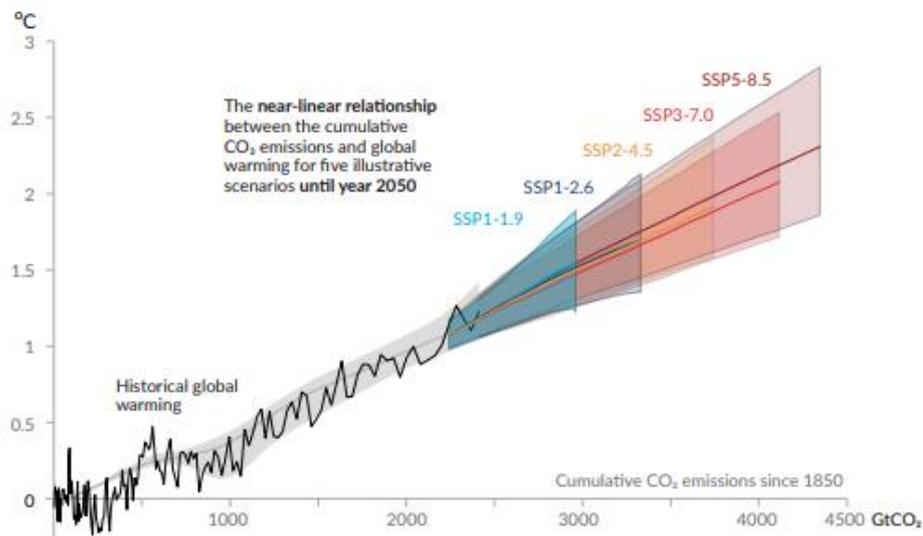


Opening Statement

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Global surface temperature increase since 1850–1900 (°C) as a function of cumulative CO₂ emissions (GtCO₂)



The 6th Assessment Report of the IPCC has confirmed that a strong linear relationship exists between cumulative greenhouse gas emissions and the rise in global temperature. This identifies the existence of a finite remaining carbon budget available to avoid warming beyond the dangerous climate change Paris Agreement limits of 1.5°C and 2°C above pre-industrial levels. The remaining carbon budget to have a likely chance of limiting warming to these levels equates to approximately 9 and 25 years respectively based on emissions at current levels. Global temperatures have already risen by 1.1°C since pre-industrial times and Irish temperatures have matched this quite closely, having risen by 0.9°C in the past 120 years, much of this having occurred in the period since 1980.

Article 2 of the Paris Agreement commits Ireland to pursuing efforts to limit the global temperature increase to 1.5°C above these levels. The Agreement also binds signatories to an implementation that reflects 'equity and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities and respective capabilities, in the light of different national circumstances'. Recent work suggests that Ireland's 'Fair Share' of the remaining global carbon budget will be exhausted within 3-5 years.

The European Parliament in June 2021 set targets to reduce net EU emissions by 55% by 2030, from 1990 levels, and eliminate net emissions by 2050. The 2030 target has been provisionally agreed between the Parliament, Commission and Council. Though commensurate with the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021, the budgets to 2030 proposed by the CCAC currently provide for a reduction over 1990-2030 of less than 45%, an aspect that will be dealt with by other contributors.

National Carbon Budget

The Climate Change Advisory Council's proposed 5-yearly Carbon budgets (295/200/151 Mt CO_{2eq}) are consistent with emissions in 2018 of 68.3Mt CO_{2eq} reducing to 33.5Mt CO_{2eq} in 2030, thus allowing compliance with the 51% emission reduction target. Several issues of timing arise, however:

1. The average annual percentage reduction required in the first compliance period is 4.8%, as opposed to 8.3% in the second. This means that any slippage in the period 2021-2025 will require an extremely onerous reduction in 2026-2030. A significant risk of this occurring exists, since Action 7 of the Climate Action Plan (CAP 22) does not envisage the incorporation of the legally adopted national and sectoral budgets in the plan until Q4 2022, i.e. until 40% of the current 5-year budget has elapsed. A failing trajectory over the next 5 years will undoubtedly result in litigation similar to what has been seen elsewhere in the EU.
2. Each year, and specifically for 2022, the Climate Change Advisory Council is obliged to report by 30 October and to request of relevant Ministers thereafter a plan for corrective action should their

Sectoral Emissions Ceiling not be on target. Recommendations made to them by the CCAC will require their response within 3 months. This potentially takes corrective action proposals into 2023, and beyond the time when the 2022 Climate Action Plan has been formulated (Q4 2022). By early 2023 the five year budget period will be advanced to the point where corrective action to stay on budget may require radical short term actions not currently contemplated.

3. The time lag for the availability of national emissions data hampers the work of the CCAC and the preparation of the CAP updates. Provisional data for emissions in 2020 were published by the EPA in September 2021 and final figures for 2020 will only be submitted to the EU Commission in spring 2022. To provide a basis for the CCAC report and the CAP 2022 it is highly desirable that advance access be given to provisional 2021 data during summer 2022. The MoU between the CCAC and all relevant government Departments and Agencies of May 2021 forms an essential recognition of these aspects.

