

Appendix 7: Background and Further Information.

The Government's first Climate Action Plan was published in 2019 and introduced an energy efficiency target of 50% by 2030. In 2021, the Government published the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 which provides a legal underpinning for climate action by the public sector and requires all public bodies to perform their functions in a manner that is consistent with Ireland's climate ambitions. The Climate Action Plan published in 2021 introduced a target of reducing Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030 and becoming climate neutral by 2050 at the latest. The Government sees the public sector as playing an essential role in leading by example and introduced the first Public Sector Climate Action Mandate in the 2021 Climate Action Plan. The Public Sector Climate Action Mandate applies to public bodies covered by the Climate Action Plan decarbonisation targets with the exception of local authorities, commercial semi state bodies and schools. The Mandate outlines the main climate action objectives for public bodies and requires applicable public bodies to publish climate action roadmaps within six months of the publication of the latest Climate Action Plan. SEAI and the EPA produced a Public Sector Climate Action Roadmap Guidance document to provide guidance to public bodies when updating their roadmaps.

SEAI's Public Sector Programmes have a focus on mobilising public bodies to enable them to reach their 2030 targets first and then climate neutrality by 2050. Achieving both the 2030 and 2050 targets will require significant leadership commitment, long term strategic planning, resources, and investment. There are over 350 public bodies in Ireland that vary in size and complexity. The Public Sector Climate Action mandate recognises the importance of structured energy management systems. It requires all public sector bodies with an energy spend of greater than €2 million per annum to achieve ISO 50001 certification and all remaining public bodies to implement energy management programmes as per SEAI's energy management guidance and report annually via the M&R system.

There is a real urgency for public bodies to meet their 2030 targets and prepare for 2050. Therefore, the focus has to be on actual performance and actions to deliver the fossil fuel reduction and energy efficiency targets. Analysis and planning are vital to understanding the position of the public bodies in relation to the targets and how they can accelerate actions to bridge the gaps. Establishing and maintaining project pipelines to 2030 and beyond is essential. To enable this, there will be a need for core data, resources and supports to undertake more detailed planning and to prioritise and formulate short- to long-term investment decisions. Determining the critical factors for success and continually assessing them is a key priority for SEAI.

For more information about the background to the requirements on public bodies please see the links below:

1. [Climate Action Plan 2019](#)

2. [Climate Action and Low Carbon Development \(Amendment\) Act 2021](#)
3. [Climate Action Plan 2021](#)
4. [Climate Action Plan 2025](#)
5. [Public Sector Climate Action Mandate 2025.pdf](#)
6. [2025_PublicSector_ClimateActionRoadmapGuidance.pdf](#)
7. [Energy Efficiency in the public sector strategy 2017](#)

SEAI is seeking a number of experts to support public bodies in undertaking energy management, project pipeline planning, and performance monitoring. The supports provided may range from general to specialist energy management supports, as well as advanced data analysis and planning supports and supports to engage sector and public body leadership. Successful Tenderer(s) will provide supports to all the Public Sector programmes. These supports may also be provided to other SEAI programmes that support public bodies.

Public Sector Programmes

There are four programmes that are currently dedicated to supporting public bodies.

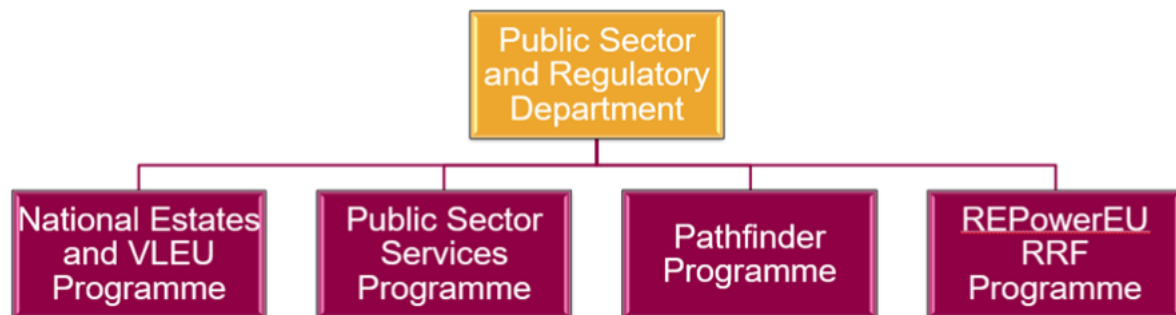


Figure 1. Public Sector Programmes

Public Sector Services Programme

The Public Sector Services programme supports public bodies through a Partnership approach. SEAI provide mentoring, training and other supports to public bodies that are committed to achieving their public sector energy targets. The supports will be delivered through standardised repeatable services such as energy management training, the annual partnership cycle and networking groups. The delivery of several supports is carried out through a panel of mentors that work with public bodies that have signed up to the partnership programme such as an annual review of Critical Success Factors, which are elements that SEAI deem critical for the public body to achieve their targets and a Gap to Target analysis looking at their usage data and planned projects. The programme also delivers an annual calendar of events, training, and support services. This programme is also responsible for the development and implementation of a retro-commissioning/building energy optimisation scheme and an operation and maintenance (O&M) scheme to support public bodies.

