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# Climate Action - Legislation and Policy

John Finnegan  
Central Climate Policy and Governance

Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications  
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**1. Climate Action Act 2021**

**2. Climate Action Plan 2021**



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# 1. Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021

# Context



- Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015
- Report of the Citizens' Assembly 2018
- Oireachtas Joint Committee on Climate Action Report 2019
- Climate and Biodiversity Emergency declared in 2019
- 2019 Climate Action Plan step change in Irish climate policy
- Programme for Government – Our Shared Future
  - 7% per annum reduction in overall GHG emissions 2021 to 2030
  - a 51% reduction over the decade
  - net zero emissions by 2050
  - carbon budgeting and sectoral emissions ceilings
- European Green Deal – includes EU Climate Law with 2050 climate neutral objective



# Process



- Inclusive approach
- The Act reflects and remains faithful to the recommendations included in the Citizens' Assembly Report and the Joint Committee on Climate Action Report
- The Act was the subject of extensive inter-departmental and ministerial consultation since late 2019
- The Act reflects the extensive pre-legislative scrutiny report of the Joint Committee on Climate Action – majority of report's 78 recommendations have been accepted by Minister
- Passed into law in July 2021



# Overarching Objective of the Act



- Establishes a statutory ‘National Climate Objective’ –

*“....pursue and achieve, by no later than the end of the year 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy ...”*

- Promotes protection of our environment and biodiversity ,and provides a robust series of steps and mechanisms to reach the National Climate Objective
- Enhances the existing climate governance framework to ensure it is significantly strengthened to deliver over time meaningful climate action to realise our national, EU and international obligations



# Highlights of the Act



- Establishes a new long-term National Climate Objective to achieve climate neutrality by 2050
- Introduces a system of successive, five-year, economy-wide **carbon budgets** starting in 2021
  1. First 2 carbon budgets provide for a reduction of 51% in the total amount of emissions from reported emissions for 2018
  2. Consistent with **Paris Agreement** and other international obligation
  3. All forms of GHG included inc. biogenic methane
- Strengthens role of **Climate Change Advisory Council** to propose carbon budgets. Government applies carbon budget across sectors.
- Provides for **Climate Action Plan** to be updated annually with Ministers responsible for their own sectoral area
- **Stronger oversight role** for the Houses of the Oireachtas through Committee
- **Local Authorities** must prepare Climate Action Plans at least every five years



# Carbon Budgets and Sectoral Emissions Ceilings



- Carbon budgets will set out the total amount of greenhouse gases that can be emitted in the State within a period of five years - budget includes all greenhouse gases and all sectors of society. A 'carbon budget programme' consists of three sequential five-year carbon budgets
- CCAC must ensure consistency with international and EU climate obligations, have regard to climate justice, and take account of:
  - the most recent national greenhouse gas emissions inventory and projections
  - relevant scientific advice, including with regard to the distinct characteristics of biogenic methane;
  - international best practice on the reporting of greenhouse gas emissions and removals;
  - and in so far as practicable, the need to maximise employment, the attractiveness of the State for investment and the long term competitiveness of the economy.
- Each five-year budget will result in 'sectoral emissions ceilings.' Sectors will be determined by the Government and based on EPA emissions inventories, the proposed carbon budget programme and the 2021 Climate Action Plan





# Climate Change Advisory Council



- Council will have enhanced functions:
  - proposing carbon budgets to Minister
  - reviewing, by 15 September each year, progress towards carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings
  - making recommendations to address projected failure to meet sectoral ceilings
- Future composition of the Council will change:
  - 14 members, instead of 11 (including Chairperson)
  - 3 ex officio members – the Director General of the EPA, the Director of Teagasc, and the Director of Met Éireann
  - Future appointments to the Council will be considered and nominated in accordance with the list of required expertise, and also to ensure gender balance.



# Stronger Oireachtas Oversight of Climate Policy



- Oireachtas will have a new role on adoption of carbon budgets
- A Joint Committee of the Oireachtas will oversee the Government's climate performance, including on carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings
- All relevant Ministers will be required to give account annually to a Joint Committee.
- Annual reporting will be evidence-based - informed by Council annual review report and the EPA annual emissions inventories and projections reports
- Ministers will have to attend the Committee and respond to any recommendations made by Committee within 3 months





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## 2. Climate Action Plan 2021

# Climate Action Plan 2021



- Act requires the Climate Action Plan (CAP) to be updated annually
- CAP 2021 expected to be finalised in coming weeks
- Details actions that must be taken in every Government Department and Body in order to deliver on:
  1. the **statutory commitments** in the Act,
  2. our **2030 targets**,
  3. prepare for **climate neutrality by 2050** at the latest
- Specific timelines and steps needed to achieve each action, assigning clear lines of responsibility for delivery

# CAP Process – Analytical Input



- DECC engaged McKinsey to identify a set of candidate actions and measures and to prepare briefing material for nine working groups.
- These groups are currently developing a programme of measures to be included in the Plan,
- The groups are taking the measures identified in McKinsey’s analysis as a starting point for their work. Includes:
- “**Core**” measures, which build on and extend existing CAP19 actions and are required to deliver emissions reduction to 2030
- “**Further**” measures; larger system choices for Ireland which do not exist at scale in Ireland today but are essential to deliver the 2050 net-zero target.

# CAP Process- Consultation 2021



- Department held a series of climate conversations under the **National Dialogue for Climate Action (NDCA)**
- Views gathered from **4,000** people, communities and organisations on the climate challenge, their perceived capacity to act to combat climate change, and what Government needs to do to make it easier to live in a sustainable way
- Informed Climate Action Plan, 2021 and the development of a revised structure for the National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA)
- An 8 week **public consultation** was held on the Climate Action Plan 2021 with over **1,200 submissions** received by the Department
- Valuable input in the development of the Plan

# CAP 2021 – Measures



The Programme for Government commits to:

- Delivering a National Aggregated Model of Retrofitting reaching over 500,000 homes by 2030
- Learning from district heating pilot projects to launch a scaled-up programme.
- Accelerating the electrification of the transport system
- Developing a strategy for remote working
- Developing a new Sustainable Rural Mobility Plan.
- Introducing a transformational programme of research and development
- Developing a major drive to realise the immense potential of Ireland's offshore renewables.
- Devising a systemic programme of sectoral audits of the commercial and industrial sector
- Expanding and incentivising micro generation, including roof-top solar energy.
- Developing a new strategy to expand afforestation
- Transforming the scale of organics farming, with the delivery of a fair price for farmers at its heart.
- Building on Ireland's relative carbon efficiency in food production

# Next Steps



- Publication of CAP 2021
- Preparation of regulations on **carbon accounting**, in consultation with the Climate Change Advisory Council and consistent with the Paris Agreement and EU rules.
- Production of **carbon budgets** by the Climate Change Advisory Council
- Government consideration of the budgets.







# Q and A