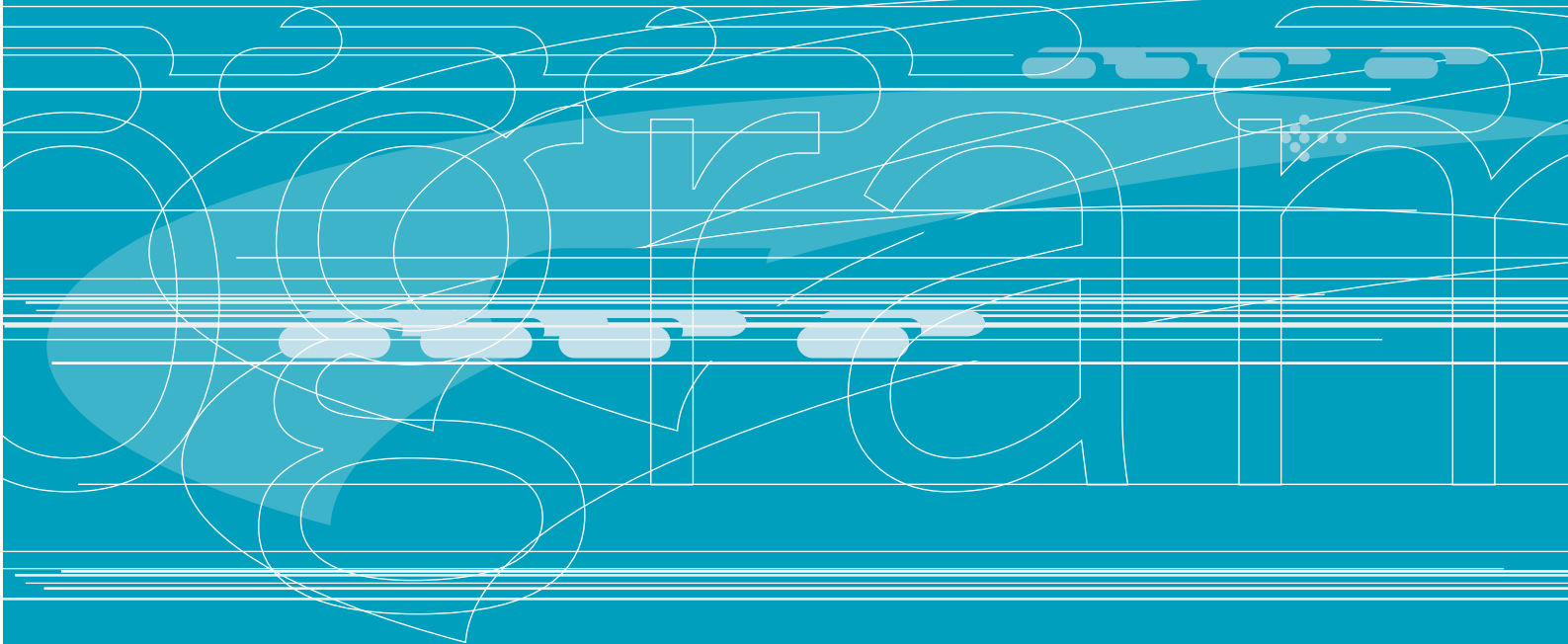


# PART 1 - STRATEGIC PROGRAMME

## 1 Summary of Key Strategic Actions





## Key Strategic Actions

The principal purpose of the Strategy is to provide a comprehensive analysis and framework which will allow sustainable development to be taken forward more systematically in Ireland. This process cannot be completed by the Strategy document itself, but requires a continuing adaptation and review of policies, actions and lifestyles. It is not, therefore, intended that the main impact or contribution of the Strategy should consist in a series of discrete new initiatives. However, for ease of reference various specific initiatives indicated in the Strategy are set out below.

