



An Roinn Talmhaíochta,
Bia agus Mara
Department of Agriculture,
Food and the Marine

National Strategy for

HORTICULTURE

2023-2027

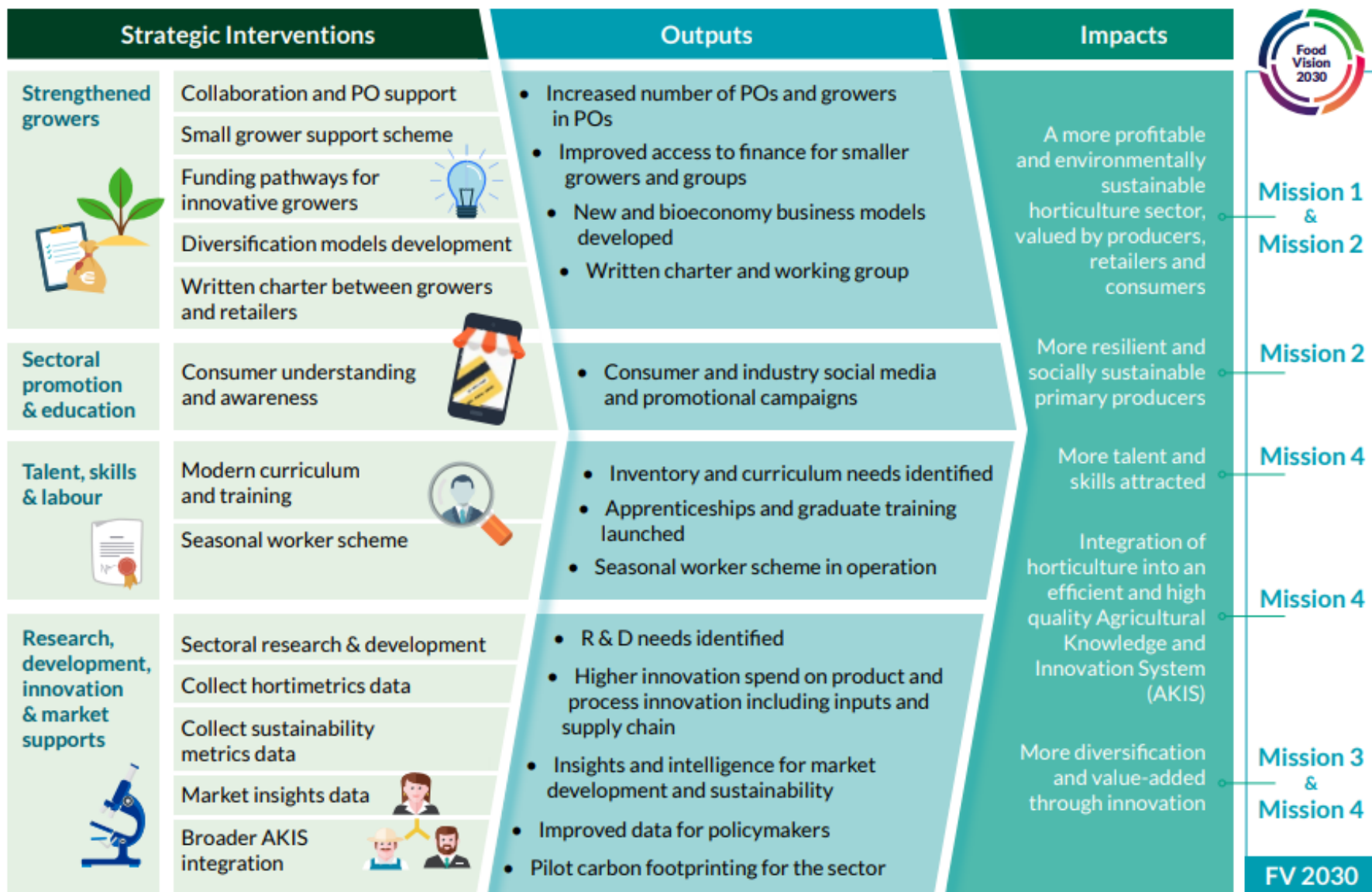
Mid Term Review

1. Strengthened growers
2. Sectoral promotion and education
3. Talent, skills and labour
4. Research, development, innovation and market supports



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Challenges and Opportunities

Increased input costs

Cost of living crisis.

