

**Just Transition  
Commission of Ireland  
Coimisiún na hÉireann  
um Aistriú Cóir**

# **Just Transition Commission of Ireland**

*Progress Update April 2026*



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# Chair's Foreword

Ireland stands at a pivotal moment in its climate transition. Decisions taken now will shape not only how the country meets its climate obligations, but how the transition is experienced in people's daily lives.

This moment comes at a time when many households are already under sustained pressure. Energy poverty persists, housing affordability continues to strain families and communities, and wider cost-of-living challenges are shaping everyday choices. Social isolation and uneven access to services further compound these pressures in many parts of the country.

At the same time, the impacts of climate and biodiversity breakdown are increasingly evident. More frequent and intense storms, flooding, and strain on infrastructure and local services are no longer distant risks but lived realities.

These intersecting challenges cannot be treated as separate from climate action. How Ireland approaches the climate transition will influence whether existing inequalities are reinforced or whether the transition contributes to greater fairness and resilience. A climate response grounded in equity and inclusion offers an opportunity not only to reduce emissions, but to strengthen social cohesion and build a safer and more resilient Ireland for all.

Since its establishment, the Just Transition Commission has worked to place fairness at the core of Ireland's climate response, as the concept of a just transition has gained increasing prominence in climate discussions.

***Around the world, governments are recognising that climate action will not succeed unless people are at its heart, unless change is experienced as fair, inclusive, and grounded in real opportunity.***

This Update assesses progress to date, highlights ongoing governance gaps, outlines practical steps to

embed fairness, and sets the context for further sectoral work to follow.

Through conversations with people and communities affected by change, the Commission has gained insight into the lived realities of the impacts of a changing climate as experienced by these groups. We heard a readiness to act, but also frustration about unclear pathways, concerns about fairness, rising costs, and uncertainty about whether the transition will genuinely lead to better lives.

Uncertainty persists not only about the direction and pace of climate action, but also about who it is intended to benefit and support. This lack of clarity risks eroding confidence at a time when public trust and shared understanding are essential. For the transition to be regarded as fair, it must be grounded in honest dialogue about the choices and trade-offs involved. That means designing climate policy with people from the outset, especially those most affected, so that decisions reflect lived realities and communities can see how their input shapes outcomes.

The transition ahead is not only about reducing emissions. It is an opportunity to shape the kind of society we want to become. Climate action can mean warmer homes and lower bills, better public transport and safer streets, thriving rural livelihoods and restored nature, new skills and good jobs, and a renewed sense of shared purpose. But opportunity alone is not enough, it must be matched by decisive and sustained action.

On behalf of the Commission, I want to thank everyone who contributed their time, insight, and experience to our work to date. We look forward to building on this work in the period ahead.



# About the Commission

The Just Transition Commission was established in May 2024 as an advisory body to Government. Commissioners were appointed by Government in late 2024 for a three-year term (2024-2027). The Commission is composed of representatives nominated through the five recognised pillars of social dialogue:

- Environmental
- Agriculture
- Community and Voluntary
- Trade Union
- Employer

In addition, independent experts are appointed to provide specialist expertise in areas including human rights and equality, skills development, rural and community development, social inclusion, the green economic transition, and youth perspectives.

This composition is intended to ensure that a range of perspectives are reflected in the Commission's advice and that the public voice is represented in the development of just transition policy.

## Secretariat support

The Commission would like to thank the Secretariat of the Just Transition Commission for their ongoing support and contributions. The Secretariat is provided by the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment by Greta Szabo, Michael Keegan, Rónán Stokes and Conor Reynolds.

The Commission would like to extend its sincere appreciation to everyone who engaged with its work programme and attended in-person or online meetings with Chair and Members or otherwise engaged with the Commission throughout 2025. The Commission are grateful for all the support, advice, insights, first-hand experience and expertise provided.

The Commission would also like to thank retired Commissioner Séamus Boland for his work on the Commission and wish him all the best in his new role as President of the European Economic and Social Committee. The Commission would also like to welcome its newest member Brian Flynn.

## About this publication

This publication provides an update on the Commission's activities and learnings over the past year. It builds on the *Introductory Report (2025)* and reflects analysis, engagement, and initial explorations undertaken as part of the Commission's work programme.

The focus of this update is on governance, social dialogue, and the integration of just transition considerations within Ireland's broader climate framework. The Commission has initiated work across specific sectors and cross-cutting areas; the outputs from this analysis will be issued in due course.

# Executive Summary

## Context: Why fairness matters now

Fairness is a key determinant of public acceptance of policy worldwide. It must therefore motivate policy- and decision-makers when designing new measures and initiatives, and it is what citizens, communities, and stakeholders increasingly expect from Government action, alongside a clear and concerted strategic vision.

This is why the Commission advocated for a just transition as a strategic lens to long-term climate action planning in its *Introductory Report* (2025). This Update reiterates that message and reflects on progress to date in integrating just transition considerations into Ireland's climate policy framework, and identifies the structural changes required to move from principle to practice.

Over the past year, the Commission has worked to deepen engagement, explore and build on existing evidence base, and help move the idea of a just transition from principle to practice. The Commission has begun its work exploring just transition across sectors, alongside cross-cutting governance and social dialogue issues. Through this work, the Commission engaged with a range of stakeholders across regions and sectors, listening to those affected by change and those shaping it.

In its reviews, the Just Transition Principles Framework provided a lens to explore how just transition considerations are integrated into policy design and strategic planning. This framework offered a consistent structure for engagement with government officials, policy experts, academia, and practitioners, guided by the following questions:

- Are policies and strategies based on evidence in terms of their socio-economic impacts? Are just transition considerations included in strategic planning?
- Do policies and strategies account for the skills that will be impacted by change and the skills that will enable people to participate in the future net zero economy?
- Do policies and strategies account for the cost of the transition, or whether costs are shared fairly and equitably? Are they exacerbating existing inequalities?
- Are policies and strategies built on social dialogue and participation of those most impacted?

## Key findings

### 1. Fairness is widely recognised but not yet systematically embedded

While equity considerations appear across policy documents, no consistent operational framework is evident to ensure that fairness shapes climate decision-making across all departments.

Climate ambition is clearly set out in law. However, the pathway to delivery, and how costs and benefits are distributed, remains insufficiently defined.

## **2. Governance structures lack clarity and coordination**

Just transition remains unevenly integrated across departments, with unclear responsibility and limited accountability mechanisms.

As a horizontal policy area introduced in 2021, it requires clearer mandates, measurable outcomes, and stronger cross-government coordination.

The forthcoming National Just Transition Strategy represents a critical opportunity to clarify roles and embed a coherent approach.

## **3. The socio-economic evidence base remains underdeveloped**

Ireland models greenhouse gas emissions pathways in detail. By contrast, there is no similar overarching comprehensive framework to assess:

- Who bears the costs of climate policies
- Who benefits the most
- Which regions and sectors are most exposed
- Where new employment pathways may emerge

Without systematic socio-economic analysis, fairness risks being addressed retrospectively rather than built into policy design from the outset.

