

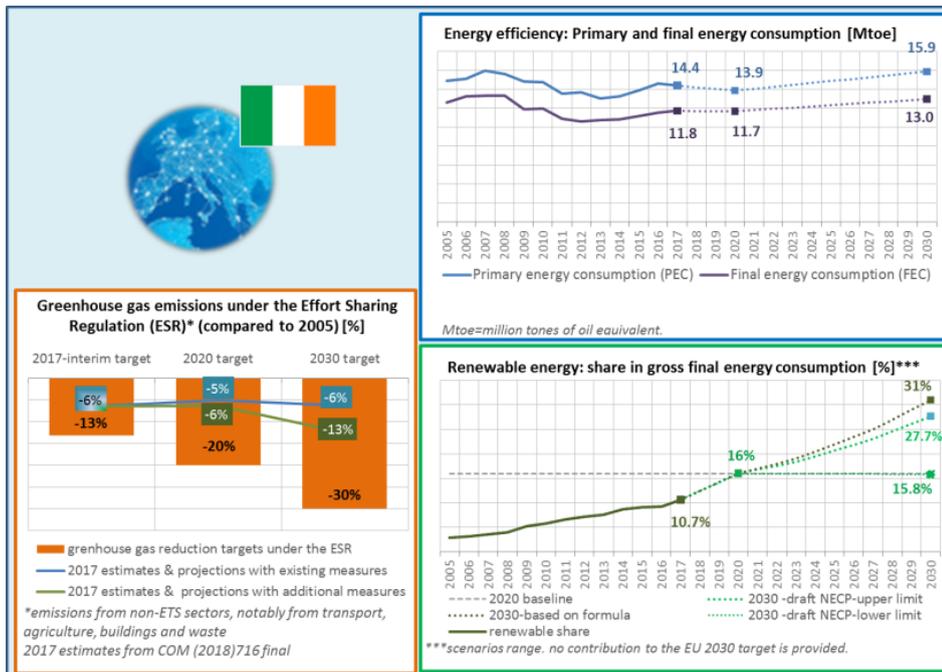


# IRELAND

## Summary of the Commission assessment of the draft National Energy and Climate Plan 2021-2030

The EU has committed itself to a clean energy transition, which will contribute to fulfilling the goals of the Paris Agreement on climate change and provide clean energy to all. To deliver on this commitment, the EU has set binding climate and energy targets for 2030: reducing greenhouse gas emissions by at least 40%, increasing energy efficiency by at least 32.5%, increasing the share of renewable energy to at least 32% of EU energy use and guaranteeing at least 15% electricity inter-connection levels between neighbouring Member States. To ensure that the EU targets are met, EU legislation requires that each Member State drafts a 10-year National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP), setting out how to reach its national targets, including the binding national target for reducing greenhouse gas emissions that are not covered by the EU Emissions Trading System (ETS). The European Commission has analysed each draft NECP. The summary of this assessment for Ireland is outlined below. The final NECPs for the period 2021-2030 are due to be submitted by Member States by the end of 2019.

### IRELAND - National targets and contributions foreseen in the draft National Energy and Climate Plan



Sources: Ireland's draft National Energy & Climate Plan, Eurostat (PEC2020-2030, FEC2020-2030 indicators and renewable SHARES), COM (2018) 716 final (2017 GHG estimates)

- The Irish draft integrated National Energy and Climate Plan (NECP) builds on the existing national energy and climate policy framework documents, which aim to diversify and decarbonise Ireland's electricity generation sector, with the long-term objective of decarbonising the energy sector and achieving an economic transformation with a carbon neutral agriculture and land use sector by 2050. The draft NECP is structured according to the Governance Regulation<sup>1</sup>, covers all Energy Union dimensions and includes a robust analytical basis, presenting several scenarios with existing and additional measures.
- Ireland's 2030 target for **greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions** not covered by the EU Emissions Trading System (non-ETS), is -30% compared to 2005, as set in the Effort Sharing Regulation (ESR)<sup>2</sup>. With the transport, building and agriculture policies set out in the draft NECP Ireland projects to miss this target by at least 17.5 percentage points. The gap assumes full use of the flexibilities with the ETS and Land Use, Land Use Change and Forestry (LULUCF)<sup>3</sup> sectors in the ESR<sup>4</sup>, which the draft plan considers as likely. Compliance with the **LULUCF** no-debit commitment is implicit in the intention to produce land credits and use the applicable flexibility.
- The lack of a clearly identified contribution to the 2030 **renewable energy** target among the four scenarios presented makes it difficult to assess the level of Ireland's ambition. The ambition levels range from 15.8% to 27.7%, and are below the share of 31% in 2030 that results from the formula contained in Annex II of the Governance Regulation<sup>5</sup>. In addition to clarifying Ireland's contribution, the final plan would need to include an indicative trajectory that reaches all required reference points<sup>6</sup>. 15.8% is also below Ireland's 2020 target of 16%. The draft NECP includes a comprehensive list of policies and measures which are not yet sufficiently quantified to allow for a complete assessment of their impact on Ireland's proposed contributions.
- Ireland has set a very low contribution for **energy efficiency** in 2030 for final energy consumption. Energy consumption is expected to grow compared to the 2020 energy efficiency target and the energy consumption level in 2017, which goes in the opposite direction of what is needed collectively by the EU. On the other hand, Ireland has proposed a comprehensive set of additional measures for energy efficiency which warrant being more detailed in terms of expected energy savings. Opportunities for growth and job creation are not yet fully exploited.

