



**Roinn Cumarsáide, Gníomhaithe
ar son na hAeráide & Comhshaoil**
Department of Communications,
Climate Action & Environment

The Climate Action Regional Offices are an initiative of the Government of Ireland funded by the department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment and managed through Local Authorities.

November 2021

Local Authority Climate Change Adaptation Strategy / Climate Action Plan Annual Progress Report 2021 An Overview

**Oifig Réigiúnach um
Gníomhú ar son na hAeráide
Rialtas Áitiúil**

Climate Action
Regional Offices
Local Government



Introduction

The local authority progress reporting template was developed to enable the local authority sector to report on the progress of the implementation of their climate change adaptation strategies / climate action plans on an annual basis. The National Adaptation Framework (NAF) “mandated the development and implementation of sectoral adaptation plans and local authority adaptation strategies which together, would form part of the national response to the impacts of climate change.” Additionally, the NAF outlined the requirement to report on progress in terms of meeting the terms of the Framework and sectoral plans. This is the second of these reports and follows on two years after the adoption of these plans by all 31 County Councils. The first of these reports was developed and submitted in December 2020. The progress reporting template was designed in consideration of the different methods and styles used by local authorities across the country, in the publication of their strategies / plans. It enables the information from each to be collated into a national progress report for the sector. The following is an overview / summary of this national progress report.

Progress

In 2020, local authorities reported on 2451 actions, adopted the previous year by their respective elected members, covering actions in mitigation, adaptation, community engagement, biodiversity, mainstreaming and awareness building. For 2021, the number of actions reported on has increased to 2462 actions. A breakdown of these additional actions is provided later in this overview. With the increase in national climate ambition and the number of new actions reported by local authorities for 2021 the CAROs aim to ensure that these actions are fully incorporated into the forthcoming Local Authority Climate Action Plans and subject to all statutory requirements of the plan making process. Additionally, the Dublin Metropolitan CARO aims to undertake a review of these actions to ensure that the SEA/EA requirements are adhered to in the current plans across the Dublin region.

The format for reporting has remained the same as it was for 2020 with local authorities asked to categorise the progress, they've made on implementing their actions across five categories including: not started, ongoing, postponed, completed and new. Local authorities were also asked to update the list of external stakeholders involved in the implementation of their actions as well as provide comments on how actions are progressing. The following charts show the level of progress made over the last year along with the progress level reported by the sector in 2020.

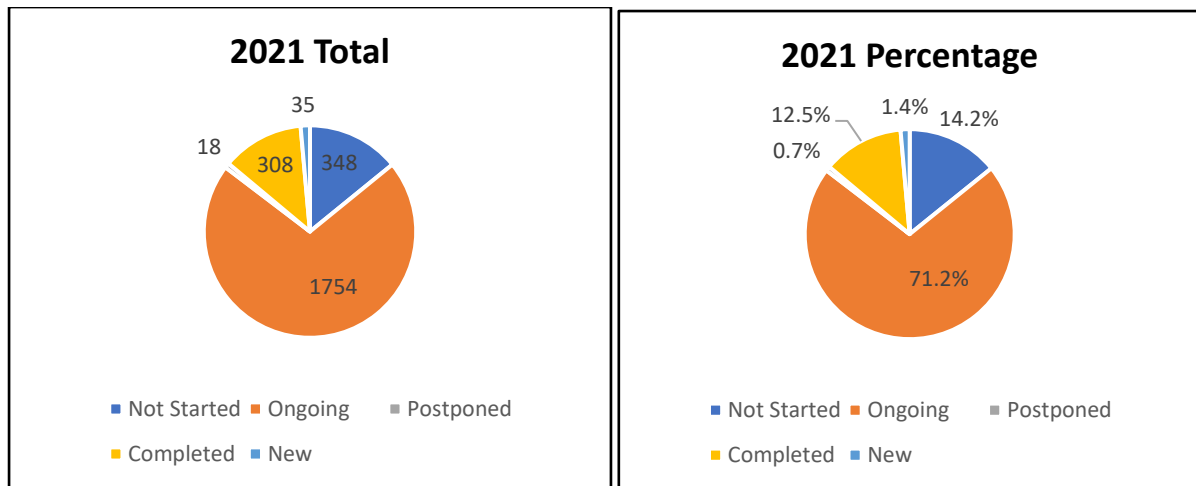


Chart 1.1 & 1.2 – Breakdown of Actions by number and percentage for 2021 – based on progress category

