



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Public Sector

Climate Action Mandate

Climate Action Plan 2024

Prepared by the Department of the
Environment, Climate and Communications
Gov.ie

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Public Sector Climate Action Mandate

The Public Sector Climate Action Mandate applies to all bodies covered by decarbonisation targets, except for Local Authorities, Commercial Semi-State Bodies, and the School Sector. The mandate highlights the main climate action objectives for public bodies and will be reviewed annually. All public sector bodies are encouraged to avail of the SEAI's Partnership Programme, irrespective of whether the mandate applies or not. Support is available for implementing the mandate and for climate action more generally.

1. Our Targets

- 1.1 Reduce energy related GHG emissions by 51% in 2030.¹
- 1.2 Improve energy efficiency in the public sector by 50% by 2030.
- 1.3 Update Climate Action Roadmaps annually within 6 months of the publication of the Climate Action Plan. Develop Climate Action Roadmaps if none are in place.

2. Our People

- 2.1 Establish and resource Green Teams, reporting to senior management, to become integrated drivers of sustainability in every public sector body.
- 2.2 Nominate a member of the Management Board as the Climate and Sustainability Champion with responsibility for implementing and reporting on the mandate.
- 2.3 Incorporate appropriate climate action and sustainability training (technical and behavioural, including green procurement training) into learning and development strategies for staff.
- 2.4 Organise staff workshops (at least annually) to engage on climate issues, including a focus on decreasing the organisation's carbon footprint.

¹ Target related to energy-related emissions.

2.5 Ensure all senior management (P.O. level or equivalent and above) and members of State Boards,² complete a climate action leadership training course.

3. Our Way of Working

3.1 Report on the following in the Annual Report of the public sector body:

- GHG emissions;
- Implementation of the mandate;
- Sustainability activities;
- Compliance with Circular 1/2020: Procedures for offsetting the emissions associated with official air travel.

3.2 Using SEAI's Public Sector M&R System, public bodies are to report annually on implementation of the individual mandate requirements using a "comply and explain" approach.

3.3 Achieve formal environmental certification for large public sector bodies, such as ISO 50001 (Energy Management Standard) or ISO 14001 (Environmental Management System), with a view to going beyond ISO 14001 to adopting Eco Management and Audit Scheme (EMAS). Specifically:

- 3.3.1 All public sector bodies with an energy spend greater than €2 million per annum to achieve ISO 50001 certification by end-2024;
- 3.3.2 All remaining public bodies to implement energy management programmes as per SEAI's energy management guidance (S.I. 426 of 2014) and report to SEAI annually on its M&R system.

² Members of state boards of state bodies that are subject to the Public Sector Climate Action Mandate.

3.4 Green Public Procurement

- Implement Green Public Procurement, using the EPA Green Public Procurement Guidance and criteria/Office of Government Procurement's online Green Public Procurement Criteria Search tool as resources.³

3.5 Construction

- 3.5.1 Specify low carbon construction methods and low carbon cement material as far as practicable for directly procured or supported construction projects from 2023.
- 3.5.2 Adhere to the best practice guidelines for the preparation of Resource and Waste Management Plans for construction and demolition projects for directly procured or supported construction projects from 2024.⁴

3.6 Food Waste

- 3.6.1 Measure and monitor the food waste generated on premises from 2024, using a standardised approach to food waste measurement set out in the EPA Protocol/Pathway.
- 3.6.2 All new contract arrangements related to canteen or food services, including events and conferences, to include measures that are targeted at addressing food waste, with a specific focus on food waste prevention and food waste segregation.

3.7 Paper

- 3.7.1 Review any paper-based processes and evaluate the possibilities for digitisation so it becomes the default approach. Eliminate paper-based processes as far as is

³ GPP Guidance for the Public Sector: <https://www.epa.ie/publications/circular-economy/resources/green-public-procurement-guidance.php>. GPP Criteria Search: <https://gppcriteria.gov.ie/>

⁴ EPA Best Practice Guidelines for the preparation of resource & waste management plans for construction and demolition projects: <https://www.epa.ie/publications/circular-economy/resources/CDWasteGuidelines.pdf>

practicable. Where paper must be procured, ensure that recycled paper is the default.

3.7.2 Measure and monitor paper consumption.

3.8 *Water*

- Provide suitable drinking water refill points for all staff and in any premises accessed by the public and measure and monitor usage of the refill points.

