Comhar Sustainable Development Council -
case for continuing support

1. Executive Summary

General
For a small investment, Comhar Sustainable Development Council saves money by: successfully promoting the integration of environment, economy and society so that policy and actions advance all three strands simultaneously at minimum cost; securing stakeholder support and buy-in so that procrastination and opposition are reduced. Through research (based in evidence and best practise), advocacy and partnership, we support the proposition that if we get the five I’s – incentives, information, infrastructure, innovation, institutions – right (mutually reinforcing) we will succeed in achieving a society that is truly sustainable, and we will save money in doing so.

The specific measures identified below are to meet our national and EU obligations in regard to climate change, transport, biodiversity and natural resources, including water and waste, in ways that minimise cost and foster sustainable enterprise.

Specific
We support analytically and via partnership:

Incentives - Getting the Prices right
Achievements: the change in VRT and annual road tax which has transformed the composition of the new car fleet so that it is much more sustainable in terms of energy use and environmental performance.
Prospects: a carbon tax (with targeted recycling) – this is the essential pre-requisite if we are to meet our climate change obligations – waste charges (neutrality vis a vis final disposal options) – essential to minimise cost burdens on households and business, water charges based on use (essential if we are to conserve an increasingly scarce resource, adapt to climate change effects, generate funds needed for investment, and avoid wasteful supply expanding investment).

Information – ensuring that the public and key stakeholders understand choices and their implications - ‘What doesn’t get measured doesn’t get done’.

Achievements: through careful analysis of choices, keep the evidence and their implications for sustainable development in the foreground. Use web site, media awards, Commentaries etc. to ensure that reality is not under-prized in debate, and that key communicators, decision makers and the public are informed.
Prospects: Develop and promote: Sustainable Development Indicators at national and local level, and best sustainable development practise at local level, by highlighting case studies and dissemination of lessons.
Supporting innovation and the Green New Deal

Both smart policies and smart technologies are needed if we are to make meeting our climate change and other environmental obligations economically and socially sustainable.

*Achievements*: Getting prices right (see above) is a key pre-requisite to support behaviour and business that are sustainable. *Re-cycling* of some of the revenues to further re-enforce sustainable development is essential. Support *policy innovation* with analyses of Cap and Share and road pricing.

*Prospects*: We are working with stakeholders to support the High Level Action Group on Green Enterprise in identifying key requirements to achieve the transition to a smart green economy. Ensuring that subsidy and investment policy also encourage innovation and R&D, and the development of an ear-marked source of investment for green business are emerging as important.

Greening Infrastructure

*Achievements*: Support for integration of carbon price in Department of Finance investment appraisal and in assessment of NDP, and the central role of *land use planning* in shaping performance.

*Prospects*: Working with the Biodiversity Forum to ensure that the ecosystem services provided by *green infrastructure* are given parity of esteem in investment appraisal.

Fostering Institutional Collaboration


2. The Policy Context

The reason Comhar SDC exists is to help advance the sustainable development agenda, which means:

- Finding new and better ways to simultaneously achieve economic progress, social cohesion and reduced use of resources and environmental impact
- Doing this at *minimum cost to the economy and the Exchequer*
- In ways that support and stimulate innovation and the achievement of green enterprise and employment.
- With the support of key business, local and national government, academic interests and social and environmental NGOs.

The Government’s national policy commitments on sustainable development arise largely from obligations under EU and UN inter-governmental processes. The policy agenda is integrated and cross-cutting across all levels of government, economy and society. Implementation of sustainable development can only be delivered with active participation of all the key stakeholders and sectoral interests. Comhar SDC is the key institutional mechanism providing for this sectoral and stakeholder engagement on implementing sustainable development. Comhar SDC provides specialist expertise to stakeholders and Government. Policy recommendations from Comhar SDC are arrived at through
evidence-based research and Council consensus and therefore represent a mix of best practice assessment and civil society input. The merging the functions of Comhar into DOEHLG, will in effect mean its dissolution and this will severely undermine the ability of the Government to meet its national and international commitments.

Ireland was one of the first European countries to adopt a National Sustainable Development Strategy putting it at the forefront of developments in Europe. The EU strategy is currently in revision and in Ireland the revised strategy has now been delayed for nearly two years. The abolition of Comhar SDC will result in a decrease in capacity at a time when Ireland will need to develop and deliver a Sustainable Development Strategy. This would be a retrograde step which leaves Ireland as one of the few European countries not to have an advisory council on sustainable development or environment.

The last Programme for Government committed to giving Comhar SDC a strengthened research role as part ofNESDO, in recognition of the need for research insights and findings on sustainable development to be fed into the policy and decision making process. The An Bord Snip report has recommended the abolition of NESDO with the exception of NESC. NESC’s remit is to carry out analysis on strategic issues relating to economic and social development and provide support to social partnership. Unlike the other constituent organisations of NESDO, Comhar does not overlap in function with other state bodies or even NESC. Without Comhar SDC, policy analysis and outputs will be focused on economic and social development rather than sustainable development, and there will be no organisation which provides a truly integrated analysis developed with cross-sectoral support to develop evidence based inputs to the policy process.

We believe that we are in the business of transformation, showing the way to an Ireland that is economically, socially and environmentally sustainable, and that the combination of rigorous independent analysis and partnership provides the best hope of making progress in this regard. Our proposition – developed below – is that our efforts will save orders of magnitude what we cost. It is impossible to identify with precision the past and future effectiveness of what we do, because so much of it is collaborative and involves helping get ideas on various agendas and generating support from a variety of quarters.

So the following claims are necessarily tentative, but not implausible.
3. Thematic Areas

3.1.1 Advancing Ireland’s Climate Change and Sustainable Transport Agenda

Carbon Tax
In numerous analyses and outputs, we promote the necessity of both a carbon tax (applied to the sectors not in the emissions trading scheme), and the recycling of revenues to address both fuel poverty and the provision of further support for emissions reduction. The recycling of revenue is a key distinguishing feature of our work.

We regard the tax as essential to stimulate change in behaviour, provide funds for related activity, and to create the basis for innovation and the green economy, and the recycling as central to fairness, reducing public opposition and the meeting of our EU obligations. And our Council supports these propositions.

Transport and Climate Change
We were the first to demonstrate analytically the potential impact that adjusting VRT would have in making the new car fleet more fuel and carbon efficient, and also reducing particulate emissions. We engaged with the Department of Finance on this issue, and secured Council support. As you know, this has been implemented with considerable success.

