

# Memorandum of Understanding

between

**the Just Transition Commission and the Climate Change Advisory Council**

to outline the functional relationship between the Just Transition Commission and the Climate Change Advisory Council.

*Signed*



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Ali Sheridan

*Chair of the Just Transition Commission*

Date: 7 May 2024

*Signed*



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Marie Donnelly

*Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Council*

Date: 10 April 2024

## Purpose of the MoU

The Climate Change Advisory Council (Advisory Council) and the Just Transition Commission (Commission), through their respective mandates, provide independent advice to the Government with regards to reaching the National Climate Objective.

While this Memorandum does not confer any legal powers or responsibilities, the purpose of this Memorandum is to:

1. Confirm the complementary role of the Advisory Council and the Commission, based on their mandate as articulated in their terms of reference or in legislation<sup>1</sup>, in order to avoid duplication of efforts in their work towards a unifying goal of the National Climate Objective whilst also enhancing and supporting the actions of both bodies;
2. Outline the working arrangements between the Advisory Council and the Commission to support the above.

## Introduction: Climate Change Advisory Council and the Just Transition Commission

### Climate Change Advisory Council

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015 established the Advisory Council as a legislative body. The mandate of the Advisory Council (Appendix 1) as specified in the 2015 Act, and as amended by the 2021 Act<sup>2</sup>, provides that the Advisory Council shall advise and make recommendations to the Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications, other Ministers of Government and the Government in relation to the preparation of the annual Climate Action Plan; the national long term climate action strategy; the national adaptation framework; the finalisation and revision of carbon budgets; and the compliance with any existing obligations of the State under the law of the European Union or international agreements. Additionally, the Advisory Council shall also prepare and submit proposed carbon budget programmes and proposed amendments to provisional carbon budgets.

### Just Transition Commission

The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, provides that in the transition towards the National Climate Objective, Ministers and the Government as a whole, in preparing both the Long-Term Climate Action Strategy and the annual Climate Action Plan, must have regard to the requirement for a just transition to a climate neutral economy, which endeavours, in so far as practicable, to maximise employment

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<sup>1</sup> Oireachtas (2021). Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021. Source: <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2021/act/32/enacted/en/html>

<sup>2</sup> Oireachtas (2021). Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021. Source: <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2021/act/32/enacted/en/html>

opportunities, and support people and communities that may be negatively affected by the transition.<sup>3</sup>

A Just Transition Commission was established to support Government in these efforts in 2024 on an administrative basis in line with commitments articulated in Climate Action Plan 2023. The function of the Commission is to prepare and analyse strategic evidence-based research in relation to just transition; evaluate, advise and comment on policy planning, implementation and progress on the application of Ireland's just transition principles into national and sectoral climate policies; provide strategic advice and engagement on just transition; and undertake proactive engagement with particular communities, sectors or regions facing specific acute or long-term challenges arising from the transition.

## **Complementary roles in the climate policy cycle**

This MOU confirms the complementary and distinct roles the Advisory Council and the Commission play in the annual climate policy cycle in line with their individual mandates as the two bodies work towards the National Climate Objective and a transition that is just, equitable and leaves no one behind.

## **Working arrangements**

To fulfil their complementary but distinct roles in the annual climate policy cycle, this MOU provides a framework for ongoing mutual cooperation and assistance between the Advisory Council and the Commission.

Regular information exchanges between the Advisory Council and the Commission shall be conducted either through their respective secretariats and or between Chairs.

Operational liaison shall be carried out between secretariats. Chairs maintain their discretion to engage on any matters relevant to the workings of their respective bodies separately. Such engagements may also involve the wider membership of the two bodies, under the instruction of the Chairs.

Envisaged areas of engagements are outlined, but not limited to the following.

### **Work programme**

Engagements during the work programme deliberation process may take place either between Chairs or secretariats to allow for greater awareness of the forward-looking work programmes of both entities. This is to allow for the identification of potential collaboration opportunities and the detection of possible overlaps, so that duplication of work can be avoided.

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<sup>3</sup> Oireachtas (2021). Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021. Source: <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/2021/act/32/enacted/en/html>

The Advisory Council and the Commission shall share their respective finalised annual- or multiannual work programmes with their counterpart in a timely manner through their secretariats.

### **Research and analysis**

The Advisory Council and the Commission shall inform each other of planned research projects where overlap of interest or expertise may be identified to avoid duplication of efforts. The two entities may identify opportunities to collaborate through shared research and will define terms accordingly for each collaborative effort.

Each entity may request input from the other on research where it is deemed appropriate. The two bodies may build on each other's research through their respective lens where appropriate.

