contribute to the fund.
2. Manage and monitor projects from first round of Climate Action Fund while putting in place the necessary arrangements to open a new round of funding for a second call for applications.
3. Work with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport on the new Low Emissions Vehicle Policy Pathway Group so as to inform the continued delivery of the charging infrastructure to support the roll out of Electric Vehicles (grants etc.) in accordance with targets set out in the Climate Action Plan.

Key Issues/Ongoing Work Programme

Climate Action Fund

In 2018 the Climate Action Fund (CAF) was created to support the funding of initiatives, by public and private bodies, which contribute to the achievement of Ireland's climate and energy targets in a cost effective manner.

The National Development Plan sets out an allocation of at least €500m for the CAF over the period to 2027, which will come from the NORA levy.

Initial funding of €21 million for the CAF was provided by repurposing monies from the Energy Efficiency National Fund. The Department has finalised a Bill to amend the National Oil Reserves Agency Act 2007 (NORA Act) to provide for the establishment of the CAF on a statutory basis and for the payment of a portion of the levy monies collected by NORA to the CAF. In the absence of the NORA levy payments to the CAF, it will not be possible to fully meet the existing commitments from the first round of funding nor will it be possible to progress the next round of funding. Enactment of the Bill is an urgent priority.

In late 2018, seven projects from the first call for funding were successful in applying for CAF support. Up to €77 million of support will be provided and this should leverage a total of €300 million investment. 2019 saw all these projects moving into the validation stage, during which projects have to meet certain criteria related to financial, environmental and legal requirements and commitments.

Three projects have now moved to delivery stage with a fourth project due to move to project delivery shortly. The first project to move to delivery stage was ESB e-cars with the CAF committing up to €10 million in support. This project will install new, modern electric vehicle chargers across the country as well as upgrade the existing charging network. To date some 140 of the existing chargers have already been replaced with more modern and reliable charging points. The project has also installed more advanced, and future

proofed, fast charger points. Although 2020 saw a slowdown due to COVID-19 restrictions, work has now recommenced in charger upgrade and rollout across the country.

In February 2020, the validation stage process for the €4.47 million support for the South Dublin County Council Tallaght District Heating Scheme was approved and the project moved to the delivery phase. This project, the first of its kind in Ireland, will see waste heat from a data centre used to heat surrounding buildings, including Tallaght IT and other civic buildings. It is envisaged that this may become an exemplar for other data centres in Ireland. A project from Irish Rail, testing hybrid railcars, has recently completed validation, with formal approval being provided to proceed to delivery. The Department will continue to progress the validation process on the remaining four projects over the coming months.

In Q1 2020, the Department held a call for Expressions of Interest in the next round of the CAF. This call received 191 submissions and will help inform the design of the next round(s) of funding. It is envisaged that the next round of funding will open for application later in 2020. An important priority for the Fund will be to support Bord na Móna's enhanced bog rehabilitation scheme as a key element of the overall Just Transition programme in the Midlands.

Transport Energy

Working closely with the Department of Transport, Tourism and Sport, as well as the SEAI, the division works to support the increased use of Low Emission Vehicles. The focus is predominantly on the uptake of electric vehicles (EVs) – there are currently c. 19,000 on the road - with a target of 936,000 by 2030. This is an ambitious target which will require very significant and sustained growth as well as continued Government measures and buy in.

The division develops policy for EV support, and funding is administered by the SEAI. The Government has allocated €36 million in 2020 for the promotion of EVs.

The division also manages Ireland's biofuels policy which in the short to medium term is the principal driver of decarbonisation in the transport sector. The Biofuels Obligation Scheme requires suppliers of road transport fuels to include a proportion of biofuels in their fuel sales each year. The current rate results in a reduction of 200,000 tonnes CO₂ annually in Ireland. The obligation rate has increased in recent years and as of January 2020 stands at 11%. This results in petrol in Ireland generally being produced with up to 5% bioethanol (called E5) and fossil diesel being blended with FAME (a type of biodiesel) up to a limit of 7% (called B7).

The division also works to support renewable energy sources in transport and Low Emission Vehicles such as those that use hydrogen, Compressed Natural Gas and Liquefied Natural Gas.

Oil Emergency Contingency Planning

In 2018 oil accounted for 48% of Ireland's primary energy requirement. In particular, Ireland still depends heavily on oil for transport with the overwhelming majority of private cars still being fuelled by petroleum products, along with virtually all commercial vehicles. Oil also remains the dominant fuel in the residential sector, accounting for 38% of the residential energy consumed in Ireland during 2018.

Under Ireland's membership of the EU and IEA the State is required to hold 90 days of strategic oil reserves. These reserves are managed by the National Oil Reserves Agency (NORA) and are available to be used in the event of an oil emergency. A release of stock from the States strategic reserve may only be authorised by the Minister and the division has developed procedures to allow for this approval in a timely manner, in the event of an emergency.

The division is currently updating the contingency plans to allow for Government to respond to a major oil emergency in the State, including developing a mechanism to enable the Minister to prioritise the supply of oil products to the emergency services

and to operators of critical infrastructure in order to safeguard the wellbeing and safety of the general public in the event of a serious oil emergency occurring. The division also attends international forum in relation to the oil markets and oil emergency planning at the IEA and EU.

NORA

The division provides oversight of NORA and their management of the States strategic oil reserve. NORA also has responsibility for the administration of the Biofuels Obligation Scheme, described above. NORA holds the majority of its strategic stocks within Ireland, with the remainder being held in the EU and UK. Under legislation, Irish stocks may only be held in countries with which Ireland has concluded bilateral agreements, and all storage contracts for stockholding abroad must be approved by the division.

NORA is currently completing the refurbishment of the Poolbeg Oil storage facility, to provide for the storage of diesel and heating kerosene close to the strategically important Dublin market, and in line with Government policy, is actively seeking opportunities elsewhere to increase the volume of strategic stocks held in Ireland.

National Level Emergency Planning

The division represents the Department at the Government Task Force on Emergency Planning, with DCCAIE being the lead Government Department with responsibility for the management of a number of emergency types, including those occurring with the energy and communication sectors and cyber and radioactive incidents. The division also attends the National Emergency Coordination Group, when convened, in response to a major emergency, such as severe weather and coordinates the Departments work with the Office of Emergency Planning.

Carbon Capture and Storage

In accordance with the Climate Action Plan, the Department has established an Inter-Departmental

Steering Group to examine the feasibility of the utilisation of Carbon Capture and Storage in Ireland, in particular Ervia's CCS project. Ervia's Project involves assessing the feasibility for a large-scale CCS project to capture CO₂ from a number of Irish gas-fired CCGT power plants and from energy intensive industries either to be stored in the depleted Kinsale Head Gas Field or to be exported for storage abroad. In 2019 Ervia signed an MOU with the Norwegian State controlled oil company Equinor to work jointly on CCS research and having been awarded Project of Common Interest (PCI) status by the EU in 2019, has recently applied for Connecting Europe Funding to progress further research into the projects feasibility.

Electricity Regulation Division

Head of Division

Úna Nic Giolla Choille

Overview of Division

The division has responsibility for policy and legislation in respect of the electricity market regulation functions of the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) as well as progressing and overseeing various tasks for the all island Single Electricity Market (SEM). The division also has responsibility for:

- overseeing compliance of the Irish electricity market regulatory framework with EU electricity regulatory legislation and policy, including implementation of three elements of the 2019 EU Clean Energy Package;
- development of Electricity Interconnector planning and consenting provisions for the Marine Planning and Development Management Bill;
- finalising engagement with the European Commission regarding the State Aid implications of a programme of works for the rehabilitation of Bord na Móna owned bogs, to be funded through the Climate Action Fund; and
- coordination of DCCAE contingency planning for Brexit, the EU/UK Future Trade Agreement and for the implementation of the NI protocol in the Withdrawal Agreement.

Priorities

1. Design and implementation of new rehabilitation scheme for Bord na Móna bogs
2. Ensure that the Departments sectors, its interests and positions are fully reflected in the Governments response to Brexit
3. Development of policy document on private wires, direct lines and distributed networks as required under Climate Action Plan

Key Issues/Ongoing Work Programme

The division's regulatory policy and legislative agenda is largely fixed on an ongoing basis by the requirements of EU legislation, during 2020 involving transposition and implementation of three legislative elements in the EU's 2019 Clean Energy Package (CEP). The division is therefore necessarily focussed on developing, drafting and securing enactment of these detailed provisions in domestic electricity legislation, and on enabling various related policy decisions to be taken, in order to avoid EU enforcement action. Other reforms of regulatory legislation being worked on flow mostly from Climate Action Plan driven actions, including Private Wires regulation (CAP Action 22), and Electricity Interconnector (IC) provisions for the Marine Planning and Development Management Bill.

The Clean Energy Package

The EU Commission's Clean Energy Package for All Europeans (CEP) (2018) sets out the EU electricity model for the next ten years. The legislative acts in the Clean Energy Package relating to electricity market design (Electricity Directive, Electricity Regulation, Risk Preparedness and ACER), were adopted in May 2019. This part of the package seeks to establish a modern design for the EU electricity market, adapted to the new realities of the market. The aim is to create a more flexible market and ensure that policies, measures and regulation are more market-oriented than previously, with a view towards integrating a greater share of renewables cost effectively and efficiently. The Directive on common rules for the internal market in electricity and the Regulation on the internal market for electricity are being led and coordinated by this division, with involvement and action required from other energy divisions in DCCAE, CRU, the SEM Committee, Eirgrid and ESB Networks.

Brexit

A separate note on Brexit is provided under cross cutting issues further on in this document. The EU's negotiating mandate was published on 25th February 2020 and included a statement that "the envisaged

partnership should ensure that issues arising from Ireland's unique geographic situation are addressed." The European Commission published its draft legal text on the Future EU-UK Partnership on 18th March 2020. Last month the UK published its approach to the negotiations; a draft legal text for free trade agreement; and sectoral documents, including a draft energy agreement.

This division is responsible for ensuring that the Department's sectors, its interests and positions are fully reflected in the Government's response to Brexit, the NI protocol and the Future Trade Agreement (FTA) and [REDACTED]

Design and Implementation of New Rehabilitation Scheme for Bord na Móna Bogs

Previous work in this area focused on the design of a new rehabilitation scheme for Bord na Móna electricity generation bogs, to be funded as a new Public Service Obligation (PSO) under Section 39 of the Electricity Regulation Act, 1999, as amended, and funded by electricity customers through the associated PSO Levy. Noting that the Act only provides for PSOs related to electricity generation and supply, such a new PSO would have been a radical change from existing PSOs provided for in the Act. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] decision was therefore made not to pursue the PSO route at this time, with funding instead to be provided through the Climate Action Fund. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] The division will however complete the discussions with DG COMP on the State Aid aspects.

Domestic Legislative Reform for Electricity Regulation in 2020

Develop in parallel the electricity IC provisions for the Marine Planning and Development Management Bill, together with implementation regulations and administrative procedures, and associated amendments to the IC sections in the 1999 Act.

Develop a pre-legislative policy document on Private Wires, Direct lines and Distributed Networks as preparation for possible legislative change to 1999 Act.

SEM and Wholesale Markets

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Ensure conditions in DG COMP's State Aid approval for the SEM capacity mechanism are adhered to and its requirements implemented in line with deadlines set in that approval.

[REDACTED]

EU Electricity Regulatory Legislative Compliance

Conduct full transposition and implementation of the three electricity regulatory elements of the Clean Energy Package (the Internal Market Electricity Directive, the Internal Market Electricity Regulation and the ACER Regulation).

