Public Consultation on the Mid-Term Review of Food Vision 2030

Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

2026

About the Respondent

Please complete the following information:

1. Are you responding as: ☐ An Individual **X An Organisation** ☐ On behalf of a group
2. Name of individual / organisation:_**Irish Timber Growers Association**
3. If responding on behalf of an organisation, please describe its main activities: Timber Growers Information and Representative Association See https://www.itga.ie/about/itga

   _____
4. Contact email (optional): __info@itga.ie _____
5. Would you like your submission to be published? **X Yes** ☐ No
6. Please indicate which sector(s) you are primarily engaged in (tick all that apply):

   ☐ Farming ☐ Fisheries X **Forestry** ☐ Food Processing ☐ Retail ☐ Advisory/Research

   ☐ Environmental NGO ☐ Public Sector ☐ Other: _____
7. Do you consent to your submission being processed in accordance with GDPR requirements? X **Yes** ☐ No
8. Are you responding based on direct experience in the agri-food system? X **Yes** ☐ No
9. If applicable, please indicate the region in which you are primarily based: **Nationally**
10. Any additional background information relevant to your submission:

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Food Vision 2030 – Mid-Term Review

Ireland's approach to delivering sustainable agriculture and food is set out in Food Vision 2030, Ireland's stakeholder-led strategy. Its vision is for Ireland to be "A World Leader in Sustainable Food Systems", with environmental, economic and social sustainability at its core. It was designed using a food systems approach, recognising the requirement to have greater policy coherence across agriculture, food, and the environment.

Food Vision 2030 is structured around four Missions, supported by 22 Goals and 218 actions. A Monitoring and Implementation Framework tracks delivery and ensures accountability.

At the midpoint of the decade, this Mid-Term Review provides an opportunity to assess progress and consider priorities for the period 2026-2030. Stakeholders are invited to provide evidence, insights and proposals to inform the next phase of Food Vision 2030.

It is important to acknowledge the central importance of the family farm to Ireland's identity, economy and communities. The family farm model is an integral element of the Irish agri-food system, providing multi-generational enterprises in rural Ireland, and playing a central role in the Irish landscape. The family farm is a pillar of rural towns and villages, stimulating economic activity and employment via primary, secondary and tertiary businesses throughout Ireland. In addition, it is foundational to our global reputation as a trusted producer of high quality, sustainable food. Nevertheless, we also know that the model faces real pressures in areas such as, demographic change, economic viability, climate obligations, market concentration, and changing societal expectations.

In 2025, Ireland's agri-food exports reached almost €21billion, an all-time high, and a clear testament to the enduring strength, quality, and global reputation of the Irish food system. This success is underpinned by a continued focus on food safety, high quality produce, innovation, and market development, delivered in partnership with Government agencies and stakeholders

across the supply chain. Farmers, fishers, foresters and food & drink producers continue to lead by example in adopting sustainable practices and embracing change.

Key achievements to date are outlined in the Food Vision 2030 Annual Reports and the Food Vision 2030 Dashboard, available at Food Vision 2030 - A World Leader in Sustainable Food Systems. The third Annual Report, published last year, showed that 79% of actions either have been completed or have had substantial action undertaken, with the remaining actions underway. That is tangible, measurable progress.

This consultation invites stakeholders to shape the next phase of Food Vision 2030 by providing evidence, insights and perspectives on how it should evolve for 2026 to 2030, ensuring that it remains ambitious, focused and responsive to emerging challenges and opportunities.

Mission 1: A Climate Smart, Environmentally Sustainable Agri-Food Sector

Mission 1 seeks to deliver "A Climate Smart, Environmentally Sustainable Agri-Food Sector" and there are seven Goals in this Mission.

Goal 1 Develop a Climate Neutral Agri-Food System by 2050

Goal 2 Restore and Enhance Biodiversity

Goal 3 Protect High Status Sites and Contribute to Achieving Good Water Quality and Healthy Aquatic Ecosystems

Goal 4 Develop Diverse, Multi-Functional Forests

Goal 5 Enhance the Environmental Sustainability of the Seafood Sector

Goal 6 Embed the Agri- Food Sector in the Circular, Regenerative Bioeconomy

Goal 7 Strengthen Origin Green and other Sustainability Supports to Reflect the Higher Level of Ambition for the Agri-Food Sector

Key Challenges

- Meeting the sectoral emissions targets while maintaining farm viability.
- Improving water quality pressures in certain catchments.
- Ongoing biodiversity decline and habitat fragmentation.
- Afforestation rates.

