



An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta  
Health and Safety Authority

# Strategy Statement 2025 – 2027





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# 1 | Foreword

## Foreword by Emer Higgins TD, Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail.

In today's everchanging environment it has never been more important to have strong Occupational Safety and Health, chemicals, market surveillance and accreditation services, to protect our workforce, assist business and society.

As a regulator under the aegis of the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment, the Health and Safety Authority plays a key role in promoting safety in the workplace, enhancing our regulatory frameworks, and supporting the competitiveness and sustainability of Ireland's economy. Workers are the backbone of the Irish economy, and the Health and Safety Authority plays a key role in supporting them and in driving a vibrant economy.

The Authority's broad mandate, including occupational safety and health, chemicals and industrial products regulation, as well as providing the national accreditation service, aligns closely with and will contribute to the delivery of several goals in my Department's own strategy. The Authority has responsibility for the enforcement of occupational safety and health law and the promotion of best practice. Significant progress has been made to improve workplace health and safety since the introduction of the 1989 Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act. Some workplaces are being transformed by new workplace technologies such as artificial intelligence, robotics and machine learning, and these changes are creating opportunities and challenges for safe and healthy working. This strategy places a strong emphasis on the implications of these developments.

Workplace fatalities, injuries and illness evidence shows that there are continued dangers associated with high-risk sectors including construction and farming and hazards, such as working at a height and working with machinery. While addressing the new world of work, the Authority will continue to prioritise compliance in respect of known risks and hazards.

Under this strategy, the Health and Safety Authority will continue to collaborate with stakeholders to ensure maximum impact from regulatory activities, especially in high-risk sectors, and to amplify prevention and guidance activities. As a tripartite agency, the Authority supports constructive engagement through safety consultation and representation as a means of achieving positive outcomes in the area of occupational safety and health. At EU level the Authority remains committed to representing Irish interests and influencing policy and legislation, while supporting innovation and competitiveness.

This will be particularly important with regard to chemical regulation as further work is done on the ambitious Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability Towards a Toxic-Free Environment.

The National Strategy for Accreditation 2022-2026 will continue to be implemented by the Irish National Accreditation Body in this strategy period. Its priorities include ensuring widespread public recognition and awareness of accreditation, and how Irish industry and the public sector can avail of the many benefits of accreditation, including facilitating international trade and increasing productivity.

The Board of the Health and Safety Authority has taken into account the evolving challenges that may face Irish society, government and the agency itself over the next three years. These include dealing with an expanding regulatory mandate and the continued impact of the withdrawal of the UK from the EU, while also addressing new ways of working, responding to the climate crisis and engaging with the use of artificial intelligence in the workplace. I am confident that the Health and Safety Authority is committing to priorities and ways of working that will allow it to keep pace in the evolving workplace.

The Government recognises the importance of the role of the Health and Safety Authority across all its mandates, and I look forward to working with the Authority to support and enable it to meet its vision of healthy and safe working lives, and productive enterprises, over the course of this strategy.

I wish to thank the Board of the Health and Safety Authority, its management, and dedicated staff for their commitment. I also want to acknowledge the valuable input of all stakeholders who contributed to shaping this strategy. I look forward to supporting the Authority in achieving the ambitious outcomes envisaged in this strategy and to seeing its positive impact across the country.



**Minister Emer Higgins TD**

*Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail*



# 2 | Introduction

**We are pleased to present the Health and Safety Authority's Strategy Statement 2025-2027. This is the seventh statement of strategy prepared by the Authority under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005.**

The next three years promise to be a time of significant change in the workplace and in broader society. New technologies such as AI are transforming the way we work, while the make-up of our society is changing. Geo-political events internationally, both known and currently unknown, will have a significant impact on Irish life.

In implementing our strategy, the Authority will be ambitious and innovative, focusing on achieving tangible outcomes in occupational safety and health (OSH), accreditation, the regulation of chemicals, and market surveillance. The Authority's mandate is wide-ranging and distinctive, and our success will continue to require the extensive knowledge, experience, and dedication of our staff. Delivery on our commitment to healthy and safe working lives, and productive enterprises, is key to a successful workforce and economy.

As a regulator, the Authority monitors, inspects, and enforces, while also promoting, advising, collaborating, encouraging, supporting, and educating. We will continue to offer enterprises a range of tools and supports to enable them to meet their compliance obligations and ensure safe workplaces and business success. We will continue our inspection programme, with a focus on areas where the greatest impact can be achieved. We will also place a particular focus on ensuring that company directors are fully aware of their responsibilities under legislation with respect to health and safety. Where necessary, appropriate enforcement action will be taken.

We now have a robust system for reporting, data gathering, and analysis to better target non-compliant entities. Our new technology platform is enhancing our regulatory processes in key areas like occupational safety and health, chemicals, and market surveillance. Full utilisation of this investment will bring additional benefits such as providing valuable insights and enabling more targeted regulatory actions during this strategy period.

The Authority will invest in educational programmes and awareness campaigns to promote workplace safety, empowering employers and employees to prevent accidents and injuries. We will also influence future workers by partnering with education providers for targeted interventions that embed a culture of health and safety. We will continue to raise awareness both independently and with State agencies to promote positive behaviour in line with occupational safety, health, chemicals, and market surveillance regulations.

Partnership and collaboration will be key to promoting compliance, whether through advisory committees, work programmes, or providing guidance. As a tripartite Board with employee and employer representatives, we recognise the importance of constructive engagement. We will emphasise the requirement for employers to consult with their employees and promote the entitlement of employees to select and appoint a safety representative in the workplace.

We will continue to foster strong alliances and networks with EU and international colleagues and play an active role in shaping policy. In the second half of 2026, Ireland will hold the rotating Presidency of the European Union and be responsible for helping drive the EU policy agenda and advancing legislative initiatives. Supporting the Irish EU Presidency will be a particular focus in 2026, and we will continually work to strengthen our alliances in the EU.

Through the Irish National Accreditation Board (INAB), we will implement the Strategy for Accreditation 2022-2026 and deliver the vision for accreditation to be recognised as central in providing trust and confidence in Irish enterprise, trade, and public services.

