



# BIOECONOMY IRELAND DAY

**Bioeconomy  
Ireland  
Day  
2018**

# INTRODUCTION

The first **Bioeconomy Ireland Day** took place on the 19<sup>th</sup> of October 2018 at the new National Bioeconomy Campus in Lisheen, Co. Tipperary. The event brought together stakeholders and leaders from **industry, research & innovation** and **policy** engaged in bioeconomy opportunities.

It involved the launch of the BEACON SFI Bioeconomy Research Centre and the Irish Bioeconomy Foundation, **significant milestones in Ireland's bioeconomy development**. Participants on the day engaged in a **panel discussion** and around table **workshop** exploring **industry perspectives, opportunities and challenges** for Ireland's bioeconomy.

The purpose of this Facilitator's Summary is to share with participants the **common insights, themes and ideas** expressed during the workshop and throughout the day.

# THE PARTNERS

The event was a collaboration between:

**BEACON SFI Bioeconomy Research Centre** – Harnessing research and industry expertise from across Ireland

**The Irish Bioeconomy Foundation** – Developing the National Bioeconomy Campus at Lisheen, Co. Tipperary

**The Government of Ireland** – Establishing a Public-Private Network for those operating within the bioeconomy and the Departments of: Agriculture, Food and the Marine; and Communications, Climate Action and Environment.

**Science Foundation Ireland** – Investing in and promoting the development and competitiveness of industry, enterprise and employment in Ireland

**Enterprise Ireland** – Partnering with Irish enterprises to support sustainable economic growth, regional development and employment

IN ASSOCIATION WITH



Rialtas na hÉireann  
Government of Ireland

SUPPORTED BY



# ADVANCE THOUGHTS

In **advance of the event**, stakeholders were invited to fill out a survey which asked them about their hopes for Bioeconomy Ireland Day 2018.

**Networking opportunities**, and **learning more about research and policy supports** were the common themes most often cited by stakeholders. This helped shape the design of the event.

Most cited

**Networking Opportunities**

**Hearing about research into the bioeconomy**

**Learning about policy and supports for bioeconomy industries**

**Learning how I/my company can engage with the bioeconomy**

**Learning about the bioeconomy in general**

**To see the vision for Ireland**

**New opportunities for north/south collaboration**

**How Bioeconomy and forestry in Ireland could be linked**

**Representation from NI stakeholders**

**That it will improve public perception of bioeconomy**

# SNAPSHOT OF THE DAY

## NETWORKING

A networking and **exhibition zone** enabled participants to interact and find out more about and research and policy



## LAUNCHES



The day saw the launch of the **BEACON SFI Bioeconomy Research Centre** and the **Irish Bioeconomy Foundation**

## PANEL DISCUSSIONS



Chaired by Helen Carroll, panels explored Ireland's **Bioeconomy opportunities** and heard from **industry experiences**

## WORKSHOP SESSION

A workshop session engaged participants on the **risks and enablers** for Ireland's bioeconomy industry and ideas for the **Bioeconomy Ireland Public-Private Network**



## ONLINE DIALOGUE

#**IrishBioeconomy**

Before, during & after the event – engaging people in discussion through social media.



# BIOECONOMY IRELAND DAY

Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, **Michael Creed TD** opened the day, announcing a €28 million investment in BEACON Bioeconomy SFI Research Centre and National Pilot Biorefining Facility. Minister Creed also announced the initiation of a Bioeconomy Public-Private Network of representatives from industry, society and relevant public bodies to inform the future development of the Irish bioeconomy.



**Rialtas na hÉireann**  
Government of Ireland



*“The bioeconomy will play a crucial role in supporting future economic development and employment, as well as providing a path towards reducing carbon emissions and our dependence on fossil resources.”*

**- Minister Michael Creed TD**

# THE LAUNCH - BEACON

The day featured the **launch of the BEACON Bioeconomy Research Centre**, which will develop sustainable, novel, processes and products using biobased resources. Creating clusters for new industry partnerships, it will help deliver the expertise and trained workforce to translate new technologies into new sustainable products, processes, markets and industries.