### Securing Sustainable Development: Better Supporting Structures

- The Government will propose that the **Joint Oireachtas Committee on Sustainable Development** should become a standing Committee of the Oireachtas to oversee relevant policy development and the implementation of this Strategy.
- The Government will establish a **National Sustainable Development Council**, independently chaired and with wide representation from Social Partners and environmental NGOs to facilitate participation in the achievement of sustainable development and promote consultation and dialogue.
- Relevant Government Departments, and the EPA as appropriate, will be designated as **Task Managers** to lead in the development of the more detailed processes and measures necessary to give full effect to the Strategy. Their reports, and the National Sustainable Development Council's comments on them, will provide a basis for the periodic review of the Strategy by Government.
- Regional Authorities will have ongoing responsibility for the regionalisation of the Strategy. They will be asked to define regional sustainability priorities, recommend appropriate implementation mechanisms in the

regions, and develop regional sustainability indicators. Regional Sustainability Fora will be held in 1997.

- An Eco-Management and Audit Scheme will be developed for local government.
- Local authorities have a key role as environment protection authorities and agents of sustainable development. All local authorities will be asked to complete a Local Agenda 21 for their areas by 1998.
- Sustainable development projects by local authorities and NGOs in partnership will be co-funded by a new **Environment Partnership Fund**.
- Government will bring forward proposals, within three years, to develop a **strategic environmental impact assessment (SEA)** system for major plans and programmes, in addition to supporting EU proposals for SEA of land use plans and programmes.

### A Positive Impact on Enterprise and Employment

- In line with *Partnership 2000* Government will consider further streamlining of the planning system and the introduction of accelerated planning procedures for major projects involving significant employment and added value.
- Government will support a shift in tax burdens away from labour towards polluters.
- Government will develop suitable economic instruments to improve internalisation of external costs, including:
  - resource pricing;
  - green taxation measures; and
  - exploration of market-based instruments, such as emissions trading, offering flexibility to industry to achieve environmental improvements.

- Enterprise authorities will encourage and promote the development of environmental industry.
- Government will maintain a substantial environmental infrastructure investment programme to underpin sustainable economic and social development.
- Active labour market policies will be pursued to support the transition to cleaner production and extension of environmental management.

### Achieving Integration: Bringing Environment to the Heart of Sectoral Performance

#### Agriculture

- The Government will extend environmental cross-compliance as a standard consideration in respect of agricultural support generally or in selected schemes.
- The *Code of Good Agricultural Practice to Protect Waters from Pollution by Nitrates*, launched in July 1996, and including recommended Nitrogen application rates, will be promoted by local authorities, Teagasc and farmer representative associations. The implementation of the Code will be closely monitored. Efforts to prevent build-up of nitrates in waters will maintain and, where necessary, improve on the quality of drinking water.
- The use of revised recommended application rates for phosphorus fertilisers for grassland (launched by Teagasc in December 1996) will be encouraged and promoted so as to reduce soil P levels, where excessive to crop requirements at present, down to the recommended levels over a period of five years. In particular, the Strategy targets a reduction of 10% *per annum* in artificial P fertiliser usage over the next five years.
- Appropriate adjustments will be made by the Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry to the specification for the Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS) to reduce phosphorus losses from agriculture which contribute to eutrophication of rivers and lakes.
- The Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry will produce comprehensive guidance and advice on agricultural practices for the purpose of protecting all environmental media and the ecosystems they support, and promoting sustainable agriculture.
- Nutrient Management Planning (as now statutorily provided for in the *Waste Management Act, 1996*), will be promoted mandatorily by local authorities in areas where the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) water quality data identify agriculture as a significant contributor to eutrophication of rivers and lakes. Emphasis will be placed on such planning on an individual farms basis and in catchment and regional areas.
- Teagasc will continue to provide advice and educational services to farmers, including the promotion of awareness on the nutrient value of farm wastes and the achievement of a more sustainable balance between soil inputs and outputs. The services will be reviewed to allow greater targeting, in consultation with EPA, towards the catchments of eutrophic rivers and lakes.
- Intensive agriculture is a scheduled activity for the purposes of Integrated Pollution Control (IPC) licensing under the *Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1992*. IPC requirements for new activities were introduced in September 1996 and IPC requirements for existing activities will be phased in from 1998.

