



An Roinn Aeráide,
Fuinnimh agus Comhshaoil
Department of Climate,
Energy and the Environment

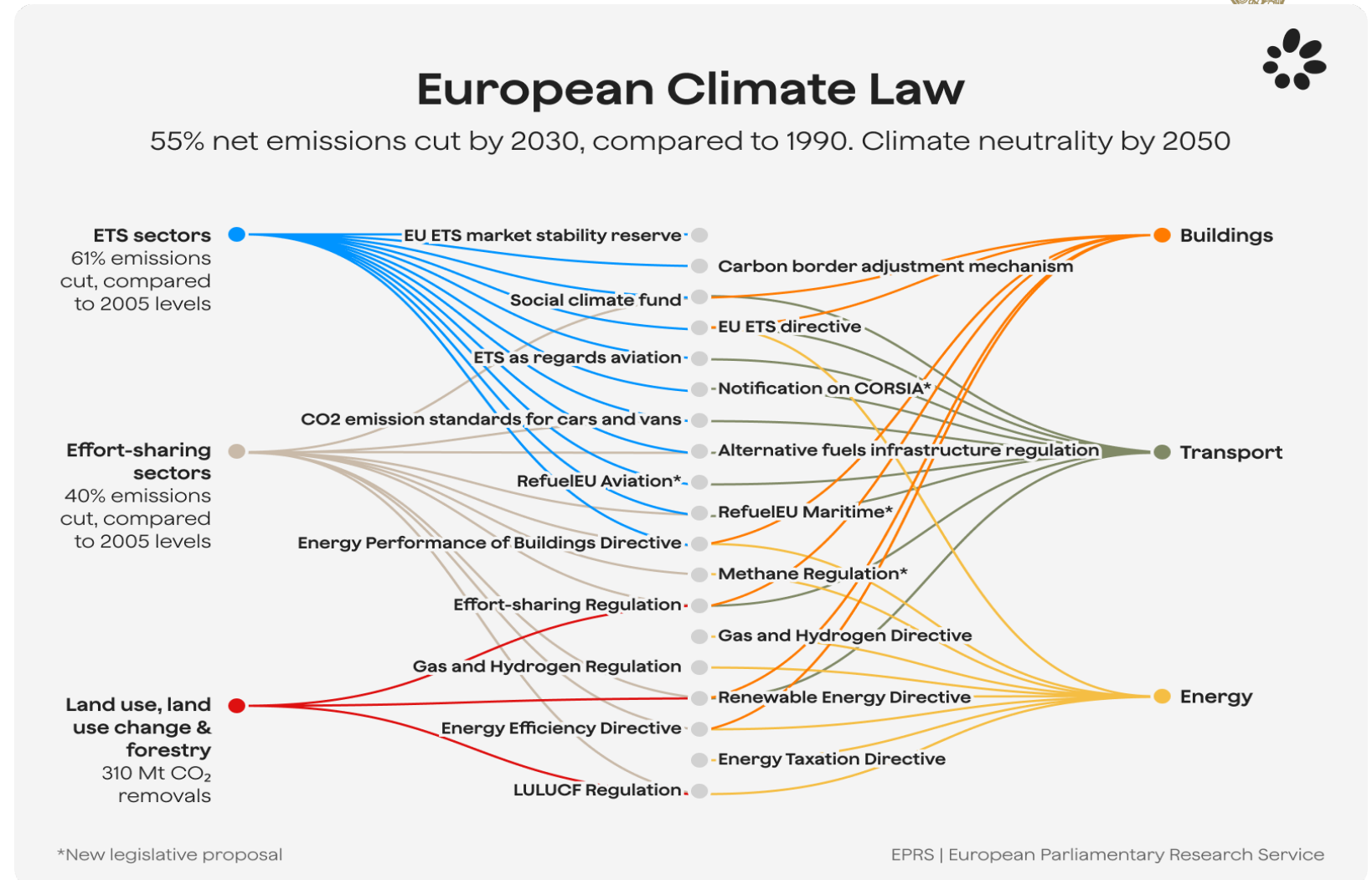
Irish Peatlands Role in Climate Mitigation and Adaptation

Dr. Stephen Barry, Technical Advisor on Land-use and Climate,
Environmental, Climate, Research and Advisory Unit.

