

Climate Action Roadmap

2024

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ESRI Climate Action Roadmap 2024

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Economic and Social Research Institute (ESRI) | PSO-00153

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Whitaker Square

Sir John Rogerson's Quay

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this Climate Action Roadmap is to highlight the Economic and Social Research Institute's (ESRI) commitment to reducing our environmental impact and demonstrating our responsibility as a sustainable organisation. The Roadmap outlines how we aim to meet the requirements of the Climate Action Mandate 2024 and recognises the legal requirements¹.

The ESRI's approach to environmental responsibility and sustainable practices is reflected in our commitment to robust governance arrangements, adherence to public sector standards, and implementation of policies that ensure effective, efficient, and ethical operations, as outlined in our Annual Report 2023.

The ESRI has established a Climate and Sustainability Committee and appointed a Climate and Sustainability Champion. The Committee will monitor progress and performance on a regular basis and will ensure the ESRI Climate Action Roadmap is implemented and updated annually to align with the latest requirements of public bodies and best practices.

The ESRI has appointed an Energy Performance Officer (EPO) and is developing an Energy Policy Statement to demonstrate our commitment to taking action to meet the Government's energy and greenhouse gas emissions targets. The draft Energy Policy Statement is in Appendix 1. It will be published in 2024.

2. Organisational Context

2.1. ESRI Background

The ESRI is Ireland's leading not-for-profit economic and social research institute. The mission of the ESRI is to produce economic and social research that informs public policymaking and civil society. Through its research, it has played a critical role in Irish life and policymaking, and has a reputation for independence, academic excellence, and objectivity.

The ESRI's [2024–2028 strategy statement](#) sets out how the ESRI will fulfil its mission to be a world-class research institute supporting the achievement of a more inclusive, prosperous, sustainable, and decarbonised Ireland. The ESRI [Annual Report 2023](#) provides an overview of the ESRI's research outputs and activity including in the areas of climate, energy, and environment research. Research output in 2023 included research on residential energy efficiency, energy poverty, and electricity markets. Several studies examined aspects of fuel poverty, including investigating the equity effects of different types of energy affordability policy interventions. The Annual Report also highlights our organisational sustainability actions and goals.

2.2. ESRI Building

The ESRI office building, located in Whitaker Square, Sir John Rogerson's Quay, Dublin 2. It was constructed circa 2005/2006, is approx. 25,000 sq. ft., with a BER rating of E2. The wider Whitaker Square campus and basement car park is owned by a superior landlord, and the car

¹ as outlined in section 1.5 'Compliance with legal requirements' in the guidance document 'Public Sector Bodies Climate Action Roadmaps Guidance 2024' <https://energylink.seai.ie/thread/view/2342#5020>

park is shared with all Whitaker Square occupants. The ESRI has 8 car spaces, one which is let to our tenant and others are available to book by staff, tenants, visitors, and contractors as required, at a fee. The ESRI owns one bike cage and shares another, and the ESRI building has shower facilities. The ESRI has a tenant and shared services arrangements in place, with a tenant on one floor and shared offices with two other public bodies. In 2024, approximately one fifth (20 percent) of the ESRI building is leased/shared with other organisations.

The ESRI outsources its building and facilities management to a Facilities Management (FM) Company, procured via the OGP integrated facilities management framework. The FM company is responsible for maintenance and servicing of all plant and equipment and building and for the provision of services such as waste services, advisory and audit.

The most recent building energy audit conducted confirmed that a significant investment in the building would be required: essential plant parts are malfunctioning, obsolete or beyond economic lifecycle resulting in higher energy use and carbon generation. The ESRI is cognisant of the challenges it faces in delivering on sustainability and environmental goals in the current building without significant investment. In 2023, the ESRI's Management Committee and Council (Board) discussed the ESRI's office space requirements in the context of this challenge and the reduction in our office occupation due to hybrid working arrangements. While a decision has yet to be made on renovation of the current building or relocation to more suitable and sustainable office space, the ESRI commits to incorporating sustainability criteria and energy and GHG emissions reduction criteria into its plans and actions.

