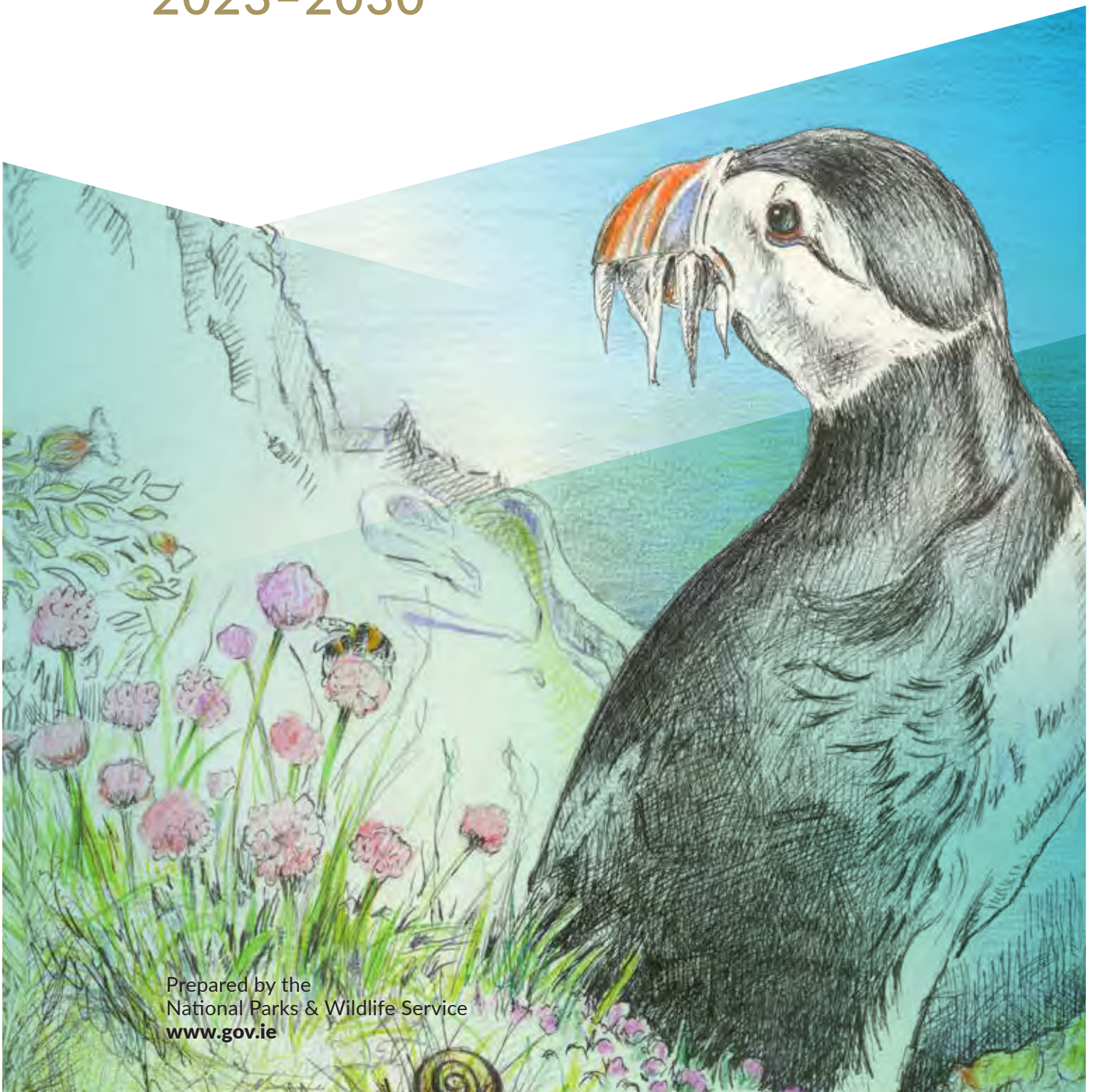




Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan

2023–2030



Prepared by the
National Parks & Wildlife Service
www.gov.ie



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Taoiseach's Foreword



Leo Varadkar, T.D.
Taoiseach

We must act now to turn the tide on climate change and biodiversity loss.

While the climate crisis, which is global and far-reaching, can seem overwhelming at times, biodiversity loss is very much something we can all see and feel. It is local, all around us, apparent in our rivers and our forests, our local flora and fauna.

We are inseparable from our natural world. Clean water, food, a habitable environment, our livelihoods, all depend on well-functioning natural systems. One of David Attenborough's documentaries pointed out that 97% of all the mammal life on the planet by weight is us and our farmed animals. That is extraordinary. We've left only 3% for wildlife.

The situation is very serious, but it's also something that can be turned around quite quickly with the right action. Nature can grow back quickly if we stop doing things that are harming it, and then start doing the right things by restoring our environment and treating it with the respect it deserves.

Government will lead the way and will help those that need it. Just transition, ensuring the most vulnerable are protected and helped to make the changes required, is crucial to our approach. I'm glad to see actions in this Plan on supporting communities and businesses.

This is our fourth National Biodiversity Action Plan. It continues some of the good work done to date, as well as incorporating some new actions. Our efforts to tame Invasive Alien Species for example, will be accelerated, as will our research capacity so we have a solid base from which to make decisions.

Restoring and rehabilitating our peatlands, our new approach to forestry, creating a network of Marine Protected Areas, ensuring the protection of our Natura 2000 sites and reviewing the way we use our land will help us to better position Ireland and its people to confront the twin crises of climate change and biodiversity loss.

We must take better care of our planet and leave it to those that come after us in a better condition than we inherited it. I am determined that we should be the generation that turned the corner on biodiversity. This Plan is a crucial step in the right direction.

Government will lead the way and will help those that need it. Just transition, ensuring the most vulnerable are protected and helped to make the changes required, is crucial to our approach. I'm glad to see actions in this Plan on supporting communities and businesses.

Tánaiste's Foreword



Micheál Martin, T.D.

Tánaiste

There's something about spending time in nature that is uniquely restorative. In our busy lives, the overwhelming majority of which are spent in man-made environments, the opportunity to immerse ourselves in the natural world has a special resonance that can be both comforting and humbling.

Ireland is blessed with some of the world's most beautiful landscapes, 59 of the EU's most precious habitats and 31,000 recorded species of plants, animals and fungi. Many of us cherish memories of childhoods immersed in nature, whether running through grassy fields in pursuit of butterflies, picking through hedgerows for blackberries, examining the creatures in rocky seashore pools, playing with seaweed washed up on the beaches, setting up a rod and line on the riverbank and admiring dragonflies in the long grasses, or letting our imaginations run wild amongst the branches and boughs of a local woodland.

The idea that the next generation will not experience these things because of decisions we make today is unconscionable and an impoverishment of the most basic wonders of childhood.

Over 20% of assessed species in Ireland are threatened with extinction and 85% of those 59 most precious EU habitats are of unfavourable status. We have lost 30% of our semi natural grasslands in the past decade and more than half of our native plants are in decline. So a nature-diminished future, where biodiversity is replaced with biomonotony, is more than an unconscionable idea; it's a very real unconscionable risk.

I'm quite certain that the overwhelming majority of us do not actively choose to damage biodiversity. Rather, the errors of our ways manifest most frequently through the unintended consequences of modern living. The effects of this are not just felt at home in Ireland but also around the world, through the far reaching tendrils of the global economy. Often, it is difficult for ecologists to point to a single threat or pressure, instead describing biodiversity loss as a "death by a thousand cuts".

In reflecting on our impact on the natural world, I am mindful that we must also reflect on its impact on us. Humanity is entirely dependent on nature for the essential provision of oxygen, clean water, a stable climate and food to recreation and mental and physical wellbeing, as well as the less tangible but equally valuable

cultural and spiritual benefits. So much of what we treasure about Ireland's heritage is itself enmeshed in nature, from our most ancient symbols and monuments to our folklore and traditions.

At the 2022 National Biodiversity Conference, I acknowledged the growing sense that people are connecting more with nature and remarked that the time has come for a new era of nature stewardship in Ireland. I was heartened to see a similar sentiment echoed in the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss. Deliberative democracy processes such as this one have enabled the kind of open, respectful dialogue through which progressive societal changes have been born, and that same transformation is needed in our attitudes towards nature.

The members of the parallel Children and Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss perhaps captured its essence best when they asked that we "treat the earth like it was a member of the family or a friend". Like them, my hope is that children growing up in Ireland – both today and in the future – will have the opportunity to experience the same immersion in nature that I enjoyed as a child, surrounded by wildness and blessed with the freedom to explore its many wonders.

There are a multitude of reasons to value, conserve, restore and sustainably use biodiversity in Ireland. But the simple fact that our children want us to is the only reason we need.

The members of the parallel Children and Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss perhaps captured its essence best when they asked that we "treat the earth like it was a member of the family or a friend".



Ministerial Foreword



Malcolm Noonan T.D.

Minister of State for Nature, Heritage and Electoral Reform

The threats posed to humanity by biodiversity loss are truly immense, and deeply intertwined with climate breakdown. In recent times, both seem to be accelerating at a pace that is difficult to process. And while feelings of powerlessness and helplessness at the rapid decline in species and the degradation and loss of wild spaces are completely understandable, it's vital that we don't let them overshadow their most powerful antidote: action.

When we act, nature can and does respond, often relatively quickly. In Ireland, it's time to up our game and that's what this National Biodiversity Action Plan is all about. We're taking an all-of-Government, all-of-society approach to biodiversity action and underpinning it with unprecedented levels of resourcing, both financial and human, to deliver on science-led targets that are measurable and impactful.

Through the implementation of 194 actions over the next seven years, we will be working together to improve biodiversity governance and stewardship, recognise and value the relationships between nature and people, enhance the scientific evidence base to inform our decisions, bolster public awareness and engagement with communities, citizen scientists and the private sector, collaborate internationally to strengthen global biodiversity commitments, and put more effort and investment than ever into the protection, restoration and recovery of biodiversity and ecosystems across the State.

My goal is to bring nature into the heart of government where it belongs and put it on an upward trajectory that can be maintained across the lifetime of this plan, and beyond. Embedding biodiversity considerations in our decision-making and governance systems is vital if we are to see real, transformative change.

And let's be clear – nothing less than transformative change will do. As Minister with responsibility for nature in Ireland, I am deeply concerned and alarmed at the state of the natural world. At the same time, I'm filled with hope that we finally have the passion, the purpose, the people and – crucially – the plan to do something about it, with a role for each and every one of us.

Over the past few years, I have visited farms, harbours, commonages, villages, towns and cities, urban green spaces and National Parks, across length and breadth of the country. In all of these places, I have met with people who are taking it upon themselves to help improve biodiversity and seen for myself the incredible efforts they have made. I have heard them speak of their love for nature and their desire for a future that makes space for wild places where wildlife can thrive.

We must not underestimate the significance of this. It's clear to me that people want to protect nature and it's our job in government to guide, support and enable them. Because when citizens, community groups and organisations are empowered to act, there is no limit to what can be achieved.

I believe we are at a turning point in Ireland in terms of the way we view and think about the natural world, and our place within it. More than that, I think we're finally ready to change our behaviour and exercise our responsibilities to the planet as much as our rights. It's this willingness to act that we must hold to most firmly. At a time when the scientific evidence describing the scale of the challenge we face is so frightening, it's our own commitment to action that is the best evidence for hope.

