An Roinn Aeráide,
Fuinnimh agus Comhshaoil
Department of Climate,
Energy and the Environment

Statement of Research and Innovation Needs

2026 - 2028

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Foreword

Our Department's Research and Innovation Strategy to 2030[1] commits us to develop and publish a Statement of Research and Innovation (R&I) Needs every three years. The purpose of this exercise is to identify and clearly communicate the key R&I questions that we need answers to in order to support us in delivering our Strategic Goals[2]. We have now developed a list of 61 priority R&I questions through a structured development process which involved strategic foresight and co-creation with our stakeholders. These questions are set out in this document and grouped into five high-level areas: 1) Climate Action and the Environment 2) Energy 3) Circular Economy, Resource Efficiency, Inland Fisheries and Geoscience 4) Marine and 5) The Sustainable Development Goals.

Looking across all the R&I questions, five cross-cutting themes emerge. The first theme is modelling & analysis together with data and artificial intelligence (AI). Modelling and analysis play a crucial role helping us to understand complex systems, test scenarios, understand risks, and evaluate trade-offs before and during policy development and implementation. Modelling can reduce uncertainty, supporting us in achieving a climate neutral Ireland, powered by clean energy, where our environment, society and economy thrive. We also need to understand how we can utilise AI, in an appropriate manner, to enhance modelling and analytical capability; and we need to ensure that we have access to robust data and evidence that we need to inform policy across all areas.

The second cross-cutting theme is maximising the uptake of innovative clean technologies and novel solutions as part of the transformational investment in the electricity network that is underway at present[3]. The Draghi Report[4] highlights the need to scale-up the deployment of these innovative technologies and solutions to support Europe's competitiveness and to achieve our climate, energy and environment goals. We need to accelerate the piloting of novel technologies across the energy sector and support their uptake by people and

[1] https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy-and-the-environment/publications/department-of-the-environment-climate-and-communications-research-and-innovation-strategy-to-2030/

[2] https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy-and-the-environment/publications/statement-of-strategy-2025-2028/

[3] https://www.cru.ie/about-us/news/cru-approves-record-investment-in-irelands-electricity-grid-and-network/

[4] https://commission.europa.eu/topics/competitiveness/draghi-report_en

businesses of all sizes. This includes building our understanding about the financial and other barriers to their uptake and use.

The third cross-cutting theme is the need to better understand the costs associated with the climate and energy transition. Further techno-economic assessment is required both on the costs and benefits associated with energy transition pathways and counterfactual scenarios where low carbon ambition is not realised. It is critical that the economic implications, both positive and negative of delivering on our climate, energy and environmental ambition are fully understood.

The fourth cross-cutting theme is the need to source the high-quality evidence we need to ensure that climate, energy and environment policy is equitable and fair to all. We need to clearly identify and understand the challenges and opportunities in achieving a just transition to a climate neutral Ireland.

The fifth and final cross-cutting theme is the need to understand the social and behavioural aspects of the climate and energy transition. The uptake and deployment of new technologies and solutions need to happen at pace and at scale. Insights from these areas of research will enable a better understanding of how we as a society respond to new technologies and how we make decisions about, for example, energy-use, and material consumption and re-use.

We will use this Statement of R&I Needs to drive engagement with our R&I stakeholders to source the answers to our R&I questions. This will focus on targeted actions to identify where outputs from existing R&I work can provide the answers we seek, and to link the relevant researchers with our policy teams. Where the answers to our questions are not readily available, we will seek to support new R&I initiatives, including those that can deliver rapid results, to furnish the answers we need.

Finally, we intend this Statement to provide guidance which can orient future R&I prioritisation across the national system for public research funding, and inform stakeholders seeking to have an impact on climate, energy and environment policy.

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1 Introduction

The Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment plays a central role in shaping the transition to a climate-neutral Ireland, powered by clean energy, where our environment, society and economy thrive. Our Department has a wide remit including climate action, energy, the environment, circular economy and resource efficiency (including waste management), clean air, noise, chemicals, radiation protection, GMOs & biosafety, inland fisheries, marine environment and marine planning and the Sustainable Development Goals. To deliver on our Strategic Goals[5], we need research and innovation (R&I) to support policy design, development and implementation, to evaluate impacts, and to respond to future challenges.

