

School energy storage dublin

Minister for Education Norma Foley and Minister for the Environment, Climate and Communications Eamon Ryan today launched the 2023 - 2024 Schools Energy Retrofit Pathfinder Programme that will evaluate and demonstrate the approach to energy retrofit and carbon reduction in the schools" sector, testing energy efficiency solutions and renewable heat technologies.

The 2023/24 Pathfinder is jointly funded with a targeted budget of EUR35 million from the Department of Education and Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications and administered by the Sustainable Energy Authority of Ireland (SEAI) and the Department of Education with delivery support from Limerick and Clare Education and Training Board.

This government-funded energy retrofit pathfinder programme will target energy use and CO2 emission reduction by 51%, testing deep retrofit and low carbon heating solutions. The programme will see up to 10 schools benefitting from a selection of energy efficiency works.

"It is paving the way for, and informing, a much larger schools national programme for the energy retrofit of schools built prior to 2008 as included in the National Development Plan and will play a key part of meeting delivery of the Climate Action Plan."

"Our target of achieving at least 50% energy efficiency and 51% emissions reduction by 2030 is challenging, but we are contributing to achieve it. I'm delighted with what has already been done in this sector, it is improving the comfort levels and learning environment for our children. The Pathfinder Programme is continuously building expertise so we can roll this out on a much larger scale to more schools in the coming years."

Design teams are being appointed to each school to feasibility stage to investigate retrofit and decarbonisation options, and works will roll out from summer 2023 subject to the outcome of the feasibility stage. The feasibility stage includes looking at various options for potential retrofit levels with renewable heat up to what would be required to be a Zero Emission Building.

The schools for 2023 present a variety of challenges, including building age, archetype and retrofit requirements. The works typically involves upgrades to the building fabric including wall and roof insulation, doors and windows, air tightness improvements, LED lighting and heating upgrades as well as renewable technologies.

Each school undergoes a comprehensive assessment to ensure that the measures are suitable for that school and will deliver value to both the school and learnings for the national retrofit programme.



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The Department of Education is at the forefront of design with respect to sustainable energy in school buildings and this performance has been recognised at both national and international level with sustainable energy awards for excellence in design and specification.

Schools that are designed and built, in accordance with the department's schools' technical guidance documents must achieve an A3 Building Energy Rating A3 and have typically up to 20% higher performance than required by the current Building Regulations, along with 10% of primary energy provided via photovoltaics and infrastructure provision for electric vehicle charging.

All new technologies and approaches are tested to ensure compatibility with school design and operational requirements. Successful and repeatable results are then incorporated into all new school designs and refurbishments.

The department's technical guidance documents set the benchmark for sustainable design in school buildings with a clear focus on energy efficiency and they are based on solid energy research projects.

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