



Consultation Response  
Draft Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029  
Planning Department,  
Clare County Council,  
New Road, Ennis,  
Co. Clare V95 DXP2

By email

Irish Bioenergy Association (IrBEA)

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28th March 2022

**IrBEA Response to Public Consultation on the Draft Clare County Development Plan 2023-2029**

Dear Sir/Madam

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to this consultation.

The Irish Bioenergy Association (IrBEA), as a representative body for the bioenergy sector on the island of Ireland, wish to acknowledge the inclusion of bioenergy as a renewable energy consideration within the draft Clare Development Plan 2023-2029. We welcome Clare County Council's stated policy in support of the bioenergy industry.

IrBEA, as part of the Renewable Energy Ireland umbrella body, released in 2021, a joint report "*40by30- A 40% renewable heat target by 2030*" which sets out a pathway for achieving 40% renewable heat by 2030<sup>1</sup>. Many of the options for reaching this target appear to be articulated and supported by Clare County Council in the consultation documents.

The draft outlines support for the use of wood fuels using locally derived forestry resources generated through sustainable forest management practices (thinnings). IrBEA manages and

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<sup>1</sup> [https://renewableenergyireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Renewable-Energy-Ireland\\_Renewable-Heat-Plan\\_Final.pdf](https://renewableenergyireland.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Renewable-Energy-Ireland_Renewable-Heat-Plan_Final.pdf)

administer the Wood Fuel Quality Assurance Scheme (WFQA)<sup>2</sup>, which provides certification of quality wood fuels in the form of firewood, wood chip, wood pellets and wood briquettes.

IrBEA welcomes the draft plan's support for anaerobic digestion. IrBEA and many of its members are involved in this sector. As part of a joint policy paper, developed along with CRÉ titled "Mobilising an Irish Biogas Industry with Policy Action<sup>3</sup>", IrBEA clearly articulates through this document the supports and infrastructure required to mobilise a medium to large scale biogas industry. Biogas production can exist at many scales ranging from the micro, small to industrial scale. A biogas industry in Co. Clare would bring many benefits to a wide range of stakeholders including farmers, energy users, local authorities, and businesses to name but a few. A growing biogas sector could include the provision of locally generated and used heat, electricity, and a renewable gaseous transport fuel. In 2021, IrBEA also released a report titled "Transport in Ireland- a pathway towards halving emissions" which outlines the role of biomethane, biofuels, electrification and efficiency measures can play in decarbonising transport.<sup>4</sup>

The draft consultation document also highlights the role of gasification, energy crops, district heating and combined heat and power plants. All these inclusions are strongly welcomed by IrBEA, and the Association would be happy to engage with Clare County Council and provide assistance, guidance and support to any potential developments in these areas in the coming years.

The NWRA's Regional Spatial and Economic Strategy makes specific reference to "*Support and encourage the development of the bio-economy sector, and facilitate its development for energy production and storage distribution, in particular advocating combined heat and power units integrated into district heating networks, in combination with Pyrogenic carbon capture and storage(PyCCS) or Bio-energy carbon capture and storage(BECCS) all to be done in collaboration with EPA and other regulators*"(RPO 4.20)<sup>5</sup>. This specific objective largely covers the ambitions Clare County Council appear to have set out in the draft documents. The bioeconomy and bioenergy sectors are intrinsically linked and indeed complimentary.

Clare County Council's specific objectives to increase the penetration of bioenergy projects within the county, support their development, to repurpose brownfield sites and to promote and showcase bioenergy in general is largely aligned with IrBEA's own remit.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.wfqa.org/>

<sup>3</sup> [https://www.irbea.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/IrBEA-Cre-Biogas-Policy-Paper-Final\\_1.pdf](https://www.irbea.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/IrBEA-Cre-Biogas-Policy-Paper-Final_1.pdf)

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.marei.ie/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/Irish-Bioenergy-Association-UCC-MaREI-Renewables-In-Transport-Report-Final.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.nwra.ie/pdfs/NWRA-RSES-2020-2032.pdf>



We look forward to engaging with, and, supporting and assisting where possible, Clare County Council's bioenergy related ambitions and developments in the coming years.

Yours sincerely,

*Seán Finan*

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