Our first Research and Innovation Strategy[6] was published in 2024. Our vision to 2030 is to harness the full potential of research to deliver across all our areas of responsibility. This is strongly aligned with the aims set out in Impact 2030[7] to improve the use of R&I knowledge generated by research performing organisations (RPOs) to support public policy and practice within the Civil Service and Public Sector.

Our R&I Strategy included a commitment to identifying and clearly communicating our R&I evidence needs. It acknowledged that identifying and publicising the key R&I questions we need to answer is essential to enable an effective response from our research partners, ensuring the delivery of R&I relevant to our Strategic Goals.

2 Our Process

Our Statement of R&I Needs was informed by a series of workshops using a strategic foresight methodology. The first step was an internal workshop attended by a selected group of staff from across all our policy areas. It used the 'Three Horizons'[8] approach to identify our R&I needs now, in the coming years, and beyond.

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[5] https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy-and-the-environment/publications/statement-of-strategy-2025-2028/

[6] https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy-and-the-environment/publications/department-of-the-environment-climate-and-communications-research-and-innovation-strategy-to-2030/

[7] https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-further-and-higher-education-research-innovation-and-science/publications/impact-2030-irelands-research-and-innovation-strategy/

[8] Sharpe, Bill; Hodgson, Anthony; Leicester, Graham; Lyon, Andrew; Fazey, Ioan (2016-06-28). "Three horizons: a pathways practice for transformation". Ecology and Society. 21(2). https://www.ecologyandsociety.org/vol21/iss2/art47/

The second step involved co-creating our list of R&I needs with key external stakeholders. Three workshops were held on distinct policy themes, where external stakeholders were invited to review and discuss the output from the first step to provide additional input and identify any gaps from their expert perspective.

In the third step, we consulted with the whole Department to turn the outputs from the first and second steps of the process into a list of R&I questions which reflect our R&I Needs. This consultation was led by our R&I Leads and ensured the full range of our expertise was utilised. This process generated a comprehensive long list of R&I questions which reflect the breadth and depth of our areas of responsibility[9].

The final step involved narrowing down the long list of R&I questions to a list of our most pressing R&I questions across all key policy areas. These R&I questions are set out in this document.

Our priority R&I needs are categorised in five high-level policy areas:

1. Climate Action and the Environment
2. Energy
3. Circular Economy, Resource Efficiency, Inland Fisheries and Geoscience
4. Marine
5. The Sustainable Development Goals

3 Next Steps

Our next steps will focus on working within the Department, with our state bodies and with the wider national R&I system to source the answers to our R&I questions.

We will use this Statement to guide our future R&I investments, funding programmes, R&I partnerships and R&I engagements both nationally and internationally. It will inform the research we perform, commission and fund (including the research undertaken by our state bodies). It will also inform our R&I engagement at national, EU and international level.

While we will seek to support new R&I projects which address our R&I needs, we will also improve knowledge transfer into our Department from previous and ongoing research, including through evidence synthesis.

[9] This long list, together with this Statement, will inform our future work.

We will also use this Statement to develop and strengthen connections between our Department and the national R&I system[10]. This will support improved alignment between research, policy, and practice, ensuring that the best available evidence is informing the work we do, and enabling the R&I system to further enhance its real-world impact.

Finally, we intend researchers, subject matter experts and state R&I funders to use this Statement as a signpost, helping them to understand our R&I needs so they can respond to them.

We will refresh our Statement of R&I Needs every three years.

4 Our Priority R&I Needs

4.1 Climate Action and the Environment

Policy and programme development in Climate Action and the Environment is led by the Climate Action and Environment Division.

Ireland is legally committed under the *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015*[11] (the Climate Act) to cut greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030 and to be climate neutral by 2050. The national climate objective, set out in the Climate Act, requires the State to pursue and achieve, by no later than the end of the year 2050, the transition to a climate-resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable, and climate-neutral economy.

National obligations align with the EU's collective climate and energy ambition, which requires Member States to meet binding targets for emissions, renewables, energy efficiency, and land use. The Government is committed to protecting Ireland's present and future generations by investing in climate adaptation measures to manage the impacts of extreme weather events and the longer-term impacts of climate change. The *National Adaptation Framework*[12] (2024) sets out Ireland's adaptation strategy and Sectoral

[10] The national R&I system consists of higher education institutions, Government Departments and state bodies that perform and/or fund research, and research active companies, charities, non-governmental and community/ voluntary organisations.

[11] https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2015/act/46/enacted/en/html

[12] https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy-and-the-environment/publications/national-adaptation-framework-naf/

Adaptation Plans[13] (2025) set out measures to build resilience across 13 priority adaptation sectors.

