



An Coimisiún
um Rialáil Fóntais
Commission for
Regulation of Utilities

Strategic Plan 2025-2027

Regulating energy
and water for a
changing climate





**Prepared in line with requirements of the Electricity Regulation (Schedule 1)
Act 1999 and Water Services (No. 2) Act 2013.**

1 | Introduction

On behalf of the Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) team, the Commissioners are delighted to present the CRU's Strategic Plan for the period 2025 to 2027. The Plan underpins the CRU's crucial role in regulating Ireland's rapidly evolving energy and water sectors, and ensuring that essential services are delivered efficiently, safely, and in line with national policy objectives.

The CRU plays a pivotal role in Ireland's journey towards Net Zero. The Strategic Plan seeks to support decarbonisation goals while remaining focused on energy security, cost-effectiveness, and consumer protection. This approach demonstrates the CRU's commitment to guiding Ireland's energy transition in a manner that is both ambitious and pragmatic. The Plan also takes into account the wide range of activities delivered by CRU, in partnership with the Utility Regulator of Northern Ireland, in the regulation of the all island Single Electricity Market.

This Plan has been informed by an extensive internal and external consultation process and we thank our team and key stakeholders for their constructive contributions.

The pace of change facing Ireland's utility infrastructure and energy markets is accelerating in response to a domestic and European policy agenda that emphasises transition to a low carbon economy and energy security. This requires strong and proportionate regulation to ensure that all citizens benefit. As the regulator responsible for electricity, gas, and water, the CRU has





a duty to act both as an enabler of critical change and a protector of consumer interests.

The CRU must adapt to rapidly changing markets and an evolving policy landscape. It is clear from engagement with numerous stakeholders, including market participants, that the scope of our work needs to expand. This will entail an organisational restructure and a transformation of the way we regulate the electricity, gas, and water sectors. The steps set out in this Plan will allow the CRU to:

- Protect and empower customers, with an increased focus on the energy sector as it grows in scale and complexity
- Maintain resilience of electricity, gas and water supply in partnership with relevant Departments and key stakeholders
- Drive competitiveness, to support choice and affordability
- Enable customers to become more active in the energy market
- Provide dispute resolution services for customers to ensure they receive a high level of service.

- Enhance our oversight and monitoring of investment in the regulated network sectors
- Build the organisation's capacity to focus on long-term sectoral developments so that it can provide economic analysis and advice for national and EU-level policy stakeholders
- Drive the decarbonisation of all regulated sectors to benefit society and the economy
- Ensure public safety across the expanded sectors which CRU regulates, as new electrification technologies reach consumers and as biomethane and hydrogen are introduced into the gas network.

We wish to thank all our staff and stakeholders who contributed their time, energy, and insights to this Plan in support of our vision for resilient, safe, efficient, and sustainable supplies of energy and water, for the benefit of customers now and in the future.

Jim Gannon
Chairperson

2 | About the CRU

About the CRU: What We Do

The Commission for Regulation of Utilities (CRU) is Ireland's independent energy and water regulator. The work of the CRU impacts every Irish home and business. We strive to ensure safe, secure, and sustainable energy and water supplies for the benefit of all customers. The work of the CRU also facilitates Ireland's climate actions and transformation to 'Net Zero.' We operate within a policy and statutory framework set by Government and are financed by means of a levy on regulated entities.

Economic Regulation of Energy and Water



- ▶ Maintaining security of supply
- ▶ Ensuring efficient network delivery
- ▶ Promoting competition and innovation
- ▶ Monitoring performance of regulated entities

Facilitating Transformation to 'Net Zero'



- ▶ Accelerating delivery of network infrastructure
- ▶ Driving low carbon technologies
- ▶ Increasing flexibility of the energy system
- ▶ Facilitating consumer participation

Customer Engagement and Protection



- ▶ Setting service standards
- ▶ Informing customers about rights
- ▶ Resolving customer disputes
- ▶ Encouraging customer engagement

Energy Safety Regulation



- ▶ Protecting public safety
- ▶ Preventing major accidents
- ▶ Promoting safety awareness

3 | Vision, Purpose, and Values



OUR VISION:

Resilient, efficient, sustainable, and safe energy and water services for Ireland.