3.9 *Single Use*

- 3.9.1 Cease using disposable cups, plates and cutlery in any public sector canteen or closed facility, excluding clinical (i.e., non-canteen healthcare) environments, and in publicly funded advertising or broadcasting, where feasible.
- 3.9.2 Progressively eliminate all single use items within the organisation and from events organised, funded, or sponsored.

3.10 *Other Materials*

- 3.10.1 Support Ireland's Producer Responsibility Initiatives in the collection and recycling of products.⁵
- 3.10.2 Use waste collection services that are segregated into a minimum of 3 streams – residual/general waste, recycling waste and organic/biowaste.

4. Our Buildings and Vehicles

4.1 Promote the use of bicycles (including push bikes, electric bikes, and cargo bikes) and shared mobility options as an alternative to car use among employees and visitors by creating and maintaining facilities (both inside and outside of buildings) that support such

⁵ Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR): <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/63441-extended-producer-responsibility/>

options, including secure and accessible bicycle parking, shared mobility parking, and charging stations, as appropriate, with a view to achieving the National Transport Authority's Smarter Travel Mark.

4.2 Phase out the use of parking in buildings that have access to a range of public transport services and active/shared mobility options for the majority of staff/visitors, while providing that sufficient accessible parking is maintained for those with physical mobility issues.

4.3 Display an up-to-date Display Energy Certificate in every public building that is open to the public to clearly show energy use.

4.4 The public sector will not install heating systems that use fossil fuels after 2023, in (1) new buildings, and (2) "major renovation" retrofit projects as defined in the Energy Performance of Buildings Directive (EPBD) unless at least one of the following exceptions applies:

The fossil-fuel use is only through using electricity from the grid.

- There is no technically viable non-fossil alternative (generally only related to applications for a purpose other than space heating).
- The installation of a renewable space heating system would increase final CO₂ emissions.
- The fossil-fuel use is provided for backup, peaking, or operational purposes (and makes up less than 10% of annual heating energy).
- Where the direct replacement of existing fossil fuel heating is required for an emergency maintenance purpose.

4.5. In relation to existing buildings:

- 4.5.1 Public sector bodies and sectoral groups with a large estate should commence a deep retrofit of at least one building in 2024 in pursuit of the 2030 51% emissions reduction target. The planning of deep-retrofit building measures will be undertaken at sectoral level for homogenous sectors, e.g., in relation to the Civil Service, the OPW will plan the deep retrofit of Government Departments' building stock.
- 4.5.2 Public sector bodies and sectoral groups with a large estate should develop a portfolio building stock plan (including determining the buildings necessary for their activities), in line with guidance published by SEAI, by end 2024 to mobilise large scale programmes towards meeting the Climate Action Plan targets.
- 4.5.3 As part of the building stock plan, large public sector bodies and sectoral groups with a large estate should undertake data gathering and consider the long term (to 2050) retrofit key performance indicators to upgrade their building stock to Nearly Zero Energy Buildings or Zero Emission Buildings as outlined in the EPBD proposal and recast Energy Efficiency Directive.
- 4.5.4 Small public sector bodies should include a basic building stock analysis or statement as part of their Climate Action Roadmap, in line with the guidance published by SEAI.

4.6 Procure (purchase or lease) only zero-emissions vehicles from the end of 2022, enabling Ireland to go beyond the requirements of the EU Directive, amending Directive 2009/33/EC on the promotion of clean and energy-efficient road transport vehicles (EU Directive 2019/1161, the Clean Vehicle Directive) and act as an international leader in this area. An exception applies where the vehicle is exempt under European Communities (Clean and Energy-Efficient Road Transport Vehicles) (Amendment) Regulations (S.I. 381 of 2021).⁶

⁶ Major manufacturers have indicated their commitment to increasing the availability of e-trucks to the market by mid-decade. However, it is acknowledged that it may not be possible to procure the desired number or variety of zero emission heavy-duty vehicles until the second carbon budgetary period (2026-2030). Depending on market developments, public sector bodies should, at the least, ensure to procure (purchase or lease) 'Clean Vehicles,' in accordance with the EU Clean Vehicles Directive, to meet their heavy-duty vehicle targets.

Public sector procurement contracts for delivery and haulage should specify zero-emissions vehicles where possible.

As an enabler for the switch to zero-emissions vehicles and meeting Climate Action Plan targets, in 2024 public sector bodies with a vehicle fleet should develop a plan for installation of charging infrastructure in relevant locations. The plan should align installation of infrastructure with timelines for decarbonisation of the body's fleet. The plan should be included in the body's Climate Action Roadmap.