## **4. Climate action must be reframed around societal benefit**

There is a need to reframe climate action away from siloed policy measures that are perceived as being for the environment alone, toward changes that deliver clear societal benefits and demonstrable improvements to health, wellbeing, and quality of life. This requires a stronger emphasis on understanding and communicating the socio-economic costs and benefits of climate policies, so that shared benefits become a central focus of action without compromising emissions reduction goals.

A just transition can deliver:

- Lower household costs
- Warmer and healthier homes
- Improved air quality
- More accessible and reliable transport
- Thriving regional communities and local enterprise
- Secure employment through new skills and enterprise

Making these benefits visible, and transparently communicating trade-offs, is central to sustaining public confidence.

## **5. Participation structures require strengthening**

Meaningful engagement is foundational. A just transition cannot be delivered to people and communities, it must be built with them.

Stakeholders expressed willingness to participate, but raised concerns about consultation fatigue, weak feedback loops, and limited evidence that engagement shapes outcomes.

The evolution of the National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA) presents an opportunity to strengthen inclusion, regional balance, and structured feedback mechanisms.

## Strategic opportunities in 2026–2027

Three forthcoming milestones offer significant opportunity:

- **National Just Transition Strategy**  
To clarify departmental responsibility, strengthen governance, and embed measurable fairness outcomes.
- **Social Climate Plan under the EU Social Climate Fund**  
To direct targeted supports to vulnerable households while strengthening implementation capacity to ensure climate action is delivered effectively, fairly, and at scale.
- **EU Presidency**  
Ireland's upcoming EU Presidency also provides a platform to position just transition at the centre of European climate governance.

## Immediate priorities

To strengthen credibility and accelerate delivery, action is required now to:

- **Ensure that just transition is fully integrated into the Climate Action Plan process**, with fairness built into planning, delivery, monitoring, and accountability mechanisms.
- **Use the development of the National Just Transition Strategy to mandate cross-government ownership and strengthen delivery**, ensuring that all Departments with responsibility for sectoral emission ceilings acknowledge their role in delivering a just transition, are adequately resourced, and are supported by a strengthened socio-economic evidence base.
- **Strengthen the National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA)** to ensure structured, inclusive, and consequential participation, with clear feedback mechanisms and meaningful engagement of impacted and vulnerable groups.
- **Embed structured and inclusive participation**, ensuring engagement is accessible, evidence-based, and demonstrably influential in shaping policy decisions.
- **Leverage Ireland's EU Presidency** to demonstrate leadership in delivering climate action and to position just transition at the centre of European climate governance.
- **Implement the Social Climate Plan** under the EU Social Climate Fund to direct targeted supports to vulnerable households while strengthening capacity to deliver climate action effectively and fairly.

## Conclusion

A just transition is not a parallel objective to climate action. It is the foundation for durable climate ambition.

Ireland's climate targets are clear. The challenge now is coherence, delivery, and visible fairness as climate policy is put into practice. Embedding just transition across governance structures, strengthening evidence, and ensuring meaningful participation will determine whether climate action is not only effective in reducing emissions, but fair in its impacts and enduring in its public support.

# Commission Activity at a Glance

## Establishment and structure

- Establishment approved by Government in May 2024
- Members appointed in October 2024
- Commission comprises 11 members, including an independent Chair
- Representation spans the five pillars of social dialogue: environmental, agriculture, community and voluntary, employer and trade union
- Five additional independent experts provide cross-cutting expertise

## Work programme 2024-2027

- Assess workforce impacts of Ireland's green transition to 2050
- Strengthen integration of the Just Transition Principles across climate policy
- Advance local and community-led transition, with a focus on engagement with vulnerable groups
- Define a national framework of just transition indicators to track progress over time

## Progress and activity (to date)

- 9 Commission meetings convened
- 2 thematic subgroups established and operational
- 3 research projects commissioned to inform evidence-based recommendations
- Introductory Report published, setting out scope and approach
- Engagement with over 80 stakeholders through roundtables, field visits, surveys and bilateral meetings
- Initial sectoral analysis undertaken in agriculture and transport
- Finance examined as a cross-cutting enabler of transition
- Recommendation issued to the National Dialogue on Climate Action to strengthen integration of Just Transition considerations in national climate engagement processes
- Preliminary findings published to inform development of a National Just Transition Strategy

# 1. Ireland's Climate Transition: Fairness in Focus

Ireland's climate ambition is anchored in our legally binding emission limits, carbon budgets and sectoral emission ceilings. The challenge ahead is to ensure this ambition translates into fair, people-centred outcomes by focusing on the lived realities of people's lives and livelihoods.

Climate risk, nature loss, and social inequality are intensifying, yet so too is Ireland's understanding that fairness, solidarity, and shared purpose must guide our response. As Ireland enters a critical implementation phase for climate action, the opportunities to embed a genuinely just transition have never been greater or more necessary, given the scale and speed of change now required.

Since its establishment, the Commission has sought to bridge the distance between national ambition and lived experience, between policy commitments that define Ireland's climate response and the realities of communities, workers, and families experiencing transition in real time.

The publication of the Commission's *Introductory Report* in June 2025 set out initial and urgent recommendations needed to make this possible. Those recommendations on critical issues including social dialogue, governance, funding, and evidence base, remain central to delivering a fair and effective climate transition.

## Intersecting environmental and social challenges

The insights gathered through the Commission's work sit within a national context that is itself at a crossroads. Ireland has made important advances in areas such as renewable energy<sup>1</sup>, nature restoration<sup>2</sup>, and sustainable transport planning<sup>3</sup>, yet the overall picture remains uneven.

The Environmental Protection Agency has confirmed that Ireland is off track to meet its legally binding 2030 emissions targets<sup>4</sup>. The European Environment Agency has described Irish nature as being in a "very poor state", warning that "economic

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<sup>1</sup> Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (2025), Minister O'Brien welcomes results of national auction for new onshore wind and solar energy project: <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy-and-the-environment/press-releases/minister-obrien-welcomes-results-of-national-auction-for-new-onshore-wind-and-solar-energy-projects/>

<sup>2</sup> National Parks & Wildlife Services (2025), Minister O'Sullivan launches RestoreNature.ie to support public engagement with Ireland's Nature Restoration Plan: [https://www.npws.ie/news/minister-o%E2%80%99sullivan-](https://www.npws.ie/news/minister-o%E2%80%99sullivan-launches-restorenatureie-support-public-engagement-ireland%E2%80%99s-nature)

[launches-restorenatureie-support-public-engagement-ireland%E2%80%99s-nature](https://www.npws.ie/news/minister-o%E2%80%99sullivan-launches-restorenatureie-support-public-engagement-ireland%E2%80%99s-nature)

<sup>3</sup> Department of Transport (2025), Transport Minister and government agencies welcome MetroLink Railway Order: <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-transport/press-releases/transport-minister-and-government-agencies-welcome-metrolink-railway-order/>

<sup>4</sup> Environmental Protection Agency (2025), Ireland's Greenhouse Gas Emissions Projections 2024-2055: <https://www.epa.ie/publications/monitoring-->

growth continues to come at the expense of the ecosystems that sustain it”<sup>5</sup>. Stark social indicators demonstrate that inequality continues to deepen: energy arrears and poverty figures remain high, and child poverty persists at unacceptable levels<sup>6</sup>.