As a public body that operates and regulates across a broad and diverse mandate, the Authority plays a unique role in ensuring the safety of workers, services, and products used by workers or consumers, and the protection of the environment. A key element of our strategy will be to demonstrate and communicate this role to government, enterprise partners, and society to maximise the benefits of accreditation and regulatory compliance.

An important objective for the Board during this strategy cycle is to improve how the Authority tracks and reports at an outcome level. The Board has asked the Executive to develop a reporting framework that will clearly demonstrate the high-level impact of the Authority's activities, underpinned by the relevant operational metrics and performance indicators. The Board appreciates that this level of analysis is complex and will be achieved incrementally but encourages the Authority to be ambitious in this regard over the next three years.

We look forward to working with individuals, partners and stakeholders to realise the vision and goals set out in this strategy.

Finally, we would like to thank all who took the time to input into the development of this strategy statement. This included extensive engagement with staff and management of the Authority, as well as a wide range of external stakeholders including other regulators, state agencies, unions, enterprise representative bodies, and private individuals. We would particularly like to thank each of the members of the Authority Board for their very active engagement in the development of this strategy.



**Patricia Byron**  
Chairperson



**Conor O'Brien**  
Chief Executive Officer



# 3

## Who We Are and What We Do

The Authority was established in 1989 under the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 1989, which has since been replaced by the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005.

Additional functions have been conferred on the Authority since then under the Chemicals Acts 2008 and 2010, and other legislation. In 2014, the Irish National Accreditation Board (INAB) was included under the Authority's functions.

The Authority reports to the Minister of State for Business, Employment and Retail under delegated authority from the Minister for Enterprise, Trade and Employment.

The Authority's legislative role is outlined in the table below.

	Occupational Safety and Health	Chemicals	Market Surveillance	Accreditation
<b>Principal Legislation</b>	Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005	Chemicals Acts 2008 and 2010 Chemical Weapons Act 1997 European Communities Act 1972 Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment Regulations 2011 to 2023 Dangerous Substances Act 1972	EU Market Surveillance Regulation 2019/1020 EU Communities Act 1972 product safety regulations Chemicals Act 2008-2010	EU Regulation 765/2008
<b>Legislative Role</b>	Protection of workers and those affected by a work activity from occupational injury and illness	Protection of human health and the environment Enhance competitiveness and innovation Act as focal point to the Technical Secretary of OPCW Ensuring dangerous chemicals are transported by road safely Independent body to decide appeals on flammable liquid and fuel retail store licence decisions made by the relevant (local) authority	Ensuring the free movement of chemicals and industrial products on the internal market Protection of workers, consumers and the environment from unsafe industrial products, chemicals, detergents or articles made from chemicals	To accredit organisations to international standards for technical competence in testing, calibration, inspection, verification and certification

# 4 Strategy Context and Direction

**The Authority's strategy for the period 2025-2027 has been developed in the context of rapidly evolving changes in Ireland and abroad. Key national and international factors that are shaping the strategy in various ways are summarised below.**

The rapid evolution of technology presents both opportunities and challenges. The adoption of new practices and ways of working in the coming years will change the health and safety risks we face, driven by emerging technologies like artificial intelligence. As workplace technology advances, maintaining and enhancing the technical expertise necessary for investigating potential breaches of the Safety, Health and Welfare at Work Act 2005 will be required by the Authority.

Economic changes, such as inflation, fluctuations in economic cycles, and labour market shortages, may impact on compliance with health and safety regulations. At a sectoral level, growing sectors such as the circular economy, green transition, the expanding gig economy, as well as increased activity in the construction sector and the continuing challenges in the agriculture sector, will impact how we deploy our resources. Additionally, changing demographics, including an ageing workforce and a growing number of vulnerable, non-English speaking, and migrant workers, represent significant external factors to consider.

The Authority will be ambitious and agile, and continually scan the horizon for emerging issues such as these. It will be innovative in its models and approaches where there is potential to leverage technology, encourage relevant research and integrate digitalisation to improve compliance management, risk assessment, and workplace communication.

Good communication between employees and employers is key to a healthy, safe, and productive workplace, as demonstrated throughout the pandemic. Strong communication and the use of employee consultation mechanisms will continue to be promoted to ensure worker safety and involvement in health and safety matters.

The pandemic has had a lasting impact on the Irish labour market, giving rise to new legislation and an increased proportion of remote or hybrid/blended working. This creates challenges for the Authority in regulating health and safety at home or during off-site work. Additionally, the UK exit from the EU also has an ongoing impact, i.e., the potential transport of unregulated dangerous goods, and the accreditation of organisations based in Northern Ireland which are working in both UK and EU markets. There is also an increased focus on psychosocial risk factors that may affect workers' mental health, which are cross-cutting issues being faced by all sectors.

The work of the Authority is supported by advisory committees, the Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee (FSPAC), the Construction Safety Partnership Advisory Committee (CSPAC), and the new Health and Social Care Advisory Committee (HSCAC). The HSCAC was formed during the strategy for 2022 to 2024, and provides a forum for stakeholders to advise and support the Authority in promoting best practices in occupational health and safety in the sector.

**Good communication between employees and employers is key to a healthy, safe, and productive workplace**

It offers a formal mechanism to access sectoral expertise for the Board and establish strong networks. Whilst WorkPositiveCI, the psychosocial risk management tool for employers, was reviewed in 2023, the increased focus on occupational health, including psychosocial risks, will require additional scrutiny and action.

The implementation of the EU Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability and associated EU agendas will impact our work and require coordination at a European and national level with other competent authorities. Changes in health and safety regulations, both domestically and internationally, can challenge enterprises in adopting compliance measures. The Authority will continue to promote legislative changes and support enterprises in implementing them, while supporting competitiveness and innovation.

Extensive recruitment means that we have scaled up our staff numbers significantly. To support this growth, a focus on staff integration, training and development to achieve organisational excellence will be required. Additionally, we will provide specialised technical training in targeted areas to both existing and new staff members whilst ensuring appropriate use of the Authority's resources.

We will also partner with the education system to develop health and safety expertise in high-risk sectors, and to develop a recruitment pipeline for careers in areas relevant to the Authority's mandate.

In the course of this strategy, we will also need to meet several Government strategies and initiatives. We will continue to work with key stakeholders to deliver on the action items set out in the Government's Road Safety Strategy 2021-2030.