We must not underestimate the significance of this. It's clear to me that people want to protect nature and it's our job in government to guide, support and enable them. Because when citizens, community groups and organisations are empowered to act, there is no limit to what can be achieved.



NPWS Foreword



Niall Ó'Donnchú
NPWS Director General

As Director General of the National Parks and Wildlife Service, I am honoured to co-present Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan. I want to reiterate the sentiments expressed by An Taoiseach, An Tánaiste and Minister Noonan, that the time to act for biodiversity is today and business as usual is not an option.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service is at the forefront in driving Ireland's response to our biodiversity crisis, but we cannot work alone.

This is a national Plan and its success will depend greatly on the endeavours of several Departments, Agencies and organisations across various sectors of Irish society.

With this in mind, I would like to acknowledge the cooperation and support of colleagues across Government and the wide range of State bodies, Local Authorities, NGOs, citizens and communities across the country that played a crucial role in formulating this plan. I would also like to pay a special tribute to the Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity, to whom we listened very carefully in formulating this Plan. We listened too to the deliberations of the Citizens Assembly on Biodiversity Loss and have anticipated many of its recommendations in this plan too. As Government's response to the Citizens Assembly is finalised, we will revisit this plan to ensure that it too conveys those recommendations to realisation.

NPWS remain committed to protecting our nature and biodiversity and raising awareness at national, regional and grassroots level of the importance of conserving our habitats and species.

A key strategic goal of the NPWS is to champion better engagement with people on nature. Our dedicated team will work in partnership with departments, agencies, NGOs, citizens, landowners, communities, businesses, researchers and all stakeholders to implement the 194 actions over the lifetime of this Plan.

The targets set out in this Plan are in the context of five objectives that lay out a clear framework for our national approach to biodiversity – to adopt a whole of Government, whole of society approach to biodiversity; to meet urgent conservation and restoration needs; to secure nature's contribution to people; to enhance the evidence base for action on biodiversity and to strengthen Ireland's contribution to international biodiversity initiatives.

Focusing on these objectives will ensure that we build on the efforts and achievements of the past NBAPs while looking ahead to what we can achieve over the next seven years.

The time to act for biodiversity is today and business as usual is not an option.

Executive Summary

Biodiversity is a term that describes the variety of life on earth. It comprises all living things, from plants, birds and mammals, to insects, microbes and fungi, and the ecosystems – bogs, forests, rivers, oceans, grasslands, etc. – that they are a part of. Healthy ecosystems are vital for human health and wellbeing, underpinning food production and food security, giving us clean water and fresh air, protecting against climate change, providing the basis of many modern medicines and enriching our lives both culturally and spiritually. (See page 11 Biodiversity – what is it and why does it matter?)

But biodiversity is in trouble across a range of species and habitats. Scientific assessments of the state of nature in Ireland have found that 85% of our EU-protected habitats are in unfavourable status, with almost half (46%) demonstrating ongoing declines. This is having negative impacts on wildlife. Almost a third of our EU-protected species are in unfavourable status, over half of native Irish plant species have declined. Over half of our 100 bee species have undergone substantial declines and 30% are threatened with extinction, 21% of breeding and 52% of key wintering bird species were reported to have short term declining trends. (See page 15 – What does science say about biodiversity in Ireland?)

Protecting and conserving biodiversity requires a Whole-of-Government and Whole-of-Society approach. The development of Ireland's fourth National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 (NBAP) builds upon unprecedented levels of public awareness at the national level and an elevated global and regional policy landscape. In doing so, the NBAP takes account of the wide range of policies, strategies, conventions, laws and targets at the global, EU and national level that influence our shared environment in order to scale up biodiversity action. The NBAP also seeks to respond to the recommendations of the Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss, a milestone report on nature in Ireland. (See page 21 – Why do we need a National Biodiversity Action Plan?)

Positive action for biodiversity is increasing all across the country. A wide array of initiatives, projects and funding streams are delivering positive change for a range of habitats and species by placing a strong emphasis on collaboration with landowners and local communities. These include new programmes focussing on the conservation of protected areas, protection and restoration projects in our National Parks, species and habitat-focussed initiatives all across the country, incentives for more nature-friendly farming and forestry through national schemes, and the rollout of the Local Authority Biodiversity Officer Programme to support community-level conservation. (See page 27 – How are we protecting biodiversity now?)

We all have a role to play in the protection and restoration of nature. The delivery of this Plan will benefit from the commitment of Government Departments and State Agencies through the strategic co-ordination of biodiversity action, and the Minister will bring a progress report to Cabinet at least once a year. But we need everyone – from Local Authorities, the private sector, NGOs, community groups, farmers, fishers, foresters, children and young people, and everybody else – to help make space for nature in our homes, gardens, farms, forests, places of work and urban environments. (See page 35 – Who is this Plan for?)

The Five Objectives



Objective 1: Adopt a Whole-of- Government, Whole- of-Society Approach to Biodiversity

Proposed actions include capacity and resource reviews across Government; determining responsibilities for the expanding biodiversity agenda; providing support for communities, citizen scientists and business; and mechanisms for the governance and review of this National Biodiversity Action Plan.



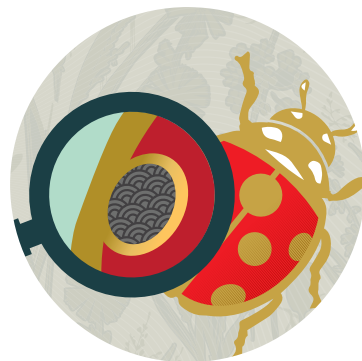
Objective 2: Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs

Supporting actions will build on existing conservation measures. Efforts to tackle Invasive Alien Species will be elevated. The protected area network will be expanded to include the Marine Protected Areas. The ambition of the EU Biodiversity Strategy will be considered as part of an evolving work programme across Government.



Objective 3: Secure Nature's Contribution to People

Actions highlight the relationship between nature and people in Ireland. These include recognising the tangible and intangible values of biodiversity, promoting nature's importance to our culture and heritage and recognising how biodiversity supports our society and our economy.



Objective 4: Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity

This objective focuses on biodiversity research needs, as well as the development and strengthening of long-term monitoring programmes that will underpin and strengthen future decision-making. Action will also focus on collaboration to advance ecosystem accounting that will contribute towards natural capital accounts.



Objective 5: Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives

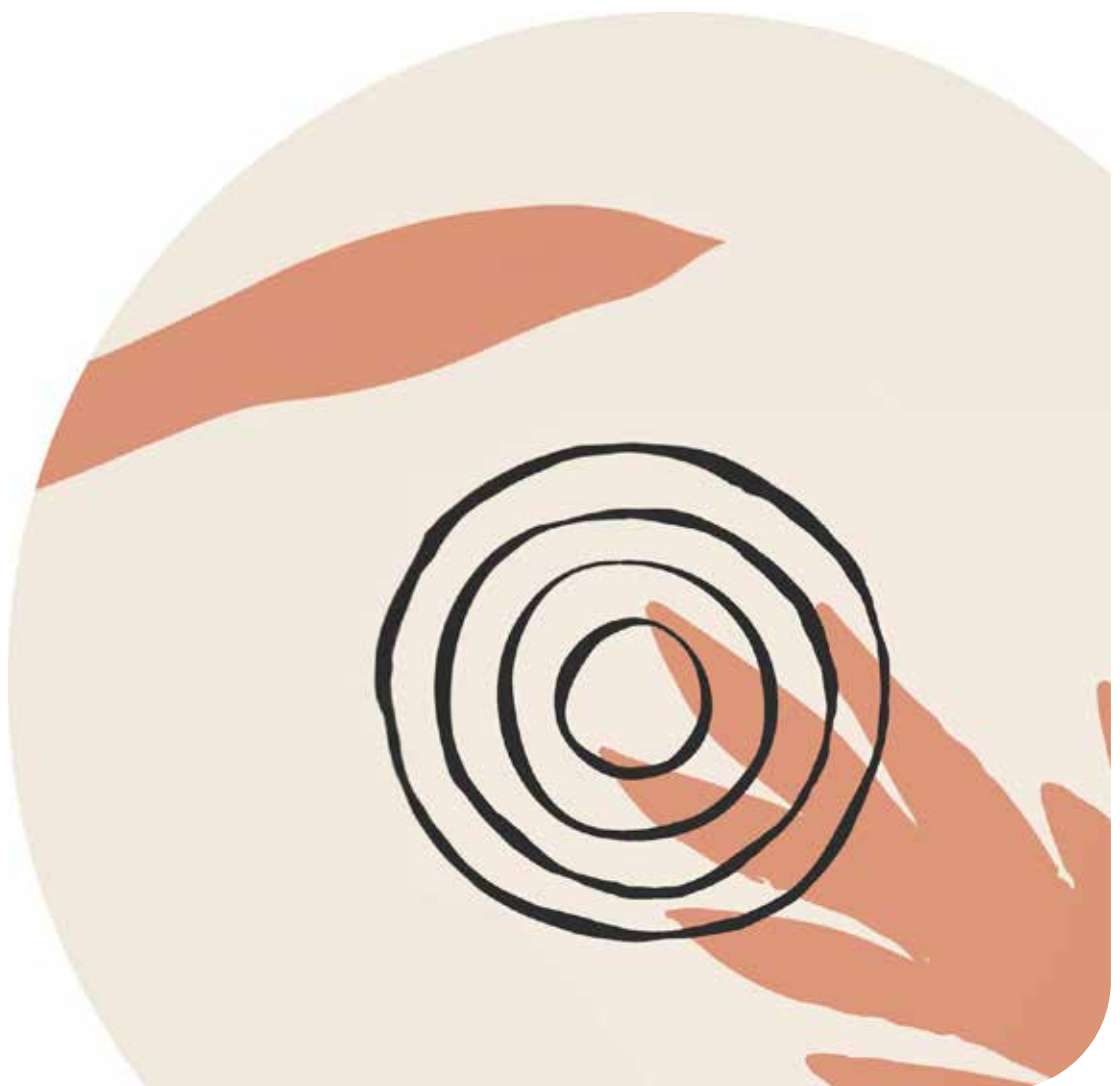
Collaboration with other countries and across the island of Ireland will play a key role in the realisation of this Objective. Ireland will strengthen its contribution to international biodiversity initiatives and international governance processes, such as the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity.



