

Environmental, Social Governance (ESG)

The Housing Finance Agency (HFA) is committed to integrating environmental, social and governance (ESG) principles into its services and business operations.

The Housing Finance Agency (HFA) recognises that the world faces environmental challenges and as a financial institution working with clients in the housing sector, we have an important role to play in promoting sustainability. By engaging with stakeholders – including employees, clients, and suppliers – we can do our part to improve sustainability, better serve our community, and simultaneously deliver good performance.

Environmental

Under its lending remit, the HFA provides loans to local authorities, approved housing bodies and higher education institutions to support the delivery of A-rated accommodation. 99% of HFA-financed homes are new-builds, which will have an energy-efficiency rating of A2 or higher. The HFA also provides competitive-rate financing to customers to facilitate retrofitting and repurposing of older and/or vacant buildings so they can be converted into homes.

We believe in minimising our own impact on the environment by following sustainable practices and reducing our carbon footprint. As part of the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate 2023, the HFA is committed to achieving its 2030 carbon emissions and energy efficiency targets.

The HFA aims to reduce energy consumption, water usage, waste disposal and our overall carbon footprint in a practical and cost-effective manner. Our Green Team held a number of meetings over 2023 and has recommended several of improvements to make our office greener, including the replacement of lighting at the HFA office and a new water dispenser system that will reduce our use of plastic. A HFA Climate Action Training Workshop was also rolled out in March 2023 to increase the level of awareness of climate change among staff members and to discuss how the company and staff as individuals could improve in this area.

The HFA's office, which is located in a listed building, has a BER rating of D1. The property management company, IPUT, has several initiatives in place to reduce energy consumption and waste and to support biodiversity. Solar panels provide power for common areas and the roof is home to a hive of bees that are cared for by IPUT's beekeeper.

HFA staff also have access to cycle facilities to securely store their bicycles and e-bikes, facilitating sustainable transport options. The Bike to Work and Taxsaver Commuter Ticket schemes are also available to staff.

Social Responsibility

The HFA is committed to investing in communities and supporting social initiatives that align with our values. The HFA provides long term, competitive-rate financing to customers that deliver social and affordable housing across Ireland. The HFA has committed to providing 25% of the funding required under the Government's Housing for All plan. The government's vision for the housing system over the longer term is to achieve a steady supply of housing in the right locations with economic, social and environmental sustainability built into the system. The remit of the HFA is intrinsically tied into this long-term vision.

The HFA offers benefits to all employees, including, family friendly policies such as parental/parents leave, the shorter working year scheme and pension related benefits. The current hybrid working environment promotes work-life balance for employees. We are committed to ensuring a fair workplace for our employees as well as partners with whom we do business. We have strict policies to protect against unlawful discrimination and harassment.

In addition to loan financing, the HFA provides €250,000 in direct funding each year through its Social Investment Fund to support community-enhancing initiatives around the homes our customers deliver. In 2023 these included gardening projects, safe play areas for children and wellbeing programmes for residents.

Governance

The HFA has a strong governance structure around decision-making, with an effective and highly skilled Board of Directors and three supporting committees: Audit and Risk, Credit and Organisational Performance and Development.

We follow the Corporate Governance guidelines as outlined in the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies. This guide outlines key principles and rules to help our Board of Directors exercise its responsibilities and serve the interests of the company and its stakeholders. Our directors and all employees, including senior management, conduct themselves in accordance with the highest moral and ethical standards, informed by a robust Code of Conduct for Directors and an Employees Code of Conduct.

The HFA has an Oversight and Performance Delivery Agreement with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, as required by the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies.

The purpose of the agreement is to define the terms of the relationship between the HFA and its key stakeholders. The agreement provides details of the legal framework of the HFA, the roles and responsibilities of the HFA, compliance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies, monitoring arrangements, and the duration of, and signatories to the agreement. The current Oversight and Performance Delivery Agreement covers the period 2022 to 2024.

Case Study: Fold Housing's Pollination Project

"The Ballygall Tenants Pollination Project is a remarkable initiative that has the potential to transform our community and contribute positively to the environment. By focusing on pollination, we are not only enhancing the beauty of our surroundings but also playing a vital role in supporting local ecosystems and biodiversity.

This project holds significant educational value, providing residents with the opportunity to learn about the importance of pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and birds in sustaining our ecosystem. Through workshops, demonstrations, and hands-on activities, we can raise awareness about the threats facing pollinators and empower individuals to take action to protect them.

Furthermore, the creation of pollinator-friendly habitats in our community will not only attract a diverse range of species but also improve the overall health of our environment. By planting native flowers, shrubs, and trees, we can provide essential food and shelter for pollinators, contributing to their survival and ensuring the continued pollination of crops and wild plants.

This initiative demonstrates our commitment to environmental stewardship and our determination to make a positive impact for generations to come."

Resident
Ballygall Road East, Glasnevin, Dublin 11



Case Study: Supporting Biodiversity

The HFA's office has several initiatives in place to support biodiversity. Our office roof, pictured here, is home to a hive of bees that are cared for by IPUT's beekeeper.

HFA Head Office
St. Stephen's Green, Dublin 2