**Climate Action Plan**

**Government positioning**

 ·         Government contends that the proposals they are putting forward in the Climate Plan are the least-cost, highest benefit, most reasonable measures available that will maximise the benefits to society and the economy.

·         It stated it is a huge opportunity to create new jobs and grow businesses, like offshore wind, cutting-edge agriculture, or making homes warmer and safer.

·         Ireland is the second largest source of greenhouse gases per person in the EU.

·         The plan contains hundreds of distinct actions with responsible agencies or departments and timelines for completion.

·         It will be assessed every year to make sure it is staying on track.

·         Every year, ministers will be required to give account to an Oireachtas Committee on their performance in implementing Climate Action Plan actions adhering to their sector’s emission ceiling.

·         Where ministers are not in compliance with the targets, they will need to outline the corrective measures they will take. They will have to return to the committee and respond to any recommendations made by the Committee within three months. This ‘comply or explain’ approach will ensure greater scrutiny and accountability is provided.

**Financing the Plan**

·         This plan is backed by the largest capital investment programme in the history of the State –

The National Development Plan (NDP), which is the largest ever capital investment programme in the history of the state, will see €165bn invested out to 2030. It is entirely climate proofed and will help fund Ireland’s climate ambitions. The Government is making the biggest investment in transport in the history of the State for example.

·       The Public Spending Code is being reformed to make sure that no public money is used in a way that increases emissions or damages climate goals.

·         It is recognised that the Exchequer cannot pay for everything and will be seeking other sources of funding, from the EIB and the EU.

·         Some of the necessary funding will also come from the private sector, such as private business investment in offshore windfarms, or by private individuals choosing to buy an electric vehicle instead of a petrol or diesel car.

**Enterprise**

Enterprises in Ireland will be required to implement a detailed agenda of transition and change if it is to ensure that sectors are climate resilient and can remain competitive in a decarbonising world. This agenda will include:

-          *Improving the energy efficiency of processes, buildings and transport*

-          *Replacing fossil fuels with renewables in their processes, buildings and transport*

-          *Improving the way in which resources are used in their supply chain to reduce emissions and conform to circular economy principles*

-          *Being innovative across production, distribution, and marketing to realise the opportunities arising*

-          *Developing new skills and techniques as necessary*

-          *Developing metrics on the climate and environmental impact of activities, which will become more widely expected in the marketplace*

·         Larger businesses and high emitters will continue to require energy audits, and under the proposed EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive will be mandated to provide public reporting of their environmental impact.

·         The Government will be launching a new website shortly, called the Climate Toolkit 4 Business. Business owners will be able to input their information and get a personalised plan, tailored to their specific needs.

·         There is grant funding available through the Enterprise Ireland Climate Action Fund for example, and the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) to help you make changes to your buildings and the way you use energy.

·         Most of the emissions from the enterprise sector come from a small number of large energy users and officials have already been working directly with them to help them make the shift away from fossil fuels and to explore new materials which are less damaging to the environment.

·         Enterprise Ireland (EI) and the IDA will use other transformational supports such as training, and Research, Development and Innovation (RDI) grant programmes to enable client companies improve their sustainability capability.

·         EI and the IDA will work to further integrate climate change considerations into their overall strategies and the specific supports provided to client firms over the coming period of radical transition by:

-          Aligning grant funding and supports with progress towards achieving emissions reductions targets for enterprise, including amending project appraisal method

-          Enabling the preparation of detailed decarbonisation implementation strategies by client companies in the highest emitting enterprise sectors

-          Working closely with the SEAI and third-party energy providers to encourage client companies to plan to decarbonise

-          EI administering the Climate Enterprise Action Fund to help companies reduce emissions and embed sustainability in how they work

**Public Procurement - Actions**

• The Office of Government Procurement will update all procurement frameworks, in line with green procurement practice by 2023

• It will review food procurement policies for the public sector, with the aim of introducing procurement of nutritious, locally-sourced food

• It will mandate the purchase of zero-emission electric vehicles where available and operationally feasible by end of 2022

**Digital Transformation and Remote Working**

***Digital Transformation***

* Commitment to developing a new cross-government National Digital Strategy to ensure opportunities are harnessed
* Through initiatives such as eHealth, the digital transformation of enterprise, and the use of 5G technologies, Ireland will be greener, more innovative.

