



An Roinn Oideachais  
agus Óige  
Department of Education  
and Youth

## Education for Sustainable Development Newsletter

Welcome to the **September 2025** issue and **20<sup>th</sup> anniversary publication** of the Department of Education and Youth newsletter on **Education for Sustainable Development (ESD)**. We would like to thank all of those who have contributed. We hope that you enjoy this edition and will find inspiration, ideas, useful links and resources to help you to play your part in sustainable development.

You can read past issues of the newsletter [here](#) and [subscribe](#) to receive it directly into your inbox every quarter!

### **ESD in County Wexford and Wicklow – Calling All Educational Institutions!**

Do you attend, work for or collaborate with an educational establishment or institution in Wexford and Wicklow that is taking action for sustainable development? If so, we would love to hear from you for the next issue of the ESD Newsletter!

### **ESD in Schools – share your story**

In the 2025/26 school year we are focused on promoting **Local Level Action for sustainable development** so If your school collaborates with a local community group in ESD activity and you would like to share this in the ESD Newsletter, please get in touch by emailing [ESD@education.gov.ie](mailto:ESD@education.gov.ie). Your school will receive a **€500 One-For-All voucher** from the Department of Education and Youth if we publish your piece!

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# 1. ESD to 2030 Updates



## a. ESD to 2030 Funding for Schools

The Department of Education and Youth is now inviting applications from recognised primary and post primary schools for ESD funding for school projects during 2025/26 in the area of Education for Sustainable Development.

Priority will be given to ESD projects that include an element of Local Level Action and/ or Teacher Professional Learning. Further criteria are set out in the application form available on the ESD to 2030 webpage here: [National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Ireland](#)

Funding of up to €2,500 per school is available with a total available fund of €450,000. This is a competitive process and depending on the number of applications received, not all projects might be successful.

The closing date for receipt of project submissions is close of business on **Friday 17<sup>th</sup> October 2025**. No late applications will be accepted under any circumstances.

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## **b. ESD to 2030 Funding for Organisations 2025**

ESD to 2030 funding of €466,000 was delivered to 21 organisations in June.

Funding of between €2,000 and €25,000 was delivered for a range of projects and programmes which focus on Capacity Building of Teachers and on Accelerating Local Level action for sustainable development.

Projects include the further development of ESD resources and materials and provision of teacher professional learning and communities of practice. A wide range of ESD programmes are included for example the Nature Explorer Programme, the Picker Pals programme, the Heritage Keepers programme, the Farmer Time programme, the Wise Water programme, the Wool in School programme and the Grow it Yourself programme. Other projects include the Climate and Nature Summit, the Rubbish Film Festival and the student led Civil Engagement Roadshow. Many of the projects include workshops for students and engagement by students with local level and community action.

A full list of 2025 grantees and projects is available on the ESD to 2030 webpage: [ESD to 2030 Funding](#)

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## **c. Youth Climate Justice Funding 2025**

Minister for Education and Youth, Helen McEntee TD, announced almost €500,000 in funding for youth led climate justice projects happening across Ireland in 2025.

The Youth Climate Justice Fund helps young people aged 8 to 25 to take part in projects that raise awareness and take action on climate issues.

This year's projects include:

- A hydrogen education programme providing an inclusive, hands-on approach to renewable energy learning for 100 young people.
- A programme educating young people about the causes and consequences of water scarcity and pollution using workshops, member participation, and outdoor projects.
- A climate justice debate series involving university societies and youth-led groups.
- Development of an innovative, games-based curriculum designed to educate and inspire youth aged 13-25 about climate change adaptation, empowering young people to design and implement local climate adaptation projects.

The programme includes climate education, community events, awareness campaigns, and hands-on environmental activities.

A full list of the projects funded is available on the departments website:  
<https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-education/press-releases/minister-mcentee-announces-498000-for-youth-climate-projects/>

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## **d. School Sustainability Policy Statements - Map**

**NEW:** The department has published a map of school Sustainability Policy Statements. Check if your school is on the map and if not e-mail ([ESD@education.gov.ie](mailto:ESD@education.gov.ie)) us the link to your Sustainability Policy Statement for inclusion: [School Sustainability Policy](#)

The Sustainability Toolkit for schools has also had some updates. Check out the up-to-date version on the ESD to 2030 webpage.

## **e. ESD to 2030 – 2<sup>nd</sup> Progress Report**

The 2<sup>nd</sup> progress report on our ESD to 2030 implementation plan has now been published. Check out the report to see what has been happening since July 2023 in terms of each of our priority areas: Advancing Policy, Transforming Learning Environments, Capacity Building of Educators, Empowering and Mobilising Young People and Accelerating Local Level Action. The report includes case studies representing best practice in ESD across all levels of the education system.

In January 2025, the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, the Department of Education and Youth, and the Department of Children, Disability and Equality, contacted relevant bodies identified as 'Lead' actors in the ESD to 2030 implementation plan, seeking updates on progress towards medium-term and ongoing actions for the second report on progress covering the period July 2023 to December 2024..

A total of 37 Government Departments, organisations and agencies, and 17 Higher Education Institutions provided updates. This qualitative information was analysed and synthesised by departmental officials, with consultation provided by the national steering group.

Featured throughout the report are case studies, which highlight effective ESD-related practices and demonstrate the rich, diverse and innovative approaches to ESD implemented at various levels of the education system nationwide.

The co-ordinating departments would like to thank the members of the ESD Steering and Advisory Groups, as well as those in the wider education community, for their ongoing support of ESD to 2030 and their valuable contributions to the report.

Together, we are building a more just, inclusive, and sustainable society through education.

Read the report here: [National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Ireland](#) [Back to top](#)

## f. SDG Posters and Information Flyers for Schools

The department issued two copies of a poster of the **17 Sustainable Development Goals** to all schools in September 2022, as well as a flyer with information on Ireland's **National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development: ESD to 2030**, and how to access resources for schools.

If you require additional copies of either the poster or flyer, please email [ESD@education.gov.ie](mailto:ESD@education.gov.ie).



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## 2. School Updates

**Editor's Note:** Thank you to all the schools who sent us in updates on their activities for ESD. There is great work going on all across the country; unfortunately, we can't include all the submissions in the ESD Newsletter but here are two great examples:

### a. ESD at SS Michael and Peter Junior School, Arklow

"This year we at SS. Michael and Peter Junior School Arklow have taken a special focus on biodiversity. We are working at developing our outdoor spaces to include creature friendly areas. As part of this we have installed many bird houses which we sourced the wood for, made and painted ourselves. We also repurposed an old bird house into a bird feeding station and added two beautiful cast iron bird baths and water areas.

We repainted our fences in bright colours to match our outdoor classroom seating. The addition of new planters and our beautiful new polytunnel means we can also grow our own flowers, plants, fruit and vegetables. We are busy watering and tending to them every week and are so excited to see the first seedlings beginning to sprout. We have potatoes, cabbage, lettuce and scallions. We hope the flowers will attract our friend the bee and other pollinators that we have been learning about. Each pupil in our senior infant's class has their own sunflower grown from seeds. We have 2 new bug hotels that house many creatures, something we discovered on our recent minibeast hunt for which we used our new magnifying glasses, pooters and nets. We also made a bat house to look after this nocturnal creature. We're so lucky to have the use of our local St. Mary's secondary school's extensive grounds too with its woodland trails laden with flora and fauna.

Finally, we have added some sustainable playground equipment in an effort to reduce plastic and disposable toy waste. The climbers and games tables are enjoyed by all at break times daily. As a junior school it's so important to us that our pupils learn about these important issues from a young age, they have so much information already so we live to teach them in age appropriate ways and terms. Given their age they learn best through play and hands on experience.

Outdoor learning is also a huge hit with all our children so we try to get out as much as possible. We've also had some guest speakers to enrich the children's knowledge including local community groups that share their expertise and experience with us. We're so appreciative of our staff that help out in this area especially our new caretaker Declan who has a special interest in nature. Also any help we get from local groups and our community is hugely appreciated.





**Editor's Note:** Well done to all at SS Michael and Peters Junior School - keep up the good work! A €500 One-For-All voucher to support ESD projects is on its way to you!

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## b. ESD at Athlone Community College

“Students and teachers in ACC had a busy year engaging and promoting sustainability. Projects ranged from planting for pollinators, making bird houses, to fast fashion.

Most notable was the project that a number of TY students undertook to raise awareness about illegal dumping. They made a short film about illegal dumping in Westmeath, which they then used to enter the Westmeath County Council competition on waste and also the prestigious Young Reporters for the Environment international competition.

These students began regular litter picks in our locality, with local volunteer groups and also by themselves to reduce the litter in the area. The film won the Westmeath County Council competition, and they also claimed a national accolade in the Young Reporters for the Environment competition. This meant they were one of two schools in Ireland shortlisted for the international environment award. Furthermore

ACC was also announced as the Green-Schools Global Citizenship Litter and Waste School of the Year. [Athlone Community College students shortlisted for international environment award | Westmeath Independent](#)

See film here:



Shane Boyne (Environment Officer, Westmeath CoCo), TY Students and teacher Rebecca Dobson

**Editor's Note:** Congratulations to all at Athlone Community College - keep up the good work! A €500 One-For-All voucher to support ESD projects is on its way to you!