In our analysis (with stakeholders) of sustainable transport, the following are amongst the elements that emerged as keys to progress. From a climate change and social perspective, rural transport is the key challenge; for most rural residents, cars are their only means of effective transport, they account for over 70% of car transport emissions, and public transport alternatives are expensive to implement. In the short run, the only policy that can be effective is the re-calibration of VRT, which makes the cars on the road much more efficient, and giving this policy top priority was the correct decision. A second key finding was the centrality of freight transport as a source of emissions. The key challenge here is the relative lack of technological alternatives. New and more efficient cars are being developed, to the point where it is plausible to expect that within 20 years a combination of smart policy and smart technology will result in sharply falling emissions from the car fleet, but there is no comparable evolution of technologies on the freight side. An important finding is the failure of the market to provide transhipment depots for small freight operators, which could substantially increase efficiency and competitiveness and reduce energy use and emissions.

The integration of land use planning and transport infrastructure to provide critical mass is crucial if a regular service at affordable cost is to be provided. We were the first to undertake the analysis of road pricing - using GPS type technology to charge based on environmental efficiency of the car, congestion of the road, using Dutch experience as the benchmark. In the long term, road pricing (charge based on fuel and environmental efficiency of the vehicle and extent of road congestion) is a key means of securing traffic flow, effective public transport (congestion is the main reason why public transport is ineffective at present) and reduced greenhouse gas emissions. Comhar SDC’s work will be key in the development of the approach in Ireland.

Biodiversity and Climate Change
Our contribution here is through research and analysis on the implications of climate change for biodiversity and support for the multi-stakeholder Biodiversity Forum, now chaired by Ken Whelan.
The impacts of climate change on our biodiversity are already being felt and will gather pace over the coming century. Actions undertaken will take a considerable time to produce benefits and need to be initiated at an early stage. The changing relationship between biodiversity and our climate will have profound implications for our economic and social well-being, as well as on the commitments to halt biodiversity loss entered into by Government.

In working with your Department in preparing the second National Biodiversity Plan, the Biodiversity Forum identified the effects of climate change as a priority area for further investigation and highlighted the need to prepare and implement responses to protect Ireland’s biodiversity. We subsequently commissioned a detailed review of this area carried out by NUI Maynooth in conjunction with Enviro Centre and a Forum statement, with recommendations to Government arising from this research forwarded to you on 30th July. The statement has been discussed by the Comhar Council and has the Council’s full support.

Although the review identifies that further analyses are required, it also stresses that immediate and urgent action is essential; to postpone determined action would be to the detriment of biodiversity and hence the future economic, social and environmental welfare of Ireland. In order to increase and maintain ecosystem resilience the statement argues for a strong policy steer which will deliver a committed buy-in from a wide range of key sectors including: agriculture, finance, transport, spatial planning, fisheries, forestry, and tourism. The Forum, working under the auspices of Comhar SDC, can continue to play its part in generating support amongst key stakeholders for implementation of these policy options.

*Embedding carbon values in the assessment of projects undertaken by the Department of Finance*

We provided analysis to support the Department of Finance’s efforts to include a ‘value of carbon emitted’ as alternative investments are assessed. The incorporation of such values will in effect help to ensure that carbon efficiency is an important criterion in decisions as regards which investments are favoured or otherwise.

*Cap and Share*

This approach - decide on the overall greenhouse gas emissions ceiling, allocate allowances to Irish residents such that the sum of allocations do not exceed the ceiling, and require emitters to buy allowances from the public sufficient to cover their emissions – has been pioneered by Feasta. Our Council decided to undertake the analytical work to assess its potential in terms of economic, social and environmental impact. The findings were that it would be environmentally effective, in that the emissions cap would be achieved, energy costs would rise substantially (the extent of the rise depending on the ‘tightness’ of the cap), the net impact on GDP and employment would be negligible, the poorest would benefit most, (revenues from sale of allowances would exceed the increase in their energy bills), but rural residents were likely to be negatively impacted. The current difficulties with public finance have made a carbon tax a more likely policy choice in the short run, but the Comhar SDC analysis of cap and share shows that it is a policy instrument that has great potential in the medium term.

3.1.2 Insights for Climate Change Policy Design and Implementation, and Comhar SDC Effectiveness
How important is it that the conclusions of these analyses and Council recommendations be implemented? The stakes are very high. If we don’t have a carbon tax applied to the non EU ETS sectors, we don’t have the key driver to support energy efficiency, the implementation of renewables obligations, the stimulation of innovation and the green economy. We will struggle to meet our EU obligations, and will suffer serious competitive disadvantage as we adopt more expensive and less effective measures, which are also likely to prove very expensive for the Exchequer. We will lack the revenues to meet our obligations to the most deprived, and to stimulate research and development and investment in low carbon alternatives.

How effective is our work in advancing the acceptance of these ideas?

- In general, because we both do the analyses, and secure Council support, we believe that our efforts make it easier to both identify what should be done, and then to implement it. We have worked hard to ensure that our work is of high analytical quality, and is credible with key power centres, even when they don’t agree with its implications.
- In case-making to the Commission on Taxation, in regard to the carbon tax, it was very valuable to have both the evidence and Council support, and it will be even more important as we move from concept to implementation.
- The work on VRT and the annual road tax was an important enabler for the policy changes subsequently adopted, as was the work on the valuation of carbon in the consideration of public investment options.
- We also pressed the case at the Oireachtas Committee on Climate Change, and in all other arenas where we get the opportunity.
- Introducing a new tax is difficult to impossible unless citizens understand how the revenues accruing are to be used. Our Council only supported the carbon tax on the basis that they knew that some of the revenues would in effect be used to address fuel poverty and to stimulate business and households to reduce energy use and emissions, and also that some provision would be made for businesses that demonstrate with independent certification that they meet very demanding energy reduction obligations. The level of tax likely to be introduced will on its own be insufficiently high to meet our targets for both emissions reduction and green business stimulation. We need additional policies, and the funds generated by the carbon tax can be a key resource in this regard. This is an important insight, which goes against the Department of Finance’s vehement opposition to earmarking or hypothecation. We need a form of words that avoids this terminology, but ensures that the necessary expenditure is forthcoming.
- Our work on rural transport, road pricing and cap and share is path breaking, and will ensure that these options get serious consideration when the context allows.
Advancing Ireland’s Biodiversity Agenda

Biodiversity is a technical way of saying ‘nature,’ comprising the web of animal and plants and the soil, geology, air and water that sustains life. The key features are interconnectedness (‘the ecosystem’), the fact that, as John Muir expressed it, ‘everything is connected to everything else in the universe’, and it provides us all with a variety of ecosystem services for free. These ecosystem services include: reducing the intensity of floods (natural systems store water and release it slowly); removing pollutants – nature acts as a filter that removes pollutants from water and air; capturing and sequestering carbon; sustaining wild plants and animals that can have medicinal value; allowing a mature understanding and enjoyment of nature and its interdependencies; providing the aesthetic and landscape benefits that are important to both residents of, and visitors to, Ireland, and in some cases comprise the key asset for a tourist business.

