

Dear Oireachtas Committee on Climate Action,

We write to you at an important moment in developing plans for Climate Action by enterprises in Ireland. We ask for your help in ensuring that the national plans to support SMEs in taking effective climate action are fit for purpose and based on evidence and our experience of success.

We are writing on behalf of the EcoMerit Community, a Sustainable Energy Community registered with SEAI. Our vision is an environmentally sustainable, just and equitable world; our mission is to support enterprises in the optimal use of their resources. We have been doing this for over 10 years now and the members of the Community have a very successful track record of achieving **emissions reductions of over 60% over 10 years across over 100 diverse enterprises**, illustrated [here](#).

We also write on behalf of the CARE (Climate Action through Resource Efficiency) group, whose members are the [Clean Technology Centre](#) (MTU), [Change by Degrees](#) and EcoMerit. Together we have a 30 year track record of helping enterprises in environmental action.

We are aware that plans are being finalised to extend the support for Climate Action by enterprises in Ireland, including the SME sector. Our experience shows that with the right supports, significant reductions in emissions are possible, practical and profitable; in brief by scaling up to 10,000 of the larger SMEs (there are more than 200,000 SMEs in Ireland) **over the next 10 years we can save over 1 million tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub>eq in emissions and over €500 million**, as discussed in detail in the attached CARE proposal.

We wish to encourage those drawing up, approving or influencing these plans to take account of our views and recommendations, based on the collective experience of the CARE over several decades working on Climate Action with a wide variety of enterprises, large and small.

### **Wheels in motion, ready to scale up quickly**

We are already taking action on this on a daily basis, so the wheels are in motion and we can rapidly scale up, with the right suite of support measures. Note that these measures are proposed for the sector as a whole – we are not requesting specific support for CARE itself.

These measures are summarised here, in 3 main areas:

- 1. Move from plans to implementation:** ensure support for SMEs goes beyond developing plans to supporting implementation and delivery over an extended period, specifically:
  - Extend the Enterprise Ireland Green funding from export oriented enterprises **to all enterprises in Ireland**
  - Support the monitoring and implementation of climate action plans by enterprises by providing support **over a 5 year period**, linked to meaningful green credentials
  - **Extend and improve access to grant funding** for major investments by SMEs (e.g. through SEAI)
- 2. Support a one-stop shop for SMEs** to help them navigate this complex landscape. This goes beyond a web-portal and should offer ‘hand-holding’ to each SME by suitable experts.
- 3. Strengthen government leverage**
  - Strengthen and enforce Green Procurement, to include a requirement for meaningful green credentials for all suppliers

- Attach 'Green Ribbons' to all government funding, requiring those in receipt to demonstrate their meaningful green credentials
- Require all businesses to have '**meaningful green credentials**', and support them in this. This means regular monitoring and measurement and performance improvement with external independent and credible verification (not greenwashing).

**Value for Money:** As per the attached proposal, our estimates the support measures outlined above would require an investment by government of less than €100 million over 10 years and would deliver costs savings of some €600 million (estimates from late 2021, these would be much higher with current energy prices).

We would be very happy to discuss this further any members of the Oireachtas Committee who would like to learn more.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Best wishes,

The EcoMerit Team