

At a glance: Climate Action Plan 2025

Maggie Semple, Senior Researcher (Environmental Science)

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To avoid the risk of paying billions of euros in fines from missing its EU climate targets, Ireland must act now and rapidly accelerate climate action. Opportunities to significantly reduce our greenhouse emissions include upgrading our energy grid, speeding up the roll out of electric vehicles and supporting changes in agriculture ([Climate Change Advisory Council and Irish Fiscal Advisory Council, 2025](#)).

This Note informs readers on the Climate Action Plan 2025 and related resources, as follows:

- Ireland's national and European commitments to climate action,
- Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions profile,
- Climate Action Plan 2025 (and new high-impact actions), and
- Progress made in the Climate Action Plan 2024.

This Note is the second in a Library & Research Service series on Ireland's annually updated Climate Action Plan. The first in this series, *At a glance: Climate Action Plan 2024* is available [here](#).



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Ireland's national and European commitments to climate action

Under the [Climate Action and Low Carbon Development \(Amendment\) Act 2021](#), Ireland is committed to reducing its greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions by 51% by 2030 (relative to 2018 levels) and achieving net-zero emissions by 2050. The Act provides for (among other things), [five-yearly carbon budgets](#) and an annually updated Climate Action Plan to support Ireland's climate ambitions.

The EU, under the European [Green Deal](#) also aims for climate neutrality by 2050. The [European Climate Law](#) writes the Green Deal goal into law and sets the EU-wide GHG emissions reduction target to at least 55% for 2030 (compared to 1990 levels) via the '[Fit for 55](#)' package.

The [UN Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change \(IPCC\)](#) warns that crossing the 1.5°Celsius (C) global warming threshold increases the risk of more frequent and dangerous extreme weather. To keep global warming to 1.5°C, GHG emissions must peak by 2025 at the latest and decline 43% by 2030. With the aim of achieving this, a [global stocktake agreement](#) was reached at the 28th UN Climate Change Conference ([COP28](#)) in 2023 to move away from fossil fuels and ratchet up climate action by the end of this decade.

Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions profile

Based on the EPA's provisional GHG emissions estimates for 2023, **Ireland's GHG emissions reduced by 6.8% in 2023 in comparison to 2022** and are below the 1990 baseline for the first time in over 30 years. This decline has been driven by reductions in all key sectors except transport. Agriculture continues to be the largest contributor to overall GHG emissions (37.8%) followed by transport (21.4%), energy industries (14.3%) and residential (9.7%) ([EPA, July 2024](#)).

The 51% national reduction target by 2030 is the key constraint on Ireland's carbon budgets this decade. From 2021-2023, the data indicates that Ireland used 64% of its first carbon budget (2021-2025) which means a substantial 8% annual reduction in GHG emissions for 2024 and 2025 is needed to stay within the limits of this budget ([EPA, July 2024](#)).

In 2024, [Quarter 1 \(Q1\) GHG emissions](#) were down 2.2% compared to Q1 2023 while GHG emissions for [Q2 2024](#) were down 4.1% compared to Q2 in 2023.

While the decline in GHG emissions is welcome, the EPA projects Ireland to achieve GHG emissions reductions of up to 29% by 2030, far below our national 51% target so **it is unlikely Ireland will meet its 2030 national and European targets** ([EPA, 2024](#)).

Climate Action Plan 2025

The latest [Climate Action Plan 2025](#) (hereafter CAP25) was approved by Government on 15 April 2025. It is the third statutory Climate Action Plan since the [Climate Action and Low Carbon Development \(Amendment\) Act 2021](#) was passed and the fifth overall. It is the last Climate Action Plan of Ireland's first five-year carbon budget, representing an important half-way mark to 2030.

If Ireland is to close the GHG emissions gap and make headway towards our 2030 and 2050 emissions reduction targets, we must accelerate on progress already made and deliver on the

actions in CAP25 as well as rapidly and fully implementing those legacy/delayed actions and policies from CAP23 and CAP24.

New high-impact actions

CAP25 is to be read in conjunction with CAP24 as an updated and amended plan. All the measures and actions to support the delivery of our climate targets are set out within the plan. However, if the reader is short on time, you may prefer to go directly to the [CAP25 Annex of Actions](#) which sets out new, high impact actions for 2025 **and** includes delayed actions from both CAP24 and CAP23 which will be tracked until completion.

