

Just Transition  
Commission of Ireland  
Coimisiún na hÉireann  
um Aistriú Cóir

# Introductory Report of the Just Transition Commission of Ireland 2025



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# What do we mean by a “just transition”

A “just transition” can be understood as a “fair change”. This change is to a world where climate change no longer happens on a large scale. We want to make sure this transition is fair and just so that nobody is left behind.

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## Who is the Just Transition Commission

The Just Transition Commission of Ireland was established in late 2024 to advise the Irish Government on the social impacts of how we go about mitigating climate change.



We are not on track to reduce our emissions in line with existing commitments. We will need to accelerate existing efforts as well as take critical and courageous decisions as a country, ensuring the transition is fair.

Ali Sheridan,  
Chairperson



## Why we need just transition in climate action



Ireland stands at a pivotal moment in its journey to climate neutrality - one filled with unprecedented opportunity. The Commission believes that by placing fairness and inclusion at the centre of climate policymaking, Ireland can not only overcome challenges but also build strong public support and unlock the full potential of the climate transition.

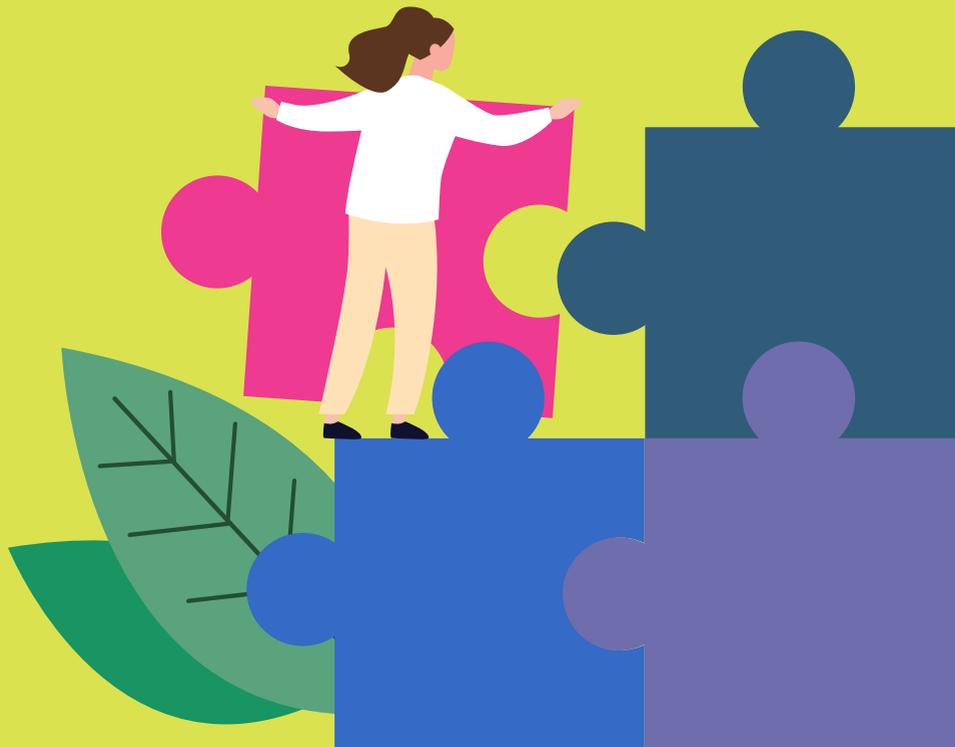
Meeting Ireland's limits on emissions, demands a bold, society-wide transformation.

Amid the challenges of rising living costs, now is the time to ensure that climate action lifts people up, rather than leaves them behind.

If we approach this transition with intention and care, the benefits will be transformative – empowered communities, reduced costs, warmer homes, better public transport, restored nature, stronger rural economies and a more resilient society.

# How can we make sure the right systems are in place to deliver a fair climate transition?

A successful just transition depends on input from multiple departments and non-state actors, but without clear coordination, efforts risk becoming fragmented and ineffective.



Ireland has only a **few short years left**



to achieve a **51% reduction in emissions by 2030**, yet we are not on track.



