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a green new deal

Getting Ireland
back on track



a green new deal

The economic and financial crisis engulfing the world requires the type of vision and response shown by Roosevelt's New Deal which enabled the US to recover from the Great Depression.

The Green Party believes our Green New Deal provides that response.

The Green New Deal is about joined-up action. It will create new jobs and new industries while at the same time addressing the fundamental weaknesses of our economic and governance systems that contributed to the current crisis.

According to the UN the global market for environmental products and services is projected to double from US\$1,370 billion per year at present to US\$2,740 billion by 2020.

It provides the single biggest opportunity for Ireland's economic recovery, to allow us to capitalise on what we are good at – developing and trading world class goods and services for export.

In Ireland the Green New Deal will generate thousands of new jobs in renewable energy ventures, environmental infrastructure, upgrading our building stock, and other green enterprise ventures.

But it will also reform our regulatory and governance structures, to rein in reckless profiteering while at the same time allowing real enterprises to get on with the business of creating jobs and renewing our economy.

It will put the interests of the real economy and society ahead of opportunistic greed.

The Green New Deal is an approach that has already been advocated by the United Nations, and is being pursued by governments around the world.

In the next weeks, the European Greens will outline how a Green New Deal can create five million jobs, reduce energy costs, tackle climate

change and unlock €500 billion of private and public investment over the next five years, equivalent to 0.75% of the EU's GDP.

In Ireland the Green New Deal recognises that additional budgetary measures in the coming weeks are absolutely necessary, since a sustainable Government fiscal position is a prerequisite for any economic recovery in Ireland.

It recognises that difficult spending and taxation decisions will have to be taken over the coming years, but that they can be done in a targeted way that can enhance competitiveness in the economy, and provide solid foundations for economic recovery.

But it also recognises that work must begin now on rebuilding the economy. In Government we have already taken the first steps towards a Green New Deal for Ireland. The Green Party is now moving far beyond what is contained in the Programme for Government to make the Green New Deal a reality in Ireland.

This year more than 10,000 jobs will be created and sustained through initiatives by the Green Party in Government, from the €100 million home insulation grant scheme to the record €500 million investment in water infrastructure.

Tax breaks and financial supports have already been implemented to encourage sustainable businesses, from low energy equipment to research and development into new green technology.

Reforms in banking, planning and business regulation to enhance competitiveness and protect the economy are also underway.

This is just the beginning. The Green Party in Government is working towards a comprehensive Green New Deal to create a sustainable long term economy for the benefit of the entire country.

In the next 12 months the Green Party in Government will:

- Establish a new action group made up of the best green business and enterprise brains in the country to draw up an ambitious green tech plan to create thousands of new jobs in Ireland
- Introduce further reform in energy regulation to provide more incentives for green energy development and investment
- Reform our planning regime for off-shore developments to make it quicker and more transparent
- Reform our taxation system, to incentivise the move to a low carbon economy through a carbon levy and lower taxes for environmental goods and services
- Make green procurement a reality in Government in order to promote green products and services across the economy
- Reform our financial regulatory system towards a more sustainable model
- Substantially increase levies on landfill and use that money to invest in recycling and waste reduction
- Publish a plan to reform our waste sector, to provide real incentives to businesses to innovate in the sector and provide jobs
- Introduce radical new planning legislation to protect our economy and communities from bad and opportunistic developments
- Draw up further plans for water infrastructure investment to create jobs and ensure Ireland has sustainable infrastructure for economic renewal.
- Work with European partners to develop new financial incentives for recycling and green products
- Produce a new climate change adaptation plan, outlining the investment needed in Ireland in infrastructure to meet our future needs.
- Place 21,000 smart meters in Irish homes prior to the roll out of the new smart grid to every home in the country
- Establishment a new transport authority to begin reform of our public transport system
- Invest further in protection and enhancement of our natural and built heritage to protect quality of life here and enhance Ireland's attractiveness as a tourist destination.
- Deliver universal broadband access to all by the end of next year.

A NEW DEAL ON ENERGY

Ireland has the natural and human resources to become a world leader in renewable energy. Eamon Ryan last year set a 40 per cent renewables target for energy generation by 2020, one of the highest in the world.

He has made significant improvements in price supports for renewable energy generation. Consequently, over the next two years an estimated €400 million will be spent by the private sector building an additional 400mw of wind power to meet our 2010 target for 15% of our power to come from renewable electricity supplies.

ESB, EirGrid and Bord Gáis are investing over €1 billion in 2008 and 2009 alone in extending and upgrading the national electricity and gas distribution and transmission networks. ESB will invest an unprecedented €22 billion by 2020 in the electricity network, the National Smart Meter programme and renewable energy R&D and commercialisation projects. Bord Gais has also committed to spending €5 billion on renewables over the coming decade.