Reduced EU funding for marketing campaigns

Consumer and retailer demand for Irish produce.

Growers leaving the sector.

Access to and cost of labour

Continental retailers flex prices according to supply and demand; Irish retailers say consumers want to pay the same price for fruit and vegetables all year round.

The Irish market is relatively small which limits investment opportunities for major projects. Expanding capacity is limited not only by the capital requirements but also by low demand due to scale. Limited scale opportunities are a barrier to entry for innovative or sustainable players.

Availability of growing media and awaiting research findings on peat alternatives.

Competition for land is an increasing challenge for new and existing growers.

Replacing single use plastics while maintaining shelf life.

Length of the Irish production season.

Reduction in authorised pesticides limits ability to treat disease and pests.

The industry is labour intensive with high and increasing input costs and low margins through retail.

Scale of food waste at farm level due to high retailer specifications particularly for organics.

Lack of funding for innovation by primary producers.

Increased paperwork for exporters following Brexit.

Research into automation and technology to improve labour efficiency.

Greater climate vulnerability of countries that grow at scale.

Innovation in production methods including non-peat based alternatives.

Import substitution for chipping potatoes and apples and other in season fruit and vegetables.

Ireland's high plant health status.

Prove and capitalise on environmental credentials of locally grown fresh fruit and vegetables.

Opportunity to revive Irish Seed potato sector via Seed potato scheme.

Salad crops can technically be grown all year round in protected environments.

Growing evidence to suggest consumers will pay more for local, fresh produce.

Diversification opportunities in ingredient powders, Medicinal Aromatic Plants, nutraceuticals, waste valorisation.

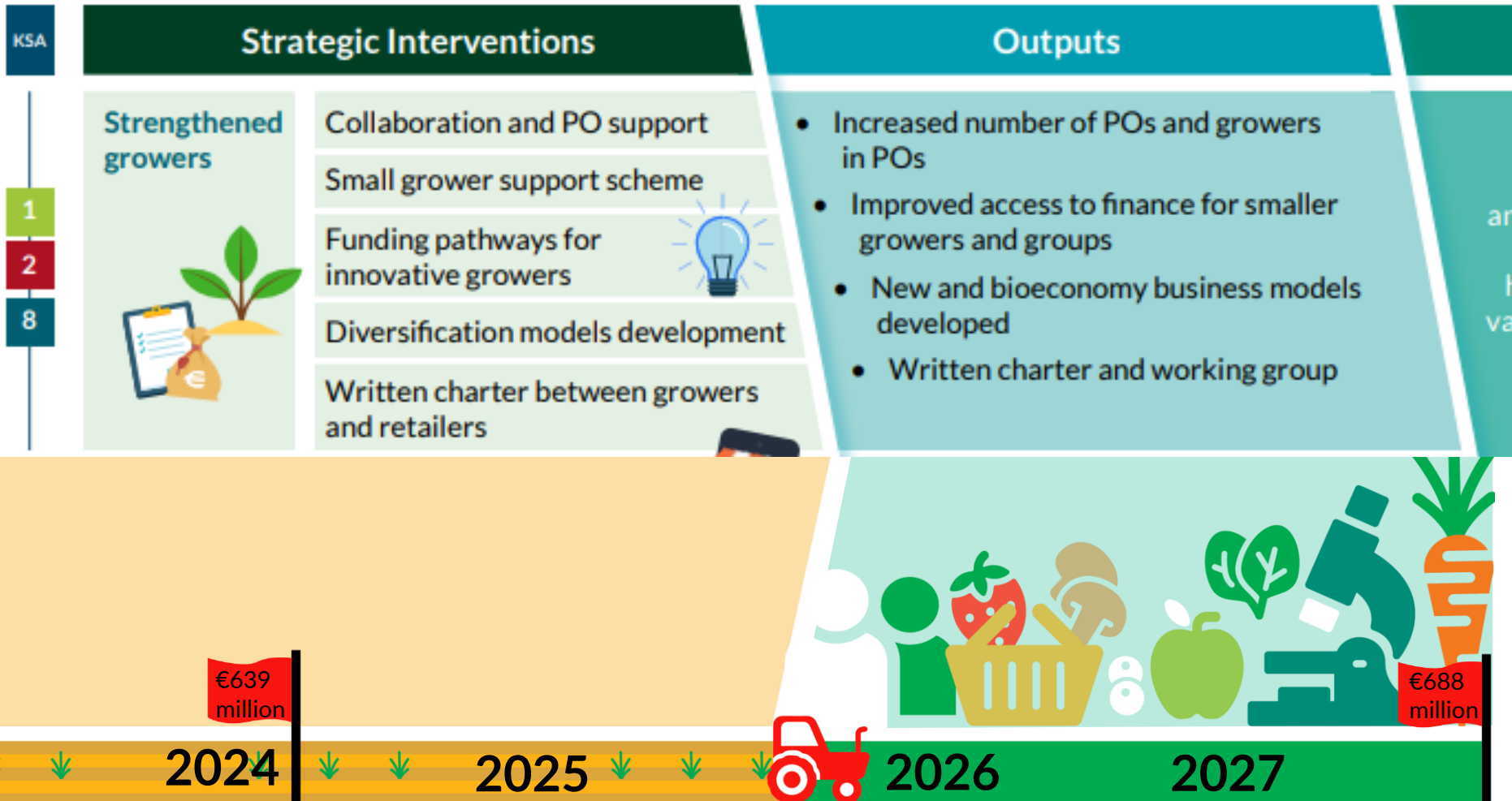
Leverage Ireland's international beef and dairy marketing expertise for horticulture exports.

