



Making Irish Blood Green:

A Sustainability Strategy
for the IBTS 2025 - 2030



Foreword

As the sole organisation charged with preserving the supply of blood and blood products in Ireland, the Irish Blood Transfusion Service strives to be a leader and an innovator in the efficient production of our supply.

The IBTS is also eager to act as a leader when it comes to legislative changes affecting our organisation. With the signing of the Climate Action Plan by the Government in 2019, we were tasked with operating with increased efficiency with a view to managing our energy use and carbon emissions.

Our ambition is to develop a long-term and robust Roadmap and a Sustainability Strategy to address the impact of the Irish Blood Transfusion Service on the environment while maintaining the supply of Irish blood and blood products in the most sustainable manner possible.

This Strategy aligns our energy and carbon targets with other objectives designed to achieve a holistic approach to sustainability.

In terms of energy management, we have already made substantial progress in reducing our natural gas and electricity use. We have conducted a full evaluation of our long-term fleet vehicle requirements, with a strategy in place to manage their energy use. We have laid out a clear project pathway to meet our 2030 targets and provide a positive outlook towards meeting our 2050 Net Zero targets.

There have also been other initiatives including the development of internal energy and environmental training, progress in improving commuting for staff and donors, and the management of our resources.

This Strategy has led to the development of 3 Strategic Sustainability Objectives to address our multi-faceted approach to Sustainability. Focus areas include both governance and social aspects, along with the previously outlined impact on energy and climate.

Progress to date has been achieved without adversely impacting on the most essential part of our organisation, namely the production and supply of blood and blood products.

We are committed to addressing all areas of concern and to working with our counterparties in the public sector and more widely in order to reduce our energy use and emissions.

The IBTS will stay abreast of upcoming legislative change and is committed to addressing all that is required of us in relation to Climate Action and Sustainability.

Deirdre-Ann Barr

Chairperson of the IBTS Board

Introduction

The Irish Blood Transfusion Service understands both the requirement, and the desire of the Irish population to meet head on the challenges associated with sustainable development.

Sustainability, in the past deemed as an extraneous subject in many organizations, can no longer be viewed as something to be achieved after the fact, but now must be brought firmly into focus as a pillar for development.



Figure 1 - The U.N. Sustainable Development Goals.

The United Nation's ratification of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals in 2015 clearly brought to the global attention that these are key strategic paths forward, towards achieving Sustainable Development, by 2030 (See Figure 1 for the Goals). These are encompassed within a holistic view of Sustainability as an umbrella term for Environmental, Social, and Economic Sustainability.

The IBTS has defined our *Climate Action Roadmap*, to address major gaps and projects assigned to meet the requirements of the Irish Governments 2030 targets for energy efficiency and reduction of carbon emissions.

Aligning the mandated regulatory requirements set out in the *Climate Action Roadmap*, and the framework provided with the Sustainable Development Goals, will allow us to develop an inclusive and well-informed Sustainability Strategy. This will assist the IBTS in moving forward and acting as a leader within the Health Industry.

Our focus will be on addressing 3 Strategic Sustainability Objectives (S.S.O.), with targets assigned underneath those objectives and to be outlined later: Controlling our Carbon, Greening our Production & Consumption, and Improving the IBTS and the Health of the Planet.

As with all concepts within the scope of Sustainable Development, there are significant points of overlap within these topics, as they work together to achieve similar end results, and providing the framework for the IBTS to move forward in this period between 2025-2030.

Section 1: Our Strategy

The development of this strategy has been achieved through extensive discussion with internal and external stakeholders, including our Sustainability Steering Group, external energy audit teams, external waste management consultants, and amongst the IBTS staff with recommendations and guidance requested by the development team.

The IBTS has been in operation since 1965 and has developed through the past 60 years evolving with the time. This is a major focus shift to the organization and will change the manner in which all aspects operate, adapting to the current scenario of a Climate Crisis.

We must continue improve our operations, which have been hugely successful in saving countless lives in Ireland, while mitigating the impact we have on the environment, and continuing to be economically independent.

