

CLIMATE CHANGE IN SCOTLAND



"Climate change threatens our people, our economy, our societies, and our very existence. It can only be tackled if we all work together - in Scotland, in the UK, and across the world."

John Swinney, Cabinet Secretary - Finance and Sustainable Growth, June 2007

The Scottish Government's purpose is to create a more successful country, with opportunities for all of Scotland to flourish, through increasing sustainable economic growth. Recognising that climate change is one of the most serious threats we face and being determined that Scotland will play its part in rising to this global challenge, the Scottish Government is ensuring that action on climate change becomes part and parcel of the way Government and the wider public sector behaves.

While climate change policy in general is devolved to the Scottish Government, policies to tackle this global issue cover a wide range of sectors and span both reserved and devolved matters. The Scottish Government works with the UK Government and the other devolved administrations in contributing to and influencing policy developments at UK, European, and international levels.

The Scottish [Government Economic Strategy](#)¹ sets the strategic direction for the public sector in Scotland - the Scottish Government, local government, the enterprise networks and other key delivery partners. It introduces strategic targets which combine raising the GDP growth rate with ambitions to reduce the level of emissions by 80 per cent by 2050. This ambition is supported by the [Scottish Budget SR 2007](#)² which emphasises that all public spending programmes must take account of, and contribute towards, the action needed to meet emissions targets.

Scotland's emissions have fallen. Between 1990 and 2005, net greenhouse gas emissions fell by around 16% from 64.4 to 54.5 MtCO₂e. As part of this reduction, net CO₂ emissions fell by 13% compared with a UK average decrease of 6.4%. Encouraging as these figures are, on balance each person in Scotland currently contributes twice the global average in emissions.

The highest emitting sectors in Scotland are energy generation, transport and business, collectively they currently account for around three quarters of Scottish emissions. Since 1990, energy supply emissions have fallen by 10% and business emissions have fallen by 22%. However, in line with the rising trend in Europe, Scottish transport emissions have increased by 11%.

Scottish and UK Climate Change Bills

Central to our climate change commitments are proposals to set a statutory target for Scotland to reduce emissions by 80% by 2050, and to develop mechanisms to ensure sustained progress is made. To give effect to this target, the Scottish Government issued a consultation on proposals for a [Scottish Climate Change Bill](#)³. The bill is designed to provide a long-term legal framework, which will offer business and investors the certainty needed to plan for a low-carbon economy. It also proposes a requirement that Ministers are held to account in the event of failure to meet emissions reductions, with mandatory annual reporting to Parliament. The Consultation closed on 23 April 2008 and the Scottish Government anticipates introducing a draft Bill to Parliament in late 2008.

The Scottish Government is also working with UK partners on the [UK Climate Change Bill](#)⁴ which will set a statutory target for the UK as a whole to reduce carbon dioxide emissions, and possibly other greenhouse gases, by at least 60% by 2050. The UK Bill provides a framework for shared action and has been drafted in terms which recognise the role of the Scottish Government as a partner in the pursuit of the UK emissions reduction target. It does not specify the measures to be used in Scotland to achieve the targets. The Scottish Climate Change Bill will offer an opportunity to put in place a statutory framework, additional to the UK one, for a distinctive Scottish target and to introduce any relevant devolved policy measures which require primary legislation. Actions taken under devolved Scottish powers to meet the Scottish target will also help towards meeting the UK target. Similarly, there are areas such as energy generation for which powers have not been devolved but where UK Government climate change action could help Scotland meet the Scottish target. The Scottish Parliament approved a Legislative Consent Motion for the UK Bill on 20 December 2007.

Scotland's Climate Change Programme

While the targets within the Climate Change Bill may be long-term, the actions to achieve them are required now. [Scotland's Climate Change Programme](#)⁵, published in 2006, sets out the existing policies being pursued to reduce emissions and adapt to climate change. A Second [Annual Report](#)⁶ on progress on Scotland's Climate Change Programme was laid before the Scottish Parliament in May 2008. The underlying principles of this

Programme remain valid - to tackle climate change in a sustainable way, to report annually on progress, to mainstream climate thinking across Government, to understand better the carbon impact of policies, to raise the profile of adaptation, and to communicate the importance of the issue much more widely. A new programme will be required to deliver the more ambitious target in the proposed Scottish Climate Change Bill. The proposed Bill will sit above this programme and set the high level statutory framework for climate change policies in Scotland.

