An Roinn Iompair
Department of Transport

Irish Maritime Directorate Strategy
2021-2025

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2021-2025

February 2021   **Department of Transport**

Foreword – Minister and Minister of State

The maritime transport sector plays a crucial role in facilitating economic growth and prosperity as well as maintaining connectivity to our trading partners. We in the Department of Transport will need to work ever more closely with our stakeholders to combat the impacts of Brexit and the COVID-19 pandemic. We know our passenger services both at sea and in the air have been decimated by COVID-19. However, our freight services continue to push through these difficult times and adapt to the ever evolving situation. This has been no mean feat and is a reflection of the incredible work undertaken at our ports and by shipping companies to protect essential crew, passengers and support services to ensure our essential supply chains are kept running.

In our roles as Minister for Transport and Minister for State for International Transport, we have had the opportunity to engage with stakeholders in the maritime sector and to hear their concerns over the last number of months. We wish to acknowledge the incredible work of this very skilled workforce in ensuring the continued delivery of our essential goods and services. Their role in keeping our supermarkets stocked, as well as the vital transportation of vaccines to our island cannot be overstated.

Early 2021 has seen the worst phase of the pandemic to date which will place even further pressure on our maritime sector. All the more reason to have a strategy in place to ensure we are able to react appropriately to changes and to assist the sector to work as efficiently as possible. There is no doubt there are great challenges to come, but so too will there be great opportunities.

This Maritime Strategy sets out clear goals under our six priority objectives, in line with our Department's Statement of Strategy as well as the Government's priorities under the Programme for Government: Our Shared Future. Now more than ever, our Department will need to be working at its optimum level in order to support our partners in the maritime sector.

We very much look forward to working with all stakeholders in the maritime sector, to build on the excellent work that has been undertaken to date, to put in place new initiatives to address issues arising from both Brexit and the pandemic and to ensure that we work towards a full recovery of our sector in the long term.

Eamon Ryan   Hildegarde Naughton
Minister for Transport   Minister of State

Foreword – Maritime Director

When we started out on this review of the Irish Maritime Administration at the start of 2020, the world was a very different place. We have always known and valued the contribution of the maritime sector to our connectivity and to the vital movement of goods between Ireland and our trading partners. However, that reliance was brought into sharp focus since early 2020 with the onset of the COVID-19 Pandemic and, while 2020 brought many challenges to our shores and impacted our lives like nothing ever before, the response to those challenges both within the Department of Transport and externally has been second to none.

It is important to acknowledge the immense contribution the essential workers across the entire transport sector have made since early 2020 and the vital work going on behind the scenes at our ports and aboard the vessels that serve our ports which have kept our country moving. The maritime sector has shown a strong resilience during this crisis, mainly due to the extraordinary work that has been done to implement measures to ensure that any risks to this very skilled work force were kept to an absolute minimum.
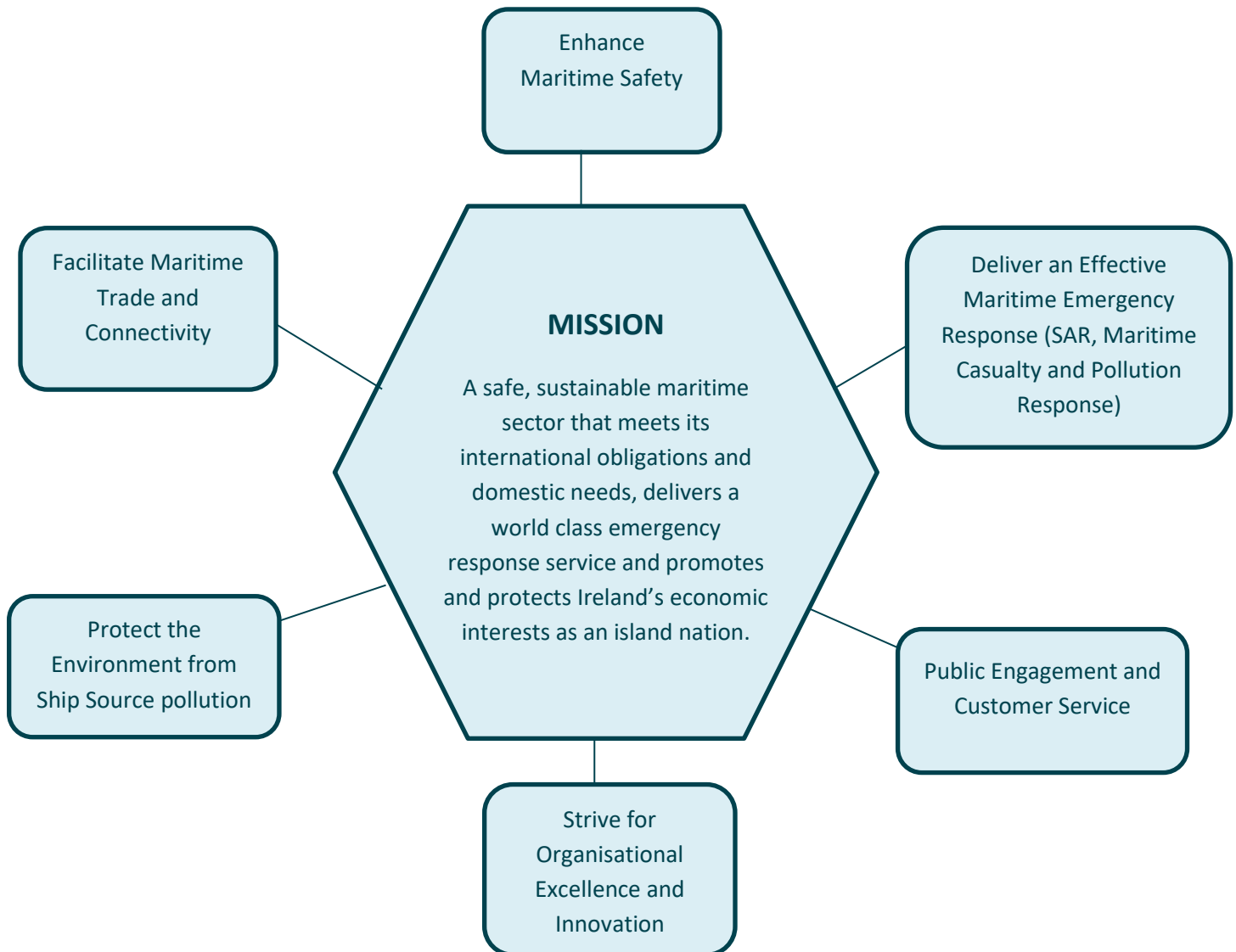
One of the positives to come out of the last year was the collaboration that took place within the Department of Transport as well as with our external stakeholders. This has led to the establishment of new relationships and more open communications which will only serve to strengthen our maritime sector. We have also recognised the very diverse and wide-ranging activities that go on in this sector and the need to nurture and build on the good work that has taken place, particularly with Brexit now upon us. There has also been a change of Government since we started this work and a new Programme for Government has been published which includes the key targets for the maritime sector.

This Maritime Strategy sets out a plan for the next five years across a broad range of activities, as we face the challenges of a post Brexit maritime sector and endeavour to respond to new environmental initiatives. It provides a critical reflection of how we can do things better and reflects the views of our stakeholders. I look forward to seeing the recommended actions put into operation.

Deirdre O'Keeffe

Maritime Director

VISION

To have a safe, sustainable maritime transport sector, and to facilitate competitive maritime transport services and safe use of the marine environment.

