



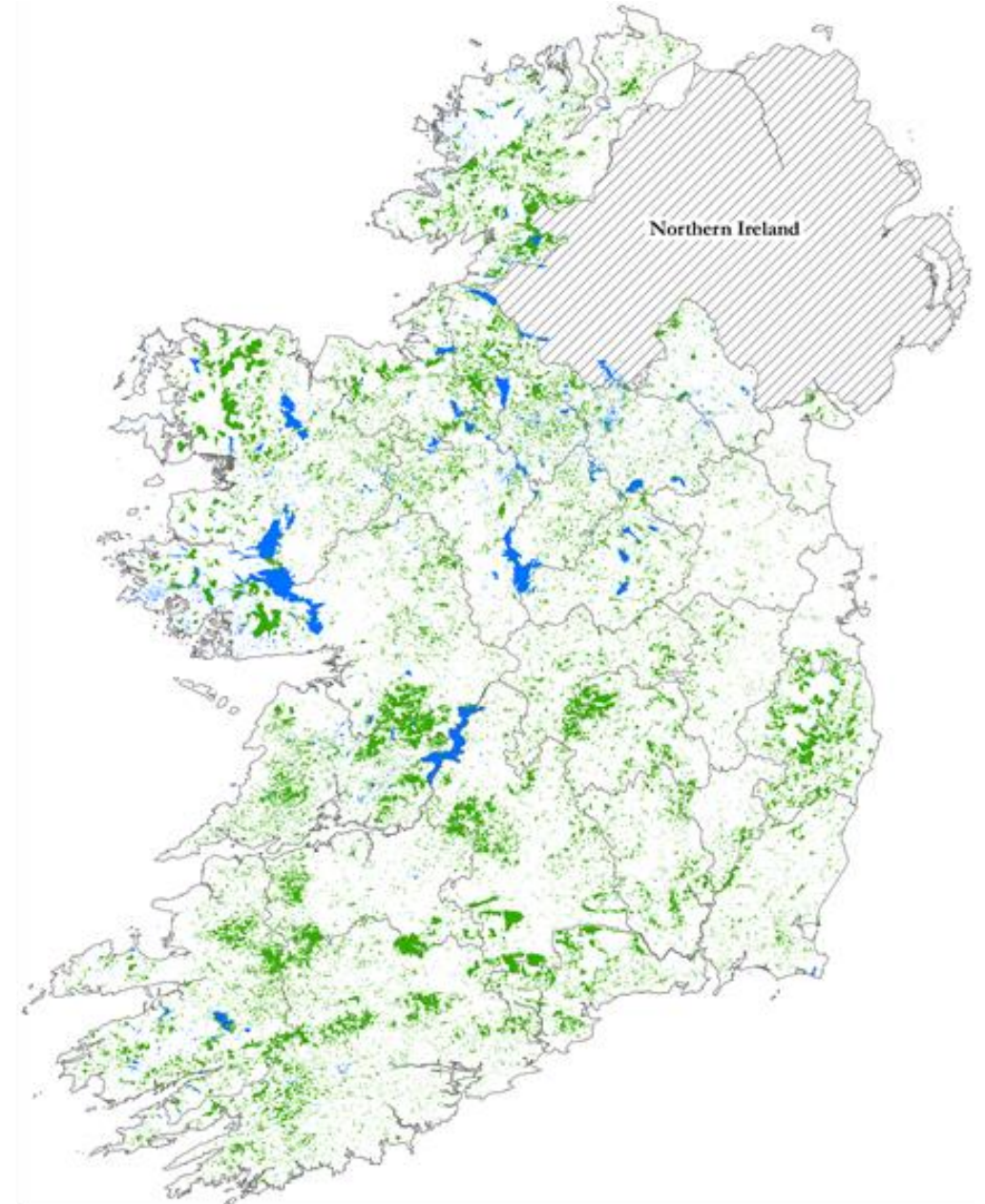
