



## **Chambers Ireland Submission to the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment**

### ***Ireland's draft National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals***

*December 2017*

Chambers Ireland is the largest business network in the State. With members in every geographic region and economic sector in Ireland, we are well positioned to understand the concerns of businesses from all areas in the country and represent their views. We welcome the opportunity to contribute to the work of the interdepartmental Working Group, chaired by the Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment, in the drafting of Ireland's National Implementation Plan for the Sustainable Development Goals.

Chambers Ireland supports and encourages ethical behaviour in the business community. It is our belief that responsible entrepreneurship is the driving force for sustainable economic development and that ethical conduct should be encouraged and promoted amongst businesses. Our network of local chambers are at the heart of the communities in which they operate, where chamber members all around Ireland continuously strive for better regional economic development, better infrastructure, higher quality of life and more development in their communities. In addition, our partner organisation, the International Chamber of Commerce, has a long history supporting sustainability and advocating for responsible business practices. This includes helping to form an understanding within the SME community of the long-term commercial benefits of sustainable business practices. In December 2016, the ICC was [granted Observer Status](#) by the UN General Assembly. This development means that business will for the first time have direct voice at the UN and paves the way for ICC to contribute directly to the work of the General Assembly and reflects the vital role the private sector will play in implementing the UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), agreed in 2015 are a set of 17 goals that UN member states will use to frame their policies from now until 2030 to

promote peace, prosperity and environmental protection and were welcomed by the ICC and Chambers Ireland when they were launched at the UN. The SDGs, which are focused on ending hunger and eradicating poverty, take a holistic approach in tackling the root causes of poverty and inequality. Indeed, many of the SDGs overlap with our own policy priorities here in Chambers Ireland. Goal 8, for example, supports decent work and economic growth, Goal 11 prioritises sustainable cities and communities and Goal 12 encourages responsible consumption and production. Our global partner, the International Chamber of Commerce, has played a significant role, as the voice of business, in driving this agenda and will continue to work with the United Nations to develop and promote these new goals.

Therefore, it is crucial to the success of the SDGs that Government, in its' cross departmental approach, actively seeks out the input and engagement of the business community. We welcome the commitment within the plan to actively engage stakeholders from across civil society, including the private sector, in the development and implementation of the Plan. The engagement of the business community will be vital in this new era of sustainable development. The private sector will be required to foster sustainable development and growth across a broad range of areas, from project finance and encouraging foreign direct investment, to supporting innovation and removing barriers to cross-border trading. If the new SDGs are to be successfully implemented, business and government will have to work together to integrate the sustainable development agenda into the broader economy. This will include public-private partnerships at global and national level and enhanced opportunities for engagement to better leverage business expertise and experience.

We welcome the opportunity to engage with Government and the interdepartmental Working Group into 2018 and in the years that follow.