Meeting climate targets and delivering the economic and societal transformation required to do this is challenging. While much has been achieved, Ireland now needs to accelerate climate action by delivering the full suite of actions set out in the Government's annual Climate Action Plans and going beyond these actions to accelerate emissions reductions.

The protection of our environment and the sustainable use of our natural resources are essential to our national, and indeed global, wellbeing. Our shared responsibility for the world's resources is behind the Government's commitment to sustainable development and the reduction of environmental pollution in all its forms. Our current focus areas include air quality, and addressing noise and chemical pollution.

Listed below are priority R&I questions relevant to the delivery of policies and programmes in climate action and the environment.

Climate and Energy Modelling and Analysis

1. Climate and energy modelling plays a significant role in the assessment of optimised low carbon pathways for Ireland. How can we enhance national climate and energy modelling capacity to continue to develop viable scenarios and pathways for Ireland to achieve climate neutrality by 2050 and to address post-2050 requirements? What role does optimised AI-related technology have on both datasets and energy modelling analytics? How can we use enhanced national modelling capacity to examine the interaction and impacts of non-climatic risk drivers[14] on future climate change risk for Ireland?

Achieving Climate Neutrality and Climate Resilience

2. How can we better identify and deploy innovative tools, technologies and solutions for climate mitigation and climate adaptation at scale? What role can nature-based solutions play and how can we effectively implement these solutions in Ireland?

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[13] https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy-and-the-environment/campaigns/sectoral-adaptation-planning/

[14] As set out in the *National Climate Change Risk Assessment* https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring--assessment/climate-change/EPA_NCCRA_Main-Report_Published_June_2025.pdf

3. Are people more concerned by and motivated to act in response to climate mitigation or adaptation? What do people understand adaptation to be and is there a better way to describe it to improve understanding and to prompt action?

4. What would be the most suitable framework to enable the use of complementary mechanisms such as carbon credits, while protecting environmental integrity and continuing to incentivise mitigation in sectors?

Economic Aspects of the Climate Transition

5. How do we ensure we have a competitive economy while, at the same time, ensuring the transition to climate neutrality? How do we ensure that options for high-emission-reductions are implemented when they offer low economic returns?

6. How can we effectively use taxation measures, regulation and public spending to drive system change in support of the climate transition?

7. How can we better understand the responses of commercial markets to different decarbonisation options (e.g., a shift to timber use in construction) so that we can identify the most viable options?

Land Use and the Bioeconomy

8. How can we develop spatially explicit analyses and tools to inform land-use decisions at regional and local levels, including addressing competing land-use demands? How do we improve national land-use mapping and downscale it to regional level to support the development of regionally appropriate plans and actions?

9. How can we better quantify the potential contribution of the bioeconomy to Ireland's legally binding climate and biodiversity targets? What indicators and frameworks are needed to monitor the climate and environmental impacts of bioeconomy and blue bioeconomy policies over time?

Communities, Local Government and a Just Transition

10. How can we capture and best communicate examples of climate action resonant with a shared collective identity (communities of interest) relevant to a local area (communities of place)? What is the role of national government, local government and civil society, including community groups, in supporting this?

11. How can we strengthen the role of local authorities and regional assemblies in leading and implementing climate action? How can these bodies and national government work better together to achieve climate objectives? What are the barriers to better and more effective cooperation?

12. How do we create robust vulnerability projections (including both energy and transport poverty[15]) so can we better understand which communities are most vulnerable to climate change?

Air Quality, Noise and Chemicals

13. How can we more accurately assess the health impacts and costs of poor air quality, including the impact on different socioeconomic and demographic groups?

14. What innovations in predictive modelling or AI could be used to help with the requirements of the Environmental Noise Regulations?

15. How can public bodies better explain and communicate the health impacts of Persistent Organic Pollutants?

4.2 Energy

Policy and programme development in Energy are led by three Divisions: Security of Supply and Generation Division; Demand, Energy Affordability and Competitiveness Division; Grid and Strategy Division.

It is the Government's goal to enable Ireland, within EU and global frameworks, to achieve a transition to a low-carbon, climate-resilient and environmentally sustainable economy. This involves striking a balance between developing low carbon and renewable energy sources, ensuring a safe, secure and reliable supply of electricity, and maintaining a competitive and well-regulated energy market.