The study, Benefits and Costs of Biodiversity in Ireland, undertaken on behalf of NPWS in 2008, calculates that the marginal value of biodiversity in Ireland is worth at least €2.6 billion per annum - much more than the costs involved in maintaining it for the benefit of society, including human health and well-being.

But the market fails to recognise and value these manifold and important benefits, so if they are to be conserved and protected, policy must intervene to do so. Such intervention can take many forms – education to ensure that the character, magnitude, importance and value of these services are understood, payment for ecosystem services, zoning, and direct investment. It is Comhar SDC’s view that these crucially important values will not be given parity of esteem in public or private decision making unless there is both understanding and appropriate action. Labels are important, which is why we have adopted ‘green infrastructure’ as a key idea.

Ireland’s first National Biodiversity Plan was published in 2002, and set out a series of actions aimed at safeguarding the country’s native biodiversity, to be implemented between 2002 and 2007. The second National Biodiversity Plan is now being prepared. The production of such plans is an obligation under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), which Ireland ratified in 1996. However, actions outlined in the first national plan have failed to halt the decline of Irish biodiversity.

While significant progress was made in implementing many of the actions, it must be acknowledged that biodiversity has continued to decline in Ireland. Such a decline is the result of many interacting pressures, including unprecedented economic development; the growth in the human population; urbanisation; changes in agriculture, forestry and land-managing practices; pollution; the spread of exotic and invasive organisms and diseases; loss of – or damage to – natural habitats, and climate change.

The preparation of our second National Biodiversity Plan represents an important opportunity – and probably the last opportunity for many species – to ensure that Ireland has an effective and comprehensive plan for future biodiversity conservation. Our wild species and natural environment are amongst Ireland’s most important but fragile assets. Biodiversity provides us with food, fresh
water, fuel and building materials. It can be considered the raw material that sustains life on earth. All of the various sectors in Irish society must now work together to advance economic development while promoting and maintaining biodiversity.

Comhar SDC are supporting NPWS in policy development in this area and through the Biodiversity Forum are preparing analysis to inform Ireland’s position on what the post 2010 target should be. A common position will need to be agreed this year by EU member states and at the CBD COP next year.

3.2.2 Insights for Biodiversity Policy Design and Implementation, and Comhar SDC Effectiveness

In 2008, the Biodiversity Forum made a number of recommendations in its input to the second National Biodiversity Plan. These include:

- Mainstreaming biodiversity in decision-making at national government level: according to the Forum, better cooperation between Government departments and agencies is needed to make further progress with conservation, while broader integration of biodiversity into other sectors of society – such as planning, agriculture, transport and tourism – is also needed.

- Placing biodiversity at the forefront of local authority development plans and urban spatial planning, and making adequate resources available to local authorities to engage biodiversity or heritage officers who would underpin the delivery of biodiversity policy at local level.

- Implementing a sustained public education and awareness programme to make biodiversity relevant to the public.

- Expanding protected areas, and improving their management and monitoring: local authorities should protect strips of hedgerows, woodlands and waterways that act as corridors linking important biodiversity sites.

Green Infrastructure

Comhar SDC believes that “green infrastructure” and the protection and enhancement of ecosystem goods and services should be viewed as critical infrastructure for Ireland in the same way as our transport and energy networks and as vital to sustainable development. The development of “green infrastructure”, including multi-functional green spaces in urban areas as well as ecological connectivity in the wider landscape, has been identified by Comhar as one of the priority areas in its proposals for a Green New Deal for Ireland.

Comhar SDC aims to build on efforts to date to develop recommendations to Government, practical and useful guidance and tools for local and regional authorities and to disseminate these widely. Developing green infrastructure will require the development of map-based strategies. To inform thinking on green infrastructure and identify the most important actions, the baseline situation needs to be established. This will enable the identification of current assets, functional requirements and benefits of current green infrastructure. This would provide an evidence base for follow on work developing strategies assessing future needs and identifying where improvements
and new green infrastructure should be provided in the future. The baseline assessment would be undertaken using GIS to collate, map and analyse information and the starting point for this is the designated site network.

Comhar SDC is one of the current leaders in developing green infrastructure policy in Ireland and will recommend a national policy framework which will integrate spatial planning with biodiversity protection, climate change adaptation and enhancement of ecosystem goods and services and people’s wellbeing. This research and analysis will have an important role to play in informing policy formation by NPWS and the Department and will contribute to Ireland’s input to the CBD COP in 2010 where green infrastructure and this integrated approach will be further developed.
3.3.1 Advancing Ireland’s Waste Agenda
Ireland has long standing policy aspirations to move from waste management to resource management. While the ongoing international review of waste policy will inform the development of waste policy in coming years, it will not recommend policies on the sustainable use of natural resources or sustainable consumption and production. Comhar SDC has made recommendations on the regulation of the waste management sector generally as well as on sustainable consumption and production policy which it plans to further develop into a national action plan. Comhar SDC’s has also carried out research on the development of resource use indicators and how satellite accounts for natural resources can be used by policy and decision makers.

Comhar SDC’s work in this area has focused not only on the upstream policies on resource use but the downstream policies on waste disposal options. A key issue as regards final waste disposal is to structure the incentives facing those involved such that:

- The environmental implications of the choices fully reflect the polluter pays principle, and
- The total costs facing households and economic activity are as low as is consistent with the achievement of best environmental practise.

Where these two requirements are met, environmental objectives are met at minimum cost to the economy. The corollary is that when they are not met, resources are wasted, and a burden is gratuitously placed on economic performance.

Reflecting these principles in policy means estimating both the private (land, equipment, labour, materials etc.) and environmental (air pollution, water quality, greenhouse gas emissions, chemical waste disposal etc) costs associated with land fill, incineration, and other final disposal options, and then ensuring that both of these cost categories are included in the assessment of the alternatives and in the choices made. There is also a case to be made for a regulator who examines practise in local authorities to ensure that they comply with best practise on the analysis of alternatives and in the implementation of choices made.

A Commentary focused on the application of these propositions in the Netherlands. The conclusion of the Dutch work was that the total (private and environmental) costs of incineration were substantially higher than landfill. It recommended that the approach be applied to the analysis of alternative final disposal options for Ireland. A submission focused on the proposal to have a Waste Regulator.