Given the uncertainties surrounding the first national carbon budget period, the justification for leaving the maximum reduction rates to the second budget period is not warranted under the Precautionary Principle (Article 191 of the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union). The rejection of a linear reduction pathway on technical and feasibility grounds is not consistent with action to tackle an emergency situation. Radical annual reduction solutions, appropriate to an emergency situation, do exist in sectors such as transport and agriculture not requiring additional infrastructure or technology.

Sectoral Emissions Ceilings

Allocation of sectoral emissions ceilings is a political choice. The scientific and legal imperative is that ceiling allocations add up to the national carbon budget, compliance is monitored, and corrective action is taken annually through the revision of the Climate Action Plan. The main sectors for allocation are:

Agriculture

No of Farms 2020	% national emissions	Average income Dairy	Average income cattle rearing	Average income Cattle other	Average income Sheep	Average income Tillage
93,244	37.1	€74,249	€9,043	€15,023	€17,913	€32,100

52% of farm households have off-farm employment. 67% of farms have no debt. Emissions from agriculture are projected to increase by 3.0% over the period 2021-2030 under the With Existing Measures scenario.

Transport

Households with at least 1 car (2016)	Total vehicles (2019)	% national emissions	Average Household Income (national)
1,390,000	2,200,000	17.9	€51,458

Emissions from transport are projected to increase by 5.7% over the period 2021-2030 under the With Existing Measures scenario

Residential

Households	% national emissions	Average Household Income	Energy use: coal	Energy use: Peat	Energy use: oil	Energy use: gas	Energy use: renewables	Energy use: electricity
1,900,00	12.3	€51,458	6	6	42	19	3	24

52% of households have some form of debt. Emissions from the residential sector are projected to decrease by 24.1% over the period 2021-2030 under the With Existing Measures scenario

Energy

% national emissions	Renewable electricity
15.0	42.1%

Emissions from the energy industries sector are projected to decrease by 11.9% over the period 2021 to 2030 under the With Existing Measures scenario.

Manufacturing & Industry

% national emissions	Total Labour Force (includes services and all categories)
7.8	~2.25M

Emissions from the Manufacturing & Industry sector are projected to remain at the same level over the period 2021 to 2030 under the With Existing Measures scenario.

Conclusions

1. The allocation of sectoral budgets will primarily require substantial changes in agricultural and transport emissions. As the primary polluter, agricultural emissions reductions will determine the burden to be placed on the rest of society.

% Reduction in Agricultural Emissions 2021-2030	Remaining % Reduction Burden on other sectors (Transport, Residential, Energy, Industry, Waste)
51	51
33	60
15	80
10	??

Commitments from COP26 relevant to Sectoral Emission Ceilings

- (i) *A total of over 100 countries representing 70% of the global economy and nearly half of anthropogenic methane emissions Countries committed to a collective goal of reducing global methane emissions by at least 30% from 2020 levels by 2030.*

Hypothetical Decrease in Agricultural Emissions by 2030	Hypothetical decrease in Methane Emissions by 2030	Consequent required decrease in remaining Agricultural Emissions by 2030
33%	10%	77%

2. Only an immediate policy change to ensure significant near-term and ongoing reduction in methane emissions can protect livestock agriculture from far more onerous, sudden and less planned mandatory and very rapid emissions reductions to meet carbon budgets.

(ii) Calls upon Parties to accelerate the development, deployment and dissemination of technologies, and the adoption of policies, to transition towards low-emission energy systems, including by rapidly scaling up the deployment of clean power generation and energy efficiency measures, including accelerating efforts towards the phasedown of unabated coal power and phase-out of inefficient fossil fuel subsidies, while providing targeted support to the poorest and most vulnerable in line with national circumstances and recognizing the need for support towards a just transition;

In 2019, the CSO estimated that €3.0 Billion was raised in energy taxes, €0.4 Billion was spent on environmental subsidies related to energy and emissions, and fossil fuel subsidies were €2.4 Billion. The 2021 Climate Action Plan targets the production only of a roadmap to transition away from fossil fuel subsidies by Q1 2024.

3. The production of only a roadmap in 2024 provides an over-lengthy delay in removing fossil fuel subsidies and this action should take place in 2022 with a view to incorporation in the 2022 financial budget and implementation commencing 2023.
4. As noted by the CCAC, a reduction in the application of Nitrogen would bring climate, biodiversity and water quality benefits and assist attainment of sectoral budget targets. Increased fertiliser usage continues to drive emission increases in N₂O, CH₄, NH₄ as well as reductions in water quality and biodiversity. Consideration should be given to the reduction of chemical Nitrogen in agriculture to 325,000t by 2025 and not 2030 as envisaged in Action 304 of the Climate Action Plan.
5. In reporting on their efforts to reach carbon neutrality and comply with relevant sectoral carbon budgets, firms should be obliged to account for Scope 3 emissions (supply chain) and include them in any assessment of expansion plans. Firms should be required by procurement policies to incentivise their suppliers to reduce their emissions where these occur within the jurisdiction.

Issues relating to timing, scope and implementation of key CAC climate actions, data availability, and policy slippage, currently render the attainment of legally binding carbon budget targets seriously at risk.