***Remote Working***

* In January 2021, the Government published Making Remote Work: National Remote Working Strategy that aims to support the adoption of remote working.
* Making Remote Work will facilitate remote working in a way that maximises the economic, social and environmental benefits, including increasing participation in the labour market; enabling balanced regional development; improving work/life balance; reducing commuting times; and reducing transport[1]related carbon emissions.
* High-speed broadband also increases the creation of local employment opportunities, which allows more people to work closer to their homes, reducing the emissions associated with longer commuter journeys.

**Electricity Targets**

To meet the required level of emissions reduction, by 2030 the Plan commits to:

• Reduce CO2eq. emissions from the sector to a range of 2 to 4 MtCO2eq. by 2030 (62%-81% below 2018 levels)

• Carry out a work programme to identify a route to deliver 1-3 TWh of zero emissions gas (including green hydrogen) by 2030, potentially equivalent to 0.2-0.4 MtCO2eq. abatement

• Increasing the share of electricity demand generated from renewable sources to up to 80% where achievable and cost effective, without compromising security of electricity supply

• At least 500 MW of these renewables will be delivered through local community-based projects,

\* Deliver circa 2 GW of new flexible gas-fired power stations in support of a highly variable renewable electricity system.

• Delivery of three new transmission grid connections or interconnectors to Northern Ireland, Great Britain, and the EU.

• Explore further interconnection, including hybrid interconnectors (combined cross border transmission network with offshore renewable generation), to other countries.

• Expand and reinforce the grid – through the addition of lines, substations, and new technologies.

• Complete the phase-out of coal and peat-fired electricity generation.

• Ensure that 20-30% of system demand is flexible by 2030.

**Buildings**

To meet the required level of emissions reduction, 44%-56% by 2030, the Plan commits to:

• Effectively phase out the use of fossil fuels for space and water heating in all new buildings

• Planning for the phase out of fossil fuels in existing buildings

• Complete 500,000 residential retrofits to achieve a B2 BER/cost optimal equivalent or carbon equivalent

• Install 600,000 heat pumps in residential buildings (of which 400,000 to be installed in existing

buildings)

• Deploy zero-carbon heating to the meet the needs of 50,000 typical commercial buildings

• Deliver up to 2.7 TWh of district heating, with the exact level to be informed by the outcome of the National Heat Study

• Develop the calculation framework and databases in order to set performance standards to promote the construction of low-carbon technologies on a phased basis

**Spatial and Planning Policy**

Implementation of the approach set out in our planning and housing policies will support our climate ambition through:

·         Reduced travel distances between home, work and services, which will enable a greater proportion of journeys by bicycle or on foot (zero emissions)

·         Greater urban density will ensure more viable public transport leading to reduced transport emissions

·         Higher density residential development,

·         Closer proximity of multi-storey and terraced buildings, which will require less energy and make renewables-based systems of energy distribution more feasible

**Transport**

To meet the required level of emissions reduction, 42%-50% by 2030, the Plan will:

• Provide for an additional 500,000 daily public transport and active travel journeys

• Develop the required infrastructural, regulatory, engagement, planning, innovation and financial supports for improved system, travel, vehicle and demand efficiencies

• Increase the fleet of EVs and low emitting vehicles (LEVs) on the road to 945,000, comprising of:

* 845,000 electric passenger cars
* 95,000 electric vans
* 3,500 low emitting trucks
* 1,500 electric buses
* an expanded electrified rail network

• Raise the blend proportion of biofuels to B20 in diesel and E10 in petrol

• Reduce ICE kilometres by c. 10% compared to present day levels

• Undertake a programme of work which will review progress and further refine measures that will seek to deliver the additional c. 0.9 MtCO2 reduction by 2030 in a fair and equitable manner

\* Continue the improvement and expansion of the Active Travel and Greenway Network

\*Development of a coherent and connected National Cycle Network Strategy

\*Construct an additional 1,000km of cycling and walking infrastructure

\*Encourage an increased level of modal shift towards Active Travel (walking and cycling) and away from private car use

\*Accelerate sustainable mobility plans for schools

\*Legislate to improve the Active Travel environment in urban centres

\*Enable use of e-scooters and e-bikes

\*Publish the new Sustainable Mobility Policy

\*Commence delivery of BusConnects Network Redesign in Dublin and other cities

\*Commence delivery of BusConnects Core Bus Corridor Infrastructure Works

Infrastructure Works)

\*Commence delivery of DART+ Programme and continue heavy rail fleet investment

\*Commence delivery of MetroLink

\*Phased introduction of National Youth Travel Card

\*Expand Smarter Travel Workplaces Programme

\*Examine the role of demand management measures in Irish cities, including low emission zones and parking pricing policies.

