

AN COIMISIÚN UM RIALÁIL IARNRÓID  
**COMMISSION FOR RAILWAY REGULATION**

# STATEMENT OF STRATEGY 2024-2027



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# INTRODUCTION



**In our Strategy for 2024–2027, the Commission for Railway Regulation (CRR) has set out its vision for the national railway system, serving as a core element in national public transport, over a transformative period.**

In developing this strategy, the CRR has taken full account of both European and national policies, strategies and plans relating to transport as well as the additional relevant legislative framework. Specifically, the Commission has developed its new strategy in the context of the current and planned significant expenditure on both railway infrastructure and rolling stock.

We actively sought the opinion of our key stakeholders in the preparation of this strategy. We received submissions from all the major stakeholders which were given careful consideration and have helped direct the development of this new strategy. We thank all our stakeholders for their active engagement.

The range of the CRR's regulatory mandate is extensive and is due to increase in the lifetime of this new strategy. While the full range of our mandate is detailed within our annual report, it can, in the context of our strategy be divided into three distinct areas namely safety, sustainability and security.

In relation to safety and sustainability, the CRR's function is to ensure that those responsible for the development, maintenance and operation of the national rail infrastructure and rolling stock have any new and upgraded infrastructure and rolling stock approved, and that all railway organisations have an effective safety management system. These must be in line with the legal requirements and be fully and effectively implemented.

In relation to sustainability the CRR has both an internal and external focus, delivering on its own climate action roadmap and fulfilling its role as the economic regulator overseeing government funding provided to maintain the conventional rail at steady state.



In relation to security, the CRR is entering a new period of expanding responsibility, being designated the competent authority in the transport – rail sector for the Network and Information Systems Directive (NIS2) on a high common level of cybersecurity across the Union and expecting a similar designation for the Critical Entities Resilience Directive (CER). Developing the necessary competence in these new areas of responsibility will be challenging. The cyber security area is significant as the rail sector continues to apply new technologies in its operation.

We use our technical expertise to support the Department of Transport and Minister by providing technical assistance in the continuing development of the rail transport regulatory framework. As this framework is primarily European Union based, it is subject to on-going development in the context of the development of the single European rail area. In this regard we also continue to represent Ireland at relevant European Commission fora where the continuing development of safety and interoperability are a central focus.

As a state body which is in the main funded through a levy on the industry, we are committed to ensuring effective and efficient operation. While there is a requirement for detailed administration procedures associated with our functions, which are in many cases directed by the legislative framework, we are focused on ensuring that the administrative burden on regulated entities is limited to what is needed.

The CRR provides a range of legislative based services to ensure the safe introduction, upgrade and maintenance of infrastructure and rolling stock. As a regulator, we proactively engage with our external stakeholders to foster and encourage the highest standards in light and conventional rail safety, as well as a few other discrete sectors that fall within our remit.

In developing the strategy, we have looked at the key purpose of all of our regulatory functions, namely safety, sustainability and security, and we aim to ensure that our actions are focused on achieving these. We look forward to working with individuals, partners and stakeholders during the life of this strategy.









# MANDATE



The CRR is a small independent state body comprising 17 staff. It has an organisational structure that is designed to facilitate the delivery of its railway and associated mandate. We recognise that we are operating in an environment that is challenging for staff recruitment and retention. The CRR is primarily staffed with technical specialists possessing a very broad knowledge of the heavy and light railway sectors. We value our staff and see continuous improvement and the growth of our own expertise as vital to our effective operation.

The CRR has a range of distinct regulatory functions, broadly these relate to operational safety, the future development of the heavy rail sector in line with European standards and the light rail sector, as well as access to the rail network and market regulation.

The scope of the entities that are subject to regulation by the CRR is defined in legislation and can be seen as three groups. The first is what is referred to as conventional (or heavy rail) including Iarnród Éireann Infrastructure Manager and the railway organisations that operate on that infrastructure including Iarnród Éireann Railway Undertaking, NIR Translink, Rhomberg Sersa Ireland Limited (contracted maintenance service provider for the rail infrastructure) and the Railway Preservation Society of Ireland. The second is light rail of which there is currently one, the LUAS. The entities subject to regulation here are Transdev as the contracted maintenance/operator and Transport Infrastructure Ireland as the owner of the infrastructure and rolling stock. The third group are a range of other entities subject to regulation based on the legislative framework and includes heritage railways of which there are 7 certified, cableways (of which there is one at Dursey) and Velorail (of which there is 1 certified).

Our mandate is extending into new areas of expertise relating to critical entities resilience and network and information systems in the transport rail sector. This will be a significant additional responsibility which must be embedded in the life of this strategy.

The CRR has a significant number of stakeholders over and above those it regulates. Our engagement with our stakeholders is important to us, it provides for the exchange of knowledge and experience that assists understanding of the rail sector as to how it is, what we want it to be and how to get there. Our stakeholders include Government Departments but primarily the Department of Transport, the Railway Safety Advisory Council, the European Railway Agency and a broad range of other regulators and representative bodies.



# CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITIES



## Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies

As a public body, the CRR has a range of corporate responsibilities in relation to our operation and the functions that we perform. An understanding and review of our corporate responsibilities including those in the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies have formed part of the development of the Strategy. The current Department of Transport Strategy has also been taken into account.

## Section 42 statement

The Irish Human Rights and Equality Act 2014 provides that: a public body shall, in the performance of its functions, have regard to the need to: a) eliminate discrimination; b) promote equality of opportunity and treatment of its staff and the persons to whom it provides services; and c) protect, promote and fulfil the human rights of its members, staff and the persons to whom it provides services.

As a public body, the CRR is required to complete 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 these issues.

The CRR as a public body has undertaken an assessment of the human rights and equality issues relevant to the functions. In performing its key functions the CRR has limited direct interaction with the public. In considering its obligation to eliminate discrimination and to protect and promote the human rights and equality of its staff, the CRR has identified three thematic areas of focus: a) the accessibility of our working environment; b) policies and procedures; and c) building capacity of management and staff to manage human rights and equality issues in the workplace.

The CRR has developed an action plan which includes a review of building facilities and of specified policies, and raising awareness through specified training and discussion sessions. The CRR will commence reporting on actions taken to address the issues identified in the assessment in its 2024 Annual Report.

## Climate Action Roadmap

Our Climate Action Roadmap is in place in line with the public sector climate action mandate, including the Climate Action Plan 2023, and has formed part of the consideration of this strategy.

## Accessibility of public bodies

As a public body, we adhere to the Code of Practice on Accessibility of Public Services and Information Provided by Public Bodies and this has formed part of the consideration of this strategy.



# MISSION, VISION AND VALUES



## Mission

To ensure safe, secure, accessible and sustainable railway systems through effective and efficient regulation.

## Vision

Safe and sustainable railways at the heart of public transport and economic development.

## Values

### Integrity

We are trustworthy and honest in all our activities.

### Respect

We value and understand the positive impact of diversity of opinion.

### Independence

We take responsibility for our decisions which are evidence based, fair and consistent.

### Professionalism

We strive for excellence and the continuous development of our expertise.

### Pragmatism

We recognise the challenges faced by our stakeholders and are solution driven whilst ensuring legislative requirements are met.



# STRATEGIC PRIORITIES



## Strategic priorities

As part of this statement of strategy we have identified 5 strategic priority areas with key supporting actions that will be a focus over the life of this strategy.

### Priority: Safe, secure and sustainable railways

Ensuring through regulation and encouragement that safety, security and sustainability are central to rail transport as part of the public transport network, protecting members of the public, employees and those who interface with the rail network.

#### Actions

- Develop an annual programme of work that addresses key performance indicator areas.
- Have an active engagement plan with contractors, suppliers and partners to promote rail safety.
- Our supervision activity will be directed by procedures based on European Railway Agency (ERA) guidance, and best industry practice.
- Evaluate the effectiveness of our key activities of supervision, conformity assessment and authorisation.
- Promote the use of new technologies, where they demonstrate clear benefits to the management of rail safety.
- Build resource and competence in the newly allocated Competent Authority role under the NIS2 Directive.

### Priority: Our people and our organisation

Our people are our most valuable asset and we will promote continuous improvement within our organisation by supporting our staff and encouraging their personal development.

#### Actions

- Assign resources to maximise effectiveness and support our continuous improvement.
- Support staff through learning and development opportunities.
- Have a positive and inclusive working environment that supports our staff and promotes good work life balance.
- Ensure good governance in line with the Code of Practice for state bodies.
- Promote innovation and the adoption of new work methods and technologies.
- Meet our targets in our Climate Action Roadmap.
- Report on the implementation of the Public Sector Equality and Human Rights Duty.
- Prepare for the competent authority role under the CER Directive.



### Priority: Promoting highest standards

Creating an awareness within the rail sector of changes to the regulatory framework, standards and guidance to support best practice.

#### Actions

- Have a process to bring new developments and changes to the regulatory framework to the attention of the rail sector.
- Share examples of best practice where these are observed.
- Ensure the reporting of accidents and accident investigations are a source of learning.
- Engage with all stakeholders in relation to Human and Organisational Factors.
- Encourage regulated entities to go beyond minimum compliance requirements.
- Support the introduction of technology which reduces administrative burden.

### Priority: Effective market regulation

Effective regulation and monitoring of the Infrastructure Manager in relation to its funding of and expenditure on asset management and network access.

#### Actions

- Keep all key performance indicators under review.
- Report on Iarnród Éireann Infrastructure Manager's adherence to the multi-annual contract.
- Ensure that the requirements allowing access to the rail network are in place.
- Review the process for the licensing of Railway Undertakings.

### Priority: Our communication

Listening, communicating and engaging effectively with all our stakeholders.

#### Actions

- Develop an annual communication plan to promote and encourage railway safety with external stakeholders.
- Engage with regulated entities in preparation for our new competent authority roles.
- Engage with Heritage Railways to promote and educate on legislative requirements.
- Review and update our website.
- Review the format and accessibility of our key Guidance and Reports.





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