### **Output schedule**

The Advisory Council and the Commission shall inform each other of their annual output schedule and publications of relevance to the other body in a timely manner. The respective bodies may also request each other's feedback prior to the publication of any outputs, as appropriate and applicable.

### **Meetings between secretariats**

The secretariats of the Advisory Council and the Commission will meet as required, but at least once every quarter, to provide an update on work programme, outputs and research. Such meetings will be arranged by the secretariats and will remain open for input and direction from the Chairs.

### **Meetings between Chairs and wider membership**

Meetings between Chairs shall take place at least once a year. Further engagements may take place at the request of either Chair. Notice of such meetings shall be provided to the secretariats. The secretariats, at the request of either Chair, may aid and support such meetings.

A meeting between the Advisory Council and the Commission shall take place at least once a year. Such meetings will be scheduled as part of the agenda of a normal meeting of either of the two bodies.

In case of formal meetings, minutes of the meetings will be published on the website of both the Advisory Council and the Commission.

### **Organisational change**

Organisational or other relevant change that impacts the collaboration between the two entities shall be communicated by the relevant secretariat to their counterpart in a timely manner.

## **Review of the Memorandum**

This Memorandum may be reviewed and updated as necessary, and at least every two years. Any future amendments to the Memorandum will require the written agreement of both parties.

Both the Advisory Council and the Commission will publish a copy of this Memorandum of Understanding on their respective websites.

## Appendix 1 - General functions of the Council

Section 11 of the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015, as amended in 2021, provides as follows:

11(1) - The functions of the Advisory Council shall be to advise and make recommendations to—

(a) the Minister in relation to—

- (i) the preparation of a climate action plan,
- (ii) the preparation of a national long term climate action strategy,
- (iii) the preparation of a national adaptation framework,
- (iv) the finalisation and revision of a carbon budget, and
- (v) compliance with any existing obligation of the State under the law of the European Union or any international agreement referred to in section 2,

(b) a Minister of the Government in relation to—

- (i) sector specific actions, within his or her responsibility, which are to be included in the climate action plan, and
- (ii) the making by him or her of a sectoral adaptation plan,

(c) the Government in relation to the approval of—

- (i) a climate action plan,
- (ii) a national long term climate action strategy,
- (iii) a national adaptation framework, and
- (iv) a sectoral adaptation plan,

and

(d) the Government, the Minister and any other Minister of the Government in respect of any policy of the Government, or any policy that is proposed to be submitted to the Government for approval relating to—

- (i) the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions, and
- (ii) adaptation to the effects of climate change in the State.

11(1A) The Advisory Council shall prepare and submit to the Minister—

- (a) a proposed carbon budget programme under section 6A(4),
- (b) a proposed carbon budget under section 6A(6)(a), and 16
- (c) proposed amendments, if any, to a provisional carbon budget under section 6A(6)(b).

11(2) For the purposes of the performance of its functions, the Advisory Council may—

- (a) gather such information as it considers necessary or appropriate, and
- (b) meet and consult with such persons (including members of the public) as it considers appropriate.

11(3) The Advisory Council shall be independent in the performance of its functions

## Appendix 2 - Functions of the Just Transition Commission

The mission of the Just Transition Commission is to support the Government in its responsibility to provide that Ireland's transition to the National Climate Objective has regard to the requirement for a just transition to a climate neutral economy, which endeavours, in so far as practicable, to maximise employment opportunities, and to support people and communities that may be negatively affected by the transition. The Commission will be a public voice on planning for just transition, leading in developing a shared understanding, and identifying the challenges, solutions and opportunities for Ireland.

The functions of the Just Transition Commission are:

- **To prepare and analyse strategic evidence-based research in relation to just transition:** to anticipate and inform long-term climate policy and investment planning, including focusing on the potential impacts, risks and opportunities arising from the climate transition for different sectors of both the economy and society, including the social, economic and employment impacts of this change and the policy responses required.
- **To evaluate, advise, and comment on** policy planning and implementation and progress on the application of Ireland's just transition principles into national and sectoral climate policies, based on high-quality, evidence-based analysis.
- **To provide strategic advice and engagement on just transition:** the Commission will support the National Dialogue on Climate Action, as well as any dialogues on climate/just transition matters within individual sectors, in engagement on the implementation of climate programmes agreed by Government.
- **Sectoral or regional engagement and road-mapping:** the Commission may, on its own initiative, or at the request of the Government, undertake proactive engagement with particular communities, sectors or regions facing specific acute or long-term challenges arising from the transition, and advise Government on strategic co-ordination by the agencies of the State, on any interventions or targeted supports which may be helpful to address the challenges being faced by that community, sector or region.