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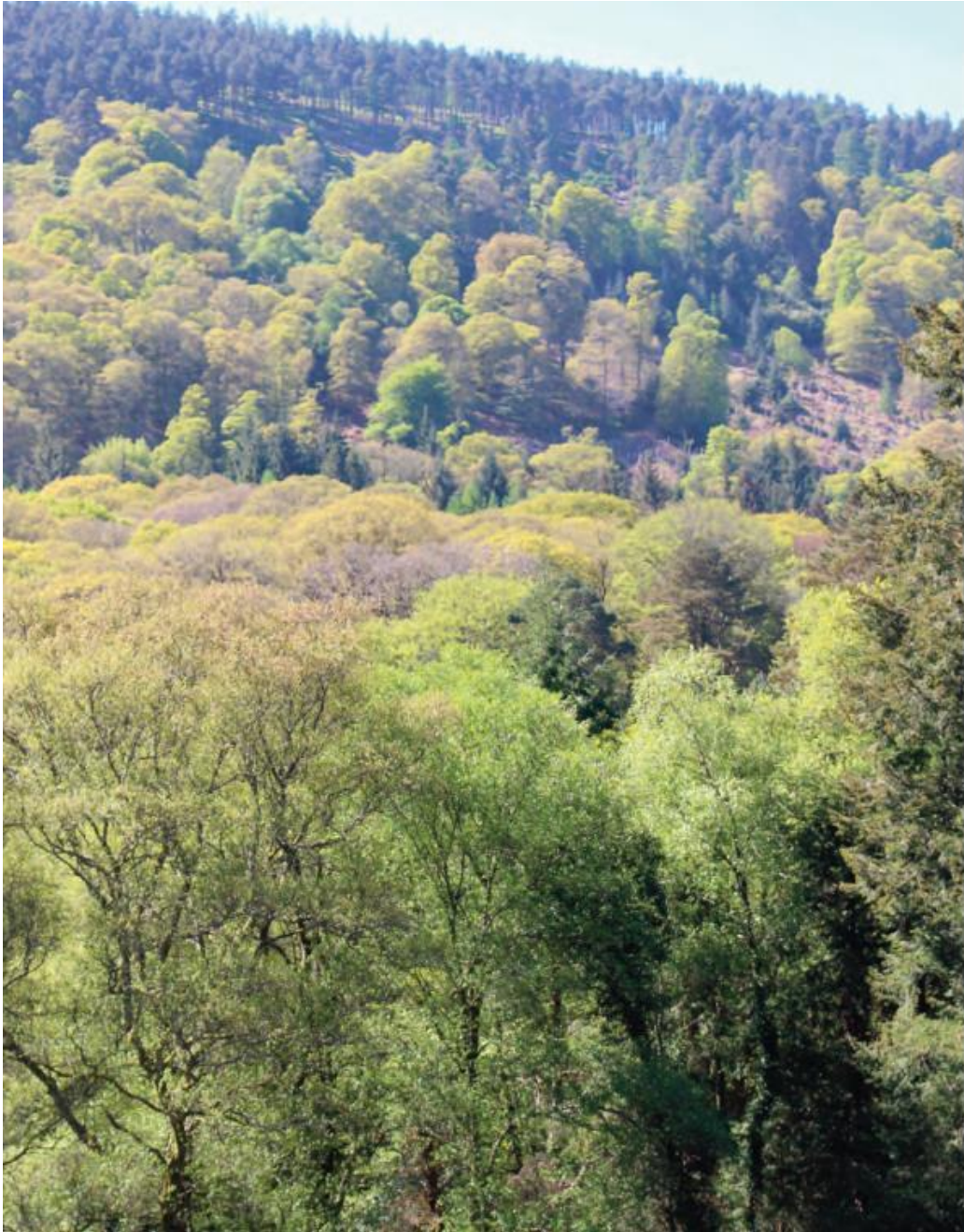


