



**CHAMBERS
IRELAND**
IN BUSINESS FOR BUSINESS

**Chambers Ireland's Submission to Irish Water on the Preferred
Scheme for meeting the future needs of the Eastern and
Midlands Region**

February 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 and represent their views. Chambers Ireland welcomes the work of Irish Water in ensuring evidence-based project planning in water infrastructure at a national level. We also welcome the opportunity to inform this consultation process and look forward to further engagement with the Irish Water in the future.

Chambers Ireland is supportive of the proposed Eastern and Midlands Region Water Supply Project as outlined in the [Final Options Appraisal Report & EIS Scoping Report](#). We view this project as vital for the future water security of the Greater Dublin Region. The stable supply of high-quality water is a key requirement for Ireland's economic growth and we welcome the long-term planning approach adopted by Irish Water. From a business perspective, water supply is a fundamental requirement for operating, and threats to water security must be addressed as a matter of priority. Ireland cannot support existing businesses or attract FDI without a safe and secure water supply to Dublin and the Eastern and Midlands regions.

Evidence from the Environmental Protection Agency has shown that Dublin's water supply is extremely vulnerable and currently at risk of collapse. This presents both inhabitants and businesses of Dublin and the Eastern and Midlands regions with a high risk of water shortages, which can result in high disruption costs for businesses and domestic water users. The capacity of the region's water infrastructure to meet daily water requirements of both businesses and domestic households is of immense importance for our ability to create sustainable economic growth and attract further investment. A high proportion of Ireland's FDI companies are in water-intensive industries such as pharmaceuticals and the IT sector and an unstable water supply presents increased risks for these industries. If Ireland is to continually attract new FDI and support existing industries we must ensure that the capacity of our water network is improved. We view the Eastern and Midlands Region Water Supply Project as outlined in the [Final Options Appraisal Report & EIS Scoping Report](#) as a vital component to Ireland's water infrastructure. In order to protect the economic well-being of our businesses and the needs of domestic users we recommend that construction on the Eastern and Midlands project is commenced as soon as possible.

The proposed pipeline stands to benefit not only Dublin, but also areas along the pipeline which will gain access to a secure, safe and sustainable water supply. Chambers Ireland welcomes the identification of the 'benefitting corridor' along the preferred pipeline corridor. These areas stand to benefit from the transportation of treated water en route to Dublin, ensuring the region has access to a safe and secure water supply. Through the inclusion of a benefitting corridor in capital infrastructure decision-making, return on investment will be maximised to support economic activity and new investment throughout the Midlands and East. Water outages can cause unquantifiable reputational damage to Ireland, Dublin and the Mideast region and thus risks dissuading potential investors from establishing enterprises in the region. According to the CSO, "the population of Dublin is projected to increase by between 96,000 and 286,000 depending on the internal migration pattern used, while the population of the Mid-East is set to increase by between 78,000 and 144,000"¹ by 2031. Thus the need for increased capacity in this region relates not only to current demand, but must also consider future growth in demand in the region.

As part of the process of planning for the construction of the preferred pipeline, Chamber Ireland would suggest that Irish Water consider how companies in the benefitting corridor can effectively engage in procurement processes in a way that will maximise community engagement and benefits. We suggest that Irish Water consider local economic benefit as part of its procurement strategy for construction, which we also believe will generate further support within communities located along the project route.

¹ <http://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/er/rpp/regionalpopulationprojections2016-2031/>