



# Irish Doctors For the Environment



## 5 year Strategy

"Building a sustainable healthcare  
system" 2023-2028



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# Introduction



Climate change is the greatest public health threat of the 21st century. The health impacts of climate change are complex and include illness, death, and injury due to extreme temperatures and weather events, changes in infectious disease vectors, increases in water borne illnesses, and wide-ranging impacts from air pollution. The WHO estimates that climate change will cause approximately 250,000 additional deaths per year from malnutrition, malaria, diarrhoea, and heat stress between 2030 and 2050.

As doctors, we have a professional responsibility not only to treat disease but also to promote health and prevent illness and death. These responsibilities mean that we must play our part in society by informing the public and decision makers of the health consequences of climate change as well as engaging with policy makers. The healthcare sector must seize the opportunity to address its own contribution to climate change through the emissions it generates, and the impact of climate change on public health. That means reducing its own emissions to net zero and initiating adaptation measures to prepare our healthcare system for the additional pressures climate change will create.

Irish Doctors for the Environment seeks to mobilise the healthcare system in Ireland in response to this call for action to address the climate crisis.





# Irish Doctors For the Environment

Who we Are



Established in 2018, Irish Doctors for Environment (IDE) is an NGO and registered charity consisting of doctors, medical students and allied healthcare professionals in Ireland whose aim is to create awareness, interest and implement action around environment health and the impact it has on our patients' health. Its membership is local within the Republic of Ireland and membership is open to any individual in healthcare who has an interest in climate change and health, regardless of disciplinary background.

IDE works alongside various NGOs, environmentalists, the government, scientists and other organisations both nationally and internationally to ensure full cooperation and education regarding the global issues of climate change which affect local, national and international health. IDE strives to support initiatives from local community level to policy change and implementation at a national and international level.

This strategic plan builds on our prior achievements and has a fresh focus of building traction around overlapping themes and connecting individuals and institutions working in planetary health, aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals.

# Strategy Overview

Irish Doctor for the Environment Mission & Vision



## **Our vision**

The development of a sustainable and equitable healthcare system moving towards net-zero for Ireland.

## **Our Mission**

Our main mission at IDE is to educate and engage healthcare workers and our patients on the impacts of climate change on health in order to to promote a healthier and more sustainable future for Ireland.

Our current strategy ‘Building a sustainable healthcare system: 2023 – 2028’ guides our work, building an operational work plan and strategic framework that supports a yearly implementation. In order to achieve these strategic goals, we will engage in a number of activities within our five strategic aims outlined below, that reflect the core values of IDE.



# Our Goals

We will strive for climate action that respects and promotes climate action through our four main pillars of Change, Advocacy, Education and Science:

## **Change**

IDE is committed to being an agent for change by engaging with healthcare workers, participating in policy development and collaborating with healthcare organisations and governmental bodies.

## **Advocacy**

IDE is committed to using our position of privilege to speak out on issues related to health and the environment and use our voice to advocate for patients and the public.

## **Education**

IDE is committed to educating doctors, healthcare workers and the public on the climate crisis and its health effects. We aim to be a conduit through which those interested can learn more about the issues facing us and how healthcare and climate interact. We aim to do this through the generation and dissemination of scientific evidence about the connections between human health and planetary health.

## **Science**

IDE aims to be involved in the promotion of planetary health science in Ireland, and add to the discussion of climate science and healthcare. We aim to include planetary health science as part of all healthcare training curricula as well as collaborate with and develop scientific research outputs.





# Strategic Aims

## **Aim 1**

Protect patients and the public from the health effects of climate change

## **Aim 2**

Engage with patients and the public about the health effects of climate change

## **Aim 3**

Build a vibrant community of members who will assist IDE in achieving our aims at the necessary pace

## **Aim 4**

Facilitate engagement in global health through partnerships at a national and international level

## **Aim 5**

Ensure an efficient, effective and resourced network

## **Aim 6**

Advocate for necessary and rapid changes in healthcare and across society to mitigate against climate-related health effects and achieve climate targets





# Objectives

## Aim 1

### **Protect patients and the public from the health effects of climate change**

We will raise awareness of the links between nature and human health, and of nature-based solutions to climate and health challenges.

