

17 September 2025

To whom it may concern,

Cork Chamber welcomes the opportunity to contribute to the public consultation on the Draft Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Biodiversity 2025.

Cork Chamber represents 1,200 members together employing 130,000 people throughout the city, metropolitan area and county. Our vision is to lead a transforming and ambitious Cork city and county, and our purpose is to unite, represent and support our members and community. Our direction is guided by our formal pledge to uphold the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Cork Chamber has also been designated an SDG Champion by the Department of Climate, Energy and the Environment for 2024 – 2025.

Cork Chamber's advocacy efforts are guided by the views and priorities of our partners, and are shaped by our continuous engagement with members, our board and key stakeholders in Cork city and county.

Biodiversity is a cornerstone of Ireland's cultural heritage, environmental health, and economic resilience. Its protection is essential not only for climate action but also for sustaining thriving local communities and businesses. Events such as the many severe flooding incidents witnessed in Cork in recent years have demonstrated the interconnection between biodiversity, climate adaptation, and economic stability. Businesses in Cork and across Ireland are directly impacted by biodiversity loss and climate-related risks, highlighting the importance of coordinated action and inclusive dialogue.

Cork Chamber's Sustainable Cork Programme (SCP) which is designed to set a vision for a more sustainable and resilient Cork empowered by a thriving business community has put particular emphasis on the importance of biodiversity. In 2024, through our SCP we hosted an event on *Biodiversity and Infrastructure*, exploring how essential infrastructure development can proceed in balance with the protection of our natural environment. This brought together perspectives from academia, state agencies, and business, underscoring the potential for collaboration and knowledge sharing.

Within our own organisation Cork Chamber continues to advance sustainability under our *Local Green Deal* initiative, which recently earned international recognition, winning first place in the 'Best Collaboration of Chambers, Business and Government' category at the World Chambers Competition in Melbourne, Australia. The Local Green Deal model harnessed by Cork Chamber and Cork City Council unites business, government and civic partners through formally signed agreements that include measurable sustainability targets, clear timelines and shared accountability. These partnerships have already mobilised tens of millions of euros in green investments across sectors, from banks and universities to SMEs, proving that sustainability speaks every industry's language. This demonstrates the pivotal role of business collaboration and investment in advancing biodiversity protection and accelerating climate adaptation goals.

We therefore welcome the recognition of business as a stakeholder in the first Sectoral Adaptation Plan (2019) and encourage continued and strengthened engagement with the enterprise community in the finalisation and implementation of the 2025 Plan.

The Draft Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Biodiversity 2025 presents an opportunity to include:

- A business-sector appendix/toolkit that would assist businesses, particularly SMEs, in their understanding of how biodiversity adaptation can affect them, what steps they can take, and what supports are/will be available.
- An emphasis on the integration of nature-based solutions into flood defence strategies for Cork and other flood-prone areas, complementing existing infrastructure by enhancing resilience while protecting biodiversity.
- The incorporation of both environmental and economic measures in monitoring, for example the costs of damage and the savings from adaptation, to highlight the benefits for business.
- Consideration of the interactions between renewable energy development and biodiversity, ensuring that expansion of Ireland's clean energy infrastructure is aligned with nature conservation and climate adaptation objectives.

Cork Chamber recognises that biodiversity loss poses one of the most significant challenges to Ireland's environmental, social, and economic future. By embedding business as an active partner, the Draft Sectoral Adaptation Plan for Biodiversity 2025 can ensure that adaptation measures are both practical and impactful, unlocking investment, driving innovation, and building resilience in communities across Ireland.

We remain at your disposal to engage further in the development and implementation of the Plan, and to share the perspectives of Cork's business community in ensuring that Ireland's biodiversity and climate adaptation goals are successfully realised.

Yours sincerely,



Conor Healy
CEO