**BEACON**  
**BIOECONOMY**  
**RESEARCH CENTRE**

Expert inputs provided by:

**Prof Kevin O'Connor**, Director,  
BEACON Bioeconomy Research Centre

**Prof Mark Ferguson**, Director General,  
*Science Foundation Ireland*

**Prof Orla Feely**, Vice President for  
Research Innovation and Impact, *UC*

# THE LAUNCH - IBF

The day also saw the **launch of The Irish Bioeconomy Foundation**, who are developing the National Bioeconomy Campus at Lisheen, Co. Tipperary with a view to exploiting the significant opportunities which existed to produce high value bio-based chemicals from domestically available low value biomass residues. The site was formally handed over by mine operators Vedanta Resources Zinc International.



**Expert inputs provided by:**

**Ms Orla Battersby**, Divisional Manager  
- Food, *Enterprise Ireland*

**Dr Brian Kelly**, CEO, *Irish Bioeconomy Foundation*

**Mr Stephen Wheston**, Site Manager at  
the Lisheen Mine



# FLOW OF THE DAY

The day brought together over 260 stakeholders from industry, research & innovation, and policy, and featured a number of speakers and panellists involved in the development of Ireland's Bioeconomy.

**LAUNCH & PANELS** The MC for the day **Helen Carroll** introduced the Speakers launching each initiative and chaired two Panel Discussions.



**WORKSHOP** Eve-Anne Cullinan M.CO facilitated a round table discussion on the opportunities and challenges facing industry.



**260**  
stakeholders

**10**  
Panellists

**6**  
speakers



# PANEL DISCUSSIONS

Two panel discussions were chaired by MC Helen Carroll and featured insights from ten experts involved in Ireland's bioeconomy.

## Panel 1: Ireland's Opportunity

**Dr Maeve Henchion**, Teagasc

**Ms Patricia Reilly**, European Commission

**Dr Peter Heffernan**, Marine Institute

**Mr Michael Finnucane**, European Investment Bank

**Mr George Burke**, Department of an Taoiseach



## Panel 2: Industry Voice

**Mr Donal McCarthy**, Commercial Mushroom Producers

**Dr Bill Morrissey**, Glanbia

**Dr Audrey Wall**, Nuritas

**Mr Jason Whooley**, Bio Marine Ingredients

**Dr Ciarán Fallon**, Coillte

# NETWORKING

A **networking and exhibition zone** showcased industry innovations and research from BEACON Bioeconomy Research Centre.

Participants noted it as the most useful part of the day, enabling them to meet other stakeholders and industry innovators.



Climate change is the most important consideration for Ireland's bioeconomy development



## CONVERSATION STARTERS

Attendees were asked to indicate their opinions by placing a sticker along a spectrum

Ireland's bioeconomy industry needs to be informed by future research and scientific developments



Developing Ireland's bioeconomy will provide a large number of new jobs



Ireland's bioeconomy development must be driven by consumer demand and market intelligence



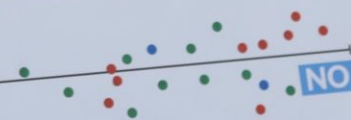
Landowners and businesses are fully aware of the opportunities offered by the bioeconomy



There is currently sufficient public demand for bio-based products for industry to invest



Engaging in the bioeconomy presents a high risk to industry



The concept of the bioeconomy is well understood by those who need to be involved



# WORKSHOP

A workshop in round table discussion format facilitated by M.CO Lab engaged participants in identifying how best to **connect research and industry** and **enable Ireland's bioeconomy**. Volunteer table hosts captured common themes and insights from participants.

## Key questions were:

1. The challenges facing Ireland's bioeconomy industry?
2. Hopes for the Bioeconomy Ireland Public-Private Network?

**Thank you**  
to the **volunteer table hosts** who guided discussions and captured feedback on the day

# 1. KEY CHALLENGES

The **risks and barriers** discussed by participants can be synthesised into key challenges facing industry as follows:

- **Accessing finance** - *How to de-risk and support new ventures?*
- **Building awareness** - *How to influence and get buy-in from consumers?*
- **Attracting talent** - *How to access applied education and skills?*
- **Policy and legislature** - *How can government support industry?*
- **Research and development** - *How to develop an industry informed by innovative research?*

**Enablers** to address each of these challenges were also identified by participants.



# CHALLENGE: ACCESSING FINANCE

How to de-risk and  
support new ventures?

