



**Framework**  
**for**  
**Climate Change Bill 2010**



Comhshaol, Oidhreacht agus Rialtas Áitiúil  
Environment, Heritage and Local Government



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# Minister's Foreword

Playing our part in the global effort to tackle climate change will be one of the most important things Ireland as a country will do over the next half a century.

Climate change is the single greatest challenge facing humanity, and it will only be through concerted effort on the part of all countries that we can hope to meet that challenge successfully.

But taking the steps to tackle climate change will also be vitally important for the future prosperity of Ireland. We know that the global economy is being constrained by the peaking of oil supplies.

A sustainable, prosperous future for Ireland will be absolutely dependant on our ability to move quickly and successfully to a low carbon economy and society.

This is why this Government believes a climate change law to be so important. It will act as the bedrock on which this country's long-term response to climate change will be based.

Today the Government is publishing a framework for that legislation, which maps out the aims of the legislation and its principal provisions.

We want to make sure that this legislation will not just enshrine the policies and principles to reflect the core national objective of combating climate change in the pursuit of a sustainable, low carbon economy, but will also act as a driver towards achieving that objective across all sectors of society in Ireland.

This framework document clearly sets out the Government's ambitions for the Climate Change Bill and is a first step in the process of developing the Bill. I will be publishing the Heads of the Bill before the end of the first quarter of 2010 which will outline the detailed provisions of the proposed Bill.

From its formation the Government has recognised the urgency of the challenge of Climate Change and has been very ambitious in its response to this challenge. This ambition is reflected in the Framework document through the setting of the 3% annual emission reduction target outlined in the Programme for Government and extending this out to 2020. Ireland has already committed to an 80 – 95% target for 2050 in the context of the



EU's proposals in the international climate change negotiations and we are now proposing in the Framework document that a specific target of 80% reduction in net emissions by 2050 be enshrined in legislation.

Any form of transition requires effective management in order to succeed and I believe that the Climate Change Bill will be the correct vehicle to manage our move to a low carbon economy. I want to ensure that this Bill not only results in Ireland meeting its emission reduction targets but that it aids us in our pursuit of being a world leader in the Green Tech sector.

This legislation, and the provisions and targets that will flow from it, should not be seen as a cost. They will undoubtedly pose challenges, but with those challenges comes an enormous opportunity to build a long-term sustainable society, economy and environment for all.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Simon Harris', is positioned below the text.

Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1** The Fourth Assessment Report of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change shows that only a narrow window of opportunity exists to address the serious negative effects of climate change. By 2050 substantial global emissions reductions of at least 50% below 1990 levels are needed with additional global emissions reductions beyond that towards a zero carbon economy by 2100. The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) has therefore estimated that developed countries will have to make reductions of 80-95% by 2050. Ireland, as a developed country with among the highest per capita emissions in the world, must lead rather than follow in the battle against climate change.
- 1.2** The UNFCCC and European Union policy and legislation provide the international framework for collective action on anthropogenic climate change. The proposed new national legislation will provide the overarching legal framework for the national effort both to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions and to put in place sectoral policy, practice and systems to adapt to climate change impacts.
- 1.3** Putting in place a definite legal structure to meet Ireland's emissions reduction targets will spur job creation. By legislating for emissions reduction, Government will provide the certainty that's needed for businesses to invest and create jobs serving new and expanding sectors as we move to becoming a low-carbon society.
- 1.4** The Government has decided that the proposed Climate Change Bill will enshrine principles and policies towards –
- underpinning the national effort in combating climate change as a core national priority in the pursuit of a sustainable, low carbon economy;
  - integrating principles outlined in the National Climate Change Strategy 2007 - 2012 for all relevant development activity;
  - confirming the statutory obligation on Government to ensure that Ireland complies with its international obligations, including targets, in relation to the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions (GHG), and to introduce the necessary mechanisms that would be required to deliver on them;
  - developing transparent and accountable reporting arrangements whereby the Minister and/ or other relevant departments and agencies will be required to report to the Government and the Oireachtas on an annual basis outlining progress in meeting Ireland's obligations in the area of climate change and the Minister will be required to bring forward additional measures to the extent that these are required to ensure a progressive pathway to compliance with national and international obligations;
  - ensuring the development and implementation of cross-sectoral national policies on climate change, particularly in sectors which are outside of the Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) such as transport, agriculture, residential and commercial heating, and waste;



