

Ireland's Natural Resources, 2006-2020 Developing our Assets

Closing Remarks

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Context for success

- Integrated analysis of economic, environmental and social issues (NESC 2005)
- Decoupling of economic growth and environmental quality (European Commission)
- Water Framework Directive: 2015
- Knowledge economy through R&D
- Government science agenda: public awareness

Is geoscience contributing effectively?

- Geoscience sector
 - Serves mineral, aggregates, water, energy
- Sectoral strategy
 - Embraces industry, services, research, education
- Research priorities
 - Focus on energy, environment, marine, infrastructure
 - Potential funding through NDP(2007-2013)
- Promoting the value of geoscience
 - International Year of Planet Earth 2008

Minerals

- Ireland has a confident future
 - Prospective terrain for base metals, gold
 - Viable mines, good neighbours
- Challenges
 - High cost base
 - Long lead in (better regulation)
 - Social antagonism (improved image)
- Opportunities
 - Mining seen as transient land use
 - Sustainable after-uses
 - Transferable skills

Aggregates

- Recent high levels of output likely to continue
- Challenges
 - High pressure on sources/landbanks
 - Need for appropriate regulation
- Opportunities
 - Implement regulation/registration for quarries and marine aggregates
 - Provide geoscience information, onshore and offshore.

Water

- Groundwater
 - Part of integrated water system
 - Increasingly important
- Challenges
 - Groundwater to facilitate balanced regional development
 - Minimise impacts on environment/biodiversity
- Opportunities
 - Develop monitoring/modelling of groundwater
 - Ensure adequate clean supplies

Energy

- Ireland requires secure, affordable, green energy
- Challenges
 - We must test our potential (not just oil/gas!)
 - Examine energy supplies in fullest context
- Opportunities
 - Evaluate alternative sources (geothermal, renewables, oil/gas)
 - Address competing land uses
 - Build green energy through carbon storage

Geoscience and Natural Resources

- Traditionally geoscience served natural resource development
- Much more is now expected of geoscience
- Examine all stages of materials life cycle
 - End game perhaps more important than opening!
- Need to describe the present and advise on the future
 - Monitoring and modelling
- Improving society's confidence in geoscience
 - Transparency, outreach
 - Planet Earth 2008

Thank you for your
attention