

Continuous Cover Forestry: Delivering Timber, Biodiversity and Climate Resilience for Ireland

Irish and EU forest policy

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Introduction



- Forestry is a pillar of sustainable land use in Ireland
- Delivering Climate Mitigation, Biodiversity Conservation, Timber Supply and Rural Development
- In accordance with the principals of SFM, Irish and EU policy sets a framework for the management of Irish forests balancing social, economic and environmental values / objectives
- In the last 2 decades there has been an increasing emphasis on Climate Resilience, biodiversity protection and sustainable production
- CCF aligns with EU and Irish policy approaches to SFM, it promotes long term environmental stability, species diversity and low impact interventions.

EU policy: European Green Deal

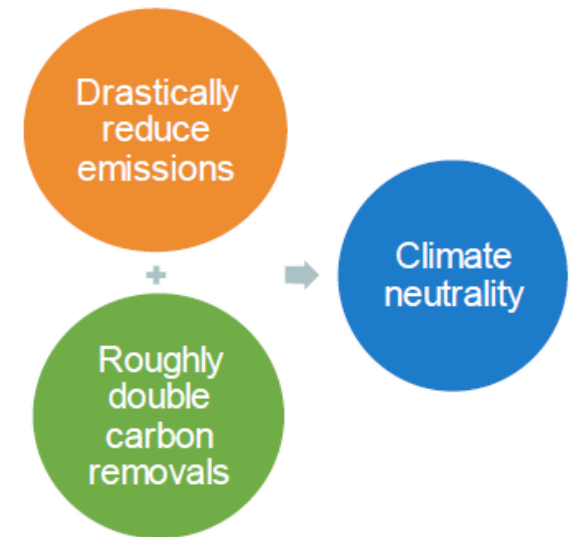
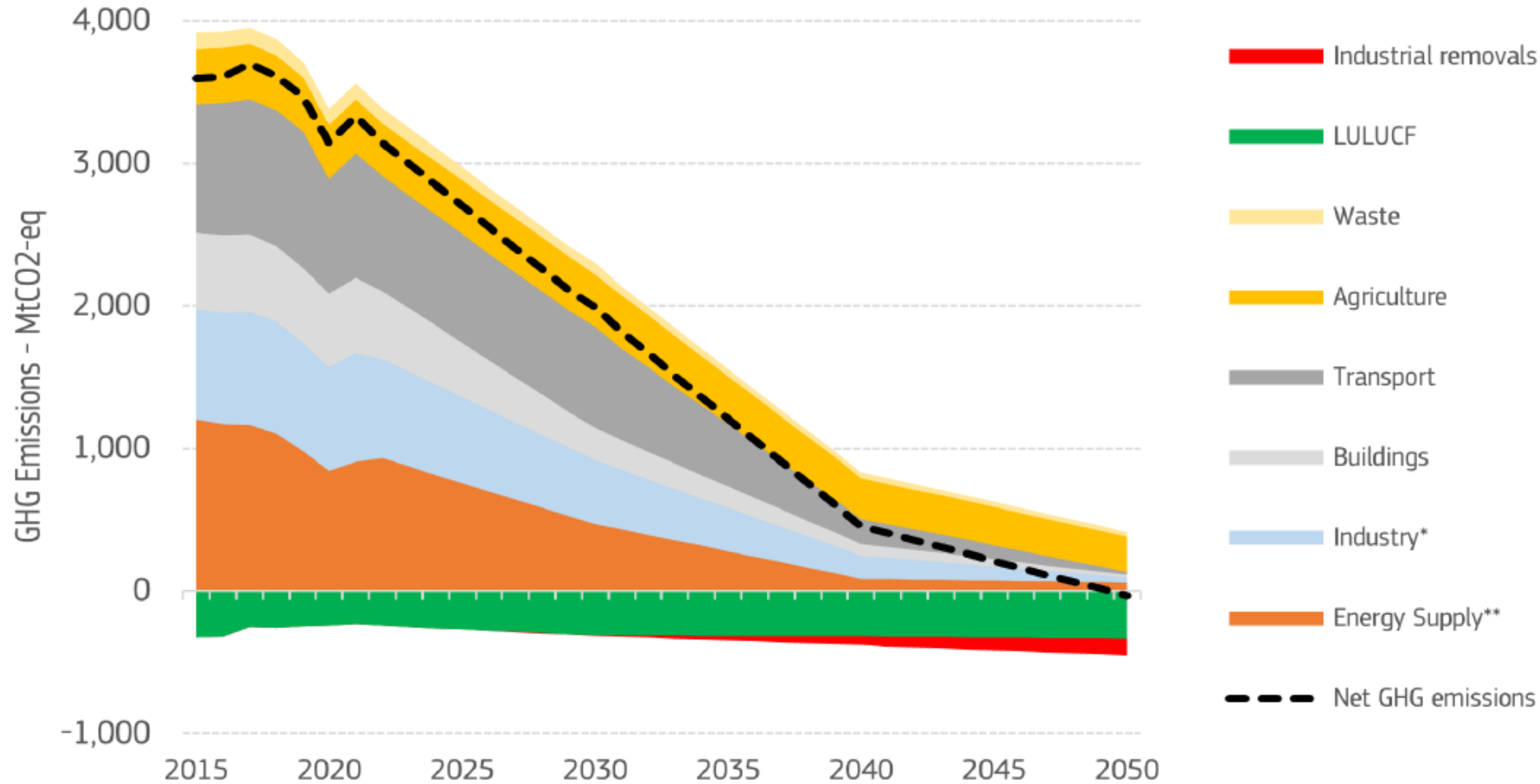