2.3. Summary - Energy and GHG Emissions Performance and Progress

The ESRI participates in the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) system, which tracks the energy consumption and carbon emissions and compares it with the baseline years². The ESRI's performance in 2023, per the SEAI reporting system, shows the ESRI's excellent progress towards achieving energy efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions reduction targets, i.e.,

- **Total energy consumption (kWh) in 2023:** 658,030 kWh (Primary Energy), a reduction of 526,596 kWh from the 2009 baseline.
- **Total carbon emissions:** 106.8TCO₂, a reduction of 62% from 2016-2018 baseline.
- **Energy intensity³:** 55.5% improvement on energy performance baseline (the 2030 target is 50% energy efficiency improvement).

The main factors that contributed to the ESRI's energy and carbon savings include:

- closer operational management of the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning system.
- adoption of remote working and online meeting arrangements, which reduced the ESRI's office-related energy use and emissions.
- sharing of the building with other organisations.

² Baselines: 2009 for energy efficiency (kWh/m²) improvements; average 2016-2018 for carbon emissions.

³ i.e., energy performance kWh/m², not measured as an absolute reduction as per CO₂ emissions.

3. Leadership and governance

3.1. Governance Structures

The ESRI has established the following governance structures for decision making and management of climate and sustainability matters:

- ESRI Climate and Sustainability (C&S) Committee: The Director (CEO) is Chair of the Committee and Climate and Sustainability Champion⁴. The Committee has responsibility for compliance and overseeing the implementation of the Roadmap.
- The Head of Governance is appointed as the Energy Performance Officer (EPO), to provide oversight and leadership to ensure that the action plan is implemented and that successes/challenges are communicated to the Committee.
- The Head of Operations is appointed the Climate and Sustainability Coordinator, to manage the implementation of the actions in the Roadmap.
- We will establish and resource a Green Team, reporting to the Committee, to drive sustainability projects.
- Terms of Reference will be developed for the Committee and the Green Team.

Climate and Sustainability Committee:

Climate and Sustainability Committee	Name
Climate and Sustainability Cttee Chair and Champion	Alan Barrett, Director (CEO), ESRI
Energy Performance Officer (EPO)	Charlie O'Regan, Head of Governance
Climate and Sustainability Coordinator	Eleanor Bannerton, Operations & Strategy Manager
Energy and Sustainability Research Expert	John Curtis, Environment and Energy

Green Team:

Position	Name	Roles and Responsibilities
Head of Governance and Finance	Charlie O'Regan	Energy Performance Officer
Operations Manager	Eleanor Bannerton	Climate and Sustainability Coordinator
Environment & Energy Researcher	John Curtis	Green Team member
IT Manager	David Gorman	Green Team Member
HR Manager	Claire Buckley	Green Team Member
Operations Administrator	LeAnnie Wilson	Green Team member

⁴ This role will be fulfilled by the incoming Head of Governance & Corporate Resources, who will also be the Energy Performance Officer

4. Engaging staff

The ESRI commits to engaging staff on sustainability and energy related emissions and wider climate matters. We will comply with the Mandate and incorporate appropriate climate action and sustainability training into learning and development strategies for staff, as outlined below.

4.1. Staff training plans

The ESRI commits to putting in place training plans on climate and sustainability, as follows:

- Investigate the options for climate and sustainability training for staff including technical, behavioural, and green procurement training as appropriate.
- Incorporate training into the annual ESRI learning and development plan and make available to relevant staff as part of the ESRI's learning and development plans in 2025.
- Investigate the options for climate and sustainability leadership training for senior ESRI managers and Council Members and incorporate into the ESRI's learning and development plans in 2025 and beyond.
- Investigate the potential for speakers on climate issues to deliver workshops for staff.

