

Embedding delivery in Scotland's Climate Change Plan: Improving Design, Governance, and Implementation

Summary Briefing Paper

September 2025



The Scottish Government is soon to publish its long-awaited new Climate Change Plan (CCP). This is a huge opportunity for Scotland to rebuild its reputation as a global climate leader by setting out a clear and ambitious plan that meets climate targets, strengthens the economy, builds resilience, and improves public wellbeing.

This summary paper sets out CERG's top recommendations on how delivery should be embedded in the Climate Change Plan..

About CERG

The Climate Emergency Response Group (CERG) is a collection of like-minded climate leaders from Scotland's private, public and third sectors, including delivery organisations and membership bodies. Our members bring extensive cross-sectoral expertise and practical insights into the steps that must be taken for Scotland to achieve its vision of a net zero, climate-resilient future.

The group aims to inform and influence the Scottish Government's response to the climate emergency by promoting practical solutions that can be taken now - unlocking delivery, cutting emissions, and securing broader benefits for people and the economy.

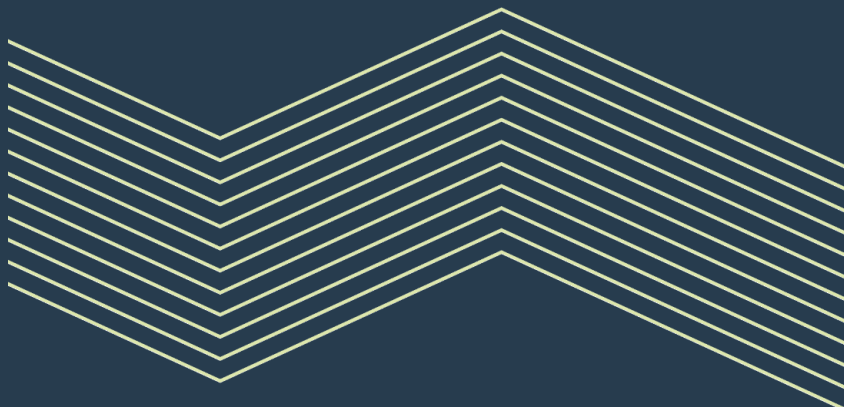
Summary of findings

Significant progress can be made by embedding robust programme management principles and practices into the design and implementation of the CCP and strengthen governance to ensure policies achieve their intended impact. This can be framed at 3 levels:

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| 1. Whole-of-Government Alignment: to ensure all policies, budgets and Directorates are aligned with - and are accountable for - delivery of climate targets and play their role in climate missions. |
| 2. Management of the CCP: focused on ensuring delivery, enabling timely, transparent decision-making, adaptability and improving accountability. |
| 3. Delivery of Policies and Proposals through SMART, outcome-driven delivery plans and robust programme management structures. |

The '**challenge**' of delivery is not unique to climate; and demands a long-term consistent commitment to ensure the path forward is both clear and deliverable. New ways of working are needed to tackle complex challenges at pace and scale, even when fiscal resources are limited. Success depends on robust programme management to keep delivery on track, and mission-based approaches to enhance the government's ability to work across sectors, shape markets, drive innovation, coordinate delivery, and overcome barriers.

CERG has distilled its findings into six key messages and ten recommendations for the Scottish Government. These are summarised overleaf and explained in more detail in the main report.



Key Message	CERG Recommendation for the CCP	Level		
i) Frame the CCP in terms of the wider economic, social and environmental outcomes it will deliver. (it's far more than a 'net zero' plan).	1. Explicitly link policies and proposals to the achievement of national outcomes and government missions, and vice versa.	Whole of government		
	2. Present a clear, compelling vision and strong narrative. Highlight the economic, social, and environmental benefits, the risks of delay, and the cost of inaction.			
ii) Delivery must lie at the heart of climate governance within the Scottish Government.	3. Make climate governance fit for delivery: Coordinate cross-government and stakeholder collaboration through mission-based approaches, allocate responsibility for delivery across government directorates, and improve transparency.		Management of the CCP	Delivery of policies and proposals
iii) Without clarity of plans, delivery is impossible.	4. Present policies and proposals within the CCP with clear routes to delivery: - specific outcomes, delivery milestones, details on the powers and levers that will drive change, investment needs and roles and responsibilities for delivery.			
	5. Develop operational delivery and investment plans for policies and proposals, co-designed with stakeholders, and supported by robust programme management.			
	6. Publish a clear pipeline process and timetable for the progression of 'proposals' to 'policies' to 'delivery programmes'.			
	7. Greater transparency and scrutiny of whether policies and proposals are ready for delivery.			
iv) Mission-driven approaches are needed to deliver long term system transformations.	8. Set up cross-governmental missions to deliver specific outcomes around heat decarbonisation, transport and land use as soon as possible.			
v) Good programme management will keep delivery on track and ensure strategies can be adapted, but must be guided by evidence, data and learning.	9. Create robust monitoring frameworks that allows for consistent, transparent, real-time assessment of progress towards milestones and sectoral outcomes.			
vi) Embed stakeholder and public engagement throughout the CCP to influence and coordinate delivery efforts.	10. Publish a clear, accessible summary of the CCP that presents a compelling case for climate action; and commit to a long-term, well-funded public engagement plan at national, regional and local levels, that uses deliberative methods.			

About CERG

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The organisations supporting the work and progress of the Climate Emergency Response Group are:



CHANGeworks.

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Jacobs



Bright ideas. Sustainable change.

Scottish Land&Estates



Scotland's climate coalition