Key Opportunities

- Expansion of organic farming and eco-schemes.
- Scaling biomethane and renewable energy integration.
- Expansion of native woodland and small forestry plots.
- Hedgerow rejuvenation and planned management cycles.
- Nature-based solutions delivering climate, biodiversity and flood mitigation benefits.

Mission 1 Consultation Questions

1. **Are the current goals identified under Mission 1 still relevant for the period to 2030?**

   X **Yes** ☐ No

2. **In your opinion, which of these seven goals have made the most progress under Mission 1?**

Goal 7 - Strengthen Origin Green and other Sustainability Supports to Reflect the Higher Level of Ambition for the Agri-Food Sector

3. **In your opinion, which of these goals have made the least progress under Mission 1?**

Goal 4 – To Develop Diverse, Multi-Functional Forests - This goal has significantly underperformed relative to Food Vision 2030 ambitions and national Climate Action Plan requirements. Afforestation levels remain far below targets and the acknowledged levels required to: meet climate targets, maintain future timber supply, enhance carbon sequestration, and support rural economic diversification.

4. **Under Mission 1, what should the absolute priorities be for the period to 2030?**

Increase annual afforestation substantially toward national targets and recognise forestry as essential to national climate change mitigation infrastructure.

5. **Under Mission 1, how can we build greater resilience to future risks (e.g., climate, market and geopolitical shocks), on Irish family farms in the areas of environmental, economic and social sustainability?**

• Forestry provides one of the strongest long-term resilience tools available to Irish family farms through: • income diversification, • carbon sequestration, • shelter, • biodiversity enhancement, water regulation, • renewable material production, • and intergenerational asset creation. • Farm forestry should be positioned as complementary to farming rather than competing with farming.

6. **What measures best support achieving the 2030 sectoral emissions ceiling?**

Afforestation and good practices in forest management

7. **How can carbon sequestration from forestry, peatlands and hedgerows be expanded?**

Plant more trees and forests, plant and manage forests to optimise carbon sequestration of trees, and greater substitution of carbon-intensive construction materials with timber.

8. **What supports accelerate water quality improvement?**

Planting riparian zones and planting additional forests in catchment areas to reduce sedimentation

9. **What actions best restore biodiversity on farmland?**

Planting mixed forest crops with areas of biodiversity enhancement

10. **How can nature-based solutions scale between 2025–2030?**

Forestry must be recognised as a foundational nature-based solution in agriculture and rural Ireland.

11. **Are there any challenges or opportunities not covered under this Mission, which you believe are of significant importance?**

Declining future sustainable timber supply risk, and underdeveloped low carbon timber construction policy.

Mission 2: Viable and Resilient Primary Producers, with Enhanced Wellbeing

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Mission 2 places primary producers, farmers, fishers and foresters, at the centre of Food Vision 2030 and there are four Goals in this Mission.

Goal 1 Improve the Competitiveness and Productivity of Primary Producers

Goal 2 Improve the Creation and Equitable Distribution of Value

Goal 3 Increase Primary Producer Diversification & Resilience

Goal 4 Improve the Social Sustainability of Primary Producers

Key Challenges

- Ensuring economic viability, including improving competitiveness, productivity and better equity in the supply chain.
- Generational renewal.
- Providing diversification opportunities.
- Gender imbalance in farm ownership and leadership.
- Farm safety risks and mental health pressures.

Key Opportunities

- Increasing demand for high-quality Irish produce.
- Viable diversification alternatives.
- Implementation of generational renewal recommendations.
- Increased participation and recognition of women in agriculture.
- Collaborative farming models.

