

Address:
110 George Street
Edinburgh
EH2 4LH

Telephone:
0845 146 1010

Website:
www.audit-scotland.gov.uk



News release

Strictly embargoed until 00:01 hours, Thursday 8 December 2011

Meeting climate change targets could cost Scotland £10 billion

Scotland has made good progress in cutting its greenhouse gas emissions, with a fall of more than a quarter since 1990. However, the country has very ambitious targets for further emissions reductions, which could cost about £10-11 billion to achieve.

An Audit Scotland report published today, *Reducing Scottish greenhouse gas emissions*, looks at the Scottish Government's plans to reduce emissions by 42 per cent by 2020, compared with 1990. This target is far more ambitious than UK and European Union goals, and the Scottish Government is dependent on action by others to achieve it.

The government's plans include action to reduce emissions from vehicles, improve the energy efficiency of homes and buildings, and increase the rate of tree planting. In some cases, the plans will require changes in the attitudes and behaviour of the public. Others require action by the EU and the UK government, as only around a third of planned reductions come from policies solely under the Scottish Government's control.

Auditor General for Scotland Robert Black said: "The Scottish Parliament has set ambitious targets to reduce Scottish greenhouse gas emissions. To meet the 2020 target new policies will need to be delivered successfully, especially in transport. The challenges will be that much greater over the next few years when the pressures on Scotland's public sector finances are likely to increase."

The report says it is difficult to calculate the cost of reducing emissions, but estimates the total cost to be about £10-11 billion by 2020. The Scottish Government has not yet established how much of the cost would be met by the public sector.

For further information contact Anne McCubbin tel: 0131 625 1653 amccubbin@audit-scotland.gov.uk

Notes to editors

1. Greenhouse gas emissions are measured in tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e). In 2009, Scotland produced greenhouse gases emissions totalling 52.0 million tonnes of CO₂e (MtCO₂e), equivalent to 8.6 per cent of the UK's emissions and 0.15 per cent of global emissions. Scotland has just 0.07 per cent of the global population but produces roughly twice the global average level of emissions for each person.
2. The influential Stern Review of the Economics of Climate Change said that it would be more cost-effective to reduce emissions in the short-term than to pay for the long-term consequences of climate change.
3. The Scottish Parliament unanimously passed the Climate Change (Scotland) Act 2009 which sets ambitious targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions over the next four decades. The Act states that emissions must decrease over three timescales:
 - every year – with annual targets set by the Scottish Parliament through subsidiary legislation
 - by at least 42 per cent by 2020 compared to their 1990 level (the focus of the Audit Scotland report)
 - and by at least 80 per cent by 2050 compared to their 1990 level.
4. The Auditor General is responsible for securing the audit of the Scottish Government and most other public bodies in Scotland, except local authorities. He investigates whether spending bodies achieve the best possible value for money and adhere to the highest standards of financial management. The Auditor General is independent and is not subject to the control of the Scottish Government or the Scottish Parliament.
5. Audit Scotland is a statutory body set up in April 2000, under the Public Finance and Accountability (Scotland) Act, 2000. Audit Scotland has prepared this report for the Auditor General for Scotland. All Audit Scotland reports published since 2000 are at www.audit-scotland.gov.uk