

Climate Action Plan 2019 and Data Centres

Data Centres (DCs) are predicted as being a significant user of Irish energy resources in the future.

Innovative renewable energy solutions will be required to meet this demand and minimise the need for grid reinforcement. ALG has advised on such solutions for DCs with renewable energy operators.

The Climate Action Plan 2019 (the Plan) references DCs in different contexts. These are as follows:

Electricity (Section 7 of the Plan)

A central focus of the Plan is to decarbonise the electricity currently consumed in Ireland, by harnessing significant renewable energy resources. The energy resources required by DCs must be identified and addressed.

State of Play (Section 7.1, page 50 of the Plan)

By 2027, it is estimated that DCs will account for as much as 31% of Ireland's electricity needs. Accordingly, the 2019 Plan recognises the importance of renewable, as opposed to fossil fuel, generation capacity in helping to meet this demand.

Actions (Section 7.4, page 56 of the Plan)

The Government has outlined specific actions to be taken to ensure the targets in the Plan are achieved. Looking to electricity, Action 20 provides that the Government will implement energy actions under the Government Statement on the Role of Data Centres in Ireland's Enterprise Strategy. This will ensure that large demand connections are regionally balanced to minimise the need for grid reinforcements. To achieve this action, the Annex of Actions outlines the specific steps that must be taken, which include:

- a. Develop and implement flexible demand and other innovative solutions for DCs; and

- b. Develop longer term measures to facilitate DCs and minimise grid reinforcement.

Enterprise (Section 8 of the Plan)

Enterprise emissions contribute significantly to the carbon inventory. Of particular concern is the correlation between emission growth and increasing economic activity, which is of relevance to DCs given their increased popularity in recent years.

State of Play (Section 8.1, page 61 of the Plan)

In light of the predicted rapid growth in energy demand by DCs, further work will be required to align this increase with grid infrastructure plans.

Measures to Deliver Targets (Section 8.3, page 67 of the Plan)

The Government has identified that different cohorts of enterprise operate in the economy, each of which face distinctive needs and challenges in decarbonising. Accordingly, the Government has outlined a variety of measures which will be critical to their success. One such measure is prioritising the establishment of networks in key sectors, including DCs, in order to promote industry-led sectoral plans.

Built Environment (Section 9 of the Plan)

It is envisaged that the improvement in the energy efficiency of buildings will reduce our dependence on fossil fuels. DCs have been identified as a possible contributor to this objective.

State of Play (Section 9.1, page 73 of the Plan)

The concept of district heating networks have are outlined in the Plan as being an attractive form of climate mitigation. However, this would be dependent on the use of renewable sources of energy or heat which is currently wasted, such as from DCs.

See here for a [link](#) to the Climate Action Plan 2019. For more information contact Alison Fanagan, Jason Milne, John Dallas and Ross Moore.

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