This strategy will provide the guiding framework for us as we move forward in this 5-year period of great change and will allow us to bring Sustainability into the decision-making structure for the IBTS. There have been many successes in Sustainability within the IBTS and we will work to recognize the achievements made.

We are committed to meeting the mandated targets set within the *Public Sector Climate Action Mandate*, and which have been integrated with our *Climate Action Roadmap*, this Strategy will incorporate those Targets and expand on other areas within the holistic view on sustainability.

Our staff and our donors, always at the core of our organization, have been and will continue to be vital in this culture shift, and we cannot thank them enough for what they have done, and how they will help us moving forward.

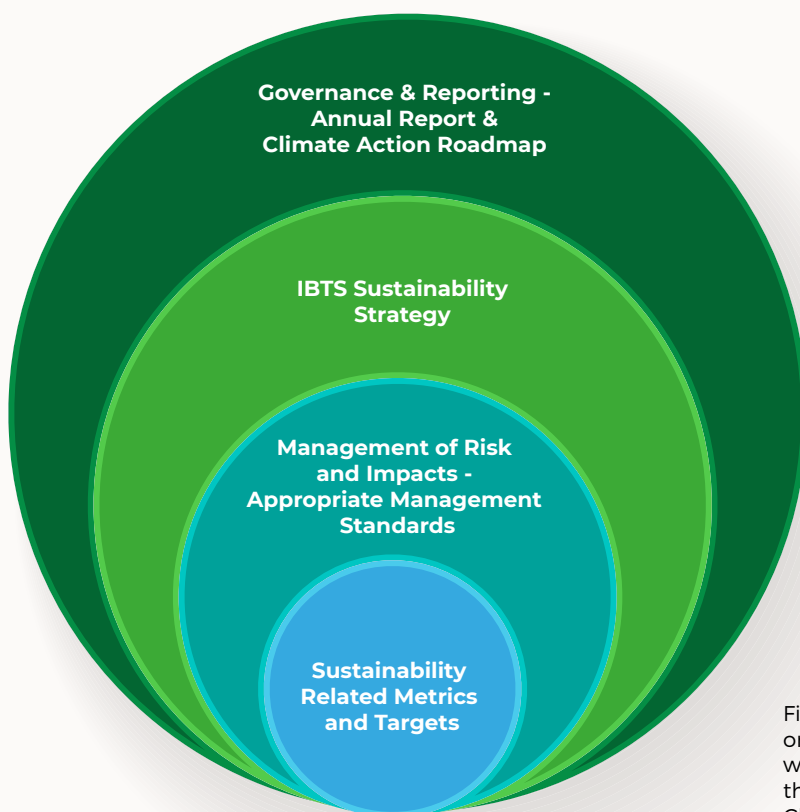


Figure 2 - Adapting the core structure of how an organization operates with specific focus on ESG within the IBTS. Adapted from Implementing the Recommendations of the Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (2021).

Section 2: The SDGs and the IBTS

In H2 2024, using the SDG Compass Business Assessment Tool, the Climate and Sustainability Lead assessed the relevance of each of the sub-targets for the SDGs by a relevance scoring index for the IBTS Sustainability Strategy. The assessment assumes that the IBTS can have an impact on the success of the SDGs even at a minute scaled down level, and the assessment scored the potential impact on each sub-target (from 1-5).

This allowed us to confirm that we are focusing on topics that align with our organisations focus, as this will allow for a greater buy-in from our internal perspective, as staff will see that they have a direct impact on these aspects of sustainability. From an external perspective, that we are addressing areas within the IBTS that have major ESG impacts, and as such we are not only tackling the easiest opportunities but also changing practices where possible to leave a positive impact.

In Fig. 3, you can see the averaged relevant impact across the sub-targets in the SDGs from the SDG Compass Business Assessment Tool. It is noted that the major impact areas for the IBTS are in SDGs 3, 5, 7, 9, 12, 13, and 15 (Table 1).

