

Enterprise, Waste & Circular Economy

Q25: What other opportunities exist to drive the decarbonisation of the enterprise sector?

[REDACTED] Cultivate - Sustainable Ireland Cooperative:

Offer state-led sustainability initiatives as ESG performance indicators (Connect business sustainability to state-led decarbonisation initiatives):

The 2021 Climate Action Plan stated that “exchequer expenditure schemes [are] neither affordable nor adequate to the scale of the challenge to be addressed”[1]. Non-financial corporate accounting, such as Environment Social Governance (ESG) key performance indicators, have become an important part of businesses maintaining investment in the 21st century while also directly contributing to sustainability. The Irish state should identify opportunities for high-quality ESG KPI’s across Ireland. SME’s and multinationals will soon be looking for biodiversity and carbon credits and linking these to emerging sustainable initiatives in the country would streamline decarbonisation efforts across industry, especially in the agriculture sector.

While the 2021 Climate Action Plan stated that the Public Sector will lead by increasing working by home by 20%. As 13% of Ireland’s workforce is in the Public sector this is only a net decrease of 2.6%. Research has shown that working from home can increase productivity by up to 13% and that 77% of those that do work from home experience this increased productivity[2]. Initiatives should be brought in to ensure that wherever appropriate and desirable for workers, working from home should be encouraged. To aid the process of cutting down emissions from traveling to work, rural co-working spaces should be encouraged.

[1] Government of Ireland (2021), Climate Action Plan, page 33

[2] <https://www.gsb.stanford.edu/faculty-research/working-papers/does-working-home-work-evidence-chinese-experiment>

Q26: What measures should be taken to address the risks that climate change poses for enterprise?

[REDACTED] Cultivate - Sustainable Ireland Cooperative:

Reduce requirements of imports on Irish industry:

The War in Ukraine has demonstrated how reliant Ireland’s agricultural industry is on imports. Considering that climate change poses a serious risk to global supply chains, resilient, self-sufficient agri-food systems should be supported in Ireland.

Agriculture & LULUCF

Q61: What are the opportunities to increase take-up of measures identified in AgClimatise and encourage adoption of other practices which reduce emissions?

[REDACTED] Cultivate - Sustainable Ireland Cooperative:

Enhance the value captured by farmers:

From the policy document captured at our annual Feeding Ourselves event in 2021, Irish farmers capture only 18.1% of value added in the economic food chain, which is lower than the EU average of approximately 25%^[4]. Enhancing the economic value of the supply chains to farmers would streamline the adoption of measures identified in AgClimatise and lead to Irish farmers being treated up to European standards.

[4] <https://www.arc2020.eu/farm-specialisation-or-diversification/#:~:text=Irish%20farmers%20only%20capture%20less,EU%20average%20of%20roughly%2025%25>.

Q62: What policies and measures would be needed to support farmers diversify their farm activities to include opportunities such as bioenergy, vegetable growth, forestry, organic farming, etc.?

[REDACTED] Cultivate - Sustainable Ireland Cooperative:

Impose a declining cap on total national reactive nitrogen usage as recommended in the joint Environmental Pillar/SWAN/Stop Climate Chaos report 'Towards a New Agricultural and Food Policy for Ireland'^[5]. Such measures could be a strong trigger to move agriculture in a more sustainable, fair, and diverse direction if their implementation was carefully managed because they would gradually reduce fossil fuel use 'at the tap'. Among other benefits, they would support the development of direct selling and community-supported agriculture (CSA) schemes, requiring farming to become more labour-intensive and, consequently, create jobs.

[5] https://www.stopclimatechaos.ie/assets/files/pdf/ien_agricultural_food_policy_v2.pdf page 7

Q64: What can be done to increase sequestration through forestry (afforestation, extended rotations, and improved forest management)?

[REDACTED] Cultivate - Sustainable Ireland Cooperative:

Apple orchards, and other fruit tree, plantations are both an underinvested food crop and have significant potential in sequestering carbon[6][7]. The retail of apples sold in Ireland is about 120 million each year but The Apple Farm, an Irish business based in Co. Tipperary, estimates that only between 3%-5% of this market is supplied internally[8]. Agroforestry could potentially create jobs and local economies while benefiting the planet through carbon sequestration and supporting biodiversity. However, for this to be economically viable Irish apples would have to sell at a premium and suitable lands for orchards would have to be utilised to create the best yield.

[6] <https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fenvs.2021.700768/full>

[7] <https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0038883>

[8] https://www.arc2020.eu/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/ARC_RuralIrelandOnTheMove_2022_final_compressed_CORRECTED.pdf
page 49

Q67: What opportunities exist for increased use of cover crops, incorporating straw into tillage and for the application of regenerative agriculture practices? How can farmers be supported to take up these practices?

