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CHEAT SHEET

Public Consultation on Ireland's "Long-Term Strategy on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction"

You can use this to help you fill in the Government's sneakily short public consultation on something very important - the "Long-Term Strategy on Greenhouse Gas Emissions Reduction".

The government launched this consultation, required by the EU, at the end of November with a ridiculously tight deadline for submissions of 5pm 31st December 2019! It includes crucial questions on the role of natural gas in our future energy mix, and the transition to renewable energy.

** If you don't have time to fill in the full questionnaire, we encourage you to answer question 10. "What is the future of the national gas grid in a net zero emissions pathway?"

We need to tell the government that gas is not a transition fuel and that it has no place in our energy mix in the future! Check out our points under question 10, below. **

Please note - we've included links in the answers e.g Q2 which won't be active when entered into the form so please include the list of documents they reference in Q26.

To complete the public consultation questionnaire before 5pm 31st December head to this link -

https://secure.dccae.gov.ie/forms/Irelands-Long-Term-Strategy.aspx

1 Pathway to 2050

1. What are the appropriate 2050 targets for Ireland to set in the context of supporting a net Zero target at EU level?

- The UNEP 2019 Emission Gap report states that we must cut global emissions by 55% on 2018 levels within ten years if we are to stand a chance of limiting warming to 1.5°C, equating to cuts of 7.6% per annum until 2030.
- Global emissions must reach net zero by 2050; Ireland as a wealthy country must reach zero emissions sooner (Stop Climate Chaos, 2019).
- Based on the fair share principles of the Paris agreement, Ireland should reduce its nett annual CO2 emissions year on year by 11% per year (beginning 2016) (McMullin et al, 2019).

2. What advanced technologies, across all sectors, could support a move to net-zero or negative emissions by 2050?

See:
- Teske (2019)
- Grubler et al (2018)

3. What financial instruments could complement a decarbonised economy by 2050?

- To support the market for renewable energy, there must be no further fossil fuel subsidies (Gerasimchuk, et al., 2017).
- Feed-in tariffs for renewable energy should prioritise community energy co-operatives, which should also be supported with greatly enhanced capacity building programs and priority grid access (Boselli & Leidreiter, 2017)
- New forms of funding and finance for community-centred retrofitting schemes should be developed, following the example of initiatives in Europe such as Energiesprong and People Powered Retrofit.

2 Electricity

4. What is the generation capacity required to move to zero or negative emissions?

- There are any number of potential pathways to zero or negative emissions, and generation capacity required will depend on the policy responses between now and 2050.
- The most technically feasible and cost-effective way to decarbonise the energy system, protect energy consumers and support security of supply is to reduce energy demand (McMullin, Price, Carton, & Anderson, 2018).
- Through changes in activity levels and energy intensity, it is possible to reduce global energy demand by 40% by 2050, while also reducing global inequality, and without negative emissions technologies such as carbon capture and storage (Grubler, et al., 2018).

5. What resources will help manage intermittency on the grid (e.g. long duration storage, zero-emissions fuel)?

- Intermittency is not a barrier to the energy transition and Ireland is already managing variability in terms of electricity generation (Bond, 2018).

- Investment in large scale grid-connected energy storage and household energy storage (Eirgrid, 2019; Teske, et al., 2019), including in small-scale technologies with diverse applications such as batteries or fuel cells in homes (Grubler, et al., 2018).
- Electrofuels can be used effectively for large-scale storage (McMullin et al, 2018).
- The electricity transmission and distribution network should be strengthened and expanded to allow energy from dispersed renewable systems to be delivered to where it's needed (Allen, et al., 2017) and to boost power system flexibility to accommodate high shares of variable renewable energy (IRENA, 2019).

6. What should our fuel mix look like by 2050?

- Single-purpose energy supply chains such as oil in transport or heating will be replaced by diversified energy supply from a variety of renewable sources e.g. solar PV, wind, biomass, supported by hydrogen (Grubler, et al., 2018).

3 Enterprise

7. How can emissions from large industry, e.g. cement and alumina, be reduced, including options beyond fuel substitution?

- Emissions from large industry can be partially addressed through reform of the EU ETS (CAN Europe, 2016, Green Finance Observatory, 2019).
- Alternative gases such as sustainable biofuels and green hydrogen will be important fuel sources for hard-to-decarbonise industries; energy infrastructure planning needs to ensure that heavy industries have access to these alternative gases and to carefully monitor the sustainability of the alternative gases being produced.

