

CUT CARBON, CUT COSTS –
MINISTER GORMLEY CALLS ON BUSINESS & PUBLIC SECTOR TO USE NEW
ON-LINE TOOL TO MEASURE CARBON AND REDUCE COSTS

“Cut Carbon. Cut Costs,” so said Mr. John Gormley, T.D., Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, today (Wednesday 29th April 2009) as he launched a comprehensive Irish-developed Carbon Management Tool (CMT) for organisations in Ireland to assist them in managing their carbon, cutting their costs and improving their competitiveness. Available at www.Change.ie, the Carbon Management Tool is a free online application, developed by the Change campaign as part of the Government’s commitment to tackling climate change and lowering carbon emissions.

“Effective carbon management will not only reduce the amount of carbon emissions produced but it will also cut costs,” said the Minister for the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, Mr. John Gormley, T.D. “Every organisation can save money through knowing its carbon emissions and taking steps to reduce them through more effective energy supply and usage, improved travel policies and effective water and waste management.”

The Change.ie Carbon Management Tool will benefit all organisations – from corner shops, offices and SMEs to large manufacturing plants. All can make considerable cost savings from a few hundred to thousands of euro, by using the tool.

It provides the facility to calculate emissions from energy, transport, water and waste using data relevant for Ireland, including data from Sustainable Energy Ireland and the Commission for Energy Regulation. It provides guidance on actions that organisations can take to better carbon manage their operations in line with advice from Sustainable Energy Ireland and the Environmental Protection Agency. All information gathered on the Change.ie CMT is confidential and users can access their data at any time with their own personal login details.

“Tackling climate change has to be a collective effort. Government and many large and multi national businesses are taking significant measures to lower emissions but we all need to work together,” said Minister Gormley. “I encourage every business no matter how large or small, as well as voluntary organisations and Public Sector bodies, to go to Change.ie, download the Carbon Management Tool and find out what their carbon number is and then follow the steps to reduce it and commit to reviewing it every 6-12 months.”

/...

The Change campaign consulted with many organisations across the public and private sectors to develop the tool to ensure that it is applicable to Irish businesses and public sector organisations. It was tested by 45 organisations across the public and private sectors and their feedback has guided both the format and content of the Change.ie Carbon Management Tool to ensure that it is both user-friendly and relevant to their needs.

“While the economic situation dominates most people’s thoughts these days, climate change is an issue which can not and will not remain far from the agenda of government or business. Our economy is moving in a greener direction, the smart economy is a green economy,” said Minister Gormley. “The Carbon Management Tool will provide the knowledge and the resources that can help businesses and organisations in Ireland learn that when you cut carbon, you cut costs. The tool demonstrates that taking measures to reduce your environmental impact need no longer be seen as a burden to business, but can be viewed as an opportunity to reduce operating costs and increase competitiveness while contributing to the challenge of tackling climate change. This will also help Ireland meet its commitments to reduce our carbon emissions in accordance with the Kyoto protocol and at an EU level.”

The Change.ie CMT calculator has been developed in line with the internationally recognised Greenhouse Gas Protocol methodology, which is at the forefront of greenhouse gas reporting and accounting.

The content and layout of the tool was developed under the supervision of a steering committee of senior personnel from Sustainable Energy Ireland (SEI), the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Department of the Environment, Heritage & Local Government, The Department of Transport, The Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources, Met Éireann, The Department of Agriculture, Teagasc and Fáilte Ireland. The Association of Irish Energy Agencies and the City & County Managers' Association Climate Change Working Group were key to ensuring that the tool is suitable for all local authorities to use.

ENDS.

For further information:

Neasa Kane, 087-232 0038 / Mary Murphy, 087-233 6415 /

Claire O’Hara, 087-613 2005 / 01-284 6338

NOTES TO EDITORS

1. How the Change.ie CMT works

Once an organisation registers their details they can manage their carbon by progressing through the Change.ie CMT's five steps:-

- Commit – get your organisation to commit to the climate change challenge. Learn how to make the business case for climate change to staff and management and communicate to everyone that your organisation is using the Change.ie CMT.
- Calculate – input data on energy, transport, travel, water and waste, and find your organisation's carbon number.
- Plan – make a plan of action for the organisation to lower its carbon emissions and therefore its costs and set targets.
- Act – implement your Change Plan, by first communicating it to staff and management, and enlisting the support of all as they are key to its success.
- Review – update the information and review progress every 3-6 months – users can return to access, review or update their saved data at any time using their own personal login.

As with all carbon calculators and emission factors, a number of assumptions have been made, including that recycling has a zero emissions rating on the Change.ie CMT. Although this figure represents a simplification, it is sourced from the International Panel on Climate Change and is a suitable emission figure until further and more comprehensive data is available for the Life Cycle Assessment of products. In line with international best practice a single grid emission factor will be used for electricity supply.

2. Climate Change

The biggest contributor to climate change is carbon dioxide, which mostly comes from burning fossil fuels (coal, oil, gas and peat). Much of what we do involves the use of energy generated through burning these fossil fuels, so the way we live, work and travel has a huge bearing on climate change. According to the EPA, industrial and commercial activity in 2007 accounted for 17.9% of total greenhouse gas emission, indicating the important role Irish business has in Ireland's impact in climate change. As part of our commitment to the Kyoto Protocol Ireland must reduce emissions to 13% of 1990 levels by 2012 and must also contribute to an overall reduction of 20% within the EU by 2020. Signing up to using the Carbon Management Tool is a first step for businesses and organisations in Ireland to make a contribution to reaching these targets.