



EEA-Eionet Day 2023: Cut Across Workshop

Summary of presentation and key outcomes of the discussion

Climate change in the Irish Mind cut across workshop 01/03/23

Workshop hosts: Dr. Desmond O'Mahony and Dr. Conor Quinlan, EPA-Ireland

Corresponding author: Dr. Desmond O'Mahony: d.omahony@epa.ie

Overview

Climate change in the Irish Mind (CCIM) is a large-scale survey that aims to develop a better understanding of the Irish population's climate change beliefs, risk perceptions, policy preferences, and behaviour of the Irish public towards climate change.

It was undertaken in 2020 as a joint project by the [Irish Environmental Protection Agency](#) (EPA-Ireland) and the [Yale University Program on Climate Change Communication](#) (YPCCC) in support of the Irish Government's [National Dialogue on Climate Action](#) (NDCA)

The CCIM questionnaire was developed to fit the Irish context, ensuring compatibility with census questions on demographics-age, gender, region, socio-economic status, education, ethnic, religious and cultural background, and political affiliation. Fieldwork was conducted using Computer Assisted Telephone Interviewing (CATI) across 2021 with a representative sample of 4,000 adults (18+) living in Ireland.

The CCIM is designed to run every two years, providing timely and authoritative information on attitudes to environmental and climate change matters in Ireland. This aims to provide accurate and useful information to inform policy makers on the attitudes of the population towards the environment.

Workshop Contents

The Cut Across Workshop covered the development of the CCIM project, the first three major report outputs from CCIM and held a discussion on the challenges of advancing the project as a longitudinal concern.

Brief headlines will cover the main presentation topics. The contents of the presentation can be found on the [Eionet day web page](#).

CCIM Project Development

The presentation section on project development covered the contents of the overview section above and prompted some discussion on running the project longitudinally.



Questions centred on practical decisions around the logic of the survey design as well as the kinds of information being sought.

Questions on the practical aspects of design: Alignment with national census questions was an important feature of the questionnaire. This allowed the survey to be weighted to ensure representativeness and allows comparison with national statistics and similar reports.

Questions on the types of policies in the questionnaire:

Specific open policy questions highlighted by the National Dialogue on Climate Action were included in the questionnaire. An example is an ongoing discussion on farming policy on the size of the national dairy herd in Ireland.

The longitudinal nature of the questionnaire will provide a window into the views of the Irish population on this and related climate questions, while allowing for changes and updates to the policy questions to capture ongoing development in this space.

Main Project Outputs

The main project outputs and reports were highlighted including:

- The main [Climate change in the Irish mind](#) report.
- An audience segmentation report: [Climate Change's Four Irelands](#)
- And an accessible public mapping tool: [Climate Opinion Maps](#).

These outputs were well received and sparked several queries and discussion.

Questions on the main report: A brief discussion was held on why the belief in climate change was so high and why there was little evidence of the polarisation seen in some countries. This was explored as a feature of the small size of Ireland, where larger storms or droughts are experienced almost country wide as well as recent collective experiences during the Covid-19 pandemic where science-based approaches were accepted by political parties across the board. These were discussed as some of the factors related to the high level of acceptance of climate change science in Ireland.

Questions on the segmentation report: There was discussion on the large size of the Irish Alarmed audience segment outlined in the CCIM segmentation report. This was discussed as an opportunity for further analysis of the CCIM data to explore the different levels of activity around climate change among this audience. Future research was outlined to determine the characteristics of those who express a strong emotional reaction to climate change, but have not yet taken any actions in support of climate adaptation or mitigation. This sub-group would represent a valuable target for mobilisation in support of climate policy or through influencing economic activity.

Future project development and exploitation of the data

This section of the workshop outlined planned future development of CCIM as well and usefulness of the project findings to date.



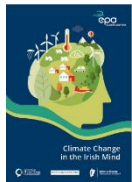
Questions on the uptake of findings: Questions on the uptake of the information from the project were discussed as contributing to both the policy and media space. An example was provided on how a better understanding of public opinion on climate matters has fed into news reporting on climate change. The CCIM finding of a lack of an urban rural divide on climate change beliefs has been highlighted by several Irish journalists who comment on climate matters, which has allowed timely new information to feed into the narrative on climate change.

Conclusion

Overall, the CCIM project overview and findings were well received, prompting interesting discussion and useful questions.

Further correspondence or questions can be sent to the corresponding author Dr. Desmond O'Mahony: d.omahony@epa.ie

Links to all current CCIM reports and tools are posted below:



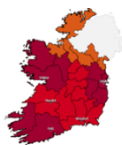
Report 1:

- [Climate change in the Irish mind](#)
- [Supporting Infographic](#)



Report 2:

- [Climate Change's Four Irelands](#)
- [Supporting Infographic](#)



CCIM Mapping tool:

- [Climate Opinion Maps](#)