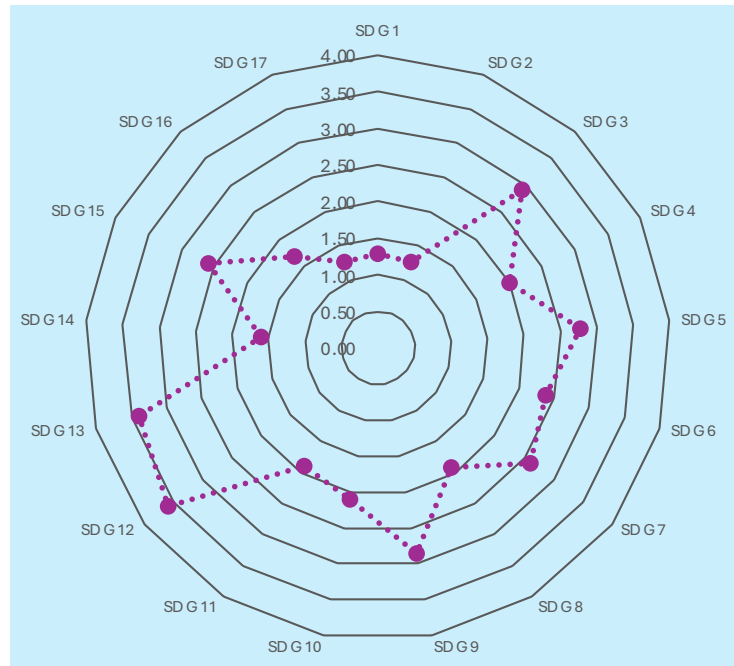


Figure 3 - Radar Graph of Averaged Relevance Scoring Index using the SDG Compass Business Assessment Tool. Table 1 Highlights the SDGs that could potentially be impacted by the IBTS Sustainability Strategy.

SDG Number	Name	Relevance Scoring Index (Max 5)
SDG 3	Good Health and Well-Being	2.92
SDG 5	Gender Equality	2.78
SDG 7	Affordable and Clean Energy	2.60
SDG 9	Industry, Innovation, and Infrastructure	2.86
SDG 12	Responsible Consumption and Production	3.58
SDG 13	Climate Action	3.40
SDG 15	Life on Land	2.58

Table 1 - From the SDG Compass Business Assessment Tool, 7 key SDGs were noted as aligned with the IBTS Sustainability Strategy due to their highest Relevance Scoring Index.

Section 3: IBTS Strategic Sustainability Objectives

As we have previously laid out, as part of the IBTS Sustainability Strategy, we will meet 3 Strategic Sustainability Objectives (SSO). The objectives will allow the IBTS to create a structured framework and overarching focus on Sustainability during this initial incorporating period from 2025-2030.

These will address sustainability on a holistic approach and include aspects of the SDGs within the underlying goals.

S.S.O.1 - Controlling Our Carbon

- **2030 Energy and Carbon Targets**

The IBTS, as a Public Service Organisation is committed to the 2030 targets set out in the Government's *Climate Action Plan*, to reduce fossil fuel and total emissions by 51% from the baseline (2016-2018) to 2030, and additionally to increase efficiency in energy use by 50% through the same period.

- **Pathway to Net-Zero by 2050**

These targets are not viewed as a short-term plan to be met by 2030 but are instead stepping-stones for the IBTS. We are committed to meet the additional targets of being Net Zero in our operations by 2050. The projects within the *IBTS' Climate Action Roadmap* project pipeline are with a long-term view of being Net Zero by 2050.

- **Energy Management Systems**

To help the IBTS progress towards these targets, the IBTS is committed to developing a robust Energy Management System suitable to the needs and size of our organisation and we will work with internal and external stakeholders to ensure that this is achieved to the required level by 2030.

- **Managing How we Travel**

The Irish Government has targets to reduce private vehicle commuting by 2030. The IBTS is committed to supporting this transition amongst our staff. We have achieved the National Transport Authority's Bronze Smarter Travel Mark. We are committed to improving our performance and expanding the programme across the organisation.