Section 42 of the Irish Human Rights and Equality Commission Act 2014 establishes a positive duty on public bodies to have regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality, and protect the human rights of staff and the people to whom services are provided. It also requires "an assessment of the human rights and equality issues it believes to be relevant to the functions and purpose of the body and the policies, plans and actions in place or proposed to be put in place to address those issues." This assessment is required to be accessible to the public. This Public Sector Duty is consistent with the mandate and core values of the Authority.

The Authority will continue to emphasise and promote equality and human rights through our day-to-day work, whether in delivering key public services; developing policy and legislation in an inclusive human rights compliant manner; or in doing our work in an efficient, fair way with integrity and respect for human dignity. Through our core values, we will also ensure that these duties are emphasised for our staff. Furthermore, we will continue our focus on equality, diversity and inclusion, to ensure that these are embedded into our policies and procedures, including our recruitment, development and retention processes. We will seek to exceed the target that at least 6% of the Authority's staff should represent persons with disabilities, in line with the Government's Comprehensive Employment Strategy for Persons with Disabilities.

The Authority also commits to align with broader public sector central policies. Building on 'Our Public Service (OPS) 2020', the Irish Government is currently embarking on OPS2030, which will be a new framework for development and innovation in Ireland's public service. The main goal of OPS2030 will be to ensure that Ireland's public service is fit for purpose to 2030 and beyond.

Additionally, the Authority will develop a Climate Action Roadmap outlining its approach to achieving energy efficiency and emissions reduction targets. This roadmap, required by the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate 2023, will align with the Climate Action Plan and Circular Economy guidelines.



# 5 External and Internal Consultation Process

**During the strategy development process, the Authority engaged in an extensive programme of external stakeholder feedback and public consultation, as well as a detailed consultation amongst our own staff. The Authority would like to express thanks to all who contributed to this, which was a key input for us in developing the strategy.**

The stakeholder engagement process involved bilateral interviews, surveys and invitation of submissions from a wide range of internal and external stakeholder groups, including employer, employee and sectoral representative bodies, government departments and agencies, and the general public, in addition to Authority staff. A total of 36 submissions were collected through the internal business unit survey and 72 submissions were gathered during the external consultation process. As well as informing the strategy, the detailed feedback will also be used by the Authority in developing its annual implementation plans over the course of the 2025-2027 period.

The consultation process was conducted independently of the Authority by Indecon Economic Consultants to ensure that respondents could give honest and direct feedback on both their engagement with the Authority over the lifetime of the previous strategy, and suggestions to inform the next one.

## Examples of some of the insights highlighted by stakeholders are as follows:

- ▶ The work of the Authority over the lifetime of the previous strategy was noted by a range of stakeholders, with frequent mention of the range and quality of communications and information provided, greater collaboration and engagement with different sectors, as well as an acknowledgement of the growing mandate of the Authority in areas such as the regulation of chemicals. The development of the INAB strategy to promote accreditation was also noted.
- ▶ Several external changes and challenges were highlighted. The impact of environmental changes on the adoption of new practices and ways of working, which may introduce new risks, was highlighted. Changes in demographics and social make-up in Ireland were also raised, as well as social changes such as the rise in violence and aggression towards public servants and frontline staff.
- ▶ The importance of inspections was raised, in particular risk-focused inspection campaigns and mitigation measures. Respondents highlighted the need for inspectors to be trained and equipped with tools to address all aspects of OSH, including psychosocial risks and mitigation of occupational illnesses. Stakeholders also emphasised the need to continue supporting Safety Representatives in the workplace.
- ▶ Awareness raising through a variety of channels of communication was highlighted as being important, with several suggestions as to how this could be further developed and enhanced. Educating young people and engaging with the education system was identified as key to influencing the workplace of the future.
- ▶ New and emerging areas of focus were also identified. Stakeholders suggested focusing on identifying organisational causes of psychosocial risks and work-related stress.
- ▶ Several areas of focus for the new strategy statement related to the chemicals sector were also proposed.



# 6 Vision, Mandate and Values

## Vision

**To deliver healthy and safe working lives and contribute to productive enterprises.**

To regulate, enforce, and promote work-related safety, health, and welfare, and the safe use of chemicals and products; and to provide the national accreditation service.

## Mandate

- To regulate the safety, health and welfare of people at work and those affected by work activities.
- To influence 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, supply, storage, and transport of chemicals.
- To strengthen market surveillance in relation to relevant single European market legislation.
- To be the national accreditation body for Ireland.

## Our CORE Values

### **Collaboration:**

We are a people-centred organisation that listens, consults and collaborates with employees, employers, stakeholders, and partners.

### **Outcomes focus:**

All our work is focused on achieving better outcomes.

### **Responsiveness:**

We are a progressive organisation that drives continuous improvement through innovation. We use data to inform what we do, and we evaluate and share learnings.

### **Ethics:**

We uphold the highest professional, governance, and ethical standards. We will earn trust by being accountable and delivering our services in a rigorous, consistent and fair manner.

In the next three years, the Authority will be focused on meeting our expanded mandate. In doing so, we will be guided by three strategic priorities, as set out below. We will focus on a number of specific goals, which are set out under each of the strategic priorities.



# 7 Strategic Priorities and Goals

## Strategic Priority 1:

### Build and Support Compliance

**BUILD AND  
SUPPORT  
COMPLIANCE**

Embed a culture of compliance, collaboration and best practice.

#### In the next three years, we will:

- identify and focus on the areas of highest risk where we can have the greatest impact,
- be forward-thinking and scan the horizon for emerging issues and technologies and identify research needs, and
- support compliance while enforcing where required.

#### Expected Outcomes

- Risk-profiling of processes based on evidence and data.
- An efficient and effective regulatory and enforcement system, that supports compliance.
- An agile, innovative methodology, capable of responding to emerging issues.
- Strengthened relationships with regulators to deliver more effective outcomes.
- Enterprises, duty holders and stakeholders are well-informed and equipped to comply with regulatory requirements.

## Strategic Priority 2:

# Influence, Educate and Collaborate

INFLUENCE,  
EDUCATE AND  
COLLABORATE

Influence, educate and collaborate with stakeholders, to ensure appropriate expertise is developed, risks within our remit are mitigated, and society is protected.