EU Climate Law sets ambitious targets



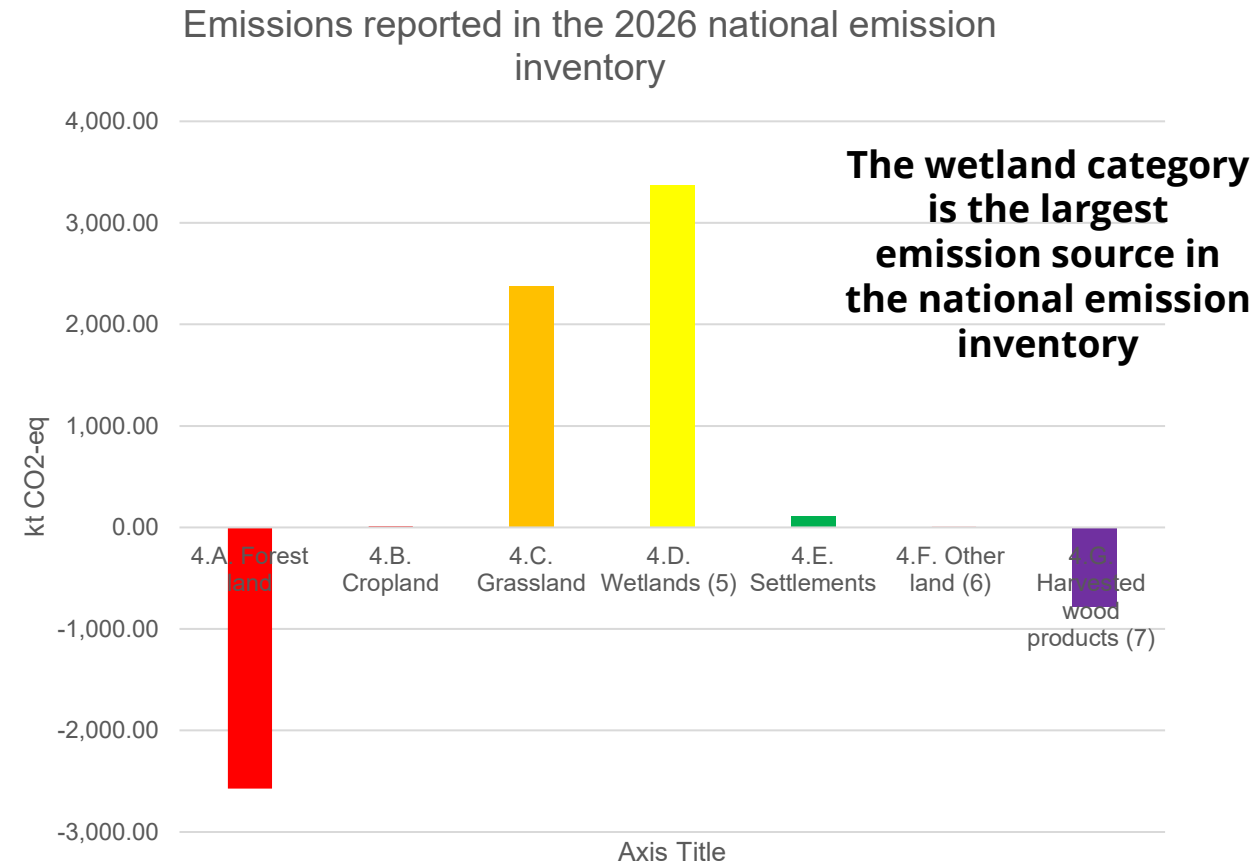
- 55% by 2030 below 1990
- 66.25% to 72.5% below 1990 by 2035
- 90% below 1990 by 2040
- Net Zero by 2050



Ireland off track in meeting climate obligations



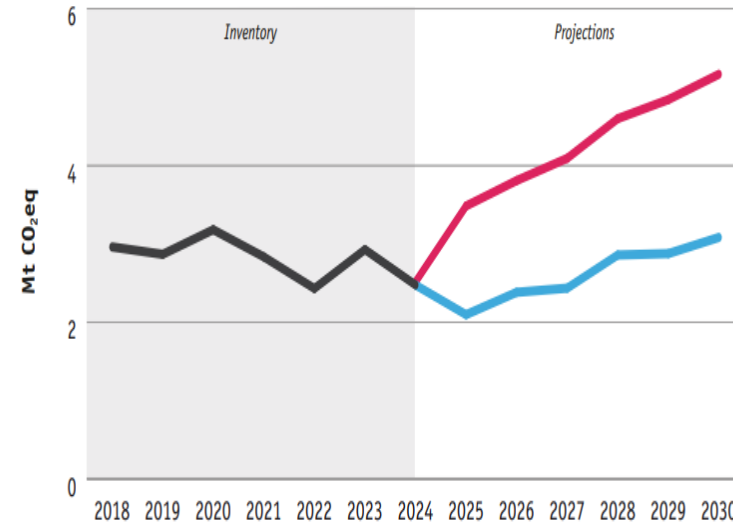
- Ireland continues to have the capacity to meet climate commitments in 2050
- This depends heavily on energy system mitigation **and** on AFLOU mitigation
- However, according to projections released by the EPA, our carbon budgets will be exhausted by 2035
- Mitigation in the AFLOU sector is therefore **critical**