Examples of new high-impact actions for 2025 include:

- **Research and Innovation:** Publish SEAI Energy Research Strategy and propose innovation funding mechanisms to decarbonise Ireland's energy systems.
- **Ensuring a Just Transition (JT) to a Climate Neutral Ireland:** Develop a JT Indicator Framework and JT Policy Toolkit and establish training and education pathways for offshore wind and sustainable agriculture.
- **Delivering a Just Transition in the Midlands Region:** support decarbonisation of local public bus routes and private bus operators, restoration of degraded bogs, and economic diversification.
- **Carbon Pricing and Cross-cutting Policies:** prepare a Social Climate Plan for Ireland in line with the [EU Social Climate Fund Regulation](#).
- **Electricity:** manage the [Renewable Electricity Support Scheme](#) (RESS) for onshore and offshore renewables and publish Long Duration Energy Storage (LDES) Procurement recommendations paper.
- **Built Environment:** progress and implement the [decarbonisation roadmap](#) for public sector buildings and publish a bill to transpose the [Energy Performance of Buildings Directive](#).
- **Industry:** explore tax and regulatory measures to support the adoption of recommendations from energy audits and the installation of energy efficient equipment.
- **Transport:** start work to develop a new Sustainable Mobility Policy Action Plan for 2026-2030, review the National Ports Policy to encourage decarbonisation of maritime transport and to support offshore renewables, and continue to deliver the Destination Charge Point Scheme for electric vehicle users.
- **Agriculture:** support reduced reliance on chemical fertiliser ([60% grant-aided nutrient storage scheme launched](#)) and look at measures to encourage the use of [protected urea](#).
- **Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry:** undertake a mid-term review of the [Forestry Programme 2023-2027](#) and review the possibility of having the 2030 target for 30,000 hectares (ha) more bog rehabilitated increased.
- **Marine Environment:** prepare Ministerial Guidelines for competent authorities on Designated Maritime Area Plans (DMAPs) and improve the integration of ocean climate data into the aquaculture and fisheries sectors in the context of climate adaptation planning.
- **Local Government:** support local authorities in implementing their [Decarbonizing Zones \(DZs\)](#) through the national DZ Advisory Group and develop local authority climate action plan stakeholder and sectoral reports.
- **Circular Economy and Other Emissions:** report on historic mine waste as a source of [critical raw materials](#) and develop a national exploration programme for critical raw materials.

- **Adaptation:** publish a [climate change risk assessment](#) and develop the second round of [sectoral climate adaptation plans](#) for various sectors including tourism, biodiversity, water quality, communications networks and flood risk management.

Progress made in the 2024 Climate Action Plan

The CAP24 [Progress Report Q3 & Q4 2024](#) was published in April 2025. Examples of completed actions from 2024 and 2023 include:

- **Agriculture:** [National Biomethane Strategy](#) published.
- **Transport:** [DART+ South West Railway Order](#) application submitted and approved, and [DART+ Coastal North Railway Order](#) submitted.
- **Electricity:**
 - [South Coast Designated Maritime Area Plan for Offshore Renewable Energy \(SC-DMAP\)](#), and
 - [Offshore Renewable Energy Technology Roadmap](#) both published.
- **Buildings:** develop pilot programme for solar photovoltaic (PV) provision in schools. Solar panels have now been installed in over 1,000 schools and the [Solar for Schools](#) programme has been extended to all schools in the country.
- **Industry:** [Roadmap for Decarbonisation of Industrial Heat](#) published.
- **Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry:** Implement new [Forest Strategy 2023-2030](#) and [Implementation Plan](#).
- **Cross-cutting actions:**
 - [Local Authority Climate Action Plans](#) adopted,
 - Successful implementation of Deposit Return Scheme with [almost one billion plastic bottles and aluminium cans collected and recycled](#) in the first year, and
 - [Second National Adaptation Framework](#) published.

The overall implementation rate for CAP24 is 64% with 80 of 125 actions completed over the year. Of the 26 legacy CAP23 actions remaining, eight were completed in 2024 ([Department of the Taoiseach, 2025](#)).

Legacy actions from 2024 and 2023 (identified in the CAP25 Annex of Actions) not yet complete include the development of a new levy on single-use packaging for disposable cups for cold drinks, publication of the Marine Protected Areas Bill and publication of a General Scheme of a Bill to regulate geothermal energy.

Contact:

Houses of the Oireachtas
Leinster House
Kildare Street
Dublin 2
D02 XR20

www.oireachtas.ie

Tel: +353 (0)1 6183000

Twitter: @OireachtasNews

Library & Research Service

Tel: +353 (0)1 6184701

Email: library.and.research@oireachtas.ie