As inequality deepens, differences in how social groups experience climate impacts, and in the resources available to respond, become more pronounced. Analysis shows that higher-income groups are responsible for a disproportionate share of emissions, while lower-income households are often more exposed to climate impacts and have less capacity to respond<sup>7</sup>.

These trends unfold against a global backdrop of environmental limits being breached. The impacts are increasingly visible: flooding, drought, and storm damage are no longer abstract projections but lived realities.

In Ireland, the human and financial costs of Storm Éowyn<sup>8</sup>, Storm Amy<sup>9</sup> and Storm Claudia again exposed how climate breakdown places significant pressure on households, communities and public services, stretching already strained systems and local recovery capacity.

## Policy coherence and public confidence

Across consultations with over 80 stakeholders including Government Departments, agencies, academia, civil society, and impacted groups, the Commission heard concerns about mixed signals across Ireland’s climate policy landscape. Stakeholders pointed to tensions between sectoral emissions reduction commitments and

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[assessment/climate-change/air-emissions/irelands-greenhouse-gas-emissions-projections-2024-2055.php](https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/assessment/climate-change/air-emissions/irelands-greenhouse-gas-emissions-projections-2024-2055.php)

<sup>5</sup> European Environment Agency (2025), State of Environment Report – Ireland: <https://www.eea.europa.eu/en/europe-environment-2025/countries/ireland>

<sup>6</sup> Community Foundation Ireland (2025), Poverty, income inequality and living standards in Ireland: Fifth Annual Report: <https://www.communityfoundation.ie/resource/poverty-income-inequality-and-living-standards-report-2025/>

<sup>7</sup> Oxfam Ireland (2025), Rebalancing the Scales: Confronting carbon inequality in Ireland:

developments that appear to increase activity or demand in emissions-intensive areas. The continued expansion of energy-intensive infrastructure and rising national energy demand were frequently contrasted with the experience of households and small businesses facing high energy prices, energy poverty, and concerns about grid capacity. The Commission also heard uncertainty expressed about decisions that may shape Ireland’s long-term climate action, including those relating to the development of fossil-fuel-linked infrastructure. Delays in the delivery of public transport, active travel infrastructure, and effective land-use planning were cited as slowing progress in areas that could both reduce emissions and improve quality of life.

These tensions feed into a broader national conversation about fairness and the common good. Increasingly, people are questioning whether the costs and responsibilities of climate action are being shared equitably. As these concerns deepen, it gives rise to a critical question:

***Is climate action being designed to improve people’s lives, reduce inequality and ensure that the benefits of transition are shared fairly across society?***

Without a clear connection between climate policy and everyday wellbeing and fairness, and tackling existing inequalities, public confidence will weaken. If people cannot see tangible benefits, in affordability, accessibility, or quality of life, support for the transition will falter.

<https://www.oxfamireland.org/press/someone-in-irelands-richest-1-emits-14-times-more-carbon-than-someone-in-the-bottom-50-of>

<sup>8</sup> Irish Times (2025), Storm Éowyn was most expensive weather event in history for Irish insurers, costing €301m: <https://www.irishtimes.com/business/2025/08/15/storm-eowyn-was-most-expensive-event-in-history-for-irish-insurers-final-bill-shows/>

<sup>9</sup> RTE (2025), Farmers facing significant costs after Storm Amy flooding: <https://www.rte.ie/news/2025/1004/1536869-farmers-storm-amy/>

## **Building a fair and trusted transition**

Yet this risk can be reversed. A fair and forward-looking transition can help address not only the climate crisis, but also the interconnected challenges of inequality, cost of living, and health.

A genuinely just transition offers far more than emissions reductions; it offers a pathway to materially improve people's lives. It can reduce household bills through energy efficient homes, create warmer and healthier living conditions, improve air quality and ease pressure on healthcare and social systems. It can deliver cleaner, more reliable and more accessible public transport, enhance access to green spaces, and support stronger, more connected communities. A just transition also has the potential to create meaningful and secure employment through new skills, local enterprise, and diversified rural and regional economies.

It is, in short, a social contract for change, one that aligns environmental ambition with human dignity, shared prosperity, and a renewed sense of collective purpose. Like any social contract, it depends on shared ownership, with people able to participate in shaping solutions, not only responding to decisions already made.

Achieving this, however, requires more than aspiration. It demands proactively planning transitions in parts of society that are already being impacted by climate change so that livelihoods are protected, communities are supported, and resilience is strengthened.

## 2. Principles to Practice: Embedding Just Transition in Policy and Governance

Delivering a just transition requires governance that is coordinated, transparent, and accountable. A just transition cannot be achieved through fragmented or ad hoc action; it must be intentionally designed into how Ireland plans, funds, and measures climate policy, ensuring that the way climate action is delivered is as fair as the outcomes it seeks to achieve.

There remains a need for stronger cross-government coordination, clearer mandates, consistent monitoring, and a more structured approach to ensure that fairness becomes a defining feature of how Ireland governs its transition.

### Continued need for stronger implementation structures

Effective governance is the foundation of a just transition. The way Government structures its decisions, allocates resources, and measures progress determines whether the transition will be fair, trusted, and enduring. Ireland's transition will succeed only if it is governed coherently, with clear accountability, adequate resourcing, and consistent integration of fairness into every stage of climate policy.<sup>10</sup> This should include routine, early participation and co-design with affected workers, communities and sectors, so that policy choices reflect lived realities and implementation barriers are addressed up front.

The Commission has a mandate to explore the integration of just transition considerations into

national and sectoral policies. As just transition is still a relatively young horizontal policy introduced in 2021, having the right structures and supports in place are crucial to enable policymakers to integrate them effectively.

In its *Introductory Report* (2025), the Commission recommended that the Just Transition Principles be actively embedded across all levels of climate policymaking, supported by stronger institutional capacity and long-term investment. However, while some steps have been taken, Ireland's overall governance approach still lacks the coherence, clarity, and consistency needed to fully deliver a just transition.

The Commission reiterates its call for all Departments with sectoral carbon budgets to review their relevant policies to ensure the

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<sup>10</sup> We know that fairness plays an important role in policy acceptance, including the need for burden sharing. Please see for example: Huber R., Wicki, M. & Bernauer T. (2020) Public support for environmental policy depends

on beliefs concerning effectiveness, intrusiveness, and fairness: <https://www.research-collection.ethz.ch/server/api/core/bitstreams/4ad51f96-a4bf-4221-82a8-2d2b45c66624/content>

principles of evidence-based decisions, fairness and equity, and social dialogue are implemented and support those most vulnerable or impacted by the transition.

