



DRAFT STRATEGY 2013-2015

June 2012

For Public Consultation

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DRAFT

Foreword

We are pleased to present the Authority's draft strategic plan for 2013-2015. This is the third strategy prepared by the Authority under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

The work of the Authority is critically important on both a statutory and societal level as we aim to ensure that Irish workers return home safely from work to their families and that everyone is protected from the harmful effects of chemicals. That is what the Authority exists to achieve through its strategy and through its annual programmes of work.

This draft strategy has been developed by the senior management of the Authority with input and guidance from the Board and in close consultation with the staff of the Authority.

The plan sets out our mandate, mission, vision and strategic priorities up to the end of 2015 and will set the overall strategic direction of the Authority during this time.

The draft plan is now available for public consultation and we welcome comments and suggestions.

All submissions received will be considered by the Board of the Authority and it is anticipated that the finalised plan will be submitted to Minister Bruton for approval in September 2012.

The closing date for submissions is 16 July 2012. Submissions should be sent:

- On-line at <http://consultation.hsa.ie>
- by email to strategystatement@hsa.ie or
- by post for the attention of Martin O Halloran, Health and Safety Authority, Metropolitan Building, James Joyce Street, Dublin 1.

Michael Horgan

Chairman

Martin O Halloran

Chief Executive Officer

Who we are and what we do

The Authority was established in 1989 under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act, 1989 and reports to the Minister for Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation.¹

The Authority has a number of major roles:

- The national statutory body with responsibility for ensuring that workers and those affected by work activity are protected from work related injury and ill health. We do this by enforcing **occupational safety and health** law, promoting accident prevention, and providing information and advice.
- The lead National Competent Authority for a number of chemical regulations including REACH (Registration, Evaluation, Authorisation and Restriction of **Chemicals**) and Seveso (Control of Major Accidents Hazards , COMAH) Regulations. Our responsibility in this area is to protect human health (general public, consumers and workers) and the environment, to enhance competitiveness and innovation and ensure free movement of chemicals in the EU market.
- A key national role in market surveillance and safety of products used in workplaces and consumer applications

	Occupational health and safety	Chemicals	Market surveillance
Key legislation	Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005	Chemicals Acts 2008 and 2010	Relevant EU product safety directives
Legislative role	Protection of workers from occupational injury and illness	Protection of human health and the environment Enhancing competitiveness and innovation Ensure the free movement of chemicals on the internal market	Protection of workers and the public from unsafe articles and products
Population protected	1.8million workers and those affected by work activity	4.5 million citizens and the environment	4.5 million citizens

¹ The Safety Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 has replaced the 1989 Act.

The Authority has a very broad mandate as set out in excess of one hundred Acts, Regulations and international conventions. Our core mandates are in the areas of workplace health and safety and chemicals and also include control of major accident hazards, transport of dangerous goods by road, chemical weapons, offshore installations and market surveillance related to personal protective equipment, machinery, transportable pressure equipment and lifts, gas appliances, REACH, classification, labelling and packaging, detergents. The core elements of our mandate are summarised below.

- To regulate the safety, health and welfare of people at work and those affected by work activities
- To promote improvement in the safety, health and welfare of people at work and those affected by work activities
- To regulate and promote the safe manufacture, use, placing on the market, trade and transport of chemicals.
- To act as a surveillance authority in relation to relevant single European market legislation.

The wideness of the Authority's mandate means that we have key role in the protection of about 1.8m people at work across all sectors, including for example: retail, healthcare, manufacturing, fishing, entertainment, mining, construction and food services

We also have a role in protecting 4.5m citizens from the unsafe use of chemicals and from unsafe products and articles and in enabling the international movement and trade of goods manufactured in Ireland.

Strategy context

This draft plan has been developed by the senior management of the Authority with input and guidance from the Board and in close consultation with the staff of the Authority.

Set out in this section are the consistent themes that emerged from our analysis of the external environment. These have informed the development of our new strategy.

Workplace Safety and Health in Ireland

There are still many people suffering work-related injuries in Ireland each year, despite overall reductions in the rate of workplace deaths and injuries since the establishment of the Authority. The rate of worker fatality has fallen from over 3 fatalities per 100,000 workers in the early 2000s to just over 2 fatalities per 100,000 workers in recent years. Non-fatal injuries may also have serious consequences for many workers - the most recent data from the Central Statistics Office² estimates that in 2010 there were almost 20,000 work-related injuries and over 15,000 work-related illnesses which were severe enough to cause more than three days absence from work.

While the number of work related deaths and injuries are unacceptable, Ireland is consistently has one of the lowest non-fatal injury rates in the EU.

