

Matheson

CELEBRATING
200
YEARS

Climate Action Plan

2025





INTRODUCTION

On 15 April 2025, the Irish Government published the Climate Action Plan 2025 (“[CAP25](#)”). CAP25 is the third update to Ireland’s Climate Action Plan under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021 (the “**2021 Act**”).

Building on last year’s plan, CAP25 refines and updates measures and [actions](#) required to deliver on carbon budgets and sectoral emissions ceilings, including the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions by 51% by 2030 and achievement of a climate neutral economy by 2050, as mandated under the 2021 Act.

It is also the final Climate Action Plan of the first 5-year Carbon Budget – marking an important midpoint in what has been called the decade of climate action.

CURRENT LANDSCAPE

Ireland’s Climate Action initiatives, including the Climate Action Plans, have yielded notable successes, demonstrating progress across various sectors. While the current figures (a sample of which are included in the table below) indicate that emissions are coming down across most industries, it is clear that there is significant work yet to be done in order to achieve the 2030 targets:

Industry	Target reduction in GHG*	Progress to Date
Electricity	75%	26.2%
Built Environment	Residential - 40% Commercial and Public Buildings - 45%	Residential - 23.6% Commercial and Public Buildings - 8.9%
Transport	50%	4.2%
Agriculture	25%	2.9%
Industry	35%	9.6%

*(% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions to be achieved by 2030 as compared to 2018 figures)

In addition, CAP25 notes the following:

- Total emissions were down over 3.5% in the first half of 2024 when compared with the same period in 2023;
- Wind generated almost 40% of electricity in Ireland in the first half of 2024;
- Agriculture emissions reduced by over 2.4% in 2024 compared to 2023;
- Building emissions have decreased by 21% since 2018; and
- In 2023, there was a 22% decrease in sectoral emissions compared to 2021, despite an increase in electricity demand of 3%.



KEY TAKEAWAYS OF CAP25

Electricity

Renewable Energy

- CAP25 supports Ireland's previous commitment to increasing the share of renewable electricity to 50% by 2025 and 80% by 2030.
- Previous targets have been restated:
 - Onshore wind: 6GW by 2025 and 9GW by 2030;
 - Offshore wind: at least 8GW by 2030; and
 - Solar: up to 5GW by 2025 and 8GW by 2030.
- A draft National Planning Framework ("NPF") has been launched to strengthen alignment between planning and spatial policy and Ireland's carbon budget framework, as well as promoting stronger integration of key sectoral climate policy objectives. It will introduce renewable electricity capacity allocations for '[Regional Assemblies](#)' which are to be achieved by 2030.
- The nascent offshore wind market requires significant investment and consideration by the Offshore Wind Delivery Taskforce. EirGrid, Enterprise Ireland and IDA Ireland have recently signed an MoU to deepen cooperation and collaboration between the three agencies, to support the development of the Irish offshore wind sector.
- Planning continues to play an important role in the development of renewable energy projects. The decision in [Coolglass v An Bord Pleanála](#) suggests that applications for permission to develop renewable energy projects may be more likely to be granted than previously.
- The [Renewable Electricity Support Scheme](#) also continues to support the deployment of renewable energy projects.

Grid Infrastructure and Interconnection

- Access to grid infrastructure continues to be a challenge for the renewable energy sector.
- The first draft of the NPF also includes policy support for the development and upgrading of electricity infrastructure.
- Interconnection with adjoining markets that can supply access to 'green' energy will be critical to achievement of climate targets. This sector has recently been bolstered by the launch of the 500MW Greenlink Interconnector between Ireland and Great Britain and the



Electricity

proposed 700MW Celtic Interconnector between Ireland and France which is scheduled to commence operations in 2027. There has also been some discussion between governments of Ireland, Belgium and the United Kingdom in respect of interconnection between those countries and a second interconnector between Ireland and France.

Energy Storage

- CAP25 continues to promote the rolling out of long-duration energy storage, which is highlighted in the Electricity Storage Policy Framework that was published in July 2024.
- The publication of the Long Duration Energy Storage Procurement recommendations paper is an action item for 2025.
- 170MW of new batteries were added to the electricity system in 2024 to increase security of supply.

Private Wires

A private wires policy framework is expected to be published before year-end. This will be of interest to renewable energy developers and energy users alike.

Demand Management

There are several demand management policies and working groups that will be developed further in connection with CAP25:

- CRU's National Energy Demand Strategy (NEDS) (July 2024) aims to deliver the key regulatory measures necessary to allow all energy system users to benefit from a more flexible energy system, reduce the strain on the power system and maximise renewables potential.
- On-going review of the Large Energy Users Connection Policy to ensure that new large energy users do not contribute to energy security challenges and that new demand is decarbonised in line with climate targets.
- Smart Energy Services Working Group which provides strategic policy direction in line with the priorities of REPowerEU and the EU Action Plan for the Digitalisation of the Energy System.



