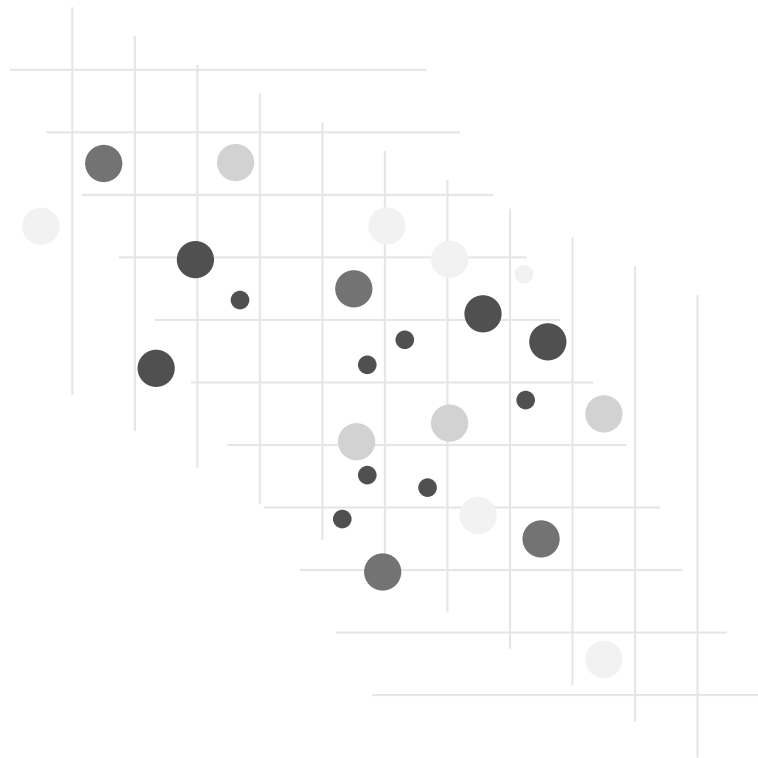




**Foras Taighde ar Oideachas**  
Educational Research Centre

# Climate Action Roadmap

2026 Update and Action Plan



**June 2026**

[www.erc.ie](http://www.erc.ie)

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1. Background

The Climate Action Plan 2021 sets out a number of ambitious objectives and envisages the public sector leading by example on climate action to reach the target of reducing Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions (GHG) by 51% by 2030 and becoming climate neutral no later than 2050.

There is a legal obligation on public bodies to comply with Ireland's climate law. Section 15(1) of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 (the Act) provides that:

*A relevant body shall, in so far as practicable, perform its functions in a manner consistent with—*

- (a) the most recent approved climate action plan,*
- (b) the most recent approved national long term climate action strategy,*
- (c) the most recent approved national adaptation framework and approved sectoral adaptation plans,*
- (d) the furtherance of the national climate objective, and*
- (e) the objective of mitigating greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to the effects of climate change in the State.*

Under the 2021 Act and Climate Action Plan 2025 (CAP25), the *Public Sector Climate Action Mandate* requires public sector bodies to demonstrate leadership in climate action by both taking and reporting on actions set out in the Mandate. The SEAI has provided guidance for public bodies, across a number of pillars:

- Targets;
- Our People – Leadership & Governance;
- Our People – Engaging our staff;
- Our Way of Working;
- Our Buildings and Vehicles;

The CAP25 sets out the energy efficiency and energy related GHG emissions reduction targets which Public Sector Bodies in Ireland are legally obliged to meet. It

also mandates Public Bodies to develop a Roadmap setting out how they will deliver these targets. This Climate Action Roadmap is the third such roadmap developed by the Educational Research Centre ('ERC') in response to this obligation.

The ERC does not meet the description of a "*Large Public Body*" as set out in CAP 21. Our Climate Action Roadmap, therefore, reflects the structure contained in the guidance published by SEAI & EPA.<sup>1</sup>

## 1.2. Context

The ERC is an internationally recognised centre of excellence in research, assessment and evaluation in education. It was established in 1966 in St Patrick's College Drumcondra. In September 2015, it was designated as a Statutory Body in accordance with the Education Act (1998).

The Centre carries out research at all levels of the education system. Research is undertaken on behalf of the Department of Education and Youth, at the request of other agencies and on the initiative of the ERC itself and its staff. An assessment service is also provided through, for example, the supply of standardised tests to schools. The ERC also publishes the Irish Journal of Education.

The ERC operates mostly from a DCU owned building located on the DCU St Patrick's Campus in Drumcondra, Dublin 9. Parts of the building date from 1967, with the last major extension and renovation works undertaken in the late 1990's. We also operate from a small industrial unit in Finglas, Dublin 11.

We currently have 66 whole time equivalent staff members, the majority of whom work in a blended environment, splitting their time between working remotely and working from our offices.

The Board and staff of the ERC are committed to playing our part in addressing the challenges presented by climate change and sustainability. We recognise that as a public body we must lead by example. We are committed to taking the necessary

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<sup>1</sup> For smaller public bodies, the SEAI/EPA guidance may be used as a template for the roadmap. The ERC has followed the guidance set out in the SEAI Public Sector Bodies Climate Action Roadmaps Guidance.

actions and decisions to support the targets and goals set down in the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate.

