

Forestry for our future

**Combatting climate change
with trees and timber**

Forest Industries Ireland
manifesto for Irish forest policy



**Forest Industries
Ireland**
Ibec

Forestry is a critical pillar of Ireland's climate action plan

Forest Industries Ireland supports the Climate Change Action Plan's ambition to plant 8,000 hectares of new forest each year.

Ireland's forests already contain 312 million tonnes of carbon and they absorb an additional 3.8 million tonnes of CO₂ each year.

“It is well known that forests play a key role in our battle against climate change; storing carbon while sucking in carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and locking it into their biomass.”

Sir David Attenborough,
UN Environment Programme

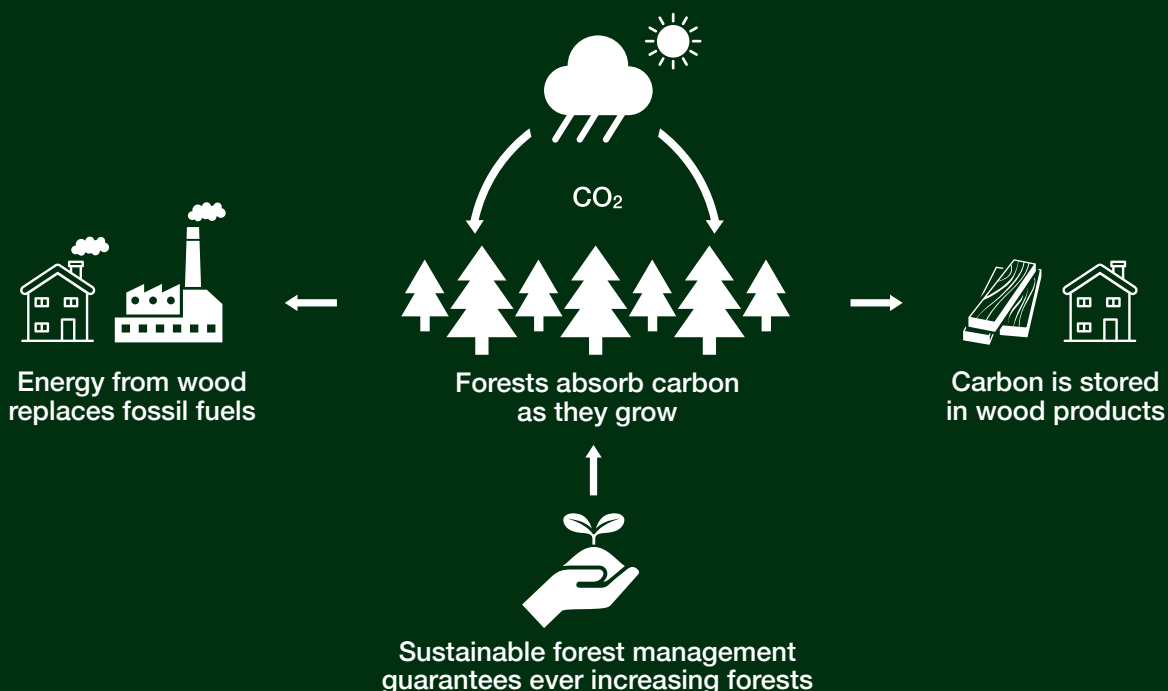
Bringing sustainable jobs and incomes to rural Ireland

Ireland's fast-growing forest sector makes a €2.3 billion contribution to the economy and employs 12,000 people all across the country. These are rural jobs in a sustainable industry that is an important part of Ireland's bioeconomy. We are producing the timber we need to build our houses and schools and putting millions of euro into communities across the country. We are world leaders in growing trees and producing timber products. This is a fast-growing industry focussed on technology and innovation with a bright future in rural Ireland.

The triple carbon benefit of forest biomass

1. Trees sequester carbon as they grow.
2. Carbon is locked away in timber products that displace carbon-intensive products.
3. At end of life, forest products can be converted into carbon neutral energy and used for heating and generating electricity.

CAPTURING CARBON WITH FORESTS AND TIMBER



Back forestry and timber to fight climate change



Only 11% of Ireland is covered by forest compared to over 38% across the EU. We have made great strides in growing new forests, but we need to redouble our efforts. Annual planting has decreased in recent years and the situation needs to be turned around. Every new hectare of forest is a new carbon sink that helps us battle climate change. Poorer agricultural lands are unprofitable and should be used to plant trees, helping both farmers and the environment.

1. PLANT MORE TREES BY REVITALISING THE NATIONAL AFFORESTATION PROGRAMME

We need to get creative about planting new forests and plant the right trees in the right place. The afforestation programme should be regionally balanced and diversified. Plant native woodlands for nature and conifer forests for timber. Everything must be done to create a programme that aims for 8,000 hectares of new afforestation each year.

2. GREEN OUR FARMS BY REINVIGORATING FARMER INTEREST IN PLANTING FORESTRY

Farmers must be properly rewarded for planting trees. Forestry provides strong, steady incomes in farming communities. Our farmers must be able to embrace forestry with confidence and security. The system should support and value them. Farming families should be proud of their decision to plant and their environmental contribution be properly recognised.

3. GET OUR FORESTRY PROGRAMME WORKING BY INVESTING IN PEOPLE, PROCESSES AND TECHNOLOGY

The Senior Minister for Agriculture should have direct responsibility for forestry and set up a senior level Interdepartmental Working Group for Forestry and Climate Action. We need faster decision making and reduced bureaucracy. Uncertainty and delays are undermining forestry and reducing farmer interest in the Forestry Schemes.

4. FACILITATE TIMBER MOBILISATION: WE NEED TO GET TIMBER TO MARKET

A strong timber market supports a healthy forest industry. Our timber uses local roads to get to market just like our other agricultural commodities. Forestry is creating value and employment throughout the country and its infrastructure needs must be supported like any other industry.

5. STIMULATE A VIBRANT MARKET FOR TIMBER AT HOME BY CONSTRUCTING PUBLIC BUILDINGS WITH TIMBER

We have a great opportunity in Ireland to build more with timber. Government can take a lead by building schools and civic buildings from timber. Wood displaces carbon intensive building products with a material that locks away carbon for generations. Our building standards must be updated to enable timber construction in all types of buildings.



RECREATION AND
WELL-BEING



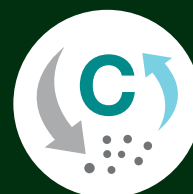
GREEN AND
RENEWABLE
ENERGY



RURAL
JOBS



CLEAN AIR
AND OXYGEN



CARBON
SEQUESTRATION



VALUABLE
EXPORTS



Contact Details

Mark McAuley

Director, Forest Industries Ireland
Ibec
84/86 Lower Baggot Street
Dublin 2
D02 H720

Direct: +353 1 605 16 52

Mobile: +353 87 219 76 14

Email: mark.mcauley@ibec.ie

Web: www.forestindustries.ie www.ibec.ie

Ibec is Ireland's largest lobby group representing Irish business both domestically and internationally. Its membership is home grown, multinational, big and small, spanning every sector of the economy. Together they employ over 70% of the private sector workforce in Ireland. Ibec and its trade associations lobby government, policy makers and other key stakeholders nationally and internationally to shape business conditions and drive economic growth. It has over 230 professional services staff in seven locations including Brussels and has 42 different trade associations in the group.