OUR PURPOSE:

We actively serve the public interest by regulating the provision of energy and water to Irish homes and businesses, while supporting the transformation to net zero.



OUR VALUES:

INTEGRITY

Trust is vital, so we always act with integrity. We take balanced, evidence-based decisions that are fair and consistent.

PROFESSIONALISM

We are ambitious and dedicated to having a positive impact in everything we do. We work as a team, value, and respect each other, and always strive to develop our expertise. We are pragmatic and open to alternative processes.

OPENNESS

We are committed to co-operation. We clearly explain who we are and what we do. Our processes are open and thorough, and we consider views from all stakeholders.

ACCOUNTABILITY

We are accountable to the public through the Oireachtas for our decisions and the way we use our resources. We are independent and open to scrutiny.

4 | Strategic Priorities

Our Vision, Purpose and Values determine the way we work and what we prioritise. There are eight strategic priorities for the next three years, which will guide us in serving the public interest.



Strategic Priority 1

Support Transition to Net Zero

We will facilitate infrastructure investment, enhance system flexibility, and implement controls and incentives to support the transition to net zero.



Objective

1. Accelerate delivery of network infrastructure for net zero

Expected Outcomes

- Electricity Price Review (PR6) developed and implemented (including offshore price controls and incentives for delivery of infrastructure).
- Framework for anticipatory investment in electricity networks developed.
- Regulatory decisions taken to enable Greenlink and Celtic electricity interconnectors to become operational.
- Regulatory consideration of the future role of gas network in the context of energy and climate goals.
- Improved long term planning of networks including integration of offshore renewables, large energy demand and renewable acceleration areas.
- Enhanced grid permitting processes.
- Regulatory framework is in place to enable build out of offshore hybrid assets with Phase 1 offshore wind projects under construction.
- Regulatory framework and funding model for district heating, including licensing and customer protection measures, developed.

Strategic Priority 1

Objective

2. Facilitate deployment and integration of low carbon technologies

Expected Outcomes

- Connection policy in place to enable integration of low carbon generation.
- Network information provided by System Operators, to support transparency and efficient decision making.
- Programme of work for onshore hybrid connections delivered.
- Regulatory policy updates arising from Private Wires Government policy decisions considered.
- Revised framework in place for High Efficiency Combined Heat and Power (CHP) certification process.
- Regulatory framework in place for Renewable Gas Guarantees of Origin.
- Offshore regulatory framework for plan-led approach significantly progressed.

Objective

3. Increase the flexibility of the energy system

Expected Outcomes

- National Energy Demand Strategy implemented.
- Regulatory framework for flexible demand connections significantly progressed.
- Potential for flexibility from heat networks examined.

Strategic Priority 2

Enable Efficient and Competitive Energy Markets

We will support competition, reward flexibility and deliver alignment with EU requirements.



Objective

1. Ensure processes and structures of energy markets are delivering competition

Expected Outcomes

- Retail market provides appropriate level of requirements for new entrants.
- A robust Supplier of Last Resort Framework that provides continuity of energy supply and protections for customers.
- Customers can switch and choose suppliers based on transparent and accessible information.
- A competitive retail market, which is comparable with EU and other markets.
- Competitive auctions that deliver capacity to meet reliability standards.
- Liquid day-ahead and intra-day energy markets in electricity.
- Transmission System Operator (TSO) dispatch more closely reflecting market outcomes.

Strategic Priority 2

Objective

2. Ensure frameworks and policies are aligned with EU requirements and re-integration

Expected Outcomes

- Enhanced engagement with EU organisations, including CEER/ACER, to ensure Ireland's interests are protected.
- Integration of EU Directives into Retail Markets and CRU policy.
- Market systems able to re-integrate into the EU internal energy market, with delivery of interconnection to France.
- Updated capacity market aligned with evolving EU State Aid rules.
- Ireland is compliant with the European Resource Adequacy Assessment (ERAA) of power system resource adequacy.