This transition can also be achieved through increased energy efficiency. The Government has put measures and supports in place to enable individuals, communities, businesses and the public sector to achieve this. This also helps to improve energy affordability and reduce

[15] Energy poverty as defined in the Energy Efficiency Directive(https://energy.ec.europa.eu/topics/energy-efficiency/energy-efficiency-targets-directive-and-rules/energy-efficiency-directive_en) and transport poverty as defined in the Social Climate Fund Regulation (https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/reg/2023/955/oj/eng).

energy poverty. The Government's energy policies, supports, strategies, and plans will help Ireland transition to a more sustainable future.

Listed below are the key R&I questions relevant to the delivery of policies and programmes in energy.

Demand, Energy Affordability and Competitiveness

16. How can information on the cost and benefits of the energy transition be clarified and enhanced for citizens and businesses (e.g., linking of network tariffs to specific infrastructure projects)?

17. How do we best explore and develop cost-effective decarbonisation pathways (e.g., heat pump affordability) using R&I, in particular, for the public sector and enterprise?

18. What are the priorities across Ireland's industrial sector for leveraging renewable energy technologies? How can we appropriately target and maximise uptake of renewable energy technologies in industry?

19. What new training, initiatives or supports could be developed to provide consumer education in relation to, for example, electricity tariffs, time-of-use pricing, energy monitoring and usage reduction tools? What can we learn from others in this regard?

20. How can energy billing information be enhanced or standardised to help consumers make informed decisions? How can the cost savings potential of smarter energy consumption be clarified for households and businesses?

21. How can the co-benefits of the energy transition (e.g., cost savings, improvement in health and wellbeing, improved air quality etc.) be captured and measured as part of understanding the overall cost?

Grid and Strategy

22. What innovative grid related technologies, both non-wire (e.g., digital optimisation, power flow control) and wire (e.g. advanced conductors, superconductors), should be prioritised to support Ireland's energy transition?

23. How will the digitalisation of electricity network assets impact upon the operation of the power system? Which digital technologies should be optimally integrated into grid network infrastructure investments?

24. How can new, innovative network planning design methodologies be applied to optimise cross-sectoral energy system planning?

25. How should innovative grid related Operational Technologies (physical and software based) be deployed to strengthen the resilience of energy systems to current and future geopolitical, physical, and market risks?

26. What opportunities for efficiencies in grid investment can be leveraged through the co-location of low carbon, innovative generation technologies and demand? What other locational signals should be assessed?

27. How can AI-related technologies enhance grid investment and infrastructure development pathways? What impact could AI load have on grid resilience and infrastructure?

28. What technology or policy innovation can be deployed to support just resilience with respect to climate adaptation in the energy sector? In what way are certain groups or communities more energy insecure than others?

29. What new types of energy modelling assessments can be applied to robustly test the expected overall system costs of the energy transition? What can we learn from national and international financing models?

Security of Supply and Generation

30. What type of capacity market reform is required to accelerate and support investment in plant as part of a balanced supply portfolio? What are the security implications of power generation project delays?

31. How can market related costs associated with energy transition pathways (e.g., imperfection charges, Contracts for Difference) be captured in future network needs methodologies?

32. What alternative, low-carbon, innovative dispatchable generation options are viable to support Ireland reducing its reliance on imported fossil fuels, particularly natural gas?

33. What are the optimal interconnection options (location and size) based on updated energy demand and renewable scenarios? What is the potential impact of these on energy costs and energy security?

34. Are further definitions for security of supply required that consider jurisdiction, variability, and duration and further distinguish between physical security (energy availability) and price security (affordability)?

4.3 Circular Economy, Resource Efficiency, Inland Fisheries and Geoscience

Policy and programme development in steering Ireland's transition to a circular economy, in managing Ireland's national resources and inland fisheries, and in geoscience policy, regulation and programmes is led by the Circular Economy and Resource Efficiency Division, which includes Geological Survey Ireland[16].

Moving towards a circular economy means using fewer resources, generating less waste, and reducing reliance on landfill. By promoting reuse, repair, recycling and sustainable production, we can protect the environment and reduce the consumption of virgin materials to transform our economy from linear to circular. The transition requires the minimisation of waste, green public procurement, and circular manufacturing whilst also promoting and supporting circular behaviours across society. It is the Government's ambition to support a whole-of-society circular economy transition that encourages sustainable behaviours, fosters innovation and safeguards resources for the future, as set out in the Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy 2026-2028[17].