Local Government

While the Scottish Government is committed to a wide programme of activity it is recognised that this is not an issue that any government can address alone. Scotland's communities will be in the front line in responding to the impacts of climate change and also have a role to play in reducing emissions of greenhouse gases that are contributing to climate change. Local government is ideally placed to lead the community response to climate change. In 2007 all 32 Scottish local authorities signed [Scotland's Climate Change Declaration](#)⁷ committing them to action to reduce emissions and adapt to the unavoidable impacts of climate change. As part of the [concordat](#)⁸ between Scottish Government and local government, each local authority will agree a Single Outcome Agreement (SOA) highlighting their contributions towards [national outcomes](#)⁹.

Meeting Emission Reduction Targets

To meet the ambitious targets proposed by the Scottish Climate Change Bill, new policies and delivery mechanisms will be needed. Central to this will be a system of cross-compliance - to ensure that spending decisions across government assess the carbon impact of policy options. Work is currently being undertaken to map out the development of new policies to contribute to delivery of the Scottish Government's 2011 and 2050 targets. Internal policy expertise alongside independent advice from expert panels will inform measures needed to meet targets. One expert panel was established to recommend measures which will make houses and buildings in Scotland more energy efficient towards a goal of zero-carbon buildings. They published [The Sullivan report on a Low Carbon Buildings Strategy for Scotland](#)¹⁰, on 12 December 2007. The UK Climate Change Bill also makes provision for Government to request advice from the [UK Committee on Climate Change](#)¹¹ on any issue relating to the Bill or climate change more generally.

Scotland recognises the need to take advantage of and build on its particular strengths. Scotland's enormous natural resources present an opportunity for global leadership in harnessing renewable energy. The Scottish Government has set an ambitious target that 50% of Scotland's electricity demand should be met from renewable sources, and is committed to supporting a wide range of renewable technologies including wave and tidal, on- and off-shore wind, and hydrogen and fuel cell technology. The European Marine Energy Centre in Orkney provides testing facilities for the development of several full-scale prototypes. Support schemes are in place to encourage the use of biomass energy and the uptake of small-scale renewables at householder and community levels. Activities to develop the market for renewable heat are also underway.

Land use is important in the Scottish context. A large area of rural land, organic-rich soils, agriculture and forestry contribute to emissions, but also have a role in removing around 8% of emissions through their carbon sink function. To maximise this natural sequestration, the [Scottish Rural Development Programme](#)¹² encourages climate-friendly management practices and investment in woodlands. Additional measures include addressing the environmental impacts of transport through a package of funded measures that promote more sustainable travel and the progression of plans to introduce a 'one-stop-shop' for domestic consumers across Scotland to provide a more strategic and co-ordinated approach to sustainable energy advice.

Emissions Trading

Targeting emissions from large business and public sector organisations including local authorities, retailers and central government is a key component of Scotland's action. While emissions trading is a devolved matter, the Scottish Government supported the creation of a single approach operating across the UK and worked with the UK Government to implement the [EU Emissions Trading Scheme](#)¹³ (ETS) and is working to develop proposals for the [Carbon Reduction Commitment](#)¹⁴ (CRC). A further consultation on regulations to implement the CRC will be held in the summer.

Adaptation

While urgent action to reduce emissions is vital so is action to reduce Scotland's vulnerability to the impacts of our already changing climate. Some degree of climate change remains unavoidable as the impacts over the next 30 to 40 years have been determined by past and present emissions. We cannot prevent these but we can adapt.

A consultation - [Adapting our ways: managing Scotland's climate risk](#)¹⁵, was launched in June to inform **Scotland's Climate Change Adaptation Framework**. The Framework will identify strategic principles and priority actions as a means of providing leadership, guidance and consistency of approach to government and non-government decision-makers. It will also identify roles and responsibilities for public and private decision makers across Scotland and outline the levels of risk being applied to manage climate change. Finally, it will draw links with Government action on mitigating future impacts of climate change, through efforts to reduce emissions. The Scottish Government is also working closely with other UK Administrations to ensure the sharing of best practice and cross-border cooperation, particularly in areas such as research. This includes involvement in the [National Risk Assessment](#)¹⁶ to be required under the UK Climate Change Bill. To help and encourage

businesses and organisations, including local authorities, in the development of their own adaptation response, the Scottish Government has had a significant role in the establishment of the [Scottish Climate Change Impacts Partnership](#)¹⁷.

