

Annex 11

SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT

Ireland: some key environmental facts (CSO 2014, EPA 2014, SEAI 2014)

Greenhouse Gases and Climate Change

- For 2013, total national greenhouse gas emissions are estimated to be 57.81 million tonnes carbon dioxide equivalent (Mt CO₂eq). This is 0.7% lower (0.41 Mt CO₂eq) than emissions in 2012.
- Emissions from Energy (principally electricity generation) decreased by 11.1% (1.42 Mt CO₂ eq) in 2013.
- Transport and Agriculture account for 51.4% of total emissions in 2013 and 70.5% of non EU ETS emissions. Emissions from both of these sectors increased in 2013.
- Agriculture remains the single largest contributor to the overall emissions at 32.3% of the total. Energy and Transport are the second and third largest contributors at 19.6% and 19.1% respectively.
- The transport sector has been the fastest growing source of GHG emissions, showing a 115.5 per cent increase between 1990 and 2013, although emissions from this sector have shown a 23.7% decrease from peak levels in 2007.
- Forest sinks in Ireland could provide a removal of 4.6Mtonnes of CO₂ in 2020 and 32 Mtonnes of CO₂ over the 2014-2020 period.

Transport

- There were 71,348 new private cars licensed in the year to the end of December 2013, a fall of 6.4% compared to the same period in 2012.

- Ireland's car density in 2013 was 533 cars per 1,000 adults.
- Road transport accounted for 68% of transport final energy consumption in 2013.
- Diesel consumption in transport grew by 251% between 1990 and 2013.
- There has been a substantial increase in the number of low emission vehicles licensed since the introduction in 2008 of motor taxation rates based upon emissions. In 2011, 90% of new private vehicles licensed were in emission bands A and B.

Energy

- Ireland's renewable energy targets for 2020 are to have 40% of electricity, 10% of transport and 12% of heat to be generated from renewable energy.
- In 2013 Ireland generated 20.9% of electricity, from renewable energy.
- In 2013 there was a fall in all fossil fuel used for electricity generation falling by 10.5% in total. Electricity generated from wind increased by 13.2% in 2013.
- Transport accounted for 39.5% of Ireland's final energy consumption in 2013.
- Oil accounted for 56.8% of Ireland's total final energy consumption in 2013.
- Renewable energy accounted for 7.8% of Ireland's gross final energy use in 2013. The target set for 2020 is 16%.
- Wind energy accounted for 42.9% of Ireland's renewable energy in 2013.
- Over the period 1990 to 2013 there was a 73% increase of total net imports with a 31% increase in net imports of oil and as a result Ireland's overall import dependency was 89% in 2013.

Water

- Food Harvest 2020 proposes a 50% increase in milk production. This will present a significant challenge if Ireland is to meet its Water Framework Directive goals as agriculture is one of the main sources of nitrates in groundwaters and of nutrient enrichment in surface waters.
- The Food Harvest target for milk production will potentially increase total nitrogen generation by as much as 14% by 2020.
- The proportion of Irish rivers classified as being unpolluted has declined from 77.3% in 1987-1990 to 68.9% in 1997-2009.
- The percentage of slightly polluted river water has increased steadily from 12% in 1987-1990 to 20.7% in the period 2007-2009.

Waste

- The amount of municipal waste generated in 2012 was 2,692,537 tonnes, a 4.6% decrease since 2011.
- Average household waste generation per capita was 344kg in 2012.
- Ireland is on course to meet the 2013 and 2016 Landfill Directive targets. However, economic recovery may lead to an increase in the disposal of biodegradable municipal waste to landfill which would put achievement of the 2016 target at risk.
- The recovery rate for packaging waste was 87% in 2012
- In 2012, Ireland achieved all its EU obligations across a broad range of waste legislation.
- 92% of Ireland's hazardous waste is exported to three European countries (Belgium, Germany and UK).

Land Use

- Forestry accounts for 11% of land cover, which is low compared with a European average of 35%.
- The area of forest owned privately in Ireland increased from 23% in 1980 to 46% in 2010.
- Although the area farmed organically increased by over 150% between 1997 and 2009, Ireland had the third lowest percentage of agricultural land designated as organic in the EU in 2009.

Biodiversity and Heritage

- Only 7% of Ireland's habitats listed under the Habitat's Directive are considered to be in a favourable state.
- The social and economic benefits of Ireland's biodiversity are worth at least €2.6 billion per annum.
- Ireland had the smallest percentage of land in the EU designated as a Special Protected Area, under the EU Birds Directive, at only 3% of total land area in 2010.
- Ireland at 11% had less land designated as a Special Protected Area under the EU Habitats Directive than the EU average of 14% in 2010.
- 30% of Irish bee species are threatened.

Environmental Taxation

- Environmental taxes accounted for 8.4% of Ireland's total tax revenues in 2012.

Table A11.3: Environmental tax revenue 2008-2012 **€million**

Tax	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012
Energy taxes	2,250	2,265	2,469	2,553	2,518
Transport taxes	2,003	1,523	1,522	1,449	1,471
Pollution and Resource taxes	61	57	62	62	67
Total	4,313	3,845	4,054	4,064	4,056
% of total receipts from Taxes and Social Contributions	8.0%	8.3%	9.0%	8.7%	8.4%

Source: CSO