3.3.2 Insights for Waste Policy Design and Implementation, and Comhar SDC Effectiveness
The Comhar SDC work on resource use has supported the Central Statistics Office in the production of a set of Material Flow Accounts for Ireland and identified how these can be used in policy and decision making.

- The Comhar SDC work has been an important input into the ongoing review of Irish waste policy. It has helped put the issue of final disposal options and asymmetric treatment of
options on the agenda in a structured and comprehensible fashion. To the extent that policy and practise reflect the level playing field approach proposed, environmental and economic costs will be reduced.

- The work has also been an important input into the consideration of the design of local authority waste charges by the Commission on Taxation.
3.4.1 Advancing Ireland’s Water Policy Agenda

Successful policy in regard to water requires:

- A river basin approach, where the interdependencies between users – including ecological requirements – can be simultaneously addressed. This maximises the prospects of ensuring that the inevitable tradeoffs are coherently faced, that investments with maximum overall benefit are favoured, that gratuitous environmental damage is avoided, and that the adaptation to climate change induced variation in flows and demands are effectively managed.
- The scarcity value of the resource is reflected in the price that users pay. This does not apply to households at present. A water charge based on use applies the polluter/user pays fairness principle - those who use most are not subsidised by those who use least, a 24 hour a day incentive is provided to conserve water, which reduces the investment and associated environmental costs required to bring forward new supplies, and allows rapid and minimum cost disruption to well being and economic activity whenever there are sharp changes in supply, perhaps climate change induced. It also generates the funds needed to meet the very demanding EU requirements as regards water supply and quality and ecosystem protection.
- Land use policy that allows the articulation of land use options and their implications, and the implementation of a land use strategy that designs with nature so as to achieve complementarity between development, agriculture and forestry and tourism, and how water, wetlands and nature are used.

These insights have been developed in a number of Commentaries, and in submissions by Comhar

3.4.2 Insights for Water Policy Design and Implementation, and Comhar SDC Effectiveness

- These issues are not at the top of agendas at present. But it is likely that they will emerge soon, as availability of funds shrinks, and as health and compliance issues become central to well being. The Comhar SDC work has been an important stimulus to awareness and debate, and will shape policy as it evolves. To the extent that it is reflected in policy, it will save public funds in reduced infrastructure requirements to increase supply to meet excess demand; it will help protect environmental endowments and provide the resources to provide a water supply and waste treatment system that meets international standards. To the extent that policy and practise reflect this approach, costs to the environment and the economy will be substantially reduced, and non-compliance with EU directives will be substantially reduced if not eliminated.

The work has also been an important input into the consideration of the desirability and design of local authority water charges by the Commission on Taxation.

4. Cross-cutting Issues

4.1.1 Advancing a Green New Deal for Ireland
Ireland faces strong challenges over the next few years relating to the sustainability of the economy, our natural environment, and the well-being of society. Failure to address these challenges will put at risk our ability to prosper both as a society and economy in the future. The current global financial crisis has only underlined our need to put sustainability at the heart of our economic recovery.

The Irish Government has already identified the Green New Deal as a key component in its plan for sustainable economic recovery, and established a high level group to map out the strategy for making it a reality. The ‘Smart Economy’ strategy, published by Government in December 2009, inter alia, aims to implement a 'new green deal' to move Ireland away from fossil fuel-based energy production through investment in renewable energy and to promote the green enterprise sector and the creation of 'green-collar' jobs. Comhar SDC’s work in this area is directed at mobilising stakeholders to engage with and support the concept, and to be as helpful as possible to the High Level Group in developing its recommendations.

We have organised a steering group, drafted a Briefing Paper and convened two workshops to bring key players together to advance the concept. The first was a broad brush analysis, of issues and priorities, the second focussed on finance.

A number of critical issues must be addressed in formulating a Green New Deal for Ireland. These include:

- examining the priority areas for green stimulus investment
- devising the policy instruments required to transform it from concept to reality, and
- raising the level of funding required to finance such a programme through a range of financing mechanisms.

As regards opportunities arising from the climate change agenda, the recently published Ireland’s Low Carbon Opportunity – analysis of costs and benefits of reducing GHG emissions, Sustainable Energy Ireland 2009 provides an important set of priorities in this domain (in order of least cost, lighting, electronics and appliances (residential and commercial), lighting controls (commercial), retrofit building envelope (residential), new build efficiency package (residential), retrofit building envelope (commercial), peat to wind). If acted upon, these would reduce emissions by about 15 million tonnes of CO₂ by 2030. However, the GND canvas needs to be much broader than this for two reasons; important business opportunities will arise due to innovation that are not specifically tied to the needs of Irish policy or the market, and there are a variety of opportunities outside the energy climate change agenda that need enterprise and innovation.

### 4.1.2 Insights for Implementation of a Green New Deal and Comhar SDC Effectiveness

The following are preliminary judgements as to key elements in any strategy:

1. **Get the Prices right.** The carbon tax is crucial here as a key to enterprise and innovation in regard to climate change, but the same principle applies to waste, water etc.. This will compensate for the market failure involved where the scarcity value of environment is not recognised in markets.
2. **Create an investment fund** specifically to promote the green new deal. This could be funded through environmental revenues raised from climate taxes, auctioning of emissions trading scheme allowances post 2012 and the issuance of government backed green bonds. Some countries are aiming to have 2% of GDP in such a fund. This is consistent with the levels recommended by the UN and the Grantham Research Institute and will ensure that Ireland is positioned at the forefront of global policy developments in this field. This will compensate for the failure of the market to fully compensate innovation and intellectual property.

3. Adopt a **two-track approach** – support **conventional business** e.g. retro fit insulation, and **innovation led enterprise**.

The first will ensure that we can achieve ‘quick wins’ as regards employment and enterprise. The second will ensure that we have the intellectual property to sustain business over the long haul and in global markets.

4. Ensure that every public investment programme, e.g. meters, has an **innovation dimension** involving business and the research community.

There are opportunities and synergies to make capital investment work better if innovation is tested in parallel.

5. Ensure that **tax policy** encourages and facilitates innovation, and that **public R&D** continues to do likewise.

The Green New Deal should encompass the following objectives:

- Revive the Irish economy and generate employment opportunities through building an innovative sustainable and resource efficient society.
- Reduce ecosystem degradation.
- Redress the failings of our financial and governance systems and provide for greater social inclusion.

