Guidance on sustainability and ethics

Climate breakdown and biodiversity collapse are the most serious issues of our time, and transformational action is required to achieve meaningful outcomes. The planet has ecological limits and a finite biocapacity, a paradigm shift is required to realign humanity's ecological footprint within this capacity. Indeed, with our existing technologies and fossil fuel dependence, we will fail to achieve our existing commitments.

The Engineers Ireland Code of Ethics applies to all members of the organisation. Members of Engineers Ireland must "*hold paramount the safety, health, and welfare of the public; the protection of the environment; and the promotion of health and safety in the workplace*". All other requirements of the Code of Ethics are subordinate if the protection of public safety, the environment or other substantive public interests are involved.

Engineers Ireland's vision is a community of creative professionals delivering sustainable solutions for society. To address the impact of the Climate and Biodiversity Emergency, members should:

1. Be conscious of the effect that their decisions will have on the environment and the welfare of the public and should endeavour to minimise the environmental impact of their engineering activities. This includes minimising or eliminating any adverse impact on the natural environment arising from the design and execution of all project work that they are engaged in.

2. Strive to accomplish the objectives of their work with the most efficient consumption of natural resources which is practicable economically, including the maximum reduction in energy usage, waste and pollution.

3. Have regard for the substance and intent of current national, European Union and other legislation relevant to their field of engineering practice and must maintain competence in the necessary standards applicable to their field of engineering practice, including advances in the relevant practices and technological developments.

4. Promote the principles and practices of sustainable development and the needs of present and future generations, and foster environmental awareness within the profession and among the public. This includes promoting the importance of social and environmental factors to professional colleagues, employers and clients with whom they share responsibility and collaborate with other professions to mitigate the adverse impacts of their common endeavours.

5. Report to Engineers Ireland and, if applicable, any other appropriate authority, if the member, on reasonable and probable grounds, believes that the continued practice by another member might pose a risk of significant harm to the environment or to the health or safety of the public or a group of people.