

Leaders Sustainability Acceleration Programme

In partnership with UCD Smurfit Executive Development, Bord Bia has developed a suite of three sustainability acceleration programmes, purpose-built for senior leaders across the Irish food and drink sector.



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.

The Bord Bia Leaders Sustainability Acceleration Programme Suite

Programme 1: The Bord Bia Leaders Sustainability Acceleration Programme

A high-impact, six-day executive programme created for senior leaders, this course has already guided five cohorts and built a strong alumni network of more than 120 participants from leading organisations such as Kerry Group, Tesco, and Dawn Meats. Today, it is recognised as the benchmark for sustainability leadership and capability development within the Irish food sector.

Programme 2: Bord Bia Sustainability Programme for C-Suite and Board Members

A new, bespoke three-day immersive programme designed specifically for senior executives, directors, and board members, it delivers concise, strategic insight that transforms complex sustainability challenges into clear, actionable boardroom priorities.

Thought Leadership Events for Bord Bia Leaders Sustainability Alumni

Stay connected through our exclusive Alumni series. These events offer a platform for cutting-edge insights and peer-to-peer collaboration across the Bord Bia Sustainability leadership network.

More details on each of these programmes are on the following pages.

Next Steps - How Do I Apply?

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

or email Patrick Murray at patrick.murray1@ucd.ie

Programme 1: The Bord Bia Leaders Sustainability Acceleration Programme

Over the past two decades, the Irish food and drink sector has progressed from sustainability awareness to meaningful action, guided by Bord Bia's Origin Green programme. While sustainability ambition is now firmly embedded across the industry, the central challenge for modern leaders has shifted - it is no longer about justifying why sustainability matters, but understanding how to integrate it into everyday decision-making across procurement, operations, and commercial functions.

In 2026, this challenge is intensified by stringent regulatory requirements, increasing supply chain scrutiny, and climate-driven cost volatility. As operational pressures grow, there is a rising risk that sustainability becomes a narrow compliance exercise rather than a strategic engine for innovation. For leaders across core business functions, balancing immediate commercial priorities with long-term environmental objectives requires new levels of capability, perspective, and cross-functional alignment.

The Leadership Sustainability Acceleration Programme (LSAP) is designed to support this transition shifting sustainability from validation to seamless integration and execution. By developing function-specific expertise and fostering cross-functional collaboration, the programme empowers leaders to drive measurable value creation. LSAP equips participants with the practical tools and strategic insight needed to transform sustainability into a source of competitive advantage and long-term organisational resilience in an evolving global market.

Programme Dates

2026: 13 & 14 April

2027: Spring 2027 (dates TBC)



Dave Fitzgerald

Sustainability Director - Ornaea

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.

The LSAP is a six-day, modular executive programme designed to deliver a focused, high-impact development experience for senior leaders and the organisations that support them.

Programme features include:

- Equipping leaders across the Irish food and drink sector with the mindset, strategic insight, and practical capabilities needed to drive sustainability over the decade ahead.
- Immersive, in-person residential modules delivered at UCD Smurfit Executive Development, centred on real-world, food-sector-specific sustainability challenges.
- A blend of rigorous industry case-study analysis and thought leadership from leading sustainability practitioners and global experts.
- A strong emphasis on peer-to-peer learning, leveraging the diverse experience and perspectives of fellow participants and programme alumni.
- A focus on generating actionable insights that accelerate organisational sustainability, with each module concluding in a practical toolkit designed for immediate application.

Module 1

The Evolving Role of Sustainability: Leading Through Risk, Regulation, and Change

- The Sustainability Imperative and the Evolving Organisational Role
- Corporate Governance, Regulation, and Proactive Compliance:
- Measuring and Managing for Materiality:
- Radical Corporate Sustainability and Business Transformation:
- Technology and AI for Sustainability Execution

Module 2

Stakeholder Engagement, Risk, and Resilient Value Chains

- Sustainable and Optimised Supply Chains
- Stakeholder Engagement and Collaboration for Impact:
- Sustainability Risk Management and Scenario Planning:
- Building Organisational and Supply Chain Resilience
- Future-Focused Decision-Making

Module 3

Driving Organisational Change and Value Creation through Sustainability

- Leading Change for the Sustainability Transition
- Translating Stakeholder Expectations into Business Strategy
- Driving Competitive Advantage through Sustainability
- Sustainable Product Development and Market Pathways

Programme 2: Bord Bia Sustainability Programme for C-Suite and Board Members

For the Irish food and drink sector, sustainability is now a defining driver of long-term competitiveness, organisational resilience, and licence to operate. Climate risk, tightening regulation, increasing stakeholder scrutiny, and evolving capital market expectations all have a direct impact on enterprise value and strategic flexibility. At board and executive level, sustainability has moved firmly beyond a specialist domain - it is now a core leadership, governance, and fiduciary responsibility.