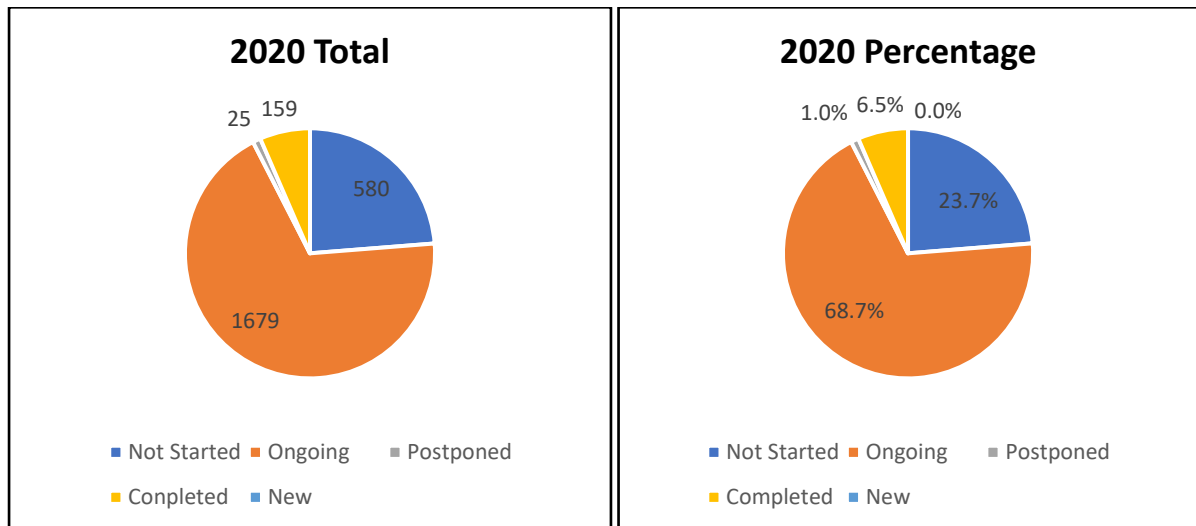


Chart 1.3 & 1.4 – Breakdown of Actions by number and percentage for 2020 – based on progress category

Two years after the adoption of the strategies / action plans local authorities have completed the implementation of 12.5% of all actions. This is up from 6.5% in 2020. Local authorities continue to make significant progress with 71.2% of all actions started and ongoing towards completion. 68.7% of actions were reported as ‘Ongoing’ in 2020. 14.2% of actions have not yet started however they are still planned to commence within the timeline outlined in their respective strategies / plans. This category has reduced from 23.7% as reported in 2020. 0.7% of actions were categorised as ‘Postponed’ down from 1% last year. Reasons for postponement are outlined later in this overview. 35 new actions were introduced within this reporting year by the sector with 24 actions removed or merged with other actions, this is also outlined later in this overview.

As outlined above 83.7% of all actions are either ongoing or completed. And as highlighted in the 2020 report, the actions that are ongoing are broad ranging, a lot of these actions will take several years to be completed while others will have a rolling duration. For example, actions such as gulley cleaning or flood defence

monitoring activities will always be fundamental in increasing the adaptive capacity of council services to address the impacts of more frequent and intense rainfall events due to climate change. The rolling nature of such actions will be required as an ongoing endeavour and are likely to take a higher level of priority in the future. As such the progress of the local authority sector should not be solely measured on the number of ‘Completed’ actions, but rather the mainstreaming of climate action across all LA functions and services and enabling the Country to increase its overall resilience to the impacts of climate change.

