

Food Wise 2025 – Agri Food Strategy draft Environmental Report (SEA) – observations of Climate Policy Section

- It is noted that the National Policy Position on Climate Action and Low Carbon Development is not referenced in the draft. The National Policy Position “aims, as a fundamental national objective, to achieve transition to a competitive, low carbon climate resilient and environmentally sustainable economy by 2050.” This is highly relevant to development of the agriculture sector and should be referenced as one of the policy drivers for setting the context for Food Wise 2025. The National Policy position commits to “a long term vision of low carbon transition based on:
 - An aggregate reduction in carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions of at least 80% (compared to 1990 levels) by 2050 across the electricity generation, built environment and transport sectors; and
 - In parallel, an approach to carbon neutrality in the agriculture and land use sector, including forestry, which does not compromise capacity for sustainable food production.”
- Furthermore, there does not appear to be any specific reference to the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Bill 2015 which will soon be enacted and which will require the Development of a National Mitigation Plan, preparation for which is already underway. The input of Agriculture is one of four key contributions to this plan.
- While the report does make reference to the 2030 EU Climate and Energy Package it would seem appropriate that the text might reflect more on how Food Wise 2025 will influence matters in respect of targets yet to be agreed under this process.
- The National Policy Position also specifies: “the need to take advantage of environmentally sustainable economic opportunities both within and outside the State”. In this regard, the SWOT analysis in the draft Food Wise 2025 would be enhanced by treating the climate agenda as an opportunity, and not solely as a threat.
- The Strategic Environmental Assessment Draft Environmental Report (page 25) states as follows: “In so far as Agri-Food Strategy 2025 promotes the concept of sustainability and promotes research directed at limiting GHG emissions the strategy will have positive impacts. Sustainable expansion of the forestry sector with consequent reduction of fossil fuel reliance will also have a positive impact. Increases in production arising from and expansion in livestock numbers will have a negative implication for GHG emissions.” It might be desirable if further quantification of these positive and negative impacts was provided within the context of overall potential effects in relation to the goal of carbon neutrality.

- The Climate Bill will also require the development of sectoral adaptation plans (including agriculture) however again there does not appear to be a specific reference to same – should the report be trying to incorporate such elements given its strategic outlook to 2025?
- From an overarching perspective and more related to the SEA process itself there was a query in respect of excluding a “Do Nothing” scenario from the analysis?

Climate Policy Section

DECLG

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