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<sup>1</sup> Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 11 December 2018 on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action, amending Regulations (EC) No 663/2009 and (EC) No 715/2009 of the European Parliament and of the Council, Directives 94/22/EC, 98/70/EC, 2009/31/EC, 2009/73/EC, 2010/31/EU, 2012/27/EU and 2013/30/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council, Council Directives 2009/119/EC and (EU) 2015/652 and repealing Regulation (EU) No 525/2013 of the European Parliament and of the Council.

<sup>2</sup> Regulation (EU) 2018/842 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 on binding annual greenhouse gas emission reductions by Member States from 2021 to 2030 contributing to climate action to meet commitments under the Paris Agreement and amending Regulation (EU) No 525/2013.

<sup>3</sup> Regulation (EU) 2018/841 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 May 2018 on the inclusion of greenhouse gas emissions and removals from land use, land use change and forestry in the 2030 climate and energy framework, and amending Regulation (EU) No 525/2013 and Decision No 529/2013/EU.

<sup>4</sup> Regulation (EU) 2018/842 on binding annual greenhouse gas emission reductions by Member States from 2021 to 2030.

<sup>5</sup> Regulation (EU) 2018/1999 on the Governance of the Energy Union and Climate Action.

<sup>6</sup> Pursuant to Article 4(a)(2) of Regulation 2018/1999.

- The draft NECP contains a limited set of objectives and targets and policies and measures in the **energy security** dimension. The United Kingdom’s expected withdrawal from the EU comes across as a key risk for Ireland but due to ongoing uncertainty, the exact impact on market functioning is not yet known. Additional measures could be needed to maintain security of supply and should be further specified in the final plan.
- Ireland has not indicated the **electricity interconnection** level it aims for in 2030, and once the UK withdraws from the European Union Ireland will have no direct electricity interconnection with the rest of the EU. The impact of the UK’s withdrawal on the all-island Single Electricity Market and further market development and integration is not yet known. Ireland has a comprehensive **energy poverty** national plan, which should be accompanied in the final plan with concrete objectives, as required by the Governance Regulation<sup>7</sup>.
- Ireland has the ambition of becoming an “Energy Innovation Hub” and presents in the draft NECP existing research and innovation programmes. When it comes to the 2030 timeframe, the **research, innovation and competitiveness** dimension of the draft NECP does not yet provide sufficient clarity regarding specific objectives and a description of policies and measures.
- The National Development Plan 2018-2027 quantifies projected socio-economic infrastructure **investments** for the next decade, including about 0.7% of current GDP per annum for climate action, including renewable energy, interconnections and energy efficiency. The final NECP would need to provide more detailed information on Ireland’s investment needs in light of achieving the 2030 targets, especially as related to the planned policies and measures. This would fully take advantage of the role NECPs can play in providing clarity to investors and attracting additional investments in the clean energy transition.
- The draft plan refers to **regional cooperation** in the North Seas Energy Cooperation, and the importance for continued regional cooperation with the UK given its decision to withdraw from the EU.
- The projected use of peat and biomass would make air impacts important to consider. The final plan would also more generally benefit from complementing and quantifying the analysis of interactions with **air quality and air emissions** policy.
- The issue of a **socially just transition** to a climate neutral economy could be better integrated throughout by considering social and employment impacts, e.g. shifts in sectors/industries and skills impacts, distributional effects and revenue recycling, especially in relation to the transition for carbon-intensive regions. The draft plan makes only general commitments on another enabler of the transition – the development of skills.
- A list of actions undertaken and planned to phase-out **energy subsidies**, in particular for fossil fuels, needs to be included in the final plan.
- When it comes to **good practice**, Ireland has developed a National Adaptation Framework (NAF) which specifies the national strategy for adaptation measures in different sectors and by local authorities in their administrative areas. Details are included in the draft NECP, and the over-arching objectives and actions are consistent between the NAF and the draft NECP.

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<sup>7</sup> Pursuant to Article 3.3(d) of Regulation 2018/1999.

**Related links:**

- [National Energy & Climate Plans](#) – for links to the Commission recommendations and Staff Working Document for Ireland and all other Member States, to the Commission Communication assessing all draft NECPs, and to the draft NECPs themselves.
- More information about the [Clean energy for all Europeans package](#)
- More information about the [2030 climate & energy framework](#)