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### 3. Competitions

#### a. May ESD Newsletter Competition – Winners

The winner of the “**Great Irish Biodiversity Book**” by Eanna Ní Lamhna is Aoife Gordon from Tyndall College in Carlow.

The winner of the **SDG competition** in the May issue of the ESD Newsletter is Helen White from Raphoe Central NS in Donegal. The competition asked for 5 actions that can be taken to reduce your own impact on climate change (SDG 13) and Helen proposed the following actions:

1. Walk, cycle, car pool, bus, scoot to school . We take part in Walk on Wednesdays in Raphoe Central NS. We meet at the local mart carpark and walk up with staff to the school. This is helping to reduce traffic at our school gate and reduce carbon emissions.
2. Use less plastic- we encourage everyone to use reusable water bottles in school. We have started to collect plastic bottles and cans as part of the 'Return' scheme, and this is raising money for our school too.
3. Grow more wildflowers and vegetables. We have planted lettuce, radishes, spinach and onions in our raised vegetable beds and have bought a new green house that we are very excited about using, all classes will be able to grow their own plants throughout the year.
4. Turn off lights and laptops in classrooms at break times when not in use. Some of the children are 'energy monitors' and they remind classes to 'switch off' when they can to reduce energy consumption in the school.
5. Plant more trees- we held a Plant a Planet campaign in our school this year and 120 native trees and 20 fruit trees were bought and planted by families in our school community. We also held a Christmas Emoji Quiz and raised €250 for the charity Self-help Africa to support their planting of trees in Africa.
6. Recycling Clothes- Christmas Jumper Swap in December encouraging a fun and eco-friendly way for families to exchange festive jumpers instead of buying new ones.
7. Organise a School Uniform Exchange where parents and children can donate any school uniform items they no longer need and pick up items they do need, for no charge. We held this at the start of Term 3.
8. Reduce, Reuse and Recycle- we have recycling bins in each classroom – for paper and plastic along with a compost bin for fruit skins. We also recycle batteries, cards, ink cartridges and stamps.
9. Clothes Recycling- we have an annual clothes recycling day for school families and last Friday 16<sup>th</sup> May we sent over 1 tonne of clothes to be recycled while raising money for our school to spend on our school garden/outdoor area.

10. The children in 2nd & 3rd Class have researched Climate Change, read lots of wonderful fact books to complete projects in their groups. They have also created power points to present to other classes in the school.

**Editor's Note:** Well done Helen, some great ideas there. A €500 one for all voucher is on its way to Raphoe.

## b. September ESD Newsletter Competition – SDG 14, Life Below Water

Healthy oceans and seas are essential to our existence. They cover 70 percent of our planet and we rely on them for food, energy and water. Yet, we have managed to do tremendous damage to these precious resources. We must protect them by eliminating pollution and overfishing and immediately start to responsibly manage and protect all marine life around the world.



Oceans help produce what percentage of the Earth's oxygen according to the UN Environmental Programme ([Goal 14: Life Below Water | UNEP - UN Environment Programme](#))?

- a) 10%   b) 30%   c) 50%   d) 90%

E-mail your answer, name and school to [esd@education.gov.ie](mailto:esd@education.gov.ie) before **Friday 26<sup>th</sup> September** to be in with a chance of winning a €500 one for all voucher for ESD projects in your school.

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## c. School Trip Competition



**Discover a Greener Future: Secondary School Tours at CloughJordan Ecovillage.** Looking for an impactful school tour? Bring your secondary school students to CloughJordan Ecovillage and witness sustainable living in action! Our

guided tours offer a unique educational experience, exploring real-world solutions to environmental and social challenges.

### **See Sustainability Firsthand:**

Students will explore:

- Renewable energy systems powering a community.
- Eco-friendly housing and sustainable building.
- Organic food production from farm to table.
- Innovative waste management practices.
- Biodiversity and permaculture principles.
- The power of community collaboration.

**Connect to Your Curriculum:** Our tours complement subjects like Geography, Science, SPHE, CSPE, and Economics, fostering critical thinking and teamwork. Students will gain practical understanding of sustainable development, environmental science and responsible citizenship.

**Inspire Future Leaders:** A visit to Cloughjordan aims to inspire the next generation by demonstrating a tangible model for a sustainable future. Students will develop a deeper understanding of environmental issues, gain a sense of agency and explore alternative ways of living.

**Book Your Educational Visit:** Give your students an inspiring and educational day out. Contact Cloughjordan Ecovillage to learn more about our secondary school tours and book your visit today!

Please contact Veronica Ryan for more information and bookings.

Tel: 086 085 1576 Email: [education@thevillage.ie](mailto:education@thevillage.ie) [www.thevillage.ie](http://www.thevillage.ie)

### **Win a secondary school class trip to Cloughjordan Ecovillage!**

**Question:** According to Cloughjordan ECO-Village [Féile na nUll festival](#) - how many litres of juice are produced from 10 kilos of apples?

Send your answer together with name, school name, e-mail address and class to: [ESD@education.gov.ie](mailto:ESD@education.gov.ie) by **Friday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2025** to be in with a chance of winning a free trip to Cloughjordan Ecovillage for your secondary school class.

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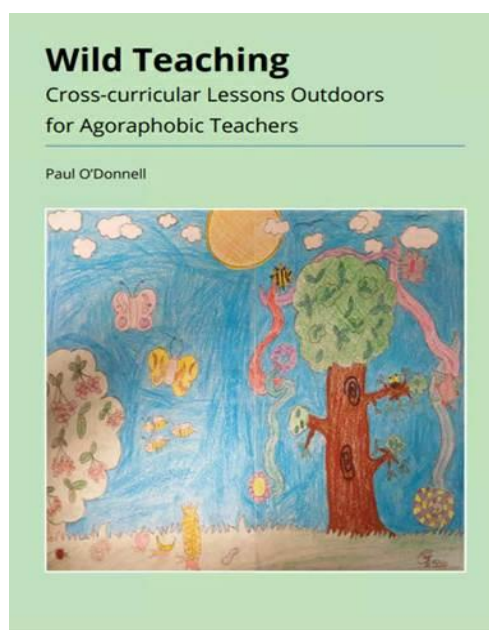


## d. Win a copy of “Wild Teaching” book for ELC/ Primary Teachers

We have five free copies of the book “Wild Teaching” Cross-curricular Lessons Outdoors for Agoraphobic Teachers by Paul O'Donnell, Principal, St. Patrick's NS, Slane.

The book supports learning and teaching outdoors for Early Years Educators and Primary Teachers.

Just be the first of five people to e-mail us at [ESD@education.gov.ie](mailto:ESD@education.gov.ie) and we will send you a copy, courtesy of Paul in collaboration with Meath County Council.



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## e. BTYSTE Students Represent Ireland with Pride in Japan:

### From Tokyo to Expo 2025 Osaka and Kyoto

The BT Young Scientist & Technology Exhibition (BTYSTE) delegation recently completed an inspiring journey through Japan, showcasing Ireland's innovation, creativity, and youth leadership on the global stage.

The trip began in Tokyo, where eight exceptional students—winners in each of the five BTYSTE categories for 2025, including the overall winners, and representing four different schools—came together for a truly memorable experience. Also joining the group was Helena Madigan, teacher of the winning team from Presentation School in Tralee.

At Ireland House Tokyo, the impressive new Irish Embassy, the students met Ambassador Cole and the embassy team. In a proud moment, Niall, Aimee, Ashlee, Alois, Tomás, Saoirse, Laoise, and Ciara delivered presentations to Japanese university students, showcasing their creativity, confidence, and passion for science and technology.

The group then travelled via bullet train to Osaka for two exciting days at Expo 2025, joining the Ireland at Expo team thanks to the generous support of the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ireland.

At the Ireland Pavilion, the students presented their projects and connected with local school students, strengthening Ireland-Japan ties through youth-led dialogue. They also explored the imaginative pavilions of France, Canada, and the whimsical

Jellyfish Pavilion, each offering a unique perspective on innovation and sustainability.

### **Expo 2025 Highlights:**

- 1.3 million+ visitors in the first two weeks
- 10.4 million+ tickets sold since launch
- 188 pavilions, including 152 country pavilions and 8 signature pavilions
- 158 participating nations and regions

The second and final day at Expo was a standout moment. The students showcased their projects to a distinguished audience, including James Lawless, Minister of State at the Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science.

“Huge thanks to @IrelandatExpo for hosting us and highlighting the incredible talent of these young minds,” said Mari Cahalane, Head of BTYSTE. “We’re deeply grateful to our colleagues at the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, Ireland, whose support made this unforgettable journey possible.”