The **EPA projects** that Ireland will **exceed its first carbon budget** (2021–2025) by between **8 to 12 Mt CO<sub>2</sub>eq**

Ireland's Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) published the first National Climate Change Risk Assessment (NCCRA), identifying four urgent priority risks for the next five years: extreme wind, coastal erosion, flooding, and heat.

Urgent and substantial action is needed to meet our legally binding targets.

Only a planned transition can be a fair transition. Without clear, sector-specific pathways to 2030 and 2050, it will be impossible to coordinate the structural changes needed to reduce emissions while safeguarding social and economic equity.

# How do we keep track of progress and make sure a just transition is really happening?

The **Just Transition Principles Framework** provides an initial structure to guide a fair transition.

There is also a clear need to monitor and evaluate our progress towards a just transition. An indicators framework could support the monitoring aspects of this process e.g. the number of people who get free energy upgrades on their homes, or the number of people whose jobs are impacted by change to capture the benefits or temporary disadvantages of the transition process.

The journey to a climate neutral society will not impact everyone equally. Some will face greater social and economic disruption, particularly those reliant on carbon-intensive industries or in areas vulnerable to climate change. Certain groups such as women, migrants, lone parents, disabled people, people on low incomes, and Members of the Travelling Community are likely to be disproportionately affected. In addition, people's circumstances determine the level of climate action they can take. More work is needed to accurately identify and support those most at risk.

An intersectional approach to considering just transition offers a valuable framework to improve understanding of how different systems of power, such as gender discrimination, economic inequality, and social class structures overlap to shape unique experiences of climate risk. A just transition must take these overlapping factors into account, ensuring that policies are inclusive, targeted, and responsive to the diverse realities of affected communities.

The Government should prioritise the development of data systems to collect key information on just transition issues.

The **Just Transition Principles Framework** sets the main considerations for policymakers to go through when designing and implementing a new policy, for example;

- Is the policy evidence-based and integrated: do we know who's impacted, who is vulnerable to change, who is negatively impacted?
- How can we support people to have the right skills to participate in and benefit from change?
- Do we know the cost implications of the policy on people?
- Are people most impacted consulted on decisions?

# How can we improve engagement and communication to support a just transition?

## Avoiding overemphasis on individual responsibility

It is important to ensure a balanced dialogue among all parts of society, avoiding placing too much focus on individual actions as the primary solution to climate change, and instead addressing its root causes.

Effective climate action requires shared accountability, where governments, industries, and institutions play their part alongside individuals.

By broadening the conversation, we can create fairer, more effective solutions that reflect the lived realities of all groups in society.

## Rural populations as a distinct group

To address the unique challenges faced by rural communities, highlighted recently by Storm Éowyn,

there is a need to engage rural populations as a distinct group, separate from farming, coastal, or Midlands communities.



# Recommendations

## Recommendation 1:

The Commission recommends that the Government **create a strategy that explains its vision for a just transition to a climate-neutral economy**. This strategy should identify those most at risk and show how the transition will benefit society.

## Recommendation 2:

The Commission recommends **setting targets for various government departments** around a just transition **and track progress** toward a climate-neutral economy.

## Recommendation 3:

**Establish Just Transition Indicators** to support the monitoring and evaluation of our progress towards a just transition e.g the number of people who get free energy upgrades on their homes.

## Recommendation 4:

To plan fair climate action, we must clearly understand who is vulnerable. This means looking beyond general economic groups and specifically **identifying people who are at risk** due to their job sector, where they live, and how different factors combine (intersectionality) so we don't miss anyone who needs help. A (hypothetical) example of intersectionality is rural women living in coastal communities: they might experience both captive car usage (no other means of transport available to them), are exposed to the impacts of extreme weather and bound by care responsibilities.

## Recommendation 5:

**Map and review available data** and **address gaps** in collecting key just transition data through collaborative monitoring efforts.

## Recommendation 6:

**Improve the National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA)** in terms of accessibility, affordability, accountability, and use of findings.

## Recommendation 7:

**Just transition messaging** and communication around climate action **should be inclusive**.

### The National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA)

The National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA) consists of four streams of engagements: a national survey on climate, the national youth assembly on climate, a national climate stakeholder forum, and meetings for researchers and policy professionals for information exchange on behavioural science.





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