## ENABLERS:

Longer term funding opportunities

Strategic Bioeconomy Fund

Tax relief and grants

Early identification of viable products

Proof of concept funding

Taxes on fossil fuel industries

Green bonds

Government subsidies





# CHALLENGE: BUILDING AWARENESS

How to influence and get buy-in from consumers?

## ENABLERS:

Media Coverage

Certification scheme for bioeconomy sustainability

Tangible & understandable examples

Normalising the terminology

Interaction with local communities

Changing the definition of 'waste'

Promoting the benefits



# CHALLENGE: ATTRACTING TALENT

How to access applied education and skills?

## ENABLERS:

Teaching the Bioeconomy at third level

Integrating industry needs to education

Blending academic skills with commercial and technical expertise

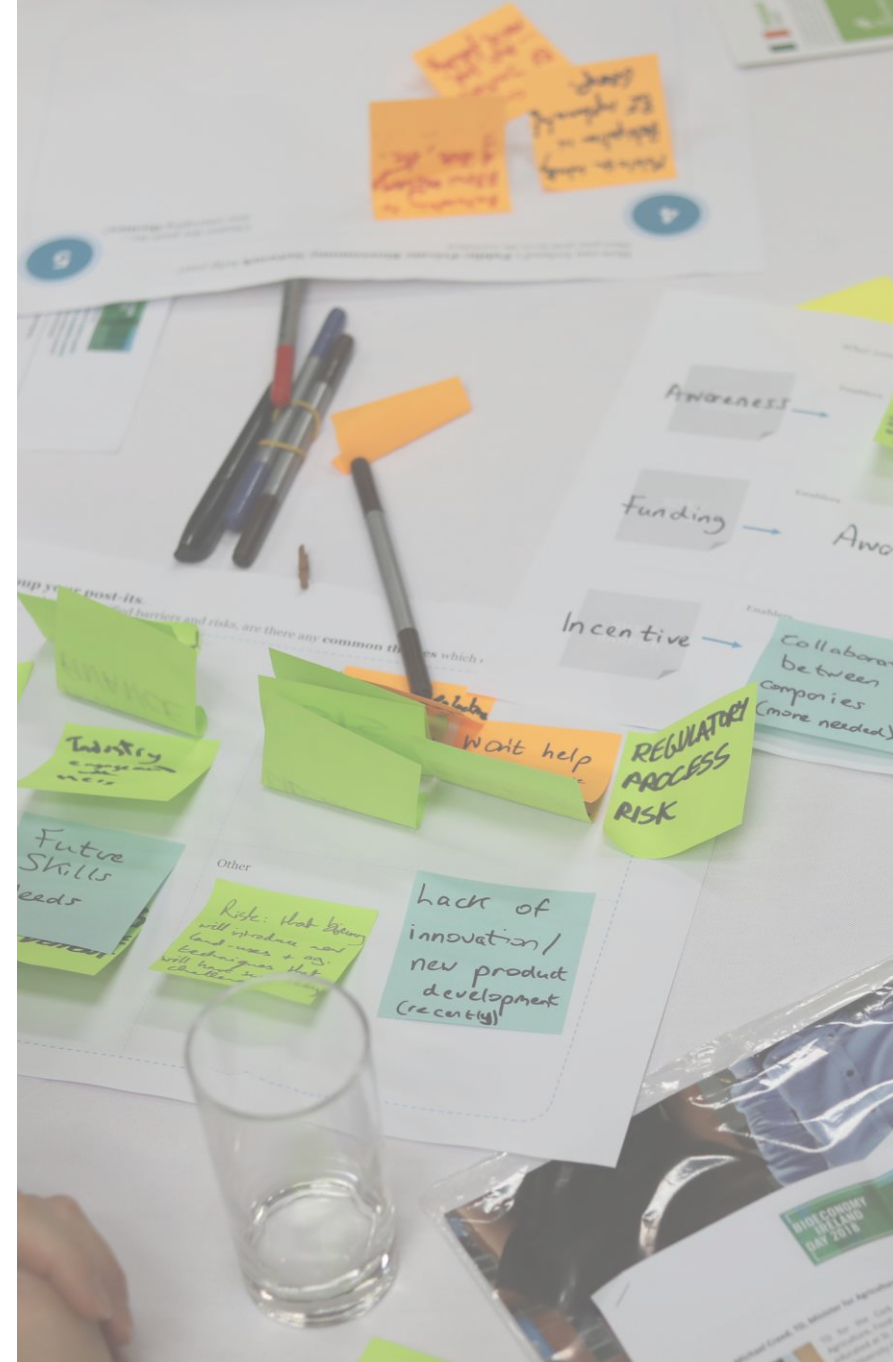
Improving soft skills development

Undergraduate and MSc programmes to feed pipeline

Company based apprentice models

Education focus on innovation vs exam points race

Career opportunities, wages, and rural infrastructure to attract talent





# CHALLENGE: POLICY & LEGISLATURE

How can government support industry?

## ENABLERS:

Long term and stable government policies

Better and more progressive enforcement of regulations

Financial incentives e.g. payments for ecosystem services

Strong political support and leadership

Rapid development of suitable policy and legislation

Policy informed by scientific research

Funding, mentoring and advice

Legislation e.g. carbon tax

# CHALLENGE: RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT

How to develop an industry informed by innovative research?

