

# **Environmental Research and Innovation in Ireland**

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**An ambitious €100 million research and innovation programme being administered by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), will underpin developments in the protection and enhancement of Ireland's environment in the coming years.**

Today marks a major call for research proposals under the EPA STRIVE programme. Valued at up to €10 million, proposals are being sought in the following areas:

- \* Environmental Technologies;
- \* Waste, Resource Management and Chemicals;
- \* Sustainable Development and Environmental Socio-Economics;
- \* Environment and Health;
- \* Environmental Research Data Management.

The new Science, Technology, Research & Innovation for the Environment programme (EPA STRIVE), open to researchers and companies, will support environmental policy development and implementation, and runs up to 2013.

Dr. Mary Kelly, Director General of the EPA, said, *"The importance of research and innovation across the Irish economy is well recognised and is extremely important in the environmental area. Good quality research can provide the foundation for credible decision-making while technology and innovation can provide solutions to environmental problems. The EPA STRIVE programme will support research and innovation in key areas of environmental importance and will help to build capacity and capability in Irish institutions as well as delivering world class results in an Irish context."*

EPA STRIVE combines initiatives to fund scientists, industrial innovators and new graduates in performing cutting-edge research to protect and improve the natural environment. Rapid developments in science and technology present opportunities to apply innovative solutions to environmental problems and to enhance monitoring and assessment of the environment. Nanotechnology, biotechnology and information technology are just a few of the innovative areas of science that the EPA is exploring through this programme.

## **Overview of the new EPA STRIVE programme**

EPA STRIVE will continue the expansion of Irish environmental research. Its success will depend on the collaboration of a wide range of agencies, research performers and industry partners, working together in a determined, flexible and innovative way.

A combination of projects will be funded ranging from short desk studies to large multi-annual capability development projects involving several organisations. The EPA STRIVE programme will involve over 1,000 researchers and industrial innovators over its lifetime and will be highly relevant to the key national and international environmental priorities.

<http://www.epa.ie/downloads/pubs/research/>

**The EPA STRIVE programme: is funded by a combination of National Development Plan (NDP) monies, Strategy for Science, Technology and Innovation (SSTI) funds, EU research grants and exchequer funding.**

*It is organised under three key measures and two support measures as follows:*

**1. Key Measure: Sustainable Development** – concerned with informing policy development and implementation on topics including climate change, eutrophication prevention, waste management and prevention, air quality, protection of soils and biodiversity.

**2. Key Measure: Cleaner Production and Environmental**

**Technologies** - including two successful elements of the previous programme. The cleaner production programme supports applied industry and services research initiatives aimed at developing and demonstrating cleaner, more environmentally friendly business operations. The Environmental Technology programme builds on the significant state investments by the EPA and others in new and emerging technologies research (ICT, Biotechnology, Nanotechnology) aimed at reducing the environmental impact of human activities, protect the environment and manage resources more efficiently.

**3. Key Measure: A Healthy Environment** - includes filling information gaps in respect of the links between the quality of air, water and soils on the one hand and human health and ecosystem health on the other. The outcomes in this area will include influencing behaviours for the betterment of the environment.

**4. Support Measure: EPA Research Centre** – the in-house research centre will continue to develop its work in the areas of data management and dissemination and the development of modern ICT infrastructure (sensors, spatial analysis) for detailed assessment of many complex environmental issues. This will be achieved through continuation of support for post-doctoral researchers and through targeted strategic projects.

**5. Support Measure: Capacity and Capability Building** – including the continuation of the successful annual scholarship support for up to 150 PhD and Masters students and the fellowship scheme for post-doctoral researchers. New funding mechanisms for more long-term research career development will be initiated. We will also fund research infrastructure through the provisions of support for key equipment.

**ENVision: environmental maps at your fingertips**

ENVision is a new interactive GIS facility showing environmental data on a map. It can be used to check air or water quality in your neighbourhood, see locations of EPA IPPC or waste licensed facilities or look up soils and landcover data for an area. Look at environmental maps for your locality.

**<http://maps.epa.ie/InternetMapView/MapView.aspx>**