## Progress and gaps in climate governance in 2025

Climate Action Plan 2026, the Government's principal mechanism for coordinating climate action, has yet to be published. This delay creates uncertainty regarding how Ireland's legally binding targets will be achieved and how fairness considerations will be integrated into implementation.

The Commission has found that the Just Transition Principles Framework<sup>11</sup>, published in 2021 to guide government departments and agencies, has seen little to no formal uptake in policymaking or programme design. Without active use of the framework, and in the absence of a clear mandate or accountability mechanism, fairness remains inconsistently applied, and the principles that should shape policy development are often overlooked in practice.

The Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment's 2025–2028 Statement of Strategy commits to the development of a National Just Transition Strategy. This represents a significant and timely opportunity. However, the Strategy must not operate in isolation. Its effectiveness will depend on its structural design and its integration into existing climate governance processes, particularly the Climate Action Plan.

The Commission considers it essential that the Strategy functions as a mechanism to embed the Just Transition Principles across Government, requiring departments to apply them systematically in the design, implementation, and review of climate-related policies.

Engagement undertaken by the Commission suggests that just transition is often viewed as an accompanying theme rather than an operational lens. Elements such as job creation, skills development, and equity considerations may be present, but they are not consistently situated within a comprehensive and forward-looking framework for assessing socio-economic impacts.

Given the cross-cutting nature of climate action, responsibility for embedding fairness cannot rest with a single department. Whole-of-government ownership, supported by clear mandates, practical guidance, and integrated reporting mechanisms, will be essential to ensure that ambition is matched by delivery.

For the forthcoming Strategy to be credible, it must articulate a clear and shared vision for just transition, reaffirm and strengthen the Just Transition Principles, and provide practical guidance on how they should be applied.

Taken together, these gaps and opportunities highlight a pivotal moment. The development of the National Just Transition Strategy and the forthcoming Climate Action Plan represent a near-term opportunity to move from principle to practice, to embedding fairness as a defining feature of Ireland's climate governance rather than as an adjunct to it.

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<sup>11</sup> The just transition framework is made up of four principles:

1. An integrated, structured, and evidence-based approach to identify and plan our response to just transition requirements
2. People are equipped with the right skills to be able to participate in and benefit from the future net zero economy.
3. The costs are shared so that the impact is equitable and existing inequalities are not exacerbated.
4. Social dialogue to ensure impacted citizens and communities are empowered and are core to the transition process.

## Understanding transition risks, Impacts, and opportunities

A credible just transition requires far greater clarity about the risks, impacts, and opportunities associated with climate action. While Ireland models its carbon emissions pathways<sup>12</sup> in detail, the socio-economic dimensions of transition remain comparatively underdeveloped.

Based on its analysis and engagement, the Commission has found that there is still no comprehensive and routinely applied framework for identifying who is most exposed to climate impacts, how the costs of climate policies are distributed, and where opportunities for resilience, renewal, and new employment pathways are most likely to emerge.

The Climate Law provides that people and communities negatively impacted by the transition should be supported. However, the tools and analytical frameworks required to identify affected vulnerable cohorts and assess the scale and distribution of impacts remain underdeveloped. This constrains the capacity to anticipate consequences, design proportionate supports, and integrate fairness considerations at an early stage of policy development.

These gaps are particularly visible in sectors and regions facing structural change, including areas where economic activity, community identity, and environmental pressures intersect. In such contexts, climate action cannot be assessed solely in terms of emissions reduction. Without a comprehensive understanding of short-, medium-, and long-term impacts, there is a risk that policy measures may unintentionally deepen existing inequalities or overlook opportunities to strengthen local economies and social cohesion.

Addressing these challenges will require greater analytical capacity, improved data on socio-economic vulnerability, and stronger cross-government coordination. Building a robust evidence base, one that examines the risks of inaction, the distributional effects of climate measures, and the potential for innovation and new employment pathways, will be central to ensuring that Ireland's transition is grounded in real-world impacts rather than assumptions.

Providing that clarity will be central to sustaining confidence and ensuring that the transition is seen as both ambitious and just.

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<sup>12</sup> Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (2022), Sectoral Emission Ceilings: <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy->

[and-the-environment/publications/sectoral-emissions-ceilings/](https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy-and-the-environment/publications/sectoral-emissions-ceilings/)

# 3. Social Dialogue to Shape a Just Transition

Social dialogue is the foundation of fairness and legitimacy. With meaningful engagement, Ireland can build trust, improve the effectiveness of policy delivery, and ensure that climate action works for people in a way that is understood, supported, and shared.

## Representing the public voice

A just transition cannot be delivered to people; it must be built with them. Fairness begins with voice. People are more likely to support change when they understand how decisions are made, how costs and benefits are shared, and how their perspectives influence outcomes.

Social dialogue must therefore remain a permanent feature of Ireland's transition governance, but it now requires significant strengthening to be fully fit for purpose, with earlier and more continuous engagement, clearer communication of trade-offs, genuine opportunities to co-design solutions, and transparent feedback demonstrating how public input shapes decisions and outcomes. Over the past year, the Commission engaged with individuals, community groups, sectoral representatives, and practitioners across the areas it explored. Through roundtables, visits, workshops, and bilateral meetings, the Commission sought to hear directly from those experiencing the effects of transition and from those working daily to deliver change on the ground.

Across these engagements, participants consistently expressed a willingness to help shape Ireland's transition and a desire to be treated as genuine partners in co-creating solutions. There was broad recognition of the need for climate action. At the same time, people stressed the importance of honesty, structured and accessible processes, and

clear evidence that their voices meaningfully influence decisions and outcomes.

Consultation fatigue emerged as a recurring concern. Participants spoke of frustration with processes that appear disconnected from tangible change, noting that policy can often feel as though it happens to them rather than with them. In a context where the direction and implications of climate action are not always clearly articulated, weak feedback loops can heighten uncertainty and erode trust.

While the Commission has sought to broaden participation and reach a wider range of perspectives, it recognises that it cannot substitute for comprehensive, Government-led engagement. Ensuring that all voices, particularly those least heard or most affected, are meaningfully included will require sustained and coordinated effort across departments and agencies.

Communities and organisations need stable support to engage meaningfully. Many groups told the Commission they lack the time, funding, or expertise to keep participating in consultations that lead nowhere. Building a national participation infrastructure, that includes training, facilitation, translation, and accessibility supports would make engagement more consistent and fair.

Accessibility is essential. Meaningful dialogue is only possible when everyone can take part. This includes accessible venues and formats, plain-language

materials, and proactive efforts to address barriers related to disability, caring responsibilities, cost, language, and geography. Applying universal design principles and offering multiple participation options, written, visual, and oral, will be important to ensuring engagement does not privilege those already well represented.

