



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

# The Climate Action Plan – Securing Our Future

Cutting Emissions, Creating Green Jobs,  
Protecting People and Planet







## OUR CLIMATE IS CHANGING, AND WE NEED TO PROTECT OURSELVES AND FUTURE GENERATIONS

**The science is indisputable and the effects already clear. Extreme weather events are becoming more frequent, with increased risks for global food supplies and security. We know we have to act, and by acting now we can build a cleaner greener economy and society, which creates opportunities for us all.**

### What we need to do

Globally we need to dramatically reduce the amount of greenhouse gases we are putting into the atmosphere, to have any hope of limiting temperature rise to 1.5 degrees, keeping our Earth habitable and our ecosystems functioning.

In the Programme for Government and the Climate Act 2021, Ireland has committed to halving our greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and reaching net zero by 2050 at the latest. The Climate Action Plan is how we do it. It's our path to a secure future for ourselves and future generations.

## What it means for how we live

By taking action now we can build a new Ireland where our communities are healthy and secure, enjoy cleaner air and water, and where homes are warmer and cheaper to heat.

Where we cut our dependence on fossil fuels and power comes from our own indigenous renewable resources.

Where thousands of jobs are created by investing in new areas like offshore wind, forestry and cutting-edge agriculture.

Where walking and cycling are safe and accessible, public transport is cleaner and more frequent, and the rollout of electric vehicles is supported nationwide.

Where farmers have certainty that their industry has a viable future, producing world class food with a lower carbon footprint, thanks to a science-based approach that also improves biodiversity, and protects nature.

## Who does what

The Climate Change Advisory Council, an independent body, has proposed overall carbon budgets to government which will go to the Oireachtas for approval. A carbon budget is the total amount of greenhouse gases we can emit in a given five year period.

It is the government's job to decide how that budget is divided out among different sectors of the economy. All sectors must play their part but some can go faster than others. The **Climate Action Plan** sets out the detailed measures to cut emissions and meet our forthcoming targets in each sector.

## How government will support the transition

Citizens, communities and business will all have a role to play. Government will support the changes through the €165 billion National Development Plan which includes funding for retrofitting our homes, building new public transport, reskilling workers and supporting a just transition.

The government will step in to provide support to people or sectors which are affected to help make a just transition to a low carbon economy possible.

All increases in carbon taxes are earmarked for targeted social protection supports, retrofitting including free upgrades for low-income households, and agri-environment schemes.







## CUTTING EMISSIONS, CREATING GREEN JOBS, PROTECTING PEOPLE AND PLANET

### Electricity

- Increase renewable electricity – wind and solar up to 80% by 2030
- Support scheme for micro-generation allowing homeowners to generate their own electricity and sell what they don't use back to the national grid
- Separate small scale generator scheme for farmers, business and communities to generate electricity and sell to the grid
- Reduce emissions from electricity by 62% – 81% from 2018 levels
- Deliver three new transmission grid connections or interconnectors to Northern Ireland, Great Britain, and the EU
- Complete the phase-out of coal and peat-fired electricity generation
- Review data centre strategy to ensure the sector supports renewables and emissions targets

### Enterprise

- IDA, Enterprise Ireland and SEAI to promote investment and employment in decarbonisation and align supports with emissions reduction
- Launch online *Climate Toolkit 4 Business*
- Introduce new obligation to ensure a proportion of energy for heat comes from renewable sources
- Prioritise longer-life and lower-carbon cement blends in public contracts
- Accelerate the use of carbon-neutral low temperature heating in the food and beverages sector and hybrid high temperature heating in the industrial sector