Annual Partnership Cycle

Currently, public bodies that sign up to the partnership programme are assigned a mentor and that mentor works with them on a one-to-one basis to complete certain deliverables such as a Critical Success Factor review and a Gap to Target analysis. The Annual Partnership Cycle will

be reviewed on a regular basis to adjust to the needs of the public bodies to support them in understanding and addressing their targets.

Training and Events

The Public Sector Services programme offers a range of training programmes at different levels for public bodies to engage and learn about energy and energy management. An annual calendar of training and events is published each year and can be accessed through SEAI Energy Link platform. The current training course range from learning the basics about energy and carbon to accelerator courses for energy management certification and behavioural change. The range of training courses will be reviewed regularly to assess if they are meeting the needs of public bodies and whether new or alternative courses are needed. SEAI also runs a number of events such as webinars and briefing to keep public bodies informed of developments.

Under the Public Sector Services programme, the support offered to schools is energy management training a programme called Energy in Education. Participants can avail of an energy management training programme that has been created for educational facilities. The training course involves three, two-hour workshop during which participants gets access to a range of helpful resources such as online tools and guidance via a dedicated Energy in Education website (<https://www.energyineducation.ie/energy-management-training>).

Networking

Networking is an important aspect of the support that SEAI provides and this can be both online and in-person. The main vehicle for managing networking is Energy Link, SEAI's online networking tool. Energy link is available to public bodies personnel and SEAI advisors only. By default, all public bodies personnel are assigned to a sector grouping. Personnel can freely network on Energy link or participate in other networks as they see fit. Networks can arise in response to different learning, knowledge or training needs as well as general areas of interest or can be linked to training courses. There are a number of communities of practice and special working groups that are tailored to specific topics to allow more in-depth sharing of knowledge and experience. All networking group are reviewed regularly to assess their impact and appropriateness to the needs of public bodies.

Retro Commissioning/Building Optimisation and Operational and Maintenance Schemes

The Public Sector Services programme is also developing two new public sector support schemes for retro-commissioning/building optimisation and operation and maintenance. Building Optimisation is a systematic method for investigating how a building is used and how and why an existing building's systems are operated and maintained. It identifies ways to improve overall building performance through improved operational procedures and retro-commissioning of buildings control systems. The schemes are being developed to help public bodies to identify opportunities to save energy and reduce their energy costs.

Public Sector National Estates and Very Large Energy Users Programme

The Public Sector National Estates and Very Large Energy Users programme supports large public sector bodies and specific sectors in establishing, diagnosing and delivering project pipelines towards national and upcoming EU directive targets. Its main focus is on supporting the five main National Estate Portfolio Leads (NEPLs), and Very Large Energy Users in the public sector to

1. HSE and health sector as a whole
2. Department of Education and schools
3. OPW and central government
4. Department of Further and Higher Education Research Innovation and Science and the ETB/University/College sector
5. Local authority sector
6. Very Large Energy Users – mostly Commercial State Bodies under New Era sustainability frameworks i.e. Uisce Eireann, CIE group including Bus Eireann, Dublin Bus and Iris Rail, Coilte etc. Over time the plan is to also support Defence Forces, An Gardai Siochanna etc

The aim of the programme is to work with each sector/subgroup to:

- 1) develop and continually refine a pathway to achieve all the various targets. SEAI has developed a more advanced version of the Gap to Target tool to map and diagnose their project pipeline. The objective is by mapping and diagnosing the project pipeline, sectors move projects from concept, through to delivery and significant impacts on targets. The core role of the programme is to continually record and map the project pipeline and whats required to move the projects from concept, to how it will be funded and delivered, through delivery (design, procurement, implementation) to impact (significant fossil fuel and kWh reduction. A core objective of the advisors is to support the sectors map and continually question what project/programme, to what level, how much and when and how can it be delivered such as to produce the biggest impacts in the quickest, most effective and efficient manner possible. For example if this project/programme were offered to the public bodies differently, through a devolved grant as opposed to application process, would it mean a more focused approach, producing more savings, in less time and administration.
- 2) A key aspect is establishing and managing a structured relationship with key personnel in each sector. This happens through an agreed set of structured workstreams, and regular proactive engagement. At these structured engagements, the project pipeline is continually assessed and diagnosed. Actions are undertaken between engagements with the purpose to move projects from concept to delivery to impact.
- 3) At particular points in the year, support the sectors produce plans linked to the project pipeline mapping and diagnosis;
 - a. A revolving 3-year investment plan and business case for projects. To link with the process of the sector/DCEE/SEAI securing overall funding
 - b. An annual investment plan for the following year – this links strongly with the annual pathfinder allocation process but also considers non pathfinder funding i.e. the sectors own capital programmes.
- 4) Supporting sharing good practices across NEPLs and focused communications relevant to establishing and delivering the project pipeline
- 5) The programme also links to the Public Sector Working Group, part of the Heating in Buildings Energy Taskforce under the climate budgets governance. Outputs from the work with the sectors is fed into this group so as to communicate the short and long term financial, resource needs and obstacles to be addressed for the sector to achieve the targets.