LULUCF and Irelands GHG emissions



- Emissions are set to increase in the With Existing Measures (WEM) scenario
- No significant reductions in With Additional Measures (WAM) scenario.
- Age Profile of Irelands forestry sector will convert Ireland's forestry from sink to source by 2030.
- Despite rewetting, emissions increase between 2030-2050
- Peatlands play an important role in Irelands climate mitigation strategies

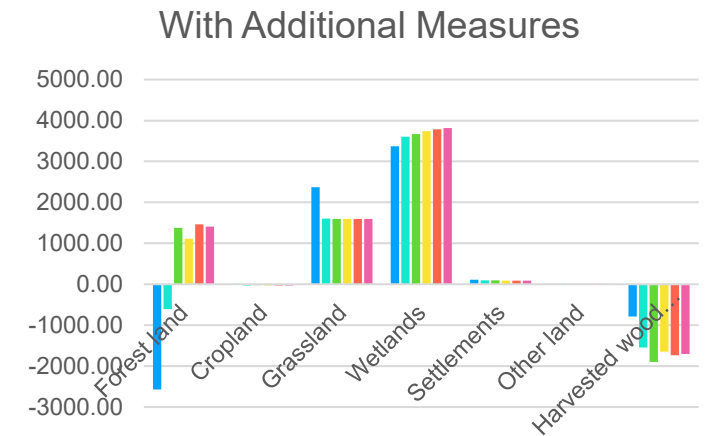
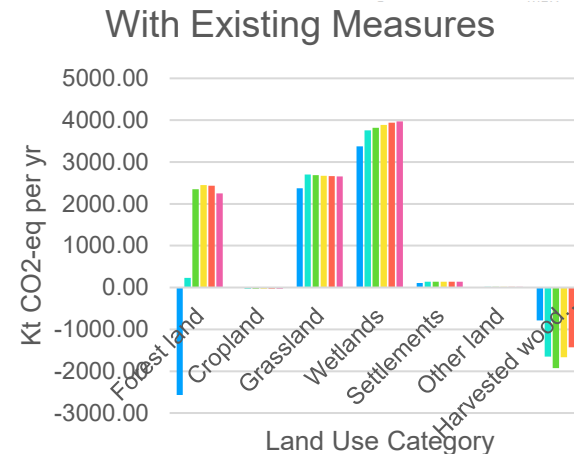


LULUCF sector emissions trajectory to 2030.