Objective

3. Incentivise efficient generation capacity and enhanced flexibility capability

Expected Outcomes

- Increased contribution of storage, including long-duration energy storage, demand-side response, and more flexible generation.
- Network charging methodologies are appropriately incentivising efficient location of generation and demand, particularly for Large Energy Users.
- Existing generation fleet is refurbished to improve efficiency and decrease lock in of new fossil gas.
- System Services High-Level Design is implemented.

Strategic Priority 3

Enable Resilient Critical National Infrastructure

We will facilitate the evolution of a future proofed gas system, drive continued decarbonisation of electricity, and underpin the cyber resilience of utilities (including water).



Objective

1. Advance a secure, decarbonisation-ready gas system

Expected Outcomes

- Required infrastructure in place to meet and deliver electricity and gas capacity adequacy that aligns with carbon budgets.
- Monitoring and supporting the implementation of any necessary changes to achieve N-1 Infrastructure standard under EC 1938/2017.
- Evolution of secure, fit-for-purpose and future-proofed natural gas system, which aligns with Price Control frameworks.

Objective

2. Deliver reliable decarbonised electricity infrastructure and system

Expected Outcomes

- Outstanding actions from the CRU Electricity Security of Supply programme implemented.
- Progression of additional interconnection to Ireland (subject to outcomes of required regulatory assessments).
- Continued evolution of energy, capacity, and system services markets to meet adequacy needs in a decarbonised system.
- A trusted adequacy forecasting process in place.

Strategic Priority 3

Objective

3. Establish CRU as a competent authority in cyber security and infrastructure resilience

Expected Outcomes

- Competence, capacity, and revenue streams established for new regulatory roles of cyber security (Network Information Security Directive - NIS2) and Critical Entity Resilience.
- Guidance published to industry on CRU role in these areas.
- Identification of, engagement and awareness-building with relevant energy and water entities and sectors undertaken.
- Compliance monitoring programmes initiated.
- Integration of existing emergency preparedness responsibilities, procedures, and activities into wider resilience framework.

Objective

4. Act cohesively in Security of Supply and resilience across our utility sectors and roles

Expected Outcomes

- Structured approach in place to address cross-cutting impacts of regulatory policy decisions on resilience.
- Delivery of clear understanding and trusted advice, across government, industry, and consumers regarding how both security of supply and resilience are defined, assessed, and assured for the three sectors CRU regulates.
- Support the delivery of the Government's Energy Security in Ireland to 2030 initiative, as per our vires and independence.

Strategic Priority 4

Ensure Efficient Investment in Infrastructure Delivery

We will ensure regulatory frameworks are fit for purpose, drive the transformation of the electricity and gas networks and support a whole-of-system approach.



Objective

1. Enhance regulatory frameworks to deliver energy infrastructure at pace

Expected Outcomes

- Network investments facilitated.
- Timely delivery of priority network infrastructure.
- Greater transparency and accountability from utility infrastructure delivery organisations.
- Improved reliability of supply for domestic and commercial electricity customers.
- Framework established for review of electricity network tariffs.

Strategic Priority 4

Objective

2. Enable efficient and sustainable transition of Ireland's gas network

Expected Outcomes

- Updated renewable gas connection policy published, to promote efficient and sustainable connections to the gas network.
- Achievement of objectives set by the Gas Price Control 5 regulatory framework.
- Price Control 6 Decision published to facilitate safe, secure, and efficient investment in the evolution of the gas network and the protection of customer interests.
- Revised tariff arrangements published, which are equitable and supportive of the transition to a sustainable gas network.
- Alignment achieved with the EU Hydrogen and Decarbonised Gas Market Package.

Objective

3. Support a whole-of-system approach to electricity and gas network planning and delivery

Expected Outcomes

- Enhanced network company governance arrangements in place.
- Enhanced collaboration among network companies to enable efficient and whole-of-network investment decisions.
- Future Operating Model for Transmission and Distribution System Operators implemented.