The dashboards incorporated in the Progress Report provide a breakdown of progress by local authorities. As this is the second year of reporting the 2020 Progress Report has been included with this year’s submission to for ease of reference. As part of the 2021 submission an additional ‘Comparison Worksheet’ has been developed to enable side-by-side comparison of a local authority’s progress for 2020 and 2021. This worksheet is also filterable by local authority allowing for a local authority to be viewed individually, thus avoiding the need to scroll down the full page. Additional columns are also filterable enabling the selection of actions under a particular progress category to be viewed in unison. An overview of an individual local authority’s progress can also be selected on this worksheet through the pie charts at the top of this worksheet by selecting a local authority from the options box provided (for both 2020 and 2021).

A breakdown of progress by local authority is now provided in the following bar chart. The full colour part of each bar shows the percentage of actions currently ongoing with the dashed part of each bar showing the percentage of actions that have been completed to date. Local authorities are colour coded by their CARO region as per the dashboards in the National Annual Progress Report.

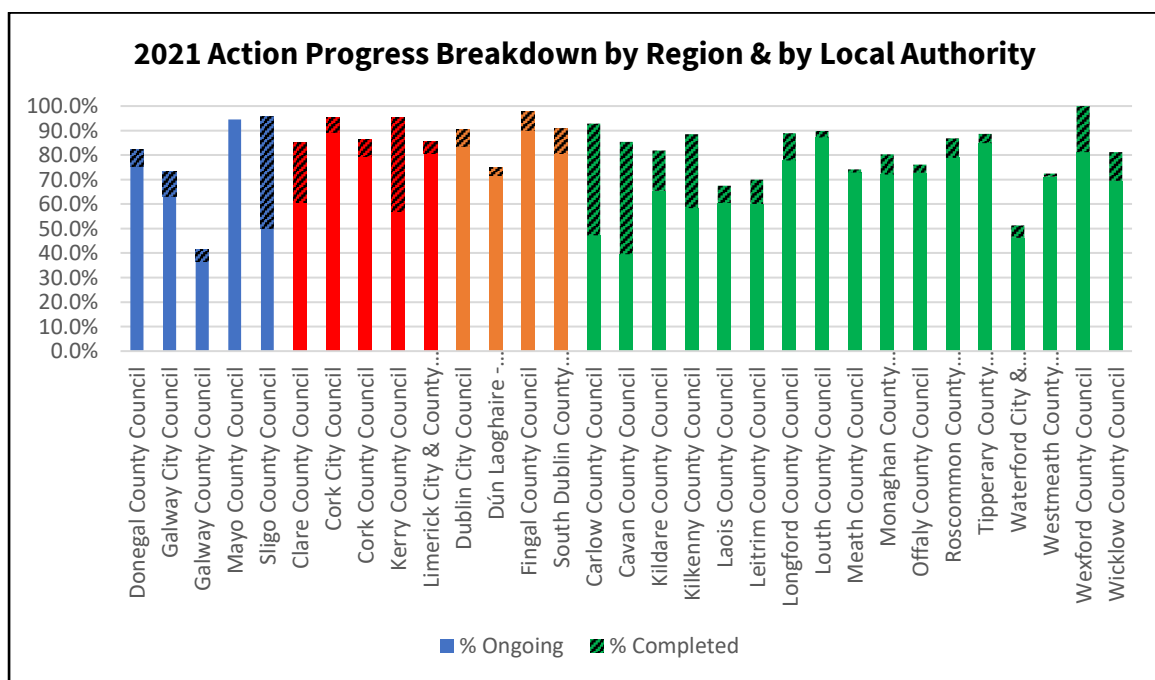


Chart 1.5 – 2021 Action Progress by Local Authority and Region – ahowing percentage of actions completed and ongoing

