

Environment (Wales) Act 2016 Factsheet



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

Climate Change



Background

The Environment (Wales) Act sets out the approach for the sustainable management of natural resources in Wales, which will help to mitigate for and adapt to the impacts of climate change. This includes strengthening the health of our natural resources to reduce the impacts of climate change on them, considering the services that natural resources provide and identifying opportunities to provide green growth. This new approach also enables resilience of ecosystems to be considered as part of the decision making process for activities from the outset.

2050 Greenhouse Gas Emissions Target

To ensure that Wales is contributing to the reduction of greenhouse gas emission, the Act places a duty on the Welsh Ministers to ensure that the net Welsh emissions account in 2050 is at least 80% lower than the baseline.

Interim targets

Interim emission targets will be set for 2020, 2030 and 2040 and will be introduced by the end of 2018. These interim targets will assist in evaluating the progress made towards meeting the long-term 2050 target.

Carbon budgeting

The Act places a duty on the Welsh Ministers to set five yearly carbon budgets, which set limits on the total amount of emissions that can be emitted in Wales. Carbon budgets are set for specified periods, known as budgetary periods.

The first budgetary period will be for 2016–2020 and then every five years up until 2050. Each carbon budget will be set in advance, with the first and second carbon budgets being set before the end of 2018 and the third budget by the end of 2020.

For each budgetary period the Welsh Ministers will publish a report setting out their proposals and policies for meeting the carbon budget for that period.

Carbon budgets must be consistent with meeting the interim targets guiding them towards the 2050 target.

Progress

Welsh Ministers must publish a final statement after each budgetary period and target, outlining if they have met the budget or target. This will need to be done within 2 years after the budgetary period or interim target year. Each statement is to be laid before the National Assembly for Wales.

In each final statement for a carbon budget, the Welsh Ministers will include an estimate of emissions from the consumption and use of goods and services in Wales.

Governance – advisory body

As the science of climate change evolves and more information becomes available, the Act provides flexibility to ensure that the targets and carbon budgets reflect the most up to date information. The Act enables the Welsh Ministers to amend targets and carbon budgets in response to new scientific evidence or European and International developments. Before setting or amending interim targets or carbon budgets, the Welsh Ministers must obtain advice from the advisory body.

The advisory body must also report on the progress being made in relation to each carbon budget and target.

Timeline

The Act became law in March 2016, with the climate change provisions taking effect two months later.

Interim targets for 2020, 2030 and 2040 and the first two carbon budgets for the periods 2016-2020 and 2021-2025 will be set before the end of 2018.

The remaining budget periods will be set at least 5 years before the start of their respective budget period.

More information

You can find out more about the Act on our website at:

<http://gov.wales/environmentact>

You can also subscribe to our monthly e-bulletin by emailing us at:

NRBulletin@wales.gsi.gov.uk