

Scotland's climate change targets are ambitious but achievable with new policies

Embargoed until: 00.01 on Wednesday 24 February 2010

Issue No: 20

The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) today advised the Scottish Government that the climate change targets set out in the Climate Change (Scotland) Act are ambitious, but would be achievable following a tightening of the EU framework in response to a global deal to cut emissions. Delivering the targets will require that steps are taken to significantly strengthen and to add to existing policies in key areas.

The 2020 target to reduce emissions of all greenhouse gases (GHGs) by 42% by 2020 relative to 1990 represents an appropriate contribution to required global emission reductions, and is on the path to meeting the 2050 target to reduce emissions by 80%, said the Committee.

The Committee recommended that traded sector emissions (from power generation and other energy intensive industries) should be regarded as following the wider EU trajectory under the European cap and trade scheme. The plan under this scheme is that the EU will move from the currently legislated trajectory to deeper cuts in traded sector emissions following a new global deal.

The Committee's analysis suggests that meeting the 42% target would be difficult before a global deal has been reached, but feasible following a global deal and the tightening of the traded sector cap.

The Committee recommended that Scottish strategy should be aimed at delivering a level of emissions reduction in the non-traded sector (e.g. covering heat, transport, agriculture, etc.) that is invariant to whether or when a global deal is reached. Options consistent with this recommendation include making the Scottish target conditional on the global deal.

Given limited recent progress reducing emissions, a step change in effort will be required to unlock emissions reduction potential in key areas including from

buildings, transport, agriculture and waste. This will require a mix of reserved and devolved policy levers. For example, there are important roles for the Scottish Government in leading a national programme for energy efficiency improvement and renewable heat uptake, promoting the Smarter Choices, Smarter Places transport initiative, supporting the roll-out of electric cars through network measures and charging infrastructure provision, and developing new policies aimed at reducing emissions from agriculture and waste.

There is also an important role for the Scottish Government to play in enabling investment in renewable electricity, for example, through providing speedier approval for planning applications, in order to support decarbonisation and unlock employment and other economic benefits.

The Committee proposed that mechanisms should be considered to add flexibility to the Scottish targets. At present the Scottish framework includes rigid annual targets which could be missed, for example, if there is a very cold winter.

The Committee's analysis suggests that following a global deal to cut emissions Scotland can meet the 42% cut at a relatively low cost to its economy (e.g. less than 1% of GDP in 2020). The Committee argued that this is a price worth paying in the light of the very high costs and consequences from taking no action on climate change.

Committee member, Professor Jim Skea said:

“These are ambitious targets that go further than those in the rest of the UK. A step change will be needed to unlock potential emissions reductions in Scotland, but we believe this to be achievable with new policies. It is important now that the Scottish Government commits to a clear and constant target for the non-traded sector and sets out a strategy to deliver this. Given a new policy framework, the opportunities are there for Scottish people and businesses to drive down emissions and build a low-carbon economy”.

ENDS

Notes to Editors

Committee on Climate Change (CCC)

The Committee on Climate Change (CCC) is an independent body established under the Climate Change Act to advise the UK Government on setting carbon budgets, and to report to Parliament on the progress made in reducing greenhouse gas emissions:

www.theccc.org.uk/

- The CCC's report "Scotland's path to a low-carbon economy" is available to download from the CCC's website at: <http://www.theccc.org.uk/reports>
- The [Scottish Climate Change Act](#), passed in August 2009, sets out a comprehensive framework for emissions reduction in Scotland. It sets a long-term target to reduce emissions of greenhouse gases by 80% in 2050 relative to 1990, with an interim target to reduce emissions by 42% in 2020 relative to 1990. The Act also provides for setting of annual emissions reduction targets.
- In August 2009, the Scottish Government requested advice from the CCC on:
 - The highest achievable interim target for 2020
 - The first batch of annual targets from 2010-2022
 - A cumulative emissions budget for Scotland
 - The proposed methodology for inclusion of Scotland's share of international aviation and shipping emissions and the use of non-CO2 multipliers
 - Limits on the use of offset credits to meet Scottish targets

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