- To assist in maintaining an environmentally-sound farming sector, the Government is introducing, for a three-year period to 1999, improved capital allowances for targeted investment by farmers in pollution control measures.
- A system of environmental management of farming in proposed Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), including sustainable stocking densities, will be elaborated between the Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry, the Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, Teagasc and REPS planning agencies, as well as environmental and farm organisations. Agreed conditions in this regard, correctly applied, will provide for sustainable farming systems in such areas, as well as placing restrictions on environmentally-damaging activities.
- The Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry is seeking the approval of the European Commission to extend the application of REPS in overgrazed areas from 5 to 15 years. Measures will also be put in place to ensure that the environmental benefits achieved under REPS in designated commonage areas are not diminished by non-participants in the scheme.
- An uptake of 30% of farmers in REPS will be achieved by the year 1999.
- The National Biodiversity Plan, to be completed by end-1997, will identify the actions necessary to preserve biodiversity, including species and habitats, from human activities including the pressures of agriculture.
- The Department of the Environment will review the regulatory thresholds for environmental impact assessment of drainage works in 1997.
- The Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry will coordinate action to improve information on the use of pesticides, and to reduce the environmental risks associated with their storage, use and disposal.
- The Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry will continue its support for organic farming, including financial support for measures to improve marketing and public awareness of the environmental benefits of organic products.
- A farm plastic films recovery scheme, a voluntary initiative involving industry and farming operations, is commencing operation in 1997, and will contribute to national recycling targets.
- The need for precaution in the use of genetically modified organisms (GMOs) in food production is recognised. The new Food Safety Authority will be established in 1997, and will have responsibility for novel foods. Better labelling provisions in Community legislation are being sought for products containing GMOs.

### Forestry

- The threshold at which planning permission and environmental impact assessment (EIA) is required for afforestation has been reduced with effect from 1 October, 1996, from 200 hectares to 70 hectares. In addition, planning permission and EIA will now be required for cumulative afforestation which results in a total area planted exceeding 70 hectares.
- The Minister for the Environment will take new powers in relation to forestry control in the next Local Government (Planning and Development) Bill to enable planning permission to be required for plantations which would not warrant EIA.

- Forestry legislation will be reviewed to reflect the principles of sustainable forestry development, as set out under the Helsinki process. As part of this process, Ireland will also develop a national sustainable forestry plan and national criteria and indicators by which progress can be measured, and the Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry will develop a Code of Practice for sustainable forest management over the full forestry rotation period.
- The Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry will implement a strategic plan for the forestry sector in Ireland, which will take account of sustainable development requirements.
- The Department of the Environment has issued draft consultation guidelines for planning authorities in relation to forestry and the need to protect views and scenic areas, landscape and water quality, and the natural and archaeological heritage and to avoid rural isolation. These guidelines will be finalised in 1997. In accordance with the guidelines, planning authorities will be entitled to designate areas which they consider to be sensitive to forestry development, and the Forest Service will notify these authorities of all proposed forestry developments, regardless of size, within such designated areas.
- The Department of Agriculture, Food and Forestry will regularly review its existing environmental controls, including its existing guidelines in relation to the landscape, fisheries and archaeology, and will introduce new guidelines on wildlife and habitat diversity, harvesting and clearfelling, use of chemicals and herbicides, and amenity and recreation. Particular attention will be paid to the planting of broadleaf trees on the margins of large coniferous plantations.

### Marine resources

- Ireland will continue to support efforts, under the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP), to optimise the management and conservation of sea fisheries in the interests of sustainable and renewable use.
- In this context, Ireland will support the development within the CFP of further measures to reduce the catching of juvenile fish, through improvements in the selectivity of fishing gear and other technical conservation measures, and monitor and quantify the by-catch of cetacea in fishing gear, as required by the Habitats Directive.
- National measures will be maintained to conserve inshore fish-stocks of salmon, sea-trout and bass. A new salmon management strategy is being implemented on a phased basis.
- The Minister for the Marine has introduced proposed legislation to establish a new licensing and regulatory system for aquaculture. The new system will include an independent Appeals Board.
- The *Dumping at Sea Act, 1996*, will be implemented to prohibit waste dumping in the majority of situations and ensure rigorous control of residual disposals.
- Existing regulations for preventing pollution from port operations and ships in harbours will be reinforced by the express duty of port companies established by the *Harbours Act, 1996*, to have due regard to the consequences of their activities on the environment.