Intensifying research and development in renewable technologies is central to securing our energy future. Ireland is emerging as a global location for such research, now forming the third pillar of Science Foundation Ireland's mission. Eamon Ryan's department is at the cutting edge of research into Ocean Energy. More than €10 million has been pumped into five separate research projects to harness the energy of the sea. This high level research and development will make ocean energy a reality and Ireland a world leader in this new technology.



A NEW DEAL ON ENERGY EFFICIENCY

With the Green New Deal we will transform Ireland from one of the most energy intensive and fossil fuel reliant countries in the world into one of the most energy efficient.

Within 100 days of being in Government the Greens improved energy standards for new homes by 40 per cent. That standard will be increased to 60 per cent by 2010, with a zero carbon objective within the next five years. John Gormley has also created a zero carbon housing programme, where local authorities have been asked to come forward with ground-breaking social housing pilot schemes that will create some of the most energy efficient housing ever built.

The Greens have also set about addressing our existing housing stock that was built to low standards.

Eamon Ryan and John Gormley have also created a €100 million home insulation scheme, where grants of up to €4000 are now available for home owners to retro-fit their homes with insulation and energy saving heating systems.

Up to half of that money is being set aside to retro-fit low income and social housing, which will dramatically cut the heating bills of low income families. Generous supports have also been provided to businesses, with attractive capital tax breaks for firms investing in low energy equipment. A new scheme to help firms retro-fit their buildings and reduce their energy costs is also being introduced by Eamon.

A NEW DEAL ON TRANSPORT

The Green New Deal aims to reverse the trend of the last two decades of increasing dependance on larger private cars. Less reliance on private cars will reduce congestion and improve competitiveness and quality of life. Public transport can become the first travelling option, not the fallback. We must capitalise on the changes necessitated by our straitened economic circumstances to bring about radical reforms amongst public transport providers.

Improving public transport, through better infrastructure, is an essential element in the Green New Deal. The first phase of the Western Rail Corridor will open this year. Design of the underground rail tunnel to link up our rail system in Dublin is well

underway, as is planning for the Metro. Public transport investment is now at €1.2 billion for this year, compared with just under €750 million in 2007.

The New Deal on transport will also push for reform of how our public transport systems work, through better planned bus routes, real-time information, and giving buses priority in congested areas so they are not stuck in traffic jams.

It will also fundamentally reform how we plan and regulate our transport system. There will be a new directly elected mayor for Dublin, with real responsibilities for transport in the capital. There will be a new transport authority to regulate our transport systems.

Planning laws have already been reformed and will be reformed further to ensure that when large residential areas are planned, they are not car-dependant.

A Green New deal also means rebalancing our towns and cities back towards people, not vehicles, where it is safe for children and families to walk or cycle to school and work. By 2020 we aim to have 150,000 commuters making the choice to cycle to work.

The Green New Deal is also about providing more energy efficient vehicles for people who are car dependant, by making electric cars a reality for 10 per cent of our motorists by 2020.

The Greens in Government have begun this work. VRT and motor tax now provide savings of over €5000 on the purchase cost of low emission vehicles and over €300 on annual road tax.

The Sustainable Transport and Travel Action Plan has kickstarted in excess of €5 million in additional funding for cycling infrastructure this year.

A NEW DEAL ON WATER AND WASTE

Ireland's clean green image and our competitiveness is absolutely dependant on having good water and waste infrastructure.

This year a record €550 million is being spent by John Gormley on more than 150 water and waste water projects. This will create and sustain just under 5,000 jobs in 2009. Similar investment is planned for every year up to 2012, in order to create one of the best water infrastructures in the world.

A sustainable waste infrastructure will also improve competitiveness and lower costs

for businesses. A major international review is under way, which will pave the way for significant private sector investment in high quality waste facilities.

€13 million is also being spent by John on market development of our recyclates, to make Ireland less dependant on export markets and to generate green jobs at home.

Through investment in infrastructure such as the automated recycling facility in Dublin, and through new rules on organic waste, the Greens in Government have supported and created in excess of 200 additional jobs in the waste sector this year alone.

A fundamental review of waste policy will be finalised this year, which will pave the way for a multi-million euro investment programme by private waste companies in sustainable job-creating ventures.

A NEW DEAL ON FOOD AND AGRICULTURE

Developing the enormous potential of domestic, UK and mainland European retail markets for organic produce presents a unique selling opportunity for Ireland to consolidate its image as "Ireland: the Food Island" and greatly reinforce our reputation for excellence in food production. The Irish market for organic produce has grown by 82% in the past two years and is now worth €106 million. As 70% of organic produce is imported there is a major opportunity to increase domestic production. The UK organic market is worth €2.1 billion and Bord Bia research shows that UK retailers and consumers regard Irish produce as local and desirable. The German organic market is worth €4.6 billion and in 2007 the sales of organic beef there grew by 19% whilst non-organic beef grew by just 1%. Given the high level of Irish imports and the scale of the UK and European markets, it is clear that major opportunities still exist even within the declining economic context. Indeed the UK Financial Times on January 2nd last forecast an increase of 7% in the UK organic market despite recession.