- EU Forest Strategy 2030 main aims:
 - Protecting and Enhancing Forests for Climate and Biodiversity (Resilience, Nature Restoration)
 - Encourage SFM and Multifunctional forests (e.g. CCF,)
 - Support a Bioeconomy (materials and Green Jobs)
 - Strengthen Member State Coordination, Legal Frameworks
 - Strengthen Research Funding, Forest Monitoring and Data Collection Framework, Development of climate resilient forest management
- Fit for 55 aims:
 - By 2030, reduce GHGs by 55% of 1990 levels
 - LULUCF: Binding CO2 Sequestration Targets, Monitoring and Reporting requirements
 - Emission Trading System, Carbon farming,

EU policy: Towards Climate Neutrality



Historical and projected sectoral greenhouse gas emissions in the period 2015-2050



*Excluding non-BECCS industrial removals

**Including bioenergy with carbon capture and storage (BECCS)



- **Renewable Energy Directive**
 - Bioenergy sustainability (Increased sequestration should not mean decreased sustainability)
 - Cascading use of Wood (High Quality Timber for Long Term Use)

- **Biodiversity Strategy 2030 & Nature Restoration Law:**
 - Aligns with CCF
 - Promotes Low Impact Forest Management, Mixed Species, Veteran Trees and Deadwood Habitats, Water Retention and Flood Alleviation.

EU policy: Carbon farming (agriculture soils and forests)



Use of **conservation tillage, catch crops, cover crops** and increasing **landscape features**



Agroforestry and other forms of mixed farming



Restoration, rewetting and conservation of **peatlands and wetlands**



Precision farming and more efficient use of fertilizers



Forest Management and Reforestation according to ecological principles



Blue carbon: coastal wetlands



Irish Forest Policy and Strategy

- Ireland's Forest Vision 2050 and Strategy 2030
 - Widespread Consultation and Dialogue with stakeholders
 - Vision revealed a desire for more mixed species forests and more close to nature (i.e. CCF) forest management
 - CCF is a priority deliverable in the Strategy
- **Forest Strategy Implementation Plan 2023 - 2030**
 - Contains 87 individual wide ranging actions
 - Forest Strategy Consultative Committee (FSCC) provide a forum for stakeholders from State agencies, industry and environment NGOs that work together to monitor the progress



Forest Policy to reflect the multi-functional role of forests



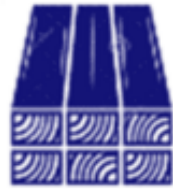
Ireland's National Forest Strategy

FOREST FOR CLIMATE



Forests sequester and store carbon. Irish forests and their soils currently store over 300 million tonnes of carbon

FORESTS FOR WOOD



Wood provides sustainable building materials and replaces materials made using energy from fossil fuels

FORESTS FOR PEOPLE



Forests provide places for recreation. Our public forests provide access on 400,000 ha