[REDACTED] Cultivate - Sustainable Ireland Cooperative:

Value chain analysis can be used to identify where environmental, health, climate, energy, and social value is created and lost from current agriculture practices which in turn would leading to evidence-based policy frameworks for the development of regenerative agriculture practices[9]. This would create scenarios that recognise the multitude of environmental and cultural goods and services such as carbon sequestration, flood attenuation, biodiversity and recreational space that are supported by farmers. Consequently, there would be greater recognition and support to farmers who provide the greatest public goods and services to society, ensuring a just and a sustainable transition for farming in response to our climate and biodiversity crises.

The EU Farm to Fork Strategy offers another way to improve the income of primary producers, offering a “huge economic opportunity”, while improving people’s diets[10].

[9] <https://europa.eu/capacity4dev/value-chain-analysis-for-development-vca4d-/wiki/1-vca4d-methodology>

[10] https://food.ec.europa.eu/system/files/2020-05/f2f_action-plan_2020_strategy-info_en.pdf

Q69: What other opportunities exist to support the decarbonisation of the agriculture, land-use and marine sectors?

Cultivate - Sustainable Ireland Cooperative:

A Just Transition Plan for Agriculture:

Decarbonisation in agriculture can be streamlined through a Just Transition plan. We recommend the following ten components taken from a report by the Institute for European Environmental Policy[1]:

1. Enhanced engagement with the farming and land managing communities, including agricultural workers.
2. Preparatory, analytical and supportive work.
3. Building knowledge, skills and capacity.
4. Fair terms and fair prices for farmers in the food chain.
5. Developing new income streams and markets for sustainable activities.
6. Better use of CAP basic payments to support greater environmental sustainability.
7. Targeted supplementary transition aid.
8. Fairness between Member States, re-align the distribution of the CAP budget with the requirements of the transition.
9. Fairness for rural communities.
10. Fairness amongst consumers.

Consumer interventions in the supply chain:

Policy interventions on the consumer's behalf may also aid a just transition for farmers. TASC argues[2] (p33) that consumers are often time or cash-poor, and therefore find shopping at "edge-of-town superstores" a necessity. This system "does not enhance well-being and is neither environmentally nor socially sustainable. Ultimately, this system requires agricultural intensification to sustain itself and this creates a hostile environment for the traditional family farm and increases livestock GHG emissions." TASC says (p33) that, "policies like the four-day work week and the implementation of a living wage would go some way towards enabling people to shop locally or afford a fairer price for produce than those offered in supermarkets."

Stimulating Agroecology:

A study by Institute for Sustainable Development and International Relations showed that a restructuring of land use for agroecology to encourage small scale local production of food, fuel and fibre offers the most comprehensive solution to the interlinked issues of climate change, biodiversity loss and overconsumption. To stimulate agroecology across Ireland, we recommend:

- Public money and supports for agroecological, small-scale production.
- Providing initial funding assistance for local markets for locally produced food as citizens recognise the benefits of agroecological, small-scale production systems.
- Fund research and peer-to-peer co-learning between agroecological farmers to share solutions and opportunities on the ground.
- Local and green procurement as part of community wealth building to drive changes in production

[1] [https://ieep.eu/uploads/articles/attachments/8d472ed3-cc73-428c-b9cd-da67e1e229c2/Just%20transition%20in%20the%20EU%20agriculture%20land%20use%20sector%20-%20IEEP%20\(2022\).pdf?v=63809716825](https://ieep.eu/uploads/articles/attachments/8d472ed3-cc73-428c-b9cd-da67e1e229c2/Just%20transition%20in%20the%20EU%20agriculture%20land%20use%20sector%20-%20IEEP%20(2022).pdf?v=63809716825) page 5 & 6

[2] https://www.tasc.ie/assets/files/pdf/feps-tasc_the_peoples_transition_-_2020f.pdf

[3] <https://www.iddri.org/sites/default/files/PDF/Publications/Catalogue%20Iddri/Etude/201809-ST0918EN-tyfa.pdf>

Built Environment

Q37: Further to the existing supports financed by carbon tax revenues, how can we protect those who are currently experiencing fuel poverty and those who are at risk?

Cultivate - Sustainable Ireland Cooperative:

A Survey carried out by UCC across 128 households[3] identified that the measurements of the 2022 National Retrofitting Scheme will not be enough to support households with low incomes. The authors recommend one-to-one advice on how to save energy as well as the introduction of Community Energy Advisors, as advised by Saint Vincent de Paul, which will assist households in avail of existing schemes.

[3] <https://www.ucc.ie/en/media/research/iss21/ENERGISEpolicybriefingpdf.pdf>

Marine Environment

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[2] https://www.tasc.ie/assets/files/pdf/feps-tasc_the_peoples_transition_-_2020f.pdf

[3] <https://www.iddri.org/sites/default/files/PDF/Publications/Catalogue%20Iddri/Etude/201809-ST0918EN-tyfa.pdf>