

## **Facing Up to Climate Change - Written evidence**

Climate is changing and the trends in statistics on flooding, precipitation and temperature in Scotland over the last 40 years have already required changes in our approach to risk and uncertainty. Legislation has now been set in place, notably the UK Climate Change Act with a statutory target for the UK to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by at least 80% by 2050, and the Climate Change (Scotland) Act with a reduction target of 42% in Scotland by 2020. At European Union level, Member States have agreed to increase the share of renewable energy to 20% by 2020 and the Scottish Government has set itself a target of 50% of Scotland's electricity from renewable sources by 2020. In order to reduce emissions, the Scottish Government's Climate Change Delivery Plan includes targets of:

- A largely de-carbonised heat sector by 2050 with significant progress by 2030 through a combination of reduced demand and energy efficiency, together with a massive increase in the use of renewable or low carbon heating
- Almost complete decarbonisation of road transport by 2050 with significant progress by 2030 through wholesale adoption of electric cars and vans, and significant decarbonisation of rail by 2050
- A comprehensive approach to ensure that carbon (including the cost of carbon) is fully factored into strategic and local decisions about rural land use

However, the gap between the necessary policies and where we are now, is large. Certainly the capacity of a government to implement changes, particularly where great uncertainty or long timescales are involved, depends fundamentally on public engagement and effective institutional structures. In order to inform the work of the Inquiry, the Committee would welcome views on some of the following issues where people/organisations have experience or expertise:

### *Individuals*

- Do you perceive the changing weather patterns in Scotland and globally as affecting you and/or your organisation?
- What are the impacts of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act on you and/or your organisation?
- What do you plan to do in response to these factors over the next 5 – 10 years?
- What are the main barriers to change for you and/or your organisation?
- If you own or run a business, what are the barriers preventing you from exploiting the opportunities in the move to a low-carbon economy and society?
- How could your transport emissions be cut by 30% by 2020, and what are the barriers to achieving this?
- How will you improve the energy efficiency of your building?

### *Organisations*

- Do you perceive the changing weather patterns in Scotland and globally as affecting you and/or your organisation?
- What are the impacts of the Climate Change (Scotland) Act on the goals and activities of your organisation in terms of investment and exposure to risk?
- What do you plan to do in response to these factors over the next 5 – 10 years?
- How integrated is your response with other organisations in similar or related fields?
- What are the main barriers to change for you and/or your organisation?
- What are the relative merits for your organisation of a carbon tax; emissions trading; energy regulations for performance standards; or incentive schemes?

### *Energy generation*

- What do you see as the issues with public acceptance of increasing investments in renewable energy and its associated infrastructure?
- How do you see 1 in 10 buildings being heated by renewable heat technologies by 2020?
- What are the institutional, organisational and financial barriers to meeting the 50% target of renewable energy by 2020?
- Is there sufficient action to exploit the potential of microrenewables?
- What are the obstacles to cutting energy use?

### *Land use*

- How can we use our land most efficiently for energy, agriculture, and forestry to reduce carbon emissions and increase carbon storage, while providing food security, public amenity, and wildlife habitats?
- What do you see as the major barriers to changing rural land-use activities in this way?

### *Buildings*

- What is your view on how we can adapt our building/housing stock to cope with a greater incidence of extreme weather events?
- How should Government ensure that business/domestic energy efficiency measures are met?
- What are the current obstacles in the current planning and building regulations to implementing the measures envisaged in the Climate Change Act?

### *Transport*

- How could your organisation's transport emissions be cut by 30% by 2020, and what are the barriers to achieving this?

### **Submissions**

It would be helpful if submissions were kept to 4 pages or under, and sent **by 1 May 2010** to [mrand@royalsoced.org.uk](mailto:mrand@royalsoced.org.uk). Alternatively, hard copies can be addressed to:

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In order to share and disseminate the evidence received, it is the intention to publish submissions on the RSE website ([www.royalsoced.org.uk](http://www.royalsoced.org.uk)). If you wish to keep your submission confidential, please let the RSE know.