

# Perspectives on Climate Change

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## Key Bodies in climate action

- ❑ Two UN bodies with separate mandates & structures
  - Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC, 1988)
    - Science and solutions focus
  - UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC, 1992)
    - Policy development body, best known for its Kyoto Protocol (1997)
  
- ❑ European Union (EU)
  - Council (Member states), Commission (DG Clima), European Parliament
  
- ❑ Ireland
  - Department of Environment: national policy
  - EPA: **Inventories, Projections, Mechanisms, Research,**

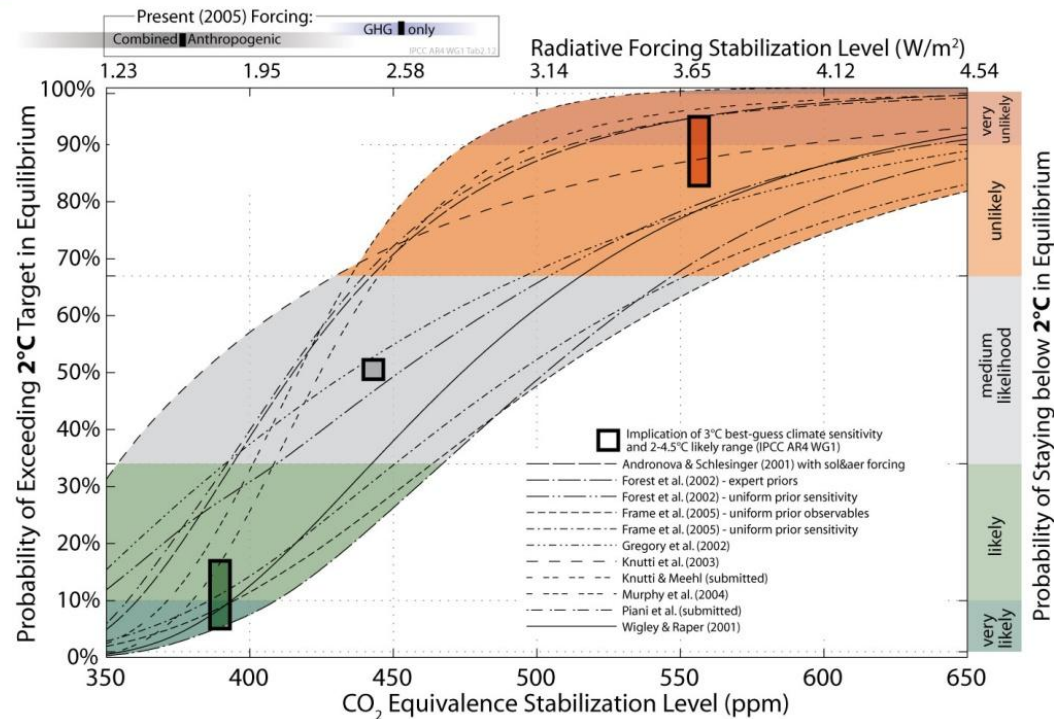
# The 2C target and its implications

- The objective of UNFCCC (1992) is stabilisation of atmospheric Greenhouse gas concentrations at a level that would prevent “dangerous climate change”
- The EU position since 1997 that this objective would be achieved if global temperature increase kept below 2 degree Celsius (2C goal)!
- The 2C goal was adopted by the UNFCCC in 2009/10, Copenhagen/Cancun
- In practice it puts an upper limit on GHG emissions
- The 2C target is the basis for the EU Climate and Energy package
  - the 20% reduction is not inline with 2C but the 30% step-up is.