The trip concluded in Kyoto, a city of stunning temples, serene gardens, and rich cultural heritage. “Kyoto was the perfect way to end the trip—an inspiring city that reminded us of the importance of history, culture, and reflection,” said Mari.



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## f. Young Environmentalist Award 2025 Winners

ECO-UNESCO's Young Environmentalist Awards 2025 Ceremony took place on 8<sup>th</sup> May in the Convention Centre in Dublin with 104 shortlisted projects in 11 categories including Biodiversity, ECO- Art and Design, ECO-Health and Wellbeing and ECO-Entrepreneurship. The overall winners were:

**Super Junior Category:** What can Athlone learn? Ardnagrath's Green Team returns! from Ard Na gCraith N.S. in Co. Westmeath. The team focused on littering in Athlone town and met with local counsellors to discuss litter blackspots and the number of public waste bins. They researched how other cities manage waste and inspired by the Return Scheme, they designed and built a prototype bin that can recognise and separate recyclable and non-recyclable waste using a sensor. The teams interest in environmental issues grew and they worked together to create the bin using engineering, creativity, and problem-solving skills. They also made sure their voices were heard through petitions, presentations and connecting with the local council, showing that they could make a difference.

**Junior Category:** Celbridge Youth Environmental Action Group from Salesian College in Co. Kildare. This local Celbridge group are doing many things to combat climate change locally. One such goal and the one used as their project, is to analyse their local business and give out stickers for their windows if they are Climate friendly. This will have a great impact on the town's carbon footprint and awareness, making businesses greener while also attracting customers to them and not to those who do not meet the criteria. Local actions can have a global impact!

**Senior Category:** Marine Litter project from Errigal College in Co. Donegal. Bottle Back is an inspiring campaign led by a group of TY students from Errigal College in Letterkenny, aiming to tackle plastic waste by encouraging the community to "take it to the bins". Goals included raising awareness about SDGs 6, 11, 13 and 14, reducing single-use plastics, and increasing reusable bottle use in the school by 20% by the end of 2024/25. The team promoted their message through social media, local newspaper articles, and school assemblies. They also created an original "Bottle Back" song and music video which had over 5,000 views online. Recognised as Green Schools Marine Ambassadors for 2024/25, the team were set to share their campaign internationally, in Greece during an Erasmus trip.



Congratulations to all the winners, participants and ECO-UNESCO on a great YEA campaign. For a full list of winners, see here: [Showcase - ECO-UNESCO](#)

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## g. Limerick and Clare ETB – Make a Switch competition winners

Students from Coláiste na Trócaire Community College, Rathkeale in Limerick have won the top prize in the first-ever Make a Switch competition for their water conservation project.

An initiative of LCETB, the competition aims to promote student-led climate action across the region. Open to all year groups in primary and post-primary, the competition focused on practical creative projects under the theme of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle, encouraging students to tackle energy, food and water waste.

Runners up in the competition were Coláiste Íde agus Josef, Abbeyfeale, for their Closing the Loop project and Coláiste Jósaef, Kilmallock, for their Worm Academy project.

Coláiste na Trócaire CC won a €1,000 Outdoor Education and Training Centre voucher and €1,000 for sustainability efforts in the school as well as a unique handcrafted trophy made from recycled materials by artists Simon Donnelly and PJ Hehir, instructors at the ETBs Colleges of Further Education and Training in Shannon and Kilrush.

The runners up both received €250 vouchers and sustainability funding.

Fedamore Community National School earned the Most Engaging Exhibit award and Limerick Community Special School won the Thinking Outside the Box Creativity award.



Patrick Cagney, Ronan Cummins and Aoife English from Coláiste na Trócaire Community College receiving their winning trophy from LCETB Chief Executive Bernadette Cullen, and joined by school Principal Michael Behan.

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## h. Picker Pals – Story Competition Winner 2025



Congratulations to Liam Priestley, 1<sup>st</sup> class in Castleknock ETNS, who won the overall grand prize in the Picker Pals 2025 Story Competition including a class visit to visit to the SKY TV studio in Dublin with transport costs included,

You can read Liam's winning story "The Litter-Picking Pirates" here: [The Litter-Picking Pirates](#)

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## 4. Programmes and Resources

### a. Green Schools celebrate awarded schools and look ahead to the new school year



An Taisce's Green-Schools programme finished another successful school year in May, awarding 733 schools around the country with a Green Flag for their work in the areas of Litter & Waste, Biodiversity, Travel and Water, to name just a few themes.

Green-Schools is a long-term, whole school, action-based programme and award scheme for both primary and second-level schools. Green-Schools operates in approximately 90% of Irish schools and is now in its 27th year. Within the Green-Schools programme, schools work through ten sustainability themes in a consecutive order. Schools spend two academic years working on each theme before they may apply for the Green Flag award for that theme.

The 2024/25 academic year saw the return of the Energy theme, thanks to a new partnership with [Eirgrid](#), who provide much needed support for the delivery of workshops to schools working on the Energy theme, as well as the development of resources for the theme.

A number of schools were also selected as 'School of the Year' at both primary and secondary levels for their outstanding work on the themes of Biodiversity, GC Marine, Water, Travel and Global Citizenship.

Green-Schools would like to congratulate all of the awarded schools for their dedication to the programme and all the work that goes into achieving their flags.

Looking ahead to the 2025/26 school year, the Green-Schools calendar is full of events, competitions and initiatives across all ten themes of the programme, aimed at primary and secondary schools. Walk to School Week is the first big event of the year, in October, followed by many others, such as [Marine Week](#), Festival of Energy, Walk for Water events, Biodiversity Week and more. All events can be seen on the [calendar page](#) of the Green-Schools website.

Green-Schools would also like to engage further with students at secondary level through a suite of offerings of ambassador programmes and projects for secondary students. These include the Water Ambassador Programme, [#andshecycle](#), Let's Fix Fashion, Young Reporters for the Environment, and [Climate Ambassador Programme](#). Added to the suite this past year was [TLDR: Global Goals Bookless Club](#), which encourages students to engage with the Sustainable Development

Goals using their chosen artistic medium of written word, painting, sculpture, music, film, dance, photography or multimedia.

The Water Ambassador Programme equips secondary students with the knowledge and skills to lead water-focused actions in their schools and communities. Learn more about the Water Ambassador programme and register [here](#).

The Let's Fix Fashion Campaign is a Green-Schools initiative that empowers secondary school students to engage critically with the issues of fast fashion and sustainability. Open to all secondary schools, students can expect to collaborate on practical solutions, sharing experiences around textile reuse, upcycling, and circular innovation combining education, creativity, and real-world action to challenge the fast fashion industry. Details on this year's campaign can be found at [Let's Fix Fashion | Join | Green-Schools](#).

The Young Reporters for the Environment (YRE) programme invites young people between the ages of 11 and 25 to report on environmental issues through articles, photographs, short documentaries, podcasts, and TikTok. YRE helps students gain a deeper understanding of critical issues and discover ways to influence local change alongside the community. This year's theme focuses on Food Security and Climate Change. [Register](#) now for access to a range of skill based lunchtime webinars and supports to enter this year's competition. The first webinar will take place during Climate Action week from 1-2pm October 16<sup>th</sup>.

Very best wishes to all of our Green-Schools for a successful school year ahead. We look forward to engaging with you and being inspired once again.



Some Green-School highlights from 2024/25.

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## b. The ISSU 'Debate Your Decision Makers' Event



Debate Your Decision Makers (DYDM) is an event run by the Oifigeach Inbhuanaitheachta of the Irish Second Level Students Union (ISSU), it will be run in February of 2026.

DYDM is a unique opportunity for second level students to engage with their policy makers (TDs, Senators and Local Councillors) and give their input into matters that directly affect them.

The event is based on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 17 goals set out by the United Nations to tackle environmental, social and global issues. A few examples of the goals are SDG13 Climate Action, SDG6 Gender Equality and SDG1 No Poverty. Students are asked to brainstorm barriers to certain goals i.e. Fast Fashion is a barrier to SDG12 Responsible Consumption and Production.

Then students are asked to give solutions i.e. production quota on fast fashion companies in a solution to the above barrier. These solutions become the student's demands. At the end of the day the students will present their demands to their decision makers and partake in a friendly debate with their decision makers on motions such as "The voting age should be lowered to 16".

This event helps students have their voices heard, gain and practise skills such as lobbying and make connections with policy makers and other young people from all over the country. More information about the event and the registration form will be available on our website [issu.ie](https://issu.ie) or on our socials @ ISSU4u closer to the time.

If you have any questions please reach out to [sustainability@issu.ie](mailto:sustainability@issu.ie).

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## c.Composting for Schools Programme



### The Composting & Recycling for Schools Programme Is Now Open!

Tired of throwing money away??? In its 4th year, the award winning Composting & Recycling for Schools programme helps schools manage their waste more sustainably to save money and help them earn their 1st Green Flag in Litter & Waste. So far, the programme has helped over 350 schools across 13 local authority areas in Ireland. This year, 3 more local authorities are joining the programme.

