



ÚDARÁS UCHTÁLA na hÉIREANN  
THE ADOPTION AUTHORITY of IRELAND

## **ADOPTION AUTHORITY OF IRELAND**

# **CLIMATE ACTION ROADMAP 2024**

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## 1. FOREWORD

### Message from the Chief Executive Officer – Dr. Lorraine Horgan

As we witness the undeniable impacts of climate change on our community, our responsibility to act has never been more urgent. I am delighted to share with you our Climate Action Roadmap 2024, the Authority's second plan, which outlines our commitment to a sustainable future and provides a clear path towards reducing our environmental impact, transitioning to renewable energy sources, and championing our sustainable practices.

Collaboration is at the heart of this Climate Action Roadmap. By working together as colleagues, we can leverage diverse perspectives and amplify our impact. Through this unified approach, we can drive innovation, promote sustainable practices, and create a lasting positive impact.

The Authority is embracing this mission with the urgency it deserves. Every small step we take collectively moves us closer to a healthier, more sustainable world. We are delighted to play our part in continuing to work towards both our 2030 and 2050 obligations.

We will take pride in our progress by staying committed to our goals, and work together to make a meaningful difference.



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Dr Lorraine Horgan

Chief Executive Officer

October 2024

## **2. INTRODUCTION**

### **2.1 Overview of the Adoption Authority of Ireland**

The Adoption Authority of Ireland, established on the 1st November 2010 under the Adoption Act 2010, is an independent quasi-judicial body under the aegis of the Department of Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (DCEDIY).

Our main operating units and management team members are:

- Board of the Adoption Authority;
- Chief Executive Officer;
- Director of Operations/Board Secretary;
  - Domestic Adoption Unit;
  - Intercountry Adoption Unit;
- Head of Compliance;
  - Corporate Services & Accreditation Unit;
- Director of Information and Records;
  - Records Unit
  - Solutions Unit
  - Archives Unit
  - Data Protection Unit
- Head of HR and Staff Development
  - HR team;
- Principal Social Worker
  - Social Work Team;
- Research Officer
  - Research Unit.

The Authority has more than doubled in size since 2022, and currently comprises a staff of approximately 60. The offices are located in Shelbourne House, Ballsbridge and occupy both the third and fourth floors with a net floor area of approximately 900 sqm per floor. The accommodation comprises of both open plan and cellular accommodation. The Authority also has a lease in its own name on the lower ground floor of Shelbourne House used for records storage of 920.19 sqm.

## 2.2 Legal requirements for energy and climate action

We aim to meet the requirements of the Climate Action Mandate 2024 and recognise our minimum legal requirements as follows. These requirements include:

|   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021</b>                       | Requires all public bodies to perform their functions in a manner consistent with Ireland's climate ambition.  |
| <b>S.I. No. 393/2021- European Union (Energy Performance of Buildings) Regulations 2021</b> | Requires installation of Building Automation and Control by 2025 for buildings with HVAC rated output over 290kW; requires installation of electric vehicle charging points in carparks for new or refurbished buildings with more than 10 car parking spaces. |
| <b>S.I. No. 381/2021 – European Communities (Clean and Energy Efficient Road Transport</b>  | Sets targets for the procurement of clean light and heavy-duty vehicles, with the first target falling in 2025 and   |

|  |   |
|--|---|
| <b>Vehicles)(Amendment) Regulations 2021</b>   | the second in 2030. The definition of clean vehicle changes to zero emission vehicles in 2025.  |
| <b>S.I. No. 646/2016 – European Union (Energy Efficiency) (Amendment) Regulations 2016</b> | Requires that public bodies only procure energy-using products and vehicles that are on the Triple E register.  |
| <b>S.I 426/2014 – European Union (Energy Efficiency) Regulations 2014</b>                  | Requires the public sector to demonstrate exemplary energy management and requires public bodies to undertake energy audits every four years, and also requires that the public sector can only lease or buy buildings with BER A3 or higher. |

### 2.3 Progress to date

We have been actively working to reduce our energy consumption since 2009 and are currently 70% better than baseline to the end of 2023. in place and are focused on achieving the 2030 targets. We acknowledge that we need to make significant changes in order to meet our 2030 carbon reduction targets.

In order to support ongoing efficiency improvements, the Authority has identified **Collaboration** as the core theme for the second iteration of our Climate Action Roadmap, and is committed to strengthening engagement with and understanding of climate action and energy management throughout the organisation.

