



Climate Just Transition in Wales: Developing a Framework for Action

Overview

With ten years left to avoid a climate system breakdown, as cautioned by the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), the need for decarbonising our economies has never been more urgent. Decarbonisation is a major policy challenge with the Welsh Government stating its ambition for a target of a 95% reduction in emissions by 2050. However, decarbonisation is neither a straightforward nor an equitable process and will impact different people in different ways. Potentially negatively impacted groups include the thousands of workers employed by the fossil fuel industries, as well as people living in fuel poverty who may be hit disproportionately hard if electricity becomes more expensive as a result of aggressive decarbonisation policies.



The fundamental idea of a Just Transition – or a transition to a low carbon economy that is fair for everyone – seeks to ensure that the way we

mitigate climate change does not result in furthering socio-economic inequalities. However, achieving this lofty goal and the journey to a ‘climate just environment’ will require honest, and at times difficult conversations, as well as a great deal of creativity among those involved, and affected. At the same time, there is no doubt that the global Coronavirus pandemic will have a significant bearing on what can and cannot be achieved, with reference to financial implications of building back better, green recovery plans, and a climate Just Transition post pandemic.

Opportunities to embed procedural justice, distributive justice, inter-generational justice, and restorative justice should be mapped across the climate Just Transition framework.

Presented below is a draft set of recommended steps for putting together a framework for developing policies that lead to a Just Transition. These recommendations are based on outcomes from a workshop hosted by the Wales Centre for Public Policy in June 2020, ‘Risks and Opportunities for a Just Transition in Wales’. This framework can be used to develop and assess proposed policies and ensure that progress is made.

Developing a framework for a climate Just Transition in Wales

The goal is to develop a strategic approach to achieving a climate Just Transition in Wales. The strategic approach to the transition process needs to be fair, inclusive, and built on a vision that is driven by the notion of 'wellbeing' for society, and working towards achieving the sustainable development goals, with the guiding motto of 'leave no-one behind'. In Wales, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015) and the Seven Wellbeing Goals; the Environment (Wales) Act (2016); and Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales (2019) are all excellent platforms on which to build a climate Just Transition framework.

Approach

The approach to transitioning away from carbon intensive sources of energy requires:

- Creativity;
- Future visioning based on sound rationale;
- A scientifically sound evidence base; and
- An approach that is underpinned by a set of core values with a clear set of targets for the short, medium, and long term (2050 and beyond).

Suggested here is a five-step plan to achieving this:

Step 1: Rapid stocktaking of scientific evidence

There are lessons to be learned from case studies of fossil fuel-driven local economies transitioning to a low-carbon industry, and examples of good practice in Europe, and other parts of the world, namely the Ruhr Region in Germany, Australia, Indonesia, and Norway. An effective Just Transition framework must draw on this evidence to identify:

- Success factors, challenges, bottlenecks;

- Opportunities for success and greatest impact; and
- Learning from past experiences in Wales, the implications and potential impact of change, such as the closure of the coal mines.

In short, the first step is to gather evidence and to answer: What works? What does not? Where and why? This should build on the existing evidence base, and knowledge of the Welsh context, including specific challenges, and opportunities.

Some of the issues that may arise during stakeholder consultations are capacity building/training, livelihoods of workers, skills development, and worker and community protection. Being aware of issues will help in developing policies that can address and resolve them.

Step 2: Use scientific evidence base to develop a climate Just Transitions framework

A Just Transition framework should use a review of scientific evidence to:

- Identify the breadth, and scope of what a Just Transition framework may look like;
- Identify social, and climate just indicators; and
- Determine how the indicators can be embedded within the framework, and be measured.

The framework could be developed across key sectors, including energy, housing, agriculture and land use, transport, and aviation.

Opportunities to embed procedural justice (fairness of a process), distributive justice (benefits and burdens of an action), inter-generational justice (fairness of action for different age groups), and restorative justice (addressing a historical injustice) should be mapped across the climate Just Transition framework.

Step 3: Identify the priorities, bottlenecks, and common ground of stakeholders

A successful Just Transition programme recognises that progress against certain indicators will be more relevant to some stakeholders than others. For example, the availability of retraining courses for a coal plant worker facing redundancy may be more relevant to them than vehicle electrification grants for a haulage company.

The process of understanding differing priorities and potential bottlenecks across a range of different stakeholders is referred to as a 'multi-scalar stakeholder and social actor analysis'. Stakeholders are defined as key individuals, groups, or institutions likely to be affected by a proposed initiative (either negatively or positively), or those who can affect the outcome of the initiative (initiative being a process of transition). Stakeholders could be beneficiaries, supporters, opponents, resource providers, or vulnerable groups. An example of a UK approach to stakeholders, and social actor analysis, has been through running Climate Citizens Assemblies. However, stakeholder analysis can also be achieved through running smaller, and focused conversations.

Stakeholder and social actor analysis are fundamental building blocks to the successful implementation of a Just Transition framework, and the rollout of a Just Transition programme. Within a Just Transition context, this type of analysis involves engaging with many stakeholders to identify institutional and societal issues, and dilemmas pertaining to climate action. The purpose of this step is to generate a better, and deeper understanding of the

strategy, knowledge, position, interest, alliances, resources available, influence, and leadership of these different stakeholders.

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Step 4: Exploration of enabling environments

Creating the right conditions to allow or enable change to take place for a smooth Just Transition involves designing, and implementing initiatives, and programmes of work. Leadership is key, so deciding who is responsible for leading different initiatives, whether through one or cross Ministerial departments, and/or cross party, is an important consideration. The financial resources to support a Just Transition need to be secured, accompanied by associated fiscal policy.

Step 5: Determine core values

A set of core values that underpin Steps 1 to 4, and resonate/connect with a framework for a climate Just Transition in Wales should be established. This set of core values ought to be considered as the guiding principles for the climate Just Transition strategy for Wales. A

good starting point for identifying values is to consider existing Welsh Government platforms e.g. Future Generations (Wales) Act (2015) and the Seven Wellbeing Goals; The Environment (Wales) Act (2016); and Prosperity for All: A Low Carbon Wales (2019), as well as broader platforms, such as the Human Rights Declaration; and the UN Sustainable Development Goals, drawing on definitions of climate justice and Just Transitions. A discussion of these with key stakeholders will facilitate drafting a values policy briefing note.

Practical ways forward

1. Conduct and commission a rapid stocktake of scientific evidence on opportunities for a Just Transition in Wales.
2. Develop and refine a 'Climate Just Transition Framework for Wales',

embracing the principles of procedural justice, distributive justice, inter-generational justice, and restorative justice.

3. Conduct, consolidate, and synthesise consultations with a wide range of stakeholders.
4. Identify the right conditions for a Just Transition to take place through cross-Ministerial platforms and ensure that a Just Transition forms part of Ministerial responsibilities.
5. Establish a set of core climate just values to underpin a Just Transition process in Wales.

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Find out more:

Read the WCPP report – Price, J., Roberts, M., and Bristow, D. (2021) [Towards a Just Transition in Wales](#), Cardiff: Wales Centre for Public Policy

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Here at the Centre, we collaborate with leading policy experts to provide ministers, the civil service and Welsh public services with high quality evidence and independent advice that helps them to improve policy decisions and outcomes.

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based at Cardiff University and a member of the UK's What Works Network.

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