### In the next three years, we will:

- focus key messages on small enterprises, self-employed, and vulnerable workers,
- develop a culture of collaboration with industry, stakeholders and education providers, and
- proactively influence policy and legislation using our expertise.

### Expected Outcomes

- Increased engagement with small enterprises, self-employed individuals, and vulnerable workers.
- Strengthened collaboration with stakeholders and education providers.
- Recognised as a leading contributor on policy and legislation relevant to our mandate.

## Strategic Priority 3:

# Organisational Excellence

## ORGANISATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Ambitious, ethical, outcome-driven, innovative and data-enriched organisation, which empowers our people to deliver on our mandate.

### In the next three years, we will:

- seek to ensure the Authority has the right skills for the future,
- be innovative and agile,
- maximise the value of the investment made in technology, and
- better measure the outcomes of our work.

### Expected Outcomes

- Optimally structured and agile organisation, with internal competence complemented by external expertise, to adapt to demands.
- An effective reporting model to allow us to allocate resources and measure the strategic outcomes of our work.
- Greater integration and co-ordination of systems and data to maximise efficiencies and quality.
- Our people are supported and empowered to succeed in their roles.

# 8 Delivering this Strategy

## Programmes of Work

The Authority will deliver this strategy through the development and implementation of annual programmes of work, which will be submitted to the Minister for approval. These programmes will specify the actions and key performance indicators (KPIs) that will support the achievement of our strategic goals.

## Measuring Performance

Progress on the annual programmes of work that implement this strategy will be monitored using a range of qualitative and quantitative measures. In setting metrics, the Authority will place a particular focus on measuring expected outcomes. The Board of the Authority has a duty to monitor, measure and drive the implementation of the strategy and organisational performance. The Board of the Authority and the Department of Enterprise, Trade, and Employment will assess ongoing performance based on quarterly and annual reports. The Authority will also agree an oversight and performance delivery agreement with the Department, which will form the basis of periodic reports on progress to the Minister.



# 9 Review of Strategy 2022-2024

The Authority's Strategy Statement 2022-2024 was implemented as Ireland's economy began to recover from the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, and activity levels rose and surpassed pre-pandemic levels. This period also saw a decreasing long-term unemployment rate, shifts in global markets, and labour market changes driven in part by technological advancements and societal changes.

The expected outcomes from the 2022-2024 Strategy Statement were:

## Regulate:

- Effective holding to account of those who fail in their duties under legislation enforced by the Authority.
- Continued downward trend in rates of work-related deaths, injuries and ill health.

## Promote:

- Employers actively engaged in managing occupational safety, health, and welfare.
- Workers actively engaged in protecting themselves and their colleagues at work.
- Increased awareness of how to avoid and manage the risks to health arising from specific industrial products and chemicals.
- People and organisations proactively engaged and satisfied with Authority programmes, tools, and services.

## Influence:

- National interests represented during proposals for and transposition of EU directives and regulations.
- Active engagement by and collaboration with other organisations in supporting the work of the Authority, including through memoranda of understanding and service-level agreements.

## Accredit:

- Increased awareness and use of INAB accreditation services to promote business excellence and sustainability, and to support regulation in essential areas.

## How we work:

- The Authority to be a high-performing organisation, evidenced by high levels of staff engagement and motivation, an ability to adapt to the changing environment, the optimal use of state resources and positive stakeholder relationships.

Details on the achievement of these outcomes during the period 2022-2024 are set out in the following pages.

## Achievement of Key Performance Indicators

An analysis of the KPIs set for the Programmes of Work in 2022 and 2023 shows strong evidence of achievement in several key areas under the main strategic priorities set in the Strategy Statement 2022-2024. This was at a time of significant change for the organisation, which has been growing significantly and taking on new responsibilities. A further analysis of the achievements under the strategic outcomes is set out below.

### Reducing death and injury

The Authority observed an increase in work-related non-fatal incidents during 2022 and 2023, as many economic activities returned to pre-pandemic levels of activity (data for 2024 was not yet available at the time of completion of this strategy). A total of 9,092 non-fatal workplace incidents were reported in 2022 and 10,035 in 2023. When compared to the pre-pandemic years of 2018 and 2019, the non-fatal incident rate, as a percentage of the number of persons in employment, has fallen.

A total of 9,092 reported non-fatal incidents were reported to the Authority in 2022. This was 8.6% higher than 2021, 19% higher than 2020, and slightly lower than 2019. Manual handling and falls were the most common triggers in 2022, as they have been in all years since 2018. The part of the body affected in the greatest number of non-fatal incidents to workers was the back. Back injuries were reported in 26% of worker incidents. The most common environment for non-fatal work-related incidents was industrial or maintenance areas for workers (26%) and shop or service activity areas for non-workers (50%). In 2023, the number of non-fatal incidents reported to the Authority increased by 10%.

While the underlying trend is encouraging, the numbers of injuries remain too high, and the Authority is fully aware that behind these figures are real people who suffered a workplace injury or illness. It must also be noted that there can be considerable under-reporting of non-fatal incidents, with smaller enterprises and self-employed people, in particular, less likely to report incidents compared to larger enterprises, while newer enterprises may be unaware of the obligation to report non-fatal work-related incidents to the Authority.

In the last ten years (2014-2023), Authority records show an overall decrease in the rate of reported fatalities per 100,000 workers in Ireland from 2.8 in 2014 to 1.6 in 2023. 2021 and 2022 were the lowest years on record for work-related fatalities since the establishment of the Authority in 1989, with 38 lives lost to work-related incidents in each of those years.

However, this increased to 43 in 2023. Measured in relation to the number of workers, the fatality rate was 1.5 per 100,000 workers in 2022 and 1.6 per 100,000 in 2023. The rate of fatal accidents is far higher than the national average among self-employed people (with no employees) and workers in small or micro-enterprises. While the number of fatalities increased, it remains lower than the 49 recorded in 2019 and the 54 in 2020. While increases may, in part, reflect increased construction sector activity, we note that there are many individual reasons behind these tragic fatalities.