As with the Authority's Climate Action Roadmap, the 2024 roadmap sets out how the Authority will improve energy efficiency and reduce greenhouse gas emissions in its building and operations which will again be achieved through a range of ongoing and planned actions across four key pillars;

- Our People
- Our Targets
- Our Way of Working
- Our Building and Vehicles

### **3. OUR PEOPLE - LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE**

#### **3.1 Statement demonstrating Senior Management commitment.**

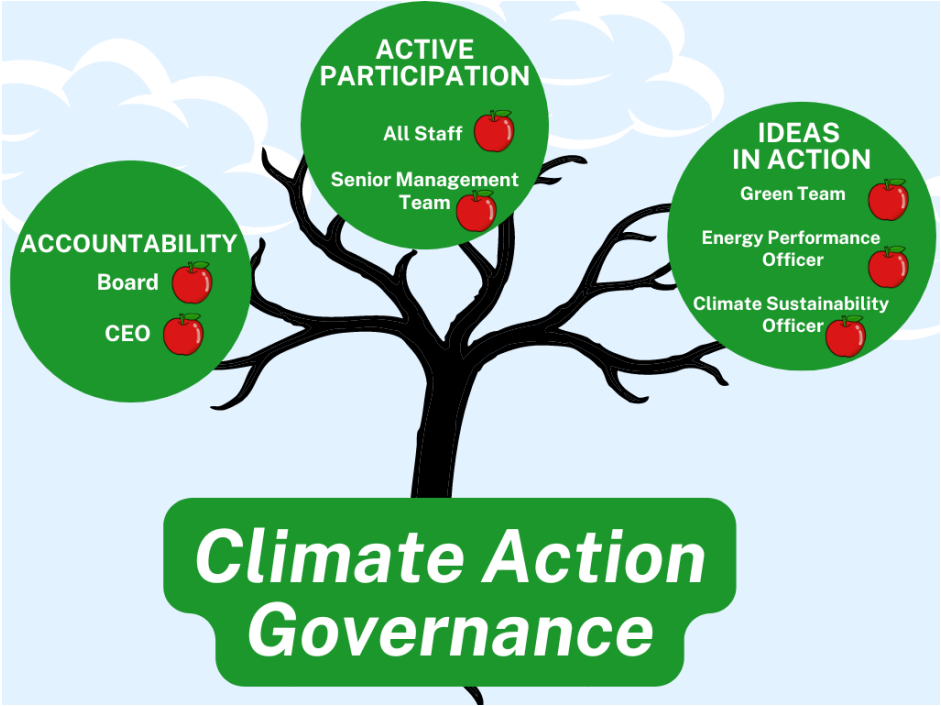
The responsibility for driving the climate action agenda sits within the remit of the Corporate Services and Accreditation Unit. The roles of Climate and Sustainability Champion and Energy Performance Officer are carried out by the Acting Head of Compliance, Catherine Breen.

The development and promotion of the Sustainability and Energy Efficient Strategy is included in the actions of the Strategic Plan 2022-2024 under Priority 4; Empower our people and deliver effective operations. The commitment to deliver the Climate Action Roadmap 2024 is reinforced in the Business Plan 2024. The Authority's commitment to support climate action will be expanded and developed further in the Strategic Plan 2025-2027 to ensure we meet our 2030 targets.

The senior management team at the Adoption Authority of Ireland are fully committed to achieving the 2030 targets and complying with the Government Climate Action mandate 2024.

### 3.2 Governance structure for climate and sustainability

We have established a dedicated governance structure for decision making and management of climate and sustainability issues.



Names and roles of individuals appointed to the Green Team:

| Position                            | Name               | Roles and Responsibilities                             |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|--|
| CEO                                 | Lorraine Horgan    | Senior Management Sponsor                              |
| Sustainability and Climate Champion | Head of Compliance | Chair, provides leadership on Climate Action           |
| Energy Performance Officer          | Head of Compliance | Leads the development of Adoption Authority of Ireland |



|                         |   |   |
|-------------------------|---|---|
|                         |   | Energy Management strategy.   |
| Core Green Team members | Soraya Sobrevia Recio<br>Michael Gueret<br>Evin Nolan<br>David O'Brien<br>Elaine Brannigan<br>Kornelia Kostek-Irfan<br>Michelly Oliveira<br>Nigel Higgins | Day to day focus on energy efficiency in their relevant departments |

Note: In addition to energy efficiency initiatives, the Green Team is involved in activities to minimise the consumption/generation of the following resources/waste:

- Food Waste
- Paper
- Water
- Single Use plastics
- Other Materials

## 4. OUR PEOPLE - ENGAGING OUR STAFF

### 4.1 Staff training plans

We aim to train staff at different levels on Climate Action and Sustainability, as follows:

The Green Team have set out plans for annual staff engagement workshops, focussed specifically and initially on energy related emissions, and over time on wider climate issues and reducing organisational carbon footprint. The Green Team have also set out a plan to identify appropriate climate action training for staff that will be incorporated into ongoing staff learning and development.