- putting on a statutory footing the Carbon Budget process as operated over the last two years;
- ensuring effective definition and pursuit of adaptation strategies, in line with the National Climate Change Strategy commitment in this regard; an initial approach to adaptation planning is in preparation and will be submitted for consideration before the proposed legislation is enacted;
- integrating climate change mitigation policies into relevant policies and measures having regard to cost-effectiveness and competitiveness;
- integrating climate change adaptation measures into relevant policy and measures, including spatial planning, water resource management and infrastructural investment;
- placing obligations on public bodies to carry out risk assessments arising in the context of adaptation planning; and
- confirming the statutory responsibility of the Minister, subject to the approval of the Government to prepare and publish up-to-date National Climate Change and Adaptation Strategies on a 5 year and 8 year cycle respectively.

**1.5** This document identifies key priorities to be covered in the legislation. These are addressed under the following headings:

- *Targets:* A 2050 target of at least 80% reduction in net emissions will be established by the legislation. An emissions reduction trajectory of an average of 3% per year until 2020 will also be established in line with the commitment in the Programme for Government. Enabling provisions will be included to allow for the amendment of these targets by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, having received the advice of the Climate Change Committee and in line with the evolution of scientific knowledge and international commitments.
- *National Climate Change Strategy:* The National Climate Change Strategy will be placed on a statutory footing, operating on a five-year cycle. The first 2 strategies will run from 2011-15 and 2016 -20.
- *Carbon Budget:* the Carbon Budget which commenced in 2007 will be placed on a statutory footing in line with the commitment contained in the renewed Programme for Government; the carbon budget will also encompass the carbon levy process.
- *Climate Change Committee:* a statutory based national committee of high level experts with appropriate scientific, economic and technical expertise will be established under the legislation. The Committee will be supported by a new Office of Climate Change within the Environmental Protection Agency. The role

of this committee will be to monitor and assess Ireland's progress in addressing climate change and to provide ongoing advice to the Government in moving forward the climate change agenda.

- *Climate Change Adaptation:* Provisions in relation to climate change adaptation are being developed in tandem with the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework. This will be published at the same time as the Heads of the Climate Change Bill in Quarter 1 of 2010. The Bill will also place the preparation, review, updating and publication of the National Climate Change Adaptation Framework on a statutory basis with the process to operate on an 8 year cycle;
- *Domestic Carbon Offsetting or Trading Schemes:* The Bill will enable the Minister to introduce carbon offsetting or trading schemes covering specific economic sectors or types of emission having regard to the criteria for examining such schemes as outlined in the National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012.
- *Monitoring, Reporting and Statutory Obligations:* The Bill will include provisions for monitoring and reporting on net GHG emissions on the part of public bodies. The Bill will enable the Minister to introduce obligations on large limited companies to assess and report on climate change-related aspects of their activities. It will amend the statutory duties of State Agencies to include climate change mitigation and adaptation goals.