Strengthening Ireland's capacity for participation is therefore essential. Participatory models such as Conundrum<sup>13</sup> (localised shared mobility planning), Youth Assemblies<sup>14</sup> and gender-focused consultations demonstrate that structured, well-supported engagement can improve both legitimacy and outcomes.

The Commission will continue to reflect these insights in its work and to advocate for engagement processes that are structured, inclusive, and visibly consequential.

## The future of the National Dialogue on Climate Action

In meeting its advisory mandate, the Commission has provided detailed input to the National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA), the Government's primary mechanism for public engagement on climate action. The NDCA, comprising of initiatives such as Climate Conversations, the National Climate Stakeholder Forum, the National Youth Assembly on Climate, and a Behavioural Science Advisory Group,<sup>15</sup> is currently undergoing a review with a view to being redesigned to strengthen participation, improve feedback loops, and ensure that public input meaningfully informs policy.

Since its establishment, the NDCA has played an important role in raising awareness and opening space for engagement. As Ireland moves further into a period of significant climate implementation, however, awareness alone is no longer sufficient. Engagement structures must demonstrate how

participation influences decisions and how fairness considerations are embedded within policy design.

The Commission is concerned about the lack of clarity regarding the next phase of the NDCA, and the uncertainty this creates about its future direction, purpose and impact. Some engagement processes appear to have slowed, and there is limited transparency about how previous inputs have shaped policy outcomes. This uncertainty risks weakening trust and accountability at a time when clarity of direction is particularly important.

The Commission has emphasised that the next phase of the NDCA presents an opportunity to embed a clearer just transition lens within national engagement structures. This includes strengthening attention to inclusion, regional balance, and distributional impacts, and ensuring that the overall purpose, design, and evaluation of the NDCA account for those most vulnerable or most affected by the transition.

To inform this work, the Commission established a dedicated subgroup to develop strategic advice on the NDCA's future direction. The advice addressed both the overarching structure of the NDCA and its individual components, including Climate Conversations, the National Climate Stakeholder Forum, and the National Youth Assembly on Climate. In doing so, the Commission highlighted the need for stronger local-level engagement, clearer feedback mechanisms, and practical measures to address barriers to participation such as childcare, travel, language, and accessibility.

Strengthening the NDCA will require not only revised formats but also clearer methodologies for identifying and including those who are vulnerable to climate impacts or disproportionately affected by transition costs. Embedding evidence-based approaches to inclusion and participation will be central to ensuring that national dialogue reflects the lived realities of those most affected.

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<sup>13</sup> CONUNDRUM (2024), A community mobility strategy for Enniscorthy: <https://citiesgovernancesustainability.eu/wp-content/uploads/2024/11/Conundrum-Strategy-Master-FA-Digital.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Department of Children, Disability and Equality (2025), National Youth Assembly of Ireland: <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-children->

[disability-and-equality/campaigns/national-youth-assembly-of-ireland/](https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-children-disability-and-equality/campaigns/national-youth-assembly-of-ireland/)

<sup>15</sup> Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment (2021), National Dialogue on Climate Action: <https://www.gov.ie/en/department-of-climate-energy-and-the-environment/publications/national-dialogue-on-climate-action-ndca/>

The evolution of the NDCA therefore represents a significant opportunity to strengthen the connection between public voice and climate decision-making, and to reinforce the legitimacy of Ireland's transition in the years ahead.

## Reflections from Commissioners



*Dr. Evan Boyle is an independent expert on the Commission and a postdoctoral researcher in UCC*

Engaging the citizenry is a crucial aspect of delivering climate action in a timely and fair way. This has been represented in policy documents such as the Climate Action Plan and the Programme for Government. There are different levels of participation which community engagement can take: informing, consulting, and collaborating. Some key lessons on community engagement in the Irish context include meeting people where they are at, tapping into local networks, the importance of transparency, and facilitating and resourcing communities to lead action locally. Community engagement has a key role to play in any attempts towards a just transition.

## Just Transition Commission Recommendations to the NDCA

1. The Commission recommends that the NDCA develop a strategic plan that defines the goals and purposes for each NDCA component, with measurable just transition outcomes identified throughout.
2. The Commission recommends for the new iteration of the NDCA to develop a methodology for the evidence-based identification and inclusion of vulnerable and most impacted groups that can be replicated in all future engagements.
3. The Commission recommends the NDCA to engage in constructive local-level dialogue with communities and must consider the barriers faced by the most vulnerable in terms of engagement. The next iteration of the NDCA must also consider factors such as childcare, travel, languages and the accessibility of tools used.
4. The Commission calls for the NDCA to incorporate the recommendations of the Climate Change Advisory Council's 2024 Agriculture Review into the new iteration of the process and develop a just transition dialogue with farmers, rural workers and communities, as the appropriate departmental vehicle to progress this initiative.

# 4. Strategic Opportunities in 2026 - 2027

Ireland enters a pivotal period in 2026–2027, with three major opportunities to advance a fair, people-centred transition: the development of a National Just Transition Strategy, the implementation of the EU Social Climate Fund through the development of a Social Climate Plan for Ireland, and Ireland’s upcoming Presidency of the Council of the European Union. Together, these milestones offer a key opportunity to shape how just transition is delivered both at home and across Europe.

## **The National Just Transition Strategy: Embedding fairness and opportunity across climate policy**

The development of the National Just Transition Strategy presents a critical opportunity to move from high-level commitment to consistent, system-wide implementation of just transition across Ireland’s climate policy framework. Informed by the Commission’s preliminary findings, the following priorities are identified to ensure the Strategy provides clear direction, strengthens governance, and supports effective delivery:

**A clear and shared vision** should be defined to ensure consistent understanding and application of just transition across Government and stakeholders.

**Embedding across Government and the Climate Action Plan** should ensure just transition is treated as a core, cross-cutting requirement.

**A strong mandate, governance, and accountability framework** should require all Departments to apply Just Transition Principles, with delivery, reporting, and measurable outcomes embedded within the Climate Action Plan.

**Reaffirming and strengthening the Just Transition Principles in practice** should include a greater emphasis on impacts on vulnerable groups, supported by tools such as impact assessments, policy guidance, and structured approaches to consultation and co-design.

**A proportionate and meaningful approach to stakeholder engagement** should be embedded throughout the Strategy and Climate Action Plan processes, ensuring continuous dialogue with the five pillars of social dialogue and affected and vulnerable groups, supported by clear tools, guidance, and evidence from the Commission.

## **The Social Climate Plan: A chance to deliver fair, targeted support**

The Social Climate Fund represents the EU’s most significant investment to date in protecting vulnerable households and small businesses from the costs of the climate transition. The allocation of these resources will be carried out through the development of a Social Climate Plan. For Ireland, this is an opportunity to:

**Direct resources where they are most needed** supporting low-income, rural, and car-dependent households to access affordable, low-carbon

mobility; enabling warmer homes through energy-efficiency upgrades; and expanding community transport and locally led climate initiatives.