Enhance Maritime Safety

Facilitate Maritime Trade and Connectivity

Deliver an Effective Maritime Emergency Response (SAR, Maritime Casualty and Pollution Response)

MISSION

A safe, sustainable maritime sector that meets its international obligations and domestic needs, delivers a world class emergency response service and promotes and protects Ireland's economic interests as an island nation.

Protect the Environment from Ship Source pollution

Public Engagement and Customer Service

Strive for Organisational Excellence and Innovation

Context for a Maritime Strategy

So why do we need a Maritime Strategy? Reviewing the role of the Irish Maritime Administration (IMA) began in January 2020 as it had been seven years since the IMA was established. There was also a need to consider our approach to the IMO International Instruments Implementation (III) Code and the associated audit. We wanted to take stock and consider where we needed to improve.

The vital importance of the maritime sector to Ireland in terms of trade and connectivity, and in relation to fishing and recreational activities, is widely acknowledged, and the COVID-19 pandemic has only served to reinforce that position. The pandemic has also brought to light the need to review our strategy and to ensure appropriate structures are in place to enable the sector to operate as safely and effectively as possible in order to deliver for those we serve – the public and the wider maritime sector.

There have been a number of policy initiatives over the years, for example the National Ports Policy and the Maritime Safety Strategy (2015-2019) as well as the recent policy reforms of the National Search and Rescue (SAR) Plan and National Oil Spill Plan, but we have never had a single sector wide strategy bringing all of the elements together in one document. A key purpose of this Strategy is to do just that. The Strategy has evolved as the work progressed to take account of the wide range of functions carried out in the sector and to take a more holistic integrated approach to maritime transport and maritime safety.

With the formation of a new Government during 2020, there has also been an emphasis placed on new environmental technologies as well as digitalisation, which is a growing theme in our sector. These factors have led to a more collaborative approach to developing the Strategy and exposed the appetite for cross-functional participation to continue in areas such as safety, connectivity, public engagement, and organisational excellence and innovation.

In moving forward to implement this Maritime Strategy, we need to consider the importance of meeting the needs of our domestic fleet, international regulatory requirements, and the importance of maintaining our reputation as a modern maritime nation.

There is a balance to be struck in meeting all of those obligations and how we risk assess our priorities, focussing on ensuring regulation is responsive, agile and proportionate to needs and risks within the sector, while maintaining our overall focus on public safety.

In the context of the UK's exit from the EU, there is a greater focus on the maritime sector and we need to ensure we have a Strategy in place to enable us to work more collaboratively in order to meet the challenges ahead. The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted many issues in the maritime labour area and there will be a renewed targeted effort to ensure the overall wellbeing and safety of seafarers and fishers, as well as improved living and working conditions.

Ultimately this Strategy will be a guide for us as we move forward as a sector to address issues collectively and collaboratively with internal and external stakeholders in a more coherent way, to foster innovation and to protect our sector from the impacts of external crises.

Core Objectives

In preparing this Strategy we have taken account of international obligations and domestic needs as well as the impacts of Brexit and COVID-19 and how they can be mitigated.

Developing the Strategy has involved considerable scrutiny across all of the relevant areas in the Department and an external consultation process. This has resulted in a number of proposed actions to be undertaken under six Core Objectives which are summarised as follows.

1. *Enhance Maritime Safety.*
2. *Facilitate Maritime Trade and Connectivity.*
3. *Deliver an effective Maritime Emergency Response (Search and Rescue (SAR) Maritime Casualty and Pollution Response).*
4. *Protect the Environment from Ship Source Pollution.*
5. *Strive for Organisational Excellence and Innovation.*
6. *Public Engagement and Customer Service.*

Implementation of this Strategy is the next step to ensure a safe, efficient and effective maritime transport system and deliver on our Mission set out in the Department's Statement of Strategy to deliver an accessible, efficient, safe and sustainable transport system that supports communities, households and businesses. Implementation will be consistent with wider Government policy, undertaken in line with the Department's Corporate Governance Framework in a transparent and accountable manner and take account of our public sector duty.

Overview of the Irish Maritime Directorate (IMD)

The IMD is made up of five Divisions:

Marine Survey Office (MSO): The MSO regulates the safety, security, living and working conditions and pollution prevention for all Irish vessels and crews as well as foreign flagged ships and crews in Irish ports. The MSO also regulates the security of Irish ports.

Within the MSO the *Mercantile Marine Office (MMO)* discharges certain administrative functions in relation to the General Register of Shipping and of Seafarers under the Merchant Shipping Acts and the Mercantile Marine Act. This includes administration of a number of processes for Irish seafarers and Irish vessels.

Maritime Strategy and Governance Division (MSGD): This Division is responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Maritime Strategy, with particular responsibility to support delivery of objectives relating to Maritime SAR and Pollution Response. The Division also has the corporate governance role for the Commissioners of Irish Lights.

Maritime Safety Policy Division (MSPD): MSPD has responsibility for the development of legislation governing merchant shipping, fishing and passenger vessels, and recreational craft, as well as maritime safety and ship source pollution. This includes the safety of fishing vessels and living and working conditions for fishers. MSPD aims to ensure that Irish maritime legislation is aligned with best international and European practices. MSPD also has responsibility for the corporate governance of the Marine Casualty Investigation Board (MCIB).

The divisions named above make up the Irish Maritime Administration (IMA) which forms part of the Irish Maritime Directorate (IMD). In addition to discharging its domestic functions, the IMA is responsible for implementation of and compliance with obligations under international conventions and European Union (EU) law and engages with the International Maritime Organisation (IMO) and the European Maritime Safety Agency (EMSA) in the context of those obligations.

Responsibilities within the Irish maritime sector are wider than those outlined above and also include maritime trade and emergency response and are all encompassed under the title of the Irish Maritime Directorate (IMD). The IMA title will also be retained to describe a particular part of the IMD, responsible for meeting relevant international obligations.

Overview of the Irish Maritime Directorate

The final two Divisions that make up the IMD are:

Maritime Transport Division (MTD): This Division is responsible for the overall development and implementation of National Ports Policy to ensure efficient, effective and adequate supports for our trading economy in order to foster economic development. The Division is also responsible for the development and implementation of legislation in relation to the commercial ports sector as well as corporate governance of the five State port companies. In addition, working with the Irish Maritime Development Office (IMDO), the Division seeks to nurture conditions supportive of the development of the Irish based shipping sector and related maritime activities to enhance Ireland's international connectivity.

Irish Coast Guard (IRCG): The Coast Guard's role is to discharge Ireland's Search and Rescue (SAR) obligations by implementing the National SAR Plan for all incidents occurring in the maritime domain, or as otherwise requested by SAR authorities in other domains (aviation or inland). Under the Framework for Major Emergency Management, the IRCG is nominated as one of

the State's Principal Emergency Services along with An Garda Síochána, the Fire Service and Ambulance Service.

In addition, the Coast Guard, under the National Oil Spill Contingency Plan, coordinates the State's response to major pollution incidents as a result of maritime casualties as part of implementing the International Convention on Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation (OPRC). The OPRC is an international maritime convention establishing measures for dealing with marine pollution incidents arising from a maritime casualty at a national and local level and in co-operation with other countries.

Under the Sea Pollution Act, 1991, Authorised Officers within the Coast Guard are warranted to intervene as necessary in marine casualties to prevent or minimise damage from pollution where these casualties pose a threat of major harm to the Irish coastline and related interests. The Coast Guard provides a Maritime Assistance Service and responds to vessels in need of assistance requesting a Place of Refuge.