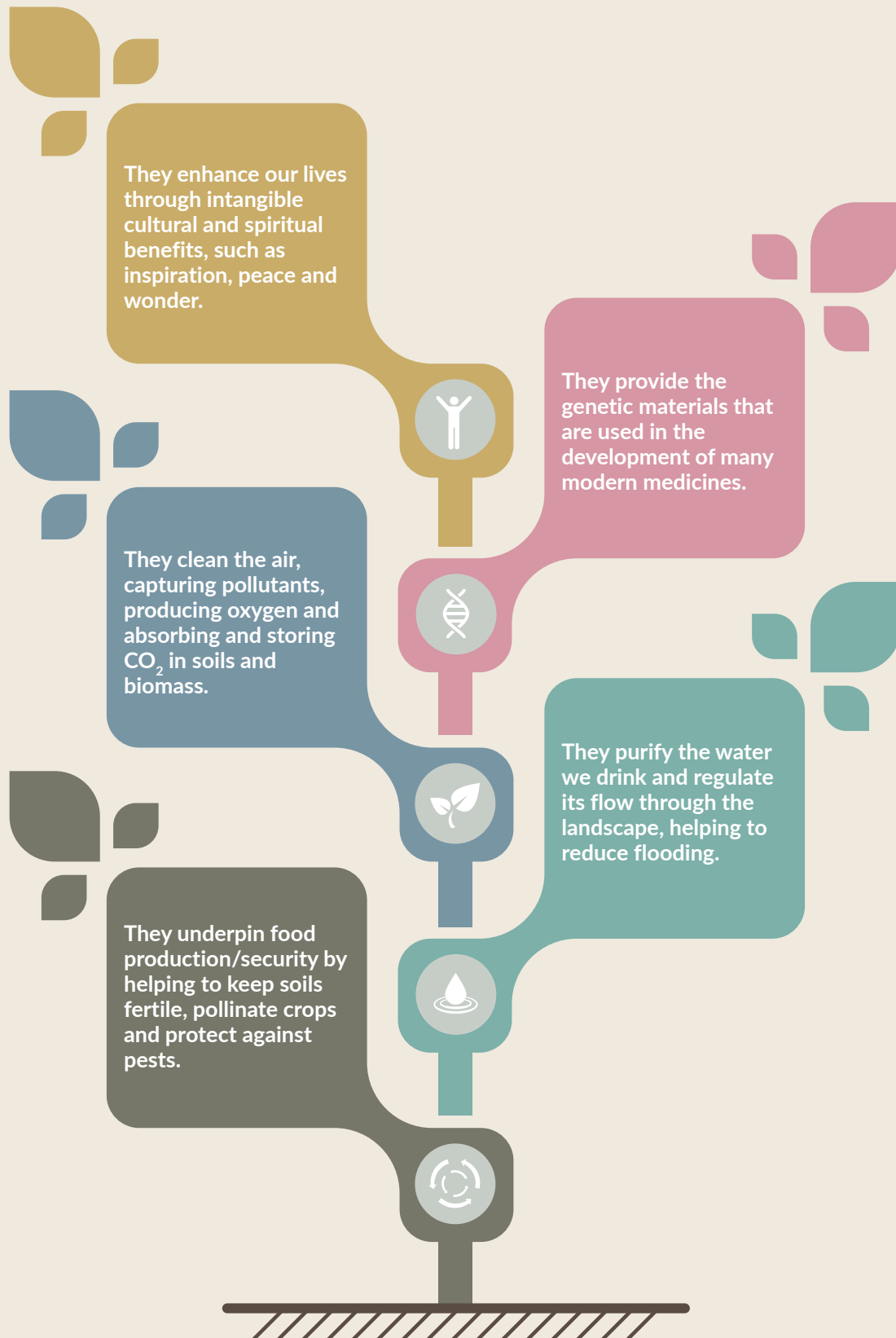
Swallow-tailed moth. Credit: Ferdia Marnell

Chapter One

Biodiversity – what is it and why does it matter?



We all depend on healthy ecosystems



Biodiversity – what is it and why does it matter?

Biodiversity - short for biological diversity - describes the variety of life on Earth. It means the variety of all living things and the living systems of which they are a part.

This encompasses more than wild flora and fauna - it includes all living species and the living communities they create. There are three principal levels of biodiversity:

Genes: The genetic diversity of individuals within a species, or what makes one otter different from another otter.

Species: The variation between species, such as between a sessile oak tree, a red squirrel, a common blue butterfly and a fly agaric mushroom.

Habitats: The variety of different habitats and ecosystems that these species create and inhabit, such as blanket bogs, calcareous grasslands, fixed dunes, sea caves, etc.

Sometimes, a fourth level of biodiversity is also recognised - landscapes. This refers to the diverse and complex natural landscape patterns that habitats and ecosystems help to create.

Biodiversity provides the essential building blocks of ecosystems. The word “ecosystem” describes a group of living communities and their dynamic interaction with the physical (non-living) elements of air, water, rocks and soils.

An ecosystem could be as small as a pond or orchard, or as enormous as the communities of coral and other marine life on the Great Barrier Reef. Small ecosystems can also be contained within larger ecosystems, such as small wetlands within a forest or grassland, or wooded islands within a lake.

The whole of the Earth’s surface can be described as a network of interconnected ecosystems. Within an ecosystem, all aspects of the environment (biodiversity and the non-living surroundings) interact and affect one another.



Grasshopper. Credit: Evan McGreal



Drosera anglica (larger long-leaved sundew). Credit: Fernando Fernandez Valverde

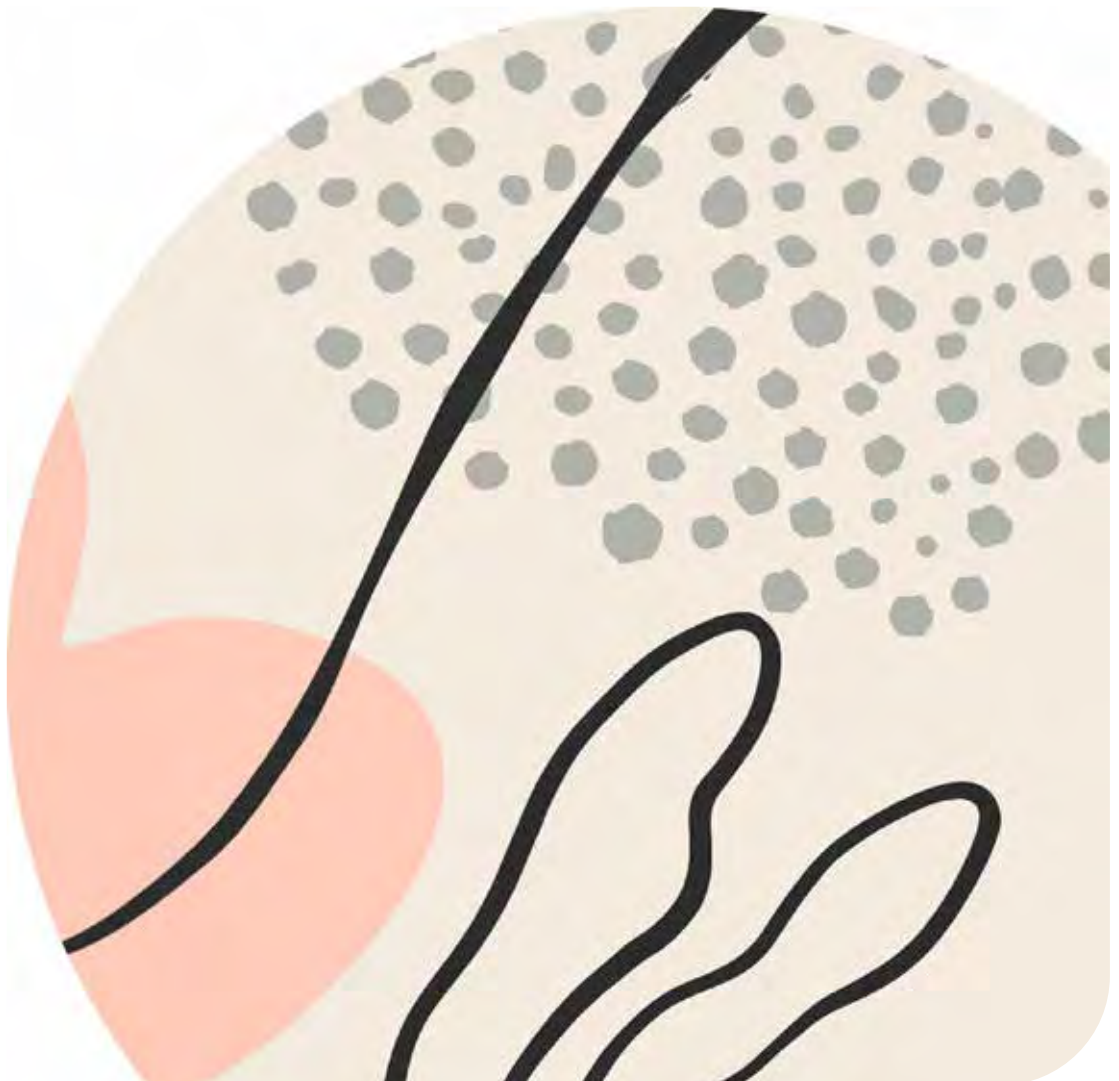
For example, a healthy forest ecosystem that is helping to regulate the composition of the atmosphere by absorbing and storing carbon dioxide and producing oxygen, is also purifying and regulating the flow of water, supporting healthy river ecosystems. Rivers in turn enable the movement of nutrients and sediments through the landscape, nourishing terrestrial ecosystems like grasslands as they flow towards the oceans, where they underpin coastal and marine ecosystems. The oceans themselves are great stores of carbon and solar energy, circulating the thermal currents that drive our weather systems and influencing other ecosystems all across the globe.

All of these ecosystems are themselves dependent on biodiversity – from the tiniest microbes to the largest mammals, and their interactions, which together make up the web of life.

We humans, meanwhile, are completely dependent on the goods and services that ecosystems provide: from the production of food, medicines, timber, fuel, and fibre, to the provision of fresh air, clean water, flood mitigation and climate regulation. Ecosystems also benefit our mental and physical wellbeing through recreation and amenity, with intimate and often ancient connections to society, culture and spirituality. Ireland's biodiversity is deeply entwined with the history and use of the Irish language, our folklore and mythology, our artistic, literary and storytelling traditions, as well as our food heritage, major heritage sites and local cultural observances. These and other important benefits are essential to our society, our economic development, and our health, and are worth billions of euro to the Irish economy every year (Bullock *et al.*, 2016; Norton *et al.*, 2018).

Chapter Two

What does science say about biodiversity in Ireland?



What does science say about biodiversity in Ireland?

Ireland is home to globally important populations of birds, fish, mammals, invertebrates, plants and fungi across a wide range of terrestrial, freshwater and marine habitats. The seas and coasts surrounding our island support vast colonies of seabirds, abundant fish and cold-water coral reefs, whales and dolphins, as well as rich algal and invertebrate communities. On land, there is a wealth of species in our mountains, peatlands, turloughs, woodlands, grasslands, lakes, rivers, and coastal habitats. Over 31,000 species have been recorded in Ireland and its surrounding seas and many more have yet to be discovered.

However, despite this rich tapestry, our biodiversity is in trouble.

Scientific studies have shown that 85% of our most precious EU-protected habitats are in unfavourable status. Almost half (46%) are demonstrating ongoing declines, particularly notable in marine, peatland, grassland and woodland habitats, with only 2% improving over a 12 year period (NPWS, 2019). Almost a third of our semi-natural grasslands have been lost in the last decade, while half of our rivers and two thirds of our estuaries are not in good ecological health (Martin *et al.*, 2018; EPA, 2021).

These impacts are attributable to a wide range of threats and pressures, including overgrazing, undergrazing, land abandonment, water and air pollution, alien and problematic species, recreation, development (particularly residential, agricultural and commercial), land drainage, urban wastewater, river barriers and the modification of coastal areas.

