

**Innovation, Research and Development Policy Unit response to Department of the Taoiseach's *Discussion Document for the Preparation of a National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy***

IRD Policy welcomes the development of a National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy. Innovation 2020, the cross-government strategy for research and development, science and technology sets out the vision for Ireland to become a Global Innovation Leader and the importance of innovation in driving a strong sustainable economy and a better society (Chapter 4 in particular). The development of this national policy statement complements Strategic Action 4.15.

With consideration of the cross –cutting nature of the bio-economy, national policy should be cognisant of and build upon Ireland's current research strengths beyond those identified in the paper; namely research areas such as health, medicine and ICT. We see an opportunity for Ireland to draw inspiration from the aims and objectives of the European approach, most particularly on the efficiency of resources. The Statement should be strongly aligned with concurrent initiatives, both national and international in order to maximise synergies and to ensure the best use of our limited resources. From an innovation and research perspective we would support a national strategy that identifies opportunities from the Biobased Industries Joint Undertaking (BBIJU) under Horizon 2020 that are scalable beyond the initial BBIJU projects.

The definition provided focuses on the 'objectives' of a bio-based economy, leaving some opportunities and areas overlooked. Several areas of key importance for Ireland in research such as Health and Medicine, Synthetic Biology and the UN's Agenda 2030 would be encouraged for consideration. The Statement should set out a clear vision for the bioeconomy in Ireland with ambitious goals, which should be underpinned by unambiguous and comprehensive targets.

IRDP supports the objective of the national strategy as outlined in this paper and envisages complementarity with national priorities for European instruments and programmes. We also support the centrality of environmental protection and sustainable development as critical in the development and implementation of this strategy. Additionally, we would support the inclusion of bio-refining to tackle food waste as this would be in line with identified national opportunities for Horizon 2020 work programme focus areas for 2018-'20. Industry should have a prominent position in the policy framework, particularly in relation to the Circular Economy.

The following initiatives and policy documents should be included in Annex 1: Sector strategies relating to the bioeconomy;

- Innovation 2020: Ireland's strategy for research and development, science and technology
- Research Prioritisation
- European Union's 9<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme for Research and Innovation

The experience of the Marine Coordination Group in driving implementation of 'Harness Our Ocean Wealth' should prove valuable in designing a mechanism to coordinate the development and monitor progress of the Strategy.