## ENABLERS:

Funding for research and infrastructure

Register of infrastructure available nationally and internationally

Better partnerships with research institutions

Pathways for transfer of knowledge from research institutions to industry

Academic focus on innovation & development over publications

IP protection & support for SMEs

International peer learning



## 2. HOPES FOR THE NETWORK?

The second key question for the round table discussion was:  
How can the **Bioeconomy Ireland Public-Private Network** best support industry?

### Emerging Ideas:

- Enabling **cross sector connections** and **supporting links** between research, industry, government and society
- Providing a hub to **exchange knowledge** and **create partnerships**
- Providing **central reference point** and **online portal** across sectors
- Disseminating **results of research** and new technologies
- Providing information on **funding opportunities**
- Enabling opportunities for **collaboration** through **problem-solution matches** (e.g. waste streams)
- Spreading awareness of **new initiatives, policies, and developments**
- Listing **job opportunities**
- Showcasing **case studies** and **success stories**

# HOPES FOR IRELAND'S BIOECONOMY

At a high level, the common hope was for Ireland's bioeconomy to **thrive** as an **efficient, innovative, and sustainable sector** of the Irish economy, and to position Ireland as a **world leader**.

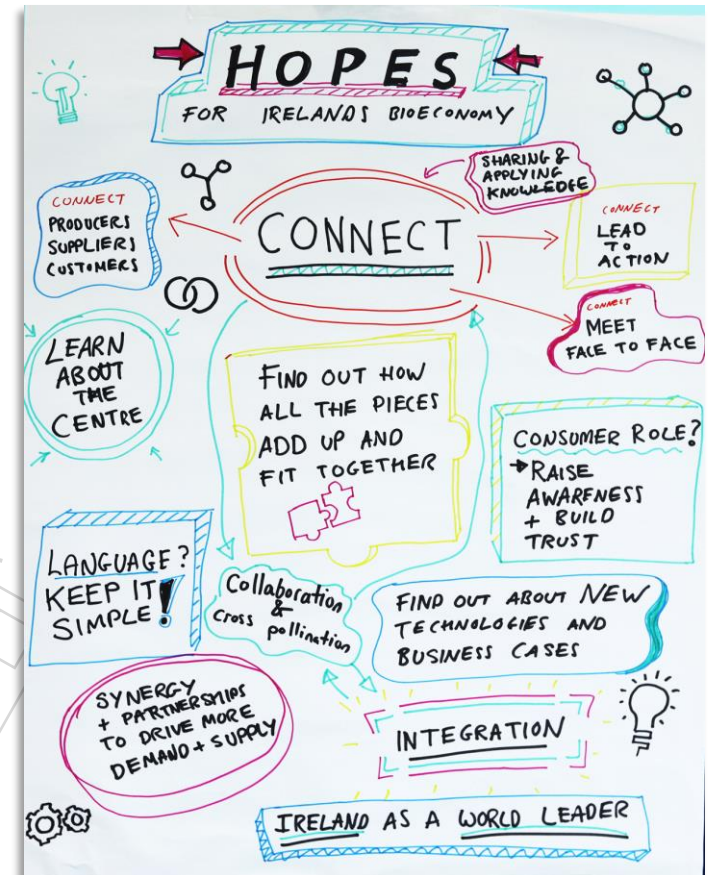
Common themes expressed throughout the day in postcards and through interaction with participants can be summarised as principles, supports and outcomes.....