In addition to species-specific threats and pressures such as overfishing or over-exploitation, declines in habitat quality are having negative impacts on the wildlife that lives, feeds and breeds in them. This is borne out in the data:

- 30% of our 60 EU-protected species are in unfavourable status, with 15% demonstrating declining trends (NPWS, 2019).
- Over half of native Irish plant species have declined in range and/or abundance (Plant Atlas, 2020).
- More than half of Ireland's 100 bee species have seen substantial declines in numbers since 1980, with 30% of species threatened with extinction (Fitzpatrick *et al.*, 2007).
- The latest review of Birds of Conservation Concern placed 26% of 211 bird species assessed on the Red list, i.e. considered to have a high conservation concern (Gilbert *et al.*, 2021). This assessment includes a range of national and global criteria.
- 21% of breeding and 52% of key wintering bird species were reported to have short term declining trends in 2019 (www.eea.europa.eu).
- Extinction threatens 48 species living in the Irish marine environment, including fish, crustaceans, shellfish and invertebrates (Fogarty, 2017).

In contrast, 80% of non-native species introduced to Ireland since the year 1500 have increased. While most are benign, some have become invasive, such as Himalayan balsam, Japanese knotweed and rhododendron, with negative impacts on native flora and fauna.

Ireland's population of Corncrake had declined by over 96% since the 1970's. The Corncrake/Traonach LIFE project works with landowners to implement measures which are effective in improving the bird's habitat. This includes the creation of large patches of nettles or crops for them to hide in and wildlife-friendly mowing to enable them to raise broods of chicks in safety.

- 35% population increase over the past five years
- 250 farmers and landowners managing 1500 hectare of lands for corncrakes

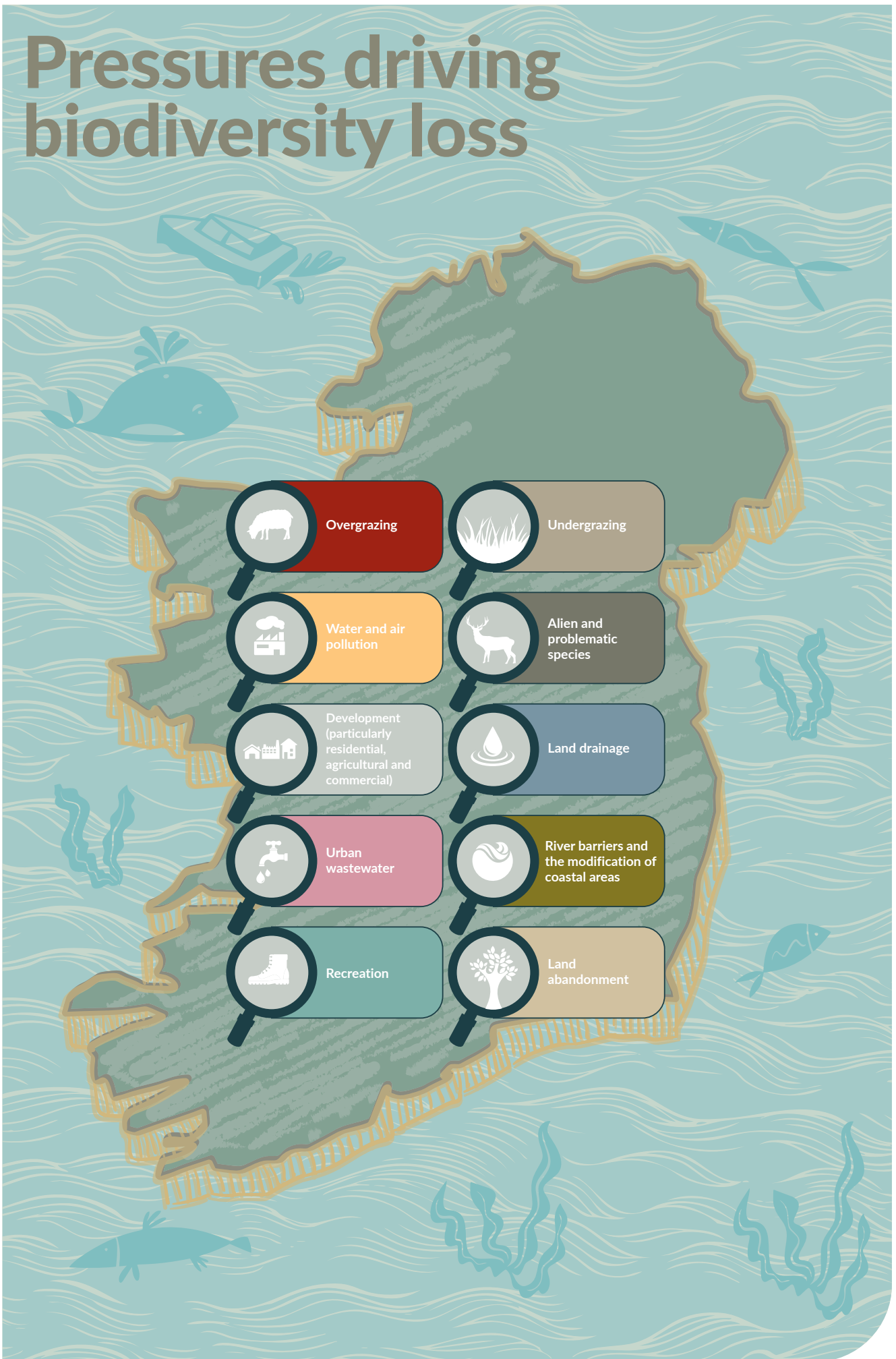


Corncrake
Traonach LIFE



Corncrake. Credit: Corncrake Life

Pressures driving biodiversity loss



Biodiversity loss around the world

Ireland's challenges are reflected at the global level, where nearly 95% of the land's surfaces have been modified by activities such as agriculture, urban development, energy infrastructure and mining.

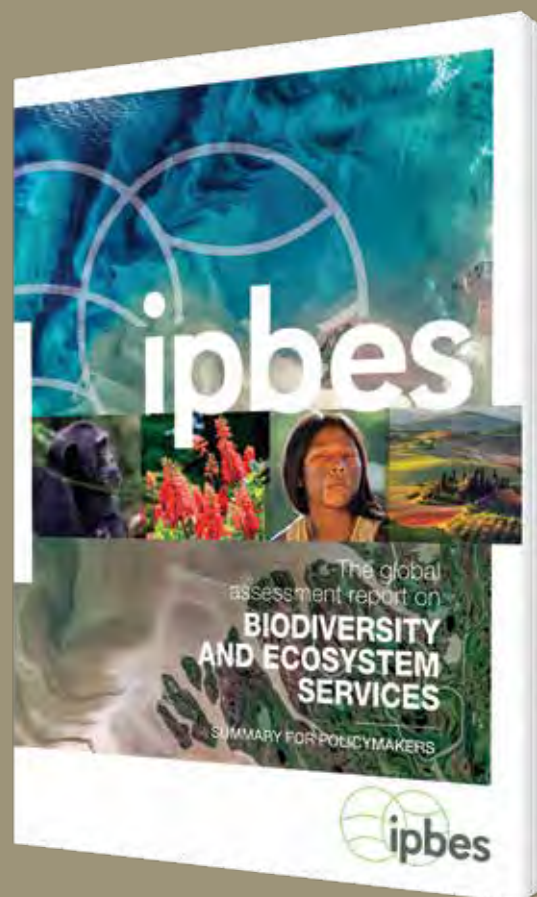
Ongoing unsustainable development is having serious impacts on natural habitats and species, resulting in very significant declines in the population sizes of mammals, fish, birds, reptiles, and amphibians over the past 50 years.

Over millennia, species have come and gone naturally. However, the current extinction rate is unprecedented and accelerating (IPBES, 2019). Species decline and extinction are beginning to affect the ecosystem services we depend upon.

The Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) report lists the direct drivers of change in biodiversity as changes in land and sea use; direct exploitation of organisms; climate change; pollution; and invasion of alien species.

These drivers result from an array of underlying causes which are in turn underpinned by societal values and behaviours that include production and consumption patterns, human population dynamics and trends, trade and technological innovations.

Human behaviour patterns are driving biodiversity loss and transforming these behaviour patterns is crucial if we are to reverse the trends of loss. Biodiversity loss was included as one of the top global risks identified by the World Economic Forum (WEF, 2022).



Chapter Three

Why do we need a National Biodiversity Action Plan?





Spider's web. Credit: Aine O'Connor

Why do we need a National Biodiversity Action Plan?

During the 1980s, sustainable development became a key issue for governments around the world, as the impacts and risks that environmental degradation posed to social and economic well-being became increasingly clear.

Today, it is understood that the economy and society are wholly embedded within the environment and biosphere, rather than separate to it. This is reflected in the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), where the four goals relating to biodiversity and ecosystem services – Life on Land, Life Below Water, Climate Action and Clean Water – underpin all of the other SDGs.

At the United Nations ‘Earth Summit’ in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, three landmark conventions were established: The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the UN Convention to Combat Desertification and – most relevant to this Plan – the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Ireland signed the CBD in the year it opened and ratified it in 1996.

The text of the convention, and the decisions taken collectively by the Parties at biannual meetings (the Conference of the Parties, or COPs) provide a global legal framework for actions to protect the natural world for the benefit of all life on Earth.

The principle aims of the CBD are:

- the conservation of biological diversity,
- the sustainable use of its components,
- and the fair and equitable sharing of benefits arising from the use of genetic resources.

The main mechanism by which we implement this global agreement is through the development and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans. Parties are expected to design and regularly review these plans to reflect their national circumstances, and as far as is possible, they must integrate biodiversity into other relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies.



NPWS Education Walk. Credit: Brid O'Donovan

Ireland's 3rd National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-21

Ireland's 3rd National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-21 contained 119 actions to support the achievement of Ireland's vision that 'biodiversity and ecosystems in Ireland are conserved and restored, delivering benefits essential for all sectors of society and that Ireland contributes to efforts to halt the loss of biodiversity and the degradation of ecosystems in the EU and globally'. In the period since 2017, 29 (24%) of the actions have been implemented and a further 78 (66%) are in progress, with 88 (74%) of the 119 actions being of an ongoing or open-ended nature. Key achievements include:

- Two National Biodiversity Conferences were held - 'New Horizons for Nature' in February 2019 and 'Act Now For Nature' in June 2022;
- Bord Na Móna implemented restoration/rehabilitation plans for peatland habitats, with almost 30,000ha rehabilitated by March 2023;
- The Business for Biodiversity platform was launched, helping businesses to measure, design and demonstrate their biodiversity impact;
- The Heritage Council and the County and City Management Association launched the Biodiversity Officer Programme, with the support of the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, to drive local action for biodiversity.



Rana temporaria (common frog), Burren. Credit: Áine O'Connor



Huperzia selago (fir clubmoss). Credit: Michele Adorni

This 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan strives for a “Whole-of-Government, Whole-of Society” approach to the governance and conservation of biodiversity. The aim is to ensure that every citizen, community, business, local authority, semi-state and state agency has an awareness of biodiversity and its importance, and of the implications of its loss, whilst also understanding how they can act to address the biodiversity emergency as part of a renewed national effort to act for nature.

To do this, the NBAP takes account of the wide range of policies, strategies, conventions, laws and targets at the global, EU and national level that influence our shared environment in order to scale up biodiversity action.

Since the Dáil declared a climate and biodiversity emergency in 2019, the policy landscape has changed dramatically. Several initiatives have been launched, including the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF), the EU Green Deal and its supporting EU Biodiversity Strategy, a new Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan (CAP SP), the Climate Action Plan (CAP) and an updated Forestry Programme. In addition, a 3rd River Basin Management Plan (RBMP) cycle and new legislation for Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) are currently in train. These developments are reflected throughout the NBAP.