Farming had 13 recorded fatalities in 2022 and 16 in 2023, remaining the sector with the highest number of fatalities. The construction sector was also a significant source of fatalities, with seven fatalities in 2022 and 11 in 2023, compared to 10 in 2021. Together, the construction and farming sectors accounted for three-quarters of all work-related fatalities in recent years.

### Enforcement

In 2022, the Authority conducted over 11,000 inspections and investigations across all economic sectors and legislative mandates, including 10,509 proactive and reactive inspections with a focus on construction, agriculture, health and social care, transport, retail, and mining and quarry sectors. The target for proactive inspections addressing occupational safety and health (OSH) was 7,500, with the Authority completing 8,815. There were 284 COVID-19 compliance checks carried out during the first quarter of 2022 when public health restrictions were in place. In 2023, the Authority conducted 10,713 inspections and investigations. The target was to deliver 10,000 proactive inspections through specific campaigns and targeted inspections across all sectors. The Authority achieved 9,995 proactive inspections.

In both 2022 and 2023, all work-related fatal incidents reported to the Authority were investigated. In 2022, 365 investigations were completed following incident reports and complaints leading to 16 prosecutions (12 on indictment and four summarily) with fines totalling €1.3m. In 2023, 225 investigations were completed, leading to 19 prosecutions (15 on indictment and four summarily) with fines amounting to €1.4m.

Authority inspectors found that 77% of workplaces inspected had prepared a safety statement in 2022, increasing to 79% in 2023.

The area of market surveillance interventions of chemical and industrial products is one of increasing importance for the Authority, with a significant increase in activity in the first two years of the strategy. In 2022, the assessments included 1,170 chemical products; 994 statutory reports for machinery, lifts, and pressure equipment; and 327 industrial products, resulting in the removal of 260 non-compliant chemical products.

In 2023, 917 chemical products and 307 industrial products were assessed, with 182 non-compliant chemical products removed. While there has been an increase in market surveillance interventions of chemical and industrial products relative to the last strategy period, the targets have increased by even more.

Inspections were undertaken to target activities legislated for under the Chemical Acts and the transportation of dangerous goods legislation. These inspections targeted high-risk chemical activities, particularly in areas with a higher potential for chemical exposure. Emphasis was placed on chemical processing, storage, transportation, manufacturing, and usage in workplaces.

In 2022, the Authority addressed 42 registration ECHA enforcement referrals relating to Irish REACH registrants, followed by 41 in 2023. Furthermore, in 2023, the Authority presented three proposals to amend ADR at a United Nations Joint Meeting, all of which received unanimous support. Additionally, 11 authorisations were issued under the ADR Regulations during the same year.

As rapporteurs on EU committees, the Authority completed five scientific opinions in 2022 and 10 in 2023. Ireland's substance evaluation conclusion document and report for the chemical 4-methylanisole was formally agreed and published by the European Chemicals Agency (ECHA). We also completed a Risk Management Options Analysis report for one substance and one group of substances and continued to collaborate with several other Member States to evaluate the need for EU wide regulation on skin-sensitising substances in consumer mixtures. In 2022, under COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards), 83 specific Tier I and Tier II sites were inspected, and a further 207 inspections were carried out on sites storing dangerous substances below the COMAH threshold and nine safety report assessments were completed. In 2023, 96 specific Tier I and Tier II sites were inspected. A further 89 inspections were carried out on sites storing dangerous substances near but below the COMAH threshold. The Authority received and assessed 22 COMAH notifications and 16 significant modifications. Eleven safety report assessments were completed.

## Engaging with employers, employees and users of Authority services

The Authority has continued to devote significant resources to working collaboratively with workers and their employers, on an individual basis and via the organisations that represent them.

Over the Strategy Period, we continued to support and engage with key stakeholders through the Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee and the Construction Safety Partnership Advisory Committee, in addition to engaging with both employer and employee stakeholders in other sectors. In 2023, the Quarry Safety Partnership Forum was re-established during the year, and the Board established a new Health and Social Care Advisory Committee, which met for the first time in 2024. This committee will provide a forum for key stakeholders to advise and support the Authority in promoting best practice in occupational health and safety in this sector.

In 2022 and 2023, the Authority actively promoted farm safety at numerous major events, including the Tullamore (Livestock) Show, the World Ploughing Championships, Teagasc Sheep 2022 in Athenry, Teagasc Beef 2022 in Grange, and Teagasc Dairy 2023, as well as several other local events. These events featured significant farm safety stands and live demonstration areas.

In 2022, our safety stands at the Tullamore Show and the World Ploughing Championships placed a significant focus on the new legal requirements on training and the wearing of helmets for operating all-terrain vehicles (ATVs). Subsequently, legislation on the use of ATVs came into force in November 2023 and was promoted at all major farming events, with practical demonstrations at stands at the Teagasc Dairy event, the Tullamore Show, and the National Ploughing Championships. The new requirements were also promoted through joint advertising campaigns and extensive media coverage.

In conjunction with the Irish Congress of Trade Unions and with support from Ibec, the Construction Industry Federation and the National Irish Safety Organisation, we marked Workers' Memorial Day each year with a national commemorative event in Dublin. Workers' Memorial Day is an International Day of Remembrance for those who have been killed or seriously injured in work-related incidents.

The Authority continued to support and promote the importance of the role of Safety Representatives in the workplace. We launched the third edition of the Safety Representative Resource Book and produced two information sheets for safety representatives in all sectors. Five training workshops were conducted with key stakeholders on the theme of safety representatives. The workshops focused on the role and function of safety representatives and the importance of consultation.



We developed and launched several high-profile awareness-raising campaigns in various areas, including incident reporting, work-related stress, and the use of all-terrain vehicles. Additionally, we continued to host conferences, webinars, and seminars on diverse topics such as ergonomic risk management, technical land use planning, biobanking, manual handling, and the impact of developments in AI and digitalisation in workplaces. We also held webinars supporting the annual Healthy Work Campaign. Furthermore, we hosted webinars and stakeholder engagement sessions focused on health and safety in the construction industry, including engagement with local authorities. Additionally, the Authority hosted its first webinar exclusively for the waste sector, which focused on campaign findings and key hazards that should be addressed when developing a safety management system. The Authority and the Road Safety Authority also hosted a joint webinar on work-related road safety.

