Sectoral Emissions Ceilings

Q4: What do you view as the key actions required to ensure the emission reduction targets set out in the Sectoral Emission Ceilings are met?

Individual 1:

Getting public opinion enthused about the making the changes, and changing the negative narrative about reducing emissions.

Q5: What do you view as the main challenges/obstacles to the Sectoral Emission Ceilings being met?

Individual 1:

Vested interests from Agribusiness and the fossil fuel industry.

People's reluctance to change.

Businesses finding the time and resources to make the decisions to find new ways of operating rather than relying on the simpler solution of repeating past strategies.

Carbon Pricing & Cross-Cutting Policies

Q6: Are there any unintended barriers within the planning system that should be addressed at national policy level in order to deliver our climate ambitions?

Individual 1:

Lack of personnel to expedite decisions and appeals.

Slow grid connections for small scale solar and wind projects, making it difficult for small scale electric ity producers to get planning approval.

Q7: What further opportunities exist within our taxation system, beyond measures already implemented and planned, to promote emissions reductions, either on an economy-wide basis, or in specific sectors?

Individual 1:

Housing- incentivise private landlords to insulate rented houses by lowering taxes on higher BER rated properties, and at the same time bring in minimum BER standards of C3 for rented properties. Measures must be taken to stop tenants being evicted during retrofitting, and landlords should benefit by a lowering of taxes rather than a raising of rents.

Business landlords for offices should be given an equal carrot and stick approach.

With rising energy costs, It's better to insulate a lot of houses to C3 than deep retrofitting fewer houses to A2.

The focus must be on reaching those most at risk of energy poverty and those who rely on coal and turf. Don't wait for them to apply to SEAI for a grant, sit down with the likes of the SVP and Age Action to plan a coordinated outreach campaign offering wrap-around supports for retrofitting.

Q9: Are there any significant cross-cutting gaps not previously discussed in Climate Action Plan 21 that need to be addressed?

Individual 1:

There still needs a solution to retrofitting rental properties.

Renewable Gases

Q13: What role does renewable gas have in the power generation sector?

Individual 1:

Bio methane production should be rolled out in rural communities to use slurry and chicken waste, as part of a circular economy.

Biomethane production should use waste products, or biomass crops that only use marginal land, such as raising willow biomass on re-wetted flood mitigation schemes.

Care should be taken that AD methane generation does not have the negative side effect of encouraging more intensive animal production.

Biomethan AD plants should be part of every sewage treatment facility.

Rather than using it to generate electricity, it would be more efficient to use it directly in farm machinery and hard to electrify transport.

Q21: What measures can be taken to decarbonise high temperature heating in industry?

Individual 1:

The deoloyment of Hydrogen for high temperature manufacturing processes,

Q23: How can we encourage the diversification away from products with high levels of embodied carbon, such as traditional cement in construction to lower carbon alternatives?

Individual 1:

Look to Sweden for best practice laminate wooden buildings - they've built an entire town out of plywood.

Ensure that building regulations don't prevent innovative carbon-free products.

Encourage a circular economy with the forestry service to produce timber frame housing that will hold sequestered carbon in the wood for at least a century.

Q24: What role could Carbon Capture and Storage (CCS) have on industry, and what steps would encourage its deployment?

Individual 1:

I don't believe that CCS actually works. Its a unicorn, a pretty idea, but all sightings have turned out to be fakes.

Electricity

Q11: What options are available to increase the penetration of renewable electricity beyond the up to 80% committed to in Climate Action Plan 2023?

Individual 1:

Rooftop solar across ireland - every school and public building should have solar panels, feeding into the grid, either behind the meter, or as a small scale solar farm, with panels on every roof in a housing estate.

All new developements and houses should have solar panels on the roof as standard, and the panels should be oriented for maximum PV production, not minimum cost to developer.

Q12: What can be done to accelerate/facilitate the delivery/deployment of offshore wind and solar PV in particular, in the context of Climate Action Plan 2021 and the REPowerEU ambition?

