

Europe moves forward on carbon farming with Ireland's national framework as key model

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Ireland has reached a significant milestone in carbon farming, with the [publication of draft principles](#) for a nation-wide carbon farming framework, co-developed by [Climate KIC](#) and the Irish Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine.

Ireland is among the first European countries to propose a national framework for carbon farming, marking a major step in implementing the EU's climate mitigation roadmap, including the Carbon Removals and Carbon Farming (CRCF) Regulation. Agricultural emissions in Ireland are significantly higher than the EU average, accounting for [over one-third](#) of the country's total greenhouse gas emissions, compared to [11% across the EU](#).

With the draft principles, Irish Minister for Agriculture, Food and the Marine, Martin Heydon, [has launched a second public consultation](#) to guide the development of the framework. "Carbon farming is a potential opportunity for our farmers and land managers to derive a new income stream for their farm," he said. "Carbon farming can reward our farmers for the actions they take to remove and store carbon in our soils, forests, grasslands, croplands and hedgerows."

A European approach to carbon farming

Reflecting feedback from farmers and farm advisors during a first consultation, Ireland's proposed approach goes beyond traditional carbon removals - both above and below ground - to also include broader ecosystem services, such as biodiversity conservation and improvements in water quality.

The framework principles were informed by an expert advisory group chaired by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and Climate KIC, the EU's leading climate innovation agency and community. In addition to effective governance, transparency, robust validation and measurement protocols, principles specific to Ireland are a focus on just transition, 'learning by doing', and integration of existing initiatives.

Ireland aims to be one of the first practical implementations of the EU CRCF Regulation and the Irish model could offer valuable lessons for other member states. In addition to the second public consultation, the country has established a multi-stakeholder working group including farmers, foresters and landowners to oversee framework development.

Minister Heydon said: "This public consultation will cover areas of importance to farmers, landowners, and foresters alike who have been calling for the establishment of initiatives which support carbon farming activities. I would encourage all farmers, foresters, and landowners to engage in this public consultation. It is important that we get this right and care is taken in what is a developing marketplace."

Scaling agricultural innovation in Ireland and Europe

The proposed framework and principles draw on key insights and extensive stakeholder input emerged from a €1.8 million strategic partnership between Ireland's Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and Climate KIC. The partnership was established in 2022 to help Ireland reduce 25% of its agri-food emissions by 2030.

Minister Heydon said: "As part of this collaboration, my Department and Climate KIC have been closely working with Irish stakeholders through interviews and workshops to gather their views on barriers to and opportunities in the development of carbon farming in Ireland."

Besides carbon farming, the partnership is focusing on:

- [Piloting methane-reducing technologies](#) across dairy farms of different sizes, testing a potential reduction of 80%;
- Setting up [a network of regional co-owned biorefineries](#) to produce renewable energy, bio-fertilisers, bio-materials, chemicals, as well as food and feed ingredients;
- Advancing innovation in AI, climate action, and agri-food by supporting 10 start-ups and entrepreneurship support organisations across the country;
- Establishing new funding and finance mechanisms focused on outcomes, such as impact bonds, to mobilise additional resources and further scale innovation.

Kirsten Dunlop, CEO of Climate KIC, said: "This new chapter with the Irish government is immensely exciting, coming as it does at a time when farmers, consumers and landholders need clear signs of positive action and opportunity in the future through sustainable practices and innovations. Over the past years, the interest and response to our systems innovation approach and partnership with DAFM has been remarkable."

The partnership, recognised as a key enabler to keep Ireland on track of its climate goals in the

country's [Climate Action Plan](#), represents a viable model for advancing the EU's Green Deal commitments while supporting the livelihoods of farmers and rural communities.

Dunlop added: "We want to ensure this new phase harnesses this momentum by demonstrating and scaling a solid portfolio of interventions that will accelerate systemic progress. We invite interested investors and funding partners who want to make a difference at the intersection of farming, innovation, policy and finance to join us in this journey and learn from each other."