## 2. Policies and Principles

- 2.1** The objective of the legislation is to underpin the core national priority of addressing climate change in the pursuit of a sustainable, low carbon economy, while ensuring the maintenance of a vibrant and viable economy in Ireland. In developing policies and measures, including proposals requiring the Government's approval, the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government and any relevant Minister will be required to take account of this objective.
- 2.2** In pursuit of the core national objective outlined in paragraph 2.1 above and where proposals or measures are being introduced by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government or any relevant Minister, including any Regulations to be made under the new Bill, regard must also be had, as appropriate, to the following:
- the need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in line with national, EU and UNFCCC obligations;
  - economic circumstances, and in particular the likely impact on national competitiveness and on competitiveness of particular sectors of the economy;
  - relevant scientific and technological knowledge relating to climate change;
  - the need to implement measures aimed at adaptation to climate change;
  - the need to develop and implement cross-sectoral national policies on climate change;
  - the need to promote energy efficiency;
  - the need to carry out scientific research in the area of climate change;
  - financial circumstances, and in particular the likely impact of the decision on taxation, public spending and public borrowing;
  - economic impacts including value for money, cost effectiveness and effects on the economy;
  - social policy issues, including impacts on the socially marginalised;
  - promotion of sustainable agricultural production, including afforestation;
  - the priority of pursuing food security at national, EU and wider international levels;
  - the need from both national competitiveness and environmental integrity perspectives to address carbon leakage;
  - protection and promotion of public health;
  - energy policy, and in particular the likely impact on the security of energy supplies and the carbon and energy intensity of the economy;
  - environmental policy issues including biodiversity protection and pollution reduction
  - the need to achieve sustainability in transport through the managing of travel demand, maximising the efficiency of the transport network, reducing dependence on the use of fossil fuels in transport, reducing fossil fuel emissions in transport;
  - promotion of public awareness of the challenges associated with addressing climate change;
  - promoting appropriate North-South co-operation in tackling the shared challenge of climate change.



## 3. Targets

- 3.1** A 2050 target of at least an 80% reduction in net emissions (on 1990 levels) will be established by the Bill; it will be the responsibility of the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government to ensure that this target or any substitute target is met. The Climate Change Committee will, in its first report on Ireland's Strategy (received not later than July 2010), advise on the suitability of this long-term target for Ireland.
- 3.2** An emissions reduction trajectory of an average of 3% per year until 2020 will be established by the Bill in line with the commitment in the Programme for Government.
- 3.3** The Bill will allow for the amendment of these targets by the Minister in line with the evolution of scientific knowledge and international commitments and having received the advice of the Climate Change Committee.

## 4. National Climate Change Strategy

- 4.1** There will be a statutory obligation on the Minister to propose to the Government a National Climate Change Strategy, on a 5 year cycle and to review the previous Strategy at the end of this time.
- 4.2** The National Climate Change Strategy should take into account the criteria listed in Part 2. The Strategy will set an overall reduction target for the 5-year period within the context of the long-term and annual reduction targets set out in the Bill (as subject to review by the Minister). The strategy should outline for each sector the strategies and measures needed to achieve national and international targets.
- 4.3** The National Climate Change Strategy will set the policy context for the Carbon Budget and will set out requirements in terms of policy objectives for the various sectors in the economy.
- 4.4** The Climate Change Committee will formally advise the Minister in a published report on the content of the Strategy, and will be available to meet the Government and Oireachtas to discuss their advice.
- 4.5** The Minister and the relevant Ministers will be required to report on progress in the delivery of the Strategy, including progress made by public bodies under their aegis, under the Monitoring and Reporting part of the Bill, as set out in Part 9 of this document.
- 4.6** The first statutory National Climate Change Strategy will run from 2011 to 2015 and the following Strategy from 2016 to 2020.

## 5. Carbon Budget

- 5.1** Annual carbon budgets were first introduced in Ireland under the Programme for Government 2007 and this year will mark the announcement of the third carbon budget. The Carbon Budget promotes the integration of climate change considerations into the Government's budgetary policy and the decision-making process across all sectors; decisions on expenditure and taxation must be informed as much by the climate impact as by the financial and economic impacts. Under the Climate Change Bill, the purpose of the annual Carbon Budget is to:
- report on net greenhouse gas emissions and trends;
  - report on progress in implementing policies and measures in the National Climate Change Strategy, including impacts on emissions;
  - report on any additional policies and measures which have been implemented and have had a significant impact on net GHG emissions;
  - provide estimates of net GHG emissions which will result from any new or altered measure being introduced in the Budget which is considered likely to have a significant impact on emissions;
  - help in our efforts to increase public understanding of climate change and the Government's response; and
  - to be a clear measure of the progress made each year towards meeting our targets for emission reductions.
- 5.2** The new Climate Change Bill will, in line with a commitment contained in the renewed Programme for Government, place the carbon budget on a statutory basis. The annual Carbon Budget will consist of a statement from the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government made to Dáil Éireann outlining the strategies and measures needed to progress the National Climate Change Strategy (NCCS) and achievement of national and international targets for reducing net greenhouse gas emissions. The reporting element of the carbon budget will be based on information supplied by the Climate Change Committee. The Committee will also advise on what policies and measures should be implemented in the Carbon Budget, having reference to the considerations in Part 2 of this document.
- 5.3** Setting the trajectory towards the achievement of national and international targets over a specified time frame and placing this on a statutory footing, will bring certain benefits by –
- providing a clear, credible and appropriate long term framework which will guide and drive Ireland's transition to a low carbon economy, and providing all sectors and individuals with the necessary certainty and direction;
  - requiring the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to have regard to any advice given to him or her in relation to the Carbon Budget by the Climate Change Committee established under the new legislation;
  - facilitating the identification of challenges and opportunities in particular areas/ sectors with regard to greenhouse gas emissions reduction.