Individual 1:

Train up more engineers.

Every Local Authority should have an information office to inform, help and guide people through the process of installing solar panels, or setting up community wind farms.

The govt should mount a series of workshops through LAs to counter misinformation about offshore and onshore wind.

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Q14: What role could carbon, capture and storage have in decarbonising our power sector?

Individual 1:

None. It doesn't work, and the few plants that have trumpeted their CCS facilities have quietly switched them off after a year due to the exorbitant cost of running them.

Better not to create the carbon in the first place, rather than spend money trying to capture it afterwards.

Using so called "Blue Hydrogen" from the UK should not form part of Irelands energy policy.

Q15: What other opportunities exist to support the decarbonisation of the electricity sector?

Individual 1:

REsearch should be done into tidal streams and in stream electricity generation, especially for areas that are not connected to the grid, to connect with greenhouses or other local businesses.

Q16: What measures might be taken to improve the resilience of the electricity system to the impacts of climate change?

Individual 1:

A public information campaign showing how to reduce demand of electricity by households and businesses, for example deleting of ancient emails and targetted heating in homes, rather than blanket heating of a whole house.

Q17: What role do you see for electricity storage and demand-side response in providing flexibility to a system comprised of high renewable penetration and in supporting the decarbonisation of the electricity sector?

Individual 1:

A raft of different energy storage systems should be created, and creating Hydrogen storage in the form of salts for emergency convertion to electricity would be something to implement.

The best energy saving is the energy you don't use - legislation should be brought forward to force data centres to implement demand-side response that ensures that only low-energy data processes are run when demand is high. Demand response should not be taken to mean that the response is to fire up a back-up generator.

Q18: What financial incentives are needed to increase renewable generation capacity?

a. To incentivise commercial scale production.

b. To incentivise microgeneration.

Individual 1:

The most important thing is to eliminate the bottlenecks of connection and planning.

The price of grid connection for small scale commercial enterprises needs to come down.

Transport

Q42: What Obstacles exist in the planning system that may prevent greater modal shift from being achieved? Are there specific measures that can be implemented to avoid further forced car dependency or lock-in of unsustainable practices?

Individual 1:

The continued expansion of ribbon developement of houses should e discouraged through planning processes. Planned new houses should have to demonstrate that there is enough housing density to warrant a public bus service, rather than having remote houses that require a car.

Villages and town s should be made user friendly for living, with squares, allotments, parks and places to excercise and socialise your dog. Bizarrely, rural areas have few places to excercise a dog that don't require driving to get there.

Q43: What changes should be considered in relation to the management of Ireland's road network (e.g. reducing speed limits, parking policy, road user/congestion charging) to reduce congestion and support the priorisation of more sustainable modes?

Individual 1:

Speed limits of 100km should be introduced on motorways and lower the speed limits on 80km roads, to cut the carbon cost of driving.

Introduce congestion charging in Dublin, and other cities.

Build a tram network in Galway and Cork. Introduce light railways connecting the city centre with suburbs or with areas in need of regenerating.

Q44: What additional measures should be considered to improve the quality or attractiveness or active mobility solutions as an alternative to private car use (e.g. dedicated lanes, secure bike parking, rest areas).

Individual 1:

County councils that have not used their allocated active travel allowance to build new infrastructure should have the unused amount taken off their transport budgets next year.

Ireland has declared a Climate Emergency - we should start treating it like an emergency. During the second world war, buildings could be requisitioned and govt could build essential infrastructure without appeals processes slowing things down. Perhaps something like that should be considered to prevent a few nervous councillors or selfish residents to block cycle paths that would benefit the whole community.

And decent bicycle parking facilities at stations, with more bicycle spaces on trains.

Q46: What potential do blended working policies or remote working hubs have to help reduce commuting travel and volume of transport emissions?

Individual 1:

Remote working hubs and hot desk offices should be set up in every community to allow for blended working.