- Ireland will ratify the Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR) in 1997.
- A Quality Status Report, required by the OSPAR Convention, is being prepared for the Irish and Celtic Sea and areas west of Ireland and Scotland in cooperation with the UK authorities.
- Cooperation with UK authorities on management and monitoring of the Beaufort's Dyke munitions dumpsite will be continued, and an inventory of other dumpsites will be developed in preparing the Quality Status Report under the OSPAR Convention.
- The Minister for the Environment will formulate a policy directive to planning authorities, An Bord Pleanála and the Environmental Protection Agency indicating that there should be a presumption against the location of new landfills adjacent to coasts or estuaries.
- The Framework Strategy for the development of the marine sector, to be published shortly by the Department of the Marine, will take full account of the requirements of sustainable development.
- The Department of the Marine, in consultation with the Department of Transport, Energy and Communications, is devising an updated and comprehensive strategy to ensure that offshore oil and gas exploration and development do not adversely affect the marine environment.
- The Government will continue to press in the appropriate international fora for the implementation of a strict new code governing the shipment of nuclear materials, and will seek to have the existing *Code on the Safe Carriage of Irradiated Nuclear Fuel, Plutonium and High-Level Radioactive Wastes in Flasks on Board Ships* made mandatory.

## Energy

- Energy conservation and demand side management programmes will be encouraged and monitored. The Irish Energy Centre will continue to develop its energy conservation programme, including the promotion of energy efficiency in industry, the provision of technical advice, and information campaigns and support measures.
- Under the Department of Transport, Energy and Communication's *Renewable Energy Strategy*, installed electricity generating capacity from renewables will reach 10% of total installed capacity by the end of 1999; further growth under the strategy will increase this to 14% by 2010.
- The Minister for Finance, in consultation with the Minister for Transport, Energy and Communications, will introduce new incentives to encourage investment in renewable energies.
- For purposes of the UN climate change negotiations, Ireland has adopted an indicative national objective of limiting the growth in total emissions of carbon dioxide, methane and nitrous oxide up to the year 2010 to 15% above their 1990 levels.
- A study has been commissioned to evaluate the scope for intensifying (or introducing new) policies and measures to limit greenhouse gas emissions.

- Action will be continued to reduce emissions of sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides (NO<sub>x</sub>) from power generation; these actions include fuel substitution, energy conservation and installation of low-NO<sub>x</sub> burners in some power stations, supported as necessary by voluntary agreements with energy producers.
- Ireland will ratify the Second Sulphur Protocol (Oslo Protocol) in 1997.
- In relation to emissions of NO<sub>x</sub>, Ireland will work towards achievement of the more stringent emission ceilings now being developed at UN ECE and EU level.
- Energy is a scheduled activity for the purposes of Integrated Pollution Control licensing under the *Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1992*, and IPC licensing requirements will come into operation for the sector by the end of the decade.
- The threshold at which peat extraction becomes liable to EIA will be reduced.
- The Government will continue to oppose any expansion of the international nuclear industry, and to avail of all opportunities at bilateral, EU and wider international level to advance its concerns in this regard. Closure of the Sellafield operations remains an objective and will be pursued through legal action should sufficient evidence of pollution or public health impact be obtained. Possibilities in this regard are being pursued in particular under the provisions of the Paris and OSPAR Conventions. Ireland has ratified the Nuclear Safety Convention, and is actively promoting a new Global Convention on Radioactive Waste Management, which is expected to be finalised in 1997.