Details of core stakeholders to the IMD are set out in the Appendix.

Core Objective 1: Enhance Maritime Safety

Ensuring a safe maritime sector is one of our key goals and requires us to look at our domestic needs as well as what we need to do to meet our international obligations, including implementation of EU law and compliance with international safety conventions.

Passenger boats and ships, together with fishing vessels, make up the bulk of the Irish domestic commercial fleet. There is also a very significant number of recreational craft of all types operating on our inland waters, lakes, rivers and canals, and on our coastal waters. The safety profile of the Irish maritime sector is generally good but it requires vigilance to maintain and to improve it. It is essential to avoid complacency and to continue to analyse developments in this area.

The accident statistics published by the MCIB have shown a steady and continuous improvement over recent years. The fatality rates have fallen in all sectors. In some areas - including cargo ships, passenger ships, passenger boats and fishing vessels greater than 15m - there have been zero or close to zero fatalities in recent years. The fatalities which have occurred in these sectors have mainly been related to occupational safety issues. Safety has also improved for fishing vessels less than 15m but more remains to be done with this sector of the fleet. The safety profile in the recreational sector has also been good with some areas having zero or close to zero fatalities. There are other areas which require further attention.

There are great societal benefits in having open and free access to our waterways and interventions need to be balanced to retain this and also to recognise the many different sets of stakeholders involved. We will develop a new safety plan as part of this overall Strategy which will build on the work of the Maritime Safety Strategy, 2015-2019 in this regard. We will also review the maritime transport accident investigation arrangements.

The need to implement legislation to support the domestic fleet must be balanced with the need to implement legislation required to address our obligations under EU law, which are generally time bound, as well as our commitments to implement international conventions. This requires prioritisation of legislative projects, which is currently implemented through a Legislation Working Group and an annual legislative review process.

Core Objective 1: Enhance Maritime Safety

In addition to current legislative needs and obligations, we must also recognise growing demands as new requirements emerge with developing technologies, for example digitalisation to facilitate smoother sharing of information for maritime trade and certification, as well as entirely new technologies such as autonomous ships.

Consideration must also be given to the greater focus being placed on climate change and green initiatives, as well as the need to meet the objectives set out in the Programme for Government: Our Shared Future and the Department's Statement of Strategy.

In order to take account of all of these variables, we will review our priorities from a risk perspective to ensure a transparent rationale is in place for the prioritisation of our legislative needs. The marine surveyors of the MSO work together with the members of the MSPD to this end.

There will be an assessment of our domestic needs as well as an examination of compliance with our international obligations. In terms of the risk-based approach, we will benchmark our international obligations against the configuration of the Irish fleet and the types of vessels that call at Irish ports. Where aspects of international conventions are not necessarily relevant in the Irish context at any time, such commitments will be placed lower down the list of legislative priorities, in order to target our work to those areas most in need of our immediate attention. We will be cognisant of the challenges faced in developing legislation, particularly primary legislation, having regard to Constitutional and Oireachtas requirements.

Ireland participated in a voluntary IMO Member State audit process in 2010, following which a Corrective Action Plan was put in place to address the findings of the audit, which we will continue to monitor progress on with a view to putting in place measures to prepare for the mandatory IMO audit process and enhance our compliance with the III Code. Such measures will take into consideration the resources and training required to ensure appropriate legislative development, implementation and enforcement and will be flexible to take account of emerging needs.

Core Objective 1: Enhance Maritime Safety

Input from other parts of the IMD with regard to other commitments outside of international obligations will ensure realistic timelines are put in place to effectively implement measures arising from the IMO audit and to ensure the appropriate application of legislation already in place as well as new legislation. We will develop, implement and monitor a plan for the IMO International Instruments Implementation Code (III Code), which sets out requirements under international safety conventions, and re-prioritise as necessary to ensure we are working more effectively.

The maritime Legislation Working Group will continue its work of monitoring legislative developments and will provide a structured approach to updating our legislative objectives and the determination of legislative priorities based on our domestic needs and international obligations as well as having regard to available resources.

The Merchant Shipping Acts date back to 1894 and it can be difficult for maritime stakeholders to follow all of the amendments which have taken place over the years and to fully understand the application of the legislation to their own situation. The absence of consolidated texts can also contribute to delays in the development of new legislation. In order to rectify this, we will work with the Law Reform Commission to progress administrative consolidated versions of the Merchant Shipping Acts commencing with the 1894 Act. In addition, we will consider how we can communicate better in advising of new regulatory requirements to ensure that relevant stakeholders have sufficient time to prepare for any changes.

Core Objective 1: Enhance Maritime Safety – Goals and Actions

Goal 1.1: Review the framework for legislative priorities.

1. Update the Legislative Work Programme to prioritise legislative projects having regard to legislative requirements at domestic, international and EU levels and the availability of resources. The Programme will take account of risks and prioritise legislative projects having regard to the needs of our domestic fleet, deadlines for implementation of EU legislation, the configuration of the international Irish fleet and an analysis of ships calling at Irish ports.

Goal 1.2: Establish a methodology to ensure effective implementation and enforcement of relevant international mandatory instruments.

2. Engage with the office of the Attorney General and the Law Reform Commission (LRC) to progress implementation of and amendments to international conventions under the Irish Constitution.
3. Work with the LRC to produce a consolidated version of the Merchant Shipping Act 1894 with next steps on further consolidation work to be considered on completion of that project.
4. Prepare a guide to maritime legislation and update this on a regular basis. The guide will comprise a comprehensive list of primary and secondary maritime legislation in Ireland within the remit of the Department of Transport.
5. Prepare administrative updates for newly amended secondary legislation and summaries of key pieces of primary legislation to allow for ease of reference.

Core Objective 1: Enhance Maritime Safety – Goals and Actions

Goal 1.3: Continue implementation of International Instruments (III) Code.

6. Develop, implement and monitor an action plan for the III Code.

Goal 1.4: Promote greater communication with all relevant stakeholders on legislative and regulatory developments impacting on the sector.

7. Develop a strategy to ensure timely and effective communication of relevant legislative developments with stakeholders in the maritime transport sector. The aim of the communications strategy will be to enhance compliance following the introduction of new legislative requirements. Refer also to Core Objective 6 for further actions.

Goal 1.5: Participate in international fora.

8. Participate effectively, in discussions of relevant international organisations to ensure Ireland's interests are represented and there is early input into development of policy and legislation impacting maritime transport.

Goal 1.6: Enhance maritime safety.

9. Develop a maritime safety policy and plan focussing on the wider aspects of maritime safety.
10. Review arrangements for maritime transport accident investigations.

Core Objective 2: Facilitate Maritime Trade and Connectivity

Given Ireland's status as a small open economy on the periphery of Europe, the maritime transport sector is a critical channel for the movement of goods between Ireland and its trading partners. Our economy relies heavily on maritime transport, with around 90% of all our traded goods by volume and around 10% of passengers being transported by sea. Recent estimates by the Socio-Economic Marine Research Unit (SEMRU) at NUI Galway put the overall turnover of Ireland's shipping and maritime transport sector in 2019 at €2.2 billion.[1] Brexit and the COVID-19 crisis highlighted again the critical role of maritime transport to almost every sector of society in Ireland. Therefore a key component of any strategy is to provide for the facilitation of maritime trade and connectivity.