- 1.1 Reduce health care's carbon footprint through our sustainable healthcare working group and collaborative partners
- 1.2 Promote active travel for both healthcare workers and the public
- 1.3 Mobilize the health sector to address climate change as a public health issue
- 1.4 Engage with policy makers to deliver the HSE's Climate Action Plan







## Aim 2

### **Engage with patients and the public about the health effects of climate change**

The transformative power of education underpins all our objectives, making their successful adoption more likely and enabling a deeper awareness of human health and climate change than is presently found. Achieving climate stabilisation will necessitate radical changes in our healthcare system and education has the power to equip future generations with the skills and knowledge they will need to thrive and survive. To carry out this aim, we will:

- 2.1 Raise awareness, understanding and knowledge of the health effects of climate change on our patients
- 2.2 Engage with the public through the IDE social media, our newsletters and blogs, podcast and public campaigns
- 2.3 Integrate planetary health and climate change into the medical school undergraduate curricula and those of postgraduate training bodies.
- 2.4 Advocate for environmental education, education for sustainable development and sustainable healthcare in Ireland





## Aim 3

### **Build a vibrant community of IDE members**

We will understand and meet the needs of the people who get involved with us, focusing on priority audiences, and so increase the long term loyalty, value and impact of our supporter base. To carry out this aim, we will:

- 3.1 Actively engage with healthcare workers and members of the public to become either a member of IDE, a contributor to a working group, undertake a committee position role or become a supporter of a project.
- 3.2 Endeavour to engage IDE members in all aspects of the organisation's decision making and work to build long-term engagement of members within the IDE
- 3.3 Facilitate monthly meetings and events for member engagement and opportunities for inclusion
- 3.4 Foster an environment of respect, understanding and inclusion for all members



## Aim 4

### **Facilitate engagement in planetary health through partnerships at a national and international level**

In addition to our members in Ireland, IDE has a set of strategic partnerships with organisations whose interests and activities align with our own. These include national and international bodies across different health and climate disciplines. To carry out this aim, we will:

- 4.1 Maintain and grow our existing partnerships
- 4.2 Seek out new collaborations to broaden the reach and impact of IDE
- 4.3 Facilitate interdisciplinary working in planetary health in Ireland
- 4.4 Coordinate inter-sectoral health-related responses to policy consultations and lobby for development support and resourcing

## Aim 5

### **Ensure an efficient, effective and resourced network**

Aim 5 focuses on how we use our small central voluntary staff and limited resources to wisely create the greatest value for our members and funders. To achieve this goal, we will work as effectively and efficiently as possible to build and strengthen our internal governance and external networks. To carry out this aim, we will:

- 5.1 Maintain an active, engaged and representative Board
- 5.2 Identify and evaluate opportunities for cost-sharing and other funding opportunities
- 5.3 Maintain strong financial reporting
- 5.4 Identify and comply with all relevant legal and regulatory requirements;
- 5.5 Maintain strong monitoring and evaluation



## Aim 6

### Advocate for the necessary and urgent rapid changes in healthcare and across society

- 6.1. Participate in educational and awareness-raising events, focusing on highlighting the extent and rapidity of change required to mitigate against the health effects of climate change and carbon emissions reduction;
- 6.2 Participate in the elaboration of key governmental documents and policies, promoting ambitious targets and practices
- 6.3 Remain professional in approach when representing Irish Doctors for Environment, in keeping with medical professional standards

**A  
FR:ESH  
START**

  
**FAIR  
RECOVERY**

  
**EQUITABLE**

  
**SUSTAINABLE**

  
**HEALTHY**

# Our Impact Goals



1. Health is protected by cutting carbon emissions this decade in the sector
  - a. By 2028 IDE will have helped the majority of Irish Healthcare workers and the public understand the physical and mental health impacts of climate change and benefits of climate action, and contribute to ensuring climate is a top priority public policy interest area.
  - b. By 2028 IDE will have shifted key decision makers towards a more ambitious emissions reduction agenda within healthcare sector
2. The healthcare sector significantly reduces its carbon footprint this decade, and understands the health impacts of climate change.
  - a. By 2028 IDE will have helped equip the Irish healthcare sector to achieve a carbon footprint reduction to reach an 80% reduction by 2030 and target for net zero emissions by 2050.
  - b. Ensure the medical profession is educated about the physical and mental health impacts of climate change, and the health benefits of climate action through inclusion across undergraduate, postgraduate and ongoing medical education





# Summary

As we are living in a rapidly evolving climate context, it is essential that IDE's work is guided by an agile strategy. This new strategic plan identifies the 5 objectives we will work towards: raising awareness on the health impacts of climate change and protecting the public and patients from these effects, healthcare emissions reduction through public and political influence, healthcare sector sustainability and the growth and efficiency of the IDE network. IDE's greatest strength is the talent, commitment and diversity of its members, who see the health impacts of climate change and environmental destruction from multiple perspectives, and recognise that the solutions will be multi-faceted. By each of us playing our part, IDE will have an ever-increasing influence and hopefully together we will be able to overcome this climate and biodiversity calamity.

## Acknowledgments

Irish Doctors for the Environment would like to sincerely thank all the IDE members for continuing to bring their support, enthusiasm and experience to the work of the IDE.



"Individually we are one drop, together  
we are an ocean" – Ryunosuke Satoro

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