FORESTS FOR NATURE

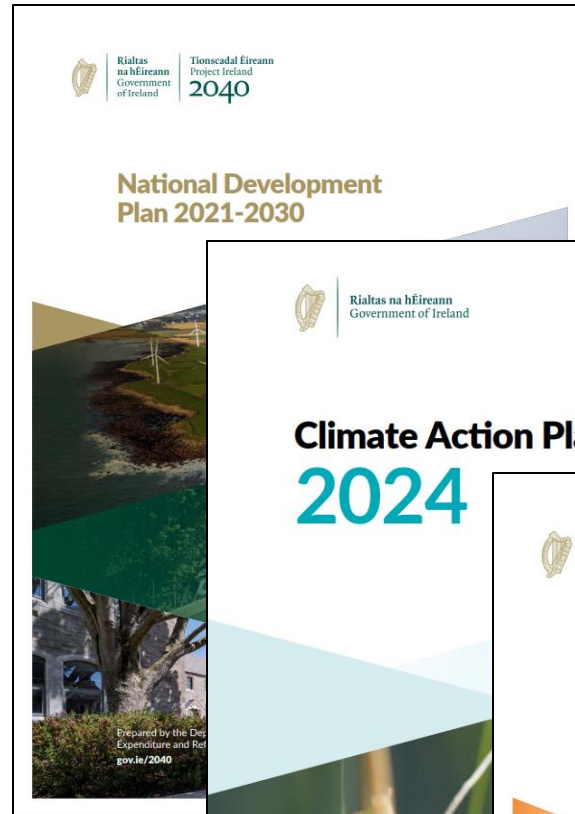
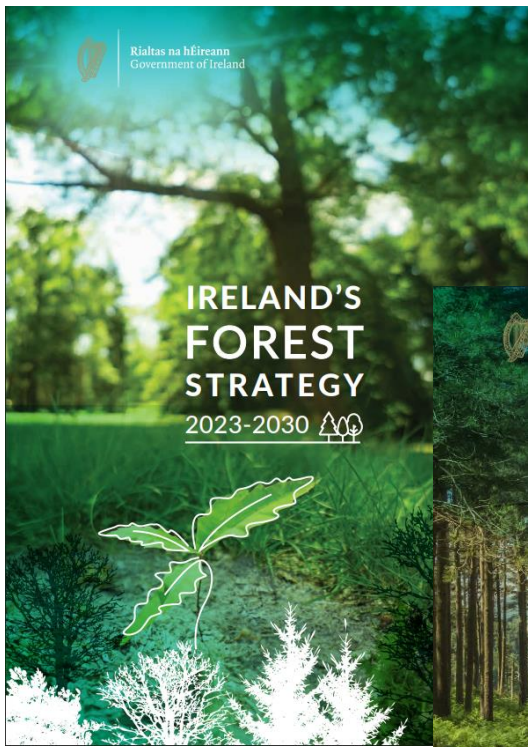


Forests provide important habitats for plants and animals, protect water quality when established sustainably

FORESTS FOR ECONOMY



Forests produced 4 million cubic metres of timber in 2020, support a vibrant forest industry





- **Climate Action Plan 2024**

- The integration of CCF into the afforestation scheme and the management of existing forests enhances the effectiveness of carbon sequestration by forests
- CCF supports Ireland's afforestation and carbon sequestration targets
- Multi-aged and diverse CCF enhances carbon capture in vegetation and soils
- Due to the lower harvesting impact, CCF enhances the protection of soil and hence its carbon stocks
- Diverse forests are more adaptable to climatic changes

- **Legal and Regulatory Framework – Forestry Act, planning and licensing reforms**

- CCF encourages alignment with Ireland's National and EU regulatory obligations concerning the protection of the environment (water, flora & fauna, habitats, climate change, landscape)



Why Continuous Cover Forestry in Policy?

- CCF provides the techniques required to deliver a well rounded implementation of the principles of SFM
- In turn SFM enhances forest ecosystem services, resilience, biodiversity, and promotes timber production for long term use
- CCF fits into stakeholder forest requirements and hence is a central element of national Forest Strategy Implementation.
- CCF requires a higher level of planning and knowledge which in turn positively fosters scientific research and technical discourse amongst practitioners
- Pro-Silva have been critical to the advancement of CCF in Ireland with their emphasis on species diversification and natural regeneration to promote many of our National and EU policy objectives
- Great example of industry led policy development.

Forestry Programme 23–27: Close to Nature and Continuous Cover Forestry



Forest Creation

- FT1 Native Forest
- FT2 Forest for Water
- FT3 NeighbourWood
- FT5 Emerging Forest
- FT10 Continuous Cover Forestry

Woodland Improvement Scheme

- Element 1: Thinning and Tending
- Element 3: CCF
- Element 4: Coppice and Coppice with Standards

Which scheme suits your farm?

There are eleven support options – or 'Forest Type' – available to farmers to plant a new forest. Please note that Forest Type 3 is only for public bodies. You can also plant up to 1 hectare of native trees under the Native Tree Area Scheme.