Comhar SDC is finalising a detailed position paper and policy recommendations. In the meantime Comhar SDC is making interim recommendations which identifies the following seven priority areas in terms of a Green New Deal for Ireland:

1. Improving the energy efficiency of existing housing stock
2. Scaling up Renewable Energy
3. Redesigning the National Grid
4. Providing Sustainable Mobility
5. Public Sector Investments
6. Skills and Training
7. Green Infrastructure
4.2.1. Advancing Communications, Awareness and Education for Sustainable Development

Communication, awareness-raising and education for sustainable development are crucial to increasing the probability of implementation of sustainable development principles by policymakers and acceptance by the public once proposed. Achieving progress on sustainable development therefore requires continuous effective engagement key sectoral and representative interests and the general public.

Communication and Awareness Raising

Comhar SDC aims to engage effectively with key sectoral commercial and political interests and the general public so that there is widespread understanding of sustainability issues. As part of this objective, Comhar SDC Chairman, Professor Frank Convery, publishes a bi-monthly commentary which focuses attention on the sustainability dimension of emerging issues. This commentary is published in local newspapers once a month ensuring that sustainable development is topical among citizens.

We have been running a media Fund award for the last 2 years, for media projects focusing on sustainable development. The fund is open to all Irish media, and is aimed at promoting more and better coverage of sustainable development issues. The media fund has been successful in attracting a wide range of applicants, reaching diverse audiences.

Comhar sponsors events and publications which help to support key objectives in the Comhar work programme, particularly where such sponsorship promotes a better understanding of sustainable development amongst stakeholders and the general public.

- Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition: Comhar SDC has sponsored a special sustainable development award in the BT Young Scientist and Technology Exhibition since 2000. It is a means of both raising awareness of Comhar SDC and its purposes and also encouraging greater involvement/interest by young students in sustainable development issues.

- Award in Tidy Towns Competition: Since 2004, Comhar SDC has sponsored an award in the Tidy Towns competition. The award was for the town or village where a building, group of buildings or space has been improved in a manner consistent with Comhar SDC’s Principles for Sustainable Development.

- Young Environmentalist Award: Since 2006, Comhar has sponsored a special Sustainable Development prize, in the Young Environmentalist Award, which is run by Eco-unesco. This is a unique initiative aimed at raising environmental awareness amongst young people whilst aiding personal development and fostering responsible citizenship.

- Fashion Evolution: Since 2007, Comhar SDC has sponsored industry roundtable talks as part of Fashion Evolution. The aim of the seminar is to open discussion between Irish educators, designers, buyers and researchers on the ethical and environmental effects of the industry with a view to developing strategies and shaping future policies/practices with regards to ethical and environmental standards.
• Over a number of years, Comhar SDC has sponsored events and activities undertaken by the Cultivate Sustainable Living Centre in Dublin. Comhar SDC has provided funding for educational events and activities which are complementary to the work of Comhar SDC and which engage with a wide range of sectors and local communities. Some examples include, continued support of the Convergence Festival and Cultivate’s Annual Conference, sponsorship for further development and the progressing of FETAC accreditation of the Powerdown Course and sponsorship for the initial set up and administration of the Transition Town Network in Ireland

• 3rd Level Sustainable Development Lecture Series: Comhar SDC, in conjunction with the EPA, funded an Occasional Lecture Series delivered by Gavin Harte, consultant in Education for Sustainable Development. The lecture is flexible and can be tailored to meet the specific needs and interests of diverse groups of students. It covers a broad range of topics under the theme of sustainable development. Student evaluations of the lecture series suggest that it is an effective tool for learning about sustainable development.

Education for Sustainable Development

The UN has declared 2005-2014, the Decade for Sustainable Development. Member states are required under the plan to develop and implement a National Strategy for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). The Department of Education and Science retains the overall coordinating role for policy development and implementation for ESD. Proposals for a draft strategy were published in December 2007 but remain to be adopted. Comhar SDC input into a comprehensive discussion paper examining the current state of ESD and recommending how to achieve future progress.

The Regional Centre of Expertise - Ireland (RCE - Ireland) is an action and research network consisting of higher education institutes, public sector bodies and NGOs. RCE-Ireland aims to promote and support activities and research that result in effective integration of ESD principles and practices into formal, informal and non-formal education in Ireland. Comhar SDC is an active member of the RCE network and hosts quarterly meetings.

4.2.2 Insights on Communications, Awareness and Education and Comhar SDC Effectiveness

• Comhar will ensure continued communication with stakeholders and the public on sustainable development through the Comhar SDC website, publications and occasional workshops and seminars.

• Comhar is investing time and effort into improving its online communication, which provides information for both policy makers and the public. It ensures easy access to all of our research and submissions, as well as general information on sustainable development.

• The Chairman’s Commentary has proven to be very popular and is an important tool in disseminating messages around sustainable development to a wide audience.

• Comhar is important in supporting many events that promote sustainable development.
• Comhar is looking to reach more diverse audiences, while still staying focused on its primary function. For example, Comhar is in the process of facilitating the development of a local authority network which will allow information sharing across local authorities on practical sustainable projects. Local authorities are extremely important in implementing sustainable development, and Comhar SDC are a prime support unit.

• Comhar SDC will continue to provide logistical support for, and participate in, the work of the Regional Centre for Education for Sustainable Development in University Limerick which acts as a focal point for research and best practice on ESD.
4.3.1 Measuring Sustainable Development

Achieving the aim of moving Ireland’s economy and society onto a sustainable footing will require a process of managed change. This will comprise target setting, policy development and implementation, and monitoring and evaluation of progress towards targets through the adoption and application of a comprehensive set of indicators. These indicators must not only reflect changes in quality of life, but must also show if these changes are compatible with the planet’s current ecological limits.

Ireland has had a sustainable development strategy (NSDS) in place since 1997 and the current strategy is under review, but has not yet adopted a SDI set. The Central Statistics Office (CSO) first published an initial set of national progress indicators in 2003 however, with the exception of the ‘Measuring Ireland’s Progress’ series of reports there has been little progress in the development and application of a SDI set for Ireland. Comhar SDC has worked with the Central Statistics Office to progress the development of a SDI set through providing research on specific indicators and a national framework.

4.3.2 Insights on Measuring Sustainable Development and Comhar SDC Effectiveness

- The outputs of previous Comhar SDC commissioned research on sustainable development indicators (SDI) will be further developed into proposals for a comprehensive and integrated SDI set for Ireland. This will integrate the recommended national and sub-national sets and provide further assessment of inter-linkages between thematic indicators.

- An indicator set will not measure all aspects of sustainable development but provides a simplified picture for use in policy and decision making. Each individual indicator will have strengths and weaknesses but it is their use in a basket of indicators that provides a more holistic picture of development.