As part of its role, the Irish Maritime Directorate (IMD) facilitates an efficient and effective competitive ports and shipping sector (both domestic and international) and the implementation and assurance of safety, environmental, technical, labour and enforcement standards and procedures that provide assurance for all who are reliant on maritime transport. In doing this we also support other marine or maritime trade and industry, such as fisheries, aquaculture, offshore renewable energy, marine tourism and marine leisure, maritime commerce, and other sectors of the economy through general trade facilitation.

The importance of shipping to the Irish economy has been highlighted in recent times, both in the run up to Brexit and during the COVID-19 emergency, which has exposed the vulnerability of certain operating models and routes. They have also brought into focus the risks of limited supply chains and routes to market. It is also clear that Brexit has and will continue to have effects on, and implications for, the maritime transport sector in Ireland.

As the Irish port sector faces unprecedented changes and challenges in its operating environment, we will commence a review of the National Ports Policy with a view to putting in place a new policy framework to complement wider Government policy and facilitate the commercial port sector to meet the needs of the economy, the environment and wider society in the decade ahead.

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[1] NUI Galway Irelands Ocean Economy Report

Core Objective 2: Facilitate Maritime Trade and Connectivity

In addition, we recognise the immense importance of the shipping sector to the health of the Irish economy nationally and to maintaining Ireland's international connectivity. We also acknowledge, from a domestic perspective, the need to build on the services provided to the domestic fleet and to other marine users. Therefore we will develop an overarching National Shipping Policy in order to safeguard existing services and help to foster the establishment of new routes and services into and out of Ireland.

To assist the ports and maritime transport sector generally to adapt to meeting new challenges, we will encourage and facilitate the development and use of digitalisation, automation and other technologies such as innovative engineering and bespoke construction techniques in addition to the use of smart traffic management, logistics systems, block chain, new cranes and gate operating systems. This will help support shipping and terminal efficiency and modernise processes in order to reduce costs and increase efficiencies. We will work with our colleagues in exploring policy options for the use of infrastructure in ports associated with offshore renewable energy, onshore power supplies to ships (cold-

ironing) and alternative fuels. As part of this, the Irish Maritime Development Office (IMDO), having been awarded EU grant funding towards a project to develop and trial a system to improve supply chain integration, which, if successful, may be rolled out more widely. We will continue to engage effectively with the EU Commission to identify and influence future funding streams suitable for Irish projects.

Both the IMDO and the Commissioners of Irish Lights (CIL) are key to promoting and developing the maritime sector through their broad range of activities. This includes a significant level of stakeholder engagement between these agencies and the wider maritime stakeholder community. The agencies also play a role in the development of other maritime related activities such as the offshore renewable energy sector. We will focus on further enhancing the role of the IMDO and CIL to allow for closer alignment to support Government policies across the wider transport sector. We will also work with colleagues in developing a communication strategy to formalise stakeholder engagement with ports, the shipping sector and other stakeholders.

Core Objective 2: Facilitate Maritime Trade and Connectivity – Goals and Actions

Goal 2.1: Develop a new National Ports Policy.

11. Undertake a review of the current National Ports Policy, consult with stakeholders and develop a new National Ports Policy, taking account of developments at EU level and internationally, the impact of Brexit, advances in technologies and green initiatives, including offshore renewable energy.

Goal 2.2: Develop an overarching National Shipping Policy.

12. Consult with stakeholders and develop a National Shipping Policy to foster the maximum level of maritime connectivity for Ireland to underpin the Irish economy, taking account of the impacts of Brexit, COVID-19 and the views of stakeholders.

Goal 2.3: Ensure integration of policies on maritime transport issues.

13. Encourage the ports to engage with industry and examine the feasibility of providing the necessary port infrastructure required to facilitate the development of offshore renewable energy.
14. Encourage the use of green initiatives and new technologies, including automation and digitalisation, in the ports and shipping sectors.
15. Prioritise the use of digital technology to enhance efficiency in the maritime transport sector, including working with other Member States and the EU in establishing the European Maritime Single Window Reporting System.
16. Work with relevant organisations and agencies to maximise knowledge, experience and expertise of all stakeholders to support Government policies.
17. Continue to build capacity within the IMD to support the ports and shipping sectors and their contribution to the Irish economy.
18. Develop a communication strategy to provide a more formal framework for stakeholder engagement for the ports and shipping sectors. Refer also to Core Objective 6 for further actions.

Core Objective 3: Deliver an effective Maritime Emergency Response (Search and Rescue (SAR), Maritime Casualty and Pollution Response)

An effective maritime emergency response is a vital component to ensure the safety of our maritime sector, with the National Search and Rescue Plan (NSP) and the National Maritime Oil & HNS Spill Contingency Plan (NCP) recognised as the principal protocols underpinning that effective response.

On foot of an Air Accident Unit Interim Report (No. 2018-004) into the R116 accident at Blacksod in March 2017 and the Marine Casualty Investigation Board Report into the fatal incident involving the Kilkee Coast Guard boat published in November 2018, the Minister for Transport, Tourism and Sport commissioned an independent review of oversight arrangements for SAR operations in Ireland.

The key deliverable from this review was a new National SAR Plan (NSP) and work programme. The NSP provided for a new National SAR Committee (NSARC) which for the first time brought all key stakeholders in maritime, land and aeronautical SAR together under an independent Chair to look at how the overall system is working and where it can be improved.

In addition, a lot of work has been undertaken to implement the recommendations of a number of other reports, to address issues identified in these reports.

The NSP sets out the national framework for the overall development, deployment and improvement of search and rescue (SAR) services within the Irish SAR Region, the international assigned geographic area of SAR responsibility, as well as meeting domestic and international obligations. The NSP is also the means by which SAR policy and services are delivered in Ireland in three distinct areas: maritime, aviation and inland. It is the baseline reference document for use by all search and rescue organisations and promulgates the agreed methods of coordination through which search and rescue operations are conducted.

The NSP provides for close co-operation between services and organisations which contribute to improvement of the search and rescue service in areas including operations, planning, training, exercises, and research and development.

Core Objective 3: Deliver an effective Maritime Emergency Response (Search and Rescue (SAR), Maritime Casualty and Pollution Response)

The Irish Coast Guard (IRCG) has responsibility for discharging Ireland's maritime SAR obligations and does so by implementing the NSP for all incidents occurring in the maritime domain.

In addition to the above, the IRCG is responsible for the management, resourcing and training of the Coast Guard volunteer Units. There are 44 units at strategic locations around the coast and the volunteer cadre consists of over 900 people. Along with the IRCG helicopter service and RNLI, the SAR matrix is completed by the Coast Guard Units which deliver an important service in support of SAR. There is ongoing investment in the Coast Guard units to improve training and infrastructure. A building programme is in place to improve accommodation and facilities along with development of the volunteer cadre and assurance mechanisms to ensure compliance and safe systems of work in line with the NSP objectives.

In addition to its SAR role, the IRCG is responsible for developing and coordinating an effective regime for response to pollution from marine casualties within the Irish

Exclusive Economic Zone (EEZ). The National Maritime Oil & HNS Spill Contingency Plan (NCP) was developed to meet our obligations under international conventions and to have an effective plan in in place to provide for the prevention and reduction of damage to the environment and property arising from Oil/HNS spills.

The NCP brings new focus to the IRCG's preparedness and response regime to maritime casualties and pollution from maritime casualties.

The IRCG will ensure the implementation of the NCP through development of response capacity and continuous assessment and verification as to the level of preparedness, the fostering of regional and international relationships and agreements, and the development and maintenance of regular training and exercise programmes at local, national and regional levels.