### 1.2.1. Actions for 2026 and beyond

The ERC's actions for 2026 include the following:

- Incorporating climate action and sustainability training (technical and behavioural, including green procurement training) into the ERC's learning and development strategy.
- Continue to organise staff workshops to engage on climate issues, including a focus on decreasing the organisation's carbon footprint.
- Organising a climate action leadership training course for members of the Management Team as required .
- Undertake a number of climate action initiatives within our offices and our working practices.
- Report annually (via our Annual Report) on the following matters where possible:
  - GHG emissions;
  - Implementation of the mandate;
  - Sustainability activities;
  - Compliance with Circular 1/2020: procedures for offsetting the emissions associated with official air travel

## 2 Targets

### 2.1. Carbon Emissions and Energy Efficiency

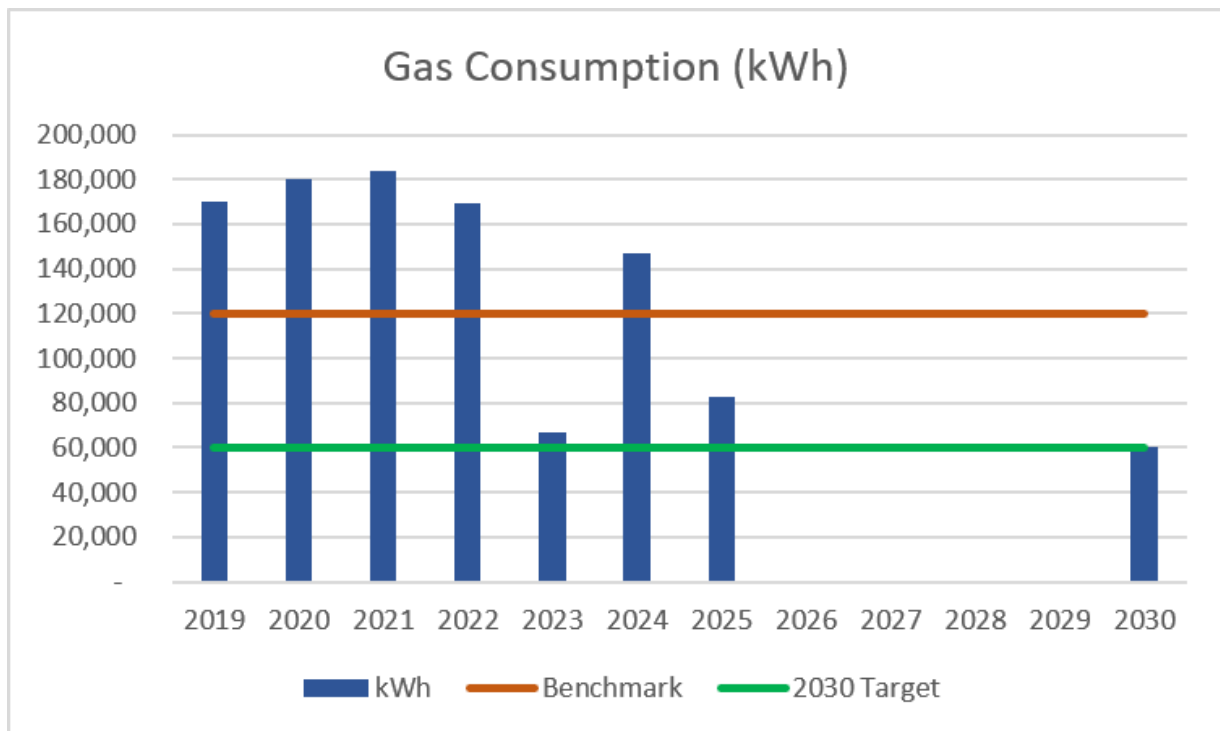
The ERC is committed to ensuring that the carbon emissions that arise as a result of its activities are kept to a minimum and to implementing energy-efficient and environmentally friendly practices.

The target for the public sector is a 51% reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 against a baseline level based on 2016-2018 average energy related CO<sub>2</sub> emissions.

The ERC, as a tenant of DCU on the DCU St. Patrick's Campus does not record or measure its metered electricity consumption on a building-by-building basis, nor are we billed directly for our metered electricity consumption.

The gas boiler upgrade in 2024 has contributed to a reduction in gas usage in 2025. The ERC expects to see further energy improvements from 2026 onwards with the building improvements made in the latter part of 2025. The use of portable radiators has been discontinued, and the gas heating is switched off in our offices during the summer months. In the colder months when the heating is in use, staff are encouraged to switch off the thermostats in their offices at the end of the day where the office will not be in use the following day. As part of a wider building redevelopment plan, we intend to upgrade thermostat controls in offices and spaces used less often.

## 2.1.1 Gas Performance against Benchmark



The ERC will remain focused on decarbonising and improving the energy efficiency of our operations and we will maximise efforts to reduce our carbon emissions through a range of measures outlined in this and subsequent Climate Action Roadmap documents. The ERC and DCU engage regularly on matters relating to energy efficiency and will work together to address energy efficiency matters where necessary.

## **3 Our People – Leadership and Governance**

### **3.1. Statement demonstrating ERC Board and Management commitment**

The Board of the ERC and Management Team are committed to addressing climate change and recognise the critical role that public bodies, such as ours, plays in achieving climate goals. We must lead by example, demonstrate best practice and be accountable for the actions we take. The Board of the ERC will approve the organisation's Climate Action Roadmap and delegates overall responsibility for its implementation to the CEO and Management Team.