- Comhar SDC will select a headline set of indicators as a recommendation to the renewed NSDS which it will publish annually along with a commentary on progress on sustainable development. Such a commentary if put in the context of wellbeing or ‘beyond GDP’ will be a valuable communication tool and outreach exercise as well as monitoring policy performance.

4.4.1 Enabling Local Government and Sustainable Communities

Local authorities play an important role in moving Ireland down a more sustainable pathway and are responsible for many key functions that will come under stress from climate change and declining energy supplies. They will also play a major part in implementing the revised National Sustainable Development Strategy, when it is published. It is, therefore, essential that local authority staff and elected officials, understand the concepts of sustainable development and their role in instigating it.
A report commissioned by Comhar SDC and prepared by Sean O’Riordain (2008)\(^1\) recognised that Comhar SDC should support local authorities in the implementation of the renewed National Sustainable Development Strategy. The report also suggested that Comhar SDC assist in further development\(^2\) of a communication structure between local and national government on national policy matters relating to the environment or regarding implementation of the renewed National Sustainable Development Strategy.

Comhar SDC is currently facilitating the development of Local Authority Sustainability Champions Network (LASC Network). Comhar SDC believes that the network would assist local authorities in meeting their targets and promote sustainable development at local level. The Local Authority Sustainability Network is designed to provide a platform for information sharing for local authorities on best practice on local sustainability. With increasing financial and other constraints due to economic climate, the network will avoid duplication of work and provide a selection of tried and tested projects that local authorities can assess to meet their objectives.

The network will initially run through a quarterly newsletter which collates various innovative sustainable development projects happening throughout the local authorities in Ireland. Comhar SDC can manage the collation of the newsletter.

The same report recognised that sustainable development (including in relation to financing and procurement) should be integrated into local authority training programmes. Comhar considers that efforts should be directed at training that provides specific practical application for local authority staff and elected officials. Training should also be targeted for different levels and different sectors. Comhar has engaged with the EPA, IPA and others to advance the integration of sustainable development principles into training programmes for local authority officials and elected members.

### 4.4.2 Insights on Sustainable Communities and Comhar SDC Effectiveness

- Comhar SDC will continue to work with representative bodies for local authority officials and elected members to promote better understanding of sustainable development. The network will provide a clear line of communication between Comhar SDC and the local authorities on sustainable development issues. It will be a key source of information sharing, especially considering budgets cuts on travelling - which means that local authority staff and elected officials cannot attend as many conferences.

- Comhar will continue to engaged with the EPA, IPA and others to advance the integration of sustainable development principles into training programmes for local authority officials and elected members.

- Comhar has highlighted sustainable communities as a key priority for its work programme for the next three years and will develop tools for communities that wish to become more sustainable.

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\(^2\) Comhar SDC recognises the already existing and very active interface between the Department and local authorities via the Joint DoEHLG/CCMA Environment Committee.
5. Delivery of the Comhar SDC Work Programme: How do we do it?

We mobilise a number of mechanisms:

- We provide well argued, evidence based feedback to requests for input on emerging policy; a few examples amongst many include our feedback on energy efficiency, transport, climate change strategy, biodiversity, and governance for sustainable development.
- We interact with our Council membership and other key stakeholders to ensure that our feedback has broad support across our membership. Recommendations for Government are initially developed under the guidance of Comhar Working Groups comprising Comhar members, other interested stakeholders and Secretariat staff.
- We draw on best knowledge and experience nationally and internationally, so that we are never duplicating or wasting time and effort. We benefit from the sharing of best practice through engaging with similar European councils network\(^3\) and also contribute to the collective effort to shape the European agenda through this network. We also provide support to the Irish delegation to the UN Commission on sustainable Development.
- We cooperate with our counter-parts and colleagues in Northern Ireland on a number of fronts, including the Biodiversity Forum (which has representation from Northern Ireland), the UK Sustainable Development Commission (particularly in relation to Green New Deal and the British Council’s Challenge Europe Project) and through participation on Peace 3 and Interreg 4 Committees.
- We take our own initiatives to develop new ideas and to inject them into the policy system. Three examples of projects completed include: analysing Feasta’s Cap and Share initiative, the potential for road pricing in an Irish context, and the implications of climate change for biodiversity in Ireland. Examples of projects in progress are: making a reality of Ireland’s Green Tech Economy, the development and dissemination of accessible indicators to assess sustainability performance, the development of grass roots development of best practise case studies of sustainable development in action from local authority level, from which we can all learn, understanding the contributions that ‘green infrastructure’ makes to economic, social and environmental well being, and how to ensure that
- The Chairman presents propositions, via the independent bi-weekly Commentary - with popular and more specialist issues alternating – that are designed to stimulate consideration of new ideas for making sustainable development a reality. Examples include: cases for the carbon tax (and recycling of funds), and water pricing, neutrality in how different forms of final solid disposal (landfill, incineration, other) are treated, and the mobilisation of innovation to support green technology and sustainable development.

- We are increasingly focusing good governance for sustainable development and the need to foster sustainable communities. We are building relationships with the key representative bodies at local level to support the sharing of best practice and capacity building.

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\(^3\) European Sustainable Development and Environment Advisory Councils Network (EEAC)
• **Secretariat and analytical support for the Biodiversity Forum** in supporting its analysis, and helping develop and disseminate conclusions, and parallel support for advancing the policy in regard to *environmental education*.

• Our **web site** in more and more a key vehicle for engaging with all our stakeholders, including in particular the public.