As disclosure requirements expand and regulatory expectations intensify, there is a growing risk that sustainability becomes confined to a compliance-led reporting function. This raises critical questions for boards and executive teams: Where should sustainability sit within the organisation? How should accountability and oversight be structured? How can leadership ensure that sustainability meaningfully informs strategy, risk management and capital allocation?

The Sustainability Programme for C-Suite and Board Members offers senior leaders a dedicated forum to step back from operational pressures and assess organisational readiness at an enterprise level. Through strategic dialogue and peer exchange, participants evaluate whether their organisations are structurally and strategically positioned to lead the next phase of sustainability. The programme strengthens board-level oversight and executive leadership, ensuring sustainability is fully aligned with long-term value creation, organisational resilience, and corporate purpose.

Designed as a concise, high-impact executive programme, it provides board members and C-suite leaders with the space to reflect on the future role of sustainability as we look toward 2035. The programme focuses on how sustainability can drive organisational transformation and competitiveness, and on the leadership capabilities required across the business to deliver accountability, urgency, and strategic clarity.

Programme features include:

- The programme supports senior leaders in setting clear direction, empowering management teams, and ensuring sustainability is integrated into core business strategy with urgency, accountability, and purpose
- Immersive, in-person residential modules at UCD Smurfit Executive Development, focused on real-world, food sector specific sustainability challenges.
- A rigorous blend of industry case studies with insights from leading sustainability practitioners and global thought leaders.
- A strong emphasis on peer-to-peer learning, drawing on the experience and perspectives of fellow participants.

Programme Dates

2026: 23, 24 & 25 September

2027: Autumn 2027 (dates TBC)

Day 1

The Evolving Role of Sustainability in the Organisation

- The Sustainability Imperative
- Sustainability Governance & Oversight
- Radical Corporate Sustainability
- Measuring and Managing for Materiality

Day 2

Navigating Risk and Regulation: Building Business Readiness

- Organisations Regulatory Requirements
- Enterprise Risk Management - Scenario Planning
- Sustainable Transition Plans
- Being in the Conversation: NGOs, Activists & Peers

Day 3

Sustainability as Strategy: Innovation, Value Creation & Competitiveness

- Moving the Needle on Sustainability
- Business Model Innovation for Sustainability Led Growth
- Finding and exploiting the next S-Curve for growth in sustainability



Richard Clinton

Group Commercial Director, Dawn Meats

Selling the proposition of regenerative Irish agriculture, as a critical element of the solution to climate change, could not be more important for the future of Irish farming and food production. All functions and disciplines within a business have a role to play in how we continuously improve and reinforce our credentials as leaders in sustainability. The Bord Bia Leaders Sustainability Acceleration Program delivers key insights, informs peer-to-peer challenge and allows for robust debate, which has helped to sharpen our approach, broaden business capability and deliver on our commitments.

Thought Leadership Events for Bord Bia Leaders Sustainability Alumni

Participants and alumni of the Bord Bia Leaders Sustainability Acceleration Programmes are invited to a series of exclusive thought-leadership events that address the most pressing sustainability challenges facing the sector today. These sessions provide a unique platform for Ireland's food and drink executives to reassess their strategic ambitions, benchmark their progress, sustain momentum as drivers of organisational resilience, and collaborate with peers across the industry.

Alumni Event 1: Clean Winners: Sustainability Strategy That Puts Customers First, 16 April 2026

Alumni Event 2: An International Case Study in Sustainability Management for Commercial Growth, 17 June 2026

Alumni Event 3: Sustainability and AI, 13 October 2026

Origin Green Sustainability Seminar: 13 October 2026

Next Steps - How Do I Apply?

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World renowned Expert Faculty



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



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



Margaret Berry
Lecturer in Sustainability in
the Food and Agribusiness
Sectors UCD Michael Smurfit
Graduate Business School



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



Professor Goutam Challagalla
Professor of Strategy and
Marketing
IMD



Professor Mark Pagell
Professor of Sustainable
Supply Chain Management,
University College Dublin