

# Manufacturing in Ireland 2023

Unlocking Ireland's manufacturing potential for the next manufacturing evolution

Eli Lilly  
case study 2023



## Sustainable manufacturing – the wave of the future

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## Sustainable manufacturing – the wave of the future

How leading pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly and Company is minimising the environmental impact of their operations and growing the business in responsible ways.

Sustainability is a key issue for the manufacturing sector today. However, the industry has been very focused on tackling sustainability issues in recent years. This focus will increase into the future, as companies aim to reach the Government’s ambition to achieve a 51% reduction in emissions by 2030 and carbon neutrality by 2050.

One such company making huge strides in their sustainability efforts is Eli Lilly and Company – an innovative pharmaceutical company committed to making safe, high-quality medicines to improve the lives of people globally.

“Lilly has been in existence since 1876, with 40,000 employees globally,” says Jean Casey, Director of Public Affairs at Lilly. “The company’s first investment in Ireland was in 1978, with our site in Kinsale. We now also have a Global Business Solutions Centre in Little Island, and we are building a new state-of-the-art biotech manufacturing campus on a greenfield site in Limerick. The company has grown extensively in Ireland in recent times and today, we have nearly 3,000 employees across our sites here.

## Reducing resources

Making medicines requires the use of valuable resources including energy, water and raw materials, and Lilly has ambitious 2030 goals to reduce their usage. But Jean says sustainability isn't new to the company.

“We've been on a sustainability journey for the last 40 years. Environmental responsibility has always been important to us. And at a corporate level, we have a number of 2030 goals that we are working towards.”

Gerard O'Shea, Director for Health, Safety and Environment at Lilly Kinsale, says “Locally, we worked closely with thought leaders to put together a plan for what we need to do to be on target to achieve our corporate goals and more, by 2030. We've identified five key focus areas, with five deliverables in each area.”

Ger shares plastic waste reduction as an example. “Our employees are passionate about sustainability, and they've spearheaded a plastic recycling initiative, partnering with a company in Ireland, to repurpose recycled plastic into a raw material used for benches and planters, for example. In the last 12 months, we have diverted a significant proportion of what would otherwise be waste plastic, to make 570 garden benches and planters. It's a real testament to the team, who also make great efforts to reduce the use of plastic right across the company.”

Ger says sustainable travel is another focus. “We put a lot of effort into finding alternative ways people can travel to our rural site, instead of bringing their cars. We've introduced a bus service and we have over 50 people travelling from Cork City to Kinsale. It's been such a success that we are now launching a second route. We also have 50 new electric vehicle chargers on-site.”

Reducing energy usage is also a priority for Lilly. Paul O'Sullivan, Utilities Engineer at Lilly, says, “Adjacent to our Kinsale site, we have a 26-acre solar farm.

**“It's one of Ireland's largest solar farms and can provide about 15% of the site's electricity per annum. On a very sunny Irish day, the solar farm can generate about 4.5MW on the site, which is over 60% of the site's daily demand.”**

“So, at times, two-thirds of our power is coming from our solar farm, which is something we're very proud of.”

Jean adds, “The sustainability ambition is also very significant for our Limerick site, because it's a greenfield site, which means sustainability is at the core of the design. Compared to a traditional pharma site, our Limerick site will have 35% lower energy intensity. It'll use 40% less water and have 15% less waste.”

## Future focus

Looking forward, Paul feels decarbonisation will be a major challenge for the manufacturing industry. “Decarbonisation needs capital investment, and it requires replacing established technologies with low-carbon technologies. If we stop burning gas, and use electricity as a source of energy, it’s one way to tackle decarbonisation.

“I think decarbonisation by increasing electrification is going to present a challenge to the wider industry and Ireland’s infrastructure as a whole, so we need to invest in the national electricity network to prepare for that extra demand.”

Ger says it’s important that everyone plays their part to make small efforts to become more sustainable. “Lilly has always looked at sustainability with a ‘continuous improvement’ focus. Whether that’s bringing a bus to site, or installing a biomass boiler, whatever small change it is.

“If we continue to move that dial with a view to the future, and what it’s going to be like to manufacture in Ireland in 2030 or 2035, we’re on the right track. Once that spirit of continuous improvement is alive and well, I think we are in good shape.”

**Jean Casey,**  
**Director of Public Affairs at Eli Lilly**



## About Ibec

Ibec is Ireland's largest lobby group and business representative. We campaign for real changes to the policies that matter most to business. Policy is shaped by our diverse membership, who are home grown, multinational, big and small and employ 70% of the private sector workforce in Ireland.

With 39 trade associations covering a range of industry sectors, 6 offices around Ireland as well as an office in Brussels. With over 300 employees, Ibec communicates the Irish business voice to key stakeholders at home and abroad. Ibec also provides a wide range of professional services and management training to members on all aspects of human resource management, occupational health and safety, employee relations and employment law.

## Ibec Trade Associations

### Representing your industry

Representing your industry Ibec understands that every business is different. There are the general issues which face all businesses operating in Ireland and then there are the issues specific to individual sectors or categories of the economy. To reflect the distinct interests of all our members, there are 39 business associations within the Ibec group. Ibec's trade associations identify and champion issues of importance to their respective members and provide great knowledge sharing, networking, and training for all these industries.

Ibec's trade associations are strong brands in their own right and those that represent the manufacturing sector include:

- BiopharmaChem Ireland
- Irish MedTech Association
- Technology Ireland
- Property Industry Ireland [Building Materials Federation]
- Engineering Industries Ireland
- Food Drink Ireland
- Drinks Ireland

**#ManufacturinginIreland**  
**[www.Ibec.ie/manufacturinginireland](http://www.Ibec.ie/manufacturinginireland)**



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