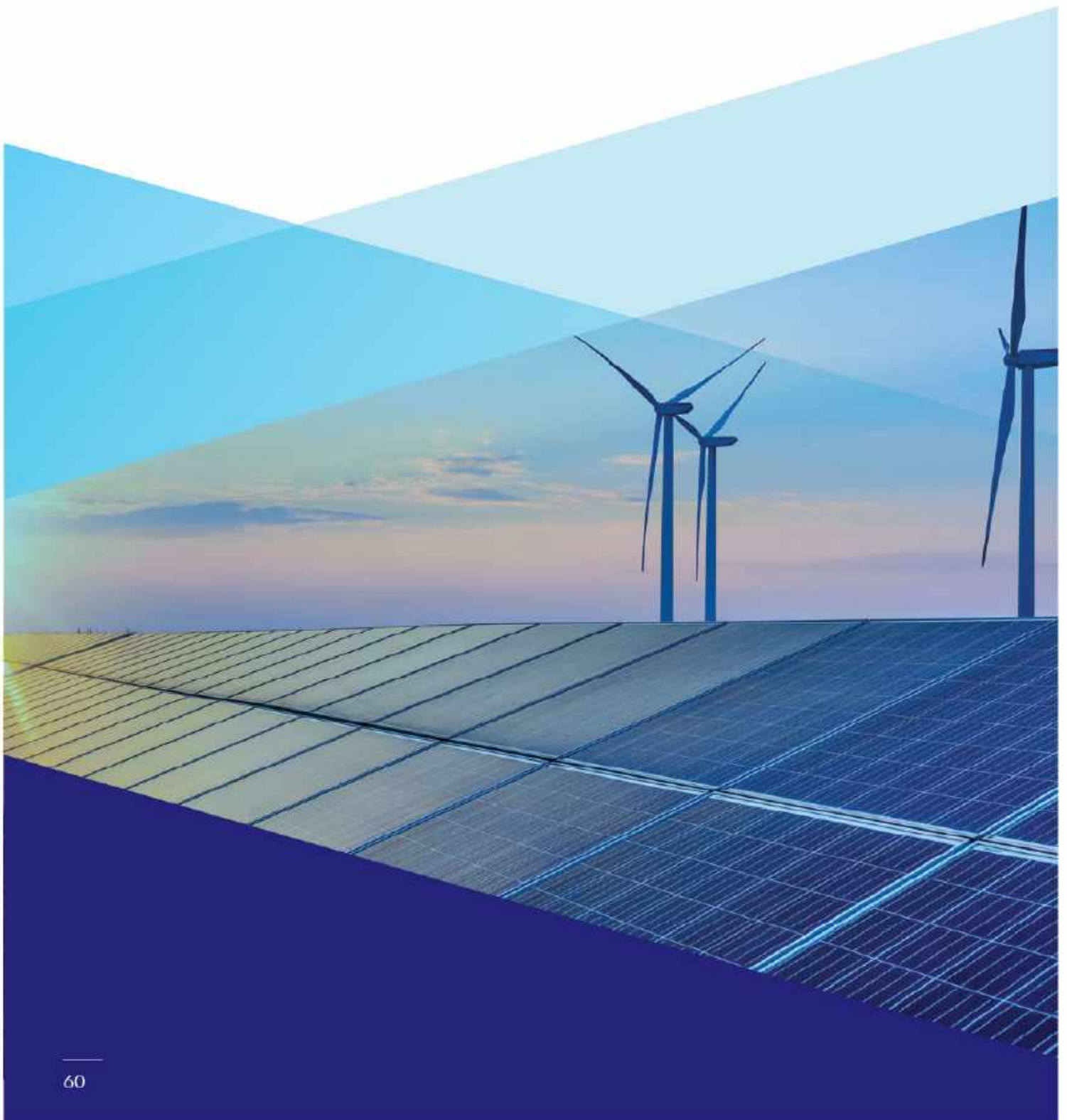
Ensure full implementation of the EU Third Energy Package in respect of Irish electricity market regulation, including any infringements and progress on regulatory aspects of the TSO certifications, applications and decisions.

Energy R&D

Promote energy research and development via the management of the C5 Energy Research expenditure subhead (2020 allocation for ESRI, IERC and SEAI schemes is €6.7 million).

Manage input to and performance of ESRI Energy Policy Research Centre. This research seeks to inform energy policy development.

Oversight and management of Irish Energy Research Council agreement. IERC multi annual funding matters may arise for decision in late summer or autumn.



Waste Policy and Natural Resources



Waste Policy and Natural Resources

Our environment and natural resources are essential to our quality of life and for the provision of a broad range of goods, services and amenities used in everyday life.

The sustainability of our natural environment underpins all other forms of activity. As the economy recovers, the responsible use of natural resources including energy sources, minerals and inland fish stocks continues to underpin the standard of living enjoyed by our citizens.

Ireland's policies in this area commit to protecting the environment and actively contributing to economic development by promoting sustainable development, resource efficiency and the Circular Economy. The focus is on:

- Mainstreaming sustainable development across Government and society.
- Transitioning to a more circular economy where the value of resources is maintained as long as possible and the generation of waste is minimised.
- Prioritising environmental protection especially in the areas of air quality and safe use of chemicals.
- The provision of high quality and reliable geoscience information.
- Fostering sustainable and productive exploration and development of Ireland's hydrocarbon resources in accordance with Government policy.



WASTE ACTION PLAN FOR A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The development of a Circular Economy, in which resources are kept in use for as long as possible and recycled at the end of service life, is an important part of the Climate Action Plan- the Government's plan to ensure we meet our 2030 climate commitments, putting us on a trajectory to be in net zero emissions position by 2050.

THE WASTE CHALLENGE



60% of greenhouse gas emissions come from our use of materials



More than 200kg of waste packaging, 59kg of which is plastic, is generated for every person every year in Ireland, this is above EU average.

Half of the material we use is not being segregated properly, two thirds of plastic used is not on the recycling list and labels are confusing.



Compliance levels need to be improved at household and commercial level in relation to waste management and segregation.



Food waste alone costs homeowners €700 a year and accounts for a loss of €1 billion to our enterprises. 70% of food waste is avoidable.



WASTE ACTION PLAN FOR A CIRCULAR ECONOMY

WASTE ACTION PLAN



Increase the amount of plastic packaging we recycle to 55% by 2030 **55% BY 2030**

Halve food waste by 2030
 This goal is reflected in the EU Circular Economy Legislative Package and the UN Sustainable Development Goals.



Increase recycling of municipal waste from 41% in 2016 to 55% by 2025, 60% by 2030 and 65% by 2035.



Limit amount of waste being disposed of to landfill to 10% by 2035



Environmental levies to target behaviour change



Cotton bud sticks, plastic cutlery, plates, chopsticks, stirrers and straws, polystyrene food and beverage containers and all oxo-degradable plastic products to be banned by July 2021.

By 2029, achieve a 90% collection target for non-recyclable beverage containers, including plastic bottles.





Philip Nugent
Assistant Secretary
Waste Policy and
Natural Resources



Kevin O'Donoghue
Principal Officer
Waste Policy
and Resource
Efficiency



Paul McDonald
Principal Officer
Waste Policy
and Resource
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Martina Hennessy
Principal Officer
Petroleum Affairs



Clare Morgan
*Head of PAD
Technical*
Petroleum Affairs



Eoin Deegan
Principal Officer
Exploration
and Mining



Koen Verbruggen
Director
Geological Survey
of Ireland



Denis Maher
Principal Officer
Inland Fisheries

Waste Policy & Resource Efficiency

Heads of Function

Kevin O'Donoghue
Paul McDonald

Overview of Division

The primary function of the Waste Policy and Resource Efficiency Division is to provide the policy and legislative framework for waste management in Ireland and the transition to the circular economy model of production and consumption.

Waste management services are generally delivered on a commercial basis in Ireland. Local authorities are responsible for waste planning, provision of some infrastructure, some regulation and enforcement. The Environmental Protection Agency is also responsible for some regulation and enforcement, as well as the National Waste Prevention Programme.

Priorities

1. Development and delivery of a new waste policy statement.
2. Household waste capacity and contingency arrangements for same.
3. Transposition of Circular Economy legislative package which sets new waste/recycling targets for Ireland.

Key Issues/Ongoing Work Programme

Household Waste Capacity

There is zero spare capacity for any unexpected household waste in our landfills or waste to energy plants, some waste is exported but there is not sufficient capacity in the State to manage the waste we generate. The ban on flat-rate fees was necessary to incentivise householders to recycle and compost more and to send less waste to landfill.

Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) Projections 2020 – 2022 based on current recycling rate of 41% remaining unchanged

(Based on projections produced by Regional Waste Management Planning Offices February 2020)

MSW Generated	2020	2021	2022
Tonnage for treatment/disposal	1,823,053	1,827,679	1,832,036
Residual capacity *	1,750,000	1,780,000	1,815,000
Deficit	73,053	47,679	17,036

*Including waste exported (370,000 exported in 2019)

There are a number of infrastructure projects under construction or in planning/licencing phase. A pyrolysis plant which will cater for 65,000 tonnes of MSW pa is due to be completed in 2021. The increase in capacity available for 2021 and 2022 is based on the expected completion of this project.

Favourable decisions from An Bord Pleanála and the EPA on extensions to planning permissions and expansion of volumes of waste accepted at 2 of the 3 remaining landfills in the State would obviously have a positive impact on available treatment capacity.

In addition should EPA licences be granted for Ringaskiddy WTE plant, Platin & Castlemungret Cement Kilns and an increase in permitted tonnage

for the Dublin WTE a significant amount of additional treatment capacity will become available in the State. Pending the potential additional capacity coming on line, the capacity shortfall will continue to be met by exporting waste to WTE plants abroad.

Construction & Demolition Projections 2020-2022

(Based on projections produced by Regional Waste Management Planning Offices December 2019)

	2020	2021	2022
Total C & D waste	6,410,000	6,570,000	6,930,000
Of which soil & stone	5,000,000	5,130,000	6,930,000

Capacity to treat inert Construction and Demolition (C & D) waste appears to be satisfied. However there continue to be difficulties with capacity to treat non-hazardous non-inert C & D waste. This capacity shortfall continues to be managed through export, with 81,000 tonnes of non-hazardous non-inert C & D waste being exported in 2019.

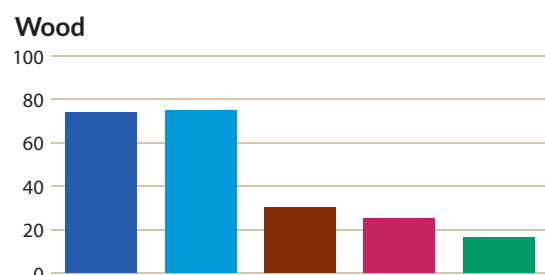
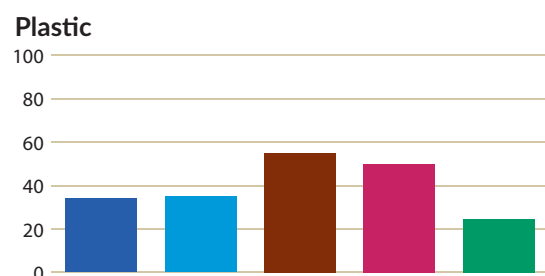
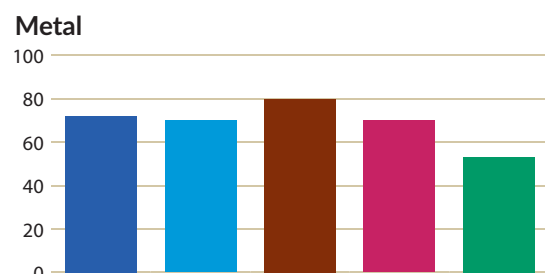
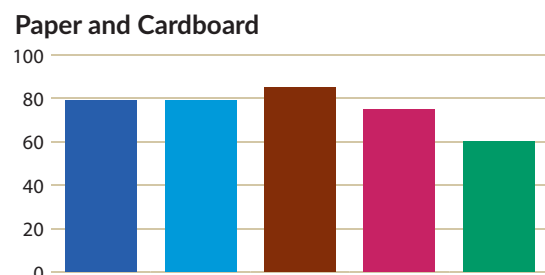
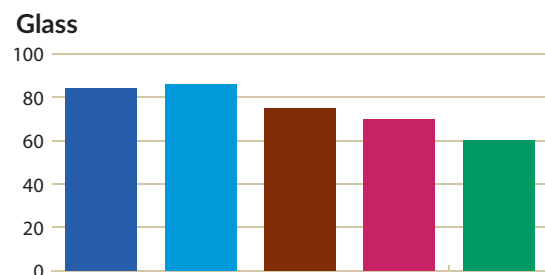
Industry and the EPA are currently working on a number of site specific and national end-of-waste applications which have the potential to alleviate some of the capacity issues, particularly for crushed concrete.

Phase out of Flat Fees for Household Waste Collection Services

In line with national waste management policy, flat-rate fees for kerbside household waste collection were phased out over the period autumn 2017 to autumn 2018, as customers contracts came up for renewal. An incentivised pricing model is now in place and needs to be monitored to ensure it is operating as it should and able to deliver the necessary results.

Construction & Demolition Projections 2020-2022

■ Performance 2017 ■ Performance 2016
 ■ 2030 target ■ 2025 target
 ■ Current EU target



Municipal Solid Waste Targets	
2020	By 16th July: Biodegradable Municipal waste to landfill to be reduced to 35% of 1995 levels (i.e. 427,000 tonnes). Performance in 2018 was 190,000 tonnes By 12th December: Prepare for reuse /Recycle Household Waste by 50%. Performance in 2017 was 50%
2023	By 31st December: Bio-waste Collected separately or separated at source New WFD
2025	By 1st January 2025: Household textiles and hazardous waste separate collection. New WFD Municipal Solid Waste 55%. Performance was 41% in 2016
2030	Municipal Solid Waste 60%. Performance was 41% in 2016
2035	Municipal Solid Waste 65%. Performance was 41% in 2016

Construction and Demolition Waste	
2020	Preparing for reuse, recycling and other material recovery (incl. beneficial backfilling operations using waste as a substitute) of 70% by weight of C&D non-hazardous waste (excluding natural soils & stone). Performance was 71% in 2016

Single use plastics targets	
2021	Cotton bud sticks, plastic cutlery, plates, chopsticks, stirrers and straws, polystyrene food and beverage containers and all oxo-degradable plastic products banned Marking requirements for cups, tobacco product filters, wet wipes and sanitary towels Awareness raising measures to be in place
2023	EPR by 5th January for Existing Schemes and tobacco (food containers, cups for beverages, balloons, packets and wrappers, beverage containers and lids up to 3ltr, beverage bottles, tobacco product filters, wet wipes, plastic carrier bags and fishing gear)
2024	EPR by 31st December for new schemes (food containers, cups for beverages, balloons, packets and wrappers, beverage containers and lids up to 3ltr, beverage bottles, tobacco product filters, wet wipes, plastic carrier bags and fishing gear) Beverage bottles and lids on plastic beverage containers up to 3ltr to be tethered by June 2024
2025	Plastic beverage bottles recycled content 25% 77% Collection rate for plastic bottles; tethered caps
2026	National targets established and achieved for the reduction and consumption of cups and food containers
2029	90% collection rate for plastic bottles

Price Monitoring Group

The Household Waste Collection Price Monitoring Group (PMG) was established in 2017 to monitor pricing developments for household waste collection services during the phasing out of flat rate fees. The PMG has indicated that charges have remained stable. The role of the PMG needs to be determined and an agreed model put in place. The results from the Price Monitoring Group and the study released by the CCPC will provide an evidence base regarding future regulation of the waste market which will be examined as a new Waste Policy in a Circular Economy is developed.