Environmental Policies, Plans and Programmes that influence biodiversity

Global:

UN Convention on Biological Diversity
UN Sustainable Development Goals

Regional:

EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030
Birds Directive
Habitats Directive
Water Framework Directive
Nitrates Directive
Marine Strategy Framework Directive
Proposed EU Nature Restoration Law
OSPAR Convention

National:

Nature: National Biodiversity Action Plan, Wildlife Act
Climate: Climate Action Plan, Climate Act
Agriculture: Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan
Forests: Forestry Programme 2023-2027, Forest Strategy, Forestry Act
Water: River Basin Management Plan, Nitrates Action Programme
Oceans: Proposed Marine Protected Areas Bill

The EU Biodiversity Strategy

The EU Green Deal aims to protect, conserve and enhance the EU's natural capital, and protect the health and well-being of citizens from environment-related risks and impacts. At the same time, this transition must be just and inclusive. The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030 is

one of the key components of the EU Green Deal, tackles the key drivers of biodiversity loss, such as unsustainable use of land and sea, overexploitation of natural resources, pollution, and invasive alien species.

Restore and protect

The 2030 Biodiversity Strategy builds upon and goes beyond the existing EU Birds and Habitats Directives and the EU Natura 2000 Network of protected areas.

It sets ambitious EU targets and commitments for 2030 to achieve healthy and resilient ecosystems, for example:

Turn at least **30%** of any of EU's land and **30%** of seas into effectively managed and coherent protected areas

Reverse the decline of **pollinators**

Restore **degraded ecosystems** and stop any further damage to nature

Establish biodiversity-rich landscape features on at least **10%** of farmland

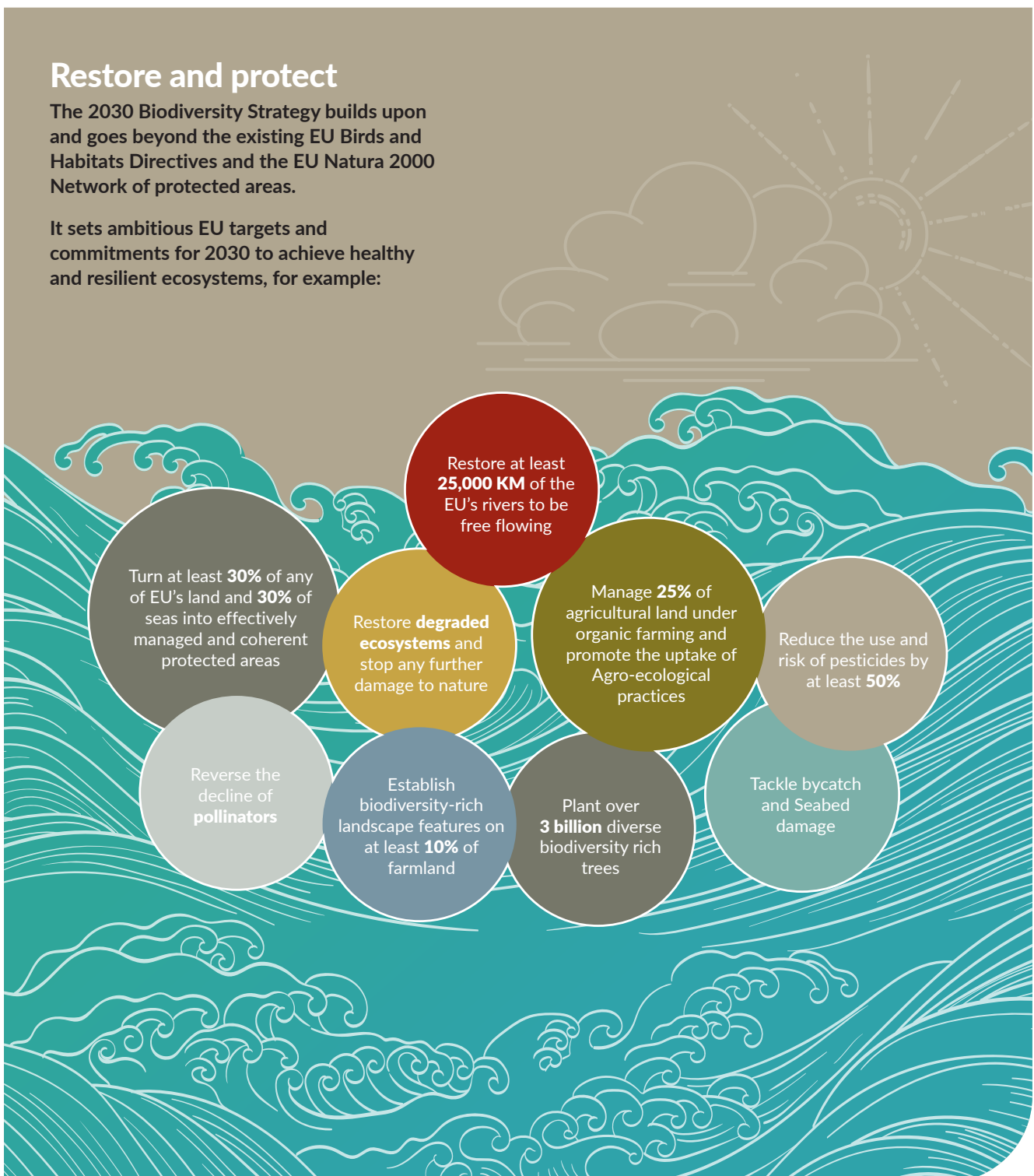
Restore at least **25,000 KM** of the EU's rivers to be free flowing

Manage **25%** of agricultural land under organic farming and promote the uptake of Agro-ecological practices

Plant over **3 billion** diverse biodiversity rich trees

Reduce the use and risk of pesticides by at least **50%**

Tackle bycatch and Seabed damage

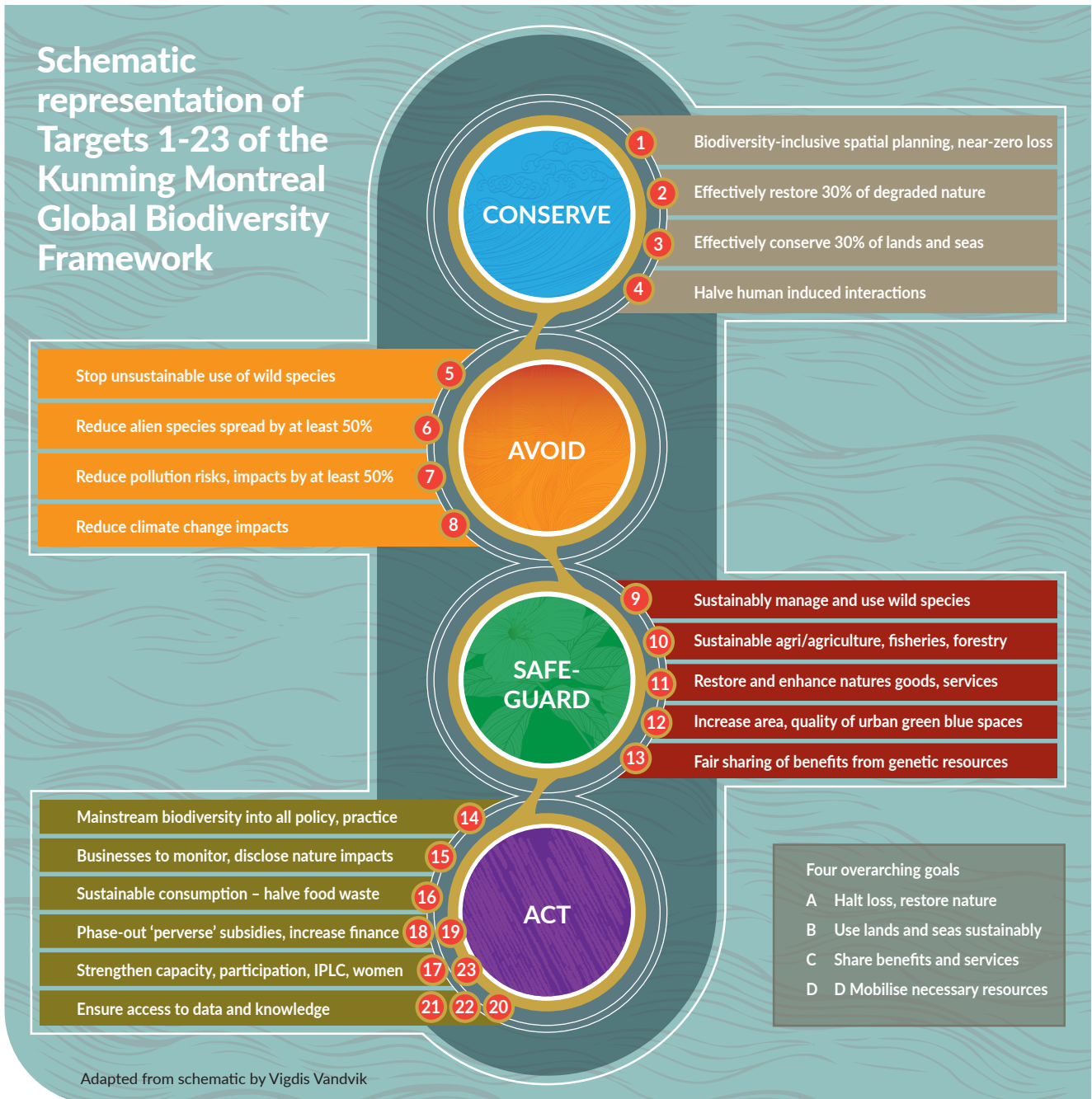


EU Nature Restoration Regulation

The proposed EU Nature Restoration Regulation will set legally binding targets to restore degraded ecosystems, in particular those with the most potential to capture and store carbon, and to prevent and reduce the impact of natural disasters. Subject to finalisation of the Regulation, it is expected that all Member States will be required to produce a National Restoration Plan within two years of adoption. This will be led by the National Parks and Wildlife Service and will comprise a broad and deep public participation process, informed by robust ecological and socio-economic impact assessments. This National Biodiversity Action Plan will be updated by 2027 to include Ireland's National Restoration Plan.

The Kunming Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework

In 2022, the United Nations Biodiversity Conference (COP15) adopted a landmark agreement to guide global action on nature through to 2030. The GBF aims to address biodiversity loss, restore ecosystems and protect indigenous rights. The plan includes concrete measures to halt and reverse nature loss, including protecting 30% of the planet and restoring 30% of degraded ecosystems by 2030. It also contains proposals to increase finance to developing countries. See Appendix 1 for alignment of Government policy and this NBAP with the GBF targets.



Chapter Four

How are we protecting biodiversity now?



How are we protecting biodiversity now?

Action for biodiversity has increased significantly in recent years, with a strong emphasis being placed on collaboration with landowners and local communities to enable a collective response to the challenge. A wide array of initiatives, projects and funding streams are delivering positive change for a range of habitats and species all across the country.

Many actions for biodiversity are focussed on accelerating the restoration agenda and promoting the sustainable use of biodiversity. This will increase the resilience of biodiversity to climate change and support achieving the targets in the Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan required under the National Adaptation Framework.