We also published guidance in 22 areas related to OSH, chemicals, and market surveillance in 2022, and in 17 areas in 2023. These publications covered a wide range of topics, including managing exposure to biological agents, exposure to sensitive content, and technical land use planning. Additionally, we prepared codes of practice in areas such as forestry operations, indoor air quality, and industrial lift trucks.

In 2022, the Choose Safety programme was delivered to almost 400 post-primary schools involving over 20,000 students. The programme was rolled out to over 4,000 students in 140 other institutions, including Further Education institutions. In 2023, the programme expanded even further. It was delivered to 428 post-primary schools, involving more than 23,000 students and representing the largest-ever number of post-primary participants in an Authority initiative.

## Increasing awareness of risks arising from chemicals

Based on the 2022-2024 Strategy, the Authority continued to focus on risks to the health of workers and consumers resulting from chemicals, supporting the EU aim of ensuring a high level of protection on chemical safety.

- The Authority continued to meet and support stakeholders with interests in EU Chemical processes under the Chemicals Act, particularly in the context of the revision of the REACH and CLP Regulations.
- An inspection campaign addressed exposure to dichloromethane (DCM) in alloy wheel refurbishment.

- The Authority undertook an awareness campaign related to the motor vehicle parts and accessories industry importing chemicals from outside the EU and their duties to provide safe use information.
- The Authority provided information for consumers on the safe use of chemicals by sharing a press release on our social media channels relating to the findings of an enforcement campaign on hazardous reed diffusers available on the Irish market. A spokesperson also took part in radio interviews to highlight the high level of non-compliance associated with the products and urged consumers to educate themselves on buying products and directed them to the Authority website where guidance is available.
- The number of chemical-related land use planning requests processed was 308 in 2022 and 347 in 2023, while 376 and 418 asbestos notifications were processed in 2022 and 2023, respectively.
- In 2023, The Authority collaborated with the National Poisons Information Centre and the Health Service Executive (HSE) to sponsor the 'The Know, Act, Prevent Garden' at the Bord Bia Bloom festival to raise awareness and alert consumers to the dangers associated with everyday chemical products commonly found in the home and garden.
- We supported the Department in advising Irish enterprises on the universal restriction proposal for PFAS chemicals.
- The Authority finalised the evaluation of 4-methylanisole in 2022. We prepared one harmonised classification and labelling (CLH) proposal, the two Irish CLH proposals submitted to ECHA in 2021 were agreed by ECHA's Risk Assessment Committee (RAC). In 2023, the Authority submitted harmonised CLH proposals to the ECHA for three substances (piperonal, O-isopropyl ethyl thiocarbamate, and sodium chlorite).
- Significant guidance was published for technical land use planning.

## Use of the Authority's programmes, tools and services

One of the desired outcomes of the strategy was for individuals and organisations to be engaged and satisfied with the programmes, tools, and services provided by the Authority. This was a significant area of focus for the authority over the period 2022-2024. For example:

- We continued to develop our BeSMART.ie online risk assessment and safety management tool, enabling enterprises in managing and complying with their responsibilities in health and safety. This involved incorporating a new business category for remote working hubs, as well as developing and promoting an Indoor Air Quality risk assessment. By the end of 2023, the number of users had increased to 109,140, nearly doubling on 2018 levels.
- The number of farmsafely.com users increased from 15,800 in 2022 to 17,000 at the end of 2023.
- Over 30,000 online courses were taken on our e-learning platform, [hsalearning.ie](https://hsalearning.ie) in 2022 and 70,000 in 2023. Seven new online courses were developed, and the Authority engaged extensively in the promotion of these new resources.
- WorkPositive<sup>CI</sup>, the psychosocial risk management tool for employers, was reviewed in 2023. The online tool was updated and streamlined to provide a better user experience and reporting. The updated version was rolled out in 2024. The tool was promoted with all stakeholders, particularly with small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs).
- Through our chemical helpdesk, we supported Irish chemical companies in meeting their obligations under the REACH and Classification, Labelling, and Packaging (CLP) regulations. In 2022 and 2023, over 400 and 450 queries were processed by the Authority.
- Our customer contact centre continued to deal with queries and complaints, responding to approximately 27,000 inbound customer contacts over 2022 and 2023.
- Our website received 1,236,439 hits in 2022 and 3,448,000 hits in 2023 as employers, workers, and enterprises availed of our wide-ranging levels of advice and support.
- We also had over 200,000 downloads of our publications in 2022, with this increasing to 390,000 in 2023, including detailed guidance and short information sheets.

## Representing national interests regarding EU regulations

In 2022 and 2023, the Authority participated in 181 and 146 different EU and international committees and working groups across our OSH, chemicals, and market surveillance mandates. The Authority also provided technical, scientific and policy inputs at other EU and international levels, as requested by the Minister and the DETE.

Throughout the strategy period, as the Central Competent Authority under the Chemicals Act, significant work was undertaken shaping EU chemical policy on the Chemical Strategy for Sustainability and a toxin-free environment. In 2022, the Authority had two harmonised classification dossier proposals agreed upon by the European Chemical Agency's (ECHA) Risk Assessment Committee, and three more were agreed upon in 2023.

We represented Ireland on several ECHA and European Commission committees and technical working groups, and we expended significant effort on shaping new chemicals policy at EU level, particularly in the context of the revision of the CLP Regulation.

We contributed to consultations and workshops to reframe the REACH Regulation. Following the review of the Machinery Directive, as technical experts, we actively contributed to the review of the Commissions draft for the new EU Machinery Regulations. We also actively supported the DETE in the negotiations by attending meetings and providing significant technical input to finalise the new EU Machinery Regulation 2023/1230. The Regulation came into force in 2023.

The Authority contributed to occupational safety and health policy at EU level through participation in working parties under the Advisory Committee on Safety and Health, including updating the Workplaces and Display Screen Directives, reviewing emergency preparedness at EU level and updating the EU Schedule of Occupational Diseases.

The INAB also participated in, and represented Ireland at, both European and international meetings. In 2022 and 2023 the INAB staff attended 23 and 17 European and international accreditation meetings and committees. Additionally, a new European Accreditation Communications Network has been established in which INAB will participate.