5. Sustainability and Energy Targets

In accordance with the targets set by the government for the public sector, the ESRI's overall targets are as follows:

- Reduce GHG emissions by 51% in 2030 [from baseline].
- Increase the improvement in energy efficiency from the 33% target in 2020 to 50% [from baseline] by 2030.
- Update our Climate Action Roadmap annually within 6 months of the publication of the Climate Action Plan.

5.1. Energy and Carbon Emissions Analysis

The ESRI's energy and carbon emissions analysis information is compiled from the SEAI M&R system.

Energy:

- Total energy consumption (kWh) in 2023: 658,030 kWh (Primary Energy), a reduction of 526,596 kWh from the 2009 baseline.
- Energy intensity: 55.5% improvement on energy performance baseline (target is 50% energy efficiency improvement).
- Trend with no additional action (Business As Usual (BAU)): On track to meet target. However, we are currently investigating options to alter or change premises, which may affect future consumption and impact on meeting the 2030.

Emissions:

- Baseline: 279,216 kgCO₂ (191,491 kgCO₂ Electricity, 87,724 kgCO₂ Thermal).
- 2023 emissions have reduced from the baseline by 172,413 kgCO₂ (129,787 kgCO₂ Electricity and 42,626 kgCO₂ Thermal).
- Trends by 2030 with no additional actions (Business As Usual (BAU) scenario): On track to meet our total emissions target, noting there is still a gap to target of 2113 kgCO₂ for

thermal. However, we are currently investigating options to alter or change premises, which may affect future emissions.

5.2. Actions/projects required to meet targets.

The ESRI will implement the following actions.

- Complete this 2024 Roadmap, obtain approval and commitment to provision of resources from the Management Committee, and issue.
- Update the Roadmap annually within the timeframe required and report on progress regularly to the Management Committee.
- Continue to engage with the SEAI and analyse data on performance via the M&R system, to establish Gap to Target to guide the development of our initiatives.
- Explore potential avenues to improve energy efficiency in the current building, based on energy audit.
- Implement internal communication campaigns as appropriate to help reduce our energy use through behaviour change.
- Incorporate sustainability criteria in future office re/designs.
- Continue to utilise OGP contracts for electricity and gas supply.

5.3. Section 15(1) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Act 2021

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 applies to public bodies, who are required to adopt practices that support the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions and the transition to a climate-neutral economy by 2050. The Climate Action Mandate⁵ applies to public bodies covered by the Climate Action Plan decarbonisation targets.

The ESRI understands its obligations under the Act to contribute to Ireland's climate goals. We have developed this Climate Action Roadmap, which outlines how we will achieve energy efficiency and emissions reduction targets. The roadmap will be reviewed annually to ensure alignment with the updated Public Sector Climate Action Mandate.

6. OUR WAY OF WORKING

A key goal of this Plan is to continue to monitor and report on performance to reduce consumption of energy and other resources. Considerable effort and progress have been made to reduce our energy use, our waste generation, and to reduce reliance on paper, eliminate single use plastics and increase recycling and composting.

6.1. Energy Management

In line with the Public Sector Energy Efficiency Strategy, the ESRI follows a structured approach to energy management, as follows:

- i. **Commitment** (senior management buy-in; staff empowerment to act)

⁵ <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/337b6-public-sector-climate-action-mandate/#public-sector-climate-action-mandate>

- ii. **Identification** (of key areas and actions for improvement following energy performance report (from SEAI) and audits)
- iii. **Plan** (of action including setting annual energy saving targets in consultation with SEAI, plant life cycle reporting and replacement plan)
- iv. **Action** (implementation of projects, in consultation with SEAI)
- v. **Review** (measure results annually, continually improve, review/audit)

The ESRI's energy management programme includes annual reporting of energy consumption to SEAI via the M&R system, energy efficiency audits provided by the ESRI's FM service provider, every four years, an implementation of planned preventative maintenance, life cycle reporting and replacement planning. The main energy users in the ESRI building are the heating, cooling, ventilation systems, lighting, and IT servers. The heating, ventilating and air conditioning (HVAC) system controls temperature in the building, including comfort heating and cooling, ventilation and circulating fresh air. The ESRI's facilities management service provider provides maintenance and servicing of HVAC and lighting, and advisory on plant life cycle and replacement.

