

# Terms of Reference of the Adaptation Committee

*Approved by the Climate Change Advisory Council on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2023*

## Basis for establishment

- The Climate Change Advisory Council is an independent, statutory body established under the *Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015*, ('the Act'), as amended. The core function of the Council is to provide independent advice to Government on policy relating to climate change, in regard to how best to address both reducing greenhouse gas emissions and adapting to climate change.
- Section 9 (sub section 16A) of the Act requires the Council to establish an Adaptation Committee to assist and advise it in relation to the performance of any or all of its functions in relation to climate adaptation.

## Purpose

- The Adaptation Committee is tasked with assisting and advising the Council in relation to the performance of its functions in relation to climate adaptation. This includes providing, for consideration by Council:
  - adaptation advice and recommendations regarding national, sectoral and local climate plans, policies, programmes and strategies, including the National Adaptation Framework and Sectoral Adaptation Plans,
  - contributions on climate change adaptation and resilience for Council reports and reviews,
  - advice and recommendations on the achievement of the National Climate Objective,
  - European and International policy and commitments related to climate change adaptation and resilience,
  - Council statements related to climate impacts, risks and vulnerabilities, and
  - any other issues delegated to the Committee by the Council.
- The Adaptation Committee may independently identify areas and issues that it considers warrant further consideration by the Council. In doing so:
  - it should alert the Council of the issue, why it warrants consideration and the process and timeline for this.
  - The Council will then decide if the Committee should advance such work.
- The existence of the Adaptation Committee does not in any way diminish the overall responsibility of the Council with regards to considering climate change adaptation and resilience, however it provides the Council with a significant level of assurance that such issues have been rigorously examined.

## General

- The Council, via the Council Secretariat, are responsible for providing the Committee with resources to carry out their functions.

- As soon as practicable at the beginning of each Council term the Committee is required to submit a multi-annual work programme to Council for approval. In this the Committee should flag any budget requirements to deliver the work programme well in advance to ensure appropriate resources can be made available. This should be in line with the Council's overall statement of strategy.
- Ahead of the first meeting of each year, the Committee will specify the key outputs for the next 12-month period for Council agreement. The Council may give direction as to other key areas of work that it considers important which can be incorporated into the annual work plan.

## Membership

- In accordance with Section 9 (16) of the Act the Committee may consist in whole or in part of persons who are members of the Council.
- The Committee should consist of at least eight members.
- Other experts may be invited to join the Committee at the Council's discretion.
- In appointing external (i.e. non-Council) members to join the Committee, the Council shall have regard to the range of qualifications, expertise and experience necessary for the proper and effective performance of the functions of the Committee.
- Committee members shall be appointed for a term, determined by the Council, not exceeding 5 years, reflecting terms for Council members.
- Ordinarily, external members of the Committee will be limited to two consecutive terms.
- External members of the Committee are eligible for reimbursement of travel, subsistence and other operational costs directly related to the role. They are not eligible for remuneration.

## Chairperson

- In accordance with Section 9 (17) of the Act, the Chairperson of the Committee shall be a member (other than an ex-officio ordinary member) of the Council.
- The Chairperson of the Committee shall be appointed by the Council. The Chairperson of the Climate Change Advisory Council is eligible for membership, but shall not act as Chairperson of the Adaptation Committee.

## Meetings

- A schedule of ordinary meetings shall be determined by the Chairperson of the Committee, but shall ordinarily be held at least five times per annum.
- A minimum of seven days' notice of each ordinary meeting shall be given to each member of the Committee via the email address that member has furnished to the Secretariat.
- Meetings shall be limited to Committee members, nominated observers on their behalf who have been approved by the Committee Chair (as outlined below), Council members and the Secretariat of the Council. However, the Council may invite external speakers to address the Committee on specific issues.

- Ex-officio Council members who are also members of the Committee may, subject to the agreement of the Committee Chair, nominate observers to attend meetings on their behalf.
- Meetings may be held in person or via video conference. Should a Committee member be unable to attend an in-person meeting, they may elect to attend via video conference. All efforts to provide these services will be undertaken by the Secretariat.
- A quorum shall be a minimum of five members of the Committee, one of whom must be a Council member.
- Council members who are not members of the Committee, and those nominated by ex-officio Committee members, may attend meetings but shall be treated as observers, and therefore shall not be permitted to vote.

## Decision making process

- The Committee will make recommendations to the Climate Change Advisory Council, which will formally endorse or adopt decisions reached by the Adaptation Committee.
- The Committee will seek to reach decisions by consensus. In instances where this is not possible, the Committee will seek to agree on how to reflect any difference of opinion in order to reach a decision. In the absence of a consensus, decisions shall be determined by a majority of votes of the Committee members present. In the event that vote is equally divided, the Chair shall have a casting vote.
- Should a decision be required outside of the meeting schedule, this should be identified at the preceding meeting where possible. The Committee should agree appropriate timeframes for electronic / telephone discussion to facilitate decisions that are required between Committee meetings.
- The Secretariat will be responsible for recording the minutes of each meeting.
- Outcomes of decisions taken by the Committee will be recorded in the minutes of the meeting.

## Reporting structure

- The Committee Chairperson or nominated Secretariat member presents the findings/recommendations of the Committee to the Council.
- Recommendations from the preceding Committee meeting will be circulated to Council members ahead of the next Council meeting for approval, and then will be reported for adoption at the next Council meeting, according to the Council's meeting guidelines.
- The Committee shall arrange for reviews of its own performance and, at least every two years, review its terms of reference to ensure it is operating at maximum effectiveness and recommend any changes it considers necessary to the Council for approval.

## Transparency

- The agenda and minutes of Committee meetings will be published on the website of the Climate Change Advisory Council.

## Disclosure of interests

- The procedure for disclosure of interests by Council and Committee members, outlined in Section 10 of the Act (as amended), applies.
- All members shall ensure that they are familiar with the processes and procedures set out in Section 10 of the Act (as amended) and take the necessary measures to comply with the obligations therein, in particular section 10(1)(a) to (e).
- Where a material interest is disclosed pursuant to Section 10 of the Act (as amended), the disclosure (and any determination relating to a course of conduct in section 10(3)) shall be recorded in the minutes of the meeting concerned.
- Committee members shall also comply with the "Disclosures of Interests Policy" set out in the Operational Guidance Document for the Climate Change Advisory Council, which has been prepared in accordance with the Code of Practice for the Governance of State Bodies 2016."