Concerns around food security issues have highlighted the importance of domestic horticulture industry and the need for import substitution.



Industry wide Challenges


Industry and Sub Sector Opportunities

Strengthened Growers



Strengthened Growers

Int	Strategic Interventions		Outputs	Impacts
 Strengthened growers	Collaboration and PO support		<ul style="list-style-type: none">Increased number of POs and growers in POsImproved access to finance for smaller growers and groupsNew and bioeconomy business models developedWritten charter and working group	 A more profitable and environmentally sustainable horticulture sector, valued by producers, retailers and consumers
	Small grower support scheme			
	Funding pathways for innovative growers			
	Diversification models development			
	Written charter between growers and retailers			

 Mission 1 & Mission 2

49 growers now in Irish POs

Since 2023, 5 Irish POs have invested **€30 million+** in on farm investments, technical advice, quality improvement and received **€15 million in aid**

€19 million paid in supports in 2024

Innovation scheme for primary producers launched 2024 to plug gap in Leader/EI funding

Hort grant scheme more accessible and greater support

- €7,500 threshold
- 50% for young farmers and organics

HIF sub committee/retailer meetings at least once a year

Leverage commodity groups to drive sub sector actions

Draft retail charter presented to 5 main retailers

Continue to instill benefits of joining a PO subject to EU rules

Continue supports for growers

Retailers sign charter and extend to consolidators

€639 million

2024

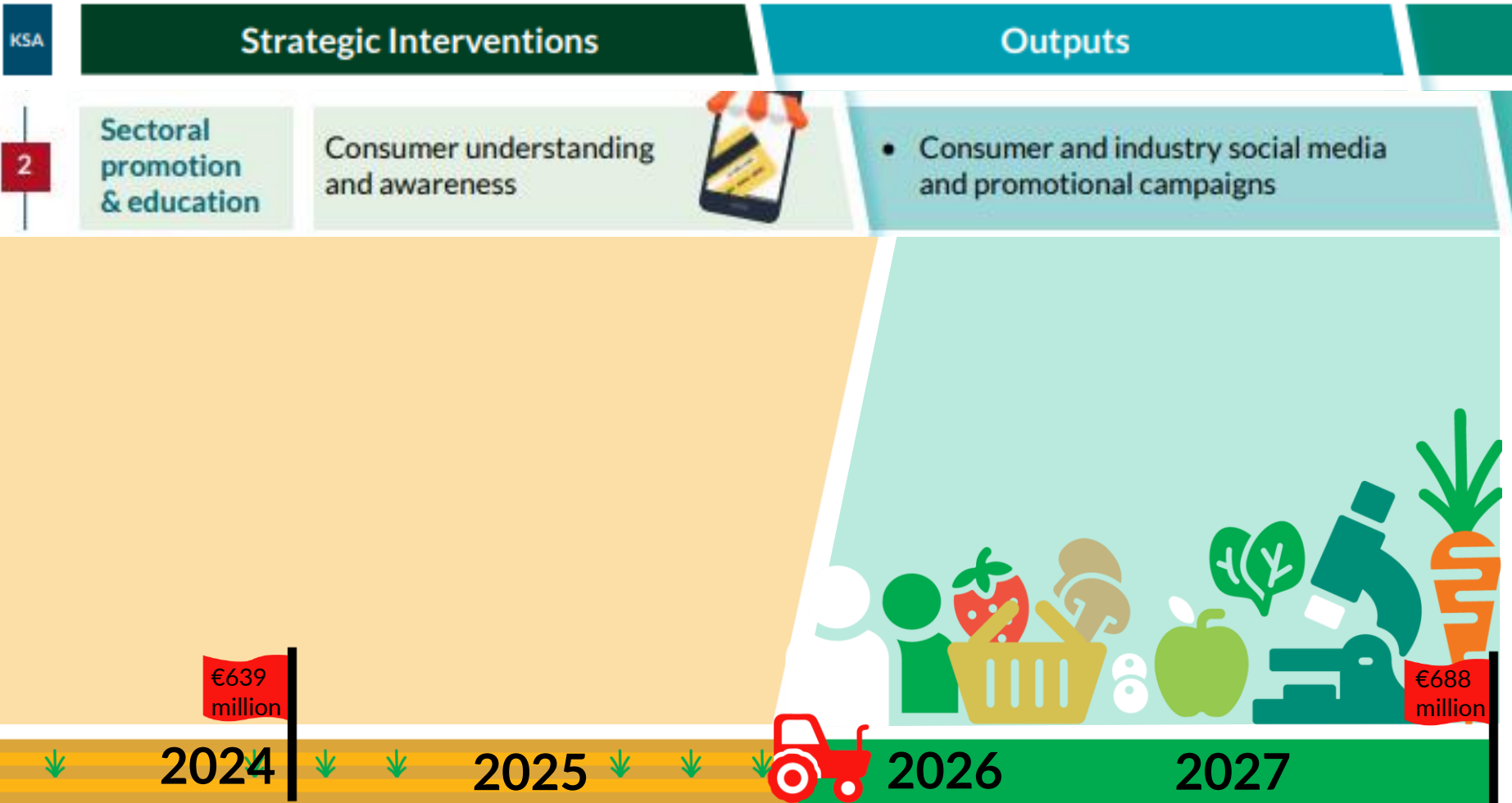
2025

2026

2027

€688 million

Sectoral promotion and education



Sectoral promotion and education

Strategic Interventions		Outputs	Impacts
2	Sectoral promotion & education	Consumer understanding and awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consumer and industry social media and promotional campaigns More resilient and socially sustainable primary producers



LIFE IS BETTER WITH
FRUIT AND VEGETABLES
(MAR 2022 - FEB 2025)

70M **18**

DIGITAL AD VIEWS
GROWER VIDEOS
(900K VIEWS)



POTATOES, PREPARE
TO BE SURPRISED
(JAN 2023 - DEC 2025)

