

Press Release

Issued: 29 May 2024



Support for Sustainable Construction Methods critical – Climate Change Advisory Council

As one of the primary sources of industrial emissions in Ireland is cement production, the Climate Change Advisory Council is urging Government to take immediate action to implement sustainable construction methods to reduce emissions in the sector.

The Council, who today published its annual review of the Industry and Waste sectors, has said that increasing the use of timber in construction and using modern methods of construction is urgently needed. The Council also highlighted that introducing whole-life carbon assessments and targets in the planning process for public buildings is required to help achieve the sectoral target.

The review of the sector revealed that industrial emissions from the EU ETS¹ fell by 6% in 2023, with reductions in the food sector, bulk manufacturing of pharmaceuticals and lower cement production levels.

The Council also called on the Government to urgently publish the decarbonisation roadmap for industrial heat in order to provide policy direction to guide industry in investment decisions and support switching away from carbon-intensive fossil fuel energy sources. Currently industrial investment in decarbonised technologies is limited. For example, increased electrification of manufacturing processes appears slow, with the share of electricity usage in the Industry sector increasing only slightly to 27.5% in 2022, from 26.3% the previous year.

The review also noted that methane produced by decomposition in landfill sites is the largest contributor to waste emissions, which increased by 7% in 2022. Too much waste is being produced and the rates of reuse and recycling are considerably below the EU average. For example, in 2022 Ireland's circularity rate declined to 1.8%, from 1.9% the previous year, significantly below the EU average of 11.5%.

Commenting on the review of the Industry and Waste sector, Marie Donnelly, Chair of the Climate Change Advisory Council said: "One of the primary sources of industrial emissions is cement production. We must address this now, by promoting more sustainable building methods including increasing the use of timber in construction and reducing emissions in the cement production process.

"Updates to the Building Regulations that support increased use of timber in construction should be consolidated with the establishment of a high-level cross departmental task force

¹ which represent around 80% of the total emissions from Industry

to prepare an overarching national strategy for the development and expansion of all aspects of the timber industry in Ireland.”

“Targets must be set and measures introduced that support the reduction of emissions in cement production. The introduction of financial incentives to encourage retrofitting of existing buildings over demolition and rebuilding would also help reduce cement demand.”

Commenting Julie Sinnamon, a member of the Climate Change Advisory Council said:

“Our review recommends the creation of a Just Transition Plan for Jobs supporting those who are most impacted by the transition to low carbon economy. This must include a co-ordinated Government assessment of the skills required to deliver our National Climate Objective. Relevant state education agencies and employers would then be able to make training investments in support of a transition pathway for the industrial sector that does not disadvantage sections of the workforce and the wider community.

“Business has an important role to play increasing our resilience to climate change, and the challenges presented to businesses from our changing climate cannot be underestimated. While current supports are generally more reactive to weather events, supporting our business sector to plan for and manage climate change risks will help strengthen sectors of our economy that are already experiencing significant impacts of climate change.

Further targeted initiatives are required to capitalise on opportunities for adaptation to climate change, including funding support for businesses to develop products and services that promote new innovations in adaptation.”

ENDS

NOTES TO EDITOR

EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS): The EU ETS operates in all EU countries plus Iceland, Liechtenstein and Norway. It covers emissions from more than 11,000 installations including power stations, larger industrial plants and aircraft operators. The scheme covers around 45% of EU emissions and operates on a “cap and trade” principle. The cap is reduced annually in line with the EU’s climate target, ensuring that emissions decrease over time. The EPA is responsible for administering the EU ETS in Ireland. 109 major industrial and power generations sites were required to report their emissions for 2023 to the EPA by 31 March 2024².

This year, the Climate Change Advisory Council will publish Sectoral Reviews throughout the year, culminating in October to complete the Annual Review 2024. The publication schedule below is subject to change and indicative only:

Publication	Timeframe
Electricity Sectoral Review 2024	Published 13 th May 2024
Enterprise & Waste Sectoral Review 2024	Published 29 th May 2024

² [Ireland’s power generation and industrial emissions decreased by seventeen per cent in 2023 | Environmental Protection Agency \(epa.ie\)](https://www.epa.ie/en/press-releases/2024/irelands-power-generation-and-industrial-emissions-decreased-by-seventeen-per-cent-in-2023/)

Transport Sectoral Review 2024	End of June
Built Environment Sectoral Review 2024	Mid July
Resilience Sectoral Review 2024	End of August
Agriculture & Land Use Sectoral Review 2024	Start of September
Biodiversity Sectoral Review 2024	By end of October
Assessment of Inventories and Projections 2024	By end of October

If you have any questions or are seeking further comment, please do not hesitate to contact:

Shane Finnegan (shane@aikenpr.com or 00447764534565) or Seamus Donnelly (seamus@aikenpr.com or 00447729556480)