Mission 2 Consultation Questions

12. **Are the current goals identified under Mission 2 still relevant for the period to 2030?**

    X **Yes** ☐ No

13. **In your opinion, which of these four goals have made the most progress under Mission 2?**

Goals 1 & 2

14. **In your opinion, which of these goals have made the least progress under Mission 2?**

Goals 3 & 4

15. Under Mission 2, what should the absolute priorities be for the period to 2030? (Limit: 1,000 Characters).

Through collaborative farming models, position forestry as part of main stream farming and nature based solutions.

16. Under Mission 2, how can we build greater resilience to future risks (e.g., climate, market and geopolitical shocks), whilst ensuring greater food security?

Active mix of forestry and farming throughout the State with a more concerted effort to plant more trees and forests.

17. What actions would best improve long-term income resilience?

Active mix of long-term forestry income with farming revenue.

18. How can we encourage generational renewal?

Afforestation should form a core part of generational renewal in Ireland as it does in other European countries.

19. How can the attractiveness of diversification opportunities be strengthened?

Increase and maintain sufficient economic supports to strengthen diversification

20. What supports are needed to enhance gender equality and women's participation?

Foster further gender balance within decision making bodies in agriculture and forestry

21. What interventions would improve farm safety, mental health and wellbeing?

Time spent in forests is well researched and strongly recognised as particularly beneficial to mental health and wellbeing. Encouragement of farm forestry can assist in regard to mental health and wellbeing.

22. How can economic competitiveness be strengthened while meeting environmental and social sustainability goals?

Additional forestry on farms can help achieve this aim.

23. Are there any challenges or opportunities not covered under this Mission, which you believe are of significant importance?

Mission 3: Food that is Safe, Nutritious and Appealing, Trusted and Valued at Home and Abroad

Mission 3 is titled "Food which is Safe, Nutritious and Appealing, Trusted and Valued at Home and Abroad", with a particular focus on the importance of trade. There are four Goals in this Mission.

Goal 1 Prioritise Coherent Food and Health Policies to Deliver Improved Health Outcomes

Goal 2 Enhance Consumer Trust in our Food System, Providing Evidence of a Safe, Ethical Food Supply

Goal 3 Create Value Add in Food Through Insight, Innovation and Product Differentiation

Goal 4 Develop Market Opportunities at Home and Abroad

Key Challenges

- Global competition and trade volatility.
- Increasing health and societal expectations.
- Maintaining consumer trust.
- Increasing innovation and value-addition.

Key Opportunities

- Premium and functional food growth markets.
- Value-added processing and product differentiation.
- Market diversification and strengthening existing markets.
- Leveraging food safety, nutritional and sustainability credentials of Irish food.

Mission 3 Consultation Questions

24. **Are the current goals identified under Mission 3 still relevant for the period to 2030?**

    X **Yes** ☐ No

25. **In your opinion, which of these four goals have made the most progress under Mission 3?**

26. **In your opinion, which of these goals have made the least progress under Mission 3?**

27. **Under Mission 3, what should the absolute priorities be for the period to 2030? (Limit: 1,000 Characters).**

    Limit: 1,000 Characters

28. **Under Mission 3, how can we build greater resilience to future risks (e.g., climate, market and geopolitical shocks), whilst ensuring greater food security?**

29. **What steps could further strengthen Ireland's global reputation for safe, high-quality food?**

30. **How can consumer trust be improved to better support increasing health and societal expectations?**

31. What supports enable greater value-added processing and innovation?

32. Are there any challenges or opportunities not covered under this Mission, which you believe are of significant importance?

Mission 4: Innovative, Competitive and Resilient Agri-Food Sector, Driven by Technology and Talent

Mission 4 is titled an "Innovative, Competitive and Resilient Agri-Food Sector, Driven by Technology and Talent", and there are seven Goals in this Mission.

Goal 1 Move to a Challenge- Focused Innovation System

Goal 2 A Strategic Funding Approach for Research, Development and Innovation

Goal 3 Develop a Dynamic Knowledge Exchange Environment

Goal 4 Enhance the Use of Technology and Data

Goal 5 Maintain and Improve Competitiveness and Resilience

Goal 6 Attract and Nurture Diverse and Inclusive Talent

Goal 7 Policy Coherence in Sustainable Food Systems between Ireland's Domestic Policy and its Development Cooperation and Foreign Policy

Key Challenges

- Rising labour, energy and compliance costs.
- Skills shortages and future skills requirements across the agri-food sector.
- Supply chain vulnerability to climate and geopolitical shocks.
- Increasing private sector spend on R&D as a percentage of turnover.
- Technology adoption gaps.