This programme also manages an online Monitoring and Reporting (M&R) system for public bodies to report their organisation's progress towards national targets. All public bodies must achieve a 51% reduction in energy-related greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and a 50% improvement in energy efficiency by 2030. It is up to each individual organisation to determine how the targets can be best achieved. The M&R system offers several benefits to public sector organisations such as:

1. Enables a public body organisation to fulfil its legal obligations with respect to reporting
2. Provides a summary of the organisation's overall energy performance
3. Provides a summary of the organisation's greenhouse gas emissions
4. Provides access to the organisation's electricity and natural gas consumption data for recent years
5. Allows comparison with the progress of other public sector organisations in achieving targets
6. Showcases the public sector organisations' achievements

It also helps organisations understand their energy consumption and greenhouse gas emissions, target areas for improvement, identify opportunities, review progress, monitor and benchmark performance and validate savings.

Pathfinder Programme

SEAI's Pathfinder Programme, established in 2017, builds upon years of collaboration with progressive public bodies to improve energy performance and help them meet national targets. Each year, the programme has expanded its ambition, supporting the delivery of sustainable, scalable solutions across the public sector. Its core focus is the decarbonisation of thermal energy demand in line with Ireland's 2030 climate targets and the longer-term pathway to net zero by 2050.

The programme takes a holistic approach to improving energy performance. Working closely with the National Estates (HSE, DEY, Local Authorities, DFHERIS and OPW), SEAI helps identify and address barriers that hinder progress toward energy-saving and carbon-reduction goals. Pathfinder also supports partners in project pipeline development, piloting solutions to retrofit challenges, and applying lessons learned to deliver best-practice outcomes.

The programme's impact extends across the public sector, industry, academia, and the wider non-domestic supply chain. Key benefits include:

- Reduced energy use and CO₂ emissions
- Improved comfort and indoor air quality
- Greater understanding of retrofit technologies and solutions
- Upskilling of professionals and contractors
- Peer-to-peer sharing of best practice.
- Lessons learned through pioneering retrofit approaches
- Strategic planning that increases ambition and accelerates delivery
- Testing of innovative procurement and financing models

The Pathfinder Programme supports the National Estates in accelerating project development and delivery by sharing best practice, providing Energy Performance Contracting (EPC) support,

offering assistance through the Support Scheme for Energy Contracting, and delivering direct financial support.

The programme also provides matched funding for the establishment of Energy Bureaus for a defined period, subject to agreed targets. The aim of an Energy Bureau is to accelerate the development of energy management systems and investment needed within a sector or sub-sector.

REPowerEU RRF Programme

This programme manages the SEAI/HSE (RRF) REPowerEU project, a HSE pilot initiative spanning eight sites. The project aligns with targets set by national legislation, EU Directives, and the Public Sector Climate Action Strategy. Specifically, capital expenditure is focused on low-carbon design infrastructure, heating systems, and building measures to maximise efficiency, achieve energy and carbon savings. This programme collaborates with the HSE capital delivery team to ensure compliance with funding conditions. The focus is on meeting technical, performance, financial, and governance requirements for the drawdown of funding.

ISO 50001 Energy Team

The ISO 50001 SEAI Energy Team leads the development and maintenance of the ISO 50001 Energy Management System across SEAI offices and associated energy consuming attributes. Through the identification of opportunities then converted into action plans the team champions energy efficiencies and projects within SEAI demonstrated and executed in compliance with the standard.

Other capital and project support for public bodies

Public bodies can avail of many business grants (<https://www.seai.ie/grants/business-grants>). Please note that this Request for Tender is seeking Framework Members to assist with the delivery of the SEAI's Public Sector Programmes ONLY (as outlined above) and in the main is not seeking Framework Members to directly assist with the 'other supports' available to public bodies.