Choose the option that best suits you

Forest type	Planting option	Description	Grant/ha (excluding fencing)	Annual Premium for farmers (ha)
1	Native forests	Plant a forest with a mix of native tree species.	€6,744	€1,103 for 20 years
2	Forests for water	Protect water bodies by planting a native tree forest.	€6,744	€1,142 for 20 years
3	Forest creation on public lands	Scheme for public bodies to plant new native forests.	n/a for farmers	n/a for farmers
4	NeighbourWoods	Create a forest that's open to the public.	€10,200	€1,142 for 20 years

Forest type	Planting option	Description	Grant/ha (excluding fencing)	Annual Premium for farmers (ha)
10	Continuous cover forestry	Create a continuous cover forest system with conifer and broadleaf trees.	€5,421	€912 for 20 years
11	Mixed high forests: conifer, 20% broadleaves	Plant a diverse conifer forest for timber production with 20% broadleaf species.	€4,452	€863 for 20 years
12	Mixed high forests with mainly spruce, 20% broadleaves	Plant a mainly spruce forest for timber production with 20% broadleaf species.	€3,858	€746 for 20 years
NTA 1	Native tree area scheme – 1ha, no licence required, but approval from the department is necessary	Creation of small native forests.	€6,744	€2,206 for 10 years
NTA 2		Creation of native forests for water protection.	€6,744	€2,284 for 10 years



Forestry Programme 23–27: Close to Nature and Continuous Cover Forestry



Climate Resilient Reforestation

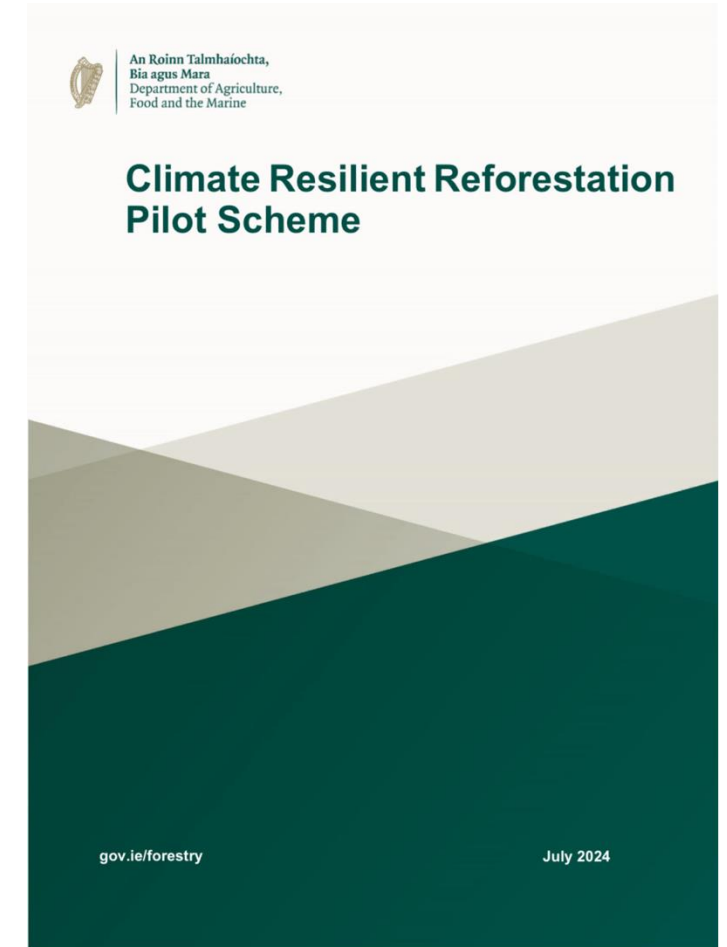
- Element 1: Reforestation for Continuous Cover Forest
- Element 2: Reforestation for Native Forests
- Element 3: Reforestation for Biodiversity and Water

Native Woodland Conservation Scheme

NeighbourWood Scheme

Open call for Promotion

Open call for Training





CCF Scheme Approvals to Date

- The total area that has been approved since the WIS CCF came in: 1222.91ha
- Total area approved for afforestation under FT10 : 314.26ha
- Total area of FT10 approved at First Instalment: 72.36ha
- Total area where CCF is the management system used in a private TFL's: 5045.08ha



Conclusions

- CCF silviculture has become more widespread in Ireland
- Delivers multiple benefits such as outdoor recreation, enhancing the landscape, stabilising soils, protecting water, enriching biodiversity while also producing valuable timber.
- Species rich forests make them more resilience to the effects of Climate Change
- Ireland has become a shining light for Continuous Cover Forest in Europe.

Forestry programme 2023 – 27

Thank you

• Robert Windle, Inspector



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