The programme consists of the following steps:

- Participate in 5 x 1.25 hour online workshops (late afternoon or evening sessions available) to explore options for waste prevention and reduction, recycling, on-site composting of garden & landscape trimmings, brown bin collection of food waste, gardening and biodiversity.
- Host a site visit to discuss options and opportunities for better waste management.
- Create a tailored action plan for your school to identify a few upgrades to how you manage waste.
- Receive a €150-300 voucher to spend on recycling bins, food waste caddies, composting systems, tools and supplies that support implementation of the school's action plan.
- Host a second site visit to install the school's new recycling or composting systems and participate in any training for school staff or workshops with students.
- Bring fun and interactive learning activities into your classroom for students to learn about the underlying principles of ecology, biology and biodiversity that underpin all life on our planet.
- Participate in an interactive platform with other educators to support your efforts and access programme resources.
- Complete a survey at the end of the school year to document your accomplishments and help us improve the programme for other schools.

For more information about the programme, please visit

<https://compostingireland.ie/schools/> . Here you will discover the goals of the programme, the benefits of participating, and how to sign your school up for this unique opportunity. Survey links at the bottom of the page will indicate which local authorities are participating this year. **Applications are due by Friday September 19<sup>th</sup> 2025.**



## Composting and Recycling for Schools Programme

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## d. Irish Schools Sustainability Network update



The Irish Schools Sustainability Network (ISSN) have been busy preparing for the 2025/26 school year and developing new resources and support for teachers and students.

The popular bitesize biodiversity CPD series will be relaunching this year and we are delighted to be joined by Biodiversity in Schools and Green schools in delivering the weekly 15 minute sessions.

The Climate and Nature Summit will be back with more up to date online lessons for primary and secondary schools as well as the annual CPD schedule for teachers.

This year the ISSN will also be offering in-school support to run our 10 week Environmental Influencer Course and the transformative Leadership Development Programme.

If schools would like to avail of either of these opportunities please contact [codie@issn.ie](mailto:codie@issn.ie). For more information or to sign up to the ISSN newsletter go to [www.issn.ie](http://www.issn.ie)

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## e. Nature Explorer Programme

The Nature Explorer Schools Programme fosters active learning through play, inquiry, creativity and problem-solving. Inspired by the Forest School ethos, it supports children and their teachers to connect with nature, acquire key skills, and care for the natural world.

Classes take part in active outdoor sessions on or near their school grounds, thereby developing strong connections to local biodiversity, and learning about complex ideas such as interdependence through engaging activities that spark their curiosity and creativity.

The programme also builds the confidence and capacity of teachers, who develop skills and competencies in nature-based learning through their participation in weekly sessions that allow them to gain practical, on-the-job experience. Participating teachers and their colleagues are also supported through CPD sessions designed to help staff embed nature-based learning into their schools and teaching practice.

Global Action Plan aims to inspire people to become environmental ‘change makers’. “We equip individuals and communities with knowledge and skills to develop solutions to the environmental and climate crises”.

Find out more about the programme here: [Nature Explorer in Schools - Outdoor Education Programme - Global Action Plan](#)



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## f. New Global Education Time Resources for Junior Cycle



Three Teaching and Learning Units on **Climate Change**, **Migration**, and **International Inequalities** are now available for free download from the **Global Education Time** (GET) project. These units align with the learning outcomes of **Junior Cycle CSPE, History, and Geography**, and are relevant for other subjects e.g. **Business Studies, Home Economics, and Ethics Education**. There is also potential for use in **Transition Year** modules. The units were piloted in 10 schools nationwide. Worksheets and basic information will soon be available in Irish on our website. (*links and QR Codes below*)

[Climate Change TLU](#)  
[TLU](#)

[Migration TLU](#)

[International Inequalities](#)



### Youth Action

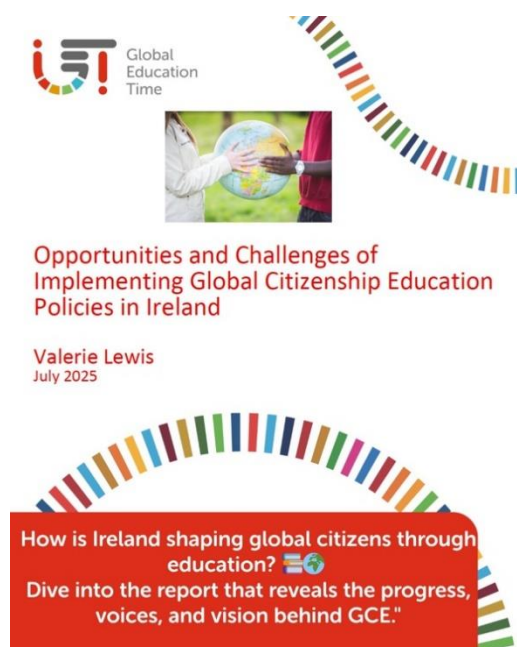
“Now we invite other schools to use the resources and take action in response to their learning. We are encouraging schools to take this action aligned to other partners such as [WorldWise Global Schools Global Passport Scheme](#) and the [ECO-UNESCO Young Environmentalist Awards](#)

In October we plan to hold a seminar for post-primary teachers to advice and support on taking youth action. We have secured the input of youth workers to advise on taking effective action in the classroom which can be aligned to the curriculum. This is open to teachers both experienced and new to taking action for ESD”.

## New Research

A report by Valerie Lewis, commissioned by GET Ireland, explores Ireland's progress in implementing ESD & GCE within the education system. It highlights key policy developments, such as the ESD to 2030 strategy and the Global Citizenship Education Strategy, and examines their practical application. The report, based on insights from educators and stakeholders, identifies opportunities for increased collaboration, but also highlights challenges like limited resources and policy alignment. It provides an overview of how Ireland is working to equip learners with the skills needed to engage ethically in a globalized world. This report will be delivered at a conference in Bulgaria in October with similar research from our project partners across the EU.

Read the report here: [GCE Opportunities & Challenges](#)



## Get in Touch:

Our international website can be accessed [here](#) and the Irish page [here](#). Updates will be posted on our social media outlets at [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

**For further information:** contact [get@apa.ie](mailto:get@apa.ie)

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## g. SEAI – Energy in Education website



The website for the Energy in Education programme, developed by SEAI and the Department of Education & Youth, has now been updated.

The website contains information and guidance on ways to save energy, accompanied with factsheets and energy management tips. Details of the latest training courses are also contained in the website [www.energyineducation.ie](http://www.energyineducation.ie)



## h. Our World Awards 2026



### **Our World Awards 2026 – Inspire Young Global Citizens in your Classroom!**

Would you like to explore the **UN Global Goals** with your class while developing key skills and covering curriculum links? The Our World Awards is the perfect opportunity! Through **Irish Aid**, Ireland's international development programme, pupils can learn how we are working globally to protect our environment, promote equality, and ensure no one is left behind. Allowing you to address **Key Competencies** of Being an **Active Citizen**; Being an **Active Learner**; Being **Well**; Being **Creative**

**Why Take Part?** This is a brilliant way to engage young people in active, creative learning — while ticking boxes across SEE, SESE, Languages, the Arts and Wellbeing curricula. Access **free teaching resources**, activities, and classroom-ready materials at [www.ourworldawards.ie](http://www.ourworldawards.ie)

In addition, pupils can also engage in **free Workshops** from the **Irish Aid Centre** in person or online to learn about the work of Irish Aid in a fun and engaging environment.

By submitting a project of your learnings, you'll also be in with a chance to take part in the National Finals in June 2026, enjoy a fun-filled celebration day, and win great prizes, including a STEM based class trip! So [REGISTER](#) now for your FREE Pupils Magazines and let your journey begin!



Pupils from across the country enjoying the National Finals of Our World Awards 2025.

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## i. ECO UNESCO – Young Environmentalist Awards 2026 and ECO-Week



### Take Part in the Young Environmentalist Awards 2026!

Now in its 27th year, ECO-UNESCO's Young Environmentalist Awards is a free, all-island programme that empowers young people aged 10–18 to take the lead on environmental issues that matter to them, from climate action and biodiversity loss to waste reduction and wellbeing.

Through the programme young people get a chance to create environmental action projects in categories including Biodiversity, Waste, Water and ECO-Health and Wellbeing, gaining skills in research, critical thinking and leadership. Teachers, youth leaders and educators receive free support, resources and mentoring from the YEA team. Finalists present their work at national showcase events, providing an important platform for young voices in climate action.