The **black** line is reported emissions

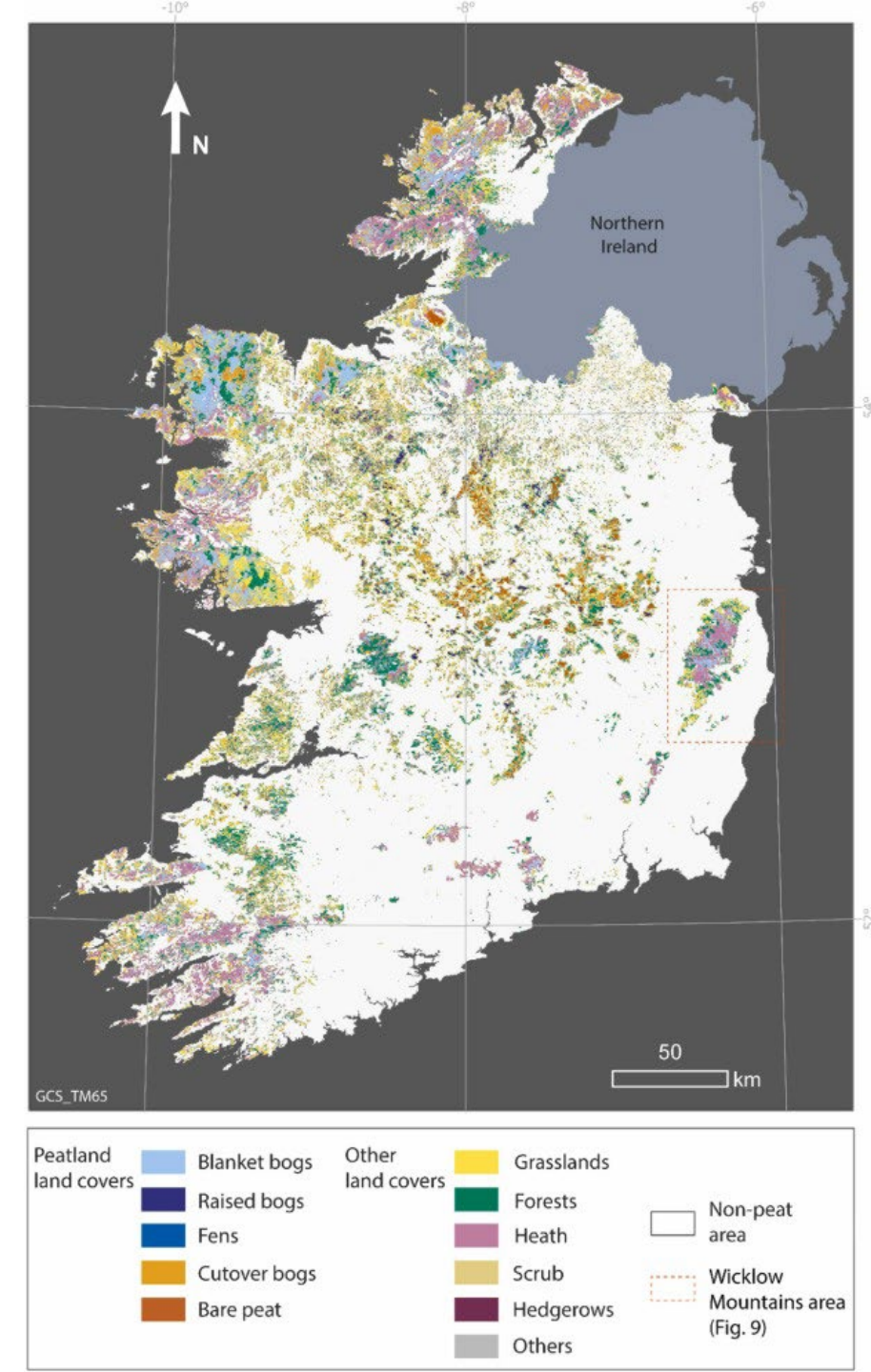
The **Red** line is the WEM scenario

The **blue** line is the WAM scenario



Peatlands in Ireland

- Spatial distribution of peatlands an active area of research
- According to national emission inventory, Peatlands in Ireland cover ~1.2 million ha's
- The latest research suggests about 36% are Raised bogs and 63% are Blanket bogs
- Distinct geographical distribution of raised bogs and blanket bogs