## Homes & Buildings

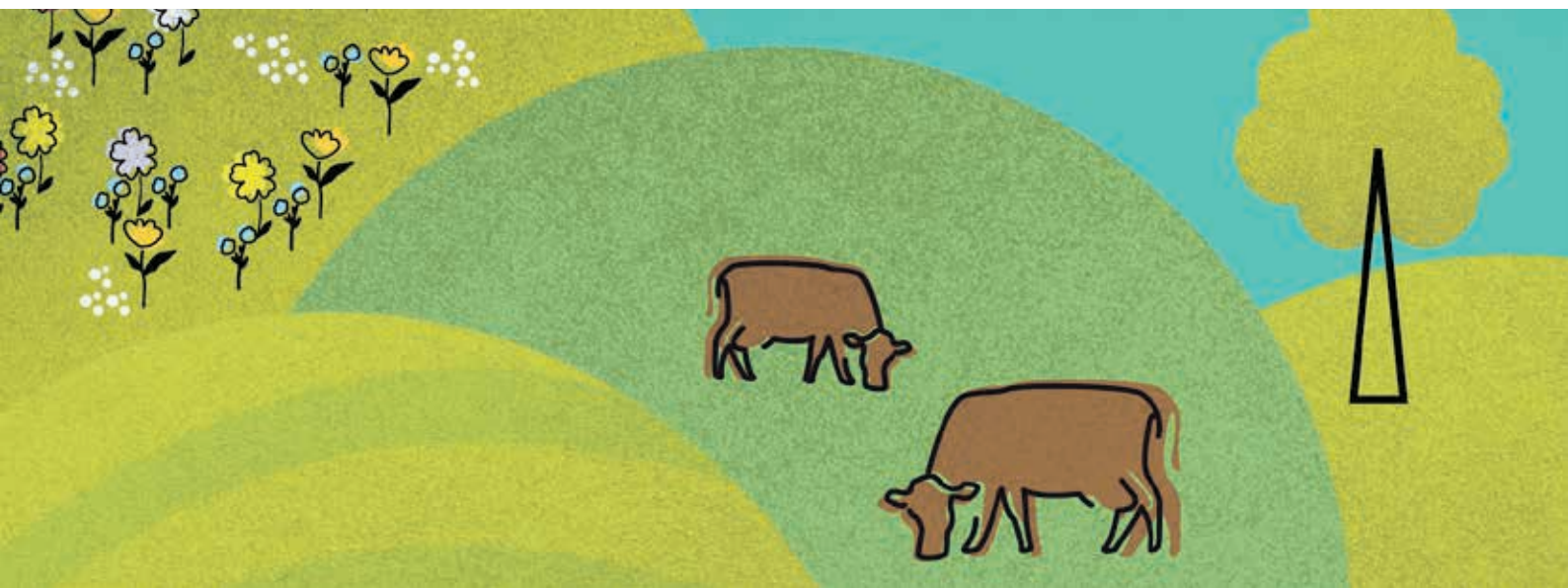
- Drive demand with new National Retrofit Plan
- Blend low-cost loans with SEAI grants to make retrofit affordable
- Open three more training centres for retrofit upskilling
- Introduce programme to decarbonise the heating and cooling sectors by 2050
- Phase out use of fossil fuels for space and water heating in all new buildings
- Roll out up to 2.7 TWh of district heating
- Promote use of electric heat pump or other low carbon technology in new and existing residential and commercial buildings

## Transport

- Enable 500,000 daily sustainable travel journeys by 2030 through major public transport projects such as BusConnects and Connecting Ireland; the expansion of rail services and cycling and walking infrastructure
- Increase the use of biofuels in transport
- Expand electrification of bus and rail fleets with 1,500 electric buses by 2030
- Increase the number of EVs to circa 1 million by 2030
- Update the public transport and public fleets to low emission alternatives

## Agriculture

- Significantly reduce chemical nitrogen fertilizer use to 325,000 tonnes per annum
- Improve animal breeding and feeding
- Increase organically farmed land almost five-fold to 350,000 hectares
- Manage emissions from our dairy herd and transform our model of beef production
- Produce 1.6 TWh of indigenous, sustainably produced biomethane per year
- Review diversification opportunities for farmers, including energy production, agroforestry and woodland creation





## Electricity

Increase renewable electricity **wind and solar up to 80% by 2030**

Small scale generator scheme for farmers, business and communities to **generate electricity** and **sell to the grid**