In all of the above, the following are characteristic: evidence rather than platitudes; integration of economy and environment, and an associated understanding of interdependence of ecosystems and economy; shaping incentives so that self interest and the public interest coincide to promote sustainable outcomes, developing a shared view across stakeholders as to the best way to proceed, mobilising existing work and resources so as not to duplicate effort.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Summary</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Submission to Regional Authorities in the Greater Dublin Area for the Greater Dublin Area Regional Planning Guidelines 2010-2022.</td>
<td>The recommendations recognise that the overarching goal of the GDA Regional Planning Guidelines should be to achieve a good quality of life for all through the planning process. The first important step is to ensure that a strong cohesive long-term vision for the sustainable development of the region is established.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>Biodiversity Forum: Statement and policy recommendations on Biodiversity &amp; Climate Change</td>
<td>The recommendations stress that immediate and urgent action is essential; to postpone determined action would be to the detriment of biodiversity and hence the future economic, social and environmental welfare of Ireland. In order to increase and maintain ecosystem resilience the statement argues for a strong policy steer which will deliver a committed buy-in from a wide range of key sectors.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Department of Transport on the Biofuels Obligation Scheme</td>
<td>Comhar SDC made recommendations based on the public Consultation on the Sustainable Transport and Travel Action Plan. Comhar SDC believes that the key to making transport in Ireland more sustainable is to provide direct incentives to all drivers to reduce their use of fuel and associated carbon dioxide, particulates and other pollutants, and their use of scarce road space at peak times, and to improve the availability of alternatives and make them more attractive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Recommendations to Department of Finance on Carbon Pricing</td>
<td>In November 2008, Comhar SDC made recommendations on the inclusion of carbon pricing in capital project appraisal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>Biodiversity recommendations to the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government on</td>
<td>The Biodiversity Forum commissioned an extensive briefing paper</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Department of</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>the Commission on Taxation</td>
<td>Comhar SDC delivered a set of recommendations to the Commission on Taxation on reducing carbon emissions through fiscal measures.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008</td>
<td>the Government on the Budget 2009</td>
<td>Comhar SDC recommended that the focus should be on mobilising markets for a low carbon future that ensures quality of life in Ireland, especially in regard to environmental and social domains, is protected and enhanced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>the Department of Transport on its new Strategy Statement in 2007.</td>
<td>In 2007, the Department of Transport developed a new Strategy Statement to set priorities for the work of the Department for the three-year period from 2008-2010 which Comhar SDC made recommendations on.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources on its new Strategy Statement in 2007.</td>
<td>The purpose of the strategy is to set priorities for the work of the Department for the three-year period from 2008-2010. Comhar SDC made recommendations on the draft Strategy related to energy and natural resources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Comhar SDC Recommendations to the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government on proposed VRT and Motor Tax restructuring to include CO2-emissions differentiation</td>
<td>Comhar SDC reviewed the Options for restructuring the VRT and Motor Tax systems and proposed CO2-differentiated rates that could provide CO2 emissions reductions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Comhar SDC Recommendations to the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government on the review of the National Sustainable</td>
<td>The recommendations addressed the thematic priorities identified in the European Union Sustainable Development Strategy as well as...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Event</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Submission on OECD Review of the Irish Public Sector</td>
<td>The recommendations were drawn in part from Comhar Sustainable Development Council’s 2006 Recommendations on Sustainability in the National Development Plan 2007-2013.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>Submission to the Department of Finance on Budget 2008</td>
<td>The focus of the submission is on mobilising markets – carbon and VRT and Motor Tax – to change greenhouse gas emission trajectory as in the Agreed Programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Department of Finance the National Development Plan 2007-2013</td>
<td>In 2007, Comhar gave recommendations on sustainability in relation to the National Development Plan 2007-2013. The NDP represents the main vehicle determining investment priorities. Comhar SDC devoted considerable effort to addressing how to ensure that sustainability was incorporated, not just in the investment programme, but also in the operation and maintenance of what we invest in.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Department of the Communications, Marine and Natural Resources on the Energy Green Paper</td>
<td>Comhar made recommendations on the Energy Green Paper entitled ‘Towards a Sustainable Energy Future for Ireland’. Comhar SDC welcomed the range and breadth of ambition, but noted that energy efficiency and conservation still do not get ‘parity of esteem’ with energy supply and renewables, in spite of the fact that the economic, environmental and energy reduction payoffs to vigorous action in this domain are manifest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Recommendations on Budget 2007.</td>
<td>An important focus of our submission was how to re-calibrate tax on cars to improve their environmental performance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on the review of the National Climate Change Strategy.</td>
<td>Comhar SDC focused on the mix of policy that need to be mobilised if we are to change the trajectory of our greenhouse gas emissions, and adaptation to climate change.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on giving effect to EU Directive on public access to environmental information.</td>
<td>Comhar recommended that comprehensive guidance should be prepared for public authorities that have statutory obligations under the legislation, as well as information and awareness raising measures for users who wish to gain access to information under the revised code.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>Comhar’s Response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on the interim review of progress in implementing the National Biodiversity Plan.</td>
<td>Comhar’s Report provides observations on the main issues in the Plan and concludes that progress to date on most of the actions in the National Biodiversity Plan has been slow or minimal and that it is difficult to audit the Plan due to a lack of prioritised targets within specified time-scales.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2004</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on the Review of Local Government Financing.</td>
<td>The main thrust of Comhar’s recommendations was on extending the revenue base for local government through taxation on natural resources, in particular land.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Comments on the Mid-term review of the National Development Plan/Operational Programmes</td>
<td>Comhar submitted comments to the managing authorities for the National Development Plan/Operational Programmes, in the context of the mid-term review of the plan and programmes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on the Draft Guidelines for Regional and Planning Authorities on Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA)</td>
<td>Comhar recommended that greater emphasis should be placed on the need to ensure complete integration between the plan under preparation and the environmental report.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government on Draft Guidelines to Planning Authorities on Sustainable Rural Housing.</td>
<td>Comhar’s submission identified a number of issues that need to be addressed to underpin sustainable development in rural areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2003</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Department of Finance on proposals to introduce carbon taxation.</td>
<td>Comhar’s response to the consultation document on the proposal to introduce a carbon energy tax addressed the seven questions in the consultation paper and made recommendations on a number of specific aspects including the rate of tax, phasing and collection, recycling the tax revenue to compensate low-income households, and provide for a de-carbonisation fund.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on 1st Biennial Review of the National Climate Change</td>
<td>Comhar recognised the need to strengthen the NCCS and accelerate implementation measures given the current level and projected increase in emissions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>Details</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2002</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Department for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government on Use of Economic Instruments in the area of Waste Prevention</td>
<td>The recommendations were prepared having regard to the commitment in the Agreed Programme for Government that consideration would be given to the extension of the levy on plastic bags to other areas such as non-reusable packaging.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Department of the Environment and Local Government on the Draft Statement on Preventing and Recycling Waste</td>
<td>Comhar noted that more emphasis should be given to awareness raising, with practical examples of how the message would be delivered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Earth Council on the Assessment of Progress on Agenda 21</td>
<td>Comhar’s report formed part of the National Councils for Sustainable Development Assessment of Progress on Agenda 21, being coordinated by the Earth Council as part of the global preparations for the World Summit on Sustainable Development to be held in Johannesburg in 2002.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Department of the Environment and Local Government on communicating the National Climate Change Strategy</td>
<td>In its 1999 submission on the draft Climate Change Strategy, Comhar had identified communication of the Strategy, policies and implementation programmes as a critical success factor to bring about the necessary behavioural change. In response to a request from the Minister, Comhar elaborated on this point in specifically addressing the communication of the Strategy.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2001</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Department of the Environment and Local Government on stage 3 of the National Spatial Strategy</td>
<td>Comhar raised some key issues concerning proposed areas of research, and the integration into the proposed policy of the three aspects of sustainable development – environmental, economic and social.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Department of the Environment and Local Government, Department of Finance, Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Border, Midlands and Western Regional Assembly and the Southern &amp; Eastern Regional Assembly on draft Operational Programmes, 2000-2006</td>
<td>In addition to providing specific comments on the two Regional Operational Programmes, and also on the Employment &amp; Human Resources Development OP, Comhar laid particular emphasis on a number of crucial over-arching issues.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Recommendations to Commissioner Margot Wallstrom, DG-Environment, European Commission, and copied to the Ministers for Environment of each of the EU Member States on the EU Sixth Environmental Action Programme</td>
<td>Comhar held a roundtable in Dublin on 24 May 2000 to discuss directions for EU environment and sustainable development policy. The roundtable, which involved the members of Comhar as well as representatives of its full nominating panels, was designed to contribute to the consultation process leading towards the preparation of the EU’s 6th Environment Action Programme.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Year</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Department of the Environment and Local Government on the...</td>
<td>Notes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Department of the Environment and Local Government the Minister for Public Enterprise, the Border, Midlands &amp; Western Regional Assembly, the Southern &amp; Eastern Regional Assembly and the Department of Finance on Transport-related issues under the National Development Plan and the Economic and Social Infrastructure Operational Programme</td>
<td>Comhar addressed a broad range of transport related issues in the National Development Plan and the Economic and Social Infrastructure Operational Programme (ESIOP), recognising the impact of these initiatives for sustainable transport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Department of the Environment and Local Government on the paper “Key Sustainable Development Indicators”</td>
<td>Comhar’s specific response to the Department’s draft document on key headline indicators primarily addressed the immediate proposal for a headline set of indicators of sustainable development, and including comments on their presentation and communication, together with the need for further work.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Department of the Environment and Local Government on the Revised Draft Guidelines for Local Agenda 21</td>
<td>Comhar recommended that, to achieve the objectives of local sustainable development, Local Agenda 21 must become a corporate approach within each local authority rather than a list of projects and initiatives. It must be based on meaningful participation and partnership, applying to all aspects of local government such as housing/accommodation and planning as well as environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2000</td>
<td>Initial Recommendations to the Department of the Environment and Local Government on National Spatial Strategy Consultation Paper No. 1</td>
<td>Comhar recommended that environmental issues should be integrated into all areas, and that ecological networks should be the most important element, on which all else depends. An integrated environmental monitoring and reporting system for the country was needed, with all the different bodies involved in monitoring and reporting of the environment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Department of the Environment and Local Government on the Planning and Development Bill, 1999</td>
<td>Comhar’s principal concern with the Bill reflected its commitment to sustainable development.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1999</td>
<td>Recommendations to the Department of the Environment and Local Government on draft National Greenhouse Gas Abatement Strategy</td>
<td>Comhar endorsed the need for early action by all the economic sectors and at all levels of society. It welcomed the emphasis on broadly based measures and on equitable burden sharing.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex C: Overview of Comhar SDC

