

Decarbonising Zone Glossary

Decarbonisation

Taking carbon out of the equation completely by removing fossil fuels from electricity, industry, and transport.

Climate Change

Long-term changes to the Earth's temperature and weather patterns.

Anthropogenic Climate Change

An accelerated change in climate caused by human activities due to increased Greenhouse Gas Emissions, dating from the 1800s.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions / Emissions

The group of gases that trap heat in the atmosphere and lead to global warming and climate change are called greenhouse gases.

Global warming

The long-term rise of the Earth's average temperature. It is a part of climate change.

Fossil fuels

Non-renewable fuels like coal, natural gas, crude oil, petroleum products and others that are made from the fossilised remains of plants and animals that lived millions of years ago.

Biomass

Organic matter, like wood, used as a fuel to generate electricity.

Carbon equivalent

An easy way of measuring all the different greenhouse gases in one unit instead of listing each gas separately. Carbon equivalent calculates all of these other gases as though they were all carbon dioxide, so they can be counted in one go.

Climate mitigation and adaptation

Mitigation means action that will reduce current and future greenhouse gas emissions. Adaptation means actions that will reduce the impacts that are already happening now from our changing climate and those that are projected to happen in the future.

Carbon-neutral

Carbon-neutral means the amount of carbon released into the atmosphere is balanced out (or offset) by taking carbon out in another way, like reducing other emissions, planting trees, restoring wetlands, etc.

Carbon off-setting

Ways of taking carbon out of the atmosphere to balance out the carbon

that's being produced by a person, business or even a country.

Carbon Sequestering

Using nature to soak up carbon from the atmosphere, and lock it back into the soil. This happens when we plant trees, restore wetlands and stop digging or ploughing the soil.

Net-zero

Similar to carbon-neutral but aims to reduce any emissions to as close to zero as possible before trying to balance or offset by reducing greenhouse gas emissions elsewhere.

Ireland's Climate Action Plan

Sets out how Ireland hopes to halve our emissions by 2030 and reach net zero no later than 2050.

An Energy Transition

Moving away from the current way of using and supplying energy to a low-carbon, renewable society that is not dependent on fossil fuels.

Renewable energy

Energy that comes from a source that can't be used up. Examples include natural energy sources from the weather and earth like solar, wind and geothermal energy but also biomass and biofuels that can be regrown or reproduced naturally.

Energy Efficiency

Using only the energy you need, and fixing or upgrading anything that might be wasting energy.

Retrofitting

Upgrading an existing home or building to make it more energy efficient. This usually means adding more or better insulation to the roof, outside walls, floors and windows. It can also include adding newer or renewable energy systems like better boilers, solar panels, heat pumps, etc.

Insulation

A material used to add extra lining to the exterior walls of your home to reduce heat loss and improve comfort levels inside the home.

Heat Pump

A machine that exchanges heat from a colder area to a hotter area by using mechanical energy, as in a refrigerator.

Thermal Energy Store

A thermal energy store is a way of storing excess heat generated from a household renewable heating system.