**Embed social dialogue into programme design** engaging communities, local authorities, and civil society to ensure supports reflect lived realities, including the needs of carers, people with disabilities, and those facing energy or transport poverty.

**Build long-term capability** using investments from the Social Climate Fund to strengthen local delivery structures, advisory services, and community capacity so that benefits last beyond the funding cycle.

**Close evidence gaps** by establishing stronger social indicators, mapping vulnerability, and building a clearer understanding of who is most affected by transition costs and who stands to benefit.

With thoughtful design, the Social Climate Plan can help Ireland reduce inequalities while speeding up climate action, showing that fairness and ambition can reinforce each other.

## **Ireland's Presidency of the Council of the European Union: A platform for leadership**

The EU Presidency provides a platform to place just transition at the centre of European climate governance and to demonstrate leadership in people-centred climate action, at a moment when just transition is becoming central to global climate governance<sup>16</sup>.

The Presidency offers an opportunity to:

**Champion a people-centred climate agenda** spotlighting fairness, public participation, and community resilience as essential components of credible climate action across the EU.

**Strengthen EU-wide frameworks on just transition** including shared metrics for social impacts, better alignment of climate finance with

equity objectives, and stronger protection for vulnerable regions and sectors.

**Advance innovative financing models** such as community energy, ecosystem-services, and blended finance that supports local enterprise and resilience.

**Lead conversations on adaptation justice** particularly around flooding, the insurance gap, and fair access to climate-resilient infrastructure.

The Presidency also provides a platform to share Ireland's emerging experience, positive and challenging, with integrating just transition into national climate governance.

The choices made now will shape not only Ireland's transition, but how just transition is understood and delivered across the EU in the decade ahead.

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<sup>16</sup> At COP30, agreement to establish a Just Transition Mechanism was reached.

## Reflections from Commissioners



*Dr Diarmuid Torney is Independent Expert, Director of the DCU Institute for Climate and Society and Associate Professor in the School of Law and Government at DCU*

Ireland's climate transition is likely to have significant implications for the country's workforce. As we progress down the road of decarbonising our society and economy, it is really important that we keep workers at the forefront of our considerations.

As someone who works in a university, I have a particular interest in education and training. Our education system has taken important steps in recent years to begin to integrate a focus on climate and sustainability. For example, a new Leaving Certificate course on Climate Action and Sustainable Development is being rolled out this year. Universities and colleges around the country are delivering an increasing array of relevant courses. But the education system can and must do more, including by focusing on the full spectrum of education – from early years to further and higher education.

Analysing the workforce implications of Ireland's climate transition is a key priority for the Commission. We are particularly focused on which sectors of the economy will be most affected – both positively and negatively – and how these impacts are distributed across the country. We have commissioned a major piece of research to tease this out, and we will be returning to the topic in future reports of the Commission.

# 5. Priority Areas for Progress

## 1. Fully integrating just transition into the Climate Action Plan

Ensuring that just transition is fully integrated into the Climate Action Plan process remains an immediate priority. Fairness must be embedded within planning, delivery, monitoring, and accountability mechanisms, alongside emissions targets.

This requires that the Just Transition Principles inform policy design from the outset and that measurable social outcomes are incorporated into annual reporting and review processes.

## 2. Mandating cross-government ownership through the National Just Transition Strategy

The development of a National Just Transition Strategy presents an opportunity to strengthen whole-of-government ownership and delivery.

All departments with responsibility for sectoral emission ceilings should clearly acknowledge their role in delivering a just transition, be supported by appropriate resourcing, and operate within a strengthened socio-economic evidence framework. A more robust evidence base, including just transition indicators, will enable early identification of vulnerable sectors, regions, communities, and socio-economic groups, ensuring that support is targeted.

## 3. Strengthening the National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA)

The next phase of the NDCA offers a specific institutional opportunity to embed just transition more systematically within Ireland's climate dialogue.

Reform of the NDCA should focus on structured processes, improved regional balance, clearer feedback mechanisms, and meaningful engagement of impacted and vulnerable groups. Participation must be demonstrably influential in shaping policy, rather than purely consultative.

## 4. Embedding participation across climate policy

Beyond the NDCA, structured and inclusive participation should be embedded across climate policymaking more broadly.

Climate action should be underpinned by dialogue and co-design with those most affected, consistent with Principle 4 of the Just Transition Framework. Engagement processes should be accessible, evidence-based, and supported by practical guidance to ensure that fairness is built into decision-making at all stages.

## 5. Leveraging strategic EU milestones

Ireland's EU Presidency and the implementation of the Social Climate Plan under the EU Social Climate Fund provide significant near-term opportunities to demonstrate delivery.

The Social Climate Plan offers a mechanism to direct targeted supports to vulnerable households and strengthen local capacity. The EU Presidency provides a platform to place just transition at the centre of European climate governance and to demonstrate leadership in people-centred climate action.

Together, these milestones offer a critical window to translate principles into visible progress.

# 6. Looking Ahead

The Commission's work to date reinforces a central conclusion, while the concept of a just transition is included in Ireland's climate legislation and policy frameworks, it has not yet been systematically integrated into climate governance and implementation.

In the year ahead, the Commission will continue to fulfil its mandate under its Terms of Reference, with a focus on strengthening how Just Transition Principles are applied across Ireland's climate governance framework.

This will include examining the workforce implications of Ireland's pathway to climate neutrality by 2050, assessing how existing climate policies reflect the Just Transition Principles, and advising on how to strengthen the local and community dimensions of climate engagement, particularly for vulnerable and impacted groups.

The Commission's work is taking place within a wider international context in which just transition is becoming more firmly embedded in global climate governance. International agreements and financing mechanisms are placing greater emphasis on fairness, labour market impacts, and social protection within climate action. As these approaches continue to evolve through multilateral negotiations and regional instruments, Ireland's experience will both influence and be influenced by international practice. Aligning domestic governance with emerging standards will be important in ensuring credibility, consistency, and leadership.

Ireland's climate transition is entering a decisive phase. The ambition set out in legislation is clear and significant. However, it is not yet possible to say with confidence that the transition will be fair in its design, its delivery, or in how its costs and benefits are shared.

The success of Ireland's climate transition will not be measured by emissions alone. It will be measured by whether people feel included, protected, and able to benefit from the changes ahead.

The Commission remains keen to continue hearing directly from individuals, communities, workers, and organisations affected by the transition. Insights from those experiencing change in real time are essential to grounding policy in lived reality and identifying emerging risks and opportunities.

As our work progresses, we will seek to deepen engagement with impacted and vulnerable groups, ensuring that their perspectives inform our analysis and advice to Government.

# 7. Supporting Information

## List of Key Recommendations from Introductory Report

### **Recommendation 1: The Commission recommends that the Government create a strategy that explains its vision for a just transition to a climate-neutral economy.**

There is a need for a strategic approach to put just transition at the heart of climate action, and to go beyond energy transitions, siloed or reactive approaches, and business as usual. This strategy should identify those most at risk and show how the transition will benefit society, especially the people most affected.