Considering the challenges with our building and our office space project, as outlined in section 2.2, the ESRI commits to the following actions:

- Continue to report performance annually via the SEAI's M&R system.
- Report GHG emissions and sustainability activities in the ESRI Annual Report.
- In the new or refurbished ESRI office, develop an Energy Action Plan to deliver energy and emission savings and ensure significant energy users can be assessed.
- Energy Performance Officer will oversee energy performance and the Climate and Sustainability Committee will review and sign off on the Energy Action Plan (draft Statement in Appendix 1).

6.2. Green Public Procurement

It is ESRI policy to implement Office of Government Procurement (OGP) guidelines on best practice in Green Public Procurement (GPP) by integrating sustainable and environmentally friendly criteria into our procurement processes, where relevant. We avail of OGP and HEAnet frameworks, wherever relevant. In 2023, ICT hardware was purchased under HEAnet frameworks that included award criteria for environmental and energy characteristics. ESRI building utilities are procured via the OGP Energy Framework Agreements.

We will take the following actions in 2024 and beyond:

- Establish a system to gather and report data on GPP implementation, and report on data in 2025 and beyond.
- Incorporate green procurement training into learning and development strategies for staff who are involved in procurement.
- Develop and publish the ESRI's a Green Public Procurement Policy
- Source goods, services, and works with a reduced environmental impact as per the Environmental Protection Agency Sustainable Procurement Guide.

6.3. Food waste

The ESRI does not have a canteen or produce food on site. Compost waste bins are provided for staff use. The ESRI commits to supporting a reduction in food waste by taking the following actions:

- Continue to implement food waste segregation.
- Require waste services provider to report on compost waste, and track progress.

6.4. Paper

Climate Action Mandate: *Review any paper-based processes and evaluate the possibilities for digitalisation so it becomes the default approach. Eliminate paper-based processes as far as is practicable. Where paper must be procured, ensure the paper is the default."*

ESRI Actions to date:

- Digital first policy is implemented, with the majority of ESRI reports disseminated digitally.
- Green procurement of recycled paper (OGP framework supplier) for use in printers.
- Discourage printing, implements a "print on both sides" default setting on printers.
- Paperless reception; facilities documents are scanned (excluding H&S documentation).
- Confidential waste is shredded, certified, and recycled.

The ESRI commits to taking the following actions in 2024 to further reduce paper-based processes:

- Continue with the digital first approach across the Institute.
- Establish a printing policy to encourage reduction in printing and printer costs.

The ESRI is currently carry out a project to dispose of all non-essential paper files in advance of moving/reconfiguring the office. During this project, the quantity of paper waste will increase significantly.

6.5. Water

The ESRI provides suitable filtered drinking water refill points for all in the building, and for the public, and encourages staff to bring in and use their own water bottles.

The ESRI commits to taking the following additional actions:

- In the new/reconfigured ESRI office, measure water consumption, identify a target and implement a plan to reduce the water consumption, as appropriate.

6.6. Single Use

Climate Action Mandate: *Cease using disposable cups, plates and cutlery from any public sector canteen or closed facility, excluding clinical (i.e. non-canteen healthcare) environments.*

The ESRI has previously eliminated the purchase of single use plastics in the ESRI building. Due to the lack of kitchen/catering facilities and space in the current ESRI building, compostable and recyclable cups and lids are provided for hot drinks. A small number of reusable glasses, cups and crockery is available for use.

The ESRI commits to taking the following actions in our new /reconfigured office:

- Design the new office space with suitable kitchen/catering facilities to allow for the storage and cleaning of reusable crockery and cutlery and eliminate single use items.
- Procure catering services which utilise reusable crockery and cutlery in the new/reconfigured office space, as appropriate.
- Encourage staff to use their own “keep cups” and water bottles, rather than the single use cups and lids.