The commercial sector is not delivering the outcomes needed in terms of waste segregation and recycling. This will be an area of particular focus from 2020 and will be a major part of the new waste policy. Enforcement actions will be taken in parallel with the changes needed to increase segregation, reduce contamination and increase recycling figures.

Construction and Demolition Waste Capacity

If the State is to meet the targets set out in the National Development Plan 2018-2027, it is vital that there is sufficient capacity for the recovery and/or disposal of the envisaged increased construction and demolition waste.

In 2018, the Department established a Construction Waste Resource Group (CWRG) which comprises key stakeholders including policy, regulatory and industry players. This group is providing a valuable platform to discuss and monitor C&D waste issues. The reports of the sub-groups of the CWRG will be used in the development of C&D policies in the new waste policy.

The Regional Waste Management Planning Offices are currently preparing a detailed study on capacity in the C & D area which is expected to be completed by September 2020. Pending the production of this report a C & D projections report for C & D waste arising to 2028 was produced in December 2019. In addition, the Planning Offices continue to produce quarterly capacity reports for both MSW and C & D

waste, the most recent of which issued in February 2020. This report noted that capacity for inert C & D waste currently seems to be satisfied however treatment capacity for non-hazardous non-inert C & D waste continues to be a problem with the export of some of this waste stream being required to meet capacity requirements.

Plastic Waste

EU Plastics Strategy

In January 2018, the European Commission published its plastics strategy. The strategy focuses on plastics production and use and sets a goal of ensuring all plastic packaging is recyclable by 2030. The strategy is built around improving the economics and quality of plastics recycling; curbing plastic waste and littering; driving innovation and investment towards circular solutions; and harnessing global action.

Single Use Plastic Directive

The European Commission published a proposal, in May 2018, to reduce the impact of certain plastic products on the marine environment. The proposal aims to deal with the top ten single use plastics items that cause 70% of marine litter. The main elements of the proposal include plastics bans, usage targets and obligations on producers. An examination of the linkages between the SUP Directive (due for transposition in 2021) and the European Green Deal is required.

Deposit and Return Scheme (DRS)

A Deposit and Return scheme is one option being proposed under the EU Single Use Plastics proposal to meet a 2029 collection target of 90% for beverage containers (PET and Aluminium). The Department commissioned a study to consider how this target could be attained and whether DRS could assist in this. While the report has been received, it indicates that further research may be required, particularly around the costs of implementation. The Irish Waste Management Association have also completed a report on the introduction of a DRS which focusses on the potentially unfavourable impact of such a scheme for

their members. REPAK have recently confirmed that they are trialling a number of measures to see if other alternative options could be pursued which would deliver the collection target.

Enforcement

Enforcement of waste legislation is a statutory matter for local authorities or the Office of Environmental Enforcement (OEE) in the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) as appropriate, who both have significant powers under the waste regulations.

The role of the Department is to provide a comprehensive legislative and waste policy framework through which the enforcement authorities operate. Under the Waste Management Act 1996, the Minister does not have a role in enforcement actions.

Actions taken

A number of measures have been taken to strengthen enforcement:

- An annual waste enforcement grant of €7.4 million to fund 150 local authority waste enforcement personnel across the country. The methodology for grant allocation has been amended and a new model agreed with the local authority sector. 2020 will be the first year of drawdown utilising the new model.
- Introduction of the Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authorities (WERLAs). The WERLA model has been successful in transforming waste enforcement and an enhanced WERLA model has been agreed with the local authority sector. 2020 will see the introduction of the new model which will strengthen harmonisation and consistency of approach and will assist in tackling sites of serious concern.
- The National Waste Enforcement Steering Committee (NWESC) drawn from a range of regulatory and law enforcement authorities provides support to local authorities to deal with serious criminal/major illegal dumping in the State based on an annual list of key national priorities agreed by the NWESC.

Multi-Agency Enforcement

Each region has established a multi-agency working group to organise intelligence-led investigations comprising members of the WERLAs, National Transfrontier Shipments Office, An Garda Síochána, Department of Employment Affairs and Social Protection, Work Place Relations and Revenue.

Anti-Dumping Initiative

In 2017, the Department provided funding of €1.26 million for the Anti-Dumping Initiative which resulted in over 200 projects across all 31 local authority areas. €2 million was made available in 2018 and €3 million was allocated in 2019. Learnings are taken from each iteration of the programme and the 2020 ADI programme will be ambitious but will deliver further measurable outcomes.

EU Circular Economy Directives Transposition

An EU package of amending directives setting new waste/recycling targets for Ireland for 2025, 2030 and 2035 are required to be transposed by 5th July 2020.

Petroleum Affairs Division (PAD)

Heads of Function

Martina Hennessy, Principal Officer, Policy and Regulation
Clare Morgan, Head of Technical Section

Overview of Division

This division develops and maintains an appropriate policy and regulatory framework to underpin oil and gas exploration and production activities; managing the State's overall role in relation to gas production from the Kinsale area and Corrib gas field and acting as the principal regulator for the sector.

Priorities

1. Manage all exploration and production authorisations effectively, ensuring the highest regulatory standards are maintained, and relevant processes are adapted upon transposition of the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive.
2. Review current Licensing Terms, along with rules and procedures for exploration and production activities, in the context of the recently published policy statement.
3. Contribute to the development of legislation across Government to streamline marine-based development and related activities, and to review existing primary and secondary petroleum legislation in this context.

Key Issues/Ongoing Work Programme

Ownership of oil and gas both onshore and offshore Ireland is vested in the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment. While exploration has been ongoing for half a century, principally in the offshore area, the vast extent of the Irish offshore is underexplored. The majority of existing licences are now based on the 2015 fiscal terms which were designed to strike the necessary balance between attracting what is considered high-risk exploration investment, particularly in the Atlantic frontier, and in maximising the return to the State from Ireland's natural resources. These terms provide a relatively high level of return to the State when compared with international competitors and also ensure that data captured from all offshore activity is provided to the State, to aid the advancement of our understanding of this relatively underexplored area.

To date only four commercial gas discoveries have been made, three in the Kinsale field area and the Corrib gas field which commenced production at end 2015. There have been a number of other oil and gas discoveries that have not been declared as commercial and some are being investigated further.

Recent Policy Developments

Following publication of the Climate Action Plan in June 2019, Government sought advice from the Climate Change Advisory Council on the future of oil and gas exploration offshore.

The Council, noting that the Government's Climate Action Plan envisages a major shift away from oil combustion within heat and transport sectors towards renewables in the coming decade, advised that the exploration for, and recovery of, new offshore oil reserves is not compatible with a low carbon transition.

Government accepted this advice with the Taoiseach announcing on 23rd September 2019 that future exploration licenses would be awarded for natural gas only. On foot of this, three policy principles were approved by Government in October 2019:

1. All future licensing rounds in the currently Closed Area offshore (Atlantic Margin - 80%) will be for natural gas only and not oil.
2. All new licence applications in the currently Open Areas (Celtic Sea and Irish Sea - 20% of total offshore area) will be for natural gas only and not oil, applicable from 23 September 2019.
3. All applications and authorisations in place before the 23rd September 2019 will not be affected by the decision and can continue towards exploration and production for both oil and/or gas as per their existing terms.

These principles were further elaborated on in a Policy Statement published in December 2019 which clearly set out the continued role for indigenous natural gas in underpinning Ireland's energy security as part of the transition to a low carbon economy. It includes:

- The future development management framework for the exploration and production of natural gas, as a transition fuel, in Ireland's offshore.
- The energy security rationale for natural gas, including:
 - The need for back-up capacity for renewable power generation via lower CO₂ emitting fossil fuels (natural gas).
 - The impact of the reduction of peat, coal and oil use on gas demand.
 - Our increasing reliance on imports given the decline of current indigenous supplies, also mirrored by a growing reliance at EU-level on imports (74% from outside the EU and growing).

Impacts of this Policy Development

In the most recent Atlantic margin licensing round held in 2015, an upward swing in interest in the Irish Offshore was evident, with a number of large international companies choosing to invest in Ireland for the first time. There is particular interest in exploration close to Corrib, with a number of companies believing further commercial gas finds in the area are likely, which the existing Corrib infrastructure could be used to bring ashore. However, since the Taoiseach's announcement of

September 2019 and the subsequent publication of new policy principles, industry sentiment has changed significantly. A number of companies have either expressed their intention to or have initiated proceedings to withdraw or surrender licenses and plan to shift investment to other international territories where they believe opportunities are greater.

In the short term this will mean a reduction in revenue from licenses and lower international confidence in Ireland as a destination for exploration activity. In the longer term, a reduction in exploration activity will reduce further the prospect of additional commercial natural gas finds being made.

Exploration Licences

The Irish Onshore is currently not open for applications for oil or gas exploration. The Irish Offshore is divided into 'Open Areas' and 'Closed Areas'.

- In Open Areas, namely the Celtic and Irish Seas, applications for licensing options or exploration licences may be made at any time.
- In Closed Areas, such as the Atlantic Margin, applications for licensing options or exploration licences may only be made during a competitive Licensing round, once announced by the Minister. The last such Round was in 2015.

Licenses, once awarded, progress through a number of lifecycle stages as defined in the Petroleum and Other Minerals Development Act, 1960. Compliance with work programme commitments form an essential part of the progression of authorisations.

The current numbers of authorisations at each stage are shown in the table below, along with numbers which are in the process of being relinquished as of June 2020. Some relinquishments are due to the prospectivity of specific areas being deemed low following technical assessment. Many, however, are related to the policy statement of September 2019 and current international uncertainty regarding Ireland as a location for investment.

Licence Stage	Explanation	Number of Current Active Authorisations	Number of Relinquishments since 23 Sept 2019
Licensing Option	A Licensing Option gives the Holder the <u>first right</u> to an Exploration Licence over all or part of the area covered by the Option.	4	5
Exploration Licence	An Exploration Licence allows the Holder right of <u>carrying out exploration</u> for petroleum in a specific licensed offshore area.	23	19
Lease Undertaking	A Lease Undertaking gives the Holder the <u>right to a Petroleum Lease</u> over that part of the area covered by the Undertaking.	2	0

Production of Natural Gas

Natural gas reserves in the Kinsale fields are almost exhausted, with production due to cease at the end June/early July 2020. Extensive engagement between the Department and the operators has been in progress for a number of years to agree a robust and thorough approach to the decommissioning of these facilities, which will meet the highest environmental standards. Ministerial consents for activities which form part of the decommissioning process commenced in 2019, with a range of further consents to be considered as decommissioning progresses until expected completion in 2022/23.

The Corrib gas field is expected to remain in production until approximately 2030. A range of activities under the terms and conditions of the petroleum lease, which require Ministerial consent, are undertaken each year.

Current Court Proceedings -Application for Judicial Review re Use of Money Messages

In November 2019, four TDs secured permission from the High Court to bring a challenge against the Ceann Comhairle's decision not to allow a Motion to be put before the Dáil to amend Dáil standing orders relating to the use of Money Messages. The applicants allege that there is an overuse by Government of the Money Message procedure.

On 27 November 2019, they filed an amended statement of grounds that proposes to widen the focus of the claim to include the refusal to provide a Money Message for the Petroleum and Other Minerals Development (Amendment) (Climate Emergency Measures) Bill 2018 and add the Minister, the Government of Ireland and Dáil Éireann as respondents.

The proceedings have been adjourned a number of times, with a further adjournment on 10 June to 8 July 2020.



Exploration and Mining Division (EMD)

Head of Function

Eoin Deegan

Overview of Division

The division's policy role is to promote mineral exploration, enable the discovery and development of economic deposits, and maximise the contribution of the mining sector to the economy, with due regard to its social and environmental impact. It also acts as regulator for prospecting and mining activities which are carried out by the private sector under permits issued by the Minister.

Priorities

1. Drafting of a policy statement which will outline how the Irish mineral sector can sustainably contribute to Ireland and the EU's transition to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions. The drafting is at an advanced stage, having being circulated informally to key Departments for comments. It is intended to be published for public consultation in Q3 2020.
2. Engagement by the public on the prospect licencing process has increased considerably in last 12 months. The concerns raised range from mineral rights; land access and the environmental impacts of prospecting and mining activities. It is intended to develop a communications programme to accompany the launch of the public consultation at point 1 above which will address such concerns.
3. The Minerals Development Act 2017 (yet to be commenced) is a consolidation of Minerals Development Acts 1940 to 1999 and the Energy (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 2006. It modernises and streamlines the regulation of the exploration and mining industry. EMD is working to commence the prospecting (exploration) elements of the 2017 Act by the end of 2020.

Key Issues/Ongoing Work Programme

Indications from industry are that prospecting and mining activities have been somewhat impacted as a result of the COVID-19 restrictions, depending on the individual circumstances of each company.

Exploration

Exploration is conducted by the private sector, under exclusive prospecting licences (PLs) from the State. Over 40 companies hold more than 500 active licences, with approximately 160 people employed directly, many in rural areas. The main focus is on zinc/lead but there is also interest in gold, copper, barite, lithium, molybdenum and gem stones. Interest in exploration in Ireland is high and some recent results are promising. PL areas typically cover 35sq km. It is estimated that the area covered by currently held licences represents around a quarter of the land area of the State.

