

Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty

– FAQ for Ireland webpage –

Ireland specific questions about the Fossil Fuel Treaty

What is the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative?

The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty Initiative is a global movement to help countries work together to create a legally binding treaty that would help the world switch to clean energy; stop the growth of oil, gas, and coal; and phase out existing extraction in a fair and equitable way. It's building a bloc of countries who are doing what scientists say is needed to tackle the climate crisis. The treaty does not exist yet but **there are currently 13 nation-states working on negotiating a Fossil Fuel Treaty and we are calling on the Irish government to join them.**

Why is a Fossil Fuel Treaty needed?

Fossil fuels are the primary cause of the climate crisis, responsible for 81% of carbon emissions in the past decade, leading to water and food shortages, floods, heatwaves, and extreme weather that harm people and livelihoods. They drive wars, threaten wildlife, and fuel corruption globally. **They are also the biggest cause of early deaths worldwide, [causing 1 in 5 deaths due to air pollution](#).** Despite these dangers, fossil fuel companies and governments [plan to produce 110% more](#) by 2030 than what's safe for our planet, and there is no international agreement on transitioning to clean energy. After 30 years of climate talks, COP28 finally mentioned the words "fossil fuels," but the agreement is full of loopholes and lacks a clear, science-based roadmap for [a phase-out based on equity](#). What we urgently need is a new treaty focused on phasing out fossil fuels, with concrete, equitable deadlines to protect our planet and all of us.

Who has called for a Fossil Fuel Treaty?

In addition to the 13 nation states and 9 Indigenous nations, the Treaty proposal has been endorsed by thousands of organisations and individuals including over 2,500 civil society organisations, [3,000 scientists](#), [101 Nobel Prize winners](#), the [World Health Organisation](#) and [thousands of religious institutions](#), Vatican cardinals, IPCC authors, the Dalai Lama and the European Parliament, Indigenous nations, youth activists, [over 110 cities](#), and [550 parliamentarians](#) across the world.

Who in Ireland has joined that call?

In Ireland [over 70 CSOs](#) have called for a treaty as co-signatories of the [open letter](#) to the Irish government from Friends of the Earth ahead of COP28. It has been endorsed by the Environment Section, Galway County Council, Cork City Council, Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, Fingal County Council & South Dublin County Council. The treaty has also been endorsed by Atlantic Technologic University, Ryan Institute University of Galway, and University College Cork and hundreds of individuals.

Why does Ireland need a fossil fuel treaty, isn't Ireland unlikely to feel the effects of climate change?

As a small island in the North Atlantic, Ireland is vulnerable to changes in the AMOC*. These changes could make Ireland much colder, and expose us to hurricanes & stronger storms. Evidence of this has been seen over the last few years with the **increase of extreme flash flooding**. [Hundreds of homes, businesses, GAA clubs, community hospitals & schools](#) have been devastatingly affected. Many businesses have been forced to close their doors permanently. Over 100,000 homeowners have been refused full home & business insurance coverage due to increased risk of flooding. [Farmers in Ireland have also experienced huge loss of crops and productivity due to flooding and waterlogged soils during 2023 and 2024.](#)

*Atlantic meridional overturning circulation- which is the main ocean current system

How would Ireland benefit from a treaty on fossil fuels?

To win the fight against fossil fuels, we need systemic change, not adjustments of individual behaviour. Many people in Ireland face energy poverty because of the rising cost of fossil fuels. People should not have to make difficult decisions on how often during winter they can put on the heating. Those in rented accommodation have little to no control over any refurbishments the government may recommend in terms of converting house energy supply to renewable energy. Corporations and landlords profit from poorly heated, unaffordable, insecure homes. If Ireland's grid is completely powered by renewable energy, [energy poverty will significantly reduce](#). We all deserve to be able to have a warm house in Winter.

Increase in renewable energy will contribute to economic stability & create more jobs. In Ireland, [green job postings of work are up 90%](#).

What campaigns against fossil fuels have been successful in Ireland?

In 2011/2012 Tamboran Resources applied for & were refused a drilling licence for fracking natural gas in the Fermanagh/Leitrim border region. Communities were warned about the damage fracking can cause & rallied together to achieve a [government ban](#) of fracking in 2017. Many people continued to campaign against imported fracked gas due to both the public health concerns of communities in North America and the environmental impact. Despite Ireland not being legally allowed to ban the importation of fracked gas under EU legislation they issued a [policy statement](#) in 2021 stating that as Ireland moves towards carbon neutrality, it does not make sense to develop LNG projects importing fracked gas. In the same year the government approved a ban on licences for new oil and natural gas exploration.

Is this not enough? What else can be achieved?

Though Ireland has set ambitious renewable energy targets, and has committed to becoming carbon neutral by no later than 2050, there has been no phase-out date set for oil and gas. In 2023, oil accounted for 46.8% of energy use, and gas for 26.7%. Though a phase-out date for coal has been set for 2025. We need an equitable fossil fuel phase out, a just transition & for Ireland to join the call for a Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty.