Actions Postponed

0.7% (18) of actions were categorised as postponed in this year's report. Down from 1% (25) the previous year. COVID-19 remains the main reason behind postponing the implementation of actions, identified on 9 occasions. Other reasons provided included:

- Staff resources
- Funding issues
- Action in this area was been undertaken and coordinated at a national level and therefore a local level initiative was not required
- A different approach was being prioritised at this time instead (e.g. increasing renewable energy use in individual buildings instead of implementing a district heating project at this time)
- The action turned out to not be suitable as uptake by people using it was very low

Actions Completed

12.3% (303) actions have now been completed by local authorities. As highlighted in the 2020 overview, all adaptation actions in strategies / plans can be classified as either soft, green or grey. As stated in the Local Authority Strategy Development Guidelines 2018, 'Soft' adaptation actions involve alterations in behaviour, regulation or systems of management, such as land-use planning policy. 'Green' adaptation actions are those that seek to use ecological properties to enhance the resilience of human and natural systems in the face of climate change. With 'Grey' adaptation typically involving technical or engineering-oriented responses to climatic impacts. Most actions categorised as 'Completed' in the 2020 annual report submission were classified as soft actions. In this (2021) national annual report, the majority of actions completed to date are still 'soft' actions however the report does show that more 'soft' actions completed within the last year are connected to, and will help guide, 'grey' and 'green' type actions going forward to combat the impacts of climate change.

Actions - New, Merged, and Removed

35 new actions were reported by local authorities for this 2021 Progress Report submission. The following chart shows which local authorities introduced these new actions.

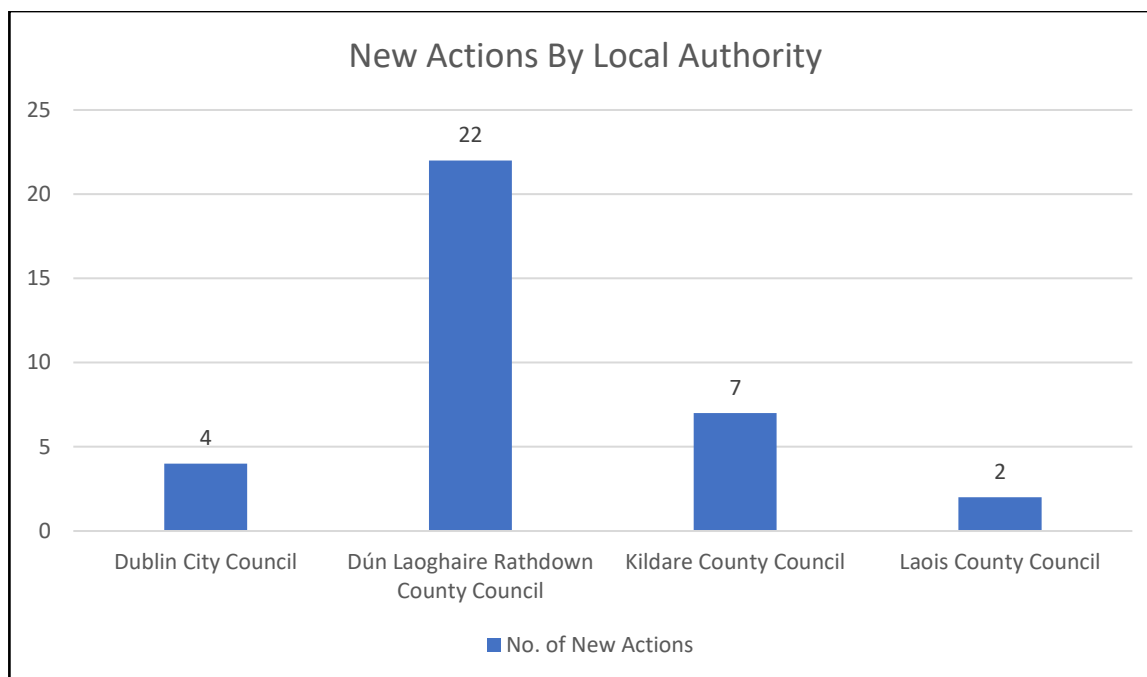


Chart 1.6 - number of new actions introduced for 2021 Progress Report by Local Authority