*“This experience will stick with them for a long time. The skills and confidence they gained will benefit them far beyond school.”* – Participating Mentor

*“Thank you for creating a platform that elevates young voices and reminds us all how powerful youth action can be.”* – Participating Mentor

**Learn more or sign up at [yea.ie](https://yea.ie) or contact [yea@ecounesco.ie](mailto:yea@ecounesco.ie) for additional information and upcoming opportunities.**

### ECO-Week| 22nd–26th September 2025!

ECO-Week returns for SDG Week this September Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> to Friday 26<sup>th</sup> with a free series of online, interactive sustainability sessions. Designed to engage young people in sustainability and climate action, ECO-Week offers two tailored tracks — one for ages 8–12 and another for 13–18 — making it ideal for a wide range of classrooms and youth settings. ECO-Week is a perfect opportunity to bring the UN Sustainable Development Goals into teaching and youth work.

Sessions are aligned with the SDGs and offer young people the chance to explore real-world environmental issues, build awareness and spark ideas for action in their own communities. Events can be joined live at 10:00–10:45am and 1:30–2:15pm daily or viewed later via ECO-UNESCO's YouTube channel.



In 2024, ECO-Week reached 3,946 young people from 205 schools, youth services and community organisations.

*“Great to have these experts in the class virtually, children love to hear from the professional and children were able to ask questions and receive feedback straight away” – Teacher feedback from ECO-Week 2024*

Register via [ECO-UNESCO's Eventbrite](#) and follow us to stay up to date with our free workshops, training sessions and online events throughout the year.



### **ECO-UNESCO Clubs – Become a Club Leader or Join as a Member!**

ECO-UNESCO Clubs bring young people together in their local communities to learn about the environment, take action on issues they care about and make a real difference. Open to groups nationwide, each club chooses its own environmental initiatives from biodiversity and climate action to waste reduction with guidance and resources from the ECO-UNESCO team. Whether meeting weekly or monthly, clubs create space for young people to build skills, share ideas and take practical action for the planet. We are recruiting both club leaders (aged 18+) and club members. Leaders receive free toolkits, training, access to events, and networking opportunities, as well as the chance to showcase their club's work through our social media channels.

**Learn more** [here](#) or **contact** [info@ecounesco.ie](mailto:info@ecounesco.ie) for additional information.

### **Youth Climate Justice Programme Looking for Participants**

The **Youth Climate Justice Programme** is a free, 12-week after-school initiative for young people aged 14–21 who want to learn, create, and take action for climate justice. Over three months, participants take part in:

- **Weekly evening workshops** (Sep–Oct) with the ECO-UNESCO team
- **Skills training** from guest experts (Oct–Nov)
- **Youth-led events** and networking opportunities (Sep–Nov)
- **Mentorship and support** to deliver your own climate action initiative (Oct–Dec)
- An **invitation to the ECO-UNESCO Earth Gala** to showcase your work and meet peers, policymakers, and sustainability leaders (Dec)

Every cohort of the Youth Climate Justice Programme brings together a nationwide group of creative and action-oriented young people passionate about climate justice! Past participants have developed skills from filmmaking to podcasting, and created impactful projects like banners, digital comics and public art.

Learn more or express your interest via our [website](#), or contact [info@ecounesco.ie](mailto:info@ecounesco.ie).

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j. Heritage Keepers fuels positive action and local pride nationwide!

A promotional poster for 'Heritage Keepers Round 5'. The top half has a green background with the text 'HERITAGE KEEPERS ROUND 5' in large white letters, followed by 'APPLICATIONS ARE OPEN' in green. Below this, it says 'Free workshops and a grant to support local heritage action and fieldtrip for primary schools nationwide'. A circular inset shows a group of children looking at a map on a screen. Another circular inset shows a group of children standing in front of a stone ruin. The bottom half has a white background with a large black hand icon containing white symbols of a cross, a tree, and a person. To the right of the hand, it says 'Applications will close in September 30th'. Below the hand, it says 'APPLY NOW' with three downward arrows, followed by 'heritagekeepers.ie'. At the bottom, there are logos for 'ESD Education for Sustainable Development', 'burrenbeetrust connecting people and place', and 'Sunflower Charitable Foundation'. The bottom of the poster is decorated with green grass.

Heritage Keepers is a free programme for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> class that supports the exploration of local built, cultural and natural heritage, after which funding is given to undertake an action or project to further celebrate and enhance that heritage. The programme is delivered online by Burren Beo Trust and has, to-date, worked with over 200 schools and

community groups across Ireland. Applications for this round are currently open and close on 30<sup>th</sup> of September 2025.

**Apply Now** via our website: [www.heritagekeepers.ie](http://www.heritagekeepers.ie). Heritage Keepers is partially funded by The Sunflower Charitable Foundation through Community Foundation Ireland and by the Department of Education and Youth through the ESD to 2030 fund.

***“We thoroughly enjoyed being part of this programme and it really inspired the children to develop a sense of pride in their locality and fostered a sense of community. The Zoom sessions were very well presented with lovely, challenging activities and we enjoyed the participative aspect with the other schools.”*** Teacher, Scoil Bhride Cailíní, Blanchardstown, Dublin; Heritage Keepers Programme 2025.

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## 5. Teacher Professional Learning/ CPD

### a. Department's NEW CPD Schedule Published!

The department has updated the list of TPL/ CPD opportunities for teachers for the new school year.

Find the list on the ESD to 2030 webpage here: [National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development in Ireland](#)

### b. Oide TPL/ CPD update



#### Primary – NEW! Social and Environmental Education (SEE)

During the coming academic year, the Oide Social and Environmental Education (SEE) team will actively support the introduction of the Primary Curriculum Framework. This framework forms the basis for high-quality teaching, learning and assessment across five broad curriculum areas. Social and Environmental Education is one of the broad curriculum areas and the team will be involved in the promotion of the core messages of the framework.

Alongside this the team are preparing for the formal launch of the SEE curriculum in the academic year 2025/2026. The draft curriculum includes geographical and historical elements, while also encompassing learning about religions, beliefs, and worldviews. At its core, it aims to empower children to view themselves as active citizens, aware of their rights and responsibilities in local, national, and global contexts.

As part of ongoing professional learning support, the SEE team hosted a webinar titled *"Let's Talk About History and Geography – A Dialogic Approach"* in May 2025. The session focused on how dialogue can enrich the teaching of History and Geography. The webinar highlighted how cultural understanding can be deepened through conversation. It emphasised the use of various stimuli to prompt meaningful discussions in the classroom.

In the coming months, support material for some of the pedagogies such as 'story' will be made available on the main Oide website [www.oide.ie](http://www.oide.ie) and shared via the Oide SEE X account (@Oide\_SEE).

## **Post-primary – NEW! Climate Action and Sustainable Development (CASD)**

There will be a range of professional learning experiences (PLEs) provided by the Oide CASD team for teachers in schools who have opted to introduce the new subject Leaving Certificate Climate Action and Sustainable Development from September 2025.

There will be multiple in-person professional learning experiences provided with a focus on supporting teachers with the process of engaging with and enacting the CASD curriculum. This will entail revisiting the suite of supports and key learning from previous PLEs as teachers now begin to engage with and enact the CASD curriculum with fifth year students. An important aspect of this year's professional learning will be an exploration of how to develop a culture of research and investigation in the CASD classroom that will equip students with valuable research skills, support independent learning and encourage application of knowledge to real-world scenarios both local and national.

Alongside multiple full day in-person PLEs, the online collaboratives established last year will continue to support teacher-led professional discussion relating to effective approaches to teaching, learning and assessment in the CASD classroom. These collaboratives will be provided in addition to multiple webinars which will be facilitated throughout the year to support teachers of CASD in their first year of teaching this valuable and exciting new subject.

Support materials for all professional learning will be made available on the Oide website, [www.oide.e](http://www.oide.e)



**Editor's Note:** Best of luck to the 42 Post-primary schools introducing the new Leaving Certificate subject "Climate Action and Sustainable Development" from September. We look forward to hearing how you are getting on in future ESD Newsletters.

## c. ISSN/ ESCI CPD Schedule September-December 2025



The Irish Schools Sustainability Network (ISSN) is pleased to announce a full CPD programme for 2025-2026 in partnership with ESCI. The ISSN is dedicated to creating a CPD schedule that reflects and responds to the needs of teachers and students.

This year's programme will involve Bitesize Biodiversity Sessions on Mondays and CPD sessions for both primary and secondary schools. It covers a wide range of topics from Global Citizenship to Green Careers to Pollinator Friendly Schools and we encourage as many teachers to get involved as possible.

For more information on the Programme see the CPD Schedule [here](#).

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## d. SEAI – energy management in schools – free course



**Interested in reducing your school's energy costs?**

***Sign up today for a free training course to find out how you could save money by better managing your school's energy use.***

Course participants are guided step by step through the energy management process from understanding bills and energy use in the school to developing and implementing an energy saving plan. Participants are given access to a range of resources, online tools, expert advice and opportunities to network and share knowledge & experiences with other schools.

**Book a course now!**

Courses will be held online and will consist of three sessions of 2 hrs each - 10am to

12pm. The school can nominate any representative to attend e.g. member of staff or of the Board of Management.