8. Should enterprise lead the way in the transformation in the GHG impact of power, transport, buildings, waste and the circular economy? If so, how?

- Enterprises should set science-based targets and report at least annually on Scope 1, 2 and 3 GHG emissions. We also refer you to the work of 2 Degrees, the World Business Council for Sustainable Development, Forum for the Future and Business in the Community Ireland.

4 Built environment

9. How can Ireland retrofit almost all buildings by 2050, including options for heating fuels and what buildings will be most challenging to decarbonise?

- Housing stability must be central to any programmes related to energy and housing stock. Social and affordable housing built to Passivhaus standards must be developed urgently, to address the homeless and waiting lists, and overcrowding.
- For existing stock, large-scale, affordable energy-efficiency programmes must be developed, including the retrofitting of homes to Passivhaus standards (Allen, et al., 2017; Grubler, et al., 2018) and investment in the installation of heatpumps (Allen, et al., 2017; Eirgrid, 2019) and district heating schemes, with a focus on extending building lifetimes to reduce the need for new build and new materials (IRENA, 2019; Grubler, et al., 2018).
- In the commercial building sector, energy-intensive new infrastructure such as data centres must be assessed for long-term and full life-cycle climate and social impacts prior to the granting of planning permission. It should be rejected if it places excessive load on the grid and, if developed, it must be powered by directly sourced renewably generated electricity.

- Up to 10,000 jobs could be created in the smart-grid and related sectors (IMPACT, 2017). Policy-makers should engage closely with construction workers and their unions to develop any training schemes and supports.
- In recognition that retrofitting one's family home is a time-intensive, stressful process (ENERGISE, 2019), more focused outreach and engagement of homeowners is required to encourage the required number of retrofits per year.

10. What is the future of the national gas grid in a net zero emissions pathway?

- Given the particularly high global warming potential of methane, which leaks at every stage of the life cycle of fossil gas, fossil ("natural") gas is not compatible with zero emissions pathways.
- There is no room in the global carbon budget to replace coal or oil with gas; it cannot be considered a "transition fuel" (Oil Change International, 2016).
- Ireland, along with all EU Member States, must stop building new fossil fuel infrastructure, including gas pipelines, now (UNEP, 2019; Gerasimchuk et al 2017).
- There should be no further exploration for gas in Irish waters, and undeveloped licences should be revoked.
- In view of the high methane leakage rates associated with fracking, as well as its detrimental impact on communities around the world, Ireland should not import gas from fracked sources, including LNG.
- New homes and other buildings should not be connected to the national gas grid; instead it should be a required standard that such buildings have heat pumps or other sustainable forms of heating.
- The role of the gas grid in a net zero emissions pathway will be to provide minimal amounts of alternative gases for hard to decarbonise industries and other sectors where full electrification is not possible. This does not include home heating and private vehicles; these can and must be fully electrified, as alternative gases will not be available in quantities to cater for these sectors (ICCT, 2018).

5 Transport

All questions

See:

- Transport and Environment (2018)
- NESC (2019)
- Cyclist.ie (2019)

6 Agriculture, Forestry and Land Use

All questions

See:

- Stop Climate Chaos and the Environmental Pillar (2018)
- An Taisce (2019)

- Regenerative Farming Ireland (2019)

7 Waste and Circular Economy

All questions

- See the submissions to the 2018 bioeconomy policy statement by An Taisce, Feasta and Ciara Beausang, the 2019 IPCC land use report and the work of Sierra Club.

8 Just Transition

24. What are the most important issues for the Government to consider in developing a long term strategy to 2050 in order to ensure a just transition?

See:

- Chapman, Essex, & Sims, 2018
- Irish Congress of Trade Unions, 2019
- Muttitt, Markova, & Crighton, 2019
- ILO, 2015
- ILO 2018
- IMPACT, 2017
- BMWI, 2019
- Climate Justice Alliance, 2019
- NESC, 2012

25. What should the primary focus of adaptation policy be for 2050?

- See the submission of An Taisce to the recent public consultation on the Draft Agriculture, Forest and Seafood Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan

26. Are there any other comments or observations that you wish to make?

- Short consultation period privileges industry stakeholders and disadvantages civil society and grassroots groups.

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