### **3.2. Nominated climate and sustainability champion**

The Finance HEO acts as the Energy Performance Officer. The Head of Governance and Corporate Services acts as the Climate and Sustainability Champion. She is a member of Management Team and acts as Secretary to the ERC Board. She has responsibility for implementing and reporting on the Climate Action mandate and has the required decision-making powers in relation to this role.

### **3.3. Green Team**

An ERC Green Team was originally established in the ERC in 2019 and a new Green Team in April 2024. The Green Team has 7 members, is representative of the various teams within the ERC and is chaired by the Senior Manager for Governance and Corporate Affairs. The Terms of Reference for the Green Team is set out in Appendix 1. The Green Team welcomes new members throughout the year.

The Green Team submits this report of its activities to the ERC Board every year. This report is also made available to staff.

At a high level, the role of the Green Team is to:

- Raise awareness about climate action and environmental goals.

- Identify appropriate awareness training for all staff.
- Identify and advocate for sustainable work practices among staff and management.
- Act as a forum for staff to suggest and implement green initiatives in areas such as:
  - Waste reduction
  - Energy efficiency
  - Resource conservation
  - Travel
  - Procurement
  - Training and Development of staff

The ERC Green Team meets regularly, at least quarterly, to review and highlight actions. The ERC Green Team reports directly to the Chief Executive of the ERC.

The resources required to implement the Climate Action Roadmap will be reviewed and agreed on a rolling annual basis and incorporated into annual budgets and operational plans.

### **3.4. Governance and Reporting**

Public bodies should publicly report on their climate action activities in their annual reports. The Annual Reports should include:

- Current greenhouse gas emissions and comparisons to 2016-18 baseline;
- Programme towards implementation of the requirements of the most recent Mandate;
- A report of sustainability activities undertaken by the organisation within the last year;
- Evidence of compliance with Circular 1/2020: Procedures for offsetting of emissions associated with official air travel.

The ERC includes this information in its Annual Report.

# 4 Our People – Engaging our Staff

## 4.1. Staff Training plans

We are committed to supporting the professional development and training needs of our staff. As set out in the 2025-2030 ERC Strategic Plan we updated our Performance Management system in 2025 and are updating our Learning & Development strategy in 2026. Training opportunities relating to climate action and sustainability (e.g. green procurement) are highlighted to staff as opportunities arise. In 2026 the ERC Green Team will explore suitable courses for staff to integrate climate action and green principles into projects.

## 4.2. Climate Action and sustainability workshops

In 2025 we introduced a Green Teams Channel to provide staff with updates on environmental information and facilities in the ERC. In 2026 we added a Green Team notice board to our office. These channels will also be used to highlight ongoing initiatives and training courses for staff.

In December 2025, the ERC Green Team organised an all-staff ‘Think Energy’ workshop in conjunction with Global Action Plan Ireland. In 2026, the Green Team propose to organise further workshops on specific issues to inform and educate staff on climate action and sustainability matters.

## 4.3. Senior Leadership training

In July 2024 the ERC Management Team took part in senior leadership training, with a focus on leadership; legal and regulatory obligations; and action setting/delivery. Training for the ERC Board took place in Q4 2025.

# 5 Our Way of Working

## 5.1. Energy and environmental management systems

As a small public sector body, the ERC is not required to achieve formal environmental accreditation such as ISO 50001 (Energy Management Standard), ISO 14001 (Environmental Management System), or to adopt EMAS (Eco Management and Audit Scheme).

In addition, the ERC's offices are based on the DCU St. Patrick's campus. The ERC is a tenant of DCU who owns the building the ERC operates from and is largely responsible for our utilities. We regularly engage with DCU on energy management matters as part of our efforts to improve the overall energy efficiency of our operations, including energy upgrades to our building. In 2025, we completed some building redevelopment works including the installation of LED lighting throughout the building, added wall insulation to colder walls and made improvements to ventilation in parts of the building. Further works are planned for 2027, subject to budget approval. At present the building has a BER rating of C2.

In January 2026, the Test Department moved from its location on Richmond Road (a building with a D2 BER rating) to a more suitable location in Finglas, Dublin 11 (a building with a B1 BER rating). From 2026 onwards, we will record energy consumption in the new building.

As an organisation, we are committed to increasing our energy efficiency where matters are within our control and seek to reduce our energy costs where possible.

We report our energy consumption figures into the SEAI's Public Sector Monitoring and Reporting System.