The most advanced exploration zinc-lead projects are Pallas Green in Co. Limerick and Tara Deep, Co. Meath. Glencore are the operators for Pallas Green and have indicated a resource of 42 million tonnes of ore. The Boliden Tara Mines Tara Deep project has an 18 million tonne resource and it is hoped that it will extend the life of the mine for a number of years.

Prospecting or mineral exploration is the process of gathering information about the mineral potential of an area and possibility of a discovery of an economic mineral deposit. Prospecting or exploration is conducted by the private sector, under exclusive prospecting licences (PLs) issued, administered and enforced on behalf of the Minister by this division. A PL does not permit mining. PLs can be renewed, surrendered and revoked. Open PL competitions for available areas are held up to four times per year.

In the event that an economically viable mineral deposit is discovered, a company must obtain planning permission from the local authority, an IPC/IE licence from the EPA and a mine lease/licence/permission from EMD (acting on behalf of the Minister).

Mining

Ireland is Europe's 3rd largest producer of zinc metal in concentrate and the 16th largest producer in the world. In addition Ireland was Europe's 6th largest producer of lead metal in concentrate and 22nd in the world.

Mining is undertaken by private industry either under State mining leases for State-owned minerals or State mining licences for privately-owned minerals. One major zinc/lead mine is currently operating, Boliden Tara Mines Ltd, Navan, Co Meath (largest zinc mine in Europe). Approximately 670 people are directly employed at the mine along with additional contract staff.

Two other zinc/lead mines have closed in recent years, Galmoy Mines Ltd, Co Kilkenny in October 2012, and Vedanta Lisheen Mining Ltd, Co Tipperary in December 2015. Shannon Resources Ltd is investigating the possibility to re-open the Galmoy Mine.

In May 2020, this division issued a report comprising an independent assessment of life cycle of these mines. The Galmoy and Lisheen mines were the first in Ireland to be opened, operated and closed under modern mining, planning and environmental regulation. The report assessed the impact of the mines on their respective communities from a social, environmental and economic aspect. Mining leases/licences/permissions are only granted after planning permission and other relevant environmental licences have been obtained from the planning authorities and EPA.

Other Roles

EMD is also the Competent Authority in Ireland for:

- The **Kimberley Process (KP)**, the international certification scheme that regulates trade in rough diamonds. It aims to prevent the flow of conflict diamonds, while helping to protect legitimate trade in rough diamonds; and
- The implementation of the **Minerals from Conflict Areas Regulation**. Ensuring that importers of

3TG (tin, tungsten, tantalum and gold) meet international responsible sourcing standards. The regulation will take effect on 1 January 2021.

In addition, EMD oversees the maintenance of a number of historic mine sites to ensure compliance with health and safety requirements and to mitigate the social and environmental impacts of the sites.

Historic Mines

A programme of on-going specialist environmental monitoring is being undertaken by contactors at Avoca and Silvermines.

When the mines closed in Avoca in 1982, a legacy of unfilled open pits, shafts, unsafe structures and contaminated spoils were left, all of which present hazards to the public. Essential health and safety works have been progressed at Avoca mines over the last ten years at a cost of c. €3.8million. As well as this work, environmental monitoring of the site ensures that no significant change in conditions occurs without detection. The monitoring programme at Avoca recently identified a stability issue in an adit (horizontal opening). The timber supports in the adit have decayed to the point that the stability of the adit is compromised. A small road occurs above the adit which could be impacted in the event of a failure. A significant body of work has just been completed to support the adit and to make the area above it safe and secure.

The Silvermines area of County Tipperary has a long history of mining (copper, lead and zinc) spanning over a thousand years. As a result, the general Silvermines locality has been left with typical features from prolonged mining activity e.g. old spoil dumps, mines shafts and derelict buildings, some of historical value. The State undertook a comprehensive project of remediation between 2006 and 2012. Of the six sites identified, work at five sites has been substantially completed at a cost of €11.19 million.

The remaining major element of the project is remediation of the Garryard tailings site which

comprises a separate phase and is not critical to the success of the work completed to date. A review of the plan and revised costs are required for this part of the project which was previously estimated to cost in the region of €10 million. There is currently no time frame or budget agreed to complete this work as a review of the works required to remediate the site has to be carried out. In addition, the lands are not owned by the State and negotiations with landowners will be required.

Geological Survey Ireland

Director

Koen Verbruggen

Overview of Division

Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) is the national earth science agency and provides independent geoscience information and advice to underpin informed decision making in the management of Ireland's natural resources and in compliance with a range of national policies and EU Directives.

It manages a range of national programmes and represents Ireland in relevant EU projects. It works extensively through strategic collaboration with a range of stakeholders, from other Government Departments, State agencies; local authorities; research institutes and the private sector to ensure Ireland has access to contemporary high-quality geoscience advice and databases.

The overall geoscience sector in Ireland (embracing mining, quarrying, construction, consultancy services, research/education, tourism etc.) employs about 30,000 and contributes 2% to 2.5% of GNP (Indecon 2017).

Priorities

1. Climate Action - delivery of geoscience projects for offshore renewable energy, Geothermal Energy Roadmap, Just Transition in the Midlands, groundwater supply and coastal erosion.
2. Project Ireland 2040/NDP - Infrastructural support through marine (INFOMAR) and onshore (Tellus/geological) mapping and aggregate/construction materials projects, particularly for housing supply.
3. Jobs and Innovation - Support of Future Jobs Initiative through Geoscience Ireland business cluster and Innovation 2020 through GSI Research programme.

Key Issues/Ongoing Work Programme

Statutory and Advisory Role and Policy Context

GSI has a number of statutory and advisory roles, including membership of national steering groups, particularly regarding groundwater protection, geological heritage, radon protection, landcover and habitats, landslide risk and marine mapping.

National Geoscience Data Centre

A key role of the GSI is to collect, maintain and publish Ireland's geoscience data. The GSI portal provides simple web access to find, view and download data. Internal data management practices ensure the delivery of accurate, consistent and standardised data. These datasets include over 200km of physical drill core at the National Core Store; historic mapping held under the National Archives Act and extensive digital repositories including seabed mapping, geotechnical site investigations and exploration reports.

INFOMAR

GSI is a world leader in marine mapping and wholly funds and jointly manages INFOMAR, the national marine mapping programme, which has completed the mapping of Ireland's deeper waters and is currently focused on completing the mapping of all Irish waters by end 2026. The programme is a key deliverable of Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth, Ireland's integrated marine development plan and delivered with the Marine Institute (MI). In particular, the mapping supports updated charting for marine safety, and provides baseline data for ocean energy, environmental protection, fisheries and research. In 2020, INFOMAR will focus on mapping off the southwest coast.

TELLUS

The TELLUS project is an initiative to carry out state-of-the-art mapping using airborne remote sensing (geophysics) and ground-based sampling, to complete a baseline all-island environmental and geological dataset, facilitating the implementation of certain EU Directives and stimulating investment. The programme was completed in Northern Ireland in 2011. Following a positive post-project evaluation in 2014, and Tellus is being extended nationally and by end 2019 had

completed 70% of airborne surveys and 50% of ground geochemical sampling across Ireland. In 2020, Tellus are due to carry out airborne surveys over Kilkenny, Tipperary and west Waterford.

Groundwater Protection and Water Resources

About 25% of drinking water supplies in Ireland are provided from groundwater (up to 100% in certain counties). The GSI Groundwater Programme, having completed national-scale aquifer, vulnerability and protection scheme mapping, is now focussed on addressing identified data gaps, supporting implementation of the second cycle of the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and developing the science to support future groundwater use and protection. The Groundwater 3D project is supporting “fresh drinking water” initiatives, which will support Irish Water in relation to the Greater Dublin Area water supply, the Federation of Group Water Schemes for rural water supplies, the Department of the Department of Housing, Planning and Local Government, EPA, local authorities and Coillte on groundwater issues.

Geoscience Initiatives

GSI is carrying out a number of multi-annual infrastructure and planning related projects under a programme labelled Geoscience Initiatives in which Geoscience can contribute to improved planning, environmental protection and jobs and growth. These include:

- **Integrated Geological Mapping**, which is producing new digital datasets and mapping in follow up to the Tellus Project. These updated maps and baseline data then feed into all areas of activity of GSI and its stakeholders.
- **Geohazards** (flooding, landslides, subsidence, groundwater pollution, soil contamination, radon exposure). GSI also work with the Office of Emergency Planning, particularly in relation to tsunami and interpretation of volcanic ash hazard and earthquakes. At end June GSI will launch Ireland’s first National Groundwater/ Turlough Flooding maps for use by OPW and local authorities.
- **Geotourism/ Ecotourism Promotion**: GSI grant support the three existing UNESCO Geoparks in Ireland (Burren/Cliffs of Moher, Copper Coast and Marble Arch/Cavan Burren) and also assists in the development of new Geoparks. GSI is managing a project funded by the Department of Rural and Community Development to create a new Geopark in the Joyce’s Country and Western Lakes area of Galway and Mayo.
- **Geoscience Communication**: GSI takes a national lead on communicating the value, relevance and availability of geoscience information through an active communications programme including extensive event participation, use of websites and social media. In 2020 GSI will also be commemorating 175 years since its foundation through a series of events including a new Geoscience exhibition at Collins Barracks.

Geoscience Ireland/Business Development and Job Creation

GSI, in conjunction with Enterprise Ireland, has developed and support a business cluster of 40 Irish companies under the Geoscience Ireland brand, who are working together to grow their companies by winning work overseas.

By end 2019, the companies involved had created over 1,300 net new jobs and increased turnover to over €1 billion since its inception in 2012. In 2020, Geoscience Ireland launched their how to guide, “The Formation and Maintenance of a successful Business Cluster”

GSI EU and External Projects

GSI leverage Government funding and their scientific expertise to attract external revenue by participating in a range of projects, funded by the EU, local authorities or other sources. This is particularly the case in relation to groundwater, marine and the Tellus programme, with external revenue averaging approximately €1m per annum.

Funding is used primarily to recruit and train Irish-based graduates and contractors, to provide Irish input into EU Directive driven initiatives, or working with Group Water Schemes or local authorities in groundwater protection.

Research

GSI fund, commissions, advises and participates in geoscience research and supports related research infrastructure. Critically GSI provide a link between Government policy requirements, private sector needs and third level expertise in this area and, through international partnerships, provides access to data, facilities and funding to Irish researchers. In 2020 GSI will launch a new facility, the Earth Surface Research Laboratory in conjunction with Trinity College Dublin.

Inland Fisheries Division

Head of Division

Denis Maher

Overview of Division

This division discharges the overall policy responsibility for the conservation, protection, management, regulation promotion and development of the inland fisheries resource, which is largely achieved through the corporate governance of Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) and the Loughs Agency.

Priorities

1. Consolidation of Angling Representative Bodies.
2. Salmon and Eel Management Plans.
3. Development of a new policy statement for the sector.

Key Issues/Ongoing Work Programme

The fisheries resource, across many species, is under threat from a range of factors. It has an economic value to the Irish economy and an ecological value, making it a national asset which should be conserved and protected as well as being exploited as a resource on a sustainable basis.

Fish stocks are under considerable pressure:

- Wild salmon catch has been reduced by some 80% on the commercial catch since 2002 to address conservation imperatives. Threats from sea-lice emanating from salmon farms remains a major concern.
- Eels reduced to circa 4% of baseline stock. Recruitment of glass eels to Europe is at a historical low level and continues to decline. Current recruitment is between 1% and 5% of that observed in the 1980s and makes the conservation and management agenda very sensitive.
- Climate change has emerged as an additional threat to salmonid species which are “cold water species”. Research in recent years indicates that these fish are, in fact, a good barometer of climate change impact in water bodies generally.

Consolidation of Angling Representative Bodies

Significant Ministerial and official engagement with the Angling Representative Bodies was undertaken during 2019 with a view to consolidating, via a unified umbrella body, the long-standing disparate positions taken across the diverse angling disciplines.

These discussions have led to significant agreement between 7 bodies covering all disciplines (pike, coarse, sea and game angling) to be part of a unified group, while a degree of dissent has emanated from three game angling bodies.

Moving this initiative forward is a priority in order to allow the full potential of the sector to be realised,

including the significant socio-economic benefits to rural communities in particular. This will be especially important in the post COVID-19 recovery phase. Of particular priority is input into a transformed policy statement for the sector.

Policy Statement

The central objective of a new policy statement for the sector will be to ensure that economic and social benefit is secured, to the greatest possible extent, from the entire national inland fisheries resource.

Maximising the potential economic contribution of every fishery and of every species is crucial to building a sustainable, rural centred economy in areas, which are currently considered economically peripheral, and where few alternative opportunities exist.

A project on modernisation of the primary legislation governing the sector and the introduction of a legislative framework which creates the environment for development and promotion as much as conservation and enforcement is already underway.

Salmon Management Regime

Salmon is a listed species under the Habitats Directive. Management of salmon is designed to ensure that each genetically unique river stock (over 140) is appropriately protected and that an adequate stock survives to spawn over the winter to ensure the long-term survival of the individual river stock.

Since 2007, the harvest of salmon, by commercial and recreational (angling) means, has been restricted to those stocks of rivers that are meeting their conservation limits. The individual river management strategy is based on the fact that each of Ireland's salmon rivers has its own unique stock of salmon which migrates to sea as juveniles and returns to the same river in adulthood to spawn and create the next generation of fish exclusive to that river.

