



Climate Change Advisory Council Meeting – Committee on Carbon Budgets

MINUTES

Date: 24th May 2021

Start time: 14:30

Venue: Video Conference Meeting

Present: Marie Donnelly, John Fitzgerald, Julie Sinnamon, Gerry Boyle, Patricia King, Andrew Murphy, Peter Thorne, Bill Callanan, Kevin Hanrahan, Trevor Donnellan, Jim Scheer, Lisa Ryan, Brian O’Gallachoir, Alan Matthews, Hannah Daly, Andrew Smith, David Styles, Eoin Moran, Keith Lambkin, Stephen Treacy, Aoife Ahern, George Hussey, Aoife Parker Hedderman, Brian Carroll, Peter Mannion.

Apologies:

Observer (s): Cara Augustenborg, Morgan Bazilian, Sinead O’Brien.

Secretariat: Philip O’Brien, Gemma O’Reilly, Margaret Desmond, Paula Leonard.

Presenters: Brian Carroll, Assistant Secretary, Department of Environment, Climate and Communications; Hannah Daly, Lecturer and Researcher MaREI UCC.

1. Opening of meeting

1.1. Adoption of Agenda

The agenda was adopted by the Committee.

1.2. Minutes for the Committee on Carbon Budget Meeting

The minutes of the Committee meeting held on 17th May 2021 were adopted and signed electronically by the Chair.

2. Update on activities

The Secretariat provided a recap of the Terms of Reference of the Carbon Budget Committee and outlined the ongoing tasks and activities as a result of previous Carbon Budget Committee meetings in line with the current June timeline, which will provide the basis for the draft communication to be considered by the Committee on carbon budget recommendations and reasoning.

The Secretariat advised a further meeting of the Carbon Budget Committee will be required before the Council meeting on June 18th to agree on the communication from the Committee to the Council on carbon budgets.

Discussion:

A number of Committee members highlighted the importance of the activities and raised concerns about the feasibility of the Secretariat to complete ongoing tasks and for the Committee to agree on recommendations by the June 10th deadline. Several Committee members stated the importance of sectoral consultation in analysing the cost and distributional effects of potential carbon budget scenarios which will form the basis of the Committee's recommendations. The Committee discussed the prospect of extending the mandate and timeline of the Carbon Budget Committee to the end of July 2021, as the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Amendment Bill has still not been passed by the government.

The Chair agreed that looking at the sectoral impacts of proposed carbon budgets would be valuable to the Committee and the Council.

The Chair requested the Secretariat to forward the scope for the biodiversity study to Committee members Sinead O'Brien and Peter Thorne to circulate within their network and relay any contact information to the Secretariat.

3. Climate Action Plan 2021

The DECC presented an overview of their findings on; closing the outstanding items from the 2019 and interim CAP report ahead of the publication of CAP 2021, the capacity of sectoral activity on delivering mitigation targets, pathways for Ireland to climate neutrality by 2050, and milestones for emission reductions for 2030;

The presentation detailed high level aspirations for CAP 2021 and defined the work that needs to be done in the next 12 months for further measures and for subsequent CAPs;

The findings concluded 75% of the gap between the 2019 and 2021 CAP can be fulfilled with the proposed measures and significant ramp up efforts to deliver targets is needed in the next 5 years;

Overall, the findings identified 30 options to drive decarbonisation in sectors such as Energy, Transport, Industry, Agriculture, and LULUCF, as well as further measures to be investigated in more detail. Currently 60% of required measures as outlined in the presentation have a stand-alone business case for state investment.

The DECC will share presentation slides with the Secretariat to circulate to members of the Committee.

Discussion:

Discussions between the DECC and the Committee concluded that the Committee, and the Council, are not mandated to advise the sectoral breakdown of emission reduction targets but they can consider the implications of carbon budgets for sectors. A number of Committee members commented on the behavioural change required by individuals to reach mitigation targets and the implications of this for education, remote working, advocacy and taxation policy instruments. The Chair commented that the core measures outlined are unlikely to achieve a 51% reduction in emissions and the feasibility of additional measures should be subject to a deep dive analysis to determine distributional effects and the total investment required.

4. Considering the SR1.5 scenarios

UCC provided the breakdown of contributions to global net CO₂ emissions in four model pathways. The figures presented do not include LULUCF however they do include AFOLU. UCC advised Ireland is expected to perform better than these projections from a global standard given its developed country status and slow population growth. The overview of benchmarking scenarios against SR1.5 include mitigation scenarios for CH₄ from agriculture and for CO₂.

5. Agreed Actions

The Secretariat advised a steering group meeting on the 'economy' criteria will take place next Monday May 31st and an invite will be extended to all members of the Committee to attend.

The Chair advised the Council are looking at other criteria such as employment, competitiveness and attractiveness, and suggested a presentation from the Enterprise Ireland on key issues at the steering group meeting on May 31st. Teagasc will present their Agriculture sector report with the Committee at this meeting as well as an update report from the DECC on the 'Economy' criteria.

The Chair informed the Committee of an upcoming webinar on June 15th organised by Politico Europe titled ""EU farming and methane, what is the road to sustainability?" which may provide useful insights for the Committee.

The Chair advised further discussions will take place between the Council and DECC about the government's position on LULUCF.

Julie Sinnamon will liaise with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment to attend and present to the steering group meeting on Monday May 31st.

The Chair will initiate a written procedure to the Council seeking an extension of the timeline for reporting by the Secretariat until the end of July 2021.

The next Carbon Budget Committee meeting will take place on Monday June 14th 2021.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Marie R. Donnelly". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the left of the date.

24.05.21