Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Tionscadal Éireann
Project Ireland
2040

National Development Plan Review 2025

Securing Ireland's Future

Sectoral Investment Plan: Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

Prepared by the Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine

Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine Capital Allocation 2026 – 2030:

	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Allocation	€315,000,000	€325,000,000	€325,000,000	€330,000,000	€330,000,000

Introduction

The Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine's (DAFM) budget is strategically and effectively deployed, contributing to improved competitiveness, including through research and innovation, and investment to meet climate and environmental obligations.

DAFM has a high level of existing commitments primarily linked to the CAP Strategic Plan and the Afforestation Programme. A high proportion of DAFM's capital budget is already contractually committed under the Targeted Agriculture Modernisation Scheme (TAMS), Forestry and sea fishery harbours. DAFM is committed to prudent management of the public finances. DAFM has an effective capital expenditure appraisal framework in place which guides the Department in decision-making process when allocating capital across competing demands. Theare are appropriate capital investment control guidelines and formal project management disciplines.

In relation to other projects, the Department will ensure that the Infrastructure Guidelines are complied with. The Department will ensure that all contracts are entered into are done in a compliant manner and that all the necessary procurement rules were followed through a competitive process.

The Department will be prioritising the following key Capital Projects over the period 2026-2030:

- Targeted Agriculture Modernisation Scheme (TAMS)
- Forestry
- Fisheries
- Horticulture
- Regional Veterinary Laboratories
- Veterinary Colleges
- Irish Equine Centre
- Growth and Sustainability Loan Scheme

- Climate Change and
- Research and Development

1. **Targeted Agriculture Modernisation Scheme (TAMS):**

Allocation 2026 – 2030: €398,500,000

TAMS provides grants to farmers to build and/or improve a specified range of farm buildings and equipment on their holdings. All investments must be linked to Climate, Environment or Animal Welfare. The Programme for Government commits to 'continue funds supports to farmers to invest in capital infrastructure including nutrient storage.'

Supports provided under TAMS will be vital in enabling farmers to invest in nutrient storage, directly supporting improvements in water quality.

The measures and grant aid available for qualified applicants are:

- The Young Farmers Capital Investment Scheme – (YFCIS) 60% Grant Aid
- The Farm Safety Capital Investment Scheme (FCIS) 60% Grant Aid
- The Solar Capital Investment Scheme (SCIS) 60% Grant Aid
- The Woman Farmer's Capital Investment Scheme (WFCIS) 60% Grant Aid
- The Organic Capital Investment Scheme (OCIS) 60% Grant Aid
- The Dairy Equipment Scheme (DES) 40% Grant Aid
- The Animal Welfare and Nutrient Storage Scheme (AWNSS) 40% Grant Aid
- The Low Emission Slurry Spreading Scheme (LESS) 40% Grant Aid
- The Pig and Poultry Investment Scheme (PPIS) 40% Grant Aid
- The Tillage Capital Investment Scheme (TCIS) 40% Grant Aid
- The Nutrient Importation Storage Scheme (NISS) 70% Grant Aid

2. **Forestry:**

Allocation 2026 – 2030: €369,720,000

Afforestation

Ireland has an ambitious annual afforestation target as set out in the Climate Action Plan 2023. The Climate Action Plan outlines the necessary decisive action to achieve a 51% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, and to set Ireland on a path to reach net-zero emissions by no later than 2050. The Climate Action Plan also recognises the important contribution of forests to removal carbon dioxide from the atmosphere to support and store carbon in timber products.

The Department's Forestry Programme 2023 – 2027 provides incentives to encourage the planting of trees in a sustainable manner, consistent with climate and environmental objectives and in line with sustainable forest management principles to help towards Ireland's national climate and biodiversity objectives.

The current Forestry Programme is due to expire on 31 December 2027, and work will commence in early 2026 on the next Forestry Programme. Allocations for Foresty for 2028 onwards will be based on the new Forestry Programme.

In addition, the Department's NDP Capital allocation will support the delivery of a Forestry Windblow Reconstitution Scheme. Up to 26,050 hectares of forests suffered severe wind damage as a result of Storms Darragh and Éowyn during the winter of 2024/2025.

3. Fisheries:

Allocation 2026 – 2030: €212,320,000

The Programme for Government commits to investment in our "State Fishery Harbour Centres and public marine infrastructure." Each year, the Department carries out approximately 50 projects of various sizes at the six Fishery Harbour Centres, Cape Clear, and also at various Piers, Lights & Beacons for which the Department has responsibility.