Members of the Green Team completed Office Energy Efficiency SEAI Training in early 2024.

In addition, the Green Team will promote The SEAI Energy Academy to all staff in the organisation. This is a free, online, e-learning platform designed to help businesses and public bodies increase their energy efficiency and reduce their energy related costs. Designed by Ireland's leading energy and e-learning experts, the Energy Academy gives access to high-quality, on-demand energy training.

## **5. OUR TARGETS**

In accordance with public sector requirements, our overall targets are:

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

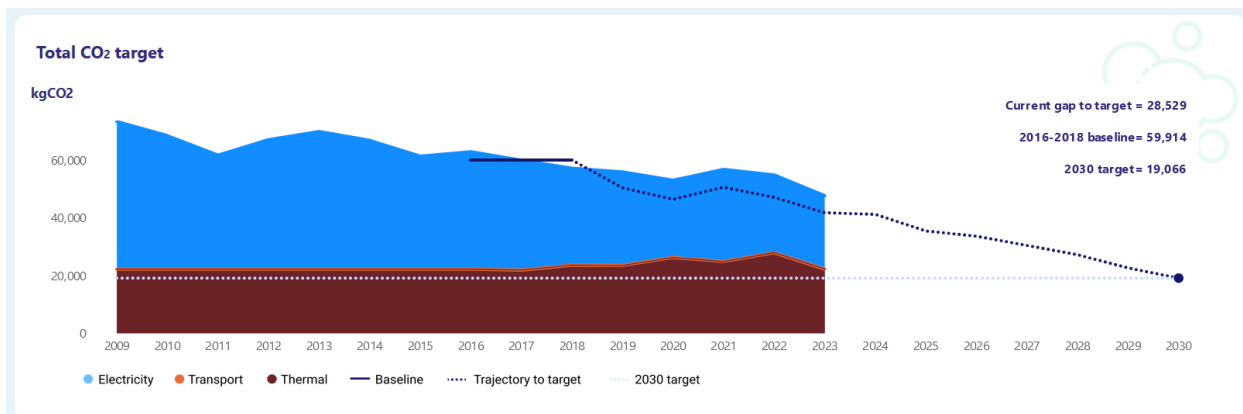
An energy audit of the Authority’s premises was carried out by an SEAI accredited energy auditor to identify energy saving opportunities, and further energy saving project initiatives. This energy audit is one of the main cornerstones of the roadmap to reducing carbon emissions by 2030.

One of the findings of the energy audit was that the Authority has been underreporting its Gas emissions. The management company in charge of Authority’s building at Shelbourne House pays the gas bills directly, therefore no staff member ever had sight of gas meter readings. This will have an impact on our Gap to Target goals.

To bridge this gap, we will use the findings and recommendations of the energy audit to target areas of energy inefficiency.