### Industry

- While legislation and regulation will continue to be important instruments for managing industrial impacts on the environment, a broader mix of instruments will be applied where environmental benefits are achievable as efficiently or more cost-effectively. This will include increasing the use of market-based instruments over time and using voluntary agreements with industry where appropriate.
- Integrated Pollution Control licensing is being extended on a phased basis by 1998 to most industries covered by the *Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1992* (the *EPA Act*).
- The *EPA Act* will be amended to give effect to the provisions of Council Directive 96/61/EC on Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC).
- The *Waste Management Act, 1996*, will be rapidly implemented. This will increase the focus on waste prevention and minimisation and on recovering, rather than disposing of, the by-products and wastes arising from industrial processes, and of products themselves and their packaging.
- Producer responsibility initiatives (such as the REPAK scheme already mobilised) will be encouraged to increase reuse and recycling of wastes, with regulatory support to ensure fair competitive conditions for participating industries.
- A Pollution Emissions Register will be published by the EPA in 1997. Regulations will be

introduced subsequently to establish by 1998 a more complete Toxics Release Inventory.

- Ireland will support international efforts to develop legally binding instruments for the reduction and/or elimination of emissions of persistent organic pollutants to the environment.
- The Department of Enterprise and Employment will review the coordination of cleaner production mechanisms to ensure maximum efficiency and value in the uptake and replication of initiatives, and as a basis for future targeting of supports to the SME sector.
- The extension of the EU Eco-Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS) to all major industrial sites will be actively promoted.
- Grant assistance for industrial development will remain conditional on compliance with environmental regulatory requirements.
- The EPA, in cooperation with the Central Statistics Office and the Department of Transport, Energy and Communications, will develop a materials and energy balance for industry to determine the full extent of industry's environmental/natural resource impacts and advise on targets for greater eco-efficiency.
- Forbairt and An Bord Tráchtála, with the support and assistance of the Marine Institute, as appropriate, will explore the opportunities for Irish industry in the growth area of environmental industry, including pollution control technology and equipment and environmental consultancy services.
- The Government has undertaken and will pursue a rapid mobilisation of new initiatives in the Science and Technology area, in line with the 1996 *White Paper on Science, Technology and Innovation*.
- Greater policy coordination at Departmental level in the areas of industry, environment and sustainability will be ensured through the development of the Green Network of Government Departments.

### Transport

- Minimisation of potential growth in transport demand will be incorporated as a leading consideration in land use planning.
- Government policy and investment for road transport will support necessary economic growth. To this end, the roads programme will continue to target bottlenecks which represent inefficiencies in the infrastructural system.
- Increased efforts will be made to manage the existing roads network more efficiently.
- Government policy will continue to support and improve public transport systems and infrastructure with a view to increasing their market share. Efficient, cost-effective and customer focused development of the rail network will be supported for its economic, social, environmental and regional development benefits.
- The agencies concerned, led by the Department of the Environment and the Department of Transport, Energy and Communications, will work together to provide more sustainable and environmentally-acceptable alternatives to private car transport, including better facilities for non-motorised transport and, where feasible, improved public mass transport modes.
- Implementation of the Dublin Transportation Initiative will be intensified.
- Noise controls will be developed under roads (or other) legislation to limit permissible noise from road transport.