Why should Ireland join the 13 nation-states that have called for a treaty so far?

Ireland has a lot of experience in international leadership, from passing UNGA resolutions on Nuclear Non-Proliferation and the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons to leading loss & damage negotiations on behalf of the EU at COP27 & COP28. Ireland should maintain its position as a global leader by continuing its support on treaties against weapons of mass destruction. As a small island itself, Ireland also holds a duty of care to the Small Island Developing States, to act now before it is too late.

The Irish government has also demonstrated strong leadership against fossil fuels, from introducing an anti-fracking bill to banning new licences for fossil fuel exploration. Ireland is also a member of the Beyond Oil and Gas Alliance, the global fossil fuel registry, and the global methane pledge. The Irish government has also announced ambitious climate action plans that want to see 80% of energy powered by renewables by 2030. By committing to phase out coal, refusing new exploration and increasing its renewable energy output. Ireland has already begun to work on the three pillars of the fossil fuel treaty, the next step is to join the growing bloc of countries seeking a negotiating mandate and a legally binding agreement.

Will we have enough renewable energy to power the grid?

For the first time in 2023, Ireland generated more energy from wind than from fossil gas. However, in the same year data centres accounted for [20% of the overall energy consumption](#). When increasing our renewable energy output, we must also ensure a moratorium is placed on data centres, and that those in Ireland have sufficient renewable energy to power themselves. South Dublin County Council, the first local authority to endorse the Fossil Fuel Treaty, recently refused planning permission for a Google Data Centre due to what it called “the existing insufficient capacity in the electricity network (grid) and the lack of significant on site renewable energy to power the data centre”.

Why can't Ireland rely on fossil fuels?

Fossil fuels have always been a finite resource. For decades reduced supplies have fueled conflict & in turn has led to **global supply issues**. Russia's invasion of Ukraine has highlighted Ireland's high dependency on fossil fuels and has been used by the Irish government as an excuse to lock in fossil fuel infrastructure, in the form of an [emergency strategic gas reserve](#), but there is no guarantee a strategic gas reserve would cover any gas shortages. Because Ireland doesn't have significant fossil fuel reserves, we have to rely on fossil fuel imports which consistently leaves us vulnerable to global shocks. True security can only come from domestically generated renewable power.

Ireland's energy consumption & renewable energy in numbers

- Ireland used 23.38 TWh of renewable energy in 2023, up from 21.68 TWh in 2022. Wind accounted for just under half (49.9%) of that renewable energy, followed by biodiesel (13.4%) and biomass (11.0%).

- *Wind generation in 2023 was 4.1% higher than in 2022, and higher than any previous year, setting a new annual record of 11.7 TWh.*
- *Solar electricity generation in 2023 was 334% higher than in 2022, but accounted for just 1.9% of Ireland's electricity supply.*
- *In 2023, 64% of solar generation came from utility-scale solar farms and 36% came from rooftop solar panels.*
- *Electricity from Irish solar farms increased by over 2400% in 2023, as multiple new utility-scale sites were grid-connected, while electricity from rooftop solar panels increased by 74%.*
- *The use of renewable ambient heat from heat pumps increased by almost 25%*

Ireland is already a member of the Beyond Oil & Gas Alliance, why do we need a treaty as well?

BOGA aims to normalise a wind down of oil and gas and establish just transition as a key pillar of climate leadership by growing the number of jurisdictions coming together through the alliance to share best practices and advocate for others to join. The Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty is a global initiative – aimed to complement the Paris Agreement – which promotes an international and binding agreement for a planned and orderly phase out of fossil fuels, and fast tracking of renewable energy and clean technologies where wealthy oil, gas and coal producing countries lead and support others with less capacity to be part of the transition. The Fossil Fuel Treaty also provides a vehicle for negotiating a global agreement among nations with that focus on equity.

The Treaty and BOGA can closely complement each other to build greater international cooperation on the phase out of fossil fuels in a manner that is fast and fair.

Other countries do not wish to take the initiative to phase out fossil fuels, let alone support the Fossil Fuel Treaty. Why should Ireland do it?

It's incorrect to say that no country is committing to phasing out fossil fuels. **Colombia, a major fossil fuel producer, recently supported the Fossil Fuel Non-Proliferation Treaty, setting an example that Ireland can follow.**

Taking the lead on phasing out fossil fuels is about showing leadership and inspiring global action. It's about setting a positive example and demonstrating that a sustainable, safer future is within reach. Ireland has experience in playing an outsized role in finding multilateral solutions to global problems—from banning new offshore fossil fuel exploration projects to fighting for nuclear non-proliferation— and this is our opportunity to lead again. When wealthy, powerful nations step up and set bold targets, others follow. Also, the UN and Paris agreement expect that the world's wealthiest nations, which are disproportionately [historically responsible](#) for global warming to date, cut emissions first and financially compensate developing nations for the damages caused by the burning of fossil fuels.