Course 1	Tue 23/09/25	Tue 07/10/25	Tue 21/10//25	To register for Course 1 <a href="#"><b><u>click here</u></b></a>
Course 2	Thu 25/09/25	Thu 09/10/25	Thu 23/10/25	To register for Course 2 <a href="#"><b><u>click here</u></b></a>
Course 3	Wed 15/10/25	Wed 05/11/25	Wed 19/11/25	To register for Course 3 <a href="#"><b><u>click here</u></b></a>

*Delivered under the Energy in Education programme developed by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) in partnership with the Department of Education and Youth*

Any queries please contact [energyineducation@seai.ie](mailto:energyineducation@seai.ie)

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## 6. HEI Sector

### a. Sustainability Laboratory Certifications

Ireland is leading the way in sustainable research, with 72 Irish laboratories now officially certified for their commitment to greener practices.

On 16th July 2025, Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science, James Lawless TD, announced 72 sustainable laboratory certifications to research spaces in 12 higher education institutions across Ireland, under a Research Ireland-led programme.

Announcing the certifications, Minister Lawless spoke about how researchers should not only focus on exploration and discovery, they should also pay attention to the impact that research has on our communities and our planet. This approach ensures that 'our pursuit of knowledge does not come at an unsustainable cost to the world around us'.

Research Ireland's Sustainable Laboratory Certification Pilot Programme was launched, in partnership with Impact Laboratories and My Green Lab, with the aim of bringing world-class sustainable research practices into Irish research labs. Research Ireland became the first national research funding body in the world to spearhead a certification process in lab sustainability, inviting Research Ireland-funded researchers to participate.

An independent evaluation of the Pilot Programme was carried out with positive results, and provided a significant number of actionable steps for Research Ireland, pilot participants, and certification providers to take forward. The report also provides resources for those beginning their journey with sustainable research. The pilot's evaluation can be found [here](#).

### b. News and Updates from the HEA



The Higher Education Authority (HEA) ESD Spotlight Series returns on Friday, 26<sup>th</sup> of September with Dundalk Institute of Technology sharing some of their ESD practice. To date, the Spotlight Series has featured 14 institutions with all the recordings available at <https://hub.teachingandlearning.ie/esd-spotlight-series/esd-spotlight-recordings/>.

There is an open call for ESD case studies until the end of September. You can submit your case study using the template provided at <https://hub.teachingandlearning.ie/esd-spotlight-series/esd-case-studies/>.

There is an open call for Open Educational Resources (OERs) until the end of September. You can submit your OERs at the following link, <https://hub.teachingandlearning.ie/esd-spotlight-series/esd-oer/>.

The HEA National Forum Open Course 'Embedding the SDGs across the Curriculum' will be offered nationally again in October. Registration is available at <https://opencourses.ie/opencourse/embedding-the-sdgs-across-the-curriculum/>.

For further information on any of the above, please contact [mkelly@hea.ie](mailto:mkelly@hea.ie).

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## c. International Health Promoting Campuses Conference 2025

[The International Health Promoting Campuses Conference](#) took place at the University of Limerick, in collaboration with Atlantic Technological University on 16th - 19th June 2025. This four-day conference gathered students, researchers, policymakers, and higher education institution (HEI) leaders from across six continents to explore emerging themes of sustainable, egalitarian and health promoting universities. Attendees included representatives from the World Health Organisation (WHO), UNESCO and the International Union for Health Promotion and Education (IUPHE).

Presented to national and international stakeholders and university leaders at the closing ceremony of the conference, *The Limerick Framework for Action* will provide future-facing guidance to inform institutional transformation in the decade ahead. The framework reflects the changed realities faced by campuses in 2025 and takes cognisance of critical international developments in this space, such as the UN Sustainable Development Goals. It is intended to support HEIs in developing comprehensive, robust approaches to embedding and furthering the healthy campus agenda.

For more information on the conference and *The Limerick Framework for Action* official launch, visit <https://www.2025ihpc.com/>

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## d. Official Launch of the Springboard+ 2025 Programme



In May 2025, the Minister for Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science James Lawless officially launched the **Springboard+ 2025 programme** announcing almost 8,000 free and subsidised places on higher education courses. The initiative offers thousands of opportunities for people across Ireland to upskill or reskill, with a strong focus on ‘futureproofing’ careers in a rapidly evolving job market. Announcing this year’s programme, Minister Lawless, said: “Springboard+ courses are specifically designed to meet current and future skills needs in industries across Ireland – upskilling participants in emerging technologies and areas where skills are needed. This year, courses are available in areas such as Infrastructure planning; Sustainable Building; Renewable Energy; Digital Skills, Cyber Security and Artificial Intelligence.”

In 2025, a total of 7,719 places are available on 249 courses delivered by 37 higher education institutes nationwide. Of these 249 courses 26 are ‘micro-credentials’ for those interested in shorter courses to upskill in very specific areas. Springboard+ courses are at Level 6 (Certificate) to Level 9 (Masters) on the National Framework of Qualifications (NFQ) and are delivered by public and private higher education providers across the country.

**Applications are currently opened with courses commencing between 1<sup>st</sup> July – 31<sup>st</sup> October.**

For additional information on the Springboard+ programme and how to apply, visit the Springboard+ website **<https://springboardcourses.ie/>**

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## e. TU Dublin and Green Foundation Ireland – SDG events Day



### Sustainability Here and Now

TU Dublin and Green Foundation Ireland are excited to partner with **Dublin Book Festival** in hosting a day of SDG themed events on *Wednesday 5th of November 2025* (10.00hrs to 18.00hrs).

As sustainability remains one of the most pressing issues of our time, staff, students and the public are invited to join us for a day of stimulating, thought-provoking and inspiring events at TU Dublin's Grangegorman campus.

Featuring authors whose writing explores sustainable development themes with depth, clarity and actionable insight, discussions will cover everything from agriculture in the age of climate change and the rich world of urban wildlife, to the value of rewilding, and how the oppression of a people cannot go unchallenged. A school's event will feature author Lucy Taylor and her new book *The Illustrated Encyclopaedia of the Irish Seashore*. Full details and booking information at [dublinbookfestival.com](https://dublinbookfestival.com)

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## f. University of Galway – Digital Badge



OLLSCOIL NA GAILLIMHÉ  
UNIVERSITY OF GALWAY



### The Sustainability Champion Digital Badge

*'Empowering Students to Lead on Sustainability at the University of Galway'*

University of Galway is empowering students to become changemakers through its innovative [Sustainability Champion Digital Badge](#), a co-curricular initiative that



recognises student leadership in advancing the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) on campus and beyond.

Launched in the 2024–2025 academic year, the badge forms part of the [University's Skills Passport](#) and is awarded to students who actively engage in sustainability through advocacy, peer education, and practical action. Students complete a combination of sustainability training, hands-on initiatives, and reflective learning. Pathways include participating in the University's flagship Community and University Sustainability Partnership ([CUSP](#)), joining the Students' Union Climate Crew, leading awareness campaigns in student residences, or receiving a [Sustainability Leadership Award](#).

In May 2025, nine students received the badge for contributions ranging from waste reduction and energy conservation to biodiversity restoration and sustainable food advocacy. Their projects demonstrated how grassroots student action can advance institutional sustainability strategies while fostering personal and collective transformation.

"The badge is not just an award, it's a recognition of leadership and impact," said Dr Richard Manton, Director of Sustainability. "These students are already shaping a more just and sustainable future."

Recipients describe the experience as "empowering," "transformational," and "a reminder of the responsibility to lead by example." For some, it offered the opportunity to work alongside staff in a meaningful, non-tokenistic way; for others, the sense of achievement came from tangible outcomes like reducing waste by 11 tonnes annually.

By equipping students with the knowledge, skills, and confidence to act, University of Galway is embedding sustainability into the fabric of its educational mission, cultivating the next generation of ESD leaders ready to drive change in their communities and workplaces.

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## 7. International Updates

### a. Teachers COP 2025 – call for projects



Are you a teacher, principal or education official working on climate change education? Have you set up a project in your school or classroom?

If so, the Office for Climate Education are inviting you to submit your initiative and get the chance to present it at COP30 during the international TeachersCOP event.

Since its creation by the Office for Climate Education at COP26, the TeachersCOP has become a global platform to highlight the essential role of teachers in climate action. In 2024, more than 1,500 participants from around the world took part.

#### **How to participate?**

The Office for Climate Change are looking for projects already implemented that address climate change adaptation (reducing the impacts of climate change) or mitigation (reducing greenhouse gas emissions). Your project should fall under one of the four pillars of the Greening Education Partnership: Greening Schools, Greening the Curriculum; Greening Teacher Training; Greening Communities.

Submit your project before 21<sup>st</sup> September at 11.59 pm (Paris time)

By joining the TeachersCOP:

- You will connect with an inspiring global network of climate educators
- Your project could be selected to represent teachers at COP30
- You will be part of a growing movement for quality climate change education
- And... winning projects will receive a mini-grant to scale their project.

