



Call for Expert Evidence to support and inform the 2023 Climate Action Plan

To Whom It May Concern,

I write to you in the context of Central Solutions' role as promoting and delivery organisation for a number of national initiatives related to the next Climate Action Plan:-

- The Climate Ready Academy in partnership with Skillnet Ireland
- The Lean & Green Skillnet

We very much welcome the Publication of the 2023 Climate Action Plan and the opportunity to provide feedback and input on one specific area, namely:

- The need for support for skills and competency development in existing firms to help them transition.

The Green Skills Gap

The European Green Deal is expected to create 2.5 million additional occupations requiring specific competencies. However, the growth in green occupations is currently not equaled by a similar growth in the number of professionals with the requisite green skills. Reskilling, upskilling and acquisition of new skills are necessary to promote a fair and just transition, and to ensure that both the current and future workforce possess the right skills and competences. Less than 40% of the 183 countries that have developed plans to implement the agreed actions of the Paris Agreement have included skills provision in their plans, while 77% of surveyed countries have identified skills mismatches that prevent them from capitalising on green economy opportunities despite advances in environmental sustainability nationally.

An analysis of 21 countries around the world in partnership with the European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training showed that skills shortages are already a constraint in the transition to a greener economy¹. In the UK, 75% of senior sustainability professionals think that all jobs will require sustainability skills by 2050, but despite this, 65% of British consumers say that they don't have access to green skills training through their employer.

Upskilling our workforce can be Ireland's best weapon

Ireland has identified the need to invest in upskilling its workforce to optimise the opportunities and strengthen its mitigations against climate change. The fifth pillar of Future Jobs Ireland focuses on 'Transitioning to a Low Carbon Economy' while The 2019 Climate Action Plan specifically identifies the need to develop the new skills required across enterprise to address Climate action.

¹ [Mise en page 1 \(ilo.org\)](#)

“The focus of programmes emphasising management development, start-up, lean productivity improvement, training, marketing and innovation will all increasingly emphasise this urgent agenda for climate resilience in our sectors.”

Similarly, the EPA Research publication, “Charting Ireland's sustainable future: Innovative approaches towards achieving the UN Sustainable Development Goals for enterprises” (2017-SE-MS-8), calls for a national programme of awareness and skills development to help deliver on the government existing commitments under the UN SDGs.

In response to this and the increasing recognition of corporate sustainability as a competitiveness imperative is leading to the professionalisation of Sustainability and the need for brand new workforce development programmes to address the associated skills deficits.

Analysis of 2021 Climate Action Plan

With respect to Talent and Skills Development, Principle 2 of the Climate Action Plan 2021 strives to ensure our people are equipped with the right skills to be able to participate in and benefit from the future net zero economy. The Climate Action Plan 2021 has identified a key action to identify future skills needs points, the result of which was published by the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs in November 2021. Furthermore, skills development requirements have been identified in areas such as further education, renewable energy, bioeconomy, farming and retrofit; all of which are to be commended, for they will make a strong contribution to the goals of the plan.

Recommendations for 2023 Climate Action Plan

However, we believe there is a gap in the delivery of skills and competency development needs across existing enterprises and that addressing this gap is of vital importance to achieving net zero ambitions - of the 50+ actions in the Enterprise section of the CAP 2021, only one action related to skills development.

Through our work, our networks and in particular the recent work of the Climate Ready Academy in upskilling hundreds of organisations and thousands of employees throughout the country to transition to a more sustainable future, we champion the role of business in doing its part to deliver on our national aims.

We see at firsthand, the will, sacrifices and impact that businesses across the country are showcasing to support a better working world but further support is needed to enable them to transition to more sustainable practices.

We believe that further supports are required to complement existing initiatives in order to underpin a Just Transition for all. As well as re-skilling and supports in developing new skills, upskilling of **existing** business to address Climate Action needs to be an area of priority and requires a more specific focus on transitioning these firms. There is a clear need to understand and build the competencies of the current workforce to enable mitigation and adaptation activities. Therefore, a key priority area should be to focus on identifying, leveraging and supporting existing business to transition.

Ends.