A number of bye-laws and Statutory Instruments for the sector are currently being prepared by the Department to be presented for the Minister's

approval and signature towards the end of the year.

Ireland's Eel Management Plan

The Government's Eel Support Scheme fund was made available from 2018 to all persons who were the holder of a State commercial public eel licence or an eel fishing permit from the ESB in the 2007 season (the base year). The fund is administered by Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI).

The programme of trapping and transporting eels around ESB hydroelectric plants is being continued and a number of former fishermen are engaged on this.



Communications



Communications

Ireland is a leading European digital economy, ranked 6th in the EU in 2020 based on 2019 data (the Digital Economy and Society Index). Our international and national digital connectivity is critically important to maintaining and enhancing Ireland's competitiveness in global markets and in the knowledge and information economy.

Communications policy focuses on:

- Delivery of high speed broadband to every premises in Ireland;
- Ensuring a clear and consistent regulatory environment which fosters investment and innovation as well as protecting and empowering citizens.

A Europe fit for the Digital Age was published by the European Commission in February and sets out the overall digital priorities of the new Commission. It encompasses three pillars which aim to provide a fair and competitive digital economy; a digital and sustainable society and technology that works for people.

Recognising that ubiquitous future-proofed broadband is key to fully harnessing the benefits of digital technologies, the National Broadband Plan aims to deliver access to high speed broadband in every premises in Ireland, regardless of location. This is being achieved through a combination of commercial investment, underpinned by regulation and policy, and a State intervention into areas where it has been shown that the commercial sector will not invest.

In harnessing the communications revolution it is critical to ensure that every citizen has equal opportunity to enjoy the benefits of technology. The National Digital Strategy, led by the Department of the Taoiseach, will map out how we can positively embrace digital advances for the benefit of every citizen, business and community in Ireland.

Whilst this transformation brings great opportunities for citizens, business and Government, it also brings a number of new risks. These include online crime, harmful content, privacy concerns and exposes critical infrastructure to some new vulnerabilities. The security of digital infrastructure and communications is essential and the measures put in place under the new National Cyber Security Strategy will strengthen capacity and capability to ensure the security of Government ICT, critical infrastructure and online services.

National Broadband



2.4m
PREMISES
THROUGHOUT
THE COUNTRY

700K
PREMISES HAD
ACCESS TO HIGH
SPEED BROADBAND
IN 2012

1.8m
OF IRISH PREMISES
HAD ACCESS HIGH
SPEED BROADBAND
BY SEPTEMBER 2019

70,000 - 100,000
PREMISES WILL HAVE BROADBAND
ROLLOUT EACH YEAR UNTIL ROLLOUT
IS COMPLETE

115,000
PREMISES WILL HAVE
BROADBAND ROLLOUT BY
THE YEAR 2021



€2.75bn

HAS BEEN INVESTED BY COMMERCIAL
OPERATORS IN THE PAST 6 YEARS



90%
OF PREMISES WILL
HAVE ACCESS TO
BROADBAND IN THE
NEXT FOUR YEARS

1GB FOR BUSINESS
AND **150Mbps**
MINIMUM DOWNLOAD SPEED WILL
BE OFFERED BY NBP NETWORK

APPROX. **300** HIGH SPEED BROADBAND CONNECTION
POINTS (BCPS) IN LOCAL COMMUNITIES WILL BE
CONNECTED IN 2020



Ciarán Ó hÓbáin
Assistant Secretary
Communications



Fergal Mulligan
Programme Director
National Broadband Plan



Barbara Leeson
Principal Officer
National Broadband Plan



John Burke
Principal Officer
National Broadband Plan



Patrick Neary
Chief Technical Officer
Chief Technology Office



Roger O'Connor
Director of
Communications,
Business and
Technology



Richard Browne
Principal Officer
Cyber Security



Kevin Foley
Principal Officer
National Cyber
Security Centre



Malread McCabe
Principal Officer
Telecommunications
Policy and
Regulation



Bill Morrissey
Principal Officer
National Digital
Strategy &
Telecommunications
Market Contracts

National Broadband Plan Division

Heads of Division

Barbara Leeson
John Burke

Overview of Division

Working with the Programme Director, Fergal Mulligan, Chief Technology Officer and Commercial Lead, the Division is responsible for delivery of the various elements of the National Broadband Plan (NBP). This includes robust governance of the NBP contract with National Broadband Ireland (NBI) to ensure compliance with all elements; delivering the substantial contractual reporting requirements associated with NBP, as well as those relating to State Aid; and managing subsidy budgets and payments associated with the project.

Priorities

1. Develop and implement a robust internal governance structure and procedures and oversee the establishment of NBI's governance arrangements as required under the contract to ensure compliance by all parties with the NBP contract.
2. Closely manage the subsidy payable to NBI and monitor expenditure incurred in relation to the NBP programme by NBI to ensure value for money for the State's subsidy drawn down under the contract.
3. Manage successful delivery by NBI of the Broadband Connection Points (BCPs) to be rolled out in year one and the initial network design/ deployment of the fibre to the home network.

Key Issues/Ongoing Work Programme

National Broadband Plan (NBP)

The NBP will ensure that every home, school and business in Ireland – regardless of how remote or rural – has access to high speed broadband.

This is being achieved through a combination of commercial investment across Ireland; and a State intervention in those areas where commercial operators acting alone are unlikely to invest. These are primarily rural areas.

State Intervention

The NBP contract, which was signed in November 2019 and became effective in January 2020, provides that a future proofed high speed broadband network will be deployed by National Broadband Ireland (NBI) to people living and working in nearly 540,000 premises in the intervention area over the next 25 years.

Broadband Connection Points

Pending the deployment of the rollout of fibre to households, it was decided to advance up to 300 Broadband Connections Points (BCPs) in year one of the plan. The BCPs have been specifically selected by the local authorities so that they can provide public Wi-Fi and other facilities at a number of locations to support people who may wish to work remotely with the scope for a wider range of services at sites that can support a greater level of activities. These sites include schools, library hubs and local sports halls in every county in Ireland. Broadband officers in each local authority were tasked with consulting with local communities and business to find the appropriate mix of locations to reap the maximum benefits.

The BCP locations are available to view on the High Speed Broadband Map on the Department's website.

Deployment

The State intervention area includes:

- 537,596 premises (plus new premises to be built);
- 1.1 million people (23% population);
- Over 54,000 farms (69% of national total of farms);
- 44,000 non-farm businesses;
- 695 schools.

As part of the procurement process and contract negotiations a detailed Deployment Plan was prepared which set out the delivery of the programme over the next 7 years. Given the complexities involved in building a network of this scale, it was recognised that the Deployment Plan would be subject to change as the project is rolled out. This plan will be updated regularly as the outcome of the low level network designs for each local area are completed and as the deployment progresses in each area. NBI's website has been enabled to allow consumers to track progress by Eircode.

All counties will see some deployment started in the first 2 years and over 90% of premises across the State will have access to high speed broadband within the next four years. The NBP network will offer users a high speed broadband service with a minimum download speed of 150Mbps, from the outset. By the end of next year, NBI are targeting to pass in the region of 115,000 premises, with 70,000 - 100,000 passed each year thereafter until rollout is completed.

Investment by the State

The maximum possible investment by the State under the National Broadband Plan is capped at €2.977 billion over 25 years. This includes €354 million in VAT to be repaid to the Exchequer and contingency subsidy of €480 million which can only be drawn down in specific circumstances.

Subsidy will be paid to National Broadband Ireland in arrears subject to independent certification of deliverable completion.

A series of clawbacks will operate to ensure value for money by "clawing back" subsidy in a number of circumstances, thereby reducing the total investment figure. Where the project costs are lower, the State will

claw back the excess and where the costs are higher, the risk sits with NBI. The series of clawbacks include:

- Deployment saving clawback [REDACTED]
- Excess profit clawback [REDACTED]
- Sale of NBI [REDACTED] up to year 10;
- Terminal value clawback [REDACTED]
- The European Commission approved the National Broadband Plan in the context of EU State Aid rules in November 2019.

Chief Technology Office

Heads of Division

Patrick Neary, Chief Technology Officer
Roger O'Connor

Overview of Division

This division provides technical advice and assistance, as required, on the priority areas within the communications sector. The division is focused on the development of technical expertise and capacity to support the sector across a broad range of activities, specifically:

- to advise the Minister and senior management in relation to communication proposals and projects;
- to lead all technical activities relating to the National Broadband Plan;
- the initiation and execution of specific projects in support of communication policy objectives;
- to assist with policy development, such as 5G, international connectivity etc;
- to represent the Minister and Department in relevant national and international fora; and
- to identify and develop new strategic focus areas that will promote opportunities for economic growth, jobs, competitiveness and social inclusion across the sector

Key Issues/Ongoing Work Programme

National Broadband Plan – Project Delivery

The CTO is responsible for the governance of the technical aspects of the NBP delivery project (supported by a number of technical advisors) and to ensure value for money over the lifetime of the project. The necessary governance structures, processes and tools are being established to manage the obligations and reporting against the contract with National Broadband Ireland (NBI). The initial focus is the delivery of Broadband Connection Points (BCPs) of which circa 300 will be delivered in 2020. For the broader fibre to the home delivery to every premises in the intervention area, the CTO is responsible for the governance of the network build performance, the technical solution and the oversight of the operational performance of NBI.

National Broadband Plan – Map

The CTO is responsible for maintaining the NBP map which identifies where high speed broadband services are being delivered by commercial operators and where the intervention area for the State subsidised network will take place. This involves the monitoring of commercial developments in the market and the assessment of operator commercial plans when requested.

The “2019 Mapping Consultation” was held in 2019 to conclude the NBP mapping exercise and to determine the final scope of the intervention area before Contract Award.

Approximately 180 submissions were received, the bulk were mainly from the general public. However 30 submissions were received by operators who wanted their network coverage classified as high speed broadband and included on the NBP map as a commercial area. A detailed technical assessment was carried out on each submission and the outcome provided to each operator.

Support of key initiatives

The division also provides support across a range of key initiatives in the Department including the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce, engagement with local authorities to remove barriers to commercial deployment of infrastructure, radio spectrum policy development and EU digital policy development.

International Connectivity

Ireland has fourteen active international submarine telecommunications cables, which have cable landing points in Ireland, and which provide international connectivity. There are three trans-Atlantic subsea telecommunications cables providing direct connectivity between Ireland and North America and eleven subsea cables connecting Ireland to the UK and on to Europe through the UK. In addition, the new Havrfue/AEC-2 trans-Atlantic cable is due to connect to Ireland in Q3 2020 and onwards to Denmark and Norway.

DCCAE monitors developments in this highly competitive market. The Department is planning to launch a public consultation on international connectivity during 2020 to assess the market and its likely evolution and determine whether the market will meet the State's requirements for international connectivity.

Cyber Security Division

Heads of Division

Richard Browne
Kevin Foley

Overview of Division

This division has responsibility for Cyber Security Policy, the National Cyber Security Centre and Internet Governance.

Priorities

1. The 2019 National Cyber Security Strategy sets out a series of measures to be taken over the life of the Strategy; commencing the implementation of these is the priority for the year.
2. Key to the implementation of the Strategy is the question of resourcing the National Cyber Security Centre. A Capacity Review has commenced with a view to informing the budgetary process later in 2020.



Key Issues/Ongoing Work Programme

Cyber Security Policy

The Department has responsibility for Cyber Security policy for the State as a whole, and is home to the National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC), which is the State's cyber security incident response body, and has a series of other roles around detecting and preventing incidents, as well as improving the resilience of critical national infrastructure. This is a complex and dynamic area, because (a) practically every facet of economic and social life is now dependent on network connected devices; (b) these devices are vulnerable to attack and failure; and (c) ownership of devices and networks is widely disparate and cuts across existing regulatory and governance relationships.

Furthermore, some of the actors seeking to exploit vulnerabilities in network connected cyber devices are States, which means that entities like the National Cyber Security Centre have to work across those entities who manage and deal with State security concerns, as well as a broad range of governmental and private sector operators.

The 2015 National Cyber Security Strategy set out the process by which the NCSC would develop full operational capacity, focusing on the Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT) and on statutory measures to secure critical national infrastructure. These have been delivered and are in place.

This Strategy was superseded by the second National Strategy, published in 2019, which takes a broader perspective on cyber security matters, including how the State will engage with issues like cyber security skills, research and development and the diplomatic component of cyber security. The Strategy also sets out a process for the expansion and development of the National Cyber Security Centre, including primary legislation to give the Centre greater powers with regard to critical infrastructure protection.

A number of international organisations have work streams in place around cyber security, including the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe, the United Nations and

the European Union. This division services all of these processes.

The EU has had a very significant work programme on cyber security involving a series of legislative measures. One of these, the Network and Information Security Directive, is already in place, and two more are in negotiations. Managing and representing the national position in these discussions is a key element of the work of the division.

National Cyber Security Centre

The National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) was founded in this Department in 2011, and focused initially on developing capacity and engaging with national and international stakeholders around sharing information, securing systems and responding to incidents.

Its role, as per the 2015 National Cyber Security Strategy, is “to lead in the management of major cyber security incidents, provide guidance and advice to citizens and businesses, and manage cyber security related risks to key services.”

Traditionally, this has meant three specific tasks:

1. Responding to Cyber Security incidents on behalf of the State, including by coordinating the national response to major incidents.
2. Act as a locus for managing and sharing information relating to threats to network and information security across the entire public and private sector.
3. Taking specific measures to defend and protect critical infrastructure and Government ICT.

