

Factsheet – how do we make decarbonisation fair?

Neither the impacts of climate change nor the costs of decarbonising the economy will be felt equally around the world or even within our own Island.

While the former will influence the decision we make on how quickly to act to reduce our greenhouse gas emissions, we need to also consider how to ensure that the costs of decarbonising our economy are shared equally within our society.

Who will be affected by the impacts of climate change the most?

Climate change impacts people around the world in different ways. The level of impact depends on the climate of the area and the wealth of the country. Climate change often makes existing problems more severe and there will be harsher impacts for poorer communities.

The poorest populations in the global south are already feeling the impacts of climate change more severely than other regions. This is due to a combination of their geographical location and their socio-economic situation, meaning they are not in a position to protect themselves from the impacts of climate change.

Changing weather patterns and increased extreme weather events pose risks to food availability. As food availability declines, it becomes more expensive. Where the impacts of climate change are the most severe people may be forced to leave their homes due to climate stressors, creating climate migrants. This might be to avoid severe drought, flood, storms.

The Germanwatch Climate Risk Index¹ shows that seven out of ten countries most affected by extreme weather events are among the least developed countries. Developing countries also have the lowest historical greenhouse gas emissions. Those that contributed the least to the problem are most affected by the impacts.

Although low-lying, flood prone regions in developed countries will also be impacted by increases in the frequency and severity of flooding events, their governments are more likely to be in a position to invest in the infrastructure needed to protect their properties and livelihoods.

In addition to geographical differences in the impact of climate change, consideration also needs to be given to the impacts on different generations. A child born today will grow up in a warmer world with risks of food shortages, infectious diseases, air pollution, floods and extreme heat. They may well also face greater economic instability.

¹ <https://germanwatch.org/en/cri>

What is a just transition?

Just transition is a process of shifting to a low or zero carbon economy in a fair and just manner so that no one is disproportionately impacted.

Within our Island the costs of decarbonisation will not be felt equally across different sectors of our communities. For example, consideration needs to be given to the rights and needs of the fossil fuel workers and energy consumers. How will we meet our ambitious climate targets without disproportionately impacting on the incomes and lives of these people and their families?

What have we committed to in Jersey?

The Carbon Neutral Strategy includes five principles. Principle 5 states:

We will make sure that carbon neutrality policies do not overall increase income inequality. The impacts of all carbon neutral policy options will be assessed to ensure a just transition to carbon neutrality.

How will we ensure a just transition in Jersey?

A crucial part of ensuring a 'just transition' in Jersey is the process of understanding what the impacts of decarbonisation are going to be across local communities so that we can mitigate against the worst impacts.

The Climate Conversations and the Citizens' Assembly have been set up to enable stakeholders to tell us what they think the impacts of decarbonisation will be on their lives and businesses. Once we have a better understanding of what the impacts will be on different communities, the next step will be to make sure that no one individual or group of people are disproportionately impacted by the decarbonisation policies proposed in our journey to become carbon neutral.

Some issues to consider:

- Our economy is dependent on fossil fuels. For example, the local gas and oil companies provide work for many people on the Island. What will happen to all those working in the fossil fuel sector as we decarbonise?
- Although Jersey is a wealthy jurisdiction, this wealth is not evenly distributed and there are households that cannot afford to adequately heat their homes. Decarbonising will require changes to the way in which we heat our homes. These changes will have an upfront cost that will disproportionately impact lower income households if they are left to cover the costs themselves. If the new, low carbon way of heating their home costs more who should pay for the difference?
- Greenhouse gas emissions from heating can be reduced by making energy efficiency improvements. In the long term this will reduce energy bills, but the

initial costs of those property improvements may be high. What should be done to ensure that everyone can improve the energy efficiency of their homes?

- Renewable energy technologies provide a low carbon source of energy. The high costs of small-scale renewables such as solar panels, mean they are unlikely to be an option for all in the near future without government support.
- There is a push towards electric cars in many countries. But until the cost comes down, they will be out of reach to many people. What can we do to ensure everyone has access to low-carbon transport options?
- Increasing the price for polluting activities, such as through a carbon tax, is a technique used in many countries to discourage fossil fuel use and make greener alternatives more attractive. Do such taxes allow those rich enough to pay the premium to continue polluting while lower income households are left with fewer options?

Examples of just transition projects around the world

Germany had once had the largest coal industry in Europe, but in 2019 it had switched to producing more energy from renewable resources than fossil fuels. Through government support and investment they purposefully diversified the region's employment base and promoted local entrepreneurship so that a key area that was reliant on the coal industry is now the largest solar supplier in Europe.

Other similar examples come from the USA's Just Transition Fund which supports innovation in sustainable development in coal communities in Appalachia and India which has received support from the UK's development finance institution to train women in the solar sector.

In the UK, organisations are calling for a green recovery² to ensure that investment to stimulate the post-pandemic economy also supports decarbonisation.

Read more about just transition:

- Wales Centre for Public Policy – Transition to a fair and climate just low carbon economy
https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=TsHYUrd1ik8&feature=emb_lo
[go](#)
- Scotland's Just Transition Commission
<https://www.gov.scot/groups/just-transition-commission/>

² ²⁰ <https://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/Greening%20the%20post-Covid%20recovery%20inquiry%20-%20Link%20submission%2013.08.2020.pdf>