As detailed under Core Objective 1, meeting our international obligations through implementation of the III Code is a key element in ensuring maritime safety. This includes those international obligations which aim to improve measures to provide

Core Objective 3: Deliver an effective Maritime Emergency Response (Search and Rescue (SAR), Maritime Casualty and Pollution Response)

for an effective maritime emergency response. The IRCG will work with our colleagues across the maritime sector to ensure appropriate delegation of responsibilities for implementation of the III Code, input into the audit process to identify non-conformities, and follow up on findings for both internal and external audits in order to rectify any identified deficiencies.

We also recognise that the active involvement and input of stakeholders at the strategic, tactical and operational levels has been a fundamental feature in the development and implementation of both the NSP and NCP. Indeed, one important conclusion reached in the annual report of the NSP was that transparent and honest collaboration lead to tangible achievement, as evidenced in the development of the NSP itself.

The IRCG has worked hard to establish purposeful engagement including establishment of the National SAR Committee mentioned earlier, which provides for high-level leadership and guidance as well as a number of sub-committees to facilitate co-ordination and co-operation. This collaborative approach will continue to be developed and fostered to ensure active engagement and decision-making based on meaningful input from all relevant stakeholders. A summary of the actions to be undertaken under this Core Objective is set out below.

Core Objective 3: Deliver an effective Maritime Emergency Response (Search and Rescue (SAR), Maritime Casualty and Pollution Response) – Goals and Actions

Goal 3.1: Ensure an efficient and effective SAR coordination and response service for all incidents occurring in the maritime domain, or as otherwise requested by SAR authorities in other domains (aviation or inland).

19. Provide strategic coordination, guidance and leadership for Ireland's National SAR system as part of the National SAR Committee (NSARC), report to the Minister for Transport on an annual basis and address specific issues that may arise.
20. Implement the NCP through the development of a number of national key performance indicators, including a response capability matrix, to provide for an efficient and effective ship casualty/pollution preparedness and response coordination service in order to minimise human, social and economic harm.
21. Develop and maintain appropriate organisational and inter-organisational procedures and arrangements to provide for a coordinated transfer from search and rescue operations (SAR) to search and recovery missions (SRM).
22. Develop IRCG capacity and capability in line with the objectives of the NSP, including the IRCG aviation service and the volunteer units.

Goal 3.2: Proactively participate in the development of a roadmap to meet our international obligations.

23. Work with colleagues across the maritime sector to identify areas for improvement in terms of meeting our international obligations under the III Code and assist in the development and implementation of measures to rectify those.

Core Objective 3: Deliver an effective Maritime Emergency Response (Search and Rescue (SAR), Maritime Casualty and Pollution Response) – Goals and Actions

Goal 3.3: Develop and maintain enhanced relationships across government (national, regional, local), with the wider community and with industry to ensure efficient coordination in major incident readiness and response.

24. Continue to develop, maintain and support the stakeholder engagement arrangements put in place to deliver on the National SAR Plan including enhancing relationships on a national, regional and local basis with industry, operators and the wider community to provide for dynamic coordination in major incident readiness and response. This will include engagement through the Government Task Force on Emergency Planning and the National Steering Group as appropriate.
25. Develop and deliver Memoranda of Understanding between the three SAR Coordinators (IRCG, Irish Aviation Authority and An Garda Síochána) and between SAR Coordinators and SAR Providers through effective stakeholder engagement.
26. Establish the stakeholder engagement arrangements set out in the NCP to allow for effective implementation of the Plan.

Core Objective 4: Protect the Environment from Ship Source Pollution

The International Chamber of Shipping has stated that maritime vessels constitute around 90% of all international trade making them the lifeblood of the global economy. As a global industry, proposals and initiatives aimed at reducing the impact on the environment from maritime transport require a global response and, as such, primarily come from International Conventions, the IMO and the European Union. Getting agreement to address such issues as Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions internationally can be a slow and arduous process.

Proposals from the EU are being aligned under the European Green Deal which aims to meet ambitious objectives set out for emissions reduction. These proposals have impacts on the competitiveness of ports and global measures are considered the best way to make changes while maintaining European port competitiveness.

Generally, proposals to reduce maritime emissions in order to meet emissions reductions targets are categorised as short, medium and long-term measures. It is believed possible that the initial objective of a reduction of 40% in global maritime emissions by 2030 can be met through energy efficiency and slow steaming, but that the mid to long-term targets can only be met by moving to zero emission or low carbon fuels.

Ireland is committed to achieving the IMO GHG reduction target of at least 50% by 2050 compared to 2008.

It is important to note that there has been no consensus reached as to what alternative fuel, or fuel mix, is suitable for the maritime transport industry in the long term. The lifespan of ships can be quite lengthy meaning a decision made today can have long-term implications. In addition, retrofitting an existing ship to a transitory fuel such as liquefied natural gas (LNG) has considerable technical and cost considerations.

It is vital therefore, that Ireland continues to contribute to influencing the development of environmental proposals at international level through appropriate representation and engagement at key IMO, EU and other fora. We will also ensure through this engagement that we keep up to date on emerging technologies such as the digitalisation of ports infrastructure and autonomous shipping.

Core Objective 4: Protect the Environment from Ship Source Pollution

We will also provide for close collaboration with other key stakeholders to ensure clarity and consistency when developing and implementing policies in relation to commitments in the Programme for Government. This will be particularly important when it comes to Ireland's position on alternative and transitory fuels which will have a direct impact on the work of the maritime sector and the Irish fleet. Meeting Ireland's environmental ambitions can only be achieved through such collaboration with coherent, clear and consistent messaging.

It is expected that the EU will mandate onshore power supply and alternative fuel infrastructure in EU ports in the near future. We will work with our ports and shipping companies on any future proposals to ensure that the appropriate infrastructure is in place to meet any new requirements and to understand the challenges faced by shipping companies in relation to retrofitting existing ships or committing new ships to a particular alternative fuel.

We will also actively engage on any future proposals by the IMO and the EU on the possible designation of Emission Control Areas (ECAs) in EU waters, which may result in the adoption of special mandatory measures to be put in place with regard to emissions from ships in order to prevent, reduce and control air pollution from nitrogen oxides or sulphur oxides and particulate matter to prevent adverse impacts on human health and the environment.

The updated Port Reception Facilities Directive includes requirements for ports to provide adequate waste collection facilities, including for fishing gear waste and passively fished waste. The Directive must be implemented in national legislation by mid-2021.

Any changes in the regulatory framework arising from environmental considerations will result in an increase in inspections in order to ensure compliance. Resources are the main factor to be considered in this regard. Ireland, as an island nation with an almost total reliance on maritime transport and a healthy maritime environment, requires a highly skilled corps of professional and technical experts to promote Ireland's interests and assist with the continued push towards a sustainable use of maritime resources to the benefit of everyone.

Core Objective 4: Protect the Environment from Ship Source Pollution

It is that skilled and dedicated workforce that has ensured that the Irish flag is well respected internationally and that the Department of Transport has built a good relationship with the companies on the flag. Ireland's fleet is energy efficient and modern. New build ships coming onto the flag are incorporating super-efficient hull designs, which are ship type and service specific, and that process is constantly evolving.

We will continue to deliver a high-quality service to the Irish fleet while retaining the ability to discharge our national and international professional obligations on whatever size fleet we may have. In order to maintain the standard of the Irish flag we will devote particular attention to developments which might affect the flag in the future. This will include consideration of environmental initiatives coming down the line and the incorporation of environmental objectives in the context of the development of any wider policy for acceptance criteria for joining the Irish flag into the future.