# Ireland's Afforestation Plan

## *experiences, challenges and opportunities*

Workshop on Implementation of the EU pledge for 3 Billion trees  
8<sup>th</sup> October 2025, Copenhagen, Denmark  
Barry Delany Forestry Director





# Presentation Overview

- Ireland Afforestation journey
- Forestry Vision 2050 & Strategy 2030
- Challenges & Opportunities
- Ireland's Afforestation Plan
- Closing remarks



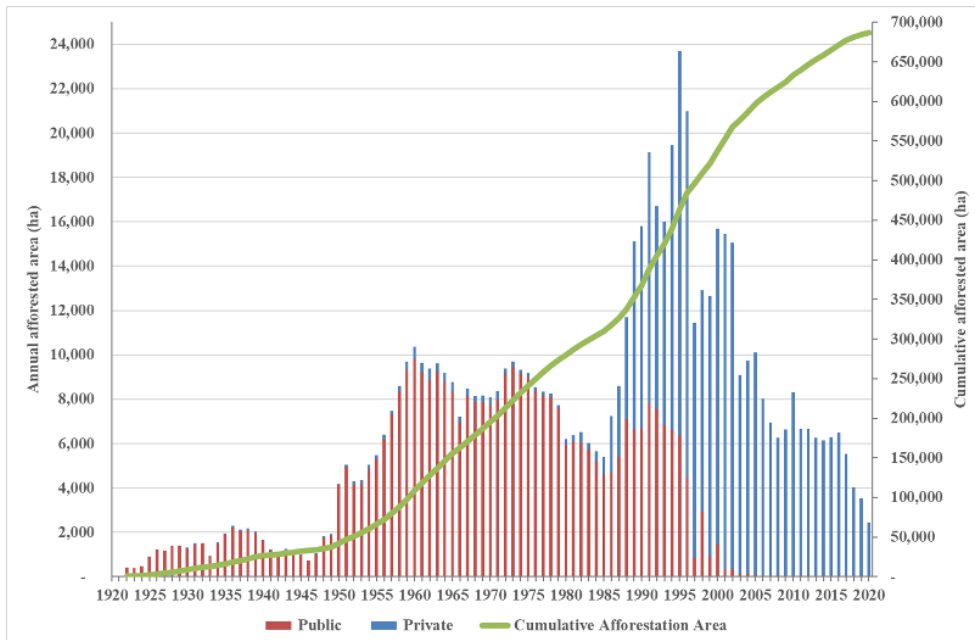


# Ireland's Afforestation Journey

- Ireland had 70% forest cover in post glacial times
- Centuries of deforestation and exploitation
- 1% forest cover remaining in 1900s
- Government policies and programmes have increased forest cover over a 100 year timeframe
- Excellent climate for growing a wide variety of species, windy climate and exposure can limit long rotations
- 12% forest cover in 2025, highest its been for over 350 years
- Ireland's plantation forests now producing over 5 million m<sup>3</sup> of timber annually



Tree planting in 1950s



# Forestry Vision 2050

Ireland's Forest Strategy 2023-2030



*The right trees in the right places for the right reasons with the right management - supporting a sustainable and thriving economy and society and a healthy environment.*