Review data centre strategy to ensure the sector supports renewables and emissions targets

## Enterprise

Accelerate use of **carbon-neutral low temperature heating** in the food and beverages sector

New Obligation Scheme to ensure a proportion of **energy for heat** comes from **renewable sources**

IDA, Enterprise Ireland and SEAI to work together to **promote employment** in **decarbonisation** and align supports with **emissions reduction**

## Homes & Buildings

Develop **performance standards** to promote **low-carbon construction**

Roll out **up to 2.7 TWh** of district heating

New **National Retrofit plan** to drive demand and make energy upgrades more affordable

## Transport

**500,000 daily sustainable travel journeys by 2030** through major public transport projects such as **BusConnects**, **Connecting Ireland**, the expansion of **rail services** and **cycling and walking** infrastructure

Expand **electrification of bus and rail** fleets with **1500 electric buses by 2030**

Increase the **use of biofuels** in transport

## Agriculture

Review of **diversification opportunities** for farmers, including **energy production**, **agroforestry** and **woodland** creation

Production of **1.6 TWh per annum** of indigenous sustainably produced **biomethane**

Significant **reduction** in chemical **nitrogen**, improved animal breeding and feeding



## Land Use, Forestry and the Marine

Increase afforestation with **new Forestry Programme** to launch in 2023

Improving management of at least 450,000 hectares of grasslands on mineral soils

## The Circular Economy

Reduce **food waste** by 50% by 2030

**Circular Economy Strategy** to be published

Ensure **all plastic packaging** is reusable or recyclable by 2030

## Just Transition to a Climate Neutral Ireland

Establish a **Just Transition Commission** to integrate just transition principles into climate policy in all sectors

€84.5m from the EU Just Transition fund to **expand programmes in the Midlands**

**National Dialogue on Climate Action** to include groups most affected by transition

## Citizen Engagement and Community Leadership

Empower everyone to help deliver on our **goal of a climate neutral economy by 2050**

Improve **climate literacy** by promoting understanding of climate change through **education and communications**

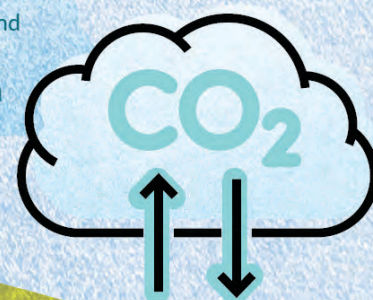
Increase number of **sustainable energy communities** to 1500