## Principles of

- Sustainability
- Inclusion
- Equity
- Innovation
- Efficiency of resource use

## Supported by

- Strong government commitment and policy
- Collaboration and integration of industry, government, and research
- Secured funding streams/frameworks
- Industry and commercialisation viability
- Education and public awareness



## Giving rise to

- Rural development & job creation
- Commercial realization, economic growth and development
- A low carbon (to carbon neutral) sector which also reduces waste

# SNAPSHOT OF FEEDBACK

Participants were asked to complete an **evaluation form**, identifying what part of the day was most enjoyable or useful for them.

The most common aspects mentioned were:



## 1. Networking



*“Meeting other stakeholders and industry innovators”*



## 2. Panel Discussions



*“Panel discussions to give insight into policy and practice in the bioeconomy.”*



## 3. Round table discussions /the workshop



*“The discussions at the interactive workshop. Sharing ideas”*

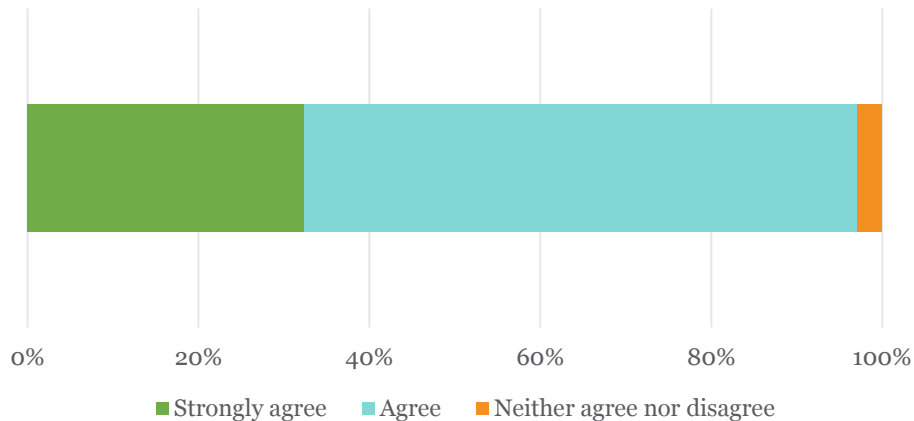
# SNAPSHOT OF FEEDBACK

According to the **evaluation forms** completed by participants after the event,

# 90%

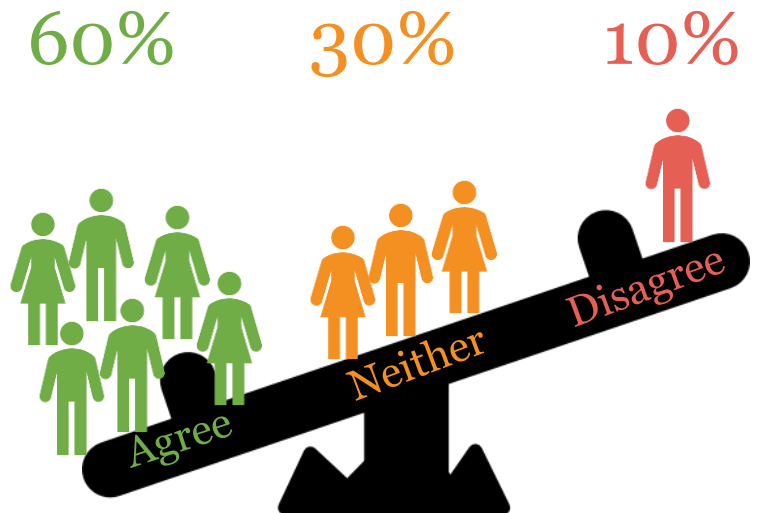
stated that they **are more aware of opportunities** offered by the bioeconomy