Strategic Priority 5

Protect the Public in Energy Safety

We will drive compliance with safety regulation, ensure the effective operation of frameworks and schemes and enhance public awareness of energy safety.



Objective

1. Drive compliance with safety regulation

Expected Outcomes

- Safety case assessment and compliance monitoring of regulated entities completed, with enforcement action taken where necessary leading to improvements in safety performance.
- Gas Safety Case Guidelines and/or Framework reviewed for CNG, RNG, LPG distribution networks, providing clarity and guidance for regulated entities.
- Investigations conducted using a risk-based approach and learnings implemented.

Objective

2. Implement expanded Gas Safety Framework and enhance public awareness of gas safety risks

Expected Outcomes

- LPG distribution network operators licensed and regulated under CRU Gas Regulatory Framework.
- Enhanced compliance within LPG distribution networks, resulting in improved safety outcomes.
- Non-domestic gas installers regulated through RGI scheme.
- Strengthened communications to enhance promotion and public awareness of gas safety, with a particular focus on LPG and non-domestic gas works.
- Enhanced public awareness of necessity to use a REC or RGI when undertaking electrical and gas works.

Strategic Priority 5

Objective

3. Oversee the effective operation of the RGI and Safe Electric schemes

Expected Outcomes

- Oversight of performance monitoring framework ensuring that a high standard of service is being provided to scheme members and the public.
- Electronic certification for RGI and Safe Electric schemes implemented.
- Scheme operator designation, completed through competitive tender process.
- Automatic Recognition system implemented along with continued review and improvement of General Recognition system.
- Scheme documents updated to reflect relevant industry developments following consultation and engagement.

Objective

4. Support net zero through ongoing safety engagement

Expected Outcomes

- Stakeholders aware of CRU safety remits, enhanced co-operation, and knowledge sharing.
- Hydrogen safety regulatory framework developed and safety cases assessed in accordance with scope of regulatory remit set by Government.

Strategic Priority 6

Effective Economic Regulation of Water Services

We will enable efficient and effective infrastructure investment, incentivise high quality water services and ensure effective protection of customers.



Objective

1. Enable efficient investment for secure, sustainable, and resilient water and wastewater infrastructure

Expected Outcomes

- Water Revenue Control 4 (RC4) in place, with transparent outputs, outcomes, reporting frameworks and efficiency targets.
- Complete External Assurance Review for AG1 of Uisce Éireann's Preliminary Business Case for the Limerick WWTP Upgrade & Bioresource Centre Project, in line with the Water Services Sector Specific Guidelines.
- Full implementation of the national Non-Domestic Tariff Framework including Trade Effluent Tariff Charging.
- Improvements in information relating to water conservation, and in response to actions relating to conservation strategy.

Strategic Priority 6

Objective

2. Incentivise delivery of high-quality water and wastewater services

Expected Outcomes

- Greater transparency and accountability with improved tracking of spend and delivery of infrastructure by Uisce Éireann.
- Regulatory framework fully implemented by Uisce Éireann, with enhanced monitoring of performance in the delivery of water services including security of supply, leakage, wastewater, conservation, and energy.
- Improvements in economic efficiency of Uisce Éireann monitored with the implementation of the single public utility.
- Publication of water customer information reports including updates on consumption, leakage, complaints and compliance.

Objective

3. Deliver robust consumer protection and compliance framework

Expected Outcomes

- Alignment of Uisce Éireann Codes of Practice with updated CRU Customer Handbook to reflect relevant aspects of the EU Drinking Water Directive.
- Compliance Audits in place, to drive improvements in customer service, asset investments and service delivery.

Strategic Priority 7

Empower and Protect All Customers

We will make sure the customer voice is heard and engage more closely with all stakeholders.