Q47: Is the level of transformation required of our transport behaviour patterns well understood and what more can be done to demonstrate the benefits of modal shift? How can the overall impact of wider decarbonisation measures be measured most effectively (e.g. capturing wellbeing impacts, health impacts, liveability, permeability, etc.)?

Individual 1:

During the covid emergency, everyone was told all the time about the daily issues and risks, and we were all well informed, and by and large people were supportive of the measures the govt brought in , because they understand why they were necessary. The same amount of communication has to happen with the climate emergency so that people get behind the measures that are being brought in. Daily updates on news channels or dedicated eco programmes on the how these things are nbenefitting people would be good.

I'd like to see a competition programme like "Irelands Fittest Family" to show the benefits of making low carbon decisions.

Q48: How can EV and other transport grants/supports be more targeted (spatially, demographically) to deliver additional emissions reduction or address distributional impacts in a more equitable manner?

Individual 1:

More, cheaper public transport

The reductions in public transport fares have been popular in Ireland, but Germany's €9-a-month scheme was a runaway success. Trial a similar scheme here for 6 months. Meanwhile, accelerate the roll out of Bus Connects and develop a rural transport plan based on a vision of "every village, every hour".

EV loans in rural Ireland, congestion charges in Dublin

Immediately introduce a state-backed interest-free loan for rural households to buy EVs. Get the most polluting cars, especially SUVs, off our city streets as soon as possible. Introduce a congestion charge in Dublin immediately that escalates by emissions and weight and extend it to other urban areas as more public transport comes on stream.

Q49: What specific actions can government take to help create a robust second-hand market for electric vehicles?

Individual 1:

No new fossil fuel cars from 2026

End the sale of new internal combustion engines (ICE) cars within 3 years. Start by immediately raising VRT on cars based on emissions and weight, so that the highest band is at €5,000 by 2025. Ban the sale of new ICE cars from 2026.

Keep VRT off imported EVs .

Second hand EVs have lower ranges and there is anxiety about the life of batteries. Encourage new industries for re-conditioning used batteries and retro-fitting larger batteries into older EV models, as they can do in Denmark.

Q50: What specific actions can government take to help accelerate or achieve parity in the total cost of ownership between electric vehicles and ICE vehicles?

Individual 1:

Accelerate the rollout of charging points across the country and allow home charging cables to be sunk into channels across public pavements for roadside parking.

Local Authorities should aim to facilitate home charging solutions as much as possible, rather than discouraging them.

Q51: What specific policies can assist in reducing the overall volume of ICE vehicle kilometres driven? Is there further scope to effect a change in the composition of the private car fleet to shift the vehicle mix away from higher emitting classes?

Individual 1:

Ban the sale of higher emitting SUVs unless you can prove that the vehicle is necessary for pulling horseboxes or negotiating difficult rural lanes.

Q52: What specific measures can be applied in the commercial transport sector to encourage or accelerate a change to EVs or to other zero carbon alternatives?

Individual 1:

Waiving congestion charges for electric deliveries, and tax breaks for EV vans.

Research into Hydrogen based fuel mixes for HGVs

Q54: How can the climate costs of home delivery services be mitigated? Should there be a surcharge - depending on the mode of delivery, with cargo bikes and EVs exempt. If this was to be considered, how would transparency around this charging be affected?

Individual 1:

Surcharge is a good idea. Adding a surcharge to non-electric deliveries would help high street shops compete against amazon.

Q65: What opportunities are there to rehabilitate our peatlands and wetlands, and what can be done to realise these opportunities?

Individual 1:

Reduce chemical fertilizers
The key to reducing air, water and climate pollution from agriculture is reducing the use of chemical nitrogen fertilizer, which grew 28% after 2010 to 408,000 tonnes a year. It's fallen this year due to the skyrocketing price of the fossil fuels used to make it. The Government must ensure that chemical fertilizer use does not rise again in 2023 or 2024 and falls to 2010 levels no later than 2025, and continues to decline steadily to less than 200,000 tonnes by 2030.