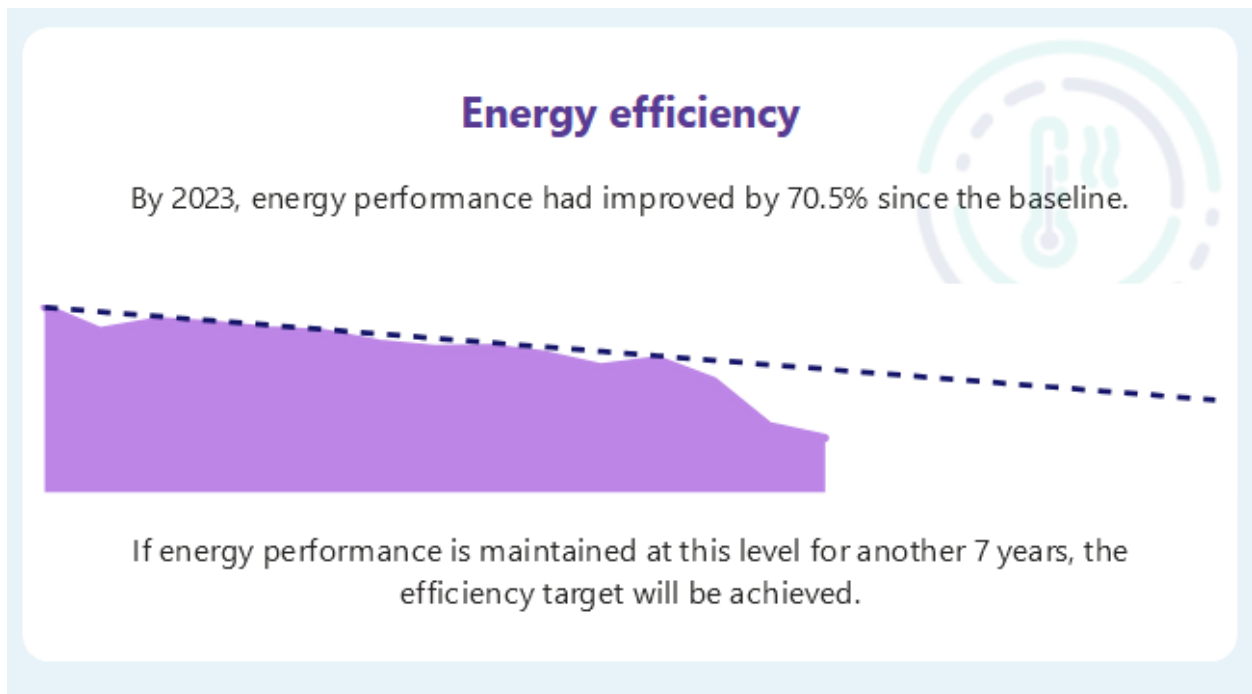
### 5.1 Carbon emissions analysis

The SEAI Gap to Target model, shows what will be required to achieve the 2030 CO2 reduction target. The chart below shows the current status. The dotted line shows the 2030 target for Adoption Authority of Ireland. The ‘blue’, ‘brown’ & ‘orange’ shading shows current status. The ‘orange’ & ‘brown’ (thermal) is a flat line each year unless decarbonisation initiatives are delivered however the model does factor in the CO2 gains by electricity ‘blue’ shading being decarbonised to 2030.



## 5.2 Energy efficiency analysis

By end of 2023, Adoption Authority of Ireland have improved energy efficiency by 70% which exceeds the 2030 targets. This is, however, largely down to the activity metric being used which related to increasing staff numbers since baseline as opposed to actual energy reductions.



## 5.3 Actions/projects required to meet targets.

As identified in the previous section on carbon emission, we have identified projects that will reduce our CO<sub>2</sub> emissions but we have also identified opportunities to improve our energy efficiency.

The energy audit identified a number of opportunities to improve energy efficiency, including:

- Improve operational control of building heating system
- Installation of metering to improve understanding of energy use with a view towards focusing on baseload reduction
- Upgrade lighting to LEDs
- Install lighting control
- Solar PV

Some of these opportunities are on their way to being implemented and more are planned for the coming years. In its 2024 budget the AAI allocated €15,000 towards these climate action initiatives.

#### **5.4 Greening our Procurement**

The Authority will work to optimise opportunities to introduce green criteria into procurement projects, supporting climate action ambitions, such as improved energy efficiency. We will seek to source goods and services with a reduced environmental impact by utilising the EPA guidance on GPP (across the ten accompanying criteria) to work towards implementing sustainable and green practices into our procurement procedures.

The priority under this area for 2023 is to review and update our procurement policy and procedures to ensure green criteria receives due consideration as part of the procurement process.

The Corporate Services Unit of the AAI is responsible for the procurement of goods and services for the AAI. Members of the Unit have attended Green Public Procurement Seminars aimed at introducing sustainable, green procurement practices into our procedures.

In early 2024, the Authority procured for a major project that will span years of work, namely the AAI Website Redevelopment project. Green procurement practices were at the forefront of this project.

## **6. OUR WAYS OF WORKING**

The Authority will report on the following in our Annual Report:

- Greenhouse Gas emissions.
- Implementation of the Climate Action Mandate.
- Sustainability activities.
- Compliance with Circular 01/2020: Procedures for Offsetting the Emissions Associated with Official Air Travel.

The Authority will also report annually on implementation of the Climate Action Mandate requirements using SEAI's Public Sector M&R System when required.