- Opportunities for non-motorised transport will be improved. This will include increased provision of cycle lanes and safer facilities for pedestrians.
- The Department of the Environment and appropriate agencies, such as the Dublin Transportation Office, will actively encourage greater public awareness of the unsustainable aspects of increasing use of vehicle transport.
- The Government will commission research to more accurately estimate the environmental externalities of road transport, and will make the results available both for public information and to the National Roads Authority (NRA) and local authorities. The NRA will be asked to amend various planning parameters to take greater account of these externalities and the cost benefits and viability of proposed major roads schemes will be assessed accordingly.
- The Government will support policy development at EU level and participate in measures towards internalising the external costs associated with transport.
- Ireland will strongly support the completion of EU proposals to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from motor vehicles and/or provide greater incentives for the use of fuel efficient vehicles. Pending full establishment of measures to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from motor vehicles, Irish vehicle tax provisions will be aligned more closely with this objective.
- Where allowable under EU law, consideration will be given to the application of tax incentives to encourage the placing of more efficient and less polluting vehicles on the market ahead of relevant EU deadlines.
- The scrappage scheme introduced in the 1995 Budget, which encourages the replacement of older cars with new, more efficient models, is being maintained for 1997 as a financial incentive to improve the age profile and efficiency standard of the vehicle fleet. Its effects will be monitored to ensure that it continues to meet this objective without creating other environmental problems, particularly in relation to disposal of vehicle waste. The Minister for the Environment is pursuing with the motor industry the development of more systematic voluntary arrangements for recycling vehicle materials.
- Ireland will support the EU Auto Oil programme as an appropriate means of addressing many of the environmental issues arising from transport emissions.
- Ireland will support the continued development at EU level of strict emission control standards for motor vehicles. In particular, Ireland will support a significant tightening of benzene and other limits in the context of the Auto Oil programme.
- The use of leaded petrol will be phased out by the year 2000.
- Vehicle testing will be extended to apply to private cars over four years old with effect from 1 January, 1998. Particular emphasis will be placed on adequate emission controls to reduce pollutants.
- Air transport is an increasing source of polluting emissions (particularly CO<sub>2</sub> and NO<sub>x</sub>). Ireland is supporting the initiation of action by the EU to address this problem in a wider international context, with due regard to effects on national competitiveness.

## Tourism

- Tourism development will be taken into account, as appropriate, by the Department of the Environment in the preparation of land use policy guidelines for planning authorities, developers and the public.
- Planning authorities will make provision in their development plans for sustainable tourism, and ensure through the planning process that over-development does not take place.
- Bord Fáilte will consider the implementation of a managed network of scenic landscapes by 1999.
- The Department of Tourism and Trade/Bord Fáilte will issue appropriate guidelines on good environmental management to the tourist accommodation sector.
- The Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht will implement good environmental management, including energy conservation, in historic properties and other tourist attractions under its care.
- The Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht will consider implementing collective transport, such as operates in Glenveagh, in other National Parks.
- The provisions of the Foreshore Acts in relation to preventing and penalising damage to beaches, sand dunes and seashore ecosystems will continue to be fully implemented.
- The Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht will ensure that all river cruisers licensed for hire are fitted with appropriate waste water storage and pumping facilities. Local authorities and the Department will ensure that the complementary shore pumping facilities are properly used and maintained.
- The Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht will develop appropriate management strategies to protect riverine archaeological monuments, which may be vulnerable to damage from cruising activities.
- Consideration will be given to the need for controls or restrictions on certain unsustainable leisure activities; the Department of the Environment, in consultation with the Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht, the Department of Tourism and Trade and the Department of the Marine, where appropriate, will provide suitable guidance for local authorities.
- Bord Fáilte, the Department of Tourism and Trade and the Marine Institute, where appropriate, will commission research on the "critical loads" of tourist destinations, including sensitive coastal or wilderness areas, to provide a firm basis for the establishment of sustainable tourist numbers.
- CERT, in conjunction with the education sector, will continue to provide suitable training emphasising the sustainable use of resources and highlighting natural products.
- Bord Fáilte, the Department of Tourism and Trade and the Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht will develop, and widely publicise, codes of conduct and practice to foster a greater awareness of the potential impact of tourist behaviour on sensitive areas and sites.

## A Quality Environment: An Investment in the Future

### Water resources

- An integrated catchment management initiative will reverse deteriorating quality trends in selected catchments.
- New regulations will be made under the *Waste Management Act, 1996*, to limit/prevent water pollution from waste disposal practices.
- New water quality standards will guide EPA and local authorities in devising and implementing management strategies to deal with diffuse pollution.
- The UN ECE Convention on Protection and Use of Transboundary Watercourses and International Lakes will be ratified in 1997.
- The *Fisheries (Amendment) Bill, 1996*, will be enacted to provide for the development of the aquaculture industry in accordance with high environmental standards.
- An updated methodology for the preparation of Water Quality Management Plans (WQMPs) will be developed by the EPA and will be used to review all WQMPs over the next five to ten years.
- EPA will, by end-1998, comprehensively review discharges to waters to assess discharges of nutrients and toxic/persistent substances.
- A national groundwater programme will be established under the coordination of the EPA to quantify resources, establish quality and make recommendations for protection/sustainable use.
- There will be continued implementation of the major programme of investment in water and sewage infrastructure to meet water quality standards and requirements, including nutrient reduction in the case of waste water discharges to waters subject to eutrophication. The programme will also ensure that Ireland's