Objective

1. Transform customer protection framework to reflect a dynamically changing market

Expected Outcomes

- Improved internal processes for how CRU manages changes to regulatory framework.
- Greater use of digital technologies to increase efficiency of dispute resolution.
- Future markets and services considered, and review initiated of all existing customer protection frameworks and gaps (energy, water, district heating).
- Customer Handbooks and Codes of Practice are up to date and provide robust customer protections.



Strategic Priority 7

Objective

2. Inform and empower customers to take actions that will benefit them as part of the energy transition

Expected Outcomes

- Recognition of the CRU as a trusted, independent customer advocate for energy, water, and climate action.
- Regular targeted consumer campaigns completed, to support and influence active customers/engagement.
- Coordinated engagement undertaken with stakeholders, optimising the use of the CRU's and other resources and channels.
- Facilitated improvements to customers' energy actions, including:
 - Switching
 - Registering for smart data services and time of use tariffs
 - Shifting consumption including reducing peak demand
 - Registering as a vulnerable customer.
- Enhanced accessibility to CRU services among customers.
- Customers understand the role of the CRU in energy and water services.

Objective

3. Protect customers and ensure their voice is reflected in CRU policy development, implementation, and enforcement

Expected Outcomes

- Examined/identified new ways of capturing the customer voice, e.g. more targeted use of surveys/research.
- Identified new/enhanced means by which all policy decisions taken in the CRU give due consideration to the customer voice.
- Robust, fair, and transparent application of enforcement measures, including administrative sanctions.

Objective

4. Build trust and understanding through meaningful engagement with stakeholders

Expected Outcomes

- Better policy-making and integration of EU Directives.
- Stakeholders are informed and understand tangible benefits and impact of CRU decisions.
- Strengthened and consistent CRU external messaging.
- Broader knowledge of international best practice, with a focus on the experience of EU counterparts.

Strategic Priority 8

Enhance Teams, Capabilities and Governance Standards

We will embrace change, foster excellence, build our capabilities and create an inclusive culture.



Objective

1. Transform our organisation to embrace and adapt to future change

Expected Outcomes

- The CRU has the necessary resources, expertise, capabilities, and structures to fulfil its responsibilities and achieve its objectives.
- Sustainable working environment to meet staff needs and environmental obligations.
- Digitalisation of key work processes and services with data and analytical solutions that drive informed decision-making, and enhanced operational efficiency.

Strategic Priority 8

Objective

2. Foster excellence while maintaining operational stability

Expected Outcomes

- Retention of talent and improved employee development within the CRU.
- An engaged and skilled workforce that is aligned with organisational goals.
- Robust processes and procedures to achieve excellence in service delivery.
- Value for money achieved from prudent and practical use of financial resources.

Objective

3. Facilitate good governance and robust decision making

Expected Outcomes

- Practices and procedures which adhere to best practice standards in governance.
- Necessary capabilities, analysis, risk assessment and oversight approaches for our portfolio of complex projects.
- Robust and informed decisions that withstand legal challenge.

Objective

4. Grow 'One CRU' with a culture of inclusivity, collaboration, and openness

Expected Outcomes

- Consistent internal communications that ensure staff are informed and included in relevant decision-making processes.
- A modern progressive work environment suited to the needs and ambition of the CRU and its staff.
- Cross-functional teamwork, collaboration, knowledge sharing promoted and encouraged.
- Improved compliance with the Irish Human Rights & Equality Commission Act 2014.

5 | Consultation to Inform this Strategy

The CRU Strategic Plan 2025-27 has been developed in consultation with our stakeholders, including the utilities we regulate, energy suppliers, licensees, representative organisations, consumer groups, Government Departments, State

Agencies, and other public sector bodies, and our own staff. We would like to thank all who took the time and effort to make submissions, which have been considered in the preparation of this Plan.

6 | Performance and Evaluation

The CRU's Strategic Plan 2025-2027 informs the annual Work Plan which details actions to achieve priorities and objectives within defined timelines. The CRU's Work Plan is submitted annually to the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications,

and the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage. Performance is monitored by the CRU on an ongoing basis, with details on progress published in each year's Annual Report.





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