

The Irish Whiskey Pledge for Environment



Irish Whiskey Association Ireland

2022 > Ongoing

#EnergyEfficiency

#SustainableAgriculture #WaterUse



Objective

On 30 May 2022, the Irish Whiskey Association launched 'Irish Whiskey Sustainable Together', a new roadmap for how the industry will reduce its environmental and carbon impact, strengthen its role in the regenerative and circular economy, and deliver a positive impact for communities.

The roadmap seeks to build on the industry's existing high level of commitment to sustainability by mapping-out its shared vision, goals and objectives for the future. This is not just an environmental strategy. It also addresses the importance of economic and social sustainability, something on which the Irish whiskey renaissance has impacted very positively. The roadmap aligns with and supports the UN Sustainable Development Goals and government policy across the island of Ireland.

The roadmap identifies a series of actions for Irish whiskey businesses. However, as sustainability will mean different things for different companies, depending on activity, location, length of establishment, etc. it will be up to individual businesses to decide which actions they wish to bring forward.

This aligns with the guidance of the World Business Council for Sustainable Development.

Description

On 30 May 2022, the Irish Whiskey Association launched 'Irish Whiskey Sustainable Together', a new roadmap for how the industry will reduce its environmental and carbon impact, strengthen its role in the regenerative and circular economy, and deliver a positive impact for communities.

The roadmap seeks to build on the industry's existing high level of commitment to sustainability by mapping-out its shared vision, goals and objectives for the future. This is not just an environmental strategy. It also addresses the importance of economic and social sustainability, something on which the Irish whiskey renaissance has impacted very positively. The roadmap aligns with and supports the UN Sustainable Development Goals and government policy across the island of Ireland.

The shared goals agreed by the members of the Irish Whiskey Association

1. **Reducing environmental and carbon impact:** The industry will take a target-focussed approach to reducing the direct environmental impact and carbon emissions of Irish whiskey production, actively supporting the goal of Ireland reaching net-zero emissions by 2050 and sooner where possible.
2. **Strengthening the place of whiskey producers in the regenerative and circular economy:** The Irish whiskey industry will actively promote and implement sustainable sourcing, reuse and recycling, to minimise the life-cycle environmental impact of their inputs, products and co-product, and to maximise support for sustainable Irish farming.
3. **Delivering a positive impact for people and place:** The Irish whiskey industry will positively impact the economic and social sustainability of the communities we work in, while empowering and supporting their workforce and consumers.

Some of the measures outlined in the roadmap include:

- **Reducing water usage:** The roadmap supports the principle of 'less-water-in, less-effluent-out' and sets a target of reducing the volumes of water used per litre of whiskey distilled. The Association and Irish Water have agreed plans to deliver bespoke, accredited Water Stewardship training days for distilleries.
- **Supporting Irish farming:** The Irish whiskey industry purchases over 100,000 tonnes of Irish barley and malt annually and the roadmap commits to buying even more from Irish farmers.
- **Supporting the circular economy:** Every year, over 350,000 tonnes of co-products from Irish whiskey production (spent grain/pot ale) are reused to become high-quality animal feed and the roadmap commits to strengthening their place in the circular economy.
- **Energy efficiency:** The roadmap proposes signature project to support innovation on energy efficiency within the industry. This will involve members sharing best practice on energy efficiency; and it will include state agencies and key stakeholders to support implementation.
- **Tree planting:** The Association has nominated **Trees on the Land** as their all-island tree-planting partner, allowing members to fund tree-planting – which will be comprised of at least 50 per cent oak trees – through a consistent expert programme.
- **All-Ireland Pollinator Plan:** The Association has signed up to support the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan (AIPP) and will be working with the AIPP to support members to implement actions on distillery and maturation sites.

There are other commitments related to Packaging, Wood, Community, Workforce and Consumers.

Partners

State agencies and key stakeholders are partnering with producers to deliver on the commitments.

Results

It is too early to see results based on the roadmap published on 30 May 2022 but progress can be seen on twitter following #IrishWhiskey #SustainableTogether @IrishWhiskeyAsc. It is important to note that this industry do not start from scratch. In recent years, the Irish whiskey industry has supported growth both urban regeneration and rural communities:

- The Irish whiskey industry has supported urban renewal and rural regeneration by creating high-quality jobs in communities across Ireland.
- Vacant buildings in 17 towns and villages across Ireland have been re-purposed for the development of distilleries.
- A newly completed assessment by Fáilte Ireland for the Irish Whiskey Association found that visitors to distilleries in 2019 spent €63 million in local communities.
- While the Irish whiskey industry has historically been male-dominated, the roadmap includes a new assessment carried out by the Irish Whiskey Association showing that the gender split across the industry is now 63% male, 37% female.

The road map offers metrics for all the objectives for individual companies to record baseline and progress.

Website

<https://www.ibec.ie/drinksireland/-/media/documents/drinks-ireland-new-website/irish-whiskey/iwa-sustainability-roadmap-2022.pdf>

Downloads

Photo gallery





Irish Whiskey
Sustainable Together