National Schemes

Agri-Climate Rural Environment Scheme

As a predominantly agricultural landscape, the new national €1.5 billion Agri-Climate Rural Environment Scheme (ACRES) under the CAP SP is vitally important for Ireland's biodiversity. ACRES aims to contribute significantly to achieving improved biodiversity, climate, air and water quality outcomes, while delivering income support for up to 50,000 farm families. Using a habitat-based approach, the scheme is delivered through both multi-functional prescription and results-based actions: 'ACRES General' offers a range of targeted and general measures for individual farmers, while 'ACRES Co-operation' – which is available to farmers in defined high priority geographical areas – utilises results-based payments, as well as tailored farm and landscape actions. Participating farmers benefit from the assistance of a Local Cooperation Project Team to support implementation of the scheme at local level.

For more information, see www.gov.ie/dafm



Agricultural Sunset. Credit: Barry O'Donoghue

European Innovation Partnership Scheme

The European Innovation Partnership (EIP) Scheme funds projects that allow farmers, scientists and other experts to collaborate together to develop new practices that are environmentally friendly and economically sustainable. A number of biodiversity-positive initiatives have been implemented since the publication of the last NBAP. Some focus on species of conservation concern, such as the freshwater pearl mussel, breeding curlew, pollinators and the hen harrier. Others focus on geographic areas, such as the Blackstairs Mountains, North Connemara, the Aran Islands, Duhallow, Duncannon, Rathcrogan, the uplands of Inishowen, the MacGillycuddy Reeks, and the Mulkear and Bride river catchments. A new €60m Water EIP was announced in 2023 to support the Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO), Teagasc and Dairy Industry Ireland (DII) to work with farmers on an individual basis to improve water quality.

For more information on EIPs, see www.gov.ie/dafm

Forestry Programme

Ireland's Shared National Vision for Trees, Woods and Forests until 2050 calls for the right trees in the right places for the right reasons with the right management. Ireland's Forest Strategy to 2030 describes how the 2050 Vision will be made a reality, and the Forestry Programme 2023 – 2027 is the first step in implementing the Vision. The Forestry Programme has been designed to make a significant contribution to Ireland's biodiversity objectives. The Programme will facilitate the creation of new forest habitats at scale, with generous incentives for farmers and public bodies to plant mixed native woodlands on suitable land, as well as 20-year payments for farmers to retain and promote emergent woodland on their land. For existing forest owners, measures under the Forestry Programme such as the Native Woodland Conservation Scheme, the Woodland Improvement Scheme and other sustainable forest management practices will be invaluable in protecting and enhancing biodiversity across our landscape.

For more information, see www.gov.ie/dafm



Sunrise Grazing at Béal. Credit: Barry O'Donoghue



Cruagh Woods. Credit: Dermot McGreal

Peatlands Climate Action Scheme

The Peatlands Climate Action Scheme (also known as the Enhanced Decommissioning Restoration and Rehabilitation Scheme, or EDRSS) encompasses the restoration and rehabilitation of approximately 33,000 hectares of Bord na Móna peatlands that were previously harvested to generate electricity. Through the project, Bord Na Móna is reassigning employees from harvesting operations into rehabilitation in order to support the natural environment and biodiversity of the peatlands. To date, approximately 14,344 hectares have been rehabilitated across 30 bogs with plans approved for a further five sites, with four undergoing approval. Works are expected to be completed by mid-2026. The Scheme is funded with €108 million from the EU National Recovery and Resilience Plan, administered by the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, regulated by the NPWS and operated by Bord na Móna. See www.bnmpcas.ie for more details.



Prosperous bog, County Kildare. Credit Jeff Harvey

LIFE Programme

The LIFE Programme is the EU's funding instrument for the environment and climate action. Its streams co-fund, among others, nature conservation projects with national governments to support biodiversity, habitats and species. Through the NPWS and the Water Advisory Unit, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage (DHLGH) is the coordinating beneficiary for four LIFE projects. Corncrake LIFE is working to conserve the corncrake in the west and northwest of Ireland, while LIFE on Machair is working in the same region to protect and restore coastal machair grasslands and associated habitats. The remaining two are 'Integrated Projects' (IP), with larger budgets and longer operational periods: Wild Atlantic Nature LIFE IP is focussed on the restoration of Atlantic blanket bog in the west and northwest of the country, and Waters of LIFE IP, which aims to protect and enhance high-status waters at catchment scale. Ireland is also a partner on four further LIFE Nature/Integrated projects: Bord na Móna's LIFE IP Peatlands and People, which is enabling the restoration and rehabilitation of raised bogs in the midlands; Mayo County Council's LIFE Lough Carra, which is collaborating with multiple stakeholders to restore the marl lake to favourable condition; University Santiago de Compostela's LIFE INSULAR project, which aims to develop a transnational strategy for the restoration of coastal fixed dunes and dry heaths in five Atlantic Ocean islands; and An Taisce's Legacy4LIFE project which aims to develop community-based supports for Ireland's natural environment, with a focus on biodiversity enhancement, environmental protection and climate mitigation. For more information on Ireland's LIFE programmes, see www.gov.ie/en/publication/7e5e8-life-programme



Chestnut Fencing in Machair. Credit: Mark Reed

Nestboxes for roseate tern. Credit: Tony Murray



Conservation Measures Programme

Ireland's Natura 2000 Network comprises of a network of sites that are ecologically important at a European level. These special places for biodiversity are designated under the EU's two Nature Directives: Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under the Birds Directive and/or Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) under the Habitats Directive. There are more than 600 such sites in both public and private ownership across all counties in Ireland. The NPWS is developing and rolling out a comprehensive Conservation Measures Programme that is linked to sites' Conservation Objectives and underpinned by incentives, supports and a collaborative approach. Conservation measures are specific to each site and can involve a wide variety of actions – from woodland management and bog restoration to grazing management, the erection of fences and invasive species removal, etc. – depending on the habitat and its condition. The overall aim of the programme is to contribute to the restoration and maintenance of favourable conservation status of species and habitats across the entire Natura 2000 Network, protecting nature at these important sites and fulfilling national and international obligations.

Green shoal diver. Credit: Nigel Motyer



Marine Protected Areas

Ireland's national vision is to ensure that the sea and ocean is clean, healthy, biologically diverse, productive, sustainably used and resilient to the effects of climate change within the broader Atlantic Ocean environment. As a key action to deliver this, the Government is developing legislation on MPAs and will rapidly progress its implementation to help meet our target of 30% protection in the marine environment by 2030. MPAs can be understood as geographically defined maritime areas that provide levels of protection to achieve a set of conservation objectives. The legislation comes on foot of expert recommendations from an independent advisory group and a substantial public engagement process. The establishment of MPAs in the coming years will help to ensure that the marine environment can continue to support our climate, our economy, our coastal communities, our cultural traditions and heritage, and our health and wellbeing.



Scythe use in corncrake habitat Credit: John Carey



Irish Brasileiro. Credit: Michal Namysl

National Parks

From Glenveagh in the north to the Wicklow Mountains and Boyne Valley in the east, from Wild Nephin, Connemara and the Burren along the west coast to Killarney in the south, Ireland's seven National Parks are at the heart of our efforts to protect nature. In recent years, increased investment has brought significant progress on the restoration of habitats like native woodlands, peatlands and grasslands, and the reintroduction of keystone species like the once-extinct white-tailed eagle and the osprey as well as the prevention, detection and control of fire and other wildlife crimes and the removal and long-term management of invasive and problematic species. NPWS is also investing in education and awareness programmes to enhance community engagement with these special places, and supporting sustainable tourism by improving our trails, walkways, signage and visitor facilities for the millions of people who visit each year. In addition, the NPWS is in the process of developing overarching management plans for each National Park to incorporate visitor management and nature conservation. For more information on Ireland's National Parks, visit www.nationalparks.ie.



Boyne Valley National Park. Credit: ©Photographic Archive, National Monuments Service, Government of Ireland.

Biodiversity Officers Programme

Biodiversity Officers are the vital link between national policy and local action. By early 2024, it is expected that Biodiversity Officers will be working at city and county level in 25 Local Authorities all across the country, with plans to extend this to all 31 in the coming year. In addition to collecting data, carrying out conservation projects, raising awareness and developing a Local Biodiversity Plan, Biodiversity Officers advise the local authority on biodiversity-related issues and its obligations in relation to the protection of biodiversity. They help Local Authorities to fully integrate biodiversity conservation into all of their policies, plans and actions through training and provision of expert advice. The Local Authority Biodiversity Officer Programme is delivered by the Heritage Council and the County and City Management Association (CCMA) with the support of the DHLGH and the NPWS. For more information, see <https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/our-work-with-others/biodiversity-officer-programme>.



New Biodiversity Officers meeting Minister Noonan, The Heritage Council, The County and City Management Association (CCMA) and Heritage Officers. Credit: Alf Harvey

Local Biodiversity Action Fund

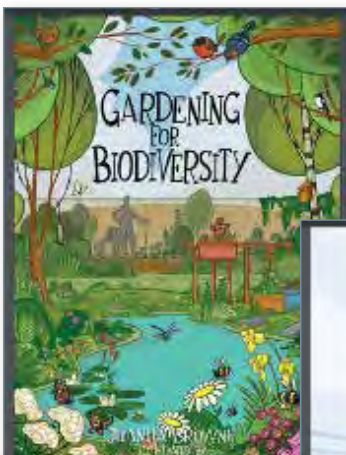
The Local Biodiversity Action Fund (LBAF) provides grant funding to Local Authorities to support actions in the NBAP at local and community level. Between 2018 and 2023, over €6m was awarded to support hundreds of small-scale projects such as an Invasive Alien Species Strategy for Galway City, predator-proof fences for breeding waders in Co. Donegal, otter habitat survey in Dublin City, county tree map survey in Co. Roscommon, hedgerow survey in Co. Kilkenny, habitat mapping in Co. Cork, bat surveys in Co. Clare, swift and barn owl surveys in Co. Carlow, rhododendron clearance on Howth Head in Fingal, dune protection plan in Co. Louth, wetland restoration in Co. Waterford, japanese knotweed treatment in Co. Kerry, citizen science and engagement in Co. Offaly, pond restoration in Co. Wicklow, and so much more. To propose a project for funding, contact your local Biodiversity Officer or Heritage Officer.

Native Woodland Trust. Credit: Lisa Larkin



Biodiversity Fund

Community Foundation Ireland's Biodiversity Fund, which is co-funded by the NPWS, aims to promote biodiversity action at the local level by partnering qualified ecologists with community groups to produce Community Biodiversity Action Plans (CBAPs). Each plan catalogues the plants, wildlife, habitats and geographical features that comprise a local area's biodiversity and makes recommendations to protect, conserve and restore them. Upon completion of their CBAP, community groups can then apply for funding to implement the recommendations. To date, over €1 million has been granted to deliver 181 CBAPs across all 26 counties and implement 51 recommendations. For more information, see www.communityfoundation.ie.



Ballineen and Enniskeane Tidy Towns Association. Credit: Ann Corcoran



Bombus hortorum (garden bumblebee). Credit: Brian Nelson

Chapter Five

Who is this Plan for?



Who is this Plan for?

A broad range of organisations are involved in biodiversity conservation, from central Government Departments, State Agencies and Local Authorities, to the research community, national and local NGOs, schools and universities, businesses, farmers, fishers, foresters, local communities and individuals. There is a role for everyone to play in the protection and restoration of nature, and there are actions in the NBAP for all of us.

The NPWS is responsible for the advisory and policy-making functions in relation to nature and biodiversity. NPWS is an executive agency within the DHLGH. This parent Department also has responsibility for the Marine Environment, Water & Planning.