Leadership

Through this activity, and with the target proposed in the Scottish Climate Change Bill amongst the most ambitious by any country, the Scottish Government believes Scotland can play a leading role internationally. Recognising the importance of strong leadership, Scotland was one of the first signatories to the 2005 [Montreal Climate Change Declaration](#).¹⁸ This Declaration committed states and regions to work together to tackle climate change and in November 2006, agreed the establishment of a climate change alliance with amongst others California, Quebec, Manitoba, Bavaria and South Australia.

The Scottish Government is also determined to show leadership by improving its environmental performance and reducing the environmental impacts of its own activities and operations. A [Report of Environmental Performance](#)¹⁹ records progress on annual targets for environmental improvement and a new [Scottish Government Travel Plan](#)²⁰ presents a package of measures designed to encouraging more sustainable business and staff travel practices.

A commitment also already exists amongst many businesses operating in Scotland to address the climate change challenge. The Scottish Government is keen to build on this through the [Climate Change Business Delivery Group](#),²¹ encouraging businesses in Scotland to share best practice, identify opportunities and challenge each other to do more.

In recognition of the increased level of effort required within and outwith government to act on climate change, resources have been announced for a range of sustainable development and climate change initiatives, including a new [Climate Challenge Fund](#)²² and the [Saltire Prize](#)²³ – where addressing climate change will be the first focus for this £10 million clean energy prize.

Conclusion

Ultimately addressing the urgent social, economic and environmental challenge of climate change will only be successful if everyone of us accepts responsibility and acts sustainably. The Scottish Government is confident that government, business and all the people of Scotland are ready to rise to the challenge of climate change.

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- 1 Government Economic Strategy - www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/12115041/0
 - 2 Scottish Budget Spending Review 2007 - www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/13092240/0
 - 3 Scottish Climate Change Bill Consultation - www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Climate-Change/16327/Climate-Change-Bill
 - 4 UK Climate Change Bill - www.defra.gov.uk/ENVIRONMENT/climatechange/uk/legislation/index.htm
 - 5 Changing Our Ways: Scotland's Climate Change Programme - www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2006/03/30091039/0
 - 6 Scotland's Climate Change Programme: Annual Report 2008 www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2008/05/20102350/0
 - 7 Scotland's Climate Change Declaration - www.sustainable-scotland.net/climatechange/
 - 8 Concordat between the Scottish Government and local government - www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/13092240/concordat
 - 9 National performance framework <http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/11/13092240/9>
 - 10 The Sullivan report on a Low Carbon Buildings Strategy for Scotland - www.sbsa.gov.uk/sullivanreport.htm
 - 11 UK Committee on Climate Change - www.defra.gov.uk/environment/climatechange/uk/legislation/committee/index.htm
 - 12 Scottish Rural Development Programme - www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Rural/SROP
 - 13 EU Emissions Trading Scheme - www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Climate-Change/16327/euets/Home
 - 14 Carbon Reduction Commitment - www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Climate-Change/16327/EnergyPerComm/Introsumm
 - 15 Adapting our ways: Managing Scotland's Climate Risk - www.scotland.gov.uk/climatechangeadaptation
 - 16 National Risk Assessment - www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/ministers/speeches/joan-ruddock/jr080331.htm
 - 17 Scottish Climate Change Impacts Partnership - www.sccip.org.uk
 - 18 Montreal Climate Change Declaration - www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Environment/Climate-Change/16327/Declaration
 - 19 The 7th Annual Report of Environmental Performance of the Scottish Government - www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/12/06160436/0
 - 20 Scottish Government Travel Plan - www.scotland.gov.uk/Publications/2007/12/06160535/0
 - 21 Climate Change Business Delivery Group - www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2007/06/29110426
 - 22 Climate Challenge Fund www.itsourfuture.co.uk/climate_challenge_fund/index.html
 - 23 Saltire Prize - www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Business-Industry/Energy/saltire-prize

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