Submission from the Climate Action Regional Offices to the Draft Agriculture, Forest and Seafood Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan

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The four Climate Action Regional Offices (CARO), welcome the opportunity to contribute to the public consultation on the Draft Agriculture, Forest and Seafood Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan as prepared by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. This submission is set out under the following headings:

1. Background to the CAROs
2. Local Authorities - Draft Climate Change Adaptation Strategies
3. Sectoral Adaptation
4. Commentary on provisions of the draft sectoral adaptation plan.
5. Conclusion

1. Background to the CAROs

Four regional climate action offices were set up in 2018 in response to Action 8 of the 2018 National Adaptation Framework (NAF) - Planning for a Climate Resilient Ireland.

The four Climate Action Regional Offices have been established to drive climate action at both regional and local levels. In recognition of the significant obligation to develop and implement climate action measures, the four regional offices are mandated to co-ordinate engagement across the varying levels of government and help build on experience and expertise that exists in the area of climate change and climate action.
The composition of the four Climate Action Regions has been determined by the geographical and topographical characteristics, vulnerabilities and shared climate risks experienced across local authority areas. The four CARO regions, constituent local authorities and associated lead authorities are as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ClimateAction Region</th>
<th>Local Authority function area</th>
<th>Lead Authority</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic Seaboard South</td>
<td>Clare, Limerick, Kerry, Cork City &amp; County</td>
<td>Cork County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlantic Seaboard North</td>
<td>Donegal &amp; Sligo, Mayo, Galway City &amp; County</td>
<td>Mayo County Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dublin Metropolitan</td>
<td>South Dublin, Fingal, Dun-Laoghaire-Rathdown, Dublin City.</td>
<td>Dublin City Council</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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2. Local Authorities - Draft Climate Change Adaptation Strategies

Ireland’s first statutory National Adaptation Framework (NAF) was published in January 2018. This sets out the national strategy to reduce the vulnerability of the country to the negative effects of climate change and to avail of positive impacts. The NAF was developed under the Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2015. The NAF outlines a whole of government and society approach to climate adaptation in Ireland. All local authorities are required to prepare Climate Change Adaptation Strategies for adoption by their members by 30th September 2019. Work is ongoing across all local authorities in the country on the preparation and development of local adaptation strategies for delivery by 30th September 2019.

The four CAROs have a strong role in assisting and supporting local authorities in the development of these local authority adaptation strategies.

3. Sectoral Adaptation

We noted the NAF identifies the 12 sector and lead departments for the development of sectoral adaptation plans. We note further that the NAF sets out the approach to sectoral adaptation planning and is very strong that sectoral guidelines need to ensure the vertical and horizontal integration of adaptation objectives, aims and actions arising from developed plans. Equally for Local Authorities, the NAF stipulates that the guidelines for local authority strategies should
ensure that they will complement adaptation plans to be prepared on a sectoral basis' (NAF page 48, role of sectoral adaptation guidelines).

This complimentary approach is highlighted to provide proper alignment between sectoral adaptation actions and local authority actions, to promote enhanced coordination and coherent and effective implementation and ultimately to create and enabling environment for implementation.

4. Commentary on provisions of the draft sectoral adaptation plan

The four CAROs welcome the publication of the Draft Agriculture, Forest and Seafood Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan. This is significant having regard to the importance of the sector to the national economy, contribution to Ireland’s Greenhouse Gases, together with the contribution the sector can potentially make in the future towards carbon sequestration and other mitigation measures. It is also noted that there are number of cross sectoral issues involved and the complexity that this brings to Adaptation Planning.

The Plan sets out the overall Adaptation Goals and overarching Objectives which the CAROs strongly support.

It goes on to discuss the alignment with DAFM Statement of Strategic Goals by listing them but does not make the connection between the Adaptation Goals and the Strategic Goals. This could be strengthened by demonstrating how it is proposed that alignment will happen or how the Strategic Goals may have to change following the completion of the Adaptation Process.

The priority impacts and consequences are well defined in the Plan in quite some detail, as are the cross sectoral issues.

The Case Studies are well presented and discussed, however not all have learnings and or actions highlighted. It may have been worthwhile including these in the main body of the Plan, before considering the detailed actions.

The draft plan of does not demonstrate a connection between the priority impacts and consequences which are quite detailed, and the very high-level actions proposed under each of the four overarching adaptation objectives and actions identified to achieve these. It is not clear how the risks and opportunities identified are dealt with through the actions proposed.

The case studies in some cases highlight action that do not appear to be aligned with the proposed Adaptation Actions. It is unclear how these will be delivered through the proposed Plan.

The implementation plan should provide for governance arrangements to clearly identify how implementation of the Actions proposed will be tracked over the life of the Plan.

5. Conclusion

Local authorities play an important role engaging with the Agricultural, Forestry and Seafood
Sectors in water quality, food safety and biodiversity. This role can also contribute towards assisting with the understanding of Climate Adaptation within the sector and provide strong leadership towards building climate resilience in the sector. The CAROs look forward to working with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine on the practical implementation of the Adaptation Plan.

Martin Keating, Senior Executive Officer
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