Read the full call for projects and participation conditions here: [TeachersCOP | Office for Climate Education](#)

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## b. UN High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development

Minister for Climate, Energy and the Environment, Darragh O'Brien and a D.CEE delegation attended the Ministerial Segment of the UN High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) in July 2025.

On Monday 20<sup>th</sup> July, Minister O'Brien delivered the National Statement in which he reiterated Ireland's commitment to sustainable development, to multilateralism and the UN. [National Statement by Minister Darragh O'Brien at the UN High-level Political Forum](#)

You can view the full opening session and Minister's address (1'47") on UN Web TV: [Ministerial Segment of the High-Level Political Forum 2025 | High-Level Segment of the Economic and Social Council, 33rd meeting | UN Web TV](#)

You can read the Press release and National Statement on gov.ie - [Minister O'Brien sets out Ireland's commitment to sustainable development at global United Nations event](#)

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## c. OECD – Policy Coherence Scan for Ireland Report

Also in July, coinciding with the UN HLPF, the OECD published the **Policy Coherence Scan for Ireland**, as part of the OECD PCSD Project which Ireland is participating in. The Report examines Ireland's efforts to achieve the SDGs through enhanced policy coherence for sustainable development (PCSD), identifying strengths, weaknesses and possible ways forward.

The report highlights ESD to 2030 as an example of Ireland's strong culture of engaging stakeholders to foster inclusive policymaking, and it's sectoral engagement approach, providing a framework to support the education sector's contribution to a more sustainable future at individual, community, local, national and international levels

The Report is available at: [OECD Policy Coherence Scan of Ireland: Introducing Ireland's institutional mechanisms for policy coherence for sustainable development | OECD](#)

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## 8. Other News

### a. Three Simple Actions – SDG 14 – Life Below Water



- Only use the dishwasher and washing machine when they are full
- Respect laws relating to overfishing
- Se fewer plastic products which often end up harming ocean life

### b. SDG Week 2025

Ireland's 4<sup>th</sup> Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) week is taking place this year from 19<sup>th</sup> to 28<sup>th</sup> September.

SDG week forms part of the wider European SDG week which this year will run from 18<sup>th</sup> September to 8<sup>th</sup> October. Last year, 4,000 events took place across 39 countries with almost 200 events held across Ireland.

For more information on SDG week and ideas for taking part, please go to: [gov.ie/sdgs](http://gov.ie/sdgs)

Queries can be sent to [SDGs@dcee.gov.ie](mailto:SDGs@dcee.gov.ie).



### Take Part in SDG Week 2025!

Ireland's fourth Sustainable Development Goals (SDG) Week is taking place this year from **19 - 28 September**. It forms part of the wider European Sustainable Development Week (ESDW), which runs from 18 September - 8 October 2025, now in its 10<sup>th</sup> year! Last year ESDW saw over 4,000 activities taking place across 39 countries, with almost 200 events taking place in Ireland.

The SDGs belong to everyone and SDG Week is open to all - individuals, groups, schools and colleges, businesses and institutions.

To take part, organize an event - however big or small - or highlight an activity or project that promotes sustainable development and join the annual week of action for the SDGs.

- 1 START NOW!**  
Think about how you could promote sustainable development and plan an activity, project or event to take place during SDG Week
- 2 REGISTER**  
Upload your idea on the ESDW website:  
[www.esdn.eu/esdw](http://www.esdn.eu/esdw)
- 3 ACT!**  
Organize and promote your initiative during ESDW - **18 September - 8 October 2025!**  
Explore which events are taking place and participate in activities near you!

DeptCEE  
EuropeanSustainableDevelopmentWeek



Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment  
European Sustainable Development Network

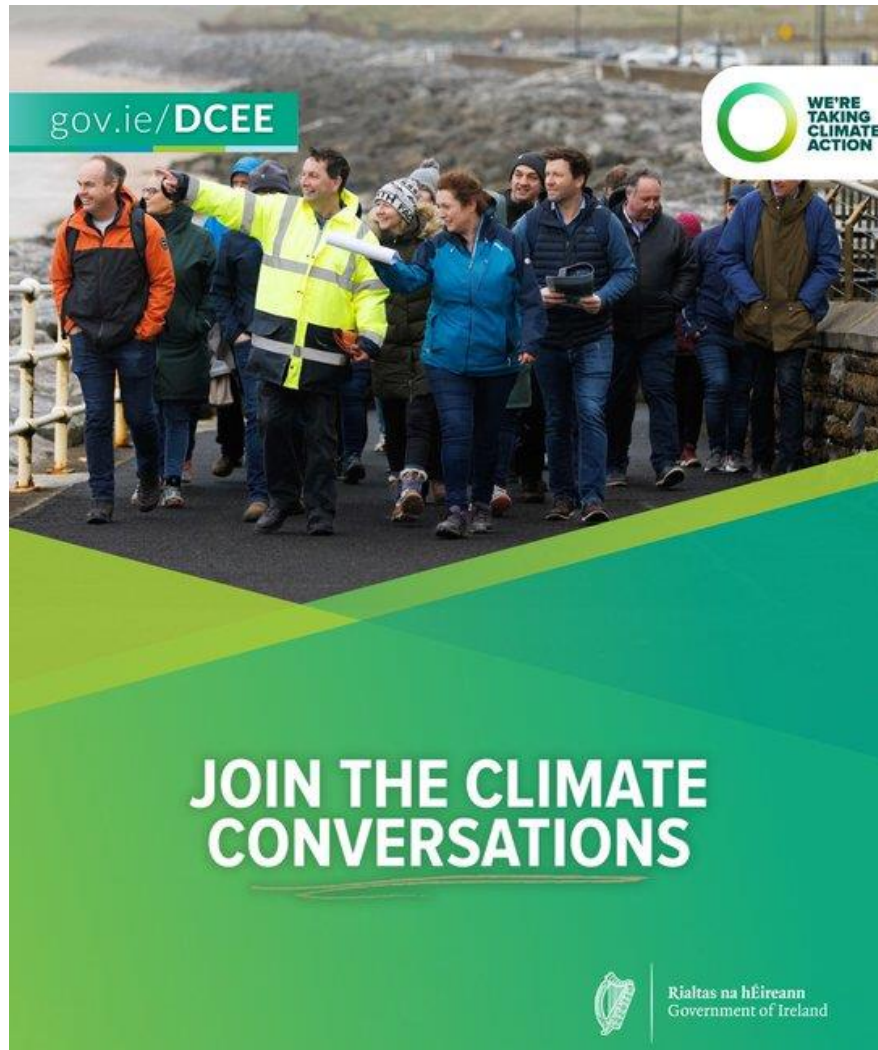
For more information on sustainable development, SDG Week and ideas for taking part please see [www.gov.ie/SDGs](http://www.gov.ie/SDGs)

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## c. Join the Climate Conversations

The [Climate Conversations 2025](#) is now open. People across the country are invited to have their say on how we can all play our part in securing our sustainable future.

[Submissions](#) close 22 September 2025.



The [Climate Conversations 2024 report](#) is now available to read.

Almost 2,000 people took part in the conversations via an online survey, offering their views on climate literacy and emotions, perceptions of responsibility and effectiveness, understanding about climate impact, as well as levels of community involvement.

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## d. ESD Research – Call to Post-Primary Teachers

# Survey Participation Request

## Post primary teachers

*Your voice is vital in shaping the future of education for sustainable development in Ireland.*

As part of my Doctoral research in DCU, I am inviting you to participate in a brief online survey to share your experiences, thoughts and understanding of sustainable development in education.

This research aims to gather information to develop a contemporary understanding of teacher knowledge of sustainable development and to inform future curriculum developments and policy.


Participation is voluntary, anonymous, and takes **just 15 minutes**.

**Complete the survey at this link or by clicking/scanning the QR code**

**[Post Primary Teacher Sustainable Development Survey](#)**

*All viewpoints welcome - Thank you for your time and expertise*

Further information: [valerie.lewis2@mail.dcu.ie](mailto:valerie.lewis2@mail.dcu.ie)



## e. Children's School Lives Study

The Children's School Lives study explores the experiences of nearly 4,000 children and their parents, teachers, and school leaders in primary and special schools in Ireland. Reports published recently highlight how gender (Report 8b) and migration and ethnicity (Report 8c) shape children's educational identities, aspirations, and experiences in primary school.

The impact of Gender report reveals several gender-based disparities in children's school experiences, including:

- Girls report more positive attitudes toward school and outperform boys in literacy, yet often lack academic self-belief, especially in maths.
- Gender stereotypes persist among children, with 'good boys' associated with being intelligent and sporty, and 'good girls' associated with being kind and diligent when learning.
- Girls tend to have higher aspirations and teachers set higher expectations for them.
- Girls in all-girls schools report stronger peer connections and less bullying, while boys in single-sex schools often form popularity hierarchies.
- Co-education is seen by teachers in the case study schools as more inclusive and reflective of real life.