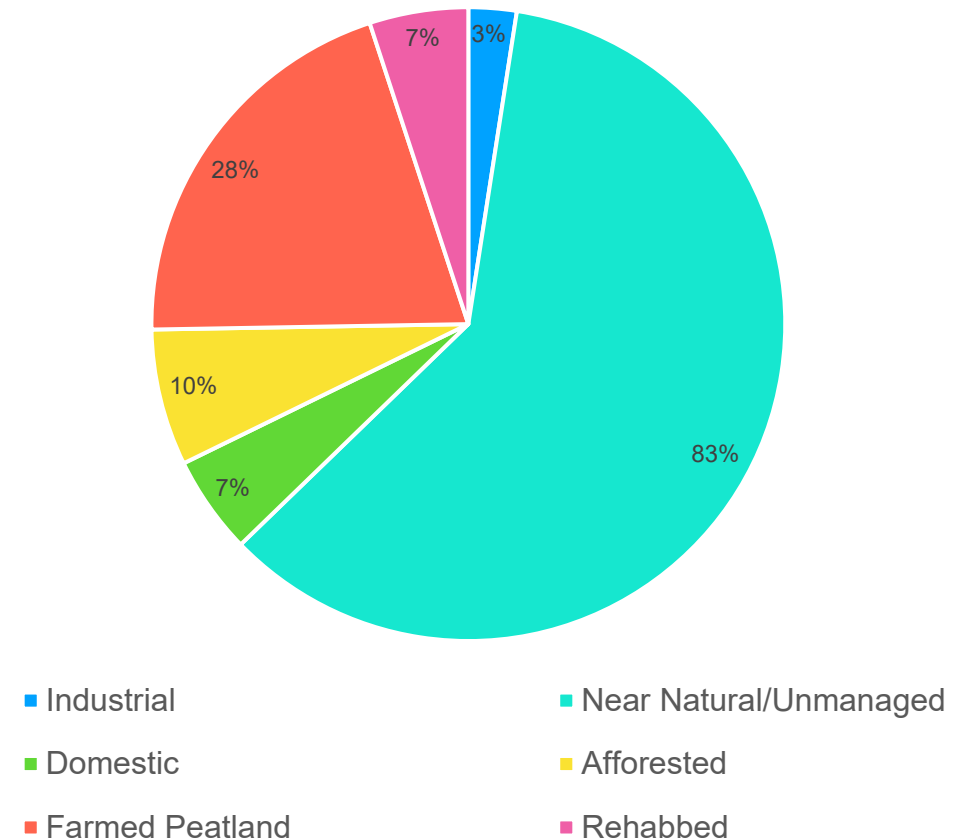


Peatland Condition in Ireland



- Largest category of land-use in Ireland is Near-Natural Peatlands (60%) as reported in the national emission inventory.
- Near Natural peatlands are defined as having experienced anthropogenic pressure to some extent but have not been subject to extraction.
- 40% of peatlands in degraded state and largest sector in Agricultural use

Peatland Land-use in Ireland in 2025



Selected Climate Action Plan Targets

- 8,000 ha per annum of afforestation
- Limit deforestation rates to less than 900 ha/year by 2030;
- Rehabilitation of 65,000 ha of peatlands
- Water table management on 80,000 ha of organic soils
- Improving management for carbon sequestration of at least 450,000 ha of grasslands on mineral soils;
- About 10% of peatlands are state owned



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland



Climate Action Plan 2025



Evidence to support adaptation measures

DRAFT

- A new National Adaptation Framework (NAF) in 2024
- the first National Climate Change Risk Assessment (NCCRA) was published in June 2025
- Under the NAF, Sectoral Adaptation Plans (SAPs) were developed across 13 key sectors and
- The Biodiversity SAP, which was developed by NPWS and is aligned with the NBAP, sets out actions to build climate resilience in the Biodiversity sector
- Wetlands are acknowledged in BSAP as being vulnerable to the impacts of climate change (drought, wildfire, changes in seasonal patterns)
- Also acknowledged as providing valuable ecosystem services like flood alleviation

Sectoral Adaptation Plan 2025 Biodiversity

Prepared under the 2024 National
Adaptation Framework

Restoration Activities



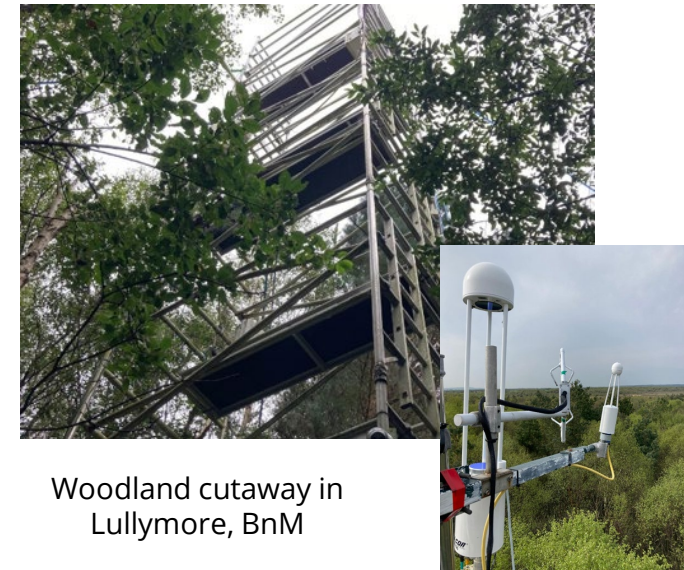
- BnM (~25,000 completed, 8000 ha to be rewetted)
- NPWS (~8 -10,000 ha's)
- Coillte (target of 4000 ha's by 2030)
- Private NGOs and Organisations (<2000 ha)



Scientific Developments



- Monitoring required to support reporting and understand rehabilitation measure effectiveness
- Significant investment carbon, ecological and hydrological monitoring
- Results here will support future peatland management.



Conclusion



- Ireland has a challenging road ahead to meet climate commitments
- The LULUCF sector is important because it is currently a net source – needs to be net sink of GHGs
- Wetlands are currently the largest category in the LULUCF sector
- Also, there is growing awareness in Ireland of wetlands role in climate adaptation
- Significant investment underway to rewet peatlands and in the development of science underpinning their management.
- Irelands well placed to be a leader in peatland management with ground breaking projects under way like EDRRS and NPWS restoration.