The Department also provides grant aid to coastal local authorities to assist in the maintenance and development of fishery and aquaculture linked marine infrastructure in their ownership.
Funding will also be directed towards other harbours, as well as health and safety, maintenance works and access works, piers lights and beacons.

4. **Horticulture:**

Grant Aid Scheme Allocation 2026 – 2030: €50,000,000
Innovation & Diversification Scheme Allocation 2026 – 2030: €22,000,000

Horticulture is the fourth largest sector in agriculture with a farm gate value of €639 million in 2024. The sector employs an estimated 18,000 people employed at both primary (7,000) and value-added levels (11,000). While covering less than 2% of agricultural land, the sector accounts for approximately 11% of all agri-food employment.

The Programme for Government states that the Government will:

- Increase capital investment support via the Horticultural Grant.
- Assist in the upgrading of production facilities, particularly glass houses, to ensure efficient production systems and reduction in energy usage.

5. **DAFM Laboratories**

Allocation 2026 – 2030: €131,000,000

The upgrade of the Regional Veterinary Labs is part of a 10-year Redevelopment Programme, endorsed by Government in late 2019 and included in the National Development Plan 2020, which provides for the modernisation of the Department's Regional Laboratories with a staged construction programme.

Modernisation of the Department's Regional Laboratories is critical to ensure that Ireland's reputation as a safe food producer remains intact.

6. **Veterinary Colleges:**

Allocation 2026 – 2030: €20,000,000

The previous Government approved the establishment of two new schools of veterinary medicine providing, at full roll-out, an expected additional 80 veterinary medicine graduates per year. The colleges will be located at South-East Technological University (SETU) and Atlantic Technological University (ATU).

The Department of Agriculture, Food & the Marine has committed up to €25 million in funding towards this initiative and is working is close collaboration with the Department

of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS). Funding from this Department is not due to commence until 2027.

The first cohort of students will be able to apply for this course for the academic year 2026/2027.

7. **Irish Equine Centre:**

Allocation 2026 – 2030: €10,000,000

The development of an **Irish Equine Centre** is vital to the Irish Equine Industry. The redevelopment of the Irish Equine Centre is necessary to improve and expand the current facilities.

The investment will support a €2.7 billion export sector providing 30,000 jobs, most of which are based in rural Ireland. The funding will be provided to redevelop the centre, also contributing to the Centre's ability to meet its climate obligations by becoming Nearly Zero Energy Building (NZEB) compliant.

The preparation of the Final Business Case and design and planning on the project is currently underway with procurement expected to take place in mid-2026. It is anticipated that construction will begin towards the end of 2026 subject to approval of the Final Business Case with an 18-month construction period.

8. **Growth and Sustainability Loan Scheme:**

Allocation 2026 – 2030: €37,357,080

This Department works in close cooperation with the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE) and the Department of Finance (DFIN) and the European Investment Bank (EIB) on government-backed access to finance initiatives. Such initiatives have been delivered through the Strategic Banking Corporation of Ireland (SBCI) since 2017 to address identified market gaps.

Loans to the sector are facilitating investments aligned with Food Vision 2030 goals, predominantly being utilised to achieve including climate and environmental priorities. commitments and. A total of 1,726 loans to the value of €386m have currently been sanctioned.

To meet the on-going demand and to continue facilitating long-term investment by Irish SMEs and Midcaps, it is proposed to increase the total size of GSLS, from €500 million to

€1 billion; and to extend the scheme closing date, from 30th June 2026 to 29th December 2028.

9. Climate Change:

Allocation 2026 – 2030: €35,000,000

Capital Expenditure Plan

2026

In 2026, the total capital allocation is €23m consisting of €20 million from the EU Recovery and Resilience Programme, REPowerEU project and €3 million from the Carbon Tax Fund.

This funding will be used to fund Anaerobic Digestion (€22m) and funding of €1m towards the AgNav project – an online sustainability tool that facilitates a whole farm sustainability assessment and counting of carbon emissions and removals.

2027 - 2030

Capital funding of €3m per year, funded by the Carbon Tax fund, will be utilised in providing €2m towards Green Agricultural Pilot Projects and €1m towards the AgNav project each year from 2027 - 2030.

10. Research and Development

Allocation 2026 – 2030: €125,912,000

The Food Vision 2030 Strategy sets out a vision for Ireland to become a global leader in Sustainable Food Systems over the next decade. A sustainable food system is economically viable, socially beneficial, and environmentally neutral or positive. Achieving this vision necessitates investment in research and innovation. Additionally, this research aims to foster an innovative, competitive and resilient sector, driven by technology and talent.