Core Objective 4: Protect the Environment from Ship Source Pollution – Goals and Actions

Goal 4.1: Explore policy options on the introduction of infrastructure in ports associated with onshore power supplies and alternative fuels.

27. Continue to actively engage in relevant EU and international fora on the development of alternative fuels and onshore power supplies.
28. Conduct an analysis of the current energy and waste related infrastructure in Irish ports and the environmental profile of port users.
29. Engage with stakeholders on the future uptake of alternative fuels and onshore power supplies to ascertain the impact on port users.
30. Develop policy options on the introduction of infrastructure associated with onshore power supplies and alternative fuels for inclusion in a new National Ports Policy (refer to Core Objective 2), taking account of environmental imperatives, the views of stakeholders and EU and international developments in the area.

Goal 4.2: Explore policy options on the introduction of an Irish Emission Control Area.

31. Conduct a review of the impacts of existing Emission Control Areas in other jurisdictions and engage with relevant EU and international bodies on the criteria for such areas with a view to exploring policy options in the Irish context.

Core Objective 4: Protect the Environment from Ship Source Pollution – Goals and Actions

Goal 4.3: Establish environmental acceptance criteria for internationally trading ships joining the Irish flag.

32. Conduct an analysis of the environmental impact of the current Irish (internationally trading) fleet and benchmark the Irish standard based on an assessment of other flags.

33. Establish environmental acceptance criteria for internationally trading ships joining the Irish flag, taking account of the views of stakeholders, for inclusion in an overarching National Shipping Policy (refer to Core Objective 2).

Core Objective 5: Strive for Organisational Excellence and Innovation

The maritime transport sector is of vital importance to Ireland in terms of the economy and our connectivity. Our operational Divisions play an enormous role in ensuring the safety of the sector as well as providing vital search and rescue services while our other Divisions play an equally important role in policy and legislation development and supports.

It is essential that we work collaboratively and effectively both within our own sector and with our external stakeholders, in a culture of openness and flexibility, if we are to provide the optimal service to all. Other relevant Department policies – for example, in the areas Human Resources and Corporate Governance – will provide the framework within which we will develop our own maritime transport policies.

In order for us to improve our performance, we must take a critical look at our current governance arrangements, processes and procedures to examine whether the maritime transport sector is working at its optimum level. The process of developing this overarching Strategy for the maritime transport sector is the first step which will allow us to set out a clear list of actions and

key performance indicators to be fed into our business planning process with outputs reviewed in a consistent manner and at an appropriate level to provide for transparency and accountability.

We will place continuous professional development at the heart of our Strategy, ensuring learning and development opportunities for the professional grades as well as administrative grades, and exposing staff to the various areas of the maritime transport sector in order to develop a wider and more holistic knowledge. Through the provision of site visits and accompaniment in field work, we will provide the administrative team with a better understanding of how their work impacts and assists the operational side.

In the context of the Strategy, we will examine our objectives over the next five years to ensure that skills needed to meet those objectives are developed across a broad range of staff right across the IMD. We will also focus on the key skills of leadership and innovation – which will be crucial in the development of our own organisation and the maritime sector generally.

Core Objective 5: Strive for Organisational Excellence and Innovation

We will work to address the specific challenges and issues around recruitment of professional staff within the MSO and IRCG with a view to putting in place pragmatic and incremental policies in conjunction with relevant stakeholders in order to be able to deliver on our Core Objectives.

We will introduce a system of timely succession planning to ensure a continued stream of highly experienced personnel across all areas to allow for knowledge retention and continuous improvement.

We will establish a Programme Management Office (PMO) to be responsible for the centralised and co-ordinated management and governance of maritime IT projects, from inception through to business case, procurement, development and delivery. This will provide us with an opportunity to enable and encourage IT innovation at all levels in the IMD and facilitate IT development where it is appropriate, all under the strategic guidance and monitoring of a refreshed ICT Maritime Steering Group.

The establishment of a PMO will be particularly important given the renewed focus by the EU on automation and digitalisation which will inevitably lead to more IT-based projects.

As part of our plan to strive for organisational excellence we will examine our current governance structures and review how they can be further developed to deliver additional clarity, improvements and efficiencies to the IMD. In this regard, innovation and continuous improvement is critical to any entity striving for organisational excellence. The more process driven, operational, service delivery functions of the IMD lend themselves to more formal continuous improvement mechanisms such as ISO-accredited Quality Management Systems, particularly where there is an imperative to ensure standard approaches to service delivery and outputs.

Policy and legislative areas also include processes and procedures, although these are less standardised and less predictable as they are subject to a high degree of external influence. However, there is an appetite for embedding continuous improvement more systematically and explicitly in business plan performance review mechanisms at divisional and sectoral level, particularly where it provides for a strong level of risk assessment in decision-making.

Core Objective 5: Strive for Organisational Excellence and Innovation

As part of that continuous assessment, consideration will be given to a re-organisation of the IMD's existing structures. A review of the wider IMD activities and responsibilities will be pursued to examine whether the organisation is working as effectively and efficiently as possible in pursuit of its strategic goals. Already this review process has identified the need to streamline and re-structure some divisional responsibilities and these have been implemented. It is also vital that there is a dedicated resource to manage and monitor implementation of the Strategy. The implementation chapter below sets out these new arrangements.

We will pursue the placement of a 'permanent' representative in the IMO to attend meetings and report back to colleagues in IMD headquarters on emerging developments. This will free up resources, increase network building, help to build influence and enable timely feedback on key issues.

In aiming to ensure the entire sector operates as effectively as possible, and with an increased focus on continuous professional development, we will ensure that the overall performance of maritime administration is periodically evaluated. This will include setting realistic goals along with key performance indicators to allow for transparency and accountability while clearly identifying lessons learned and putting in place corrective action plans.

We will continue to engage with our international partners and learn from their experiences. We will establish cross-divisional relationships to expand the knowledge of staff outside of their own Divisions and aim to maintain the collaborative approach, which was particularly developed during the COVID-19 pandemic, requiring staff to work more closely together.

Core Objective 5: Strive for Organisational Excellence and Innovation

Goal 5.1: Review structures and governance and build a performance improvement process across the IMD to ensure it operates at optimum level.

34. Review our structures and governance arrangements, processes and procedures, including business planning and review procedures, and make any necessary changes to ensure the IMD is working at the optimum level.
35. Consider how IMD can improve its approach to continuous improvement, applying formal mechanisms where appropriate, and develop a systematic approach to implementation.
36. Expand the IMD footprint through placement within international organisations.

Goal 5.2: Ensure that adequately trained and experienced personnel are in place to deliver on the IMD's objectives.

37. Develop a systematic approach to continuous professional development across the IMD.
38. Identify a set of priority skills and competences for administrative and professional staff as a basis for the development of a suite of training programmes in these areas.
39. Develop a programme of site visits and cross-divisional workshops to familiarise new and existing administrative staff with the operational dimension to the work.

Core Objective 5: Strive for Organisational Excellence and Innovation

Goal 5.2: Continued

40. Develop initiatives to address the specific challenges and issues around recruitment of professional staff within the MSO and IRCG and provide for timely succession planning to ensure knowledge retention across the sector.
41. Build on existing links and develop new links with universities and colleges to promote the importance of maritime training in Ireland leading to a lifelong career with opportunities both at sea and ashore.
42. Provide staff with exposure to other jurisdictions to facilitate skills enhancement and ensure a continued stream of highly experienced personnel across all areas of the maritime sector.