The NCSC works, on an ongoing basis, with utility operators and with similar bodies in other jurisdictions to ensure that risks to infrastructure in Ireland are managed appropriately, including the active management of ongoing issues. This includes close cooperation with the Defence Forces and the Gardaí on national security issues. The Unit exercises a significant statutory role with regard to critical infrastructure protection and the security of digital service providers under the EU Network and Information Security Directive, and has designated

67 entities across 7 sectors as ‘Operators of Essential Services’ under that Directive.

The Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT) within the NCSC is the National CSIRT, and responds to incidents reported to it by approximately 150 constituents, as well as those entities formally designated under the NIS Directive. In 2019 the CSIRT responded to over 2,200 incidents.

While the NCSC has seen significant investment and recruitment of new staff in recent years, it will need further expansion if it is to fully deliver on the 2019 Strategy.

Since early 2019 the National Cyber Security Centre has been involved in an EU process to jointly assess security risks associated with 5G telecommunications networks, and to set out measures that might be taken to mitigate these risks.



Telecommunications Policy and Regulation Division

Head of Division

Mairéad McCabe

Overview of Division

The division has responsibility for leading Irish policy engagement and alliance building in respect of EU and international telecommunications policy including EU Digital Single Market; sustaining investment in telecommunications infrastructure, including elimination of barriers through delivery of Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce actions; and telecommunications market regulation, compliance oversight and sectoral engagement, including on wider electronic communications policy and related digital and data matters.

Priorities

1. Transposition of the European Electronic Communications Regulatory Framework.
2. Review of the legislative framework for the telecoms regulator ComReg- including enforcement and sanction powers and competition law powers for the sector.
3. Leading negotiations on proposals under the Commission's "A Future for the Digital Age" package.
4. Supporting the work of the Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce.

Key Issues/Ongoing Work Programme

Transposition of the European Electronic Communications Regulatory Framework

The European Electronic Communications Code (EECC) represents a review of the entire EU regulatory framework for the telecommunications sector.

The Directive combines and updates five existing Directives. It aims to future-proof the telecommunications space and to lay a strong foundation for the digital economy across Europe.

Under the Digital Single Market, the EECC aims to provide incentives for investment in high speed broadband networks, bring a more consistent internal market approach to radio spectrum policy, tackle regulatory fragmentation, ensure effective protection of consumers with a level playing field for market players a more effective regulatory institutional framework.

It entered into force on 21st December 2018 and must be transposed in Member States by 21st December 2020.

Review of Legislative Framework for the Commission for Communications Regulation

The Commission for Communications Regulation (ComReg) currently has a suite of enforcement and sanction powers available to it in regulating the sector. These are set out mainly in the Communications Regulation Act, 2002, as amended, and a suite of secondary legislation transposing the EU regulatory framework.

These powers and the regulator's obligations will require review to ensure alignment with the new European Electronic Communications Code and other legislation such as the ECN+ Directive which aims to ensure coherent competition law across Member States, as well as the CPC Regulation and the Better Enforcement Directive which strengthen consumer protection enforcement. Dialogue is ongoing between

DCCAIE, ComReg and legal advisers on how best to ensure a robust and effective regulatory regime. Options in relation to enhanced enforcement powers are currently being considered.

Telecommunications input into the Marine Planning and Development Management Bill

The Marine Planning and Development Management Bill aims to establish a new regime for the management of development and activities in Ireland's Maritime Area. It is being led by the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government, under the auspices of the Marine Legislation Steering Group (chaired by D/ Taoiseach).

The Bill will fundamentally transform how Ireland manages its marine space – it will replace the existing State and development consent regimes and streamline arrangements on the basis of a single consent principle i.e. one State consent (Maritime Area Consent) to enable occupation of the Maritime Area and one development consent (planning permission), with a single environmental assessment.

Connectivity – including international connectivity – is of critical importance to the Irish economy and our digital future. This division is focusing on ensuring that the most efficient regime for subsea telecommunications cables is reflected in the Bill.

It is envisaged that the planning interest for subsea telecommunications cables, similar to other sectors under the Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment's remit, will be granted by the Minister, development consent by An Bord Pleanála (or relevant coastal local authority), and subsequently a Maritime Area Consent will be granted by the DCCAIE.

This represents a fundamental change to the current regime where Minister currently has had no role in planning / consenting for telecoms cables in the marine area to date (nor with regard to terrestrial cables / infrastructure).

Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce

The Mobile Phone and Broadband Taskforce was

established in 2016 to identify immediate solutions to broadband and mobile phone coverage deficits, and to investigate how to improve services to consumers prior to full build and rollout of the National Broadband Plan (NBP).

An Implementation Group established in 2017 co-managed by DCCAIE and the Department of Rural and Community Development has been overseeing implementation of over 70 targeted actions identified by the Taskforce Report, bringing together all key stakeholders, with a focus on issues negatively impacting upon the rollout of essential telecommunications infrastructure particularly in rural areas. The Taskforce publishes quarterly reports on progress made and all reports are available on the Department's website.

The Taskforce continues to deliver upon its third annual Work Programme, containing 30 actions. Discussions are continuing with the Department of Rural and Community Development on how best to carry forward the work of the Taskforce at a more strategic level to tackle more complex issues relating to removal of barriers to deployment of telecoms infrastructure and connectivity.

Public Warning System for Emergency Situations

The revised Telecoms Regulatory Framework (EECC) provided for a requirement under EU law for Member States to develop mobile-phone based public warning systems.

In parallel with the EECC requirement, the Department was tasked under the Government Taskforce on Emergency Planning (GTF) to explore options to identify a suitable mechanism for private mobile phone operators in Ireland to convey text messages to mobile phone users, providing real time information on developments in respect of large scale emergency events such as severe weather events or terrorist incidents requiring a fast response.

The Department is in continuing discussion with industry on what will be required from a technical

perspective and is facilitating direct engagement between the telco providers and the GTF process.

In addition to facilitating engagement between central Government and industry, the Department is actively contributing to the cross Government discussions on planning for development of a Public Warning System.

Publication of a Connectivity Strategy

Connectivity positively impacts on the lives and livelihoods of citizens throughout the country and the development of a Connectivity Strategy, in combination with the work of the Mobile and Broadband Taskforce in removing barriers, encouraging business and consumers to get online, the implementation of the National Broadband Plan and the implementation of the National Digital Strategy, will pave the way for the hyper-connected society.

The draft strategy is being finalised, having had regard to recent developments such as in the area of spectrum policy, network security and integrity, and legislative proposals under the Marine Planning and Development Management Bill that will impact telco cables, and will be submitted to the Minister for consideration in Q3 2020, with a view to stakeholder consultation and publication thereafter.

Current negotiations at European level

The proposal for an ePrivacy Regulation will ensure respect for private life and the protection of personal data in electronic communications and will repeal the existing ePrivacy Directive.

The negotiation of the ePrivacy regulation is continuing three years after its original inception, after failing to reach a General Approach during both the July to December 2019 Finnish Presidency and the January to June 2020 Croatian Presidency of the Council of the European Union. The Croatian Presidency cited disagreement among Member States on the proposed text as a factor in the lack of progress. The upcoming German Presidency July to December 2020 has signalled its intention to progress the ePrivacy file to General Approach and to include

Climate and Digital among its priorities.

DCCAE will also have responsibility for a revision to the Radio Equipment Directive to examine common chargers for mobile phones and similar devices in Q3 2020.

Negotiations continue on the Multiannual Financial Framework (MFF) 2021 -2027 and are led by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade. This division is responsible for elements of the Digital Europe Programme and Connecting Europe Facility both of which are funded under the MFF and continues to input into the negotiations in this regard. The European Commission unveiled its proposed budget on 27 May 2020 which includes €1.1 trillion for the overall MFF, €8.2 billion for Digital Europe Programme, €1.8 billion for CEF Digital and €750 billion for an EU COVID-19 recovery instrument. These proposed figures will now be subject to intensive negotiations



National Digital Strategy & Telecommunications Market Contracts Division

Head of Division

Bill Morrissey

Overview of Division

This division manages and develops Management Services Entity (MSE) arrangements in respect of the Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs) and the Galway-Mayo Pipeline telecommunications infrastructure.

It manages digital inclusion initiatives aimed at citizens and small and micro enterprises under the National Digital Strategy 2013 and co-ordinates the Departments input in the development of a new National Digital Strategy.

It also oversees the Digital Hub Development Agency; management of the National Digital Research Centre digital enterprise initiative and management of the Emergency Call Answering Service (ECAS 999/112) contract.

Priorities

1. Complete Review of Digital Hub Development Agency and bring recommendations as to the future of the Agency to Government.
2. Determine future path of digital inclusion initiatives in the context of COVID-19 restrictions and the development of a new National Digital Strategy.
3. Commence procurement process to engage a MSE to operate market and maintain the Galway-Mayo Gas Pipeline telecommunications Infrastructure and conclude NDRC procurement process.

Key issues/Ongoing Work Programme

The Metropolitan Area Networks (MANs) consist of 88 wholesale, open access State owned telecommunications networks in 94 regional towns and cities. The MANs have played an important role in facilitating operators to provide broadband services for business and residential customers in the regions and have assisted in attracting Foreign Direct Investment. More than 70 operators are using the MANs and over one million citizens and business end users benefit from the MANs. These end customers include industrial estates, multinationals, SMEs, State entities, educational institutions, as well as fixed and mobile customers outside Dublin. The MANs are managed, operated and maintained on the Department's behalf by a private company - enet - under two MSE concession agreements which end in 2030.

In 2017 the Department engaged Analysys Mason to review pricing and access arrangements for the MANs; and enet's compliance with its contractual obligations to ensure that access to the wholesale infrastructure is in line with the principles of open access, equal treatment and non-discrimination. Analysys Mason reported in February 2019 noting that in certain respects enet was not in compliance with the agreed Code of Practice in relation to its approach to intercompany transfer pricing. In that regard the Minister referred the report in February 2019 to ComReg to undertake a follow-up compliance review. The outcome of ComReg's review has been received and is currently under consideration by the Department.

Getting Citizens Online Programme

According to CSO figures one in nine adults living in Ireland have never used the internet while the EU's Digital Economy and Society Index 2019 states that 52% do not have basic digital skills. Digital adoption among citizens is being promoted through the Department's Getting Citizens Online Programme.

The Programme is delivered through 12 community, voluntary and not-for-profit organisations who provide

people who do not have the skills or confidence to use the internet with an opportunity to receive 10 hours of informal classroom based training in basic digital skills.

Classes are delivered free of charge and are tailored to meet the needs of the participants and include but are not limited to modules on sending and receiving emails, using Government services, internet safety, online shopping and use of Apps. Since classes commenced in January 2017 over 57,000 people have received training at a cost of €5 million. The ability to deliver training classes has been impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic as classes were cancelled in compliance with public health guidance. Grantees are in receipt of pre-funding of €0.5million to train an additional 5,500 people. The Department has requested that grantees submit proposals by end June on how this training might be delivered outside of a classroom setting. Training under this scheme is due to be completed by 31 December 2020. With this in mind, the future path of the scheme is currently under consideration to ensure a coordinated all of Government approach that will meet the basic digital skills needs of all people living in Ireland.

Trading Online Voucher Scheme

The Trading Online Voucher Scheme (TOVs) was launched nationally in mid-2014 and aims to assist small and micro-enterprises to develop their e-commerce capability. By end 2019, 6,400 small and micro businesses had completed, or were in the process of completing their trading online projects. In addition, 19,000 or so business owners-managers had benefitted from advice and peer-to-peer support through their participation in the information seminars delivered by the Local Enterprise Offices under the Scheme.

In response to COVID-19 changes to the Scheme were introduced on 8 April and 8 June:

- 2020 Budget increased by €17.5 million from €2.3 million to €19.8 million (€12.6 million from DCCAE; €7 million from DBEI and €0.2 million from DCHG).
 - in the period to September 2020:
- requirement for co-funding reduced from 50% to 10%;
 - a second voucher of up to €2,500 introduced for businesses that have already availed of a voucher.
 - confirmed subscriptions to low cost online retailing platform solutions as eligible expenditure, whilst they progress solutions appropriate to their long-term business development needs.
 - Údarás na Gaeltachta provided with a TOVS allocation to ensure smaller and micro-businesses in Gaeltacht areas are not disadvantaged.
 - The Scheme amended to allow small and micro-enterprises from the accommodation and food service sector to apply.

The revised Scheme forms part of the Government's COVID-19 Business Supports Package for small businesses.

Digital Hub Development Agency (DHDA)

The DHDA was established in 2003 under the DHDA Act to develop Ireland's digital enterprise sector through the creation of a cluster of digital enterprises. It also aims to contribute to urban regeneration in the Dublin 8 area. The Digital Hub offers digital companies flexible property solutions (short-term leases etc.), facilities, and technology transfer with peer-to-peer collaboration within the wider digital sector. It operates under the aegis of the Department and is currently funded through a mix of commercial income and Exchequer funding.

Under the programme to rationalise State agencies, the Government approved a proposal in 2015 for the transition of the DHDA into an independent company under the aegis of Dublin City Council. Given developments since (including improvements in the wider economy, increases in the commercial value of the properties and developments in the digital ecosystem) the Department is currently undertaking a review of the policy underpinning the DHDA. This review is expected to report at the end of June.