Fish stocks are a national asset which must be conserved, protected and used fairly and sustainably. It is the Government's responsibility to ensure that these resources are managed and developed in a way that protects them from over-exploitation, pollution and habitat degradation.

Geoscience underpins our work in a broad range of policy areas such as environment protection and restoration, circular economy (including waste management and critical raw materials) and climate action (including renewable energy).

Listed below are priority R&I questions relevant to the delivery of policies and programmes in this area.

Towards a Circular Economy

35. How can we promote a market for circular activities like reuse, recycling, refurbishing, and secondary resource use?

[16] https://www.gsi.ie/en-ie/Pages/default.aspx

[17] https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy-and-the-environment/publications/whole-of-government-circular-economy-strategy-2026-2028-accelerating-action/

36. How could a regulatory sandbox[18] be applied to the development of a circular economy in Ireland and what might be the priority areas for exploration?

Textiles, Construction and Demolition Waste

37. What standards and systems currently exist for professional assessment of textiles as "fit for reuse" in Ireland, and how consistent or robust are these practices?

38. What processing or end-market opportunities exist in Ireland for low-quality post-consumer textiles that cannot be reused, and how can new circular markets for these materials be developed?

39. What data infrastructure is required to create a national-level digital marketplace for secondary construction materials, providing real-time information on availability, quality, and certification? How will this interact with digital product passports?

40. How can Building Information Modelling be leveraged to integrate circularity principles from the design phase, including data on material disassembly, reusability, and recycled content?

41. What are the specific technical standards and data required to confidently reclassify a wider range of recycled aggregates from construction and demolition waste as end-of-waste, and how can this be streamlined for producers?

42. How can pre-demolition audits be enhanced with digital tools to systematically identify and quantify potential by-products (e.g., intact beams, bricks) for direct reuse, and what data platforms are needed to connect supply with demand?

Chemical Recycling Technologies

43. What is the potential for chemical recycling technologies (e.g., enzymatic, solvolysis) to handle complex plastic blends prevalent in the Irish market, considering the quality of the feedstock available in Ireland (including contamination levels)?

Economic Instruments & Extended Producer Responsibility

44. What challenges do businesses in Ireland - including SMEs - face in adapting to new environmental demands, and what tailored supports or incentives could facilitate a just transition to a circular economy?

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[18] Regulatory Sandboxes facilitate small-scale, live testing of innovations by giving derogations from certain regulatory provisions to projects for a limited amount of time.

Inland Fisheries

45. How can we improve our understanding of the cumulative and interacting drivers/ pressures that contribute to the continuing decline in salmon stocks in Irish rivers and how can Ireland more effectively address the decline and restore salmon populations?

46. What is the baseline and potential economic and social contribution of angling to the Irish economy, with particular focus on the rural economy? In addition to direct and indirect economic impacts, this should include wider the wider social, cultural and wellbeing benefits associated with angling and other river-based activities.

Geoscience

47. How can geoscience research support the circular economy and resource efficiency (in addition to the digital and energy transitions, and security and defence), exploring 'advancing techniques and technologies' for geological, hydrogeological, geotechnical, and marine geoscience[19]?

4.4 Marine

Marine environment and planning, marine strategic policy, Designated Maritime Area Plan (DMAP) implementation and marine regulation, together with the Department's interaction with the planning system in support of our policy areas, are the responsibility of the EU, International and Marine Planning Division.

Forward planning in our maritime area ensures maritime activities are sustainably managed and we achieve Ireland's environmental, economic and social objectives. The Government is committed to delivering an integrated, responsive and sustainable marine governance system that supports Ireland's environmental, energy, economic and security objectives. Marine planning is one part of the complex process of delivering offshore wind energy but is critical to resolving the spatial 'trilemma' - the spatial squeeze involving energy, environment and food production. This includes ensuring an appropriate planning and development framework is in place for offshore wind energy, including the development of a National Offshore Renewable Energy (ORE) DMAP.

[19] Seabed mapping and monitoring, geohazards, enhancing geothermal resource characterization, assessing potential environmental impacts and knowledge gaps affecting renewable energy deployment, and identifying onshore critical raw materials potential.

Listed below are priority R&I questions relevant to the delivery of policies and programmes in the marine.

Strengthening the Evidence Base for the Planning System

48. How can we strengthen our evidence base for qualitative and quantitative socio-economic impact analysis and our understanding of ecosystem services to support terrestrial and maritime spatial planning? What can we learn from good practices?