In addition:

- the Carbon Budget will be prepared at the same time as the Financial Budget, so as to demonstrate that carbon effects are now being taken into account in the Government's decisions on spending and taxation measures and to demonstrate, particularly to the business community, that the Government's decisions on climate change are consistent with overall economic and budgetary policy;
- *Carbon proofing of Financial budget*: in line with a commitment in the renewed Programme for Government an estimate of the carbon impact of programmes announced in the financial budget will be included; a report<sup>1</sup> of the direct and indirect impacts on greenhouse gas emissions of the various activities covered by the financial budget will be prepared by the Minister for Finance and laid before both Houses of the Oireachtas;
- in preparing a Carbon Budget the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government will be required to take account of the following:
  - relevant scientific and technological knowledge relating to climate change;
  - economic circumstances, and in particular the likely impact on national competitiveness and on competitiveness of particular sectors of the economy;
  - financial circumstances, and in particular the likely impact of any decision on taxation, public spending and public borrowing;
  - social circumstances, and in particular the likely impact of any decision on fuel poverty;
  - energy policy, and in particular the likely impact of any decision on security of energy supplies and the carbon and energy intensity of the economy;
  - circumstances at European and international level;
  - circumstances in relation to development.

**5.4** In Budget 2009, the Government signalled its intention to include the Carbon Levy in Budget 2010, taking account of the recommendations of the Commission on Taxation. The subsequent recommendation on the introduction of a carbon tax in the Commission on Taxation report also addressed an important climate change policy commitment in the Programme for Government.

**5.5** A floor price for carbon and the application of the levy at the earliest practical point of supply are particularly important in terms of the effectiveness of the proposed tax. The EU Emissions Trading Scheme works on a "Cap and Trade" basis, with participating installations operating under an existing emissions cap and with market price per unit of pollution. The exemption of Emission Trading Scheme participants is, therefore, essential for fairness (avoiding double taxation).

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<sup>1</sup> This is in line with the Carbon Assessment provision (Section 94) of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009

**5.6** The principle of carbon pricing is widely accepted as the most effective way to secure emission reductions. The renewed Programme for Government commits to the introduction of a Carbon Levy in Budget 2010. The principles underlying the levy are:

- those most at risk of fuel poverty will be protected,
- the fuel efficiency of our current housing stock will be improved, and
- the relative tax burden on labour will be reduced.

**5.7** The new Bill will incorporate the carbon levy process into the Carbon Budget. In setting or varying the rate of the levy in the Financial Budget, the Minister for Finance will be required to consult with the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. The legal mechanism for setting or varying the tax will be the *Taxes Consolidation Act 1997* (No. 39 of 1997) as amended by the Finance Bill.

**5.8** The impacts arising from the establishment or variation in the rates of the carbon levy will be encompassed in the Carbon Budget statement made on an annual basis by the Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. Criteria in relation to the operation of the levy will be provided for in the Heads of the Climate Change Bill.