# The 2C target and its implications

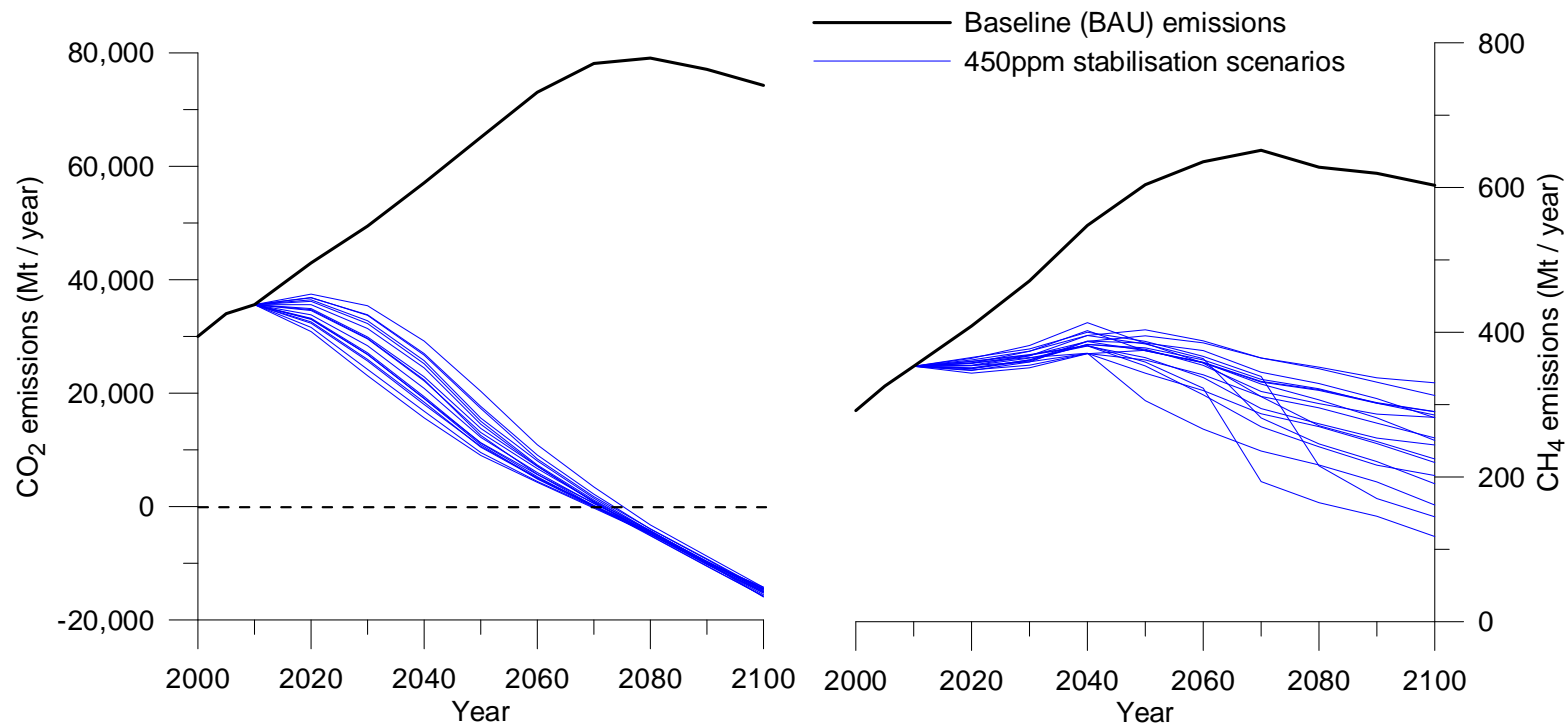
Analysis from the IPCC AR4

Annex 1      Developed countries  
Non Annex1    Developing Countries



| Scenario category                          | Region      | 2020  | 2050   |
|--|-------------|---|--|
| A-450 ppm CO <sub>2</sub> -eq <sup>b</sup> | Annex I     | -25% to -40%  | -80% to -95%                                       |
|  | Non-Annex I | Substantial deviation from baseline in Latin America, Middle East, East Asia and Centrally-Planned Asia | Substantial deviation from baseline in all regions |

# The 2C target and its implications



- Examples of 2C emissions pathways for Carbon Dioxide and Methane\*

\* Resinger, A. Et al, 2012

# Options to progress actions

- Sectoral cap and trading: e.g. NZ
  - Clarity of outcome, stability in planning
  - Regulatory demanding
- Sector harmonisation: e.g. South Korea
  - Requires partnership, national compact
  - Can be difficult to insure outcomes
- Gaming the system, e.g. USA, China & others
  - Very attractive for certain sectors
  - Can have serious downsides, e.g., costly long term pathway
- Innovation:
  - Essential, but needs specific goals and part of a broader framework of actions

## Opportunities from positive actions

- International requirements for action are leading to a growth in global markets for climate products and services
- Ireland can develop internationally marketable mitigation and adaptation solutions
- Branding, exports of goods and services will benefit from recognised low carbon credentials
- Low carbon and environmental credentials are important to attracting new and continued inward investment (FDI).
- Positive actions taken now will reduce long-term costs in the transition to a low carbon economy and meeting future targets



## A framework for progress

1. A high level climate goal for Ireland
2. Overall strategy including: targets, innovation, and enhanced quality of life
3. Decision on approach to be adopted
4. Elements
  - Economic sectors, government bodies and institutions
  - Sustainable resource use; land, ocean and atmosphere
  - International partnerships in trade and sustainable development
5. Management body and structure, independent assessment, review and advice.

# Conclusions

- Climate change is an urgent, existential challenge, it also presents new opportunities at local and global levels
- A long term perspective is essential ,i.e., the steps taken to meet 2020 should not compromise cost effective achievement of 2050 targets
- A comprehensive strategy based on national goals and international partnership is required
- Environmental integrity and sustainable economic development must be central to this strategy.