## Carbon Pricing & Cross-Cutting Policies

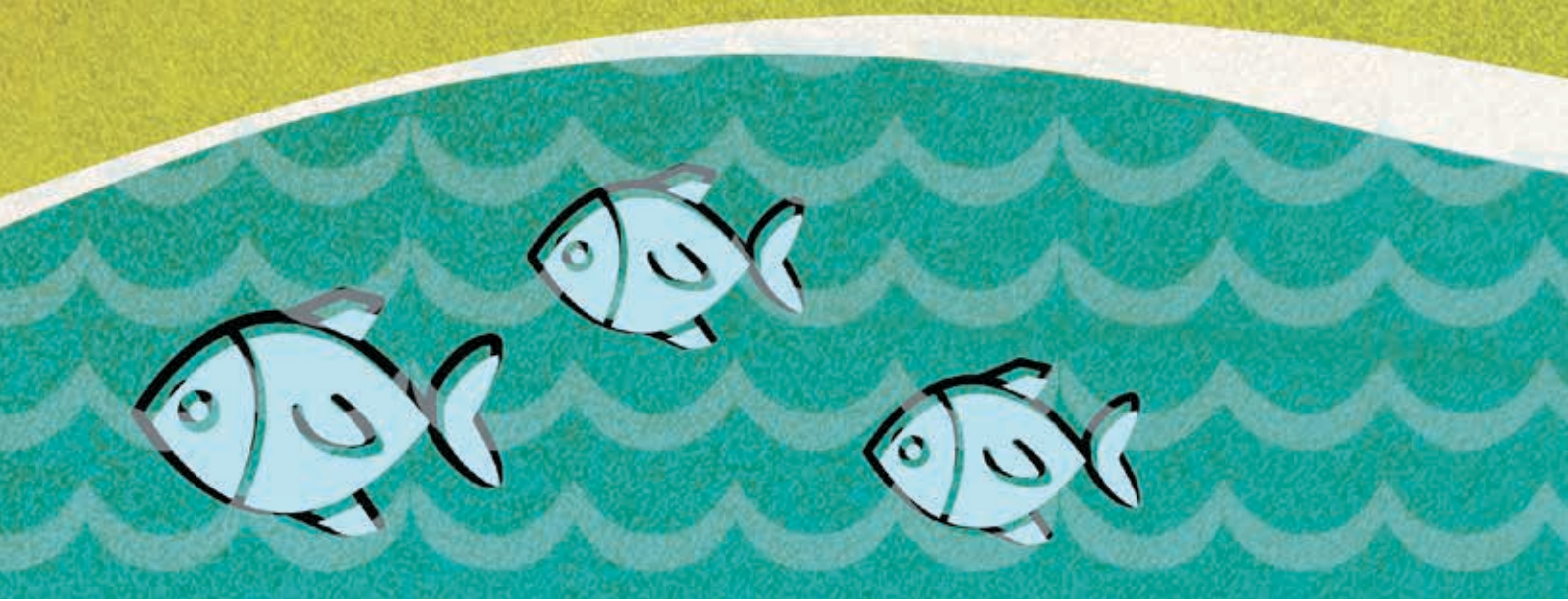
Ensure that **expenditure and taxation policies** support the achievement of our climate objectives

All increases in carbon tax earmarked for targeted **social protection measures**, expanded **home energy upgrades for low income and social homes** and for **agri-environment schemes**

Promote the development of a **sustainable and climate resilient financial system**







## Land Use, Forestry and the Marine

- Increase afforestation with new Forestry Programme to launch in 2023
- Improve management of at least 450,000 hectares of grasslands on mineral soils
- Reduce management intensity (water table management) of 80,000 hectares on drained organic soils by 2030
- Conduct a land use review to ensure that optimal land use options inform all relevant government decisions
- Increase public awareness of the value of Ireland's seas

## The Circular Economy

- Publish Whole of Government Circular Economy Strategy
- Reduce food waste by 50% by 2030
- Ensure all plastic packaging is reusable or recyclable by 2030
- Introduce a Deposit Return Scheme in 2022

## Public Sector Leading by Example

- Introduce a Sustainable Mobility Policy in the Public Sector
- Reduce emissions from the public sector by 51% by 2030 with Green Teams in every public body
- Prohibit new fossil fuel heating systems in public buildings after 2023 (limited exceptions)
- Mandate all new fleet purchases to be electric from 2023 (where vehicle type available)
- Improve energy efficiency of public sector from 33% in 2020 to 50% by 2030



## Just Transition to a Climate Neutral Ireland

- Establish a Just Transition Commission to integrate just transition principles into climate policy in all sectors
- Expand programmes in the Midlands with €84.5m from the EU Just Transition fund
- Hold National Dialogue on Climate Action to include groups most affected by transition

## International Action

- Prepare a Climate Finance Roadmap, increasing contributions to 2030
- Develop Climate Diplomacy Strategy

## Citizen Engagement and Community Leadership

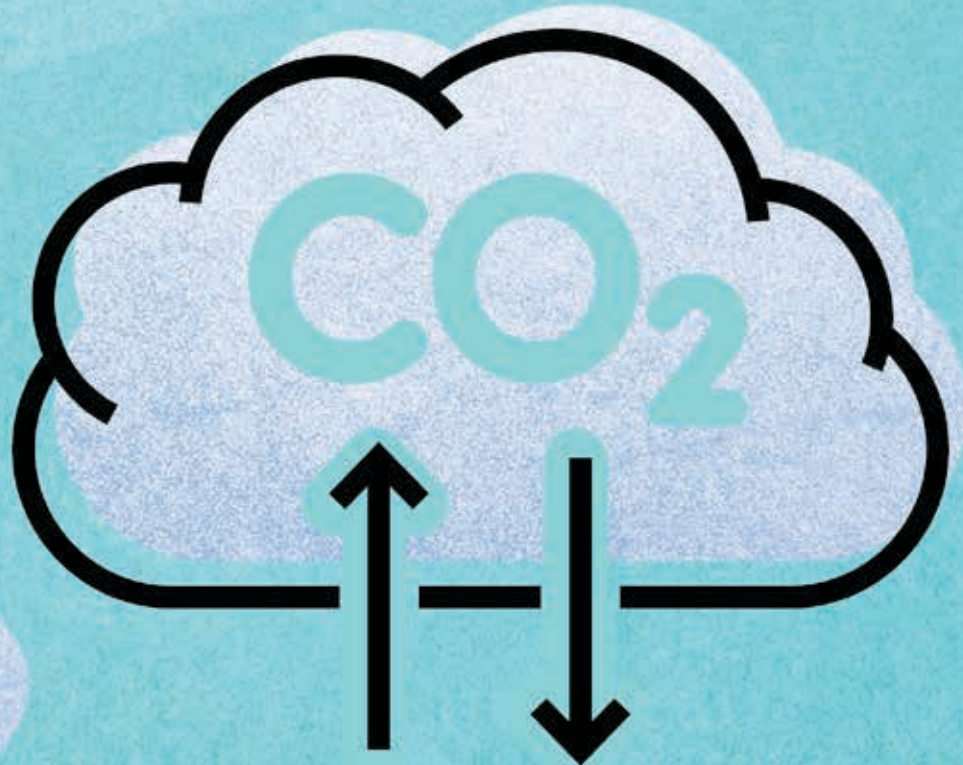
- Empower everyone to help deliver on our goal of a climate neutral economy by 2050
- Improve climate literacy by promoting understanding of climate change through education and communications
- Promote active engagement at local level - provide financial support for innovations, host climate conversations, support capacity building, empower local communities to transition to carbon neutrality in a way that is meaningful to them
- Increase the number of Sustainable Energy Communities to 1,500 by 2030

## Adaptation

- Undertake research to support coherent national, sectoral adaptation planning
- Assess the impact of climate change on key sectors including transport, agriculture, telecommunications networks and our built environment
- Review the National Adaptation Framework
- Include adaptation actions in sectoral policies including: Local Authority Planning Guidelines, National Structural Design Codes for Physical Infrastructure, and Guidance on Climate Adaptation on Regional and Local Roads







## Carbon Pricing & Cross-Cutting Policies

- Ensure that expenditure and taxation policies support the achievement of our climate objectives
- Use increased carbon tax revenue for social protection measures, expanded retrofitting for low income and social homes and agri-environment schemes
- Promote the development of a sustainable and climate resilient financial system
- Develop green hydrogen supply and demand
- Implement the National Planning Framework to promote compact and sustainable housing, growth and development
- Promote the digital transformation, sustainable remote working practices and the roll-out of the National Broadband Plan
- Support research, development and innovation in climate action

## Enshrined in Law

- Independent Climate Change Advisory Council to recommend Carbon Budgets and evaluate policy
- Climate Action Plan to be Reviewed and Updated every year
- Climate Action Delivery Board overseen by the Department of the Taoiseach to monitor delivery
- Strong accountability to an Oireachtas Climate Action Committee
- Carbon proof all government decisions and major investments



# Benefits that will be brought about by the actions in the Plan

- Warmer homes
- Cleaner air
- Sustainable and circular use of resources
- More connected communities
- Quality jobs in low carbon enterprises

- Greener businesses
- Growth in low carbon sectors of the economy
- More active and healthier lifestyles
- Greater protection for natural habitats and biodiversity