## Collaboration with other organisations

The Authority's strategic goals have been achieved through engagement and collaboration with business, sectoral and employee representative groups, other regulators, and government agencies. Within the strategy period, a range of inter-agency agreements were introduced or updated to facilitate and optimise our interactions with other public bodies.

Collaboratively with the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Competition and Consumer Protection Commission (CCPC), the Authority participated in an EU-wide REACH Enforcement Project on integrated chemical controls. Additionally, in October 2023, the Authority and the EPA hosted the EU Chemicals Strategy for Sustainability conference, focusing on the future of EU chemicals legislation.

The Farm Safety Partnership continued its work on implementing the objectives of the Farm Safety Action Plan 2021-2024. The FSPAC ensures strong stakeholder engagement in the agricultural sector. The Authority maintained joint prevention initiatives with Teagasc and collaborated with Coillte and major co-ops. The Farm Safety Partnership Advisory Committee (FSPAC) also supported Farm Safety Week.

The Construction Safety Partnership Advisory Committee (CSPAC) worked towards achieving the objectives of the CSPAC Plan 2022-2024, promoting good health and safety practices in construction. Extensive guidance and information resources were provided to the sector in 2023 through the work of the CSPAC and the Authority.

Over the strategy period, we also provided technical expertise and support to the Department in relation to legislative development at EU level and at national level. Topics included the new EU Regulation on Machinery Products, a derogation application under the Lifts Directive, updates to national legislation for the safe transport of goods by road, amendments to national legislation under the Chemicals Act, and advice on a proposal to amend the Directive on asbestos protection. Recommendations were also made on proposed updates to quarry sector regulations.

The INAB engaged in collaborative efforts with various bodies, including a ministerial working group on the revision of the Drinking Water Directive, the Department of Transport on a Marine Equipment Directive audit, the Data Protection Commissioner on accreditation under GDPR, and the EPA on accrediting stack emission laboratories.

In collaboration with the Road Safety Authority (RSA), the Authority held a Work-Related Vehicle Safety webinar. We supported five training workshops on the theme of safety representatives in collaboration with key stakeholders. Guidance for employers on exposure to sensitive content, particularly in content moderation, was prepared in collaboration with the State Claims Agency.

## Accreditation

One of the strategy's desired outcomes was to increase the awareness and use of INAB accreditation services to promote business excellence and sustainability, and to support regulation in essential areas. The Irish National Accreditation Board (INAB) continued to award new accreditations and renew existing accreditations to support a wide range of businesses and services across the Irish economy. In 2022, 17 new accreditations were awarded, along with 321 decisions on the renewal of existing accreditations. In 2023, there were 553 assessment events, resulting in 13 new accreditations and 384 renewal decisions. Additionally, INAB awarded 117 extensions to scope for current clients, an increase of 40 from the 2022 figures.

A five-year Strategy for Accreditation 2022-2026 was launched by the INAB in May 2022. The strategy sets out how Ireland will fully realise the benefits of accreditation to have a positive impact across the Irish economy and society. The INAB delivered numerous presentations, including to Government Departments. A set of presentations has been prepared to promote the benefits of accreditation, improve knowledge sharing, and exchange information. The INAB LinkedIn social media page was regularly updated to communicate and interact with clients, to improve knowledge sharing and to grow networks. INAB also collaborated with Government Departments and agencies responsible for accreditation in areas such as cybersecurity and data protection.

The INAB added several client case studies to its website to illustrate the benefits of accreditation from the clients' perspective and share learnings and knowledge. This will support knowledge sharing and awareness of accreditation.

In November 2023, INAB hosted the 54th European Co-operation for Accreditation General Assembly meeting in Dublin, which was attended by delegates from national accreditation boards across Europe. INAB staff attended more than 50 international meetings over the strategy period.



## The Authority as a high-performing organisation

Under the 2022-2024 strategy, the Authority continued to invest in its staff, systems and technology. Internally, the Authority grew and adapted to new ways of working. Extensive recruitment means that we have scaled up our staff numbers significantly and have filled out various teams across the Authority, including the new Occupational Health division. Staff numbers increased from 204.8 FTEs in 2021, at the end of the last strategy period, to 268.3 FTEs in Q1 of 2024, representing a 31% increase. Training and onboarding initiatives were enhanced to support new staff in delivering across all mandates.