Rewet peat soils
Reward landowners for active maintenance of ecosystems, including rewetting of agricultural peatlands

Built Environment

Q28: Currently SEAI provides approx. 50% of the grant of retrofit to Landlords, Housing for All commits to introducing a minimum BER for rented properties from 2025 onwards. What further supports can be put in place to address the split incentive when retrofitting rental properties (residential and commercial)?

Individual 1:

Tax breaks for landlords who retrofit, with measures in place that they don't pass on costs in higher rents . Minimum BER ratings for both residential and business properties

Q29: How can we encourage SMEs to upgrade the energy efficiency of the buildings they own?

Individual 1:

A mobile information unit, showing what can be done easily, and a cost/benefit app that can show what financial savings can be made. A scheme like the Carbon Literacy Project in the |UK that gives peer-to-peer information packs to businesses within the same sector.

Q32: Housing for All Commits to 100% funding to retrofit 40% of local authority housing stock to B2 by 2030 at a cost of 1.4 billion euro. How can we further support local authorities to help them deliver on social housing retrofit targets?

Individual 1:

LAs should team up with One Stop Shops to rapidly roll out a basic retrofit of attic and wall insulation to counter fuel poverty, even if it doesn't attain B2.

Q33: In addition to the existing financial supports and policy measures, are there any other incentives/assistance needed to help homeowners upgrade the energy efficiency of their homes?

Individual 1:

A dedicated office in each community helping people to navigate the decisions, with model buildings of each type of local house showing what can be done.

Q34: How could the roll-out of district heating be accelerated and what needs to be done to expand its coverage in Ireland?

Individual 1:

District heating should be paired with Data centres to use their heat.

Q35: Are there any specific obstacles in the planning system that is impeding the rollout of district heating and the national retrofit plan? How can we overcome these barriers?

Individual 1:

There seems to be resistance in ESb Networks to facilitating small scale grid connections.

Q36: What policy levers are needed to encourage and support the retrofitting of shared properties e.g. apartments?

Individual 1:

Group savings schemes that will club together to retrofit an entire building and implement a district heating scheme. Advisors should

Q37: Further to the existing supports financed by carbon tax revenues, how can we protect those who are currently experiencing fuel poverty and those who are at risk?

Individual 1:

Examine the idea of a “Basic Energy Guarantee” as proposed by the New Economics Foundation in the UK and Age Action in Ireland. Every household would get a basic allowance of electricity and gas, at a low rate for everyone and free for older people and welfare recipients. Usage at above that level would be at the very high market rates or more. Aim to have this in place by October 2023.

Q38: What specific measures can be implemented to improve the efficiency of rolling out the National Retrofit Programme?

Individual 1:

Create a method of batch retrofitting, for houses in an area that have same BER, so that houses can be retrofitted at scale, making logistics and costs easier for the insualtion companies. Get the minimum insulation done, like attics and walls, even if it isn't a full retrofit.

Designing an app that neighbours in an area can use to fill in their details of current BER, house age, wall type, current attic insulation, eligibility for fuel allowance etc would help to identify which houses could group together to do a batch retrofit.

Q40: What specific measures would incentivise a greater rate of oil boiler replacement?

Individual 1:

Most people only change their oil boiler when it goes bust, and in an emergency they will simply replace like for like because they don't have time to research new options. Set a date to ban the sale

of new oil boilers by 2030, and introduce an exchange scheme to incentivise changing to heat pumps. Lots of notice needs to be given to to allow people to insulate their homes sufficiently for a heat pump to work.

Most oil boilers are in areas that are not on gas networks, ie, rural aeas, but it might be useful to look into the possibility of district heating schemes in villages, or community wind farm schemes.

Q41: What is the next step for geothermal energy application to the built environment?

Individual 1:

All new build houses and developments should have ground to water heat pumps installed as standard.