



30th December 2020

### **AIB Sustainability Index - Majority of people make New Year resolution to live more sustainably**

- 53% of people state their New Year resolutions will include living more sustainably
- 67% say they will be likely to reduce the amount of packaging and single use plastics they use, while almost half say they will demand more sustainable food options from their supermarket
- Half of people don't take the environmental impact of deliveries from online shopping into consideration when buying online
- 53% of people say sustainability has become more important to them since the start of the pandemic
- 37% of people state they are already being personally affected by Climate Change, while another 36% say they expect to be impacted in the next 10 years

The latest AIB Sustainability Index, based on research conducted in December 2020 by Amárach Research, focuses on Irish attitudes, behaviours and intentions regarding climate and environmental Sustainability. The index is calculated based on a number of key questions which are then combined to give a score that is anywhere between zero (neither interested in nor practicing sustainability) and 100 (interested in and practicing sustainability). The AIB Sustainability Index score for December 2020 is 67 compared to 66 in June 2020.

#### **Living more sustainably in 2021**

When it comes to 2021, 53% of respondents state they will make living more sustainably a part of their New Year's resolutions. In particular, the top behavioural changes mentioned were:

<b>Intention</b>	<b>% intent in next 12 months</b>
Reduce the amount of packaging and single use plastics you use	<b>67%</b>
Become better informed about impacts of what you buy on the planet	<b>49%</b>
Demand more sustainable food options from your supermarket	<b>48%</b>
Switch to businesses that are doing more about sustainability	<b>33%</b>

The impact of Covid-19 on attitudes towards climate and environmental sustainability has been muted. In some cases it has been a catalyst for positive change with 42% of people saying they are doing more to live sustainably than they did before the pandemic began, while 44% haven't changed, so there has been a net positive impact.

#### **Environmental cost of online shopping**

On the other hand, Covid-19 has also fuelled online shopping. While shopping online has a strong environmental impact due to the effects of transport and packaging, our survey shows that people don't particularly take this into account. Of those who buy online, almost one in two don't consider the sustainability of the delivery at all and another one in three only consider it to some extent.

## **Sustainability in our lives**

94% believe human activity is having a negative impact on the planet, with 56% believing that human activity is mainly responsible for climate change. 81% think that collective effort is more important than individual behaviour when it comes to tackling climate change.

AIB firmly believes that we can all play a part and is collaborating with our partners including the Economic and Social Research Institute to support research in to climate action and Nissan to finance the purchase of electric vehicles.

62% of people say that a business's positive sustainability credentials have an impact on their decision to buy that firm's products or services.

However, price is still a key consideration, with 48% saying they would be willing to pay a little more for greener home heating and 44% willing to pay a little more for greener electricity, while still half would not be willing to pay more for these utilities.

One of the factors that will impact future products and services demand will be taxation and costs associated with making greener choices. In terms of support for increases to the carbon tax, 50% of people would welcome this to some extent or more, but 44% wouldn't.

With more people working from home and the other changes that have come about due to the pandemic, 37% expect that the quality of their life after the pandemic will be better than it was before its onset, 19% expect it will be worse, with the remaining third expecting no major change compared to pre-Covid-19.

## **Commentary**

Colin Hunt, AIB Chief Executive said:

"Managing climate change is the most important challenge facing this generation. That is why earlier this year we committed to achieving Carbon Neutrality across our operations by 2030, using a Net Zero approach. That means cutting greenhouse gas emissions to as close to zero as possible - through elimination of carbon rather than offsetting it. We must also look beyond our own operations and the greatest impact that we can have on Ireland's carbon footprint is by supporting our customers and helping them to transition to a low carbon economy. It is our ambition that green lending should account for 70 per cent of our new customer lending by 2030. As we enter a New Year, it's heartening that the AIB Sustainability Index shows that people are planning to live more sustainably. At AIB, we too have put sustainability at the centre of our strategy and will continue to support our customers to transition to a low carbon future including by funding renewable energy projects and financing the building and purchase of energy efficient homes."

Gerard O'Neill of Amárach Research said:

"The trend in our research confirms that sustainability has become more important to Irish people since the start of the pandemic. This is especially encouraging as the country prepares for a more sustainable recovery in 2021. The findings also show that we are taking responsibility for change in our own lives through the choices we make about energy efficiency and waste reduction. The research is a wake-up call for those businesses who need new ways of relating to Irish consumers in a post-Covid world.

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### **Notes to Editors**

- AIB received an A Leadership Rating from the Carbon Disclosures Project (CDP) in 2020
- The AIB three-year strategy to 2023 has our Sustainable Communities Pillar - which sets out a clear direction for this important agenda
- In 2019 AIB announced a €5bn climate action fund to support customers' transition to a low carbon economy – over €1bn in green lending in 2020
- In Nov 2020 AIB stated its ambition to make its operations carbon neutral by 2030 using a net zero approach.
- AIB has reduced its Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions by 40% since 2014
- In Q4 2019 AIB launched a Green Mortgage with a competitive five year fixed rate, currently 2.45%
- In 2019 AIB was a founding signatory for the UNEP FI Principles for Responsible Banking
- AIB is a Supporter of Task Force on Climate-related Financial Disclosures (TCFD) since Q4 2019