



## **A Submission to the Review by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources**

**Of**

## **The Green Paper on Energy Policy in Ireland**

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[www.dochas.ie](http://www.dochas.ie)

“Climate change is not an abstract phenomenon featuring in arcane science journals and measured only in laboratories. It is present everywhere and perhaps most harshly and adversely in environments where people are least equipped to meet its force and ill effects – and least responsible for its causes.” Michael D Higgins, President of Ireland, Hunger-Nutrition-Climate Justice Conference Dublin Castle, 15 April 2013

### **1. Introduction**

The following is the submission by Dóchas, the Association of Irish Non-Governmental Development Organisations, to the 2014 review of the Green Paper on Energy Policy in Ireland being conducted by the Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources

The members of Dóchas are working together to bring about a sustainable world where poverty and inequality are unacceptable, and where every person has the right to live free from fear, from want and able to fulfil their potential. Dóchas provides a forum for consultation and co-operation, helping members speak with a single voice on development issues.

We welcome the review and feel it's timely given the 2013 Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) conclusion that we are on a trajectory toward exhausting the twenty-first century's entire carbon budget by 2030. The energy sector is one of the largest GHG emitting sectors in Ireland and as such is important sector for climate change policy.

## **2. Setting Ireland's vision for a sustainable energy system**

Dóchas believes that the White Paper on Energy Policy should set out a vision for an energy system that is no longer dependent on climate polluting fossil fuels, but rather operates with clean renewable indigenous resources and energy conservation at its core.

This vision should be set within the context of a climate justice approach and how those countries that have produced, or are producing, high levels of green house gasses need to be held responsible for reducing emissions and contributing their fair share to adaptation and mitigation costs. Climate change must be recognised as an increasingly vital concern for humankind, requiring agreements and interventions at global, regional and national levels.

The vision should also take into account that the effects of climate change have the ability to undermine hard-won development gains in the decades ahead.

## **3. Promoting a Policy Coherence for Development (PCD) approach**

Ireland's relationship with the developing world takes many forms. Development aid is a critical dimension of this, but broader policies relating to environment, energy, trade, taxation and investment are equally important. The challenge for Ireland is to bring about a coherent approach to its interaction with the global community.

Since the signing of the Lisbon Treaty in 2009, Policy coherence for development has become a legal obligation of all EU member states. Article 208 states that all EU policies must take into consideration development objectives: at best, this means that all EU policies must be in support of developing countries' development needs, or at least not contradict the aim of poverty reduction and eradication

Policy Coherence is defined by the OECD as the systematic promotion of mutually reinforcing policy actions across government departments and agencies creating synergies towards achieving the agreed objectives. In its basic form policy coherence for development means making all policies that affect developing countries "coordinated, complementary and non-contradictory".

In line with Irelands Commitments on Policy Coherence for Development Dóchas recommends that the Inter-Departmental Committee on Development (IDCD) should play a role in the development of the new white paper on energy policy. The Terms of Reference of the IDCD defines its role as a consultative and advisory forum for inter-departmental coherence, and as a forum to facilitate the best use of expertise across the public service in Ireland's development aid programme. In this capacity, the IDCD provides an administrative and institutional support mechanism for promoting PCD across government departments.

Efforts must also be made to make the new policy coherent with Ireland's international hunger and food security priorities as outlined in Ireland's policy for international

development -One World, One future. In particular, recognition must be given to the effect biofuel policies are having on land resources and food growing areas across the developing world. The effect of these policies directly contradicts Irelands work on Hunger and sustainable development.

The paper should highlight the important of regional level coordination (EU level) and the need to continuously and effectively engage with international policy developments

#### **4. Recognising climate change not just an environmental problem**

We note that the Green paper recognises ‘Climate change as the most serious and threatening global environmental problem’. It is internationally recognised that Climate change has profound implications for virtually all aspects of human well-being, from jobs and health to food security and peace within and among nations. In this regard, we urge the white paper to recognise climate change not just as an environmental problem but as part of the broader development and economic agenda.

Finally, in line with the recommendations of the recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report, we urge the white paper to commit to reduce our reliance on fossil fuels, oil, coal, gas and peat, and transition to a renewable energy system with a mix of renewable technologies. In this regard, the paper should also set clear time-bound targets.