excellent record under the Blue Flags for Beaches scheme is maintained.

- Government will fund phased implementation of large-scale projects, including the Dublin Water Strategy.
- The Department of the Environment and local authorities will develop and implement a water conservation programme, including "water audits" for water supply capital projects, capital funding for water conservation projects and a commitment to long-term active leakage control.
- Pricing policies will be developed to promote conservation by major industrial and commercial water users.

### The coastal zone

- A strategy document on coastal zone management will be published in 1997. Following public consultation, a national policy on coastal zone management will be determined and published.

### Landscape and nature

- An amending Bill is being prepared to update the *Wildlife Act, 1976*, and provide a statutory basis for designated Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs).
- A National Parks and Heritage Bill will be published in 1997 to provide statutory recognition for national parks, national historic parks and national gardens.
- The National Biodiversity Plan will be published in 1997.

### Waste management

- New Regulations under the *Waste Management Act, 1996*, will include:
  - EPA licensing of landfill sites, commencing on 1 May 1997;
  - management of packaging wastes; and
  - establishment by EPA of a Toxics Release Inventory.

- There will be a rapid implementation of improved planning and organisational arrangements under the *Waste Management Act, 1996*.
  - Waste management policies will achieve:
    - stabilisation of municipal waste arisings by 1999, and their reduction by 20% by 2010;
    - diversion of 20% of municipal waste from landfill, by recycling, by 1999; and
    - an increase from 27% by 2001 to at least 50% in the recovery rate for packaging waste by 2005.
  - There will be a continued improvement in the compilation of waste statistics to measure future performance.
  - The use of economic instruments will be explored to reduce waste, promote reuse/recycling and increase management efficiency.
  - A hazardous waste management plan will be completed by the EPA in 1998.
  - Capital funding aid (EU co-financed) will be provided for hazardous waste facilities based on recovery or other specialist treatment systems.
- Air quality**
- Local air quality will be maintained and improved particularly in urban areas.
  - Ireland will actively support international action on climate change, ozone depletion and transboundary air pollution.
  - Ireland will participate in international actions to reduce low-level ozone precursor emissions from transport and power generation, and to develop acidification abatement strategies.
  - Research will be undertaken on the impacts of acidifying depositions, in particular sulphur dioxide and nitrogen oxides.
  - Ireland will support the development of stricter EU standards for air pollutants.
  - EPA will prepare a national air quality monitoring programme.
- Spatial planning**
- Planning and Development legislation will be amended to require planning authorities to take account of sustainable development considerations in the elaboration of development plans.
  - The Department of the Environment will conclude the current series of Land Use Guidelines.
  - No State funding will be provided for infrastructure in the event of overzoning.
  - Regional Authorities will be assigned a role (in line with *Better Local Government*) in setting out strategic planning guidelines for development planning by constituent local authorities.
  - The relationship between a development plan and other forms of special designation, for example, NHAs, Special Protection Areas (SPAs), will be clarified in the forthcoming Bill to amend the *Wildlife Act, 1976*.

- Development exempted from development control will be reviewed.
- The UN Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context will be ratified.
- Developments in regard to Strategic Environmental Assessment will be monitored - Ireland will take a constructive position on new EU proposals.
- There will be an ongoing review of the operation of complementary planning and Integrated Pollution Control procedures, with

appropriate amendment, if required, to the *Environmental Protection Agency Act, 1992*.

- Planning authorities will be encouraged to take a more strategic view of settlement patterns, development needs and major infra-structural services, combining the statutory five-yearly review of the development plan with a coherent longer-term rolling plan.