Effective Engagement

49. What lessons can we learn from the outcomes of good practice models of stakeholder engagement in marine spatial planning processes, and the role played by Fisheries Liaison and Community Liaison Services in consultation with coastal communities, the seafood and fisheries sector and other stakeholders in marine spatial planning processes (especially regional level approaches undertaken)? What structures for on-going engagement, which were established for plan implementation stages, can inform our approaches?

Marine Environment

50. How can we strengthen our approaches to Climate Smart Marine Spatial Planning (MSP) in our DMAP processes; and what climate adaptation and mitigation measures, evidence-base to understand climate change impacts on coastal communities, marine environments, marine ecosystems and marine food webs can we learn from?

51. How can we better measure and understand the links between human pressures and their impacts, including climate change and pollution, on biodiversity and environmental health, to inform assessments under the *EU Marine Strategy Framework Directive*[20] and OSPAR Convention[21] and to prioritize areas for protection, conservation and restoration?

52. How do we integrate an improved evidence-base for coastal change processes to plan for resilient coastal and island communities, maritime activities and forward plan for critical infrastructure interacting with the land and sea through marine spatial planning

[20] https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/research-area/environment/oceans-and-seas/eu-marine-strategy-framework-directive_en

[21] The Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic https://www.ospar.org/convention

processes? What lessons can we learn from other jurisdictions where terrestrial and maritime planning are closely coordinated?

Critical Infrastructure Delivery

53. How can we strengthen social acceptance of the need to deliver critical infrastructure for climate action including renewable energy? What can we learn from nature-based design in plans and/ or projects, and the use of Nature Enhancement and Rehabilitation Plans to protect and enhance biodiversity and natural habitats (terrestrial and maritime), in delivering infrastructure for renewable energy?

54. What evidence-based learning can we obtain from case studies and from other jurisdictions on permitting timelines, use of IROPI (Imperative Reasons of Overriding Public Interest) processes and the results of implementing compensatory measures required under Article 6(4) of the Habitats Directive[22], for plans and/ or projects for climate action including renewable energy?

55. To complement a research programme on critical subsea infrastructure between the National Maritime College of Ireland, DCEE and Department of Defence, how can we strengthen our knowledge of the risk levels and responses needed to protect strategic international and State subsea cables and infrastructure in our Maritime Area? What can we learn from pilot research on risk modelling, monitoring and surveillance systems, innovative technologies (such as autonomous surveying sensors and AI) to better monitor and protect the security of our seas?

Transboundary Cooperation

56. How can we improve transboundary cooperation in marine spatial planning processes including cross jurisdiction infrastructure projects? What can we learn from case studies on effective systems for transboundary consultation, data sharing and coordination on environmental assessments including improved cumulative impact assessment and improved assessment of in-combination effects between jurisdictions?

[22] https://eur-lex.europa.eu/eli/dir/1992/43/oj/eng

Use of Advanced Technologies

57. How do we harness autonomous surveying sensors and AI to support and accelerate data collection and analysis to meet our evidence and monitoring needs for plan, policy and project development and implementation?

4.5 The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

The 2030 Agenda[23] and 17 Sustainable Development Goals[24] (SDGs) were adopted by the United Nations in 2015 as a universal call to action to end poverty, protect the planet, and ensure that by 2030 all people enjoy peace and prosperity.

In Ireland, a whole-of-Government approach has been adopted for implementation of the SDGs. Our Department has overall responsibility for promoting the SDGs and overseeing their coherent implementation across government.

Research plays a vital role in achieving the SDGs and is an important tool in providing the evidence needed to identify and address global challenges, as well as fostering collaborations and partnerships. Set out below are our key R&I questions related to the SDGs.

58. What data is available that would allow us to more robustly assess progress in implementing the SDGs? How can this data be used to report on SDG implementation progress at national, local and regional levels and assist with embedding the SDGs into policymaking across all levels of Government?

59. What is the level of engagement of different groups in society with the SDGs? What steps should be taken to stratify the audience and reach those who are currently not being reached?

60. How do we develop a bespoke approach to increasing engagement with the SDGs that optimises engagement with different target groups, including hard to reach groups?

61. What can be learned from those already engaging with the SDGs to further develop our communications around the SDGs, including methods we can use that will avoid “SDG fatigue”?

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[23] https://sdgs.un.org/2030agenda

[24] https://sdgs.un.org/goals