



Goal 13



Climate Action

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The sustainable transition to a low carbon economy is critical to Ireland's competitiveness and our quality of life. The next Government must create a Climate Action framework that supports businesses through the transition process to a circular economy which is powered by renewable energy.

Research into dual-effect technologies like anaerobic digestion and biomethane production which reduce greenhouse gas emissions from one industry, while offsetting CO₂ emission in another, will be vital to managing this change.

To implement the National Development Plan, and the Climate Action Plan, huge investment is needed. The decarbonisation of heat and transport is vital if we are to reduce our CO₂ emissions. If we are to meet our 2030 targets and avoid significant fines, substantial investment in our electricity grid is needed.

Generating renewable energy plays a major role in the transition to a low carbon economy and is key to securing the Irish energy supply and security post-2020. It is imperative that we invest in renewable energy and remove the obstacles that hinder their development. Wind is already the second greatest source of electricity generation after natural gas but regulatory and financial barriers, such as the delay of the Marine Planning and Development Management Bill, prevented us from meeting our targets and providing green renewable energy for Ireland. The decarbonisation of heat and transport will require a broad range of responses. Along with investing in the electrification of heat and transport, we must also ensure appropriate investments are made in other forms of renewable energy, such as hydrogen and biomethane, to fuel heavy good vehicles and some forms of public transport

The move towards a circular economy, with appropriate funding and infrastructure to enable businesses to make the transition, must also be a prioritised. A low-carbon, circular economy is the only sustainable future. To make this transition, we must ensure that a balanced, competitive, SME friendly approach is at the heart of regulatory changes.

Lastly, in parallel to supporting the business transition to a low carbon economy, the next Government must prioritise national climate adaptation strategies to support communities and local economies to mitigate against the more regular occurrence of extreme weather

Generating Renewable Energy

- Urgently implement a technology neutral renewable energy subsidy scheme
- Publish and enact the Marine Planning and Development Bill to provide the legal framework for delivering offshore renewable wind energy projects
- Fund research into how the gas-networks can be future proofed to transition from the delivery of natural gas to renewable gas and the potential of Hydrogen as a means of storing excess electricity
- Commit increased investment in the electricity grid to ensure that it is future-proofed and has the capacity to meet decarbonisation targets, including the progression of the North-South Interconnector and the Celtic Interconnector to ensure energy security for the island of Ireland

Decarbonising Heat and Transport

- Ringfence all Exchequer returns from Carbon Tax and strategically invest in green infrastructure, public transport, and funds that will support communities to transition to green transport and heating alternatives
- Review and expand the commitments contained in the National Development Plan of retrofitting 45,000 homes annually and bringing these houses to at least a BER of B2. Homes that use solid fuels (such as coal and peat) and those that do not have central heating must be the primary target of retrofitting
- Classify SEAI supported retrofitting projects as zero VAT rated products
- Increase investment in decarbonisation of public transport, particularly in cities, such as investment in bio-methane vehicles and the electrification of trains and buses. Road usage plans should also prioritise public transport
- Invest in appropriate infrastructure to support the transition of Heavy Goods Vehicles to low carbon fuel options like Compressed Natural Gas
- Invest in an accelerated roll-out of a national fast-charging network for EVs, particularly

in rural parts of the country where there are limited options for public transport

- Government should commit to an “Electric Vehicle first” procurement requirement for all transport unless there is a service-related justification
- Ensure that all Local Area Plans include the building of the segregated cycleways that are needed to link our residential areas with our civic and economic centres. Traffic infrastructure also needs to support, and be responsive to, the introduction of new forms of transport such as eScooters by integrating them with upgraded cycling infrastructure
- Use ring-fenced environmental fund revenues to broaden the coverage and density of shared use schemes such as City Bikes in the cities where they are available and expanding them to other towns where they are not

Accelerating the Transition to the Circular and Low Carbon Economy

- Introduce further Circular Economy supports like the recent €600,000 funding DCCA Circular Economy Call with the emphasis on the business transition
- Introduce a National CupSwap Scheme to promote the elimination of single-use coffee cups, where a standardised cup would support the flexibility of ‘grabbing a coffee on the go’ while promoting an affordable and flexible reusable alternative to single-use cups, with a central fund and regional oversight to avoid disadvantaging individual participants
- Increases in the Environmental Levy should be ringfenced to support research development and innovation and to increase the affordability of alternatives to plastics and non-renewable energies for businesses
- Increase investment into skills, apprenticeships and re-training so more people can move to jobs in the low-carbon and circular economy
- Following any phased increases to the Carbon Tax, the next Government must commit to carrying out an impact assessment on consequences for SMEs, commuters and Border communities following on from increases in carbon taxation

- Continue to invest in measures that will support communities to meet afforestation and bog restoration targets
- Expand the services offered by Local Enterprise Offices to collaborate with the business community to support actions to increase biodiversity supports such as wildflower and bee-friendly spaces in towns and cities across Ireland

Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

- Prioritise appropriate budget allocation to facilitate necessary flood defence infrastructure, technology investments and support for flood resistance and resilience measures
- Government should work with the insurance industries to provide clarification on insuring properties where demountable defences have been applied
- Government should consider the merits of incentivising proactive individual flood resistance measures and flood resilience measures such as those applied via the Individual Property Protection in the UK.
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- Develop a National Mitigation Plan to tackle impacts of coastal erosion
- Publish a strategy to improve insurability of homes and businesses