

# Leaders Sustainability Acceleration Programme

## Programme Purpose

Accelerating sustainability by aligning **boards and executive teams** with their organisations to create resilient supply chains, enhanced innovation for growth and distinctive organisations



**Dave Fitzgerald**

**Sustainability Director - Ornua**

The Bord Bia/ Smurfit Executive Development programme gave me fresh perspective and insight delivered by leading thinkers in the sustainability field. The opportunity to learn from global leaders, as well as engage with peers from different sectors of the food industry was invaluable. I would recommend this programme for any senior leader who wants to embed and accelerate the sustainable transition in their organisation.



**Alison Cowzer**

**Co-Founder – East Coast Bakehouse**

The Bord Bia Leaders Sustainability Acceleration Programme was inspirational in re-setting my views on the importance of sustainability to our business. The world-class presenters and case-studies gave us a real insight in how to blend business strategy and sustainability strategy to succeed as a sustainable business for the future. The class discussions with food industry peers brought a real-live dynamic to the sessions and drove us all to think deeply and creatively about the sustainability agenda for our industry. I would recommend the course to any food industry professional looking to build a business for future success.

## The Inflection Point

The commitment to reducing the impact of business on climate change and other Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) goals has gained momentum. The establishment of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) and the European Sustainability Reporting Standards [ESRS]) represents one aspect of the inflection point and the momentum of sustainability on the global policy agenda. The gathering and sharing of this information will lead to increased scrutiny of public and private firms in society. One likely impact of this is a change in the ability and increased unwillingness of the investment community to invest in activity which is not climate friendly, regenerative or restorative. The food, drink and horticulture industry is accelerating towards these changes which are having a profound impact on how the industry organises resources and allocates our capital. The central position of agriculture and food in the Irish governments ambition to meet carbon emission goals, both from a reduction and an investment perspective further underlines the looming inflection point.

# Accelerating Sustainability Leadership

In 2012, the Origin Green programme pioneered a pathway for the Irish food, drink and horticulture industry to begin its sustainability journey. We must now enact a step change and elevate the issue of sustainability to a guiding principle for businesses. The industry has called out its senior leadership group as the key force in meeting the challenges facing the industry. Customers demands for sustainability and national requirement for carbon reduction cannot be dealt with by sustainability professionals working alone and isolated in the organisation. Sustainability must be led from the board and the executive team embedding sustainability into business strategy and investment decisions. Immediate action and the accelerated leadership of sustainability is now an urgent requirement.

## Sustainability Leadership

Sustainability Leadership requires board members and senior executives to understand sustainability, its challenges and the strategy and governance issues involved in its management. Additionally, effective reporting on sustainability and metrics which connects sustainability with business outcomes and to have the ability to translate these metrics into strategy and investments is vital. Finally, a mindset change is required to view sustainability as a lens for innovation, change and growth. New tools and ways of thinking that have not formed part of any previous curriculum are required to achieve this.

### Questions for Organisations



1. Has your organisation embedded sustainability in all functions of the business, and reflected them in the KPIs of the Executive Board?
2. Does your board and executive team have a comprehensive understanding of the range of changes sustainability currently presents and how these are evolving?
3. Does your organisation have an effective plan and toolkit to respond to the opportunities and challenges within the food, drink and horticulture industry?
4. Is your organisation having the right conversations about the future of food, drink and horticulture?
5. Are you confident that your organisation's product and service portfolio has been reallocated to take advantage of the opportunities of sustainability?

### Questions for Leaders



1. Have you accelerated your understanding of sustainability?
2. Are you a confident communicator of sustainability on behalf of your organisation?
3. Could you support the sustainability achievements and ambitions of your organisation to peers, customers and other stakeholders?
4. Do you understand what information is and should be available about sustainability in your organisation?





# Accelerating Leaders Ability to Lead

This programme is a modular offering designed to provide a rapid and concentrated input to the toolkit of senior leaders and the organisations that sponsor them.

## Key Programme Features:

- The overall emphasis of this programme is on the development of actionable insights for leaders and their organisations and the acceleration of sustainability within their organisation.
- In-person residential modules. Delivered in UCD Michael Smurfit Executive Development.
- Discussion and analysis of sustainability and food specific industry examples. The introduction of new and existing case studies with thought leaders in sustainability.
- Live case study which will examine managing similar challenges in an adjacent sector.
- Peer-to-peer learning through immersive discussions with fellow participants and alumni.
- Executive exchange with global industry thought leaders.
- Participants will be provided with a thought provoking toolkit at the end of each module, summarising all learnings.



## Sustainability in a Strategic and Governance Context

### This module will focus on:

- What sustainability means in your business, and how your business should be responding to different sustainability challenges.
- Asking the right questions about how sustainability is impacting your business.
- Enabling your organisation to see sustainability, not as an isolated business goal, but as a framework to guide strategy execution and drive long term value.



## Transitioning to a Sustainable Business

### This module will focus on:

- How can your business: a) identify existing pressures; b) assess and prioritise impacts, and c) respond and act on these pressures.
- How your organisation needs to evolve to become a sustainable business both internally and across the supply chain.
- How your business can design, build, execute, and maintain a more responsible supply chain?
- How does your business need to evolve to meet regulations?



## Accelerating Sustainability Opportunities

### This module will focus on:

- Preparing your organisation for this new era of business where sustaining competitive advantage could also mean transforming your business model for sustainability.
- Understand and critically evaluate your organisations sustainable investment and financing.
- How sustainability attributes could augment your organisations existing brand strategy or be used to reposition the brand, and the role customers play.

# World Renowned Expert Faculty



**Professor Damien McLoughlin**  
Anthony C. Cunningham  
Professor of Marketing, UCD  
Michael Smurfit Graduate  
Business School.



**Russell Smyth**  
Partner, Head of KPMG  
Sustainable Futures



**Sarah Moran**  
Director, Sustainable  
Finance, KPMG  
Sustainable Futures



**Professor N. Craig Smith**  
Senior Affiliate Professor  
of Ethics and Social  
Responsibility INSEAD



**Shane O'Reilly**  
Director, ESG Strategy,  
KPMG Sustainable  
Futures



**Caroline Pope**  
Associate Director,  
ESG Strategy, KPMG  
Sustainable Futures



**Professor Karan Sonpar**  
Full Professor of  
Organisational Behaviour  
UCD School of Business



**Professor Patrick T. Gibbons**  
Jefferson Smurfit Professor of  
Strategic Management  
UCD School of Business



**Professor Goutam Challagalla**  
Professor of Strategy and  
Marketing  
IMD



**Professor Mary L. Shelman**  
Former Director of Harvard  
Business School Agribusiness  
Programme



## John McGrath

### Head of Business Development, Marketing and Communications – Dawn Farms

In addition to the expertise and up to date insights from recognised experts in the evolving field of ESG and sustainability, this programme provides a stimulating cross sectoral environment to debate the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead for the agri-food sector in Ireland. If ever a topic required joined up thinking and action by all parties invested in our most important indigenous industry, this is it.

## Next Steps How Do I Apply?

For further information on the  
programme fees and how to apply  
please visit:

[www.smurfitschool.ie/executivedevelopment/organisations/leaderssustainability-accelerationprogramme/](http://www.smurfitschool.ie/executivedevelopment/organisations/leaderssustainability-accelerationprogramme/)