10M **6M**

META VIEWS
TIKTOK IMPRESSIONS



MUSHROOMS
THE HIDDEN GEM
(JAN 2023 - DEC 2025)

1.1M

IMPRESSIONS VIA INFLUENCERS
& DIGITAL MEDIA PARTNERSHIP



2.5m portions each year
200k+ students reached
each year



€639
million

2024

2025



2026

2027

€688
million

Consider funding
mechanisms for future
campaigns



Continue sectoral
promotions

Increase coordination with
Dept Health, Dept Education,
Agriaware



Talent, skills and labour

KSA

Strategic Interventions

Talent, skills & labour



Modern curriculum and training

Seasonal worker scheme



Outputs

- Inventory and curriculum needs identified
- Apprenticeships and graduate training launched
- Seasonal worker scheme in operation

€639
million

2024

2025





2026

2027

€688
million



Talent, skills and labour

Strategic Interventions		Outputs	Impacts	 Mission 4	
3 Talent, skills & labour	Modern curriculum and training	 <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inventory and curriculum needs identified• Apprenticeships and graduate training launched• Seasonal worker scheme in operation	More talent and skills attracted Integration of horticulture into an efficient and high value supply chain		
	Seasonal worker scheme				

Education review published June '25

Horticulture Education Leadership Group agreed – all Island approach

Teagasc Apprenticeship scheme launched

90 employers registered for apprenticeship scheme

great success for amenity sector but only 11% are fruit or vegetable producers

2 out of 54 apprentices are focused on edible horticulture

Seasonal Employment Permit Pilot launched 2025

QQI updating horticulture and agriculture QQI Levels 3-7 in 2026

F&V industry support for apprenticeship scheme

Reposition horticulture as a career of choice: target youth

Feed into Seasonal Employment Permit scheme review and next steps

Continue engagement with DoJ and DETE on labour challenges

€639 million

2024

2025

2026

2027

€688 million

Research, development, innovation and market supports

KSA

5

6

7

8

Strategic Interventions

innovation
& market
supports



Collect hortimetrics data

Collect sustainability
metrics data

Market insights data



Broader AKIS
integration



Outputs

- Higher innovation spend on product and process innovation including inputs and supply chain
- Insights and intelligence for market development and sustainability
- Improved data for policymakers
- Pilot carbon footprinting for the sector

€639
million

2024

2025



2026

2027

€688
million

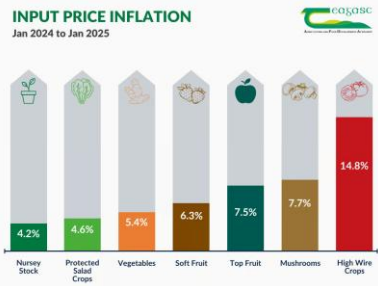


Research, development, innovation and market supports

R&D needs synthesised by Teagasc informs DAFM calls for research



Teagasc



Hortimetrics pilot



Bord Bia market research



Census data collection



DAFM calls for research

Grower participation in census and better data collection



Bord Bia: Multi country pricing and crop intelligence from 2026

Import substitution research

AKIS for horticulture: work with ERINN



€639 million

2024

2025



2026

2027

€688 million

Strategic Interventions	Outputs	Impacts
Research, development, innovation & market supports Sectoral research & development Collect hortimetrics data Collect sustainability metrics data Market insights data Broader AKIS integration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> R & D needs identified Higher innovation spend on product and process innovation including inputs and supply chain Insights and intelligence for market development and sustainability Improved data for policymakers Pilot carbon footprinting for the sector 	Quality agricultural Knowledge and Innovation System (AKIS) More diversification and value added through innovation

Mission 3 & Mission 4
FV 2030



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Mid Term Review

Engage with sector reps/DAFM on strategy review
by 1st December 2025

horticulturestrategy@agriculture.gov.ie

- Consider joining a PO
- Additional challenges/opportunities?
- Funding mechanisms for promotions
- Apprenticeship scheme
- Commodity groups
- Engage with census



Growers



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