*“I have connected with other stakeholders interested in Ireland's bioeconomy”*



**Almost all** participants felt they had networked successfully on the day

*“I have learned about the supports in place for Ireland's bioeconomy industry”*



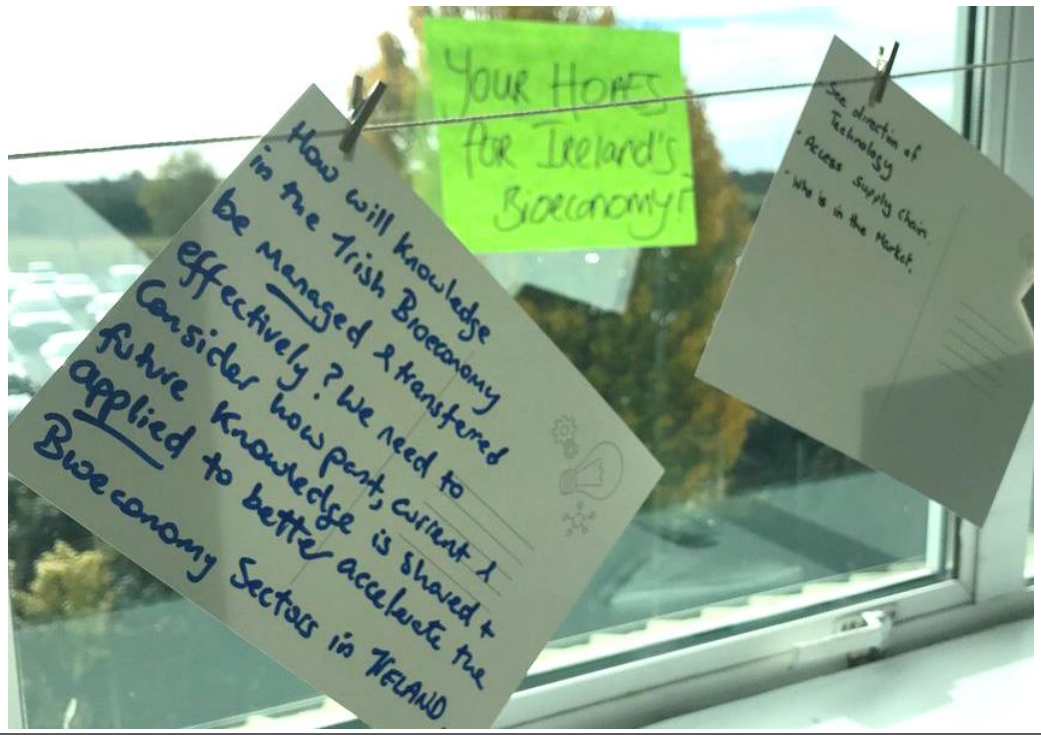
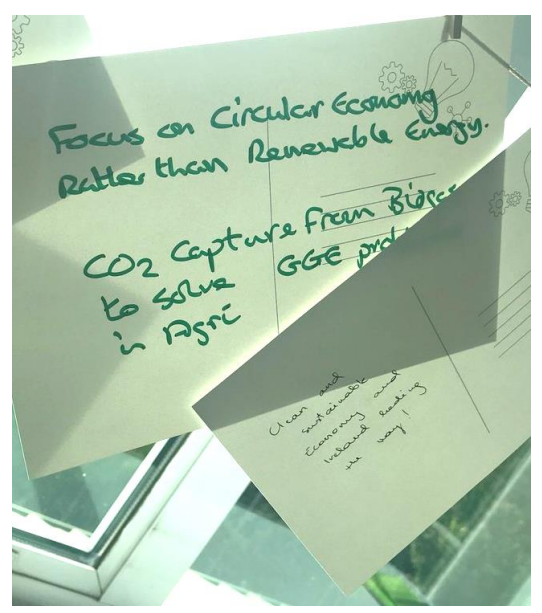
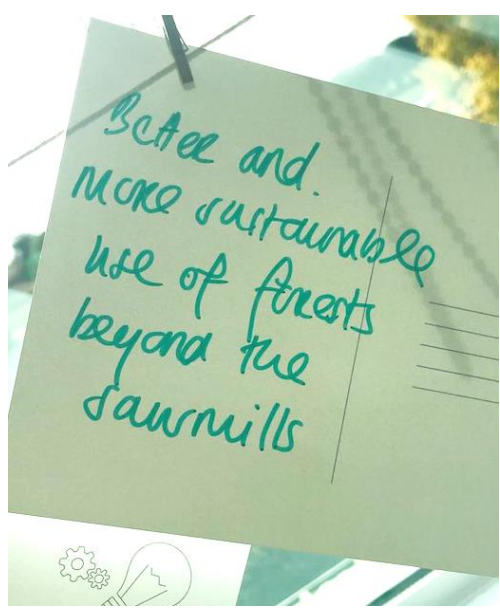
# THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION

For more information on  
Ireland's Bioeconomy and the  
Public-Private Network visit

[www.irishbioeconomy.ie](http://www.irishbioeconomy.ie)

Your HOPES  
for Ireland's  
Bioeconomy?





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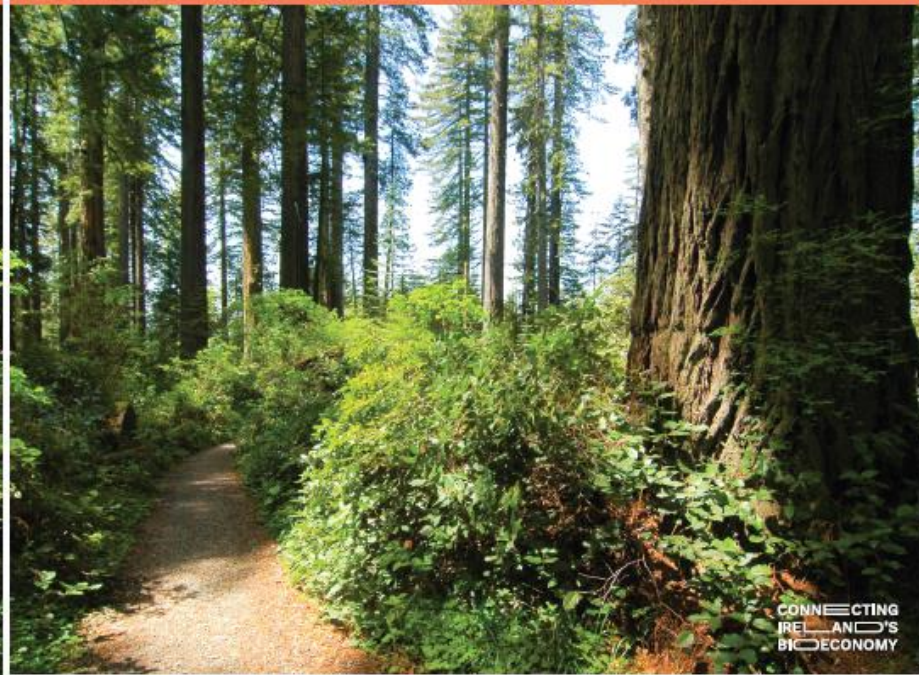
**INFORMATION ON THE DAY**

Ireland's extensive coastline provides opportunities for the development of new marine-based value chains through harvesting underutilised resources and using marine natural resources in non-food products.



In Ireland the agri-food sector produces large volumes of residues which could be converted to high value products providing businesses access to new markets.

Forestry offers multiple benefits by generating sustainable and renewable materials, carbon, acting as a carbon sink and providing a replacement for high embodied CO<sub>2</sub> materials such as cement and plastic.



With 80% of agri-food companies located in rural Ireland, the bioeconomy will be a key driver to stimulate rural and agricultural redevelopment.

Growing the bioeconomy would increase energy security by diminishing our reliance on fossil fuels and carbon intensive resources.



The bioeconomy is cross-cutting in nature and offers a unique opportunity to address inter-connected challenges of climate change, natural resource scarcity, food security and fossil fuel dependency.

