

Interim Strategic Plan 2024-2025

Who we are and what we do

The Irish Environmental Network (IEN) has been in operation since 2001 as an umbrella group representing environmental non-governmental organisations working throughout the Republic of Ireland.

Our members comprise voluntary groups that fulfil a nationwide remit and focus on a broad range of environmental issues which include: direct conservation and restoration projects, sustainable living, circular economy, transport, renewable energy, environmental education, heritage conservation, sustainable agriculture and land use, regenerative and sustainable practices, marine and freshwater conservation and protection, animal welfare and protection, planning, the built environment, and well-being and sustainable economy. Our members also work to raise awareness for the protection of our environment, whilst advocating for sustainable policies to address the dual climate and biodiversity crises.

We offer support to our members in a range of ways, including providing opportunities for collaboration and connection, direct and indirect funding, marketing their efforts and ensuring our Board meet their fiduciary responsibility to protect the IEN through effective governance, integrity, and accountability. Through the Environmental Pillar, which is the advocacy arm of the IEN, we also support our members' collective actions to develop and advance sustainable policy.

We meet as a network each year in person, and host regular meetings as well as provide educational resources to upskill our members to achieve their goals whilst complying with governance, legal and employment legislation and best practice.

Our Vision

A world where everyone recognises, and acts on the basis that, the economy is but one component of society and that society exists within the environment of our one planet, Earth, on which we depend.

Our Mission

IEN's mission is to facilitate its Members in working individually and jointly to protect and enhance the environment and to promote the interlinked principles of environmental, social and economic sustainability.

Our Focus

How we undertake this will be set out in this paper, and further drive our commitment to our vision, mission, members and broad range of stakeholders.

Strategic Plan 2018-2023: Status Update

Goal 1: Build the voice of the Environmental NGO Sector

Key Achievements include:

- Redevelopment and launch of IEN and Environmental Pillar websites, including a members' login area
- Regular engagement on critical pieces of legislation and policy, including for example: annual national budgets; Agri-Food 2030 Strategy; Planning Bill; Marine Protected Areas Bill; EU Nature Restoration Law
- Launch and delivery of social media strategy to highlight key issues of importance and amplify the work of members

Goal 2: Build the financial and expertise capacity of our members to deliver on their objectives

Key Achievements include:

- Delivery of in-house training sessions for members, including in communications and social media
- Support and facilitate members to attend trainings and workshops in finance and governance
- Ensuring the IEN is compliance with the Governance Code for Charitable organisations

Goal 3: Facilitate and promote Members working together

Key Achievements include:

- Serving as the host organisation and legal entity for the Fair Seas Campaign, through which 5 of our member groups work as campaign partners, together with a sister network, to secure robust marine protection in Ireland.
- Launch of the Environmental Pillar's Advocacy Hubs, through which groups work collectively on specific campaign and advocacy initiatives
- Launch and delivery of Sustainable Agriculture and Land Use small grants programme, supporting groups to work collaboratively

Goal 4: Strengthen the network

Key Achievements include:

- Carrying out annual members' survey to gather feedback and insights on how we can best support our members and facilitate their work
- Launch and delivery of IEN Members Newsletter, ensuring members are kept informed and up to date about projects, activities, as well as employment and funding opportunities across the Network
- Launch of IEN digitisation fund, which has enabled members to enhance their capacity to engage in network activities and to reach their objectives.

Strategic Plan Review

We carried out a review of our existing Strategic Plan (2018-2023), whereby several recommendations were made. These were to sharpen and crystallise our strategic goals, setting Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-bound (SMART) objectives and to develop an effective reporting, monitoring and evaluation framework to drive the work of the IEN and its members, and to guide future decision-making.

Following this review process, we have agreed to extend the 2018-2023 Strategic Plan to ensure that we address any areas not fully completed and to also include various initiatives that have been added to our remit since the 2018-2023 plan was originally agreed. This will enable the Network to fully review and assess the impacts that we have achieved in recent years and to engage in consultation with our members, funders and other key stakeholders to identify our critical priorities and goals that will be set out in our next Strategic Plan.

The focus of this Interim Strategic Plan will be on the following areas:

- Assess the viability of developing Associate Memberships, seeking guidance and advice from a wide network of environmental advocates and organisations.
- Development and growth of Local Environmental Networks – this is ongoing and dovetails with our work to support the PPNs.
- Formalise the process for bringing in external expertise to the Board.
- Prepare the planning process for the next strategic period - to include a review and update of the organisation’s values, vision, mission, and theory of change.

We will continue to facilitate a participative procedure for stakeholders to feed into the values, vision, achievements of our Network, and identifying areas for development and proposed solutions to strengthen the IEN and Environmental Pillar, which will help us to better understand the lived experience of all connected and within the Network.

Key Performance Indicators and Timeline

To ensure accountability of this Interim Strategic Plan, we have set out timelines to allow sufficient scheduling to enable completion of these goals:

Timeline	Goal
Q3 2024	Finalise Interim Strategy Plan + Create Governance Hub
Q4 2024	Legal analysis regarding establishment of Associate Membership is complete
Q1 2025	Finalise Associate Membership Terms; Membership Handbook for Consultation and Review
Q1 2025	Stakeholder Review & Theory of Change Exploration, including consultation with staff, members, board and key stakeholders
Q2 2025	2025+ Strategic Vision Proposal Draft and Review
Q3 2025	Review Analysis and Feedback
Q4 2025	2025+ Strategic Vision Finalised and published