## 6. Climate Change Committee

- 6.1** Co-ordination of activities in implementing the *National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012* is carried out under the auspices of a specially established *Cabinet Committee on Climate Change and Energy Security* which in turn is assisted by a *Senior Officials Group* drawn from the key relevant Government Departments and State agencies.
- 6.2** The Senior Officials Group is tasked with addressing the challenges posed to Ireland in achieving its greenhouse gas emissions targets and informing and implementing policy in this regard, while a separate *Technical Advisory Steering Group*, which includes representatives from relevant agencies, principally EPA and SEI, provides the modelling expertise which underpins the analysis required to support climate change policy development and implementation. An *Informal Expert Advisory Panel* comprising national and international experts on climate change has also been established by the Cabinet Committee to provide an overarching advice and guidance role.
- 6.3** In developing the approach to proposed legislation consideration has been given to the further strengthening of the existing institutional arrangements through the establishment of a statutory based *Climate Change Committee*. The Committee will be supported by a new Office of Climate Change within the Environmental Protection Agency, and will report periodically, and on request on specific items, to the Cabinet Committee on Climate Change and Energy Security. In particular, it will have a formal role in relation to the National Climate Change Strategy and the Carbon Budget as set out above. Given the central importance of Government collectively, and sectoral Ministers individually, in leading necessary action to address climate change, the Committee will be required to play a wide-ranging advisory and supporting role to Government and Ministers.
- 6.4** It is proposed to establish such a committee with an essentially advisory role and to structure it as follows:

The Committee will:

- be supported by the proposed Office of Climate Change in the Environmental Protection Agency;
- have an independent Chairperson;
- have in addition to the Chairperson not less than five and not more than 7 other members;
- be made up of high calibre persons with relevant expertise and experience (private/ public sectors) in the areas of business, economics, environment and science, and development;
- two of the members of the Committee (other than the Chairperson) shall be from the Agency and SEI and will serve on an ex officio basis;
- be appointed via an independent statutory process similar to that for appointing Directors of the EPA<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Environmental Protection Agency Act 1992 Section 24;  
<http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/1992/en/act/pub/0007/sec0024.html#zza7y1992s24>



**6.5** The existing functions carried out by the *Informal Expert Advisory Panel on Climate Change* would be subsumed into the new Committee. The Committee would operate on the basis of a five-year term, the first commencing following enactment of the legislation in 2010. The Committee will also be empowered to establish sub-committees to advise on specific technical issues as these arise. This will be particularly relevant to adaptation.

**6.6** The role of this committee would be to monitor and assess Ireland's progress in addressing climate change. The main functions of the committee would be to provide independent advice to Government including functions to:

- advise on the *National Climate Change Strategy* (including meeting legally binding national and international targets under the proposed Bill and transposed/ ratified EU/UNFCCC legislation/treaties),
- advise on the *National Climate Change Adaptation Framework*,
- advise on measures to be taken in areas where the required progress both for climate change mitigation and adaptation is not being made, including measures contained in carbon budgets,
- advise on the extent to which carbon budgets should be met by domestic net emissions reductions versus net emissions reductions achieved overseas,
- provide guidance on the identification and carrying out of independent research and analysis into climate change, both in terms of climate change mitigation and adaptation, and
- report annually to Government on Ireland's progress towards meeting its legally binding targets on reducing GHG.

## 7. Climate Change Adaptation

- 7.1** Regardless of future emissions reductions current elevated greenhouse gas concentrations in the atmosphere will result in climate impacts; a National Climate Change Adaptation Framework is therefore required.
- 7.2** On foot of a commitment contained in the *National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012*, the Department is currently in the process of developing a National Climate Change Adaptation Framework. The framework must be informed by the best available scientific research in order to enable the various sectors to plan ahead and develop policies and strategies to enable Ireland cope with the likely impacts of climate change. This work is being co-ordinated and developed through the Climate Change Research Programme led by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The EPA recently published a report on the impacts of climate change which will input into the development of the adaptation framework. The report is based on research carried out by Met Éireann, NUI Maynooth, the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) 4th assessment report and the EPA's own research.
- 7.3** As the Bill will include specific provisions on climate change adaptation, work on the adaptation framework will run in parallel with the development of the Bill. The planned adaptation framework will provide a basis for integration of adaptation policies into decision-making at both national and local level. This process of 'mainstreaming' climate change adaptation principles is happening already; for example the Planning and Development (Amendment) Bill 2009 provides for the integration of adaptation policies into development plans, regional planning guidelines etc. Similar "mainstreaming" is occurring in the River Basin District planning under the EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC) and in common with the approach being taken by the EU, in its White Paper<sup>3</sup> on climate change adaptation, this mainstreaming will apply across other key policy areas such as agriculture, coastal and marine, health, transport, energy etc.
- 7.4** The Department has been engaging with other Government Departments, public bodies and other sectoral stakeholders in developing the adaptation framework. The provisions on adaptation to be included in the draft Bill are dependent on the development of the adaptation framework which will focus on developing an effective and coherent approach to adaptation at the local, regional, and national levels, making best use of the existing institutional structures and systems and identifying effective modes of delivery, rather than creating new ones.
- 7.5** The Bill will require an assessment of the risks posed by climate change to Ireland to be carried out at least every 8 years. There will be a statutory obligation to develop a National Climate Change Adaptation Strategy, based on the risk assessment, and to review the previous plan on an 8 year cycle.