National Digital Research Centre (NDRC)

The NDRC was established in 2006 by a consortium of third level institutions including DCU, TCD, UCD, IADT Dun Laoghaire and NCAD, and is based at the DHDA campus. NDRC is funded by the Department under a Concession Agreement. It offers accelerator services and invests in the development of promising science and technology ideas/projects to market-ready stage, where angel or venture capital funds are ready to invest. The initial Concession Agreement ran from 2006 to 2013 and involved funding of €25m. The Concession Agreement was renewed for a further 5 years, effective from mid-2013 to mid-2018, with funding of €17.5m (€3.5m per year) to cover its operational costs and investment costs.

Following a review undertaken by Indecon the Government committed in May 2018 to the continuation of the current supports to the NDRC for a three-year period, extendable to five years pending the appointment of a new service provider. The Department is currently undertaking a competitive procurement process. The competition is at the invitation to submit final tenders stage. The Department expects the procurement process to conclude in July/August. In that context the expiry date of the current concession agreement has been extended until August 2020 to minimise disruption to the digital start-up ecosystem during the procurement process and any subsequent transition process.

Emergency Call Answering Service (ECAS)

The Emergency Call Answering Service (ECAS) is responsible for answering all 112 and 999 calls and texts, providing a vital link between the caller and the Emergency Services. The ECAS establishes the location of the incident and confirms the Emergency Service being requested (Garda, Fire, Ambulance or Coast Guard and Air Traffic Control in emergencies involving aircraft). The call or text is then transferred to the appropriate Emergency Service which then takes responsibility for the call and responds to the emergency. The challenges ahead include the accommodation of new communications technologies in communicating with the emergency services. The legal basis for the ECAS is set out in the

Communications Regulation (Amendment) Act 2007 which provides for the establishment and operation of the ECAS and enabled the Minister to enter into a contract with an entity to provide the service. BT Communications Ireland Limited currently holds the contract, following a procurement process, to operate the service until November 2025. It is funded through a Call Handling Fee levied on communications providers for each emergency call transferred to ECAS. The level of the fee is reviewed annually by ComReg.

Galway Mayo Telecommunications Network

Bord Gáis Éireann has constructed 132 kms of telecommunications ducting along the route of its gas pipeline from Galway to Mayo (Bellanaboy gas terminal), and a further 24 kms spur to the outskirts of Castlebar and Westport. By end 2018 as part of the Corrib Gas Field development Shell Exploration and Production Ireland Ltd had installed fibre in the ducting at no cost to the Exchequer, with ownership of such fibre vesting in the State.

In 2013, the Department received State Aid approval to operate, market and maintain the fibre in these ducts for use by the telecommunications market. A process to procure an MSE to manage the infrastructure commenced in 2015, but was suspended pending resolution of outstanding issues in relation to access rights along the route of the pipeline.

The Telecommunications Services (Ducting and Cables) Act 2018 was enacted in April 2018 and allows for the vesting in the Minister of the ownership of the fibre optic duct and rights of access to the route once an MSE has been appointed. Pending the appointment of the MSE, the Minister entered into an interim agreement with Gas Networks Ireland to provide dark fibre access to customers on the network. The Department will commence the MSE procurement process in Q3.

Governance & Operations



Governance & Operations

The Department's corporate centre supports the Department's line divisions in achieving their sectoral business objectives and the delivery of overall organisational effectiveness. It underpins the implementation of the Public Service Reform Agenda and the Civil Service Renewal Plan.

It has responsibility for specific cross cutting issues encompassing HR and Corporate Services, Communications, Internal Audit and Corporate Governance as well as the Ministers and Secretary General office and Professional Advisory Units (legal, economic and financial).

Together these areas aim to promote and operate a culture of value for money and continual evaluation of organisational performance in a measureable, transparent and accountable manner. They also aim to develop our staff and deliver the public service reform agenda whilst providing a high quality service to our customers and stakeholders.

A high level overview of the budget and staff numbers is provided at the outset, with further information on strategic communications and corporate governance functions.



Patricia Cronin
Assistant Secretary
Governance and
Operations



Corporate Governance Division

Head of Division

Jenny O'Hora

Overview of Division

Corporate Governance Division provides a cohesive approach to the governance of the Department's State bodies, ensuring the relationship between the Department and its agencies is consistent and reflects best practice. It is also responsible for the development of postal policy with the goal of ensuring that Irish customers, both business and residential, enjoy competitively priced, high quality postal services. The division also provides the Department's co-ordination function, which involves a cross divisional, interdepartmental and EU co-ordination service across the wide-ranging economic and policy areas within the Department's remit.

Key Issues/Ongoing Work Programme

An Post

In response to the structural challenges facing the postal sector generally, An Post has put in place a Strategic Plan for the medium-long term future of the company. In order to implement the Plan, the cost of which was estimated to be in the region of €150 million, the Minister for Finance provided a loan of €30 million to the company in December 2017 to support the renewal of the post office network (€15m) and the continued fulfilment of a 5 day per week mails delivery service (€15 million). In conjunction with NewERA, the division monitors implementation of the Strategic Plan to ensure the future sustainability of the company.

Corporate Governance division works with NewERA and DPER to ensure ongoing oversight of An Post financials. As the transformation programme is implemented there will be changes to the workforce and work practices. This includes not only the mails business and the post office network but also central operations currently located at the GPO.

The ongoing implementation of the strategic plan is continuing to yield substantial results. An Post recorded an operating profit of €41.9 million for 2019 compared to €37.6 million for 2018. This represents the third year of significant financial improvement for the group.

Group revenue was €892.1 million in 2019. Though core mail volumes continued to decline and resulted in a €25 million revenue decrease, it was largely offset by the full year impact of the price adjustments made in 2018, significantly increased packets and parcel volumes, the volumes generated from the European and local elections, an increase in revenue from financial services related product offerings and continued strong performance in their subsidiary companies.

An Post has recently indicated that the strength of the balance sheet should enable the Company to deal with the impacts of the COVID-19 crisis.

ESB

The most significant challenge facing the ESB is de-carbonising its business and meeting targets set by the Climate Action Plan. The plan places an emphasis on accelerating the electrification of our heating and transport systems, underpinned by electricity generation moving to zero or close-to-zero carbon technologies out to 2050. The company is investing in renewable energy assets across a range of technologies including onshore and offshore wind and solar energy. ESB is also developing assets that will support the grid to transition to a low carbon future such as battery and storage assets and flexible gas fired units that respond quickly to system demand, which will be key to facilitating large scale renewables in the future. Decarbonisation also creates a challenging operating environment for thermal plants.

The operating environment for ESB will remain challenging in 2020 and beyond, with competition, disruptive innovation, commodity prices and market integration all putting pressure on traditional revenue streams. However, these developments are also presenting opportunities for ESB, particularly in the development of services, where ESB can bring value-driven solutions to its customers and enable the transition to reliable, affordable low-carbon energy. A new set of island of Ireland wholesale electricity trading arrangements, the Integrated Single Electricity Market (I-SEM), was introduced in October 2018. These changes will put pressure on market players to adapt and become more competitive.

As part of the Climate Action Plan, ESB Networks has been tasked with upgrading all electricity meters in Ireland between now and 2024. Every home, farm and business will receive a smart meter free of charge which will enable the development of smart grids, and support the electrification of heat and transport, local renewable generation and microgeneration.

SIRO was launched in 2015 as a joint venture company between ESB and Vodafone. Its objective is to deliver a 100% fibre-to-the-building broadband network with speeds of 1 Gigabit per second. SIRO is

deployed on ESB's existing overhead and underground infrastructure, ensuring a fast and cost-efficient roll-out to every county in Ireland. It is a wholesale open access network.

EIRGRID

Since 2006, EirGrid has operated and developed the national high voltage electricity grid in Ireland.

EirGrid Group is a commercial, fully State owned "designated body" and is responsible for planning, developing and operating a secure and efficient electricity transmission system and for providing transparent non-discriminatory transmission access to generators. EirGrid Group is also responsible for the secure and efficient operation of the East-West Interconnector to Great Britain.

Two major projects underway are the North-South Interconnector and the Celtic Interconnector. The North-South Interconnector project proposes the addition of a new 400 kV overhead line to our grid, connecting the electricity grids of Ireland and Northern Ireland. It will reduce costs to consumers, and contribute to decarbonisation and security of supply of electricity across the island. This proposed line would run through counties Monaghan, Cavan and Meath in Ireland, and Armagh and Tyrone in Northern Ireland. The project has now cleared all planning and legal hurdles in Ireland. A framework contract for the design, test and supply of steelwork for the North South Interconnector contract has been awarded. However, no critical procurement process for construction will be concluded until all planning issues in Northern Ireland are resolved.

In 2018, Ministerial consent was granted for the commencement of plans for the Celtic Interconnector. The Celtic Interconnector is an estimated €1 billion electricity interconnector jointly proposed by EirGrid and their French counterparts, the French transmission system operator, RTE (Reseau de Transporte d'Électricité). It is proposed as a 500km long (subsea), 700MW high voltage direct current line that would run from the north-west coast of France to the south

coast of Ireland. At this scale it would be able to provide electricity for some 450,000 homes. The Celtic Interconnector received a grant of €530million from the European Commission in October 2019 and Ministerial consent has recently been given for the next phase of the Project – the Detailed Design and Consents Phase. This will be the last phase before the final investment decision and construction is estimated to commence in late 2021.

EirGrid launched their new strategy 2020-2025 *Transform the Power System for Future Generations*. The new strategy is shaped by two factors – climate change and the impending transformation of the electricity sector. The primary goal is to lead the island’s electricity sector on sustainability and decarbonisation. EirGrid are planning to prepare the electricity system for a future based almost entirely on renewable energy. They can currently operate the grid with up to 65% renewable power including onshore wind and solar. This must increase however to 95% by 2030 and they are aiming to achieve this by using innovative solutions as well as proven technologies.

Bord na Móna (BnM)

Bord na Móna is undergoing a fundamental transformation as it exits peat harvesting and pivots to sustainable lines of business. The company owns over 80,000 hectares of land in the midlands. To support this transformation, Bord na Móna has developed a ‘Brown to Green’ strategy which envisages the development and scaling up of new and existing business opportunities to ensure the future commercial viability of the company and enable it to continue to fulfil its mandate to be an employer of scale in the midlands region.

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED] A peatlands rehabilitation scheme is being developed with the aim of rehabilitating the peatlands to a higher standard than Bord na Móna’s licences require. Discussions are ongoing with regard to the funding of this scheme.

The scale of the transformation has a significant impact on Bord na Móna employees. This is illustrated by the decision of the ESB to close two power stations in the midlands at the end of this year following a decision by an An Bord Pleanála to deny the West Offaly Power station planning permission to continue operating post-2020 on a co-firing basis (peat and biomass). The Brown to Green Strategy envisages the provision of significant employment in the midlands for Bord na Móna employees in green businesses. Bord na Móna currently employs approximately 1700 people. At present the split between brown and green headcount, i.e the percentages of employees working in peat-related positions versus renewable or sustainable areas, is currently 58% to 42%. Over the next 5 years as the Brown to Green strategy is implemented that is expected to shift to 21% brown versus 79% green.

In September 2019 the High Court ruled to overturn the Peat Extraction Regulations and associated Planning Regulations on foot of a judicial review.

This High Court ruling has led to a decision by Bord na Móna not to harvest peat in 2020 while it seeks the necessary planning consents in respect of retrospective peat harvesting.

[REDACTED]

On 6 May 2020, An Bord Pleanála approved Bord na Móna’s applications for leave to seek substitute consent. Bord na Móna submitted substitute consent applications in early June 2020.

Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)

SEAI has, in co-operation with the Department, conducted a review of its structure and resources over the past year as its critical role in the delivery of the Climate Action Plan and the major national retrofit programme has grown. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Communications and Media Relations Division

Head of Division

Sheena Denny

Overview of Division

The improved resourcing and structuring of the communications discipline across Government through the establishment of a Government Communications Network (GCN) in 2018, is a significant aspect of Public Sector Reform and Civil Service Renewal. With an estimated 700+ people now working in-house in communications across Government Departments and State agencies, the growing importance of strengthening public understanding of the work of Government and the Civil Service through public sector communications is developing.

Communications is an essential part of the effectiveness of any modern organisation and is particularly true of Government departments, given the impact of their activities on the lives of every Irish citizen. DCCAIE specifically has a leadership role in a number of critical policy areas for the citizens of Ireland and therefore has an opportunity to positively engage with the ultimate beneficiaries of these policies through the design and deployment of effective communications activities.

Within DCCAIE, the Press Office, Strategic Development and Communications Unit, Customer Service Team and Internal Communications Unit form one integrated division that create meaningful communications - the Communications and Media Relations Division (CMRD). The division works across five key strands where communications support can be provided throughout the policy and programme delivery process. The CMRD acts as a practical support and provide an increased consultative source of strategic communications expertise for all divisions and sectoral areas.

Cross Cutting Issues

Brexit

Transition Period

The United Kingdom formally left the European Union on 31 January 2020. The transition period will last until 31 December 2020. The UK has formally indicated that it will not seek an extension.

During the transition period, the UK will continue to follow EU rules and the EU will continue to treat the UK as if it were a Member State. There will be no immediate changes for citizens and businesses in their day-to-day dealings. This will allow time to plan and prepare, as things will be different once the transition period is over at the end of 2020.

The UK leaving the EU will inevitably bring significant change. No set of arrangements will be able to replicate the access and benefits of the UK being a member of the EU and within the Single Market and Customs Union.

While Brexit preparations and contingency measures undertaken may reduce the impact on certain sectors of the economy, the measures and preparations should not be considered to mitigate fully the impact of Brexit. As such, communications around the need for businesses and citizens to prepare for Brexit will remain a key part of on-going preparations.