There have been changes in accident trends since our previous strategy. With the decline in construction activity the agriculture sector has now emerged as having an extremely high fatality rate compared to other sectors. For example, of the 54 work-related deaths reported to the Authority in 2011, 22 of these were farming accidents. The types of accidents are also changing, with data suggesting that accidents involving workplace vehicles and transport are increasing. Equally, some accident triggers are not changing – both manual handling and slip, trip and fall hazards continue to account for over half of all non-fatal injuries reported to the Authority.

While there have been clear improvements in workplace safety and health in Ireland, the ultimate aim of this strategy is to continue to further reduce the rates of workplace death, injury and illness.

Economic development

The Authority can contribute to economic growth in two ways – (i) by reducing costs associated with workplace accidents and ill health and (ii) by providing a well-functioning, robust and proportionate regulatory framework.

Poor safety and health costs individuals, enterprises and the State a great deal. According to CSO data, over 1 million work days were lost due to work related injury

² Health and Safety Authority (2012), Summary of Workplace Injury, Illness and Fatality Statistics 2010-2011

and illness in 2010 and the total cost of poor health and safety in Ireland is estimated to be approximately 2.5% of GNP³ or €3.2 billion based on the GNP for 2010. By supporting the reduction of these unnecessary costs through the proper management of safety, health and chemicals, the Authority can make a positive contribution to enterprise success.

The strategy published by the Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (2012)⁴ states that Ireland's regulatory environment is one of the more progressive and supportive environments for enterprise. Recent foreign investment and trade decisions suggest that a well-functioning, robust and proportionate approach to regulation is a fundamental part of Ireland's competitive offering. The work the Authority does to ensure safe and healthy workplaces and the proper and sustainable use of chemicals helps to create this positive regulatory environment. For this strategy we will direct our efforts toward reducing the costs and administrative demands associated with compliance, while always ensuring that people are protected from death, injury and illness.

Changing nature of the workforce and workplaces

While there has been an overall reduction in the number of people at work, industries including pharmaceuticals, ICT and medical devices have now assumed increased economic importance. In 2010, for example, the Irish pharmaceutical and chemical sector exported products to the value of 50.8 billion. As the national competent authority with responsibility for implementing chemicals legislation the Authority has an important role in terms of regulating and supporting this sector.

We have also observed an increased casualisation of the workforce since the economic downturn. Our previous strategy directed significant effort to engaging with smaller employers and the self-employed and these efforts will continue for this strategy period.

The Authority continuously scans the environment to identify new technologies, industries and ways of working so that we can quickly and effectively address emerging risks in Irish workplaces.

Public sector reform

The focus on reducing costs in the public sector and improving the way in which services are delivered will continue during this strategy. By the end of 2015 the staffing of the Authority will be reduced by 20% from 2010 and spending will also have been significantly reduced. The Authority currently has the lowest ratio of inspectors to persons in employment in the EU⁵. During this strategy period the Authority will prioritise service delivery so that our activities achieve the greatest benefit for the resources available to us.

³ Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (2006), Report on economic impact of Safety, Health and Welfare at Work legislation

⁴ Department of Jobs, Enterprise and Innovation (2012), Statement of Strategy 2011-2014

⁵ EU Senior Labour Inspectorate Committee (SLIC) 2009 Annual Reports

Perceptions of workplace health and safety

Some misconceptions exist in relation to workplace health and safety and the role of the Authority. “Health and safety” is sometimes used as an excuse for not doing something or is the reason given for unpopular decisions. In many cases the real reasons have little to do with workplace health and safety and this can lead to a trivialisation of our work. It is important for the Authority and for our customers that there is a clear understanding of our role and of the benefits for workers, employers and the public of good health and safety management. During this strategy we intend to address this issue through a combined approach of challenging inaccurate or trivialising accounts while promoting our goal of balanced and sensible regulation.

Mission and Vision 2013 - 2015

Mission

To protect people from death, injury and ill-health arising from all work activities and chemicals

The Authority works with key duty-holders to protect people from injury and ill-health arising from work activities and chemicals. These duty-holders must meet their legal obligations in relation to workplace safety and health and chemicals. The Authority works to motivate and inform through providing a combination of promotion, information, inspection and enforcement.

Vision

A country where worker safety, health and welfare and the safe management of chemicals are central to successful enterprise

Good safety management should be the normal way of doing business in Ireland because it makes sense for employers, for people at work and consumers. Everybody has a legitimate right and a legal entitlement to return home safely from their work.

Strategic priorities and objectives

The ultimate goal of the Authority is to prevent injuries and ill health caused by work activities and chemicals. The overall and most important outcome of this strategy is a reduction in the rate of deaths, injury and ill health.

Taking account of our environmental analysis and the views expressed during our consultation with the Board and staff of the Authority, we have developed five strategic priorities and associated objectives to focus our activity over the period 2013 – 2015.

