

A circular logo with a green-to-teal gradient, containing the text "CLIMATE CHANGE ADVISORY COUNCIL" in white, uppercase letters. The logo is positioned in the top right corner of the page, overlapping the landscape image.

CLIMATE
CHANGE
ADVISORY
COUNCIL



ANNUAL REVIEW **2023**

SUMMARY FOR ALL

Summary for All of the Climate Change Advisory Council's Annual Review 2023

The Climate Change Advisory Council is an independent advisory body tasked with assessing and advising on how Ireland is making the transition to a climate-resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable and climate-neutral economy.

In the spring and summer of 2023 a concerning series of unprecedented climate events have occurred. Multiple global and local records were broken, including the warmest daily temperature ever recorded on 7 July, following the warmest June ever recorded. Average sea surface temperatures reached unprecedented levels for June.

Temperatures will continue to increase until significant action is taken. This will lead to more extreme weather events in Ireland, such as heatwaves, droughts, storms and flooding.

What is the Annual Review?

Each year the Climate Change Advisory Council reviews Ireland's performance of the previous year in:

- ▶ reducing [greenhouse gas emissions](#),
- ▶ complying with the [carbon budget](#) and each [sectoral emissions ceiling](#) for that period,
- ▶ meeting Ireland's EU and international obligations,
- ▶ moving towards the National Climate Objective and preparing Ireland for the adjustments needed to be ready for the impacts of climate change.

Annual Review 2023

In this Annual Review 2023 the Climate Change Advisory Council says that, at the current rate of policy implementation, **Ireland will not meet the targets set in the first and second carbon budget periods unless urgent action is taken immediately and emissions begin to fall much more rapidly.**

Ireland's first task is to **reduce and ultimately prevent** emissions of greenhouse gases. To support this, there must be effective and consistent engagement with communities, ensuring there is a fair and equitable transition, while building and maintaining public support and action.

Read all the recommendations from the Annual Review 2023 and browse the full report [here](#).

Overall recommendations

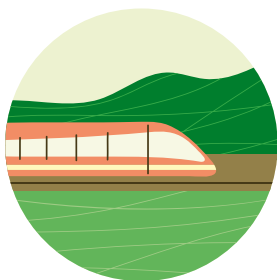
- ▶ Government must address areas of uncertainty in how Ireland will reduce its emissions. The sectoral emissions ceiling for the Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry sector must be set, and it must be clear by how much each sector must reduce its emissions.
- ▶ Government needs to identify and remove barriers to policy implementation by ensuring adequate funding and planning reform at scale and speed.
- ▶ Key actions need to be implemented now to prevent longer term damage and increased costs to society and the economy.
- ▶ Government must adopt new approaches to reduce emissions, creating investment and enhancing skills across the economy, particularly in areas such as retrofitting and renewable energy.
- ▶ The establishment of a Just Transition Commission is recommended to ensure that Ireland achieves its climate objectives in a way that is fair and equitable and protects vulnerable people and communities.
- ▶ The Government should support opportunities that reduce emissions and make Ireland better prepared for the impacts of climate change.

Annual Review 2023: Recommendations for the electricity sector



- ▶ Government needs to conclude work on laying out where and what type of onshore wind should be located across the country.
- ▶ Local authorities need more assistance to help deliver onshore and offshore renewable energy applications more efficiently.
- ▶ It is critical to stop using coal for electricity generation as soon as possible.
- ▶ Electricity storage can form part of the solution to lowering our electricity emissions. Government needs to give guidelines and incentives to operators to ensure that sufficient levels of storage are rolled out.
- ▶ Laws to support access to smart metering data must be progressed to help consumers better control their energy use.