6.7. Other Waste

The ESRI limits its environmental impact through several measures. Waste is recycled where possible; for example, in 2023, 464 kgs of IT and WEEE was recycled (in accordance with Directive 2002/96/EC of the European Parliament). The ESRI’s contracted facilities management company provides waste services in the ESRI building, which includes waste segregation into general waste, recycling waste and compostable waste, and paper shredding waste. Waste service providers are required to implement waste segregation and recycling where possible and provide reports on waste.

The ESRI commits to the following actions:

- From 2025, the contracted facilities management company will be required to provide and report on ESRI waste.

7. OUR BUILDINGS AND VEHICLES

7.1. Building

As described in section 3.1, the ESRI faces challenges in delivering on energy efficiency and greenhouse emissions reduction targets due to its aged building. In the context of this challenge and the reduction in office occupation due to hybrid working arrangements, a project is underway which will inform our decisions on either renovation and investment in our existing office building or relocation to more sustainable office space.

The ESRI commits to the following actions:

- incorporating sustainability criteria and energy and GHG emissions reduction criteria into the building renovation or office relocation planning project.
- The ESRI building is not open to the public for service provision, but steps will be taken to ensure that a copy of the Display Energy Certificate is visible in our newly renovated building or in the new office building, as appropriate.
- ensure procurement and design of new office space follows best practice.

7.2. Vehicles and Sustainable travel

The ESRI is committed to promoting alternative methods of transport for its staff, visitors, contractors, and tenants. The ESRI does not own company vehicles. It is ESRI policy that staff are required to take public transport for business purposes wherever possible.

Actions to date:

- The ESRI promotes its 'Bike to Work' Scheme during onboarding inductions.
- The ESRI promotes of the TaxSaver commuter ticket scheme during staff onboarding inductions and reminders.
- The ESRI provides secure, lockable bike cages and shower facilities.

The ESRI commits to taking the following actions:

- Continue to encourage active travel via promotion of the 'Bike to Work' and TaxSaver commuter ticket schemes, and by providing on-site facilities.
- Prioritise sustainable and active travel options in planning refurbished/new office space.
- Liaise with the superior landlord to explore the potential to enhance existing facilities to encourage active travel.

8. Review and Approval

This Roadmap is reviewed by the Management Committee annually, amended as appropriate on an annual basis, and signed by the Director.

9. Signature



28 June 2024

Alan Barrett, Director ESRI

10. Appendix 1 ESRI Energy Policy Statement draft

The ESRI recognises its responsibilities to its staff, customers, contractors, and the public regarding sustainable and cost-efficient energy management and is committed to continual improvement in energy efficiency in its operations. To this end, the Institute commits, as far as is reasonably practicable, to managing its workplace to ensure its energy efficiency objectives are achieved.

Energy efficiency objectives:

- Commit to continuous improvement in energy efficiency.
- Promote and raise awareness of energy efficiency throughout the Institute.
- Ensure work activities, procurement, operations, and maintenance procedures include energy efficiency as a priority.
- Identify building plant, equipment, processes, and behaviours which account for the greatest energy usage, and which offer the most potential for energy savings, and work towards improving performance in these areas.

To help achieve these objectives, the ESRI Management Committee has appointed an Energy Performance Officer who is responsible for monitoring and reporting of energy consumption, obtaining advice and submitting proposals on potential energy saving projects, and reporting at least annually on energy consumption and the achievement of these objectives to the ESRI's Management Committee.

This policy is supported by the ESRI's Management Committee and by the Council of the ESRI, who commit the necessary resources to ensure that the objectives can be achieved.

These objectives will be reviewed by the Management Committee annually and updated as required and brought to the attention of all staff, at least annually.

Alan Barrett, Director

XX 2024



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