Key Opportunities

- Precision agriculture and automation.
- Expansion of apprenticeships and technician programmes.
- Bioeconomy and renewable energy integration.
- Stronger research-industry collaboration.

Mission 4 Consultation Questions

33. **Are the current goals identified under Mission 4 still relevant for the period to 2030?**

X **Yes** ☐ No

34. **In your opinion, which of these seven goals have made the most progress under Mission 4?**

Goal 4 Enhance the use of technology and data

35. **In your opinion, which of these goals have made the least progress under Mission 4?**

The forestry sector remains significantly under-digitised relative to its needs and potential

36. **Under Mission 4, what should the absolute priorities be for the period to 2030? (Limit: 1,000 Characters).**

Accelerate forestry digitalisation and use to data and technology. Develop AI-enabled forest management tools. Improve timber sale technologies, traceability and supply-chain coordination. Support carbon accounting system technologies.

37. **What research areas most require increased investment between 2026–2030?**

Carbon accounting technologies, forest biodiversity integration with economically sustainable timber production, improve storm resilience, and forest health/biosecurity monitoring.

38. **What supports would accelerate digital transformation and technology adoption?**

Funding support programmes specifically for digital transformation and technology adoption in forestry

39. **How can Ireland strengthen skills and talent pipelines across the agri-food system?**

Retain home talent and graduates and attract talented graduates from abroad

40. What tools or systems are needed to support competitiveness while achieving economic, environmental and social sustainability goals?

Support the development of and roll out the use of improved forest technology systems in Ireland

41. Are there any challenges or opportunities not covered under this Mission, which you believe are of significant importance?

The Four Missions

The core missions of Food Vision 2030 are still relevant to the challenges and opportunities for the agri-food sector:

- Mission 1 “A Climate Smart, Environmentally Sustainable Agri-Food Sector”.
- Mission 2 “Viable and Resilient Primary Producers, with Enhanced Wellbeing”.
- Mission 3 “Food which is Safe, Nutritious and Appealing, Trusted and Valued at Home and Abroad”.
- Mission 4 “Innovative, Competitive and Resilient Agri-Food Sector, Driven by Technology and Talent”.

Nevertheless, are there any comments or proposals on these missions, or the overall vision for Ireland as a world leader in sustainable food systems?

Food Vision 2030 correctly identified forestry as strategically important but underestimated the scale of societal barriers affecting implementation.

The review process should acknowledge that:

- forestry targets have not been achieved,
- implementation mechanisms have not achieved success in afforestation
- and confidence within the sector has deteriorated significantly

The second half of Food Vision 2030 must therefore focus on implementation and delivery of forestry targets.

Without a major reset in forestry and afforestation delivery, Ireland risks:

- failing climate obligations,
- increasing timber imports,
- weakening rural diversification,
- and missing major biodiversity and bioeconomy opportunities under woodland creation.

Monitoring and Implementation

Have you any comments or proposals regarding the Monitoring and Implementation of Food Vision 2030?

In this regard, you can view **Food Vision 2030 – Annual Reports** and the **Food Vision Dashboard.**

The monitoring system should also include the monitoring of future timber supply and it's forecast implications from recent past and ongoing afforestation levels and their impact on our future sustainable supply of timber for home construction.

General comments or proposals

Have you any general comments or proposals regarding Food Vision 2030 or the approach to agri-food strategy in Ireland?

Forestry must move from being viewed as a peripheral or optional land-use activity to being recognised as an essential national strategic agricultural related activity which underpins:

- carbon sequestration and climate change mitigation delivery,
- renewable biomass,
- biodiversity enhancement,
- rural economy,
- water protection,
- and the circular bioeconomy.

Ireland cannot realistically achieve the ambitions of Food Vision 2030 without a major recovery in afforestation and forestry performance.