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<sup>3</sup> Adapting to climate change: Towards a European framework for action (COM(2009) 147)

- 7.6** Statutory requirements may be placed on public bodies to assess the risks of current and predicted impacts of climate change on their sector and to develop specific sectoral adaptation plans on an 8 year basis.
- 7.7** Local authorities may be given a co-ordinating role in relation to climate change adaptation activities within their functional areas.

## 8. Domestic Carbon Offsetting or Trading schemes

- 8.1** In line with a commitment contained in the National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012, the Government proposes to undertake an assessment of sectors that offer the most potential for domestic carbon offsetting projects.
- 8.2** The proposed Bill will provide enabling provisions to allow for statutory based approval to the establishment, operation and regulation of such schemes or other trading schemes covering specific economic sectors or types of emission having regard to the criteria for examining the potential of such schemes as outlined in the National Climate Change Strategy 2007-2012.

## 9. Monitoring, Reporting and Statutory Obligations

- 9.1** The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government or, as appropriate the relevant Minister<sup>4</sup>, may require public bodies under their aegis to report on an annual basis on progress towards achieving climate change objectives under the National Climate Change Strategy.
- 9.2** The Minister for the Environment, Heritage and Local Government will submit a Climate Change Statement on an annual basis on progress in implementing overall climate change policies and measures to the Oireachtas.
- 9.3** The Climate Change Committee will provide advice to Government on the steps that are required where sufficient progress has not been made in achieving policy objectives.
- 9.4** The Bill will enable the Minister to introduce obligations on large limited companies to assess and report on climate change-related aspects of their activities.
- 9.5** The Bill will amend the statutory duties where applicable of public bodies<sup>5</sup> to include climate change mitigation and adaptation goals.

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<sup>4</sup> Relevant Minister means a Minister other than the Minister for Environment, Heritage and Local Government

<sup>5</sup> Public body can be defined as (a) a government or other public administration, including public advisory bodies, at national, regional or local level; (b) any natural or legal person performing public administrative functions under national law, including specific duties, activities or services in relation to the environment, and (c) any natural or legal person having public responsibilities or functions, or providing public services, relating to the environment under the control of a body or person falling within paragraph (a) or (b).

## 10. Next Steps

**10.1** The Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government is proceeding with the development of the Heads of the Climate Change Bill. In addition to the usual Heads on the citation of the Bill and the interpretation section on definitions, separate Heads will be prepared for the following as outlined in this framework document as follows:

- *Policies and Principles*: this Head will outline the policies and principles set out in Part 2 of this document;
- *Targets*: this Head will enshrine a commitment to EU and international targets in relation to climate change and will also include an enabling provision;
- *National Climate Change Strategy*: this Head will contain provisions on the placing of the National Climate Change Strategy on a statutory basis, a process that will operate over a five-year cycle;
- *Carbon Budget*: this Head will provide for the placing of the carbon budget on a statutory basis as outlined in Part 5;
- *Climate Change Committee*: This Head will contain provisions on the establishment of a Climate Change Committee to advise the Government on how best to progress Ireland's climate change agenda. The Committee will be supported by a new Office of Climate Change in the EPA;
- *Climate Change Adaptation*: this Head will place the preparation and publication of a National Climate Change Adaptation Framework on a statutory basis, this will operate on an eight-year cycle; the Bill will also require the preparation of a risk assessment to be carried out for Ireland on climate change impacts;
- *Trading/ Offsetting Schemes*: this Head will contain enabling provisions for such schemes;
- *Monitoring, Reporting and Statutory Obligations*: this Head will place legal obligations on public bodies to report on progress on the delivery of climate change measures; it will enable the Minister to introduce reporting and assessment obligations on large limited companies and amend the statutory duties of relevant public bodies to include climate change considerations.