The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine (DAFM) is responsible for policies and funding programmes in the areas of agriculture, food, fisheries and forestry. The Department of Communications, Climate Action and Environment have responsibility for other environmental issues such as climate change, waste, the circular economy and the Sustainable Development Goals. (see Appendix 2 for the contribution of this NBAP to the SDGs).

A number of other Departments have responsibility for, or involvement in, issues that crossover with biodiversity concerns, e.g. An Garda Síochána and Customs are involved in enforcement of certain key legislation in the area of illegal trade and importation.

State bodies with a role in biodiversity conservation include the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), the Marine Institute, Inland Fisheries Ireland (IFI), Teagasc, Coillte, Bord na Móna, the Office of Public Works (OPW) (which includes the National Botanic Gardens) and the Heritage Council, which oversees the National Biodiversity Data Centre (NBDC).

Local Authorities play a key role in biodiversity conservation through the planning system, the wide range

of environmental services they provide, the network of biodiversity and heritage officers, the Local Authority Water and Communities Office and their implementation of plans and programmes.

Landowners, farmers, fishers, foresters and local communities are in many aspects the most important players in biodiversity issues. Their representative organisations include the Irish Rural Link, Irish Farmers' Association, Irish Creamery Milk Suppliers Association, Macra, Irish Natura and Hill Farmers' Association, Irish Cattle and Sheep Farmers' Association, Community Wetlands Forum and the Irish Landowners' Organisation.

Universities and Institutes of Technology are centres of research and training in the field of biodiversity. Important networks such as the All-Island Climate and Biodiversity Research Network (AICBRN) brings together researchers from a wide range of disciplines across the island of Ireland who are undertaking research on climate and biodiversity topics.

There are a range of government departments and agencies that have a role in the promotion and funding of biodiversity-related research that addresses societal challenges e.g. Science Foundation Ireland (SFI), the Irish Research Council, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the Marine Institute. The NPWS funds bespoke ecological research focusing on protected habitats and species.

A wide range of national non-governmental organisations are involved in the area of biodiversity including An Taisce, Birdwatch Ireland, the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group, Bat Conservation Ireland, the Irish Peatland Conservation Council, and the Irish Wildlife Trust. Many of these NGOs are themselves members of the Irish Environmental Network and its advocacy coalition, the Environmental Pillar. An ever-growing number of local organisations and groups also carry out important biodiversity-related work.

Business for Biodiversity Ireland



Business for Biodiversity Ireland was established in response to a growing need for guidance for Irish business around their impacts on the natural world. The main aims of the Platform are to encourage and incentivise Irish businesses to assess their impacts and dependencies on nature and craft meaningful biodiversity strategies around that information. The Platform aims to bring nature into all levels of business decision making and accelerate action and financing of restoration and remediation of damaged ecosystems. The Platform will support companies to develop policies for a nature positive future benefitting both the organisation and the environment. Platform development is led by Natural Capital Ireland with support from the National Biodiversity Data Centre and Business in the Community. Three years of seed funding was provided by the NPWS and the Department of Food, Agriculture and the Marine, see <https://businessforbiodiversity.ie/>

NPWS organisational structure



The National Biodiversity Data Centre

The National Biodiversity Data Centre was established in 2007. Following a decision of Government in 2022, the NBDC was established as a company limited by guarantee. The Data Centre collates, manages, analyses and disseminates data on Ireland's biodiversity. <https://biodiversityireland.ie/>



6 million+ records of almost 18,000 different species are contained in Ireland's largest national biodiversity database



More than 30,000 recorders have helped capture biodiversity data through Ireland's Citizen Science Portal



4,500+ people have been trained in our biodiversity training and capacity building programmes



We monitor pollinator populations through the **National Pollinator Monitoring Scheme**



National Biodiversity Data Centre
Documenting Ireland's Wildlife



We undertake research and engage with farmers through the **Protecting Farmland Pollinators EIP programme**

OUR

Achievements

TO DATE



We coordinate the hugely successful **All-Ireland Pollinator Plan**

For over 15 years, the National Biodiversity Data Centre has been a core component of Ireland's national heritage infrastructure.

By making biodiversity data and information freely available to public and private sectors, we provide essential services that enhance understanding and support the conservation of Ireland's biodiversity.



We monitor bumblebee populations on the island of Ireland through the **All-Ireland Bumblebee Monitoring Scheme**



We monitor butterfly populations through the **Irish Butterfly Monitoring Scheme**



We coordinate the **Explore Your Shore!** citizen science project to build knowledge on Ireland's coastal biodiversity



We report on data and information needs under the **European Union's Invasive Species Regulations**



We report on **Ireland's National Biodiversity Indicators**



We participate in international networks and serve as **Ireland's node of the Global Biodiversity Information Facility**

Chapter Six

How will the NBAP be funded?



How will the NBAP be funded?

In order to support the delivery of this NBAP, the implementation of the Nature Directives and, in particular the ambition for enhanced restoration outlined in the EU Biodiversity Strategy and the GBF, an Infrastructure, Climate and Nature Fund has been established. This escalation of ambition will need to be matched with additional resources for staffing across public bodies. This recruitment has commenced with the implementation of the NPWS Strategic Action Plan, the roll out of Biodiversity Officers across Local Authorities and additional Biodiversity-related positions filled within the OPW and DAFM.

Dedicated funding for biodiversity is provided under the annual Exchequer allocation to relevant Government Departments. State bodies with a biodiversity role also receive Exchequer funding or grants. Funding for biodiversity research is delivered via a number of organisations including the EPA, Marine Institute and NPWS.

There are many initiatives to support community engagement, including through Community Foundation Ireland, Local Agenda 21 and the Peatland Engagement Fund.

At EU level, the Multiannual Financial Framework (2021-2027) sets the ambition to provide a minimum of EU annual spending to biodiversity objectives, starting with 7.5% in 2024 and at least 10% in 2026 and 2027. It is recognised that biodiversity action within the EU requires at least €20 billion per year stemming from 'private and public funding at national and EU level', of which the EU budget will be a key enabler. This funding will be delivered through existing programmes such as the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD), the Recovery and Resilience Facility (RRF), the European Regional and Development Fund (ERDF), the EU LIFE Fund and the Horizon Research and Innovation Fund.

EAFRD is co-financing €3.86 billion to implement the CAP SP (2023-2027) which is targeting environmentally ambitious interventions such as the new ACRES and the Organic Farming Scheme.

EU LIFE, an EU financial instrument, is co-financing €41.9 million in nine environmental and nature conservation projects in Ireland.

The EU PEACEPLUS and the Shared Island Initiative focus on strategic challenges faced on the island of Ireland, including €11 million announced for peatland restoration and invasive alien species.

The EU Recovery and Resilience Facility supports economies and societies to be more sustainable, resilient and better prepared for the challenges and opportunities of the green and digital transitions. Ireland has been allocated €108 million for the rehabilitation of post-production peatlands.

The EU Just Transition Fund supports regions most affected by the transition to climate neutrality. In Ireland this will focus on the wider Midlands region, where there have been direct impacts from the move away from peat production and electricity generation from peat. €12 million has recently been allocated to peatlands from this fund.

There are substantial opportunities for new blended public and private finance. Support from the European Investment Bank (EIB) and the NPWS have helped to establish Peatland Finance Ireland (PFI) which is developing a Peatland Standard to standardise the contributions made by investing in peatland restoration to carbon storage and sequestration. There is already active interest from private companies to investigate the potential for financing peatland restoration to offset high demands for water use.

NPWS Strategic Action Plan

The Programme for Government of June 2020 included a commitment to review the remit, status and functioning of the NPWS. The independent, multi-phase Review was completed in February 2022 and culminated in fifteen recommendations to renew the NPWS and make it a more resilient, more effective organisation, fit to meet the challenges of the twenty first century. The Strategic Action Plan for Renewal of the NPWS, published by Minister Darragh O'Brien, TD and Minister Malcolm Noonan, TD, in May 2022, provides the NPWS with the organisational and management structure to deliver fully on its mandate, driving the protection and restoration of Ireland's habitats and species and managing our National Parks and Nature Reserves. The Plan sets out an ambitious timeline for a full organisational restructuring of the NPWS, and a substantial €55m additional investment in the organisation across three budgetary cycles, together with the early recruitment of 60 key staff for critically important roles.





Peatland Finance Ireland

Peatland Finance Ireland (PFI) is a multi-partner vehicle that aims to deliver climate, water, biodiversity and livelihood impacts for Irish peatlands. PFI's objective is to combine finance streams from public investments, carbon credits and commercial finance to fund solutions across key sectors such as energy, forestry, water and agriculture to deliver integrated results at catchment and national level. Partners include the European Investment Bank, Landscape Finance Lab, IUCN Peatland Programme, University College Dublin and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. For more information, see www.peatlandfinance.ie.

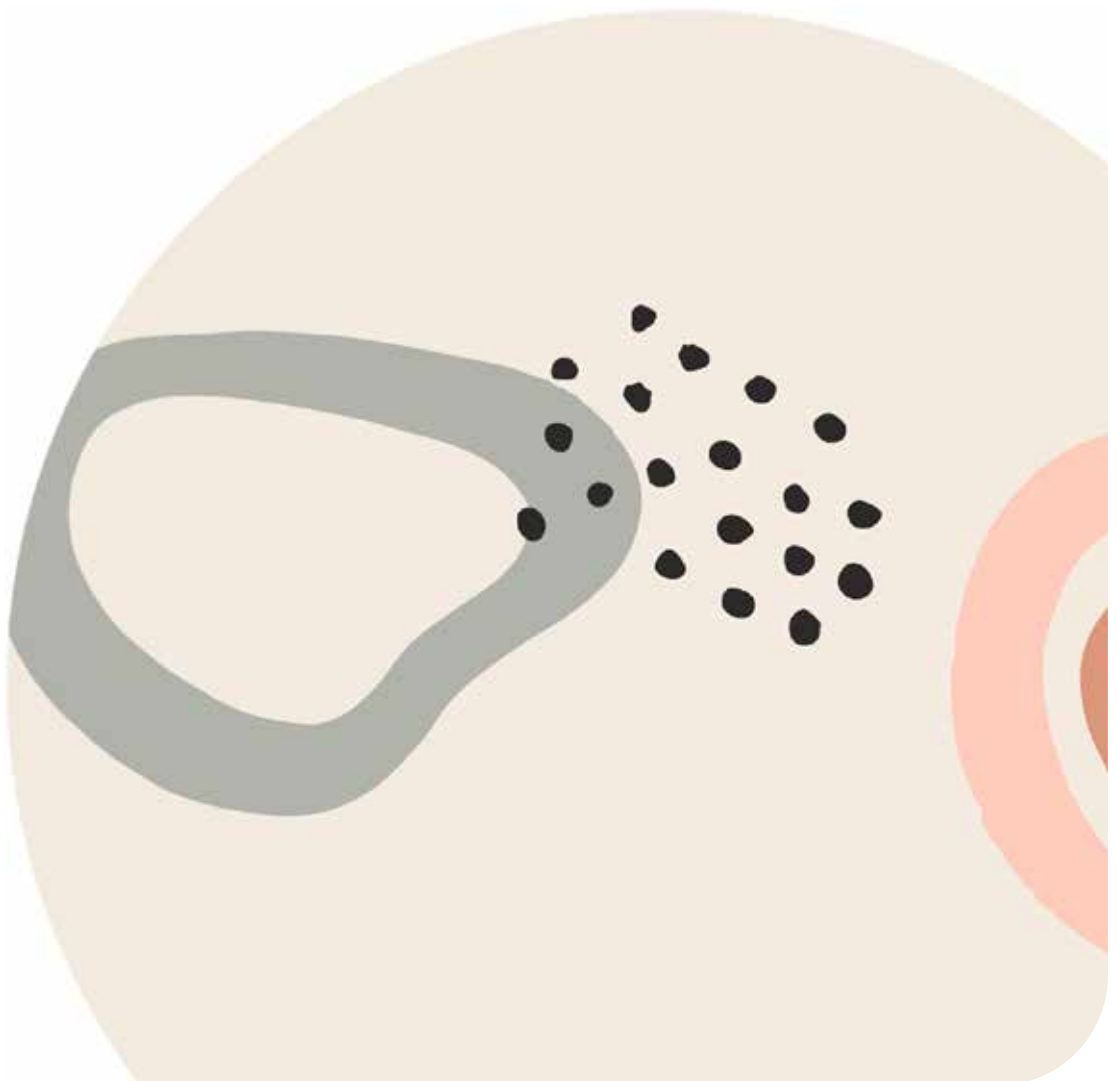
Looking ahead, there are good reasons for government to refine its revenue stream from carbon taxes, environmental levies and sales of green bonds to demonstrate distinct new finance for biodiversity and for climate action linked to the EU Taxonomy on Sustainable Finance. There is also significant potential to develop new blended public-private financial instruments, such as impact bonds, supported by low interest loans from the InvestEU facility of the EIB whose huge reserves are being directed to support the EU Green Deal.

