



2024 Highlights

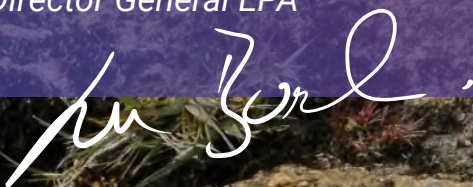
Introduction

In 2024, the EPA published our landmark four-year assessment of the State of Ireland's Environment. The report highlights the progress that Ireland has made since joining the EU over 50 years ago, however future prosperity and health are threatened unless we better protect our environment. Where we are currently, while it is better, is nowhere near good enough. We are always playing catch-up. We now have virtually no seriously polluted rivers, but we have hardly any pristine ones left either. We now recycle more but produce more waste than ever and export much of it. We are taking positive actions across multiple fronts, but they are not keeping pace with the growing pressures, and our environment is being squeezed. Incremental change is not the best use of scarce time and resources. We need to make a fundamental shift.

Whilst some welcome progress is being made on climate action, we are still well off-track from meeting our 2030 targets. Critically, however, this level of delivery is not evident across other areas of the environment. The report shows that across five key environmental indicators, none were rated good or very good. Indeed, for air, water, climate, nature, and waste indicators, Ireland scored moderate, poor, or very poor. We need to build momentum towards delivering not only on climate but also on our water, circular economy, pollution reduction, and biodiversity goals. Delivering on these aims will require transformational change in many of the core systems of our society, and will involve everyone. We have much to do, but by acting now we can make good in providing a healthy, clean and resilient environment for ourselves and future generations.

These highlights of 2024 look back at the work of the EPA over the last 12 months, through regulation, scientific knowledge and working with others. A key priority for the EPA continues to be the provision of timely and targeted information on the environment. In addition to our State of the Environment Report, we published over 50 major reports on water, air, circular economy, environmental compliance and more. During the year we also launched our new series of Quarterly Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reports. These reports aim to support early and more frequent monitoring of progress on Climate Action. The EPA also published an early insights bulletin into nitrogen levels in major rivers in Ireland for the period January to June 2024. In 2025, the EPA will continue to use our expertise, extensive monitoring systems, evidence and research to protect, improve, and restore Ireland's environment.

Laura Burke
Director General EPA



Highlights

KEY FIGURES
EPA Activity



210+

Urban wastewater and 200+ drinking water inspections

1,300+

Inspections of licensed Industrial and Waste facilities

440+

EPA datasets on data.gov.ie

€500,000

Circuit Court fine resulting from an EPA investigation into breach of licence at a Kerry-based waste disposal company



2,500+

Lakes, rivers, estuaries, and other waterbodies monitored by the EPA

1.2 Million

Visits to epa.ie



7

Counties where EPA is using its enforcement powers to stop illegal peat extraction

170+

Environmental Authorisations issued

14,500+

Water chemistry samples analysed

10

Poor-performing industrial and waste licensed facilities featured on National Priority Sites List in 2024

Highlights

KEY FIGURES EPA Activity



900+

Samples measured for radioactivity

€18.5m

Awarded for new environmental research

70,000+

Social media followers

New

EPA Early Insights - Provided new, timely indicators on greenhouse gas emissions and nitrates

3-day

Forecast of air quality now available online



300+

Citizen scientists helped measure air quality in Limerick City

Over €1bn

Financial provision set aside for clean up in the case of abandonment or incident at licensed sites

KEY FIGURES State of Ireland's Environment

6.8%

Drop in Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions in 2023



29%

Projected reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 if majority of actions outlined in Climate Action Plan 2024 are implemented (versus target of 51%)

Less than **1/3**

Of plastic packaging waste recycled in 2022



1.24 million tonnes or

39%

Of municipal waste exported in 2022

Highlights

KEY FIGURES State of Ireland's Environment

170,000

Homes predicted to have high radon levels

79%

Of bathing waters had excellent water quality in 2023

53%

Of Irish population understands that climate change is 'caused mostly by human activities'



16
(down
from 19)

Reduction in number of towns and villages discharging raw sewage daily in 2024

29%

Number of government department contracts incorporating green criteria in 2022 (compared to 24% in 2021)

Five key priorities from the State of the Environment Report 2024:



1. Deliver a national policy position on the environment.



2. Drive policy implementation to deliver benefits.



3. Transform our energy, transport, food and industrial systems.



4. Scale up investment in water, energy, transport and waste management infrastructure.

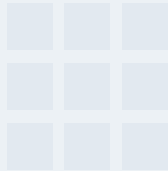


5. Protect the environment to protect our health.

Dates for the Diary



JANUARY



FEBRUARY

Announcement of 2024 EPA Research Call Awards
Clean Air Together Limerick City Results



MARCH

National Stop Food Waste Day (March 1)
Industrial and Waste Licence Enforcement Summary



APRIL

EU Emissions Trading Scheme Report
Launch of 2025 EPA Research Call
Spring Climate Lecture
Publication of National Climate Change Risk Assessment



MAY

Bathing Water Report
Ireland's Air Pollutant Emissions Report
GHG Emissions Projections
Environment, Health & Wellbeing Conference
EPA Climate Change Conference
Domestic Wastewater Treatment Systems Report



JUNE

National Water Conference
Food Waste Forum
Public Drinking Water Supplies Report

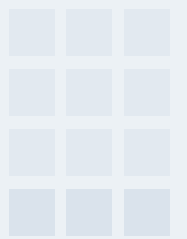


JULY

Ireland's GHG Emissions Inventory
Private Drinking Water Supplies Report



AUGUST



SEPTEMBER

Air Quality in Ireland Report
EPA Circular Economy Conference



OCTOBER

Urban Wastewater Treatment Report
Water Quality in Ireland Report



NOVEMBER

National Air Event
EPA ICEL Law Conference
Circular Economy and Waste Statistics Highlights Report
Green Public Procurement Good Practice Event



DECEMBER

Local Authority Enforcement Performance Report



Environmental Protection Agency
An Ghníomhaireacht um Chaomhnú Comhshaoil



*All figures preliminary.
Finalised statistics available in EPA Annual Report and Accounts.*