Northern Ireland Protocol

The Protocol for Ireland/Northern Ireland provides that regardless of the path taken in the EU-UK relationship, the special circumstances of the island of Ireland are recognised and protected.

The Protocol upholds measures to avoid a hard border on the island of Ireland, maintain the Common Travel Area and the Single Electricity Market (the all island wholesale electricity market) and protect continuing North South cooperation.

In order to avoid a hard border, the Protocol provides that the rules of the Customs Union and relevant Single Market rules will continue to apply to Northern Ireland, which means that Northern Ireland will remain

in the UK customs territory and at the same time benefit from access to the Single Market without tariffs, quotas, checks or controls.

The detail of a number of operational aspects of the Protocol on Ireland and Northern Ireland will be clarified during the transition period by the EU and the UK, working together, in the Joint Committee.

To date, the Joint Committee has met twice. The first meeting provided for the establishment of specialised committees, each looking at implementing specific areas of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

Mandate for Future Trade Negotiations

The European Council approved the negotiating mandate for the European Commission in February.

Due to the close links between Ireland and the UK, Brexit will have a significant impact on our economy and society. This is acknowledged in paragraph 5 of the negotiating mandate which states that “*the envisaged partnership should ensure that issues arising from Ireland’s unique geographic situation are addressed*”. The EU’s negotiating mandate was followed by the draft text of the agreement on the new partnership with the United Kingdom, published by the European Commission on 18 March 2020, following consultation with the European Parliament and Council. The draft legal text was also transmitted to the United Kingdom on the same date. The UK legal text and sectoral draft agreements were published on 19 May 2020.

There is a dual focus on both the negotiations of the future trade agreement and the implementation of the Northern Ireland Protocol.

To date, there have been four rounds of negotiations. After each round the Commission provides an update to Member States on the progress made on the wide range of topics discussed during each round.

Periodically, memoranda are brought to Government on Ireland’s preparations for the end of the transition period. The Tánaiste brought a comprehensive Memorandum to Government on 29 May to brief

the Government on recent Brexit developments, and provided an update on Brexit Readiness work. Government agreed that this work will intensify in the coming months, and that a new Brexit Omnibus Bill should be drafted. This Department had 2 sections in the last Brexit Omnibus Bill related to the Single Electricity Market and certification in the fluorinated gas sector.

In line with the Government decision of 29 May to intensify Brexit preparedness planning, divisions in the Department have intensified their planning their planning for their areas/sectors, including any requirement for legislation. Brexit planning covers many diverse areas within the Department, including, but not limited to, energy, climate, environmental standards and market surveillance.

Individual divisions are tasked with developing and implementing Brexit preparations for their areas and discussing their sectoral issues with the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of An Taoiseach and other Departments as required, as well as with the EU Commission and TFUK. The electricity regulation division plays an important coordination role for the Department and acts as first contact point with other Departments as above and with EU Commission entities.

In light of ongoing developments on Brexit during June, for the purposes of briefing the incoming Minister, a more detailed note or oral presentation can be prepared on the implications of Brexit for the various sectors in the Department's remit, with the most up to date position on the negotiations. In view of the significance of Ireland/UK energy interdependencies, below is more detail on energy issues arising.

Energy

Ireland imports most of the fossil fuels we use and the UK is a key conduit for much of this energy. In addition, we have many close energy links between Ireland and Northern Ireland, most notably the Single Electricity Market, the all island wholesale electricity market in place since 2007.

The energy systems of Ireland and the United Kingdom are interdependent and mutually beneficial. Ireland and Northern Ireland import a large amount of energy supplies from Britain – most notably gas and oil. Electricity and gas are imported to Ireland via interconnectors, with Scotland in the case of gas and with Wales in the case of electricity (known as the East West Interconnector of EWIC).

Natural gas provides over 30% of Ireland's energy needs, heating and powering 700,000 homes and businesses and generating over 50% of the electricity Ireland uses.

Over the coming years, Ireland's demand for electricity is expected to increase as we electrify heating systems and increase the uptake of electric vehicles. Ireland's increased demand for electricity, together with the phasing out of peat and coal, will lead to an increase in the amount of natural gas we use in the near term and its importance to the operation and stability of our electricity system.

Natural gas in Ireland is currently supplied by a combination of domestic production and imports via pipeline from Scotland. In 2018, 39% of Ireland's natural gas use was imported. By the middle of this decade, as the Corrib gas field, our indigenous supply of natural gas, continues to deplete, our dependence on gas imports is expected to be over 80%.

It is in this context that Ireland strongly supports the EU negotiating mandate which provides for cooperation to support the delivery of cost efficient, clean and secure supplies of electricity and gas, based on competitive markets and non-discriminatory access to networks. Ireland warmly welcomes that the EU negotiating mandate seeks a framework to facilitate technical cooperation between electricity and gas network operators and that includes mechanisms to ensure as far as possible security of supply and efficient trade over interconnectors over different timeframes, taking account of the fact the United Kingdom will leave the internal market in energy.

EU/International Work

Much of the work of the Department has an EU and international dimension to it. An overview of the main policies and developments, including the impact of Brexit on the work of this Department, is provided here. More detail is available under sectoral headings. Details of the structure of the European institutions and the Council formations which the Minister represents Ireland at are also provided.

EU

European Institutions

The European Union institutions produce the EU's policies and oversee the management of its various programmes.

The **European Council** is made up of the heads of Member State governments who meet to guide the work of the EU. The Council usually meets between four and six times a year. The meetings are chaired by Charles Michel, President of the European Council.

The **European Commission** proposes legislation and policy for the Council of the European Union and European Parliament to discuss and decide on. It also makes sure that countries comply with European legislation and it manages many of the EU's programmes. Each member state nominates one commissioner each to the Commission and it's headed by the Commission President, Ursula von der Leyen.

The **Council of the European Union** is made up of Ministers from the Member States who come together to make decisions on legislation and policy. There are ten different Council formations for different policy areas.

The Minister for Communications, Climate Action and Environment sits on the Transport, Energy and Telecommunications (TTE) Council at meetings regarding energy and telecommunications as well as the Environment Council.

Official Council meetings are organised by the Council of the EU and chaired by the Council presidency. However, each Council presidency also organises informal meetings of ministers to discuss initiatives related to a particular topic or Council configuration. Informal meetings normally occur in the country of the Presidency. Germany currently holds the Presidency. Forthcoming meetings, in chronological order, are:

- Environment Council - 8th October 2020 (Luxembourg)
- Informal meeting of Ministers responsible for Telecommunications - 15th October 2020 Baden-Baden
- Telecoms Council - 7 December 2020, Brussels

The incoming German Presidency are currently reviewing the holding of physical or virtual meetings in the Autumn.

Committees and working parties handle the preparatory work on files before they are discussed at Council meetings and are attended by officials from the Department and in the Permanent Representation office in Brussels, where the Department has full time staff.

The European Parliament is made up of 751 directly-elected MEPs from all Member States who help create policy and make decisions in co-operation with the Council of the EU. In order to do the preparatory work for Parliament's plenary sittings, the Members are divided up among a number of specialised,

standing committees of which there are 20. The committees relevant to the work of this Department is the Industry, Research and Energy Committee (ITRE) and the Environment Committee.

Engagement with members of the European Parliament at Ministerial level is a very helpful signal of Ireland's commitment to policies being progressed by the parliament. It provides an opportunity to help MEPs understand the progression of our own policies and programmes as well as helping to influence them on the Irish position on important legislative files. Further detail is provided below on files currently being progressed and negotiated.

Transposition of EU Directives and Regulations

Under EU law, Directives must be transposed into national law in order to give force to its provisions. Across the various sectors, the Department is currently transposing 16 Directives and 11 Regulations. The European Commission monitors that transposition is timely, correctly done and implemented.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - State Agencies

Communications

An Post

An Post is Ireland's national postal service provider. It provides postal, communication, retail and money transmission services. As one of Ireland's largest commercial companies, An Post employs over 9,600 people in retail, processing and delivery points.
www.anpost.ie

Commission for Communication Regulation (ComReg)

ComReg is the statutory body responsible for the regulation of the electronic communications sector. This includes the telecommunications, radiocommunications, broadcasting transmission and the postal sector.
www.comreg.ie

Digital Hub Development Agency (DHDA)

The Digital Hub Development Agency was established under the Digital Hub Development Act 2003. It oversees the development of the Digital Hub, Ireland's flagship in the digital media sector.
www.thedigitalhub.ie

Energy

Electricity Supply Board (ESB)

ESB was established in accordance with the Electricity Supply Board Acts 1927-2001. It is a corporate body which controls and develops Ireland's electricity network. ESB is involved in the generation and supply of electricity to both domestic and commercial users. Employing over 7,000 people, it is the largest Electricity Utility in the state. ESB is actively diversifying their portfolio to include renewable energy and communication networks.
www.esb.ie

EirGrid

EirGrid PLC was established to act as the independent Transmission System Operator (TSO), in line with the requirements of the EU Electricity Directive. EirGrid became operational as the TSO on 1 July 2006.
www.eirgrid.com

Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU)

Established in 1999, the CRU, formerly the Commission for Energy Regulation (CER), is Ireland's independent energy regulator. It has a wide range of economic, customer protection and safety responsibilities in the energy sector. In addition, the CRU is Ireland's economic regulator of the Irish public water and wastewater sector. Policy for this area is the responsibility of the Minister for Housing, Planning and Local Government.
www.cru.ie

Bord na Móna

Bord na Móna is the supplier of products and services based principally on peat. The company is also providing products and services in the environmental, renewable energy, electricity generation and waste management business sectors.
www.bnm.ie

National Oil Reserves Agency (NORA)

NORA was established as a stand-alone agency under the NORA Act 2007. Its main function is to maintain Ireland's 90 days of strategic oil reserves for use in an oil supply disruption.
www.nora.ie

Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)

The SEAI, formerly SEI, was established in 2002 to promote and assist the development of sustainable energy.
www.seai.ie

Irish National Petroleum Corporation (INPC)

INPC is a state company which owned the Whitegate refinery and Bantry Bay Terminal on Whiddy Island. These were sold by the state in 2001, and since then the INPC has had no staff. It is currently overseen by a 3 person technical board. The board's functions relate to upholding the Minister's rights and obligations under the 2001 Sale and Purchase Agreement. This principally involves managing environmental claims.

Mining Board

The Mining Board is a Statutory Body established under Section 33 of the Minerals Development Act 1940. The Board is an appellate body principally involved in consideration as to whether minerals are excepted from provisions of the Minerals Development Act 1979 and 2017, which vested in the Minister the exclusive right of working minerals in the State save for "excepted minerals".

Climate Action and Environment

Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) is responsible for protecting the environment in Ireland, through licensing, enforcement and guidance. It was set up in 1993 under the Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992 as an independent public body.

www.epa.ie

Natural Resources

Inland Fisheries Ireland

Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI) was established under the Inland Fisheries Act 2010. IFI is the agency responsible for the protection, management and conservation of Ireland's inland fisheries and sea angling resources.

www.fisheriesireland.ie

Loughs Agency

The Loughs Agency was established under the British Irish Agreement Act 1999. It is a North South body under the co-sponsorship of the department. The Agency aims to provide effective conservation, management, promotion and development of the fisheries and marine resources of the Foyle and Carlingford areas. It is also responsible for the development and licensing of aquaculture, as well as the development of marine tourism

www.loughs-agency.org

Appendix 2 – Climate Action Fund projects: Round One

ESB eCars

Up to €10 million is being provided to develop a nationwide, state-of-the-art electric vehicle charging network capable of facilitating large-scale electric vehicle uptake over the next decade.

Irish Rail: Hybrid Drive for Inter City Railcar fleet

Up to €15 million is being invested to design new hybrid power-packs for intercity railcars to reduce diesel use and greenhouse gas emissions. Following the proof of concept in one three car train, the hybrid power-packs will be implemented across the wider fleet.

South Dublin County Council: The South Dublin County Council Tallaght District Heating Scheme

Up to €4.5 million is being provided to establish a sustainable district heating solution in the Tallaght area to provide low carbon heat to public sector, residential and commercial customers.

Gas Networks Ireland: GRAZE Gas - Green Renewable Agricultural Zero Emissions Gas

Up to €8.5 million is being provided to support the installation of the first transmission connected Central Grid Injection (CGI) facility for renewable gas and a grant scheme to support circa 74 compressed natural gas vehicles.

Dublin City Council: Dublin District Heating System

Up to €20 million is being invested to capture waste heat generated at industrial facilities, in particular, the Dublin Waste to Energy Plant in Ringsend and piping it into homes and businesses in the Poolbeg, Ringsend and Docklands areas of Dublin city.

Road Management Office: Local Authority Public Lighting Energy Efficiency Project

Up to €17.5 million will be invested to retrofit all remaining 326,000 non-LED Local Authority public lights to high efficiency LED Lanterns. Public Lighting accounts for approx. 50% of total energy use and based on the application, the project could deliver emission reduction of over 40,000 tonnes of CO₂ from electricity generation per annum.

3 Counties Energy Agency: Driving HGV Efficiently into Brexit

Up to €1.4 million will be provided to support the transport sector in reducing reduce fuel consumption and emissions from vehicles by being smarter about transport use and by embracing new technologies. Over a two-year period telematic equipment will be installed in over 1,000 vehicles and appropriate training for the drivers will be provided. Through continuous monitoring and positive reinforcement of driving behaviour performance, the overall fuel efficiency is expected to increase by 10%.