We will work to support our staff by increasing public and active travel guidance and support.

This will be further supported by the introduction of a car parking policy at the National Blood Centre. This will provide funding for sustainability initiatives from 2026 onwards.

S.S.O.2 - Greening our Production & Consumption

• Improving our Waste Management

The Irish Government has waste recycling targets of 55% of total weight by end-2025 and by 60% by end-2030. As the IBTS generates a significant amount of waste through our activities, we feel that it is important that we align ourselves with these targets. We will develop a new IBTS Waste Policy in H1 2025 to support this.

We will further assess our opportunities to, where possible, reduce and overall improve our management of hazardous waste within our organization to further reduce the amount of waste requiring recovery as a disposal method.

• Increasing Efficiency of Our Production

The IBTS is committed to continue to provide the national blood supply which has been the core focus of the organisation for 60 years, in the most sustainable manner possible.

We will continue to be innovative in our approach to providing this essential service and will ensure that sustainability is a core focus as part of any improvements being made to our system of production, with opportunities assessed from 'Vein to Vein'.

We are committed to improve our understanding of the impact of our supply chain and use this as a decision-making tool.

• Education and Awareness

As an innovator and a centre for education, the IBTS is committed to developing an engaging and active sustainability education and awareness programme, for our staff to understand the impact of the organization and to be able to inform our donors.

We will work with our L&D team and other internal and external stakeholders to develop this system, to ensure we are going to capture all areas of the organisation.

• Green Public Procurement (GPP)

As part of our response to the *Public Sector Climate Action Mandate*, the IBTS has introduced GPP into all tendering processes. We are firmly committed to using GPP as a mechanism to increase the sustainability of our supply chain. Our internal corporate strategy is due to be reviewed and updated in 2025 and will include a scoring of 10% as a minimum scoring for sustainability aspects of the product/service/supplier in all tenders.

S.S.O.3 - Improving the Health of People, the Planet, and the IBTS

• Health

The IBTS is the statutory body with responsibility for the national blood supply. The IBTS was established by Statutory Instrument (S.I.) in 1965. The IBTS also provides testing and tissue services to hospitals and is responsible for the Irish Unrelated Bone Marrow Registry.

As we are the sole body responsible for this S.I., we must act as a leader and an innovator within Ireland, and this must be in a system of continual improvement.

Sustainable blood management is a new lens from which to view this process and will provide a holistic view on sustainable management of the blood supply.

This aspect will be considered across the organisation with support provided where needed to continue to provide this vital service while reducing impact on the planet and ensuring the long-term service availability.

• Gender Equality

The IBTS has acted as a leader within the lens of Gender Equality and will provide continuity in this commitment. Within our Annual Report, we provide detailed breakdown of the Gender Pay Gap to highlight any systemic inequalities within our organisation. We will continue to report on this to ensure transparency.

The focus on equality is not limited to the balance of pay however, we are committed to ensuring appropriate education and awareness initiatives are made available to staff, guidance documents for donors, and policies supporting equality. We have a robust internal diversity & equality policy that encompasses this support and the IBTS Sustainability Strategy will support this in any way that is required for guidance or assistance.

• Biodiversity

The IBTS has signed up as a supporter of the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan, as a starting point at our headquarters in the National Blood Centre. The strategy will support this development, and both expand the support at this location, and reach out to our other locations to increase the coverage and awareness across the organization.

• National Outreach

At the IBTS we recognize the importance of the vital services we provide and are aware that we can play a role as a leader in our local communities. We are committed to understanding the impact we can have on community initiatives across our sites and will engage with groups to see where we can support them.

This will extend to national support with charitable initiatives and schemes which we can engage with. We have made the first step with our support of the Return for Children Scheme, donating our Deposit Return Items to the 6 major children's charities in Ireland.