### Food waste

- In 2023, the Authority also introduced compost bins in order to dispose of food waste in an environmentally friendly manner. The Authority currently does not have a facility to measure and monitor the amount of food waste generated on premises.
- The Authority will support National Stop Food Waste Day in March 2025.

### Paper

- The Authority monitor and measure paper consumption using our SafePrint printers.

- In January 2024, the AAI moved to an entirely digital payments process. All invoices and purchase orders are signed and stored digitally, completely erasing paper from the workflow of the finance function.

### Water

The Authority offers chilled drinking water facilities to staff on both floors of its premises. By providing suitable drinking water facilities we eliminate the consumption of single use plastic water bottles. A future focus of the Green Team is a campaign to reduce our use of plastic water bottles in the office.

### Single Use

As part of the 2024 Climate Action Roadmap guidance, the Authority has eliminated the use of disposable/single use cups in the two kitchens provided on its premises.

### Air Travel

The Authority monitors and maintains a log on official air travel, calculating liability based on relevant rates. On 29<sup>th</sup> February 2024 the Authority paid €38.72 into the Climate Action Fund in respect to offsetting emissions relating to official air travel in 2023.

## **7. OUR BUILDINGS AND VEHICLES**

The Authority occupies a rented property with dated facility systems. We are not responsible for a fleet, and do not own and operate our own vehicles. Therefore, the focus under Our Buildings and Vehicles pillar is engagement with partners and agents to identify opportunities for improvements and further efficiencies. This is particularly relevant for 2024 when the Authority will continue to engage with the OPW about future organisational requirements in advance of our current lease expiring in 2027.

Although the Authority does not own a fleet, many staff opt to drive to work. The Authority will continue to encourage staff to avail of the Cycle to Work Scheme, and explore alternative transportation methods to personal car travel.

The AAI headquarters is bike friendly. In 2024, the Authority successfully liaised with Building Management to open up a bicycle shed for all staff at Shelbourne House. This shed is located at ground level and can only be accessed via specifically assigned fob which can only be assigned by the Corporate Services unit. This has resulted in an increased number of staff members cycling to work rather than using personal motor transportation. The HR team has also circulated periodic emails encouraging staff to avail of the bike to work scheme in efforts to further increase the number of staff cycling to work.

The Authority is also a participant in the Iarnród Éireann tax saver scheme. This scheme encourages staff to use public transport when travelling, further reducing carbon emissions.



## Roadmap 2024

### Action Area 1; Our People

| Action                      | Description   | Target    | Update   | Status               |
|-----------------------------|---|-----------|--|----------------------|
| Expansion of Green Team     | Identify more staff to join the Green Team and participate in driving the climate action objectives | End of Q2 | We now have staff members from most teams.                                     | Complete             |
| Training and Awareness      | Identify further training for members of the Green Team   | End of Q2 | Office Energy Efficiency SEAI Training completed by members of the Green Team. | Complete and ongoing |
| Annual Engagement Workshops | Host participatory workshops in Q3 to inform the 2025 Climate Action Roadmap                        | End of Q3 | Planning in progress   | Delayed to Q1 2025   |

### Action Area 2; Our Targets

| Action  | Description   | Target    | Update      | Status      |
|---|---|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| Use supports available to identify priorities | Utilise the Gap to Target tool to identify further projects that will maximise energy efficiency. | End of Q3 | In progress | In progress |

**Action Area 3; Our Way of Working**

| Action   | Description   | Target    | Update   | Status      |
|--|---|-----------|--|-------------|
| Embed Green Public Procurement principles into our procurement process | Review and update our procurement policy and procedures to ensure green criteria receives due consideration as part of the procurement process. | End of Q3 | The A/Head of Compliance and A/Corporate Services Manager have both attended training in GPP practices.                              | Complete    |
| Review of paper based workflow   | Review organisational workflows to identify paper heavy areas with the scope to benefit from further digitisation.                              | End of Q3 | Following the success of the digital payments process the Authority are currently reviewing areas for further progress in this area. | In progress |

**Action Area 4; Our Buildings and Vehicle**

| Action                       | Description  | Target            | Update   | Status      |
|------------------------------|--|-------------------|--|-------------|
| Promotion of Green Transport | Identify more means to encourage staff to participate in cycle to work scheme, and consider alternatives to personal car | End of Q2         | Promotion of cycle to work scheme initiatives in place | In progress |
| Energy Efficiency            | Identify means to reduce energy consumption in our premises  | End of Q4/Q1 2025 | Replacement of lightbulbs to LED project planned       | In progress |