By exploiting these potentially lucrative markets Ireland could provide a profitable future for 5,000 more farmers (by hitting the 5% Government Organic target by 2012). Developing further high value organic food products would potentially create many more jobs.

Ireland is also well placed to develop and market both GM-Free and high quality

artisan food products. 58% of European consumers want their food to be GM-free. Ireland has the established image and capacity to develop valuable food products with strong regional identity. Trevor Sargent has developed a comprehensive plan to grow the organic farming sector exponentially to five per cent of Irish land under organic production by 2012.

A NEW DEAL FOR SCHOOLS

The Green Party has already begun a programme of investment in school insulation and other green capital projects. As part of the Green New Deal we will work to provide assistance to schools so they can generate their own electricity using wind turbine and photovoltaic technology. This will reduce electricity costs and can eventually raise additional revenue for the schools.

A NEW DEAL ON TOURISM

Ireland's success in tourism is almost wholly dependant on its clean green image, with three quarters of visitors citing this as an essential factor in their holiday experience.

Ireland must aim to become a world leader in sustainable tourism by ensuring the strongest protections possible for its built and natural heritage, thus protecting the two most important selling points for Ireland abroad.

And low environmental impact services, from hotels to restaurants, must also become fully mainstreamed. Failte Ireland has now integrated the principles of sustainable development into its development plans for the tourism sector in Ireland which must be fully supported.

Planning guidelines and laws will be an essential element in protecting our attractiveness as a holiday destination. Enhancing our heritage will also be essential.

Principles of sustainable tourism, championed by the Green Box initiative

in the North West, must be spread across the country, lowering costs for tourism businesses and making them more attractive to the higher end of the tourism market.

The eco-tourism market alone in Ireland could be as high as €51 million a year according to some studies.

The Greens in Government have been championing the Eco-Flower label, the European benchmark for low environmental impact tourist facilities. This scheme, overseen by the Department of the Environment, has seen 51 establishments meeting the standard to date.

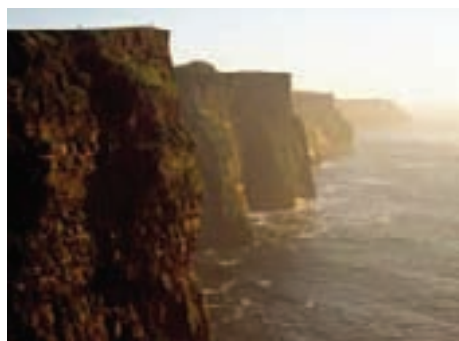
Strong planning laws, combined with ongoing capital investment in heritage projects by John Gormley in the Department of the Environment will form an essential element in protecting and enhancing Ireland's tourism potential.

A NEW DEAL ON GREEN BUSINESS AND INNOVATION

With a 20 per cent reduction in greenhouse gases across the EU now signed into law, and a potential global deal on climate change later this year, the green tech and clean tech sector provides one of the greatest growth opportunities for the Irish economy. Globally it is expected to double to \$2.7trillion by 2020. Forfas estimates the sector is currently worth €2.8 billion in Ireland, employing 6,500 directly.

The Government is establishing in the coming weeks a new action group on green enterprise, which will combine the expertise of the enterprise and business agencies of the State with the experience of some of the country's top green entrepreneurs, to develop a new strategy to create thousands of new jobs in this sector.

This new strategy will use all of the resources of the State – such as research and development funding, our skilled work force, our track record on foreign direct investment – to create one of the leading green and clean tech sectors in the world



within the next ten years. The Government will also act as a leader by integrating environmental considerations into all procurement decisions.

A NEW DEAL ON THE SMART ECONOMY

The emergence of a knowledge society will be a key feature of Ireland's new smart economy, allowing us to make the transition from traditional high-cost manufacturing to the development and trading of digital products and services.

In order to develop a knowledge economy, we need to put in place the ICT infrastructure upon which the digital economy and e-commerce will be based. Eamon Ryan has already begun the rollout of a national broadband infrastructure. At the beginning of this year, he announced an investment of some €223 million to bring broadband to the final 10% of the country. The National Broadband Scheme will also directly result in the creation of 170 jobs as well as indirectly fostering and protecting hundreds more jobs as the availability of broadband increases investment and enterprise in the targeted areas.