### **Recommendation 2: Strengthen the governance structure and deliverables associated with just transition planning in climate action.**

To support the implementation of the Just Transition Principles Framework and demonstrate how it is an integral part of climate policy, just transition needs to become a more cohesive component of the annual climate policy framework. The Commission recommends setting just transition targets alongside sectoral actions to guide national and local efforts 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 that accounts for those most affected or vulnerable to the transition.**

A robust governance structure, potentially supported by the Just Transition Commission, can ensure ownership, transparency, and accountability in the implementation of these indicators.

### **Recommendation 4: Build an understanding of vulnerabilities associated with climate action.**

Identifying vulnerable groups, not just through broad economic categories, but by considering sector-specific and geographic vulnerabilities and

intersectionality is required to ensure these groups are not overlooked.

### **Recommendation 5: Map and review available data and address gaps in collecting key just transition data through collaborative monitoring efforts.**

The absence of robust data hinders the ability to carry out meaningful, evidence-based impact assessments across sectors and the identification of those most affected.

### **Recommendation 6: Improve the National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA) in terms of accessibility, affordability, accountability, and use of findings.**

To ensure the overall purpose, inputs and outputs, and methods of engagement associated with the NDCA account for the most vulnerable, address root causes, and that the voice of impacted cohorts is amplified in future climate policy.

### **Recommendation 7: Integrate just transition into all messaging and communication around climate action.**

All Government departments should work proactively to:

- Better understand current awareness and interpretations of just transition across society.
- Integrate just transition messaging across all climate communication efforts.
- Create practical guides and toolkits to help communities, businesses, and other stakeholders understand their role.
- Use inclusive, accessible language that speaks to diverse audiences and reflects their real-life experiences.
- Offer meaningful ways to hear and understand people's lived experiences.

# Just Transition Commission Membership



**Ali Sheridan, Chair**

Independent Expert – appointed October 2024



**Oisín Coghlan**

Environment Pillar Representative – appointed October 2024



**Conor Minogue**

Business Pillar Representative – appointed October 2024



**Ryan McKinney**

Trade Union Pillar Representative – appointed October 2024



**Dr. Diarmuid Torney**

Independent Expert – appointed October 2024



**Suresh Kumar**

Independent Expert – appointed October 2024



**Dr. Evan Boyle**

Independent Expert – appointed October 2024



**Tanya Ward**

Independent Expert – appointed October 2024



**Michelle Murphy**

Community and Voluntary Pillar Representative – appointed October 2024



**Vanessa Kiely O'Connor**

Agriculture Pillar Representative – appointed October 2024



**Brian Flynn**

Independent Expert – appointed March 2026

## Glossary

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### **Carbon Budget Programme**

Ireland's Carbon Budgets provide 5-year economy-wide legally-binding ceilings that set out the maximum amount of greenhouse gas emissions that are permitted to be released. Carbon Budgets are prepared by the Climate Change Advisory Council and submitted to Government for approval. Please also see: Sectoral Emission Ceilings.

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### **Climate Action Plan (CAP)**

The CAP aims to provide a decarbonisation pathway to 2030 consistent with Carbon Budgets and an overall aim to achieve climate neutrality in Ireland by 2050.

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### **Climate Crisis**

The climate crisis refers to the complex systemic challenges posed by climate change as the defining crisis of our time.

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### **Climate Law**

Climate Law stands for the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act of 2015 and Climate Action and Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act of 2021.

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### **Climate Neutrality**

A sustainable economy and society where greenhouse gas emissions are balanced or exceeded by the removal of greenhouse gases. Achieving climate neutrality by 2050 is Ireland's National Climate Objective.

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### **Energy Poverty**

While there is not one single definition of energy poverty, it is understood to be multidimensional and inextricably linked to other forms of deprivation. This is supported by research carried out by the ESRI which finds that low income is the main determinant of energy poverty. Additionally, high risk groups include renters, single parents, households with women as main income earners, people out of work, those living in older buildings, rural households and individuals with health issues.

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### **Greenhouse Gas Emissions**

Greenhouse gases are a group of gases that prevent heat escaping into space, raising the surface temperature of the planet. Human-induced increase in their presence in the atmosphere contribute to anthropogenic climate change and global warming.

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<b>Just Transition Principles Framework</b>	<p>The Just Transition Principles Framework is made up of four principles:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An integrated, structured, and evidence-based approach to identify and plan our response to just transition requirements;</li> <li>• People are equipped with the right skills to be able to participate in and benefit from the future net zero economy;</li> <li>• The costs are shared so that the impact is equitable and existing inequalities are not exacerbated; and</li> <li>• Social dialogue to ensure impacted citizens and communities are empowered and are core to the transition process.</li> </ul>
<b>National Climate Objective</b>	<p>Ireland's Climate Law, sets out the national climate objective whereby the State shall, so as to reduce the extent of further global warming, pursue and achieve, by no later than the end of the year 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy.</p>
<b>National Dialogue on Climate Action (NDCA)</b>	<p>The NDCA is the government's main forum for public engagement on climate action incorporating Climate Conversations, the National Climate Stakeholder Forum and the National Youth Assembly on Climate.</p>
<b>Sectoral Emission Ceilings</b>	<p>Sectoral Emissions Ceilings refer to the total amount of permitted greenhouse gas emissions that each sector of the economy can produce during a specific time period, within the limits of Ireland's Carbon Budget.</p>
<b>Social Climate Fund</b>	<p>The Social Climate Fund is a new EU fund that will help make the green transition fair and inclusive. It is the first EU Fund with the explicit purpose of alleviating energy and transport poverty by supporting those who are most affected by rising energy and transport costs as Europe moves towards climate neutrality. The fund aims to ensure that no one is left behind in the transition to a low-carbon economy.</p>
<b>Social Climate Plan 2026-2032</b>	<p>Ireland is required by EU law to develop a national Social Climate Plan. This mandatory plan, co-funded from the Social Climate Fund, will set out measures to cushion the impact, on those who may struggle the most, of rising energy and transport costs as Europe and Ireland moves towards climate neutrality.</p>
<b>Transport Poverty</b>	<p>For the purposes of the Social Climate Fund, transport poverty is defined as individuals' and households' inability or difficulty to meet the costs of private or public transport, or their lack of or limited access to transport needed for their access to essential</p>

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socioeconomic services and activities, taking into account the national and spatial context.

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# Terms of Reference – Just Transition Commission

## 1. Establishment

- 1.1 The Just Transition Commission (Commission) is established on an administrative basis by Government Decision 30 April 2024.
- 1.2 The mission of the Just Transition Commission is to support the Government in its responsibility to provide that Ireland's transition to the National Climate Objective has regard to the requirement for a just transition to a climate neutral economy, which endeavours, in so far as practicable, to maximise employment opportunities, and to support people and communities that may be negatively affected by the transition. The Commission will be a public voice on planning for just transition, leading in developing a shared understanding, and identifying the challenges, solutions and opportunities for Ireland.

