

POLICY BRIEF
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This policy brief / factsheet is produced by way of collaboration between BioBase4SME and IETS BIO³ at Ryan Institute, NUI Galway.

This is intended to be the first in a series of policy briefs from the IETS BIO³ programme in collaboration between Pádraic Ó hUiginn and Prof Piet Lens at NUI Galway's Ryan Institute

For queries please contact:
padraic.ohuiginn@nuigalway.ie

Pádraic Ó hUiginn

BioInnovation Agent for Ireland

BioBase4SME at NUI Galway

Follow us on Twitter:

@BioBase4SME

@ietsbio3

@EnviroPR

@RyanInstitute

@nuigalway



BIOECONOMY IN IRELAND POLICY BRIEF

Bioeconomy market development in Ireland, in review at year end 2018

Looking back 5 years – Looking forward 5 years

2018 has seen publication of **Ireland's first dedicated National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy (2018)**.

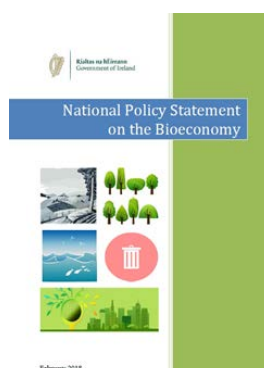
2018 has also seen publication of an **update of the European Union's 2012 Bioeconomy Strategy for Europe**.

2018 has brought with it dedicated innovation supports for addressing climate action in the Government of Ireland's **Ireland 2040** national plan.

Flashback 2013:

Looking back five years to 2013, Ireland was still in the period of retrenchment in the public finances, post-global financial crisis. The Action Plan for Jobs provided the whole of government focus for implementation for most new policy initiatives. The 2020 renewable energy and emissions targets seemed a long way-off, yet notwithstanding progress at that stage on the renewable electricity supply targets (primarily wind generation), progress was observed to be lagging behind in the heat and transport sectors. Industry interests were calling for the publication of the national plan for bioenergy and the development of an incentive tariff for biogas, including biomethane production.

As 2018 comes to a close, we now have an over-arching policy statement in place for Ireland's bioeconomy, with work in progress on a Support Scheme for Renewable Heat (formerly the RHI) and a new renewable electricity support scheme (RESS). The Irish economy is generally considered to be in recovery according to a range of indicators including GDP, employment statistics and exchequer revenue (tax) receipts. Science Foundation Ireland and the (European) Bio-based Industries Joint Undertaking have recently allocated funding to bioeconomy initiatives at the former Lisheen zinc and lead mines outside Thurles, Co Tipperary – with an emphasis on sustainable and bio-based chemicals and plastics. Bio-marine Ingredients Ireland has a marine-based integrated biorefinery up and running. European Union funding will also support the first use of biomethane (produced in Ireland) in the national gas grid in the coming months, through Causeway.



Forecast 2023? Horizon-scanning questions for beyond 2020, to 2030 and beyond

Looking forward 5 years to 2023 and beyond – with 2020 now almost upon us where does government, industry interests and international actors plan to take us?

What influence will, for example, the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) and European Union 2030 renewable energy targets have on the development of Ireland's bioeconomy?

Circular economy is growing in influence in both public policy and the sustainability strategies of large multi-national corporations –will this have impacts?

Disruption –unexpected global events that can cause more than mere paradigm shifts overnight –eg Brexit?

Some roadmaps to the future?

- **What are Ireland's bioeconomy / bio-based economy natural resources?**

The **Bio-Éire project** sought to identify and quantify Ireland's broad range of bioeconomy resources or raw materials. In the main the starting points are agriculture & the agri-food processing sectors, marine and sea fisheries, forestry and then municipal organic wastes, residues, waste-waters. Bio-Éire also sought to identify value-chains that Ireland should pursue in the bioeconomy, and in particular identify those that it should prioritise –this was part of an exercise to inform the development of the National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy 2018.

[The National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy 2018 will be followed up by a bioeconomy roadmap, being prepared by government officials.](#)

- **Project Ireland 2040** – Climate Action Fund, Disruptive Technologies Innovation Fund.
- **National Wastewater Sludge Management Plan 2016** – first time that Ireland has looked at wastewater treatment and sludges in an integrated manner.
- **FoodWise 2025** sets targets for continued growth in Irish food and beverages exports.
- **Harnessing Our Ocean Wealth** – in more recent years Ireland has started to map and gather data on one of our largest national resources –our ocean territory –climate change could bring with it serious impacts for our fishing industry and marine life in the form of ocean acidification.
- **Ireland's greenhouse gas emissions targets** – 2030 and 2050 horizons – a challenge and an opportunity for Ireland in the context of targets to continue export-led growth in the agri-food, fishing and beverages sectors.
- **Causeway** plans to roll-out Ireland's first public filling station for compressed natural gas (CNG) and the first use of biomethane in the national gas grid -with an initial network of 14 public stations to be in place by end-2020. This will provide for the use of CNG as a more environmentally-friendly and sustainable alternative to diesel fuel in transport. It will also provide a pathway or "Causeway" to the use of renewable biomethane in transport.
- **Commercial deployment and bioeconomy market development in Ireland** –a "promised land" beyond the "valley of death" for research break-throughs and developments?

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