Who we are

What we do

Legislative drivers

Our outputs

Our key stakeholders

Who we are

What we do

Legislative drivers

Our outputs

Our key stakeholders
### Annex C: Comhar SDC Membership 2009

#### Pillar 1 - STATE / PUBLIC SECTOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Nominating Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jackie Maguire</td>
<td>OLAM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Micheál Ó Cinnéide</td>
<td>EPA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shirley Clerkin</td>
<td>The Heritage Council (Monaghan county Council)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vacancy</td>
<td>DOEHLG</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Noel Keyes</em></td>
<td>The Heritage Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Pillar 2 - ECONOMIC SECTOR

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dr Claire Penny</td>
<td>Business in the Community Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Liam Berney</td>
<td>Irish Congress of Trade Unions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><em>Donal Buckley (Alternate: Finola McDonnell)</em></td>
<td>Irish Business and Employers Confederation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emer Dunne</td>
<td>Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ruaidhri Deasy</td>
<td>Irish Farmers Association</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### Pillar 3 - ENVIRONMENTAL NGOs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jack O’Sullivan</td>
<td>Irish Environmental Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frank Corcoran</td>
<td>Irish Environmental Network (An Taisce)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>David Korowicz</td>
<td>Irish Environmental Network (Feasta)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pat Finnegan</td>
<td>Irish Environmental Network (Grian)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Organisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anja Murray</td>
<td>Irish Environmental Network (An Taisce)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elaine Nevin</td>
<td>National Youth Council of Ireland</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seamus Boland</td>
<td>Irish Rural Link</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niamh Garvey</td>
<td>Dochas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fr Sean Healy</td>
<td>Conference of Religious Ireland (CORI Justice)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judy Dunne</td>
<td>Consumers Association of Ireland</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**PILLAR 4 - SOCIAL & COMMUNITY SECTOR**

**PILLAR 5 - PROFESSIONAL / ACADEMIC SECTOR**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prof. Vincent O’ Flaherty</td>
<td>Royal Irish Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sue Scott</td>
<td>Royal Irish Academy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deirdre McGrath</td>
<td>Royal Town Planning Institute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Richard Moles</td>
<td>Environmental Sciences Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethna Diver</td>
<td>Directors of Institutes of Technology</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Annex D: Organisation Chart Of Comhar SDC

Organisational Structure

Comhar Council (25 members)

Chairman
Frank Convery

Director
Noel Casserly

Research Director & Policy Analyst – Lisa Ryan

Policy Analyst
Climate Change, Energy, Transport
Eoin McLoughlin

Policy Analyst
Natural resources including biodiversity
Cathy Maguire

Policy Analyst
Infrastructure, Built Environment, Governance
Niamh Kirwan

Commissioned Research

DEHLG [NESDO]
administrative support (IT, personnel, finance)

Office Manager – Paschal Stephens

Office Administrator
Ellie Corcoran

Stakeholders

Comhar Executive & Secretariat

Comhar Council (25 members)

Stakeholders

Comhar Executive & Secretariat

Comhar Council (25 members)

Chairman
Frank Convery

Director
Noel Casserly

Research Director & Policy Analyst – Lisa Ryan

Policy Analyst
Climate Change, Energy, Transport
Eoin McLoughlin

Policy Analyst
Natural resources including biodiversity
Cathy Maguire

Policy Analyst
Infrastructure, Built Environment, Governance
Niamh Kirwan

Commissioned Research

DEHLG [NESDO]
administrative support (IT, personnel, finance)

Office Manager – Paschal Stephens

Office Administrator
Ellie Corcoran

Other resources