Equipping our young people with the skills and expertise to prosper in the new digital economy is essential if we are to emerge as a leading knowledge society. This is the main impetus behind Eamon Ryan's decision to provide all second-level schools with 100Mbit connectivity, so that our students have the hardware and software to learn and interact online. Eamon succeeded in securing some €9 million in this year's budget to begin the first phase of rollout to schools. The provision of fibre optic cables to school buildings has the added advantage of generating much-needed construction jobs and local investment.

A NEW DEAL ON PLANNING

Ireland's competitiveness and environment has been seriously eroded by poor planning in the last decade and for a Green New Deal to succeed, this has to be addressed.

John Gormley has already implemented serious reforms through strict new guidelines in urban areas, which means that major residential developments cannot be approved without adequate infrastructure, including water, public transport and schools being in place upon completion.

He is also finalising one of the largest pieces of planning legislation ever produced,



which will aim to penalise those who breach planning laws, and ensure for the first time that there is consistency across the country on planning and development. It will effectively outlaw opportunistic rezonings, and the retention of unauthorised developments that require an environmental impact assessment. It will level the playing field and ensure that those who plan developments to the highest specifications are not undercut by dodgy developers.

The laws will also simplify the planning system for off-shore renewable energy projects, but will enhance public participation and access to information for third parties.

A NEW DEAL ON REGULATION AND FINANCE

The Green New Deal will seek to end the existing ineffective light touch approach to financial and company regulation, whereby protections for consumers and the State against unscrupulous and illegal activities were almost non-existent. The Green New Deal will make it impossible for the profit motive to take precedence over the public interest. But it will also seek to ensure that the reforms do not act as a barrier to or burden on businesses.

We fully support the creation of a Central Banking Commission, which will undertake the fiscal responsibilities of both the Central Bank as well as the regulatory functions of the Financial Regulator. The Green Party believes that a three-person commission will be the most effective governance model for the body, and is insisting that the commissioners have both significant international experience and suitable independence to reassert the regulatory integrity of our banking system.

We are also acutely aware of how intertwined the Irish financial system is with the European and global systems. We will therefore encourage the Commission to establish collaborative links with international regulatory, across the EU, the Eurozone and the wider world. We are actively advocating European directives to be re-examined to ensure that they provide national regulators with the necessary investigative, prosecutorial and monitoring competencies, including naming-and-shaming powers.

The Green Party also support the development of microfinance in Ireland along with greater support of the credit union sector to provide credit for business ventures that have been typically ignored by the larger banks. The Green New Deal is premised on the fundamental belief that the creation of local economic initiatives and indigenous enterprises are a crucial and urgent condition in towards bringing about national economic recovery..

The Green Party has already begun the task of changing the focus of our economy away from short-term speculative property investment and on towards indigenous sustainable industries. As part of the conditions imposed on the recapitalised banks, the Green Party insisted on each bank making available a €100m environmental and clean energy innovation fund. This is not only to ensure liquidity for Green business development but also to kick-start the redirecting of capital into industries that will provide clean, Green, long-term employment and investment.

THE GREEN NEW DEAL HAS ALREADY BEGUN

The Green Party in Government have been putting the measures and the investment in place for a Green New Deal. More than 10,000 New Deal jobs will be created and sustained this year by Greens in Government initiatives in projects that will improve competitiveness, reduce costs and protect our environment. The Green New Deal is a key element in the Government's plan for economic renewal. The Greens in Government are progressing a series of priorities that are creating new jobs in Ireland and will create thousands more every year.

The last 12 months have seen the following measures implemented:

- New guaranteed tariffs for renewable electricity generation. €400 million of private investment will take place this year and next, which will mean that by the end of next year 15 per cent of our electricity will be from renewable sources
- These new tariffs have prompted the ESB to publish a zero carbon plan for 2030 to be delivered through a €22 billion investment in the next decade
- Bord Gais is now spending €5 billion on clean energy projects
- A new energy rating system for homes for sale or rent, generating 250 full time jobs this year
- €100 million of State investment to be spent on grants to retrofit and insulate more than 50,000 homes around the country this year
- Reforms of VRT and motor tax have given tax breaks of up to €5,000 and annual motor tax reductions of at least €400, which has seen 84 per cent of new car buyers choosing low emission vehicles
- A new action plan to increase organic production to 5 per cent of land area by 2012
- Record investment in water infrastructure of more than €500 million which will sustain more than 4,500 construction jobs this year
- Tax breaks for firms investing in energy efficient equipment
- New planning guidelines to ban building on flood plains
- New planning guidelines to ensure residential developments have adequate transport, social and commercial infrastructure and services
- Publication of a new plan for sustainable transport, including reform of how we regulate transport
- €30 million is to be invested in the construction of a new direct telecommunications link to North America
- €200 million in additional finance from Irish banks for green businesses
- Planning exemptions for micro renewable energy and attractive new incentives for micro renewable developments
- €2 million grant aid to support planting of bioenergy crops