Goal 5.3: Reinforce the role of IT as a driver of organisational excellence

43. Establish a Project Management Office with dedicated and appropriately qualified staff and develop a systematic approach to IT systems to improve efficiencies and drive innovation within the IMD.
44. Manage IT projects in accordance with best practice and ensure resources are allocated to enable the success of projects.
45. Develop relationships with EMSA, and IMD equivalents in other jurisdictions who are leading in IT developments in the maritime area, to develop collaborative approaches and potentially access funding for IT developments.

Core Objective 6: Public Engagement and Customer Service

Stakeholder engagement has increasingly been considered an essential facet of open Government. Providing stakeholders with the opportunity to contribute to the development, implementation and review of Government policy and key legislative developments is not only a more inclusive means of operating but it also facilitates greater transparency, accountability and trust amongst Government and stakeholders. This matter has been referenced a number of times already in this document.

As set out by the Maritime Director at the start of this document, key to progressing work over the last year during the COVID-19 pandemic has been renewed and newly formed relationships, close collaboration and improved communication. It is now time to build on these relationships to bring this Strategy forward and to continually improve how we engage with our stakeholders, both internally and externally, including public engagement in terms of serving the democratic process.

The IMD is comprised of several divisions, each with its own area of responsibility, and,

as a result, its own group of stakeholders and service users with communication at times inconsistent across the sector. In order to address these challenges, we will develop a communication strategy to be implemented consistently across the entire IMD. This communications strategy will address any identified gaps or weaknesses in our communications, reflecting the views of our stakeholders and taking account of existing methods of engagement that have proven effective in order to utilise these further. We will identify examples of best practice within our Department and wider Government as well as internationally to examine whether other models are transferable in the maritime context.

We will consider our internal communication practices and how these can be improved to ensure a greater sharing of knowledge in order to provide for smoother workflow processes across the sector. We will also exploit the tools already at our disposal to better communicate with the wider Department and raise an awareness of the maritime transport sector and its work.

Core Objective 6: Public Engagement and Customer Service

To ensure that our communication strategy is implemented in the most efficient manner, we will refocus our efforts on modern information communication technology and platforms such as webinars, e-Newsletters, social media platforms and development of applications where appropriate to allow our stakeholders to access information more easily.

In determining the need for a new communication strategy, it was important that we assessed the views of our stakeholders on our current engagement practices and their effectiveness. In 2020, a survey was distributed to our stakeholders specifically seeking views on this matter as part of the development of this Strategy. The survey data raised a number of important issues for the IMD to consider going forward. For example, the fishing sector is one of our biggest customers in terms of regulation but just four fishers responded to the survey. Given the ever-changing legislation in this area to bring working and living standards up to acceptable levels, it is more important than ever that this group is aware of new regulations coming into force and, therefore,

it is clear that we need to do a better job to reach the people most impacted by them.

We also need to provide for timely engagement with all of our stakeholders, both internal and external, to ensure they are in a position to implement legislation when it comes into force, including for example, the provision of the necessary training and other supports. In short, we need to ensure our communication strategy adopts a more proactive approach to stakeholder engagement.

As well as developing methods to communicate more clearly with our stakeholders, we also need to ensure that stakeholders can easily engage with the IMD and, more importantly, with the appropriate part of the IMD, to address their specific queries. To ensure customers are aware which of the maritime transport sector's wide and varying areas of responsibility are of most relevance to them, we will develop a "who does what" for the sector. This will clearly set out each area of responsibility and remove any confusing jargon and acronyms to ensure clarity. This will be regularly updated to provide stakeholders with the ability to address the queries to the most appropriate area in the first instance.

Core Objective 6: Public Engagement and Customer Service – Goals and Actions

Goal 6.1: Develop a communication strategy for the maritime sector and establish more formal structures to engage with relevant stakeholders regularly and systematically.

46. Provide for structured, targeted and effective engagement with stakeholders, reflecting the nature of the stakeholder relationship in each case, taking into account other successful communications practices in the sector and the lessons learned from our communications in the COVID-19 context.

Goal 6.2: Ensure a more proactive and systematic approach to communicating with stakeholders in relation to regulatory/legislative developments.

47. When introducing significant regulatory/legislative changes, undertake targeted communication with all stakeholders, including service providers, using all relevant media, to provide for appropriate preparation of operations and effective enforcement, as well as necessary supports, including training.
48. Advise stakeholders of any open consultations on proposed EU legislation.
49. Provide jargon-free explanations on changes to legislation or introduction of new legislation.

Core Objective 6: Public Engagement and Customer Service – Goals and Actions

Goal 6.3: Develop a "who does what" for the maritime sector providing clarity to stakeholders and allowing for better engagement.

50. Set out a jargon-free easily accessible organisation chart which details the activities undertaken in each area.
51. Provide contact details linked with each area of work to allow stakeholders, including passengers (the end users) to identify areas of responsibility and provide for easier engagement.

Goal 6.4: Develop or utilise existing IT tools in order to better communicate with stakeholders both internally and externally.

52. Examine the possibility and feasibility of developing a smart mobile-friendly interface to access Marine Notices.
53. Consider how online tools can be better utilised to communicate with the wider maritime community in relation to developments of relevance to them and to present the work of the IMD.
54. Publish an IMD Newsletter for internal and external distribution to keep stakeholders updated on policy and legislative developments.

Implementation of the Strategy

As set out earlier in this document, the purpose of developing this Strategy is to clearly set out a path for the Irish Maritime Directorate for the next five years in order to pull all the strands together to ensure we have a safe, efficient and effective maritime transport system that provides for connectivity to our island and continues to contribute to our economic growth. This review has come at an opportune time given the additional focus placed on the maritime sector due to the COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit.
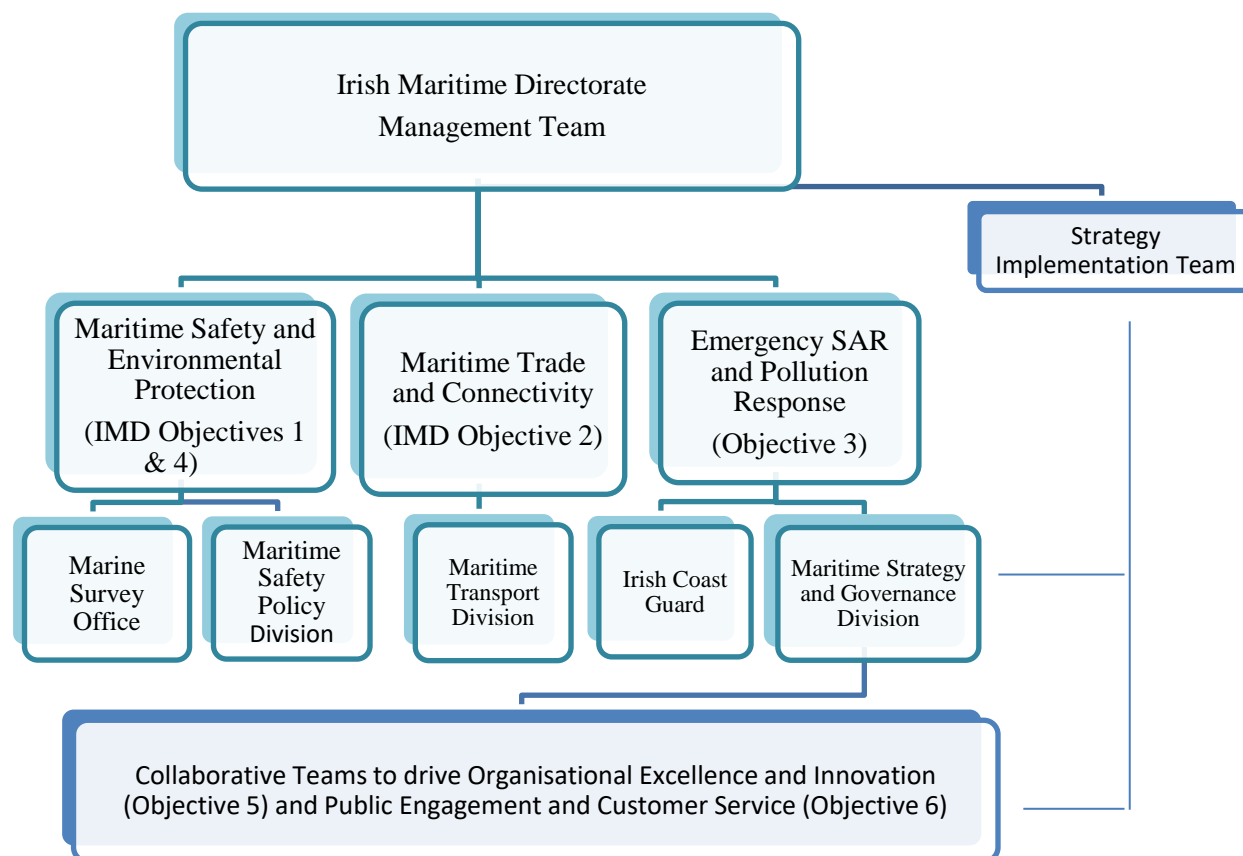
There are 22 goals with 54 actions set out in this document to be implemented over the lifetime of the Strategy. These goals and actions take account of the responses to the consultation undertaken for the Strategy. The majority of the proposals set out in the consultation will be taken on board in the implementation of the various actions rather than expressly reflected in the Strategy document itself. A summary of the consideration provided to the consultation process will be published on the Government's website along with the final Strategy.