## Human Settlements are Shaped by their Environment

### Built environment

- More sustainable urban development will be promoted by:
  - closer coordination between transport and land use planning;
  - the promotion of higher residential densities in appropriate locations;
  - emphasis in the proposed new Guidelines on Development Plans on clear demarcation between urban and rural land use; and
  - Local Agenda 21 initiatives by local authorities.
- Policies for achieving sustainable urban regeneration will have as key elements:
  - integrated strategic economic and social planning;
  - ecological principles;
  - improving accessibility;
  - environmental upgrading;
  - design flexibility;
  - open spaces;
  - mechanisms and resources to overcome critical barriers; and
  - a partnership approach.
- New legislation is being prepared along lines recommended in *Strengthening the Protection of the Architectural Heritage* (published in September 1996), and a package of administrative and financial measures will create a fully effective framework for protecting the built heritage.
- Under the Building Regulations since 1992, insulation standards are estimated to have increased by up to 50%, with a reduction of 20% in energy use in buildings. By 2000, the new standards will result in a 2% reduction in CO<sub>2</sub> emissions from buildings. Arising from a review of the Regulations, a further 5% saving in energy use for heating will be achieved.
- A new Energy Rating System for new houses is being introduced.
- The Government is committed to ensuring that its policies in relation to housing and the urban environment take full account of the provisions of the HABITAT Agenda, and will also work in this regard with EU partners to agree common approaches, where appropriate.
- Housing policies will continue to promote sustainable settlement formation, with greater social integration.
- The *Guidelines on Residential Development in the Designated Tax Incentive Areas* will be reviewed in the light of experience.
- Investment under the Urban and Village Renewal Sub-Programme of the *Local Urban and Rural Development Operational Programme, 1994-1999*, will continue to promote the rejuvenation of towns and villages, rehabilitate the built environment and restore and conserve important heritage buildings.
- The Department of the Environment will formally request the National Standards Authority of Ireland to revise the existing Irish Standard to make provision for a flush toilet water cistern involving substantially lower water consumption. Following consultation at national and EU level, the revised standard should be operational by end-1999.

### Individual Action Counts...

- Government will ask the Director of Consumer Affairs to make recommendations for providing full and authoritative environmental information to consumers.
- The Office of Consumer Affairs will also be asked, in consultation with the Department of Enterprise and Employment and the Department of the Environment, to prepare a **Code of Practice** on green marketing.
- The *Access to Information on the Environment Regulations, 1996*, will be reviewed in the context of Freedom of Information legislation, and a **Code of Good Practice on Issuing Environmental Information** will be prepared for implementing authorities by the Department of the Environment.
- The detailed anti-litter provisions in the Litter Pollution Bill will be vigorously implemented.
- The role of ENFO will be further developed.
- The Department of Education will promote and improve the position of environmental education within the formal education system.

### Global Sustainability requires Global Solidarity

#### Trade

- Trade policy will be examined to ensure compliance with the objectives of *Agenda 21* in relation to promoting an open, non-discriminatory and equitable trading system, taking particular account of the needs of developing countries.
- Ireland supports the EU consensus on the importance of upholding the validity of multi-lateral agreements (MEAs) designed to protect the environment and of ensuring the integration of sustainable development into world trade policies and practices.

- The Department of Arts, Culture and the Gaeltacht will make any amendments to legislation which may be necessary to enable Ireland to ratify the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES) in 1997.

#### International actions

- Ireland will participate fully in UNGASS, the UN review of *Agenda 21*.
- The Government is committed to increasing Official Development Assistance by 0.05% each year to meet the UN target of 0.7% of GNP.
- Ireland will invite OECD environmental performance review for 1998.
- Ireland supports strengthening the Treaty on European Union to make sustainable development an explicit objective of the Union.

#### Measuring Progress Towards Sustainability

- A series of environmental quality indicators will be prepared by 1998.
- Sustainability indicators will also be developed and preparations advanced towards satellite green accounts.