Transport

- The transport sector is a strategic priority for CAP25 since figures indicate a small increase in sectoral emissions in 2024.
- CAP25 identifies private car journeys as a key contributor to the current sectoral emissions levels and seeks to improve and promote the use of public transport, cycling and walking to reduce the modal share of daily car journeys from over 70% to c. 50% by 2030. Public transport numbers exceeded 300 million for the first time in 2023.
- CAP25 emphasises the need for improved rail options for freight (particularly near ports) and transport options in rural areas, aiming for 70% of rural residents to have access to bus services traveling to the nearest town three times a day.

Waste Management

- CAP25 aims to reduce the amount of waste sent to landfill to 10% of all waste by 2035.
- Recycling is a strategic priority, and 70% of packaging waste is to be recycled by 2030 with over half of plastic packaging waste to be recycled.
- CAP25 proposes to ban single use plastic items and continue the deposit return scheme for recyclable bottles and cans.

Built Environment

- The CAP25 continues to promote the Zero Emission Building standards (to be implemented by 2030), heat pump usage and the development of district heating systems which alone has a target of up to 2.7Twh of installed capacity by 2030.
- Efforts are underway to reduce emissions associated with the production, construction and demolition of buildings. This includes the development of frameworks to assess and reduce embodied carbon in construction materials.
- The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (“DECC”) will also develop a National Building Renovation Plan to ensure that Ireland’s building stock in “highly energy efficient and decarbonised” by 2050 in line with Article 3 of the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive.



Built Environment

- The Government has also approved a Heat Bill which aims to develop a district heating industry that will, among other things, support the development and expansion of district heating networks by public, private and utility ‘actors’, ensure price protection and provide a pathway for State ownership of privately developed heat networks.

Agriculture

- CAP25 notes a decrease in agricultural emissions, owing largely to the decrease in use of fertiliser nitrogen.
- As of 2024, Ireland has 220,000 hectares under organic farming. This is nearly halfway to achieving our 2030 target of 450,000 hectares.
- Engagement with the agricultural sector will be critical to achieving Ireland’s sectoral climate targets.

Industry

- Promotion of the use of timber in construction to reduce emissions and embodied carbon.
- ‘Roadmap for the Decarbonisation of Industrial Heat’ and ‘Green Book: Empowering Ireland’s Renewable Future’ were published which sets out a pathway of decarbonisation of businesses and a practical guide for manufacturing companies looking to integrate renewables onto their site.

Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry

- This sector is emerging in respect of climate targets and does not yet have a carbon budget.
- Key processes to reducing greenhouse gas emissions in this sector will include afforestation, rehabilitation of exploited peatlands and completion of the Land Use Review to determine the environmental, ecological and economic characteristics of land types across Ireland.



EDUCATION

Alongside the numerous climate-related policies referenced in the table above, as part of the CAP25 'Just Transition' there is and will continue to be a concerted effort to educate those working in this area to ensure that they have the skills to drive these initiatives forward to success. This will include:

- DECC's development of a **Framework to Guide Climate and Climate Related Strategic Research and Innovation** which will outline strategic research and innovation priorities and gaps in climate and climate-related research and innovation ("CCR&I"). It will also identify optimal mechanisms to fund strategic CCR&I priority areas, ensuring that there is effective cross-agency collaboration.
- SEAI's agreement to provide a **national offshore renewable energy test site infrastructure**, including facilities for laboratory testing or numerical modelling of offshore renewable energy generation technologies and marine enterprises.
- A **geothermal energy demonstration project** worth €20 million which is to be developed at four sites in Belfast, Dublin and Sligo to show how geothermal energy can help decarbonise heating/cooling, while providing data to a series of research projects to further support this sector.
- An **offshore wind skills development programme** which will be established in 2025 under the lead of Skillnet Ireland. The programme aims to ensure that skills planning (along with other higher education programmes) is aligned with Ireland's Climate Action Plan targets and with industry requirements.

The establishment of **Decarbonising Zones ("DZs")** in all local authorities (currently there are four in Dublin-Clondalkin, Dun Laoghaire and Blackrock, Balbriggan and Ballymun and Ringsend / Poolbeg). A DZ is a spatial area in which climate mitigation, adaptation and biodiversity measures are identified to address local low carbon energy, GHG emissions and climate needs.

CONCLUSION

Ireland is making significant progress in reducing emissions, but more work needs to be done. Accelerating the implementation of actions and strengthening the climate governance structures in this, and the next Climate Action Plan (Climate Action Plan 2026) will be key if Ireland is to close the emissions gap and stay within the limits of the Carbon Budgets.



CONTACT US

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