• International Outreach

The IBTS's internal long term research strategy highlights the partnerships in place for the Organization. One of which is Global Health through partnering with the National Blood Transfusion Service of Tanzania. This partnership aligns with the SDGs and the Sustainability Strategy will provide sustainability guidance and support as required.

Additionally, the IBTS is determined to further enhance our strategic partnerships with other international blood establishments to understand key sustainability and facilities management advances that could be applied to our organisation.

Section 4: Levers to Meet our Objectives

The IBTS has already set out our set of organisational values, and these provide a framework for our success. These values are a representative for our staff and indicate the areas of importance for us to act as guiding principles. These principles provide a path for success for the IBTS and are embedded in what we do every day.

This success can extend to our Sustainability Strategy, as they can act as levers for its implementation. Below (Table 2), you will see how we feel the IBTS values are incorporated in the Strategic Sustainability Objectives we have set out and how they can assist in the everyday activities and the long-term success of the Strategy.



Figure 4 - Graphic representation of the IBTS Values.

IBTS Values	Relationship with the Strategic Sustainability Objectives
We Love Our Donors	Ensuring our donors are made aware of our progress, and how we value their role in our success. Increase Awareness of Sustainable Commuting/Visiting Options. Having a positive impact on biodiversity improves the donors' lives as they know that we are working with them to create a positive impact on nature.
We Strive for Excellence	Link sustainability education with L&D to ensure staff understand the benefits internally and externally of making progress. Support and assist the sustainability journey of the My Green Labs teams as they strive for innovative success. Embedding an energy management system based on practices of continual improvement.
We Improve Patients Lives, Together	Ensure that we continue to increase the overall sustainability of the Blood Management System in place. Reducing the overall consumption within the organisation and using GPP to ensure we make sustainable choices will improve the lives of patients directly and indirectly. Working to foster a system where there is no inequality within our organisation.
We Lead by Example	Act as a role model within the health sector for meeting the energy and carbon reduction targets for 2030 and 2050. Setting ambitious waste and commuting targets. Acting as a national and international leader for outreach and collaboration encourages others to do the same.

Table 2 - Summary of the IBTS Values and their Relationship with the Strategic Sustainability Objectives

Section 5: Governance & Reporting

5.1 - Governance

The IBTS has begun to develop a clear structure for good governance on aspects of Sustainability. There are several stakeholders involved in the development of both this document and the Climate Action Roadmap.

Internally, the Climate and Sustainability Lead led the gathering of data from procurement, human resources, finance, transport, and facilities/estates, with additional exchanges with our external stakeholders (EnerJ Energy Audit team, Deloitte ESC Review Team, the IBTS External SEAI Partnership Support Manager, and several data sources held externally).

This provided many stages of data assessment and verification prior to the development of the plans and framework for the development of the Climate Action Roadmap and the Sustainability Strategy.

Following this, the documents went through several stages of editing and on-going assessment by the Sustainability Steering Group, before a final draft assessment by the Director of Finance and the Chief Executive. The finalized draft was then presented to the Executive Management Team before a presentation to the IBTS Board in Q4 2024.

5.2 - Reporting

Reporting of our performance is a key demand for any Sustainability Strategy as it outlines the commitment to meeting any targets set either internally or externally.

As such, at the IBTS we are determined to report using the mechanisms applicable to us. Some of these mechanisms are required reporting, both internal and external as part of good governance, and there are also additional voluntary reporting systems in use.

Mandatory Reporting Tools	Voluntary Reporting Tools
Sustainability Data in our Annual Report	My Green Lab Accreditation
Annual SEAI M&R System update	Monthly reporting internally to staff
Annually updating our Climate Action Roadmap	All-Ireland Pollinator Plan reporting
Reporting to Board at Regular Intervals	National Transport Authority Smarter Travel Mark
Waste Declarations to the CSO as required	

Table 3 – Summary of the mandatory and voluntary reporting tools in use by the IBTS. These are a mix of external and internal reporting.

We will continue to assess opportunities to increase the level of voluntary reporting to ensure transparency in the organisation, and ensure we are, meeting all the mandatory requirements that are applicable to us with any changing legislation.