Of the 35 new actions reported by local authorities, 9 actions were also reported as ‘Ongoing’ with 3 also reported as ‘Completed’. To keep the focus of this year’s Annual Report submission on the implementation progress of actions originally part of Climate Change Adaptation Strategies / Climate Action Plans as well as to avoid double counting of actions (in charts on the dashboards) all 35 actions are categorised as ‘New’ (only). Their category of progress will be captured in next year’s Annual Progress Report. Additionally, Dublin City Council reduced their number of actions through removal or merging with other actions. 24 actions in total from Dublin City Council were either removed or merged with other actions. The actions removed have been strikethrough(ed) in the ‘Master Report’ with the original text remaining underneath for reference. These changes resulted in a net increase of 11 actions for the local government sector in this years Annual Progress Report.

External Stakeholders Updated

Many external stakeholders were identified by Local Authorities to help deliver on action implementation through their Adaptation Strategies / Climate Action Plans and additionally in the 2020 Annual Progress Report. Local Authorities were asked to update their external stakeholder list for this 2021 Progress Report after another year of implementing actions. The updated breakdown of external stakeholders involved in the implementation of local authority actions follows.

Government Department	No of Entries	Action Ongoing	Actions Completed
*Department of Environment, Climate & Communication (formally DCCA) – both included	50	40	3
Department of Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht	27	16	1
Department of Agriculture, Food & Marine	25	18	4
Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government	34	24	1
Department of Transport Tourism and Sport	24	21	2
Government Department (no specific dept mentioned)	9	8	0
Department of Health	3	3	0
*Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	6	3	1
Total	158	133	12

The remaining external stakeholders, most identified and National Bodies, are listed below:

External Stakeholder	No of Entries	Action Ongoing	Actions Completed
Office of Public Works (OPW)	182	134	18
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	99	73	12
Irish Water	80	55	12
Academia / 3rd Level Institutions	79	52	1
National Parks & Wildlife Services (NPWS)	78	56	6
Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI)	75	61	13
Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)	46	40	2
National Transport Authority (NTA)	40	37	0
Local Authorities Waters Programme (LAWPRO)	30	23	1
The Health Service Executive (HSE)	24	21	2
Met Eireann	23	18	3
Climate Ireland	23	16	3
Waste Enforcement Regional Lead Authorities (WERLA)	22	15	7
Regional Assemblies	21	16	1
Irish Farmers Association (IFA)	17	15	2
National Biodiversity Data Centre	15	11	1
The Heritage Council	15	14	0
Marine Institute	12	10	1
An Taisce	12	11	1
Enterprise Ireland	10	9	0
ESB	11	8	1
Geological Survey Ireland (GSI)	9	7	1
Teagasc	9	6	0
Bord Ná Mona	7	5	0
Inland Fisheries	6	4	1
Faite Ireland	4	3	0
Listed as - Sectors in the National Adaptation Framework (NAF)	4	3	1
Eirgrid	4	4	0
Waterways Ireland	4	2	1
Gas Networks Ireland	3	2	0
Bord Gais	2	1	0
Invasive Species Ireland	2	2	0

National Adaptation Framework Themes & Sectors

The above information categorised under sectors identified in the National Adaptation Framework, where relevant follows:

Themes, Sectors and Lead Departments under the National Adaptation Framework			
Theme	Sector Level		Lead Departments
Natural and Cultural Capital	Seafood, Agriculture, Forestry, Biodiversity, Built & Archaeological Heritage		DAFM; DCHG
External Stakeholder	No. of Entries	Actions Ongoing	Actions Completed
Department of Agriculture, Food & Marine	25	18	4
Department of Culture, Heritage and Gaeltacht	27	16	1
Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)	99	73	12
National Parks & Wildlife Services (NPWS)	78	56	6
National Biodiversity Data Centre	15	11	1
The Heritage Council	15	14	0
An Taisce	12	11	1
Teagasc	9	6	0
Inland Fisheries	6	4	1
Bord na Mona	7	5	0
Invasive Species Ireland	2	2	0
Waterways Ireland	4	2	1
Total	299	218	27

Critical Infrastructure	Transport Infrastructure, Electricity and Gas Networks, Communication Networks		DTTAS; DECC
External Stakeholder	No. of Entries	Actions Ongoing	Actions Completed
Department of Transport Tourism and Sport	24	21	2
*Department of Environment, Climate & Communication (formally DCCAE)	50	40	3
Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII)	46	40	2
National Transport Authority (NTA)	40	37	0
ESB	11	8	1
Bord Gais	2	1	0
Eirgrid	4	4	0
Gas Networks Ireland	3	2	0
Total	180	153	8

Water Resource and Flood Risk Management	Flood Risk Management, Water Quality, Water Services Infrastructure		OPW; DHPLG
External Stakeholder	No. of Entries	Actions Ongoing	Actions Completed
Department of Housing, Planning & Local Government	34	24	1
*Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	6	3	1
Office of Public Works (OPW)	182	134	18
Irish Water	80	55	12
Local Authorities Waters Programme (LAWPRO)	30	23	1
Marine Institute	12	10	1
Geological Survey Ireland (GSI)	9	7	1
Total	353	256	35

Public Health	Health		Dept. of Health
External Stakeholder	No. of Entries	Actions Ongoing	Actions Completed
Department of Health	3	3	0
The Health Service Executive (HSE)	24	21	2
Total	27	24	2

Conclusion

The local authority sector, through this second annual progress report, has shown that progress is continuing with the implementation of actions from their Climate Change Adaptation Strategies / Climate Action Plans as well as with new actions introduced by several local authorities during 2021. It is noted that the development of new Local Authority Climate Action Plans (including both mitigation and adaptation actions), as part of the requirements of the Climate Action & Low Carbon Development Act 2021, will commence during 2022 along with the progression of Decarbonising Zones in each local authority area. Engagement with climate action is significantly increasing across all departments in the local government sector as well as in local communities which is translating into an ever-growing demand on CARO resources for supports and coordination. The business case 'Delivering Effective Climate Action 2030' outlined the need for increased climate action resources within Local Authorities and for an enhanced CARO structure. It will be important for the sector to maintain or increase the momentum it has gained over the last few years as it deals with increased targets, challenges, requirements, and responsibilities in the area of climate action. The Climate Action Regional Offices (CAROs) will continue to assist their local authorities on driving the implementation of these actions to the best of their ability as well as actions from sectoral adaptation plans where local authorities are identified as stakeholders. Additionally, the CAROs will continue to work with their local authorities to implement actions outlined in the All of Government Climate Action Plan 2019 and the recently published Climate Action Plan 2021, the Local Authority Climate Action Charter, and new actions that will be

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identified and delivered through the development of Local Authority Climate Action Plans as set out in the Climate Action & Low Carbon Development (Amendment) Act 2021.

It must also be noted that the level of work required to produce the Annual Progress Report and accompanying Overview, compared to that in 2020, increased significantly (due to working with 2 years of data). A further increase can be expected in 2022 if the same process is followed. To improve the reporting process for local authorities as well as for the CAROs, the development of an online reporting system/portal, which will provide additional functionality, will need to be undertaken. The CAROs aim to commence the development of this online reporting system in early 2022 and will ensure it will cater for the type of reporting needed for all types of actions that will be in the new Local Authority Climate Action Plans.