

Email to: [NRA@taoiseach.gov.ie](mailto:NRA@taoiseach.gov.ie)

20 May 2024

## Re: National Risk Assessment 2024 Overview of Strategic Risks

Dear sir/madam,

The EPA welcomes this opportunity to input to your consultation on the National Risk Assessment 2024 Overview of Strategic Risks.

EPA does not see any specific additional risk that need to be added to the list contained in the consultation documentation. EPA does have some comments to make in relation to a few of the risks as set out below.

The Climate Change risk (Risk 16) has been clearly identified. In the assessment of this risk, it is important to take cognisance of the latest available evidence and research. In this context, the recently published EU Climate Change Risk Assessment ([European Climate Risk Assessment — European Environment Agency \(europa.eu\)](https://europeanclimate.eu/)) is an important tool to use in assessing and mitigating climate change risk. This report sets out that Europe is the fastest-warming continent in the world. Extreme heat is becoming more frequent. Downpours and other precipitation extremes are increasing in severity, and recent years have seen catastrophic floods in various regions of Europe. The EEA set out that these events, combined with environmental and social risk drivers, pose major challenges throughout Europe. Specifically, they compromise food and water security, energy security and financial stability, and the health of the general population and of outdoor workers; in turn, this affects social cohesion and stability. In tandem, climate change is impacting terrestrial, freshwater and marine ecosystems.

The EPA has recently published Ireland's Climate Change Assessment with volume 3 dealing with being prepared for Ireland's Climate future. The EPA is also leading the development of Ireland's first National Climate Change Risk Assessment which commenced earlier this year. This work when complete will provide information to inform future iterations of the national risk assessment.

Finally, EPA considers that it is important to consider and assess appropriately new scientific understanding, reflected in the most recent IPCC sixth assessment report (AR6) that suggesting that the risks of reaching or exceeding tipping points are more likely to occur at lower global warming level than was previously envisaged. The EPA is happy to provide further information on this new evidence and knowledge if useful.

In relation to the listed societal risks, EPA suggests that demographic change (Risk 14) should consider the increasing population as well as the age profile of the population as

this increase on overall population places pressures on existing infrastructure which can have knock on impacts on the environment. For example, EPA has highlighted in its reports on urban wastewater treatment that it will take a multi-billion-euro investment to bring treatment systems up to standard and at least two decades to complete this work. Consequently, the provision of adequate water services for housing development should be considered and reflected in this risk assessment (potentially under Risk 10 (Capacity constraints and infrastructural deficits)).

Under Risk 20 (Antimicrobial Resistance), EPA suggests that some reference to Ireland's second One Health National Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance 2021-2025 may be relevant as certain risks descriptions do indicate some of the mitigations in place (e.g. Risk 19).

Regarding Risk 25 (CBRN), EPA suggests that there is need for separation in the text between radiological incidents in Ireland which could have a major public health impact and associated societal and economic impacts and civil radiological events overseas which due to the distances between Ireland and the event are likely to have significant economic impacts rather than public health impacts.

If you require any clarifications on any of the points above, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours Sincerely,

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**Andy Fanning**  
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*Office of Environmental Monitoring and Radiation Protection*