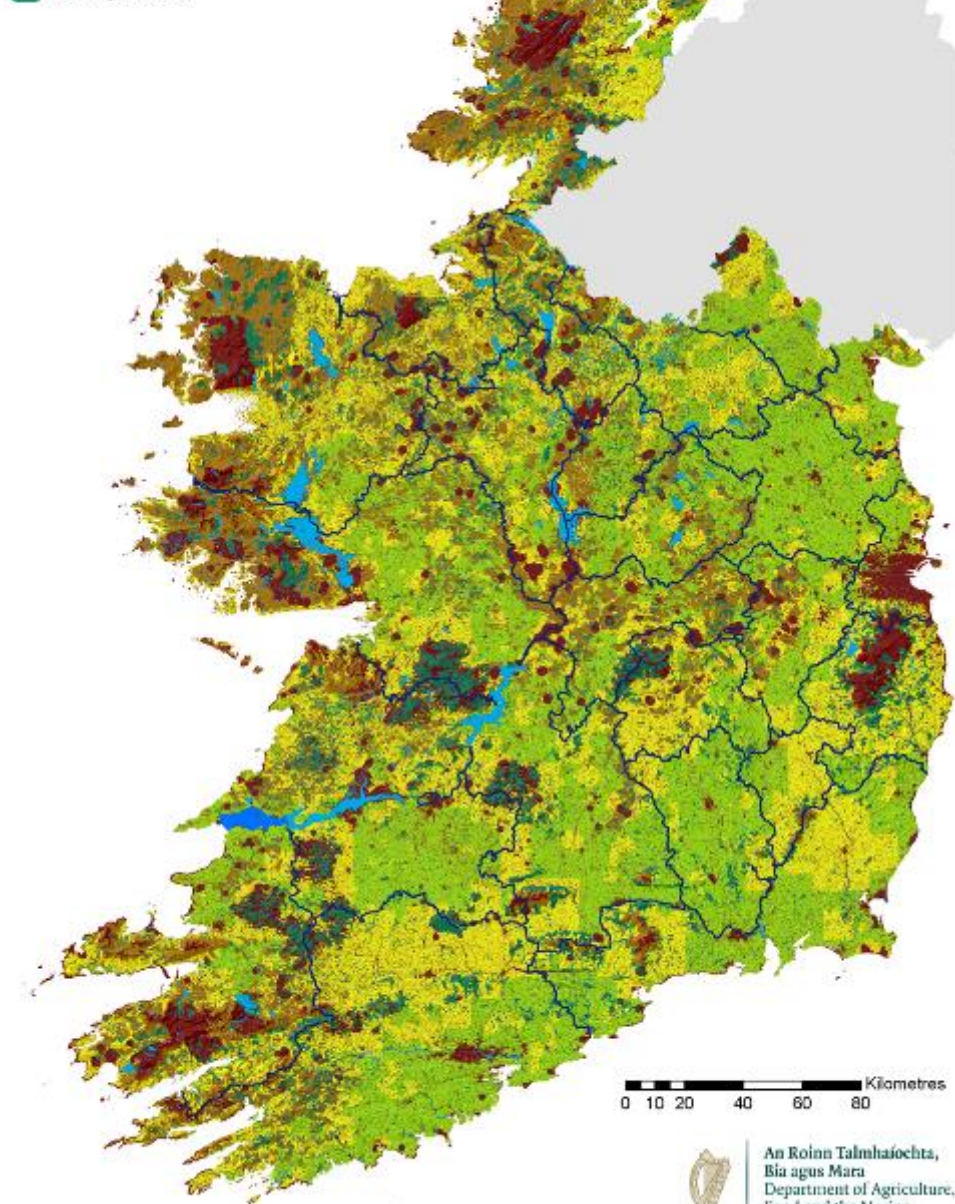


# Forest Strategy

- Strategy informed by the Shared National Forestry Vision 2050
- Focus 5 key values
  - Climate
  - Wood
  - People
  - Nature
  - Economy
- Informed by extensive consultation and stakeholder input
- Informed by the EU Forest Strategy
- Detailed implementation plan developed with a focus to expand the forest estate from 12% to 18%



- 1. Suitable for a range of forest types (20%)
- 2. Suitable for certain forest types (25%)
- 3. Suitable, where appropriate, for nature conservation and/or amenity forests (20%)
- 4. Unsuitable, unproductive or unplannable (18%)
- 5. Existing forest (11%)



# Afforestation Challenges & Opportunities

- **Land availability** – we need 450,000 ha of land to reach 18% target
- **Planting at Scale** – workforce capacity, seed & plant supply
- **Stakeholder engagement** - building consensus amongst stakeholders.
- **Climate and soils** - winds, exposure and wet soils, productive soils
- **Government Funding and income for landowners** – forestry programmes and incentives
- **EU and National Regulation** - ensuring regulatory compliance and simplification
- **legacy environmental issues** – habitat restoration
- **Multiple/Competing Objectives** – climate, wood, nature & income



# Ireland's Afforestation Plan



FT1 - Native forests



FT11 - Mixed high forest



Agroforestry



FT9 - Seed Orchards

- **National target** – 18 %
- **Forest Strategy and Implementation Plan**
- **Forest Programme 2023- 2027**
  - Grants and annual premiums
  - Knowledge transfer groups
  - Seed orchards and tree breeding
  - Advisory services
  - Registered foresters
- **Simplification** – introduction of 1 ha native tree area scheme
- **State Forestry Company** – Coillte supporting afforestation targets
- **Nature Restoration Law** – opportunities to expand and restore native woodland at scale
- **Increasing Wood in Construction** – incomes for forest owners will incentivise new forest owners to plant trees and fund SFM





# Closing Remarks

- Funding necessary to support landowners to plant trees
- Land use change is challenging and takes time
- Ireland has already planted in excess of 1 billion trees over the last 100 years
- More recently Ireland has pledged 5.3 million broadleaved trees to the EU 3 billion target (2020-2024), and will pledge additional trees in 2025
- There is also the potential to complement the EU tree counter by including non native tree species from planted forests, these trees contribute to EU climate goals and provide wood for sustainable construction
- Ireland fully supports the EU goals to plant more trees and working together with all our stakeholders we can make it happen



## Legend

### Tree amount by country

- Belgium: 6,792,983 trees
- Ireland: 5,300,443 trees *+ further pledge being prepared for 2025*
- Denmark: 4,387,605 trees
- Romania: 3,896,020 trees
- France: 3,782,577 trees
- Czechia: 3,653,544 trees
- Spain: 3,146,919 trees





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# Thank you