The five strategic priorities are:

1. Enable enterprises to comply with their legal obligations in a practical and reasonable manner
2. Achieve a high standard of compliance with safety, health and welfare and chemical laws.
3. Support the Minister in the development of a well -functioning, robust and proportionate regulatory framework.
4. Engage and work with people and organisations nationally and internationally to achieve our vision.
5. Be a high performing organisation delivering value to the Irish taxpayer

Strategic Priority 1

Enable enterprises to comply with their legal obligations in a practical and reasonable manner

Objectives

- Motivate and gain the commitment of employers and workers to safe and healthy workplaces and the safe use of chemicals.
- Provide and promote tools to simplify compliance.
- Provide particular supports to assist small businesses in applying good health and safety practice.

Expected outcomes

- Small businesses have access to tools and information that will enable them to have and/or to improve their application of a safety management system
- Evidence of a high level of adoption of tools and packages that help make compliance simpler, easier and more cost effective
- Increase in the proportion of small businesses with safety statements in place
- Evidence of increased commitment by employers and workers
- Workers will better understand their role in protecting themselves, their colleagues and their business

Strategic Priority 2

Achieve a high standard of compliance with safety, health, welfare and chemical laws

Objectives

- Focus inspections on areas of known highest risk, concern and greatest impact
- Provide on-site support and advice to duty holders
- Enforce proportionate to the risk to people
- Investigate and hold to account those who expose people to risk.

Expected outcomes

- An increase in the control of high risk activities and high risk sectors.
- A high proportion of employers report that the inspection process was supportive and fair
- A high proportion of employers made improvements following inspection
- Awareness among employers and employees that it does not pay to expose people to uncontrolled risks

Strategic Priority 3

Support the Minister in the development of a well -functioning, robust and proportionate regulatory framework

Objectives

- Make proposals and provide technical support on the transposition of EU legislation and the drafting of national provisions.
- Identify opportunities for rationalising and simplifying the legislative framework.
- Contribute to the national agenda on reduction of regulatory and administrative burden.
- Represent the national interest at EU level.

Expected outcomes

- Enable the timely transposition of EU legislation and the drafting of national provisions and amendments through the provision of necessary technical support
- A strong effective consultative system which will ensure that legislative arrangements are thoroughly and widely reviewed.
- Targeted and early intervention in relation to key EU proposals that affect Irish interests.
- Review of legislation leading to the rationalisation and reduction of administrative burdens

Strategic Priority 4

Engage and work with people and organisations nationally and internationally to achieve our vision

Objectives

- Identify, develop and maintain relationships with key influencers and enlist their support
- Create awareness and understanding of risk management amongst students
- Promote sensible and practical understanding of work related health and safety and safe chemicals management.

Expected outcomes

- Make the best use of state resources by working with other agencies
- Risk management and its benefits are better understood by those in education
- An improvement in the understanding and image of workplace health and safety

Strategic Priority 5

Be a high performing organisation delivering value to the Irish taxpayer

Objectives

- Be a role model organisation in delivering value for money
- Promote a culture that enhances staff empowerment, learning and development
- Gather and use information and research to enable us direct activities to achieve, measure and demonstrate the greatest outcome and impact

Expected outcomes

- Increased value for money through use of framework agreements in procurement, greater use of business cases and better impact evaluation
- A leaner and more flexible organisation with motivated and competent staff
- Better targeting of our activities and approaches to achieve measurable outcomes

How HSA will deliver successfully

External collaboration

The Authority works with a wide range of national, European and international bodies. Our partnerships support our activities in relation to enforcement, legislation, policy-making and communications.

At the national level the Authority has more than 20 Memoranda of Understanding or Protocols with other state bodies in place. We also lead or participate in a number of advisory groups (agriculture, construction, healthcare, workplace transport, technical and scientific, regional) that bring together representatives from industry, unions, other state agencies, local authorities, third level institutions. During this strategy we recognise that we will need to prioritise those partnerships which best support the delivery of our strategy.

A significant proportion of our work is conducted at European level. Staff from the Authority represent Ireland on strategic committees or working groups in Europe. In the next strategy period it will be vital that we continue to influence legislation and policy to ensure good decision-making and to protect national interests.

Resource planning

The breadth of the Authority's mandate means that the Authority must prioritise those areas where there is the greatest risk and the greatest potential for improvement. We will need to manage the reduction in our staff numbers to ensure we retain the key competencies that are essential to achieving our strategy. The deliver of this strategy is conditional on the allocation from Government of the necessary resources.

Monitoring progress

The Authority will implement this strategy through its annual programmes of work. For each strategic objective, we will identify the responsible owner(s), the actions required and the qualitative and quantitative measures of success. Performance will be monitored through interim reports to our Board and the Minister and through our published annual reports.