

TOWARDS A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

UCD EARTH INSTITUTE STRATEGY 2021-2023

The global environment is facing unprecedented challenges. Population growth and resource consumption are placing enormous pressures on the natural capital which underpins our life-support system, prosperity and well-being. Impacts of these challenges are unfairly distributed through society at local, national, regional and global scales.

It is recognised that economic activity must continue to support global aspirations for improved quality of life for all. However, it is also very clear that our economy and society must change dramatically to reduce environmental degradation, address the climate and biodiversity emergencies and enable a more just and sustainable future.

These challenges are complex and innovative solutions require integrated approaches. Research must involve perspectives from a wide range of disciplines such that economic, societal and cultural dimensions are considered in combination with scientific and technological approaches. Education must nurture interdisciplinary knowledge and skills so that the next generation can further drive the sustainability agenda now and in the future. Closer relationships with societal stakeholders are also essential to maximise the relevance and impact of research and education.

The **UCD Earth Institute** provides a space in which to bring together UCD's diverse expertise to address environmental and sustainability challenges. The Institute community comprises over 130 academic members and 250 postdoctoral researchers, postgraduates, technical and support staff from across UCD, as well as a growing network of national and international partners. The Institute actively supports new members, early career academics and prospective collaborators in navigating this extensive network of expertise.

The Institute is structured around seven multidisciplinary themes: **Water, Climate, Ecosystems and Evolution, Crops for the Future, Sustainable Communities, the Built and Constructed Environment and People, Work, Society**. The themes reflect key environmental and sustainability issues and the diversity of our members' expertise and interests. Cutting across these themes, we have dimensions on **Research and Education, Policy and Governance, Innovation and Enterprise and Society and Engagement**.

Towards a Sustainable Future sets out the Institute's agenda for the period 2021-2023 and its alignment to UCD's Rising to the Future strategy. **Our vision** is for a vibrant Earth Institute that combines its members' expertise to contribute to a sustainable future, integrating environmental considerations and research into decision-making and discourse at all levels.

Our mission is to foster research and innovation to address the environmental challenges of our time, to develop and support the environmental and sustainability research community in UCD and beyond, to forge new connections across disciplines and sectors and to help maximise the impact of our members' work.

To achieve our vision and fulfil our mission, **our objectives** over 2021-2023 are:

1. To increase the quantity, quality and impact of environmental and sustainability research and innovation by building interdisciplinary communities and facilitating and supporting our members.
2. To build our engagement and reputation locally, nationally and internationally by developing partnerships and enhancing profile and societal impact.

This plan presents an exciting vision and programme for the next three years and the Earth Institute team looks forward to working with our members, collaborators and partners to bring it to fruition.

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