The Department of Agriculture, Food, and the Marine (DAFM) is a principal national funder of competitive, public good research. Its Statement of Strategy 2025-2028 includes the aim of supporting Irish research and innovation to enhance efficiency, sustainability, and to develop the bioeconomy.

The Programme for Government 2025 mandates investment in research in the agri-food sector. Continued support for research in the NDP will help deliver on these objectives. It will provide valuable insights that can inform important policy decisions and strategies in areas such as climate, water and biodiversity. It will also generate new technologies and practices that will enable a more competitive, productive and sustainable farming sector, while also driving innovation in food and timber processing to increase value-add and overall competitiveness.

The priority projects and programmes to be delivered from 2027 – 2030

- Funding for the 2027 and 2029 DAFM Thematic Research Call
- Funding for annual DAFM Policy and Strategic Studies Research Calls
- Co-funding for Research Ireland Centres
- Funding for the Ireland-New Zealand Joint Research Call in Agriculture and Climate
- Funding for the US-Ireland R&D Partnership in Agriculture
- Funding for EU co-funded Partnerships, including sustainable food systems, agroecology, agriculture of data, animal health and welfare, forestry, and antimicrobial resistance
- Prior research commitments
- Prior bioeconomy commitments (Shared Island and Just Transition Fund)

Sectoral Specific Measures that boost housing delivery

- In addition to meeting sectoral needs and providing the necessary infrastructure for the future, a range of measures are being taken to support housing delivery and meet the Government's housing objectives.
- Projects that will support the further delivery of housing and have the potential to unlock further growth opportunities include:
    - **National Forestry Programme 2023-2027**

      Ireland's state funded Forestry Programme will continue to build on previous EU forestry programmes that have increased Ireland's forest cover from 1% in 1900 to 12% today. This scaling up in forest area is now delivering over 4 million cubic metres of timber annually and will rise to over 7 million cubic metres by 2035, providing sustainable home-grown

timber to support Ireland's construction and housing sector. Recent market analysis suggests that Irish timber harvested from Ireland's forests can support the construction of 1.13 million homes by 2040, supporting housing delivery across a range of housing types. The challenge is to use more home-grown timber and substitute timber imports at scale.

- **New Timber, Knowledge and Innovation Facility**
  DAFM, the Department of Enterprise, Tourism and Employment and Enterprise Ireland will co-fund the establishment of Timber, Knowledge and Innovation facility in 2026 which will support the construction sector to increase the use of timber, providing opportunities to decarbonise the built environment, contribute to a circular economy and support our climate change targets. This new facility will play an important role as the construction sector continues to increase the use of timber frame in housing and new modern methods of construction.

Sectoral Specific Measures that boost competitiveness

- In addition to meeting sectoral needs and providing the necessary infrastructure for the future, a range of measures are being taken to support competitiveness.
- Projects that will support the competitiveness of the agri-food sector to unlock further growth opportunities include:

  Growth and Sustainability Loan Scheme

  - The proposed extension of the Growth and Sustainability Loan Scheme provides long-term low-cost finance to support eligible businesses, including farmers, fishers, and food businesses when investing in growth & resilience or climate action & environmental sustainability. GSLS is delivered by SBCI providing an 80% uncapped guarantee, which is supported by the European Investment Bank Group (EIBG).
  - A minimum of 30% of the lending volume is targeted towards Environmental Sustainability or "Green" purposes with the aim of helping SMEs to invest in sustainability and energy efficiency. The remainder is available for strategic investments with a view to increasing productivity

and competitiveness, underpinning future business sustainability and growth.

- Businesses wishing to invest in “Green” purposes can do so via:

  ● Investment in green/sustainable measures

  ● Any investment by SMEs classified as a Green/Sustainable Enterprise

  ● Any investment by farmers classified as a holder of a Green Eco Label (Organics Certified Farmer or farmers with Origin Green Membership (Quality Assurance Scheme) who are participating in DAFM ACRES scheme).

- The key outcome of the scheme is:

  1. Support Business Growth and Resilience
  2. Promote Climate Action and Environmental Sustainability
  3. Facilitate Access to Finance and
  4. Stimulate Regional and Sectoral Development.

- In the context of agriculture and food policy, GSLS resonates with the EU Vision for Agriculture and Food, Food Vision 2030, supports cohesion with the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) and the National Development Plan 2021–2030, bolstering rural economic resilience, innovation, and productivity by facilitating accessible, low-security financing tailored for SMEs and farmers in less served regions.

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