\* Publish the impact of speed and speed limits on greenhouse gas emissions and pollutants

\*Continue rollout of variable speed limits/dynamic traffic management infrastructure on the M50 Motorway to increase safety and reduce congestion

\*Require all cities with a population exceeding 75,000 to produce a sustainable transport plan for review by the National Transport Authority and the Department of Transport.

\*Balance better movement priorities within urban areas so transition the built environment and public domain from one that is “vehicle centred” to being “people centred” to align with the goal of net zero by 2050

\*Ensure all metropolitan transport strategies reflect Climate Action Plan sectoral emission reduction targets

\*Review and, if necessary, develop a regulatory framework for low-emission zones

\*Increase provision of park and ride/share at transport interchanges

\*Deliver public transport corridors providing prioritised bus lanes on relevant national radial routes to the M50

\*Deliver sustainable bus priority measures on the National Road Network

\*Publish new investment framework for land transport in Ireland

\*Develop roadmap for review and transition away from fossil fuel tax subsidies in transport sector

\* Examine options for the equalisation of diesel and petrol excise rates over an appropriate period of time

\*Transition Dublin, Cork, Galway, Limerick and Waterford metropolitan area PSO bus services to a low/zero emission bus fleet.

\*Develop a policy pathway to drive a significant ramp-up in passenger EVs and electric van sales and/or disincentivise fossil-fuelled passenger vehicles and vans

\*Identify options to increase EV uptake to support the transition away from grant supports

\*Establish an Office for Low Emitting Vehicles to co-ordinate the implementation of existing and future EV measures and infrastructure

\*Enable greater EV infrastructure roll-out for passenger cars and vans

\*Develop a national infrastructure strategy to address on-street, location and fast charging infrastructure needs to stay ahead of demand

\* Launch a Destination Charger Scheme to install publicly accessible EV charging infrastructure

\*Amend the Home Charger Grant Scheme to include apartments

\*Identify measures to support the shift to 95,000 electric vans

\*Set a roadmap for more LEVs in Public Sector Fleets

\*Set out the planned level of biofuel use for the period 2021 to 2030.

\*Support the development of renewable gas as a transport fuel in the transport sector

\*Publish the 10-year Haulage Strategy for Heavy Goods Vehicles

\*Implement the minimum standards and mandatory targets identified in the Alternative Fuels Infrastructure Regulation (AFIR)

\*Assess the environmental impact of the internationally trading Irish fleet

\*Through the Core Transport Adaptation Team, review the climate adaptation activities currently ongoing and identify opportunities for future implementation of relevant policy.

\*Identify opportunities for collaborative research in the area of climate adaptation for the transport sector

\*Improve climate resilience and adapt to climate change on the Light rail and National Road Network

\* Devise pathway to deliver an additional 0.9MT CO2 reduction in the transport sector by 2030

\* Review further linkages between accessibility and climate action

**Measures to Deliver Targets**

***Environmental Taxation and Carbon Pricing***

Taxation policy can play a central role in incentivising the behavioural change necessary to reduce our GHG emissions and to support additional environmental benefits. The Plan commits to:

·         Examining the introduction of an emissions-based tax regime for light goods vehicles

·         Examining gradually phasing out VAT rebates on commercial fuel use where electric alternatives exist

·         Examining the gradual equalisation of the diesel and petrol excise rates

·         Introducing environmental criteria into the vehicle BIK regime, with its commencement sensitive to typical fleet renewal timescales

·          Supporting the use of the accelerated capital allowance regime to promote business investment in energy efficient equipment and gas-powered commercial vehicles. These regimes will be reviewed in advance of their respective sunset clauses