5.3 - On-going Assessment

With the assistance of the Governance structure in place, and the reporting conducted by the IBTS, we will be able to immediately address gaps or opportunities for improvement within the Strategy to ensure we show progress and keep our Strategy updated with the changing landscape.

Section 6: Potential Challenges

As with any innovative and ambitious strategy, especially one such as this with a focus on sustainability, there are potential challenges, these are some of the challenges that we see as potentially facing the IBTS, however with a robust strategy and framework, we will be able to overcome and remain committed to our goal.

The potential challenges list in Table 4 is not exhaustive and will be assessed on an on-going basis. To ensure that the IBTS stays informed on any potential future challenges or risk, the Climate and Sustainability Lead will conduct an ESG risk review in 2025 with the Risk and Resilience Manager.

These will then be incorporated into the internal IBTS Risk Register.

Challenge	Impacts on Production	Financial Support
Detail	The first and most important potential challenge for the IBTS would be any change having an impact on our vital production.	One potential challenge for the success of the IBTS Sustainability Strategy would be an issue with financial support for the projects aligned with the Climate Action Roadmap, or any additional initiatives.
Solution	The IBTS has a robust Good Manufacturing Practices system in place, and this will be married with the Energy Management System to ensure that any changes made improve rather than detract from the production process.	The IBTS is mandated to meet the energy and carbon reduction targets by 2030; as such these projects will be supported. Additional initiatives to support the strategy will be addressed in a financially sustainable manner, looking to have limited impact. The new internal car parking policy will also provide funding for Sustainability activities from 2026 onwards.
Challenge	Impacts on Production	Internal Acceptance
Detail	Potential future shifts in legislation could change the mandated targets or create additional restrictions or requirements for the IBTS.	There is a potential for a challenge as this strategy will create additional aspects to be considered for the IBTS, and staff may feel that it would take focus away from the core actions of the organisation.
Solution	The IBTS will liaise and stay up to date with the training recommendations of the Government and the SEAI to ensure any legislative requirements are addressed and planned for without delay.	Ensuring that the Sustainability Steering Group has inputs from across the organisation, and that the queries/ comments/ suggestions gathered are addressed to ensure that staff feel valued and heard and to reaffirm that this strategy has core values of the organisation embedded within it.

Table 4 - Summary of the 4 main challenges that could potentially impact the success of the Sustainability Strategy.

Conclusion



This Strategy outlines the dynamic approach that the IBTS will take over the next 5 years to implement initiatives focused on sustainability and sustainable development, along with introducing these aspects to in-situ programmes and projects that are ongoing.

The development of this Strategy has taken place with an appropriate level of Governance concerning both internal and external stakeholders to get a true reflection of the current level of sustainability incorporation, and the appetite for future development.

We feel that this robust approach in the development of the Strategy has provided us insight on potential challenges and a view into the solutions available to us. Our development will be mapped and reported on both internally and externally, as alluded to previously.

While the Strategy sets out plans and targets that are both quantitative and qualitative for the next 5 years, these will be continually assessed and may be revised to expand and include additional concepts that are brought on stream within the organisation. We will also continue to monitor the legislative landscape that we must adhere to, and meet any mandated changes required of us, in this way we will align this document with our mandated Climate Action Roadmap, which is annually reviewed.



Referenced Documentation

IBTS Documentation

- **IBTS Climate Action Roadmap**

Published documentation by the IBTS outlining our progress and plans to meet the *Public Sector Climate Action Mandate* 2030 targets.

External Documentation

- **Climate Action Plan 2024**

Most up to date annual publication by the Irish Government with best practice guidelines and targets to be met across the country. There are specific sub-sections which directly apply to the IBTS as a public body.

- **Public Sector Climate Action Mandate:**

Annually published and revised documentation by the Irish Government to provide updated guidance on targets and any extraneous materials required for Irish Public Bodies.



**Irish Blood
Transfusion Service**

Seirbhís Fuilaeistriúcháin na hÉireann