A system to tag Biodiversity expenditure across government will be introduced in 2023; tagging will be extended to expenditure that is considered harmful to biodiversity. This will result in greater transparency on how exchequer money is being spent and move towards phasing out harmful incentives.



Chapter Seven

How did we develop the NBAP?

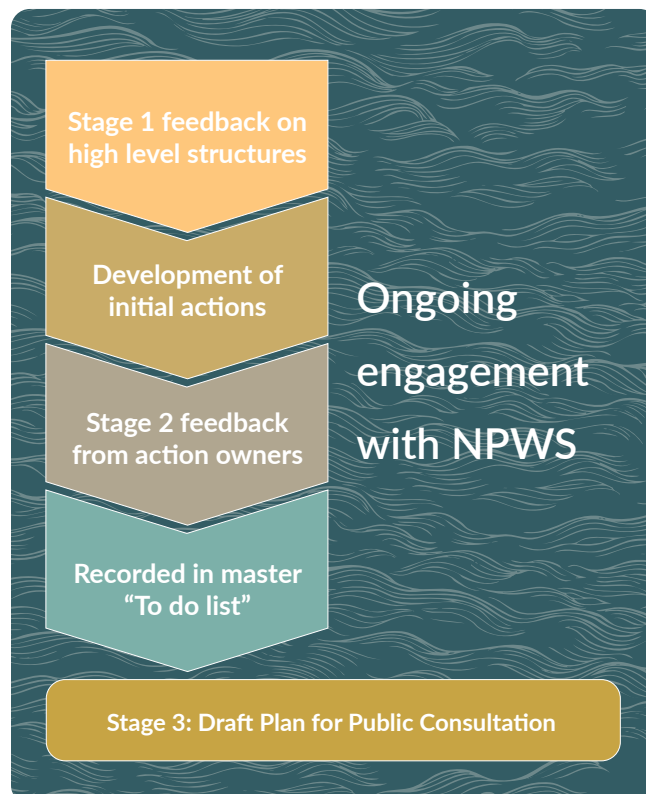


How did we develop the NBAP?

Ireland's 4th NBAP began development in October 2021. Our key considerations were to:

- Build on the successes of previous NBAPs, while addressing shortfalls and implementation challenges
- Expand the governance and oversight of the NBAP and develop a robust Monitoring and Evaluation Framework to track progress
- Achieve buy-in and ownership of the NBAP across all levels of government and society
- Achieve greater coherence between biodiversity policy and other policy areas
- Strengthen compliance and enforcement of existing legislation
- Increase focus on addressing the root causes and drivers of biodiversity loss, rather than consequences of biodiversity loss
- Determine biodiversity priorities, allocate financial and other resources, internalise the value of nature and recognise the cost of inaction
- Significantly strengthen the science base and enhance data accessibility

The stakeholder engagement process for the 4th NBAP involved three distinct stages, each of which targeted a different stakeholder group.



STAGE 1

Stakeholder Consultation

The first stage ran from January to February 2022 and focussed on the high-level structure and direction of the 4th NBAP, including the proposed Vision, Objectives and Outcomes for biodiversity in Ireland. Group 1 Stakeholders included the following stakeholders, selected based on their role in biodiversity governance and assessment:

- **The NPWS NBAP Steering Committee:** The Steering Committee consisted of NPWS staff tasked with leading the development of the 4th NBAP.
- **The Biodiversity Forum:** The Forum is an independent group of biodiversity experts. The Forum was established in the lifetime of the first NBAP to encourage improved stakeholder awareness and involvement in biodiversity policy.
- **The Biodiversity Working Group:** The Biodiversity Working Group (BWG) is an Interdepartmental Group that was established in 2012 to strengthen engagement of key Government Departments and State Agencies in the implementation of Ireland's biodiversity targets.
- **The Business for Biodiversity Platform Steering Group:** The Platform was established in 2021 and is supported by the DAFM and the NPWS. The goal of the Platform is to help Irish businesses to recognise the risks posed by biodiversity loss and to take action to halt the growing crisis.

Dedicated workshops were held with representatives from each of these stakeholder groups to discuss the successes and failures of Ireland's previous NBAPs and the emerging structure and direction of the 4th NBAP. A high-level, initial draft of the 4th NBAP was then circulated, and written feedback was sought on its structure and high-level Vision, Objectives and Outcomes.

STAGE 2

Stakeholder Consultation

This stage ran between February and July 2022 and targeted organisations and bodies that are likely to be directly impacted by the 4th NBAP or involved in its implementation. Stakeholders in this group were asked to provide specific feedback on the Actions proposed under the Draft 4th NBAP. Several concurrent feedback loops were used to capture relevant feedback from different stakeholders at this stage. Stakeholders in Group 2 were as follows:

- Government Departments and State Bodies
- Local Authorities
- Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (eNGOs) and Community Groups

Feedback received throughout Stage 2 was used to further revise and refine actions and to identify suitable action owners. This feedback directly informed the development of the Draft Plan that was then subject to the public consultation process.

STAGE 3

Public Consultation

Stage 3 comprised an open public consultation. A draft 4th NBAP was published on the 1st of September 2022. A public consultation period was launched on the same date and ran for ten weeks; closing on the 9th of November 2022. During this period, all interested parties were invited to provide comments via an online survey and/or to make submissions via email or by post to the NPWS. The NPWS serviced a stand at the National Ploughing Championships in September 2022 to encourage submissions from the agricultural sector.

In total, the public consultation period saw:

- 200 survey responses
- 111 written responses

Bilaterals continued across Government to refine actions in response to the public consultation. A summary report of the responses to feedback received through this public consultation has been published to accompany this Plan.

The National Biodiversity Conference

Ireland's second National Biodiversity Conference was held in Dublin Castle and online over two days on June 8th and 9th of 2022 as an initiative of the NPWS in support of Ireland's fourth National Biodiversity Action Plan. The conference theme, Act Now for Nature, was reflective of the immediacy required for transformational change in how we treat nature in Ireland at governmental, organisational and societal levels. The event welcomed over 400 delegates and over 90 speakers across the two days with a further 245 attendees joining online. Insights and recommendations were recorded for the fourth NBAP.

The conference report can be accessed on: [BiodiversityConference.ie](https://www.biodiversityconference.ie)



Panel Discussion. Credit: ©Photographic Archive, National Monuments Service, Government of Ireland.



Ministers Noonan, Hackett and O'Brien. Credit: NPWS



Address by Ana Mariá Hernández Salgar IPBES. Credit: ©Photographic Archive, National Monuments Service, Government of Ireland.



Citizens' Assembly Field Trip. Credit: ©The Citizens' Assembly'

Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss

The Recommendations and Report of the Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss was published in April 2023. The report was produced following seven meetings of the Assembly from May 2022 through to the end of January 2023. It concluded with the 99 members of the Assembly agreeing 159 recommendations. These include 73 high-level recommendations and 86 sectoral specific actions and priorities.

Central to the report's recommendations is the need for the State to take prompt, decisive, and urgent action to address biodiversity loss and restoration and to provide leadership in protecting Ireland's biodiversity for future generations.

The report proposes a series of changes to the Constitution to ensure people have a right to a clean, healthy, and safe environment. In addition, the Assembly recommends that nature be provided with protections within the constitution to allow it to continue to provide

the necessities of life including food, clean freshwater and air, as well as providing a clean and healthy environment for wellbeing now and in the future.

Other recommendations in the report refer to actions in specific sectors such as agriculture; freshwaters; marine and coastal environments; peatlands; forestry/woodlands/hedgerows; protected sites and species; invasive species; and urban and built environments. There is a specific acknowledgement of the role of farmers as the custodians of the land possessing a rich knowledge and understanding of the environment, and that the agriculture industry must be supported in conserving and restoring biodiversity.

The recommendations of the assembly will now be deliberated by the relevant committee in the Houses of the Oireachtas. The Committee will, in turn, bring its conclusions to the Houses for debate. The Government will provide in the Houses of the Oireachtas a response to each recommendation of the Assembly.



Citizens' Assembly deliberations. Credit: 'The Citizens' Assembly'



Citizens' Assembly engagement. Credit: 'The Citizens' Assembly'

Children and Young People's Assembly nature walk. Facilitated by RUA Productions. Credit: Eleanor (Assembly member)



Children and Young People's Assembly deliberations. Credit: RUA Productions.



Children and Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss

Ireland's first Children and Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss published its final report in April 2023, calling for biodiversity to be at the centre of decision-making and for children and young people to be included in how we respond to biodiversity loss.

The Assembly met over two weekends in October and aimed to ensure Ireland's youngest citizens have their say in how Ireland responds to the challenge of biodiversity loss. Over 500 children and young people aged 7-17 years from across Ireland applied to be part of the assembly, of which 35 were selected, representing a diverse cross-section of society.



Children and Young People's Assembly logo. Credit: RUA Productions, Illustration by Hazel Hurley

Ireland's Children and Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss

Our Vision

An Ireland where we are connected to, and care for, the rights of nature (and each other) so that biodiversity is restored and protected and we live and grow up in healthy, clean and fair environments.

Our Key Messages

1. We must treat the Earth like a member of the family or a friend.
2. Future generations must live in a world where there isn't a biodiversity crisis and where children don't have to take action because of the incapability of past generations.
3. Every decision must take biodiversity into account.
4. Children and young people must be included in decisions being made about biodiversity.
5. Biodiversity protection must be a shared responsibility and a global, collaborative effort.
6. We must consume resources in a sustainable, moderate way that neither diminishes the environment/biodiversity or our rights, wellbeing and livelihoods.

Our Calls to Action

58 Actions under 7 themes

Education & Raising Awareness
Governance
Energy & Transport
Waste & Consumption
Restoring & Rewilding
Habitat & Species Protection
Over-exploitation