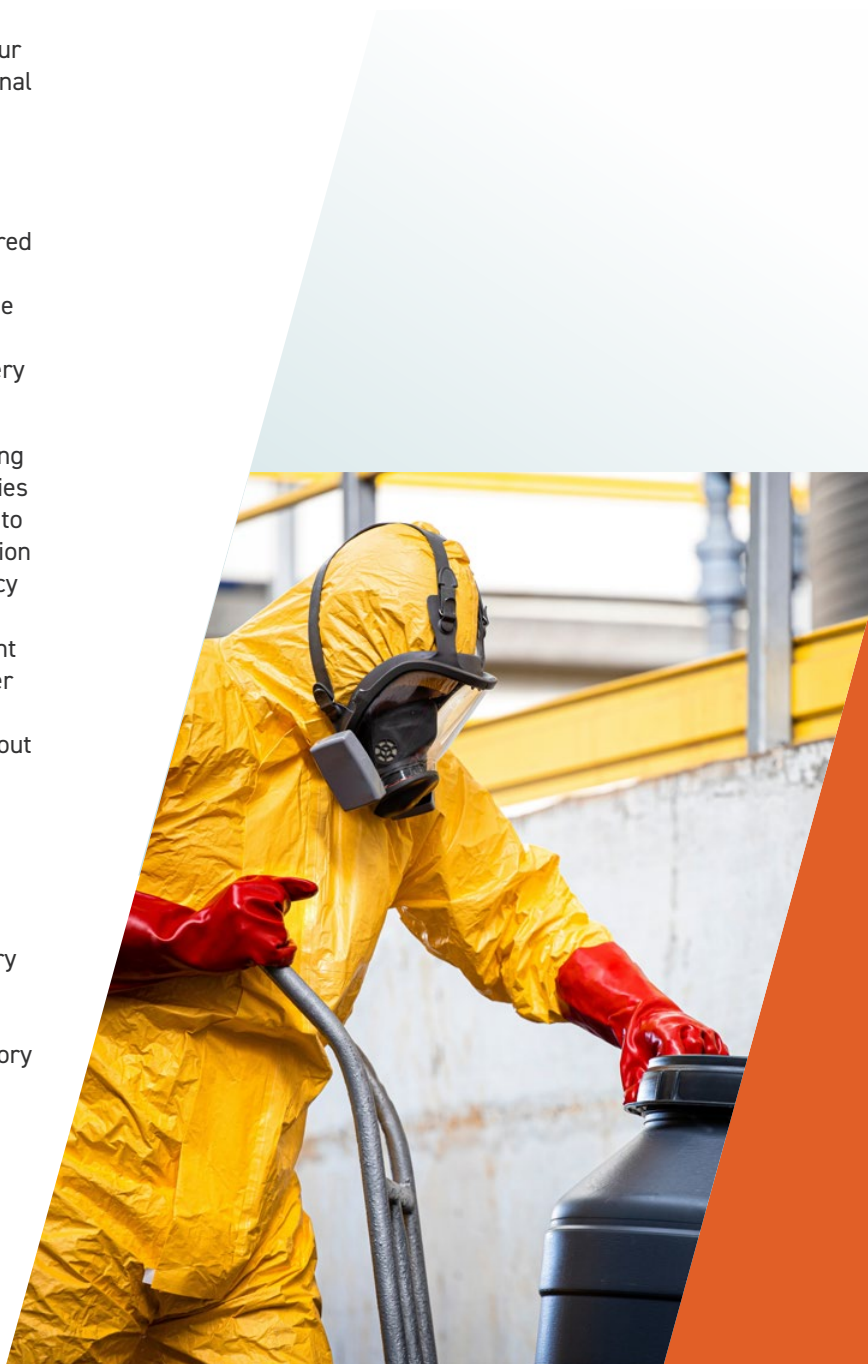
2023 was the first full year of operation under our new model, following a comprehensive organisational development and change management programme implemented in waves throughout the first year of our strategy. While all structures of the new organisational design have been fully implemented, we operated throughout the year with a significant vacancy level in most areas as we continued to scale up to fill our sanctioned headcount. The Authority introduced a development programme for new inspectors, delivered through a blended learning approach of classroom training and supervised inspections. This programme enhances the existing onboarding and induction processes, ensuring consistency in inspection delivery and knowledge transfer across the organisation.

Internally, the Authority developed strategies focusing on people, communications, and data. These strategies aim to ensure a purposeful and long-term approach to the Authority's activities in these areas. In consultation with our staff, we developed a blended working policy that complements our existing suite of work-life balance policies and the Code of Practice on the Right to Disconnect, solidifying our position as an employer of choice. As part of our commitment to work-life balance, we ran a pilot for blended working throughout 2023, which was utilised by 92% of our employees.

An independent review of the ICT environment was conducted against the Cyber Security Baseline Standards for Government ICT, resulting in an action plan. Significant resources were allocated to developing a new core platform to support regulatory and advisory activities. We have successfully completed the initial phase of Córas, a new MS Dynamics platform designed to enhance our regulatory business processes across some of our key areas such as occupational safety and health, chemicals, and market surveillance. Achieving this significant milestone enables us to streamline our workflows, implement end-to-end case management, gather robust data and enhance work planning.

This paves the way for future phases which will bring additional benefits such as improved customer experiences and valuable insights for more targeted regulatory actions, and which is a specific goal in the new strategy.

Our data capabilities have grown in recent years with the establishment of the Data Management and Analytics Team. In 2023, we engaged with key stakeholders to promote optimal data behaviours. Key reports were developed to meet business needs and provide an evidence base for decision-making. Data cleansing was prioritised, with major tasks completed, particularly on our master data, ensuring the migration of clean, high-quality data to the new core platform.



## Conclusions of review of Strategy 2022-2024 which have informed Strategy 2025-2027

- The number of non-fatal incidents increased in 2022 and 2023 as people returned to work, though the non-fatal incident rate, as a percentage of the number of persons in employment, has fallen. Incident rates will be monitored through a strong emphasis on supporting and building compliance in the new strategy.
- Farming and construction accounted for three-quarters of all work-related fatalities in recent years and these sectors will continue to be a focus in the new strategy.
- The rate of fatal accidents is far higher than the national average among self-employed people and workers in small or micro-enterprises. Particular emphasis will be placed on getting the Authority's messages out to smaller businesses during this strategy.
- The Authority continued to develop its programmes, tools, and services, including BeSMART.ie, farmsafely.com, hsalearning.ie, WorkPositiveCI, chemical helpdesk, customer contact centre and website. As the Authority continues to develop its digitalisation programme during the next strategy, it will look to improve the effectiveness of these customer-facing systems.
- In 2022 and 2023, the Authority participated in numerous EU and international committees and working groups across our OSH, chemicals, and market surveillance mandates. Efforts to influence EU policy and legislation will remain a priority.
- Within the strategy period, a range of inter-agency agreements were introduced or updated to facilitate and optimise our interactions with other public bodies. The Authority will aim to identify and engage in further agreements to facilitate efficient delivery of the goals of the new strategy.
- A five-year Strategy for Accreditation 2022-2026 was launched by INAB in May 2022 and the implementation of the accreditation strategy will continue through the first two years of the Authority's strategy.
- Staff numbers increased from 204.8 FTEs in 2021 to 268.3 in Q1 of 2024. Training and onboarding initiatives were enhanced to support new staff in delivering across all mandates. We will prioritise staff development and retention to ensure that we have the correct skills and expertise available during the next strategy and into the longer term.
- The Authority completed the initial phase of Córas, a new MS Dynamics platform designed to enhance our regulatory business processes across some of our key areas. The investment in digital technologies will continue into the new strategy with a particular emphasis on customer-facing applications and maximising the use of the Authority's data to help direct its work.

## Notes



# Our Vision:

**To deliver healthy and  
safe working lives and  
contribute to productive  
enterprises**



An tÚdarás Sláinte agus Sábháilteachta  
Health and Safety Authority

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**Tel: 0818 289 389**

**[www.hsa.ie](http://www.hsa.ie)**