## 2. Functions of the Just Transition Commission

- 2.1 The functions of the Just Transition Commission are:
- **To prepare and analyse strategic evidence-based research in relation to just transition:** to anticipate and inform long-term climate policy and investment planning, including focusing on the potential impacts, risks and opportunities arising from the climate transition for different sectors of both the economy and society, including the social, economic and employment impacts of this change and the policy responses required.
  - **To evaluate, advise, and comment on** policy planning and implementation and progress on the application of Ireland's just transition principles into national and sectoral climate policies, based on high-quality, evidence-based analysis.
  - **To provide strategic advice and engagement on just transition:** the Commission will support the National Dialogue on Climate Action, as well as any dialogues on climate/just transition matters within individual sectors, in engagement on the implementation of climate programmes agreed by Government.
  - **Sectoral or regional engagement and road-mapping:** the Commission may, on its own initiative, or at the request of the Government, undertake proactive engagement with particular communities, sectors or regions facing specific acute or long-term challenges arising from the transition, and advise Government on strategic co-ordination by the agencies of the State, on any interventions or targeted supports which may be helpful to address the challenges being faced by that community, sector or region.

## 3. Work Programme

- 3.1 The work programme for the first term of the Commission shall include, but may not be limited to:
- An analysis of the potential impacts on Ireland's workforce, and policy implications, of achieving the statutory 2050 climate neutrality objective; including examining the potential overall employment implications, which sectors of the economy may be most adversely impacted, which sectors may be expected to see significant employment growth in the decades ahead; and an examination of the geographic distribution of these impacts.

- An assessment of the degree to which climate action policies already reflect the principles of Ireland’s Just Transition Framework, taking account of the policy framework and sectoral emissions ceilings set out in the Climate Action Plan, and advice on any opportunities for strengthening both the principles themselves and the application of the principles into sectoral policies.
- Advice on the strengthening of the local and community dimensions of just transition and strengthening engagement with vulnerable cohorts into Ireland’s climate engagement activities, in particular the National Dialogue on Climate Action, as well as sectoral dialogues.
- Recommendations on a set of just transition indicators to support measurement of progress, over time, in achieving a just transition.

#### **4. Membership and Chairperson**

- 4.1 The number of Members, appointed on a part time basis only, shall be comprised of not fewer than eight and not more than ten ordinary Members (excluding the Chair). Appointments to the Commission may be for a term of up to three years, renewable once.
- 4.2 The Minister who holds responsibility for climate policy shall make appointments to the Commission based on objective criteria, with due regard for the benefits of diversity, including on the basis of gender. The composition of the Commission should be balanced, so that the views of members represent a diverse group of stakeholders.
- 4.3 The Minister may appoint one member each from the five pillars of social dialogue, comprised of the Agriculture pillar, the Community and Voluntary pillar, the Employer pillar, the Environment pillar and the Trade Union pillar.
- 4.4 The remaining members shall be recruited through a competitive process to supplement delegated members and to represent a range of expertise and perspectives including human rights and equality, skills development, rural and community development, social inclusion, the green economic transition, and youth perspectives.
- 4.5 The Chair shall be appointed by the Minister either from amongst the appointed members or through a separate competitive recruitment process.
- 4.6 The Chair shall be independent of the Government and is responsible for determining the work programme of the Commission, in consultation with the Members, and for the discharge of this work programme, in conjunction with the secretariat.
- 4.7 The Minister may decide to appoint one or more deputy chairs from amongst the Members as required, subject to ultimate accountability remaining with the Chair.
- 4.8 Members and the Chair shall be suitably qualified persons, (for example, but not limited to individuals who have a direct experience of policy issues from a business or societal perspective or in academia).
- 4.9 All appointments to the Commission shall be approved by the Government.
- 4.10 Commission Members shall receive a fee and expenses.

## **5. Independence of Commission**

- 5.1 The Commission is an independent body and shall perform its duties in an objective, neutral and fully independent manner, free of any expressed ideology or political position.
- 5.2 The Commission shall have functional autonomy and shall be responsible for the management and direction of its own work programme, save where requested by Government to undertake proactive engagement with particular communities, sectors or regions facing specific acute or long-term challenges arising from the transition. The work programme will be shaped by the Chair, in consultation with Members and with the assistance of its Secretariat.
- 5.3 The Commission shall develop a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government, through the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, outlining the operational relationship between the Commission and the Government, including the provision of secretariat, financial and operational resources to the Commission.
- 5.4 The Commission shall produce independent high-quality, evidence-based analysis on just transition challenges and opportunities and shall report to the Government through the Minister with responsibility for climate policy and make this analysis available to the public to inform policy development across government.

## **6. Advisory Representatives**

- 6.1 The following Departments may attend Commission meetings in an advisory capacity:
  - Department of Agriculture, Food and Marine
  - Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications
  - Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
  - Department of Finance
  - Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
  - Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
  - Department of Public Expenditure, National Development Plan Delivery and Reform
  - Department of Rural and Community Development
  - Department of Social Protection
  - Department of Taoiseach
  - Department of Transport
- 6.2 The Commission may invite additional Government Departments and Agencies to attend Commission meetings in an advisory capacity where appropriate.
- 6.3 When necessary, alternates may attend on behalf of advisory representatives, with the prior agreement of the Chair.

## **7. Relationship with other bodies**

- 7.1 The relationship between the Commission and Climate Change Advisory Council will be subject to a Memorandum of Understanding between the two bodies.
- 7.2 The Commission may coordinate its work programme with other advisory bodies to ensure appropriate complementarity, taking account of the Commission's work programme set out in section 3.

## **8. Meetings and Procedure**

- 8.1 Subject to the requirements of this Section, the Commission shall regulate its own procedures.
- 8.2 The quorum for a meeting of the Commission shall be not less than six members at the meeting.
- 8.3 The Commission will seek to reach decisions by consensus. Where this is not possible, decisions shall be determined by a simple majority of votes of the members present and, if voting is equally divided, the Chairperson shall have a casting vote.
- 8.4 The Chairperson may at any time call a meeting of the Commission or shall call a meeting of the Commission at any time when requested to do so in writing by any five members of the Commission.
- 8.5 Views expressed by the Commission in publications or by any Member of the Commission speaking on its behalf, shall not be understood as representing the views of the Minister who holds responsibility for climate policy or any Member of the Government.
- 8.6 The disclosure of information, except in the exercise of their duties, obtained by any member of the Commission or any committee or consultative group appointed by it, shall be prohibited.
- 8.7 The Commission shall keep the Minister who holds responsibility for climate policy informed of its activities on a regular basis and the Chairperson shall be afforded the opportunity to present the key findings and recommendations of its work to the Minister, at minimum on an annual basis.

## **9. Secretariat**

- 9.1 The secretariat to the Commission shall be provided by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications.
- 9.2 Communication between the Government, Ministers, Government officials and the Commission, save for when the Chair directly engages with such parties, shall be conducted through the Secretariat.

April 2024