To ensure effective implementation of the Strategy, new governance arrangements will be put in place, supported by a dedicated resource within the newly-titled Maritime Strategy and Governance Division.

A Strategy Implementation Team representative of all Maritime Divisions will be established to monitor delivery and report to the IMD Management Team (chaired at Assistant Secretary level).

Delivery of each objective will be led by specific Divisions and associated actions will be captured as appropriate within Divisional Business Plans. This will ensure ownership is clearly assigned. Many of the objectives and actions are cross functional, particularly Objectives 5 and 6, and as such, a number of collaborative teams will be established to oversee implementation of these (see Governance diagram below).

Progress on implementation of the Strategy will be reviewed bi-annually with actions prioritised and re-prioritised as necessary depending on time-sensitive deadlines and available resources.

Irish Maritime Directorate Management Team

Strategy Implementation Team

Maritime Safety and Environmental Protection (IMD Objectives 1 & 4)

Maritime Trade and Connectivity (IMD Objective 2)

Emergency SAR and Pollution Response (Objective 3)

Marine Survey Office

Maritime Safety Policy Division

Maritime Transport Division

Irish Coast Guard

Maritime Strategy and Governance Division

Collaborative Teams to drive Organisational Excellence and Innovation (Objective 5) and Public Engagement and Customer Service (Objective 6)

Appendix – Core Stakeholders that support the work of the IMD

Commissioner of Irish Lights (CIL)

The Commissioners of Irish Lights (CIL) is one of three General Lighthouse Authorities (GLAs) set up under the 1894 Merchant Shipping Act, though its history goes back to the 1700s. It has responsibility for Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the adjacent seas and islands. The other two GLAs are Trinity House (England, Wales, Channel Islands and Gibraltar) and the Northern Lighthouse Board (Scotland and the Isle of Man). CIL works very closely with these GLAs to ensure the smooth operation of navigation services.

The statutory functions of CIL are the provision & maintenance of General Aids to Marine Navigation (AtoN) (totalling over 300 of which 65 are light houses); the superintendence and management of Local AtoN (buoys & beacons etc.) numbering 3,200 and the marking or removal of dangerous wrecks outside of harbour areas.

Marine Casualty Investigation Board (MCIB)

The function of the MCIB is to examine and if necessary carry out investigations into all types of marine casualties to, or on board, Irish registered vessels worldwide and other vessels in Irish territorial waters and inland waterways.

The MCIB is an independent, non-prosecutorial body which does not enforce laws or carry out prosecutions. It is not the purpose of an investigation carried out by the MCIB to apportion blame or fault.

The legislative framework for the operation of the MCIB, the reporting and investigating of marine casualties and the powers of MCIB investigators is set out in the Merchant Shipping (Investigation of Marine Casualties) Act, 2000 and the EC (Merchant Shipping) (Investigation of Accidents) Regulations 2011 (S.I. 276 of 2011) as amended by the EC (Merchant Shipping) (Investigation of Accidents) (Amendment) Regulations 2020 (S.I. 444 of 2020).

In carrying out its functions the MCIB complies with the provisions of the International Maritime Organisation's Casualty Investigation Code and EU Directive 2009/18/EC governing the investigation of accidents in the maritime transport sector.

Appendix – Core Stakeholders that support the work of the IMD

It should be noted that a review of accident investigation arrangements in Ireland will be undertaken as part of the implementation of this Strategy.

Irish Maritime Development Office (IMDO)

The Irish Maritime Development Office (IMDO), established by Statute in 1999, is Ireland's national dedicated development, promotional and marketing agency for the maritime industry, providing support to both the national and international maritime sector in Ireland. The IMDO is charged with responsibility for the following:

- To promote and assist the development of Irish shipping and Irish shipping services and seafarer training.
- To liaise with, support and market the shipping and shipping services sector.
- To advise the Minister for Transport on the development and co-ordination of policy in the shipping and shipping services sector so as to protect and create employment.

- To carry out policy as may be specified by the Minister for Transport relating to the shipping and shipping services sector and seafarer training.
- To advise the Minister for Transport on the development and co-ordination of policy and to carry out policy, as may be specified by that Minister, relating to ports and the ports services sector, and;
- Any additional functions relating to the shipping and shipping services sector conferred on the Institute under section 4(4) of the establishing Act.

It is the aim of the IMDO to be the focal point for maritime business in Ireland. The IMDO works with international businesses to help them set-up or expand in Ireland. A key component of the IMDO's work is the provision to Government and industry of a range of information, reporting and research across the sector.

The IMDO is also Ireland's designated Shortsea Shipping Agency and provides independent advice and guidance on EU funding initiatives.

Appendix – Core Stakeholders that support the work of the IMD

Ports

There are five ports of national significance which fall under the European Core and Comprehensive Trans-European Transport Network. These are Dublin, Cork and Shannon Foynes which are classed as Tier 1 Ports (EU Core Transport Network) and Rosslare and Waterford which are classed as Tier 2 ports (EU Comprehensive Transport Network). These five ports of national significance are State owned commercial ports which operate without any State financial support but rather derive their income from commercial operations. The ports of national significance are our key international maritime gateways handling approximately 90% of all tonnage and are of vital in terms of our national competitiveness.

In addition, there are five ports of Regional significance, Drogheda, Dun Laoghaire, Galway, New Ross and Wicklow which all transferred to the control of the relevant local authority under the Harbours Act 2015.

Irish Maritime Directorate

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Maritime Transport Division – maritimetransport@transport.gov.ie

Maritime Strategy and Governance Division – msd@transport.gov.ie

Mercantile Marine Office – mmo@transport.gov.ie

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www.seafarers.ie

https://www.gov.ie/en/organisation/department-of-transport/