The impact of Migration and Ethnicity report findings include:

- Immigrant children often enjoy school and exhibit confidence in learning, with second-generation immigrants showing the highest aspirations for higher education.
- Language barriers affect literacy and social integration, while minority ethnic children, especially from poorer backgrounds, report higher anxiety and lower self-esteem.
- Many schools work to create inclusive environments, but migrant children participate less in extracurricular activities, raising concerns about their full inclusion.

Both reports emphasise the need for inclusive school environments where every child feels valued and supported, regardless of gender or background. For more insights, visit [cslstudy.ie](https://cslstudy.ie).

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## f. Safe Routes to School – 2024 Annual Report



The recently published 2024 Annual Report on the Safe Routes to School Programme shows that:

- 412 schools are currently active in the programme
- Almost 15% of schools that applied to the programme are located on “higher speed rural roads” where speed limits of 80km/ h or 100 km/h were in place
- Schools in the Programme report a 49% increase in park and stride, 36% increase in cycling, 6% increase in walking and 17% decrease in car use.

For more information and to view the Annual Report,

visit [https://saferoutestoschool.ie/resources-](https://saferoutestoschool.ie/resources-library/)

[library/](https://saferoutestoschool.ie/resources-library/) or <https://www.nationaltransport.ie/planning-and-investment/transport-investment/active-travel-investment-programme/safe-routes-to-school-srts-programme-active-travel/>

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## g. National Ploughing Championship -



The Government of Ireland Village is back at the National Ploughing Championships this year– and there’s an exciting range of exhibits lined up for students, teachers and parents.

Whatever your interest, the Government Village will have something for you.

The **We’re Taking Climate Action** tent will be of particular interest to the ESD community. Check out exhibits on the bioeconomy, energy efficiency, biodiversity and nature, research, geology and the latest data from the Environmental Protection Agency and Met Éireann [here](#).

Plan to hang around long enough to catch one of the talks on Climate and Sustainability happening throughout the three days of Ploughing. The Village will showcase training and career opportunities in the civil service and construction, apprenticeships and healthcare and much, much more.

Drive a digger on a bumpy simulator, test your reflexes with a hand-eye coordination game, engage with robots and learn about technology, tackle a climbing wall, learn life-saving CPR, watch a traditional mud wall being built, or listen to trad or classical music sessions.

As well as interactive offerings, a wide range of Government supports will be explained and offered in marquees hosted by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Teagasc, Bord Bia, the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade, the Department of Social Protection and the Department of Rural and Community Development and the Gaeltacht.

The Village will also feature bustling marquees themed around topics such as housing, road safety, business supports, culture, creativity, education and recruitment.

The National Ploughing Championships 2025 is taking place from September 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup>, in Screggan, Tullamore, Co Offaly. To find out more about what’s happening in the Government of Ireland Village this year, go [here](#).

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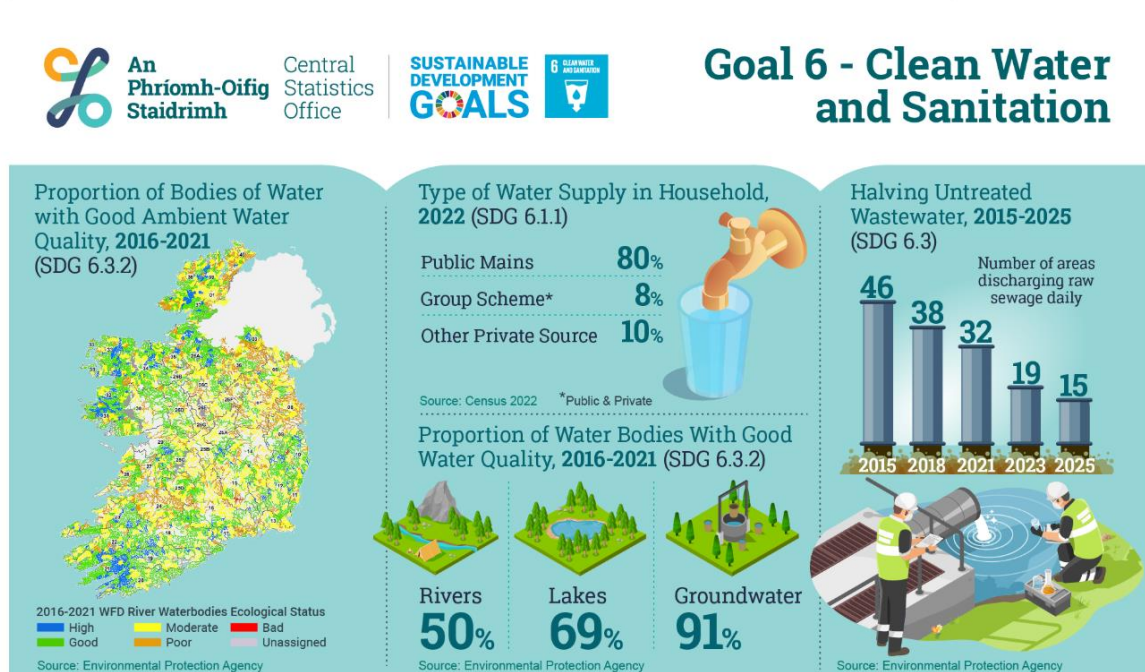
## h. . CSO – SDG Geohive Publications

The Central Statistics Office (CSO) has published the latest in its series of SDG indicator reports for Ireland.

The **SDG 6 – Clean Water and Sanitation** publication was developed in collaboration with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) with input from the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. The indicator 6.a.1 data is provided by the Department of Foreign Affairs and published on 27<sup>th</sup> June.

Key findings:

- Around 98% of wastewater received at least secondary treatment, with only 2% receiving either primary or no treatment, in 2023.
- Official Development Assistance (ODA) for water and sanitation was €0.8 million in 2023, down from €2.4 million in 2022.
- Around 80% of households were connected to the public mains water supply in 2022, up from 77% in 2016.
- Households connected to the public sewerage scheme accounted for 68.2% of all households in Census 2022, up from 65.9% recorded in Census 2016.
- Good ambient water quality was recorded in 58% of water bodies in Ireland, based on the 2016-2021 Water Framework Directive (WFD) assessment.





The **SDG 7 – Affordable and Clean Energy** publication was developed in collaboration with SEAI and was published on 23<sup>rd</sup> July.

#### Key findings:

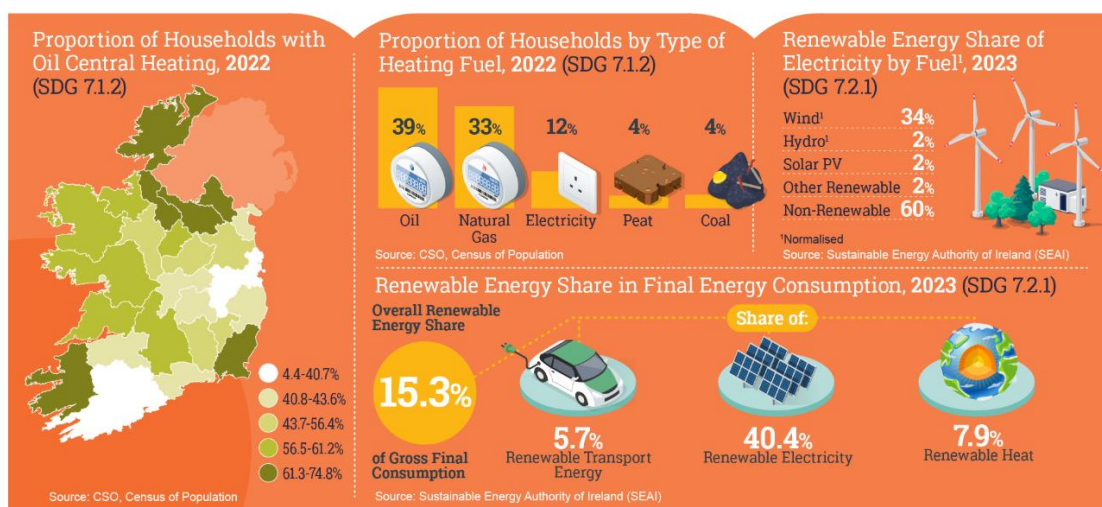
- In 2023, 40.4% of Ireland's electricity came from renewable sources, with wind accounting for 34.1% of the electricity generated.
- The renewable energy share of transport was 5.7% in 2023, with biodiesel accounting for 4.9% of this.
- Oil was the most popular type of central heating, used by almost two-fifths (38.9%) of households according to Census 2022.
- Almost a quarter of households in Dublin City (23.4%) and Galway City (22.8%) used electricity to heat their homes in 2022.
- Ireland contributed €0.7 million in 2022 to developing countries in support of clean energy research and development.



Central  
Statistics  
Office



## Goal 7 - Affordable and Clean Energy



All publications are available on the [CSO's SDG homepage](#).

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We hope that you enjoyed reading this issue the Department's ESD Newsletter. If you wish to receive it directly into your inbox every quarter, please [sign up](#) to the circulation list!