

DEPARTMENT OF THE ENVIRONMENT, HERITAGE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY STATEMENT

for the Custom House

Our mission is to pursue sustainable development. In doing so, our mandate is to achieve a high quality environment with effective environmental protection; address climate change; achieve effective conservation of our natural and built heritage and biodiversity; protect and improve water resources and the quality of drinking water; ensure that our regions and communities are planned and built to respect sustainable and balanced regional development; ensure good quality housing in sustainable communities; monitor, analyse and predict Ireland's weather and climate; and support and enable democratic and responsive local government.

Securing the integration of environmental considerations into economic and sectoral policies is one of the key objectives which flow from our mission. This means that as well as providing and maintaining policies, programmes, legislation and information for the protection of the environment, we take account of the environment across our own mandate, and we promote the integration of environmental considerations into wider economic/fiscal and sectoral policies in the interests of sustainable development.

We recognise that everyone is entitled to enjoy a clean, healthy environment, and shares with Government the duty to maintain that environment. We place a high emphasis, therefore, on the provision of clear, accessible information to our customers, including suppliers, to increase environmental awareness and promote behaviour changes that foster more sustainable consumption and production patterns.

Good environmental performance is as relevant in our workplace as in the private lives of our staff, and is accordingly an integral part of our day-to-day management and activities. The office environment is demanding on many resources, including energy, water, paper, equipment and other consumables. In this regard, as part of our green housekeeping policy over recent years, we have placed particular emphasis on conservation and demand management. Our procurement policies have also given priority, where possible, to environmentally-friendly goods and services.

This Environmental Policy Statement has been developed in respect of our offices in the Custom House in line with requirements for accreditation to the ISO 14001 standard. The Department is, however, also implementing good environmental practice in all its other main buildings in line with this Environmental Policy Statement. The Department is committed to:

- Continually improving the environmental performance of our in-house practices, policies and programmes, taking account of customer needs and expectations, and reviewing, including through independent assessment auditing, and reporting at regular intervals on progress being made;
- establishing objectives and targets for improved environmental performance and increasing their ambition in light of progress including:

- Implementing strategies to maximise the efficient use of natural resources, including energy and water, and of other materials, supplies and equipment;
- Implementing a programme for waste prevention and reduction, and for the collection, segregation, re-use, recycling, storage and safe disposal of all waste arising in the building, including litter;
- Increasing the scope and range of our environmentally preferable procurement policy in respect of goods and services, including promoting the adoption of sound environmental principles and practices by suppliers and contractors to the Department;
- Further extending the One Small Step campaign to encourage staff to use sustainable and healthy modes of travel to work including walking and cycling;
- Liaising with appropriate organisations regarding the environmentally sensitive maintenance of the Custom House building, grounds and all related facilities and equipment;
- Participating in OPW's *Optimising Power of Work, Staff Energy Awareness Campaign*. Providing information, and training as necessary, to increase awareness and to enable staff to make the changes in office culture and practice that are needed to achieve best environmental management practice, and advising all new staff on the Department's approach in this regard;
- Complying with all relevant environmental legislation and standards.

In the context of the Government's decentralisation programme, the Department will seek ISO 14001 accreditation for all four of its new buildings in the South East, and will ensure that those buildings incorporate best practice in eco-design with a view to achieving the highest possible environmental performance.

This environmental policy statement is being disseminated to all staff and is available on the Department's website at www.environ.ie. Implementation is by a cross-Divisional "Environment Management Team" reporting to the Management Review Team. Results of external audits will be published as part of the Department's Annual Report. The statement is subject to review every three years, in association with the preparation of Statements of Strategy under the Public Service Management Act.

Geraldine Tallon
 Secretary General
 8 February 2008