## 5.2. Resource use and digitisation of processes

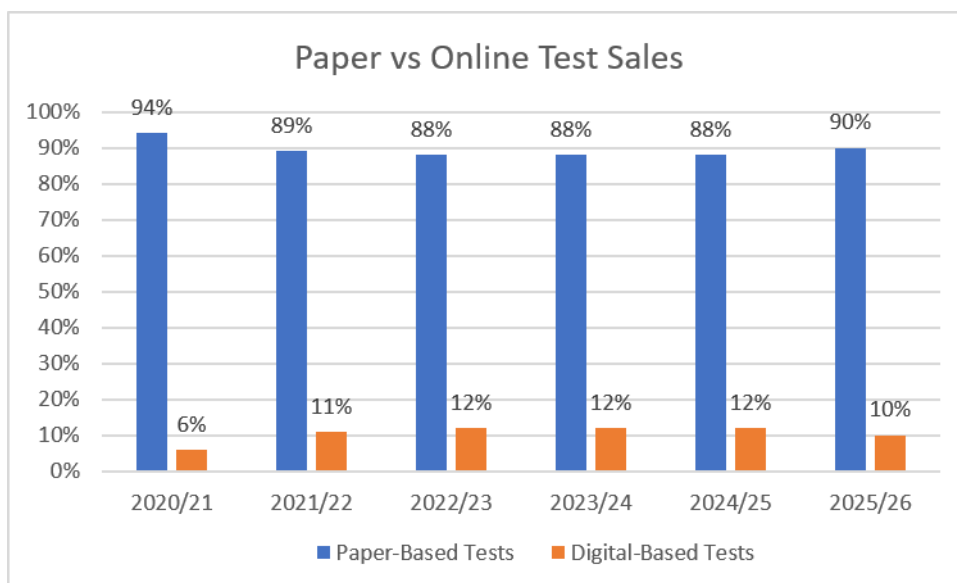
Many of our research projects involve fieldwork and data collection in schools using paper-based assessments. Over time, many of these large-scale assessments and

studies have been digitalised. We recognise that our research operations have significant potential to affect the environment, and that the responsible, efficient and reduced use of resources must be part of our sustainability efforts. We actively manage our use of these paper-based assessments, use sustainably sourced paper and dispose of materials in an appropriate manner.

*Migration from paper based to digital assessments*

	<b>PISA (OECD)</b>	<b>PIRLS (IEA)</b>	<b>TIMSS (IEA)</b>	<b>NAMER</b>
<b>Pre-2020 format</b>	<i>Paper/Digital</i>	<i>Paper</i>	<i>Paper/Digital</i>	<i>Paper</i>
<b>Most recent format</b>	<i>Digital</i>	<i>Digital</i>	<i>Digital</i>	<i>Paper</i>
<b>Planned next format</b>	<i>Digital</i>	<i>Digital</i>	<i>Digital</i>	<i>Paper/Digital</i>

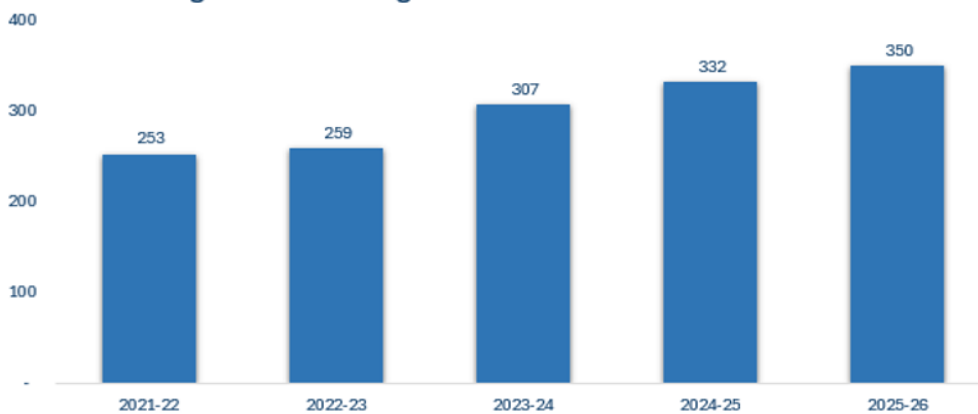
The ERC is Ireland’s largest supplier of standardised tests to primary and post-primary schools. Our tests are available in paper and in some cases online via our ERC DOTS online platform. In 2025 we are launching a number of new online tests, however paper-based tests still account for over 80% of our test sales. Many of our paper-based tests and support resources are reusable and this information is made available to schools when purchasing tests.



Demand for online testing has increased steadily over recent years, demonstrating sustained and increasing adoption of online assessments by schools. In 2025 the slight increase in paper test sales is reflective of an overall increase in sales rather than a change in trend.

As digital technologies and training become more widespread, we expect more schools will seek to migrate to our online test platform. Our 2025-2030 Strategic Plan commits to growing the number of schools using ERC DOTS to over 1,000 by 2030.

**Schools using Online Testing**



In addition to promotional offers, we provide an economic price-based incentive to schools to take-up ERC DOTS based tests.

The ERC adopted a hybrid model of working in 2022, allowing staff to work from home and our offices each week. As well as improving the work-life balance of staff and improving talent acquisition and retention, this policy has reduced the emissions produced by staff commuting to our offices in Drumcondra. We support hybrid working through collaboration tools, video-conferencing facilities and IT equipment.

Since the introduction of hybrid working, we have sought to transition various processes to digital workflows. Actions taken including reducing paper consumption, reducing printing of research publications and the use of e-signatures for contracts.

In our offices, we have also ceased the procurement of disposable cups, plates and cutlery. In 2024 we rolled out reuseable water bottles and insulated coffee cups for staff. In March 2025 a new range of reuseable kitchen crockery was purchased.

### **5.3. Green procurement**

ERC Procurement is supporting climate action by increasing the use of environmental and social criteria in tenders, such as promoting green and socially responsible solutions and evaluation sustainable practices and encouraging suppliers to provide more sustainable goods and services.