### Public Consultation

**10.2** The Minister proposes to carry out a public consultation following publication of the Heads of the Climate Change Bill in Quarter 1 of 2010; this will involve consultation with a wide range of stakeholder groups; the outcome of this process will then feed into the drafting of the Bill.



# Glossary of Terms

**Adaptation** (to climate change) The taking of measures to cope with the effects of climate change, rather than the action taken to reduce emissions.

**Anthropogenic** Human induced; as a result of human actions.

**Base year** The year against which commitments are measured. Emissions levels in 1990 set the basis for determining the national Kyoto Protocol limitation target of 13% (a base year of 1995 was used for the industrial gases).

**Climate change** The global climate system is subject to natural variation. In the context of the UNFCCC and Kyoto Protocol, what is meant is that change in climate attributable to human activity arising from the release of greenhouse gases into the atmosphere and which is additional to natural climate variability.

**Commitment period** The Kyoto Protocol provides that Parties' targets are to be achieved over the 5-year period 2008 – 2012 (the "first commitment period"). Targets for future commitment periods (post 2012) are yet to be negotiated.

**COP** Conference of the Parties (to the UNFCCC) which meets annually. The 15th Conference (COP15) is to meet in Copenhagen in December 2009.

**Cross-sectoral** Pertaining to more than one, or many, sectors of the economy.

**Emissions trading** In the context of the EU Emissions Trading Scheme or the flexible mechanisms of the Kyoto Protocol, this refers to the buying and selling of allowances to emit a defined quantity of greenhouse gases or credits that represent a quantity of greenhouse gas already reduced.

**EPA** Environmental Protection Agency. Website: <http://www.epa.ie>

**Fossil fuel** Peat, coal, fuels derived from crude oil (e.g. petrol and diesel) and natural gas are called fossil fuels because they have been formed over long periods of time from ancient organic matter. All contain varying amounts of carbon, and in the recovery of energy from the fuel through combustion in the presence of air, the carbon combines with the oxygen to form CO<sub>2</sub>, which is vented to the atmosphere.

**GDP** Gross Domestic Product.

**Greenhouse gas (GHG)** A gas in the atmosphere that freely allows radiation from the sun through to the earth's surface, but traps the heat radiated back from the earth's surface towards space and reradiates it back to the earth's surface. The heating effect sometimes likened to the manner in which the glass of a greenhouse traps warm air, heated by the sun's radiation. Most greenhouse gases occur naturally and are a necessary part of the global climate system, but their concentrations can be increased by human action, causing climate change.

**IPCC** Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. This is the authoritative scientific source on human interference with the global climate system. Website: <http://www.ipcc.ch>

**Kyoto Protocol** The second international agreement (1997) on climate change, setting binding limitation and reduction targets for developed countries. It is a protocol to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change. Website: <http://www.unfccc.int/> Text of Protocol at <http://www.unfccc.int/resource/convkp.html>

**Sequestration (of carbon)** The removal of CO<sub>2</sub> from the atmosphere and the storage of the carbon, generally by growing plants (e.g. by the fixing of carbon in the organic compounds which make up the body of a tree). It can include storage of carbon in associated soils and litter. Non-organic mechanisms for carbon sequestration are not considered by the Strategy.

**SEI** Sustainable Energy Ireland. The national agency for energy efficiency and renewable energy information, advice and support.

**SMEs** Small and Medium-sized Enterprises.

**UNFCCC** UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, the first international agreement (1992) on action to tackle human-induced climate change. Website of the secretariat: <http://www.unfccc.int>