Annual Review 2023: Recommendations for the transport sector



- ▶ Motor Tax should be redesigned to promote energy-efficient vehicles and should increase year on year.
- ▶ Government should increase investment in public transport, including the electrification of our bus fleet. In addition, there should be a focus on improving the reliability and accessibility of services.
- ▶ The local authority in each of our main cities should introduce park and ride schemes along major roads and plan to reduce the number of public parking spaces.
- ▶ Commuters should be motivated to opt for public transport and active travel. This would include updating the Taxsaver commuter ticket and cycle to work schemes, and the introduction of parking levies at workplaces in our main cities.
- ▶ Locating homes closer to businesses and services can help to reduce our dependency on private cars. The new national planning framework needs to better reflect our climate ambitions.

Annual Review 2023: Recommendations for the enterprise and waste sectors



- ▶ Government should urgently update building regulations to increase the use of timber in construction and also encourage greater usage of lower carbon cement and concrete.
- ▶ Government should work to find ways to help industry to become more energy efficient and less reliant on fossil fuels.
- ▶ Public education campaigns and economic incentives for businesses and households are required to achieve targets on food waste and food packaging waste.

Annual Review 2023: Recommendations for the built environment sector



- ▶ More urgency and ambition is required in developing district heating schemes, taking on board lessons from other countries where they already supply a significant proportion of heat. (District heating systems deliver hot water or air heating through an underground network to a large number of homes.)
- ▶ Large energy users, including data centres, should be obliged to supply their excess heat to local communities to support district heating schemes.
- ▶ Budget 2024 should set a target of all social housing being upgraded to a building energy rating of B2 or connected to a district heating network by 2030.
- ▶ The numbers of retrofits each year needs to increase. Homes that use peat or coal as their main heating fuel should be prioritised for grants for retrofitting.
- ▶ Mortgage providers should be encouraged to offer green mortgage products that align to and support retrofitting schemes .

Annual Review 2023: Recommendations for the agriculture and Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF) sectors



- ▶ Government should actively support income diversification opportunities for farmers.
- ▶ Government should ensure sufficient supplies of a greener form of fertiliser are available and launch an information programme for farmers.
- ▶ Urgent consideration should be given to the opportunities for roll out of feed additives for dairy farms that reduce methane emissions from cattle.
- ▶ A streamlined process for applications for the new forestry scheme will be needed to ensure speedy implementation.

Annual Review 2023: Recommendations for adapting to the impacts of climate change



- ▶ Government should set out a budget for developing our resilience to the effects of climate change. Given rising sea levels, a Coastal Management Strategy is urgently needed to help actively manage our changing coastlines.
- ▶ Communities, non-governmental organisations and the private sector must be involved in adaptation planning and implementation.
- ▶ An all-island approach to climate action should be developed further, especially for critical infrastructure such as our electricity network and the management of cross-border natural systems such as rivers.

What are Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions targets?

Ireland is one of 190 countries that signed up to the Paris Agreement, which aims to limit global warming to well below 2°C and to limit the increase to 1.5°C.

Ireland has committed to reducing its emissions by 51% by 2030 (compared with 2018 levels) and to being climate neutral no later than 2050. This means that the amount of greenhouse gases that go into the atmosphere is matched by the amount of emissions removed from the atmosphere.

What is a carbon budget?

A carbon budget represents the total amount of emissions that may be released during an agreed 5-year period. This is measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent and is calculated on an economy-wide basis. If we exceed one of our carbon budgets, the excess must be accounted for in the next period.

In Ireland, three carbon budgets have been set for 2021–2025, 2026–2030 and 2031–2035. This aims to set Ireland on a pathway to achieving climate neutrality by 2050.

What is a sectoral emissions ceiling?

Sectoral emissions ceilings refer to the total amount of greenhouse gas emissions that each sector of the economy is allowed to produce during a specific period. In Ireland, the sectoral emissions ceilings set out the maximum emissions permitted from each sector to ensure that Ireland remains within its carbon budgets. The sectors are:

- ▶ electricity,
- ▶ transport,
- ▶ built environment (residential, commercial and public sector),
- ▶ industry and other,
- ▶ agriculture,
- ▶ land use, land use change and forestry.