Our work continues to be guided by the EPA's GPP guidance for public bodies. Our Procurement Officer will undertake training in 'Practical Steps to Green Procurement' in 2026 to ensure the effective implementation of green procurement principles.

### **5.4. Low carbon construction methods**

As noted above, in 2027 we expect to continue the redevelopment of our offices in Drumcondra. Sustainable and low carbon construction methods form a key part of this work, where appropriate. As part of this redevelopment project, we will adhere to the best practice guidelines for the preparation of Resource and Waste Management Plans for construction and demolition projects for directly procured or supported construction projects.

### **5.5. Organic/Biowaste**

In Q1 2025 we gained access to a platform to measure and monitor the food waste (and other waste types) generated in our offices, in line with the approach to food waste measurement set out in the EPA Protocol/Pathway. In 2025, the ERC recycled 0.73 tonnes of compostable food waste and a further 2.58 tonnes of mixed dry recyclable waste.

The ERC does not provide a catered canteen or provide food services to staff and therefore the requirement to ensure at least 10% of food provided is organic, does not apply. Any contract arrangements related to canteen or food services, including any events and conferences, will include measures that are targeted at addressing

food waste, with a specific focus on food waste prevention and food waste segregation.

## 5.6. Paper

The ERC introduced an energy efficient Managed Print Solution in mid-2024. We regularly review internal processes to reduce or eliminate paper-based processes and seek to ensure new processes are digital by default. In 2025 we rolled out new finance, expenses and HR systems to eliminate paper-based processes in these areas.

In our offices, we now use a mix of FSC Mix and FSC Recycled paper<sup>2</sup>. FSC Recycled paper is used for photocopying and general printing. The ERC uses FSC Mix paper<sup>3</sup> for any large printing work undertaken (e.g. printing of standardised testing booklets). Other paper types (e.g. coloured paper, glossy paper) are also ordered, depending on project needs.

In 2025, FSC Recycled paper accounting for 14% of paper purchased and FSC Mix paper accounting for a further 65%. In 2025, the ERC generated 115,779 sheets of printed output across our offices.

Since 2024, we have reduced the number of printers in the office by over 50%.

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<sup>2</sup> FSC Recycled: the materials used for the products are 100 per cent recycled.

<sup>3</sup> FSC Mix: the product is made with a mix of materials from FSC-certified forests, recycled sources and/or FSC controlled wood.

# 6 Our Buildings and Vehicles

## 6.1. Vehicles

The ERC does not own or operate any vehicles.

Our offices are well served by public transport routes, cycle lanes and walkways. We have a small number of dedicated car parking spaces outside our offices on the DCU St. Patrick's campus. Maintaining these car parking spaces is desirable to support accessibility and emergency use.

We support the Cycle to Work scheme and TaxSaver Commuter Ticket Scheme as options for staff who work from our offices on a regular basis. The majority of our staff work remotely, attending the office on set days, resulting in less emissions from commuting and less energy consumption in our offices. In February 2025 we removed two parking spaces and replaced these with dedicated secure bicycle storage. We provide showers and drying areas for staff who cycle to work. In 2026, we will carry out a survey of staff regarding travel options used to commute to the office.

For business travel, our staff are encouraged to use public transport where it is possible. We have restricted the use of private taxi and hackney services during working hours. When our staff need to travel outside Ireland, often the only option available is to fly. We seek to minimise the amount of travel our staff undertake, but recognise some international travel is unavoidable. In some cases (e.g. participation in international large-scale assessments) international travel is required by team members.

In line with Circular 1/2020, we make payments to the Climate Action Fund. In 2025 a sum of €1,189 was paid into the Fund.

Where a procurement project involves significant delivery and haulage services, we specify zero emissions vehicles should be used where possible.

From July 2025 we transitioned to a monthly stationery order, reducing the number of journeys the stationary company is making.

## 6.2. Buildings

The ERC has operated from our main office in the DCU St. Patrick's campus since 1967. Since then, various extensions and refurbishment works have taken place to expand the office, which now comprises 1,400 sqm. The building is owned by DCU, with the ERC being the sole tenant. In 2024 we engaged architects to review our main offices on the DCU St. Patrick's campus with the aim of redeveloping the working space to better accommodate our needs. This work includes reviewing the energy efficiency of the building and highlighting where improvements can be made. We are also engaging with DCU around the retrofitting of the building to improve the energy efficiency of the building.

The ERC's offices are not a public building and so the requirement to have a Display Energy Certificate does not apply. In June 2025 we obtained a BER certificate for our office to better understand the energy needs of the building. At present the building has a BER rating of C2.

In Q1 2026, the ERC transitioned Test Department operations from the Richmond Road building, with a BER rating of D2, to an industrial unit in North City Business Park. The unit is fitted with a heat pump and has a BER rating of B1.

# 7 Our Actions

In the section below, we have outlined the steps taken to date and planned actions for 2025/26. Where relevant, specific workstreams and timelines are identified.

## 7.1. Actions

Theme	Action	Timeline	Status – June 2025
<b>Our People</b>	Establish and resource Green Teams, reporting to senior management, to become integrated drivers of sustainability in every public sector body.	Q2 2024	Complete
	Nominate a member of the Management Board as the Climate and Sustainability Champion with responsibility for implementing and reporting on the mandate.	Q1 2024	Complete
	Nominate a member of the Management Team as the Energy Performance Officer.	Q1 2024	Complete
	Incorporate climate action and sustainability training (technical, behaviour and procurement) into L&D strategy for staff	Annually	An organisation wide L&D Strategy will be developed in 2026.
	Organise a staff workshop or event (at least annually) to engage on climate issues, including a focus on decreasing our carbon footprint.  Communicate and Inform staff on climate action and sustainability matters.	Annually	ERC Green Team organised a staff workshop on sustainable transport options in 2025. Further initiatives are planned for 2026.

			The ERC Green Team and Operations team, who oversee facilities, communicates regularly with staff on sustainability initiatives in the office.
	Ensure all senior management (PO level or equivalent and above) and members of the ERC Board complete a climate action leadership training course.	Q4 2024	Complete
	Management Team meetings to include a recurring agenda item on climate action	Ongoing	Complete and ongoing.

<b>Our way of working</b>	All public sector bodies should have some form of energy management system in place.	Ongoing	The ERC is engaging with DCU on this matter.
	Using SEAI's Public Sector M&R System, public bodies are to report annually on implementation of the individual mandate requirements using a "comply and explain" approach	Ongoing	Ongoing
	Report on the following in the Annual Report of the ERC: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- GHG emissions</li> <li>- Implementation of the mandate</li> <li>- Sustainability activities</li> <li>- Compliance with Circular 1/2020</li> </ul>	Annually	Complete and ongoing.
	Implement Green Public Procurement in accordance with the Green Public Procurement Implementation Mandate set out in Buying Greener: Green Public Procurement Strategy and Action Plan 2024-2027 , using the EPA Green Public Procurement Guidance and criteria/Office	Ongoing	Ongoing.

	of Government Procurement's online Green Public Procurement Criteria Search tool as resources. Setup a system to gather and record data on GPP implementation		
	<p>Construction</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Specify low carbon construction methods and low carbon cement materials as far as practicable</li> <li>- Adhere to best practice guidelines for the preparation of resource and waste management plans for construction and demolition projects.</li> <li>- A minimum proportion of construction materials procured by public bodies under new contract arrangements to comprise recycled materials</li> </ul>	2027 pending budget approval.	Ongoing. The ERC's building redevelopment project will require low carbon construction methods and low carbon cement materials as far as practicable.
	<p>Organic Food</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A minimum of 10% by value (€) of food sought under new contract arrangements (including via contractors such as canteen service providers), is to be certified organic in each of the following categories of Cereals, fresh Beef, Lamb, Pork, Poultry, Fish, Vegetables and Dairy products, where possible.</li> </ul>	N/A	The ERC does not provide a catered canteen or provide food services to staff and therefore the requirement does not apply.
	<p>Food waste</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Measure and monitor the food waste generated on premises from 2024, using a standardised approach to food waste measurement set out in the EPA Protocol/Pathway</li> </ul>	Ongoing.	Complete – Implement mechanism for tracking food waste.  Ongoing

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- All new contract arrangements relating to canteen or food services, including events and conferences, to include measures that are targeted at addressing food waste, taking into account Ireland's commitment to reduce food waste by 50% by 2030.</li> </ul>		
	<p>ICT Equipment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A minimum of 80% of ICT end user products (desktop computers, portable computers and mobile phones) procured by public sector bodies under new contract arrangements are certified to EPEAT Gold Standard (or equivalent), TCO Certified (or equivalent) or will have been remanufactured.</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>In 2025, 11 remanufactured laptops were purchased through the Green IT OGP Framework. Refurbished laptops are rented for the delivery of digital testing in schools.</p> <p>All new laptops are certified to EPEAT Gold Standard.</p> <p>The ERC migrated to using USB-C hub monitors to replace separate laptop docking stations. These devices reduce the need for additional power units, as they combine a monitor and docking station in one device. This transition was made to support our environmental efforts.</p>
	Move IT services to the cloud where feasible	Ongoing	The ERC is continuing to rollout cloud-based services. A medium-term IT Strategy is being developed in 2026. This strategy includes the move of any remaining core IT services to the cloud.

	Replace legacy IT equipment with energy efficient equivalents	Ongoing	Ongoing. The ERC replaces legacy IT equipment periodically (as it as it is written-down) with energy efficient equivalents, in line with best practice.
	<p>Paper</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Review any paper-based processes and evaluate the possibilities for digitisation so it becomes the default approach.</li> <li>- Eliminate paper-based processes as far as is practicable</li> <li>- Where office paper for printing and photocopying must be procured, 100% of the paper must be recycled paper.</li> <li>- Measure and monitor paper consumption.</li> <li>- Remove personal printers and introduce eco-friendly “all in one” photocopiers/printers and adjust ICT power down systems.</li> <li>- Significantly reduce hardcopy paper/files by increasing digitisation.</li> <li>- Seek to accelerate transition of paper-based standardised testing to ERC DOTS based tests.</li> <li>- Reduce the use of flip-chart paper</li> </ul>	Ongoing	<p>Ongoing action.</p> <p>The ERC has commenced buying recycled photocopying paper and is committed to rolling out recycled paper for use across the office, where possible. Recycled printer paper is now the default paper purchased by the ERC.</p> <p>The ERC introduced an energy efficient Managed Print Solution in 2024 and monitors paper usage across the office.</p> <p>The ERC continues to modify and update internal processes to reduce and remove paper-based processes where possible. New HR, finance and expenses systems were introduced in 2025 and 2026 efforts are continuing to remove various paper-based processes.</p> <p>In 2025 and 2026 we ran a promotion to move schools using paper based standardised tests to ERC DOTS. We will run a similar promotion in 2026/27 (subject to resources) and continue to highlight the benefits of digital testing over paper-based tests.</p>

			In 2026 we introduced a number of small meeting rooms and shared spaces for staff to use. Offices and meeting rooms use whiteboards to reduce the reliance on flipcharts.
	<p>Water</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Provide suitable drinking water refill points for all staff and in any premises accessed by the public and measure and monitor usage of the refill points.</li> <li>-</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>2025+</p>	The ERC provides filtered water to staff. We are exploring with our landlord how to measure water usage in our offices.
	<p>Single Use</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cease using disposable cups, plates and cutlery in any public sector canteen or closed facility, where feasible.</li> <li>- Progressively eliminate all single use items within the organisation and from events organised, funded or sponsored.</li> <li>- Introduced Keep Cups and Water Bottles and eliminated the use of disposable cups reducing the level of single use plastics across the office.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p>	The purchase and use of disposable cups, plates and cutlery has ceased having transitioned to reusable kitchen crockery. We provide reuseable keep-cups and water bottles for staff to use at work.
	<p>Other materials</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Support Ireland's Producer Responsibility Initiatives in the collection and recycling of products including the Deposit Return Scheme.</li> <li>- Use waste collection services that are segregated into a minimum of 3 streams – residual/general waste, recycling waste and organic/biowaste. Monitor weights collected.</li> </ul>	<p>Ongoing</p>	<p>All packaging waste in the ERC is recycled. Batteries and WEEE are collected and disposed of in an appropriate manner.</p> <p>We collect bottles and cans as part of the Deposit Return Scheme. Refunds from the scheme go towards staff initiatives.</p>

			<p>In Q1 2025 we gained access to a platform to measure and monitor the food waste (and other waste types) generated in our offices, in line with the approach to food waste measurement set out in the EPA Protocol/Pathway.</p> <p>Waste is segregated into recycling, organic/biowaste, general waste, and deposit return scheme waste.</p>
	Removal of individual office waste bins in favour of consolidated waste and recycling bins	C Q3 2024	Complete. This action has been completed and shared waste and recycling facilities have been located throughout our offices.
<b>Our Buildings and Vehicles</b>	Promote the use of bicycles and shared mobility options as an alternative to car use among employees and visitors by creating and maintaining facilities (both inside and outside of buildings) that support such options, including secure and accessible bicycle parking, shared mobility parking, and charging stations, as appropriate, with a view to achieving the National Transport Authority's Smarter Travel Mark.	Q3 2024	<p>Ongoing.</p> <p>In February 2025 we installed a dedicated secure bike storage facility for staff to use.</p> <p>Staff have been provided with cycling vests.</p> <p>A Cycle Clinic Workshop designed to help staff learn the basics of bike maintenance and support cycling to work took place in Q3 2025.</p>
	Phase out the use of parking in buildings that have access to a range of public transport services and active/shared mobility options for the majority of staff/visitors, while providing that sufficient accessible parking is maintained for those with physical mobility issues.	Ongoing	The ERC maintains a small number of parking spaces (8) for accessibility and emergency use, but staff are encouraged to use public transport, carpool, cycle, or walk. In February 2025 we reduced the number of ERC parking spaces we have on the DCU Campus to install dedicated bicycle storage facilities.

	Smaller public bodies should include a basic building stock analysis or statement as part of their Climate Action Roadmap	2027	This matter will be considered as part of the redevelopment of the ERC's offices in 2027.
	<p>The public sector will not install heating systems that use fossil fuels after 2023, in (1) new buildings, and (2) "major renovation" retrofit projects as defined in the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) unless at least one of the following exceptions applies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The fossil-fuel use is only through using electricity from the grid.</li> <li>• There is no technically viable non-fossil alternative (generally only related to applications for a purpose other than space heating).</li> <li>• The installation of a renewable space heating system would increase final CO2 emissions.</li> <li>• The fossil-fuel use is provided for backup, peaking, or operational purposes (and makes up less than 10% of annual heating energy).</li> <li>• Where the direct replacement of existing fossil fuel heating is required for an emergency maintenance purpose.</li> </ul>	2024	<p>Complete</p> <p>Our 35-year-old gas boiler had to be replaced in December 2024 following repeated breaking down and maintenance issues. An A-rated condensing gas boiler was identified and installed following a procurement process.</p>
	All tenders for the public procurement of energy-related products, heating equipment, or indoor and outdoor lighting to include a requirement for tenderers to specify recommendations and options for the product, when the product or components of the product comes to the end	2025	This matter will be considered as part of the building redevelopment programme in 2027.

	of life, that consider environmental sustainability, including options for reuse, repair, and recycling. Comply with SI 626 of 2016 to procure Triple E registered products or equivalent.		
	All tenders for the public procurement of indoor cleaning services to include a requirement for tenderers to specify the training that will be put in place to ensure that all staff involved in delivery of the contract have the knowledge and skills to apply cleaning methods, which will reduce the environmental impact of the services.	Q3 2026	The ERC uses cleaning services provided by DCU Estate Services. The ERC and DCU meet annually to confirm this training takes place and cleaning staff understand their role in reducing the environmental impact of their work.
	Building stock plans – all public bodies that have not yet completed a stage 1 Building Stock Plan should do so and submit to SEAI. Public bodies that have completed a BSP should update it regularly, minimum every two years. Public bodies are encouraged to include their BSPs in their Climate Action Roadmaps. Small public sector bodies should include a basic building stock analysis or statement as part of their Climate Action Roadmap, in line with the guidance published by SEAI.	2025	The ERC has completed a BER assessment in June 2025. The information contained within this report will inform us in completing the next steps for the BSP.  In 2025 we transitioned from using single occupancy offices to shared office spaces for the majority of our staff. This reduces our use of lighting and heating in rooms not being used every day.  Estimated time of completion is 2027.
	Installation of LED lighting and motion sensor lighting to reduce electricity usage.	2025	Complete.
	Installation of vehicle charging points	Complete	Complete. Two 50kW vehicle charging points are available in nearby DCU carparks, within 300m of our offices.

	<p>Vehicles - Procure (purchase or lease) only zero-emissions vehicles from the end of 2022.</p> <p>Public sector procurement contracts for delivery and haulage should specify zero-emissions vehicles where possible</p>	Complete	<p>The ERC does not own or lease any vehicles.</p> <p>For the vast majority of our delivery requirements (e.g. deliveries to schools as part of research or the provision of assessment support services), we use An Post delivery services.</p>
<b>Sustainable Travel Policies</b>	Critically review the current allocation of car parking spaces, for employees and service users, and repurpose space currently used for private cars in favour of storage for active and micro-modes (e.g., bikes, e-bikes, cargo-bikes);	Complete	In February 2025 we reduced the number of ERC parking spaces we have on the DCU Campus to install dedicated bicycle storage facilities.
	Where possible, provide infrastructure such as showers, drying rooms, changing rooms and lockers to facilitate staff travelling to and from work by sustainable modes;	Complete	The ERC provides showers and changing rooms for staff. Lockers were introduced in 2025 as part of the building redevelopment programme.
	Encourage the use of car-pooling/lift-sharing among those employees who have no viable alternatives to travel than via car, e.g., using dedicated carpool parking spaces;	Ongoing	Outlined as part of Green Team workshops with staff. The Green Team remind staff of sustainable travel options each year.
	Actively seek to enhance staff knowledge of the bike-to-work and TaxSaver commuter schemes, and encourage uptake of these schemes;	Ongoing	Outlined as part of Green Team workshops with staff. The ERC HR Team and Green Team remind staff of travel related tax incentive schemes each year.
	Give the maximum possible priority to reduction in commuter or work-related travel. This could include a 'remote-first' approach to meeting arrangements	Ongoing	Wherever possible meetings are organised as 'remote-first' subject to the needs of the organisation and ERC Blended Working policy.

	wherever possible, unless a physical meeting is deemed essential		
	Foster a culture of equivalence between physical and digital attendance, ensuring staff who attend remotely do not suffer any resultant disadvantage	Ongoing	Ongoing.
	Consider regular staff travel surveys and travel audits, to learn how staff are travelling, via what modes, and to what extent available facilities are being used or in need of improvement, e.g., bike parking and shelters, bicycle safety/skills training, more EV bays, etc. This data should inform ongoing reporting within the public sector body as well as in annual reports	Annually	Ongoing. A staff survey on travel took place in Q2 2024 to identify travel patterns and the use of transport options. Another staff survey is planned for 2026.
	Encourage pedestrian or active travel activities and uptake via other means such as HR wellbeing initiatives, social club initiatives, volunteering programmes, etc	Ongoing	The ERC Wellbeing Committee organises participation in a number of walking-related competitions (e.g. Walktober and Marchathon) each year.

# Appendix

## Terms of Reference (ToR) – ERC Green Team

### 1. Purpose

The Green Team is established to support and advise on the implementation of the ERC's Climate Action Roadmap. The role of the Green Team is to:

- Raise awareness about climate action and environmental goals.
- Identify appropriate awareness training for all staff.
- Identify and advocate for sustainable work practices among staff and management.
- Act as a forum for staff to suggest and implement green initiatives in areas such as:
  - Waste reduction
  - Energy efficiency
  - Resource conservation
  - Travel
  - Procurement
  - Training and Development of staff
- Organise regular staff events related to the rollout of the Climate Action Roadmap.

### 2. Membership

The Green Team will include representatives from key functions within the ERC including:

- Operations
- Corporate Services
- Research Staff
- Management.

The Green Team is chaired by the Senior Manager – Governance and Data Protection.

### **3. Meeting Frequency**

The Green Team will meet at least quarterly, or more frequently as needed.

### **4. Reporting and Accountability**

The ERC Green Team reports directly to the Chief Executive of the ERC. The ERC Green Team will submit an annual report of its activities to the ERC Board. This report is also made available to staff.

The ERC Green Team will work collaboratively with other committees within the ERC (e.g. wellbeing committee, EDI committee) to ensure goals are aligned.

### **5. Review of Terms**

These Terms of Reference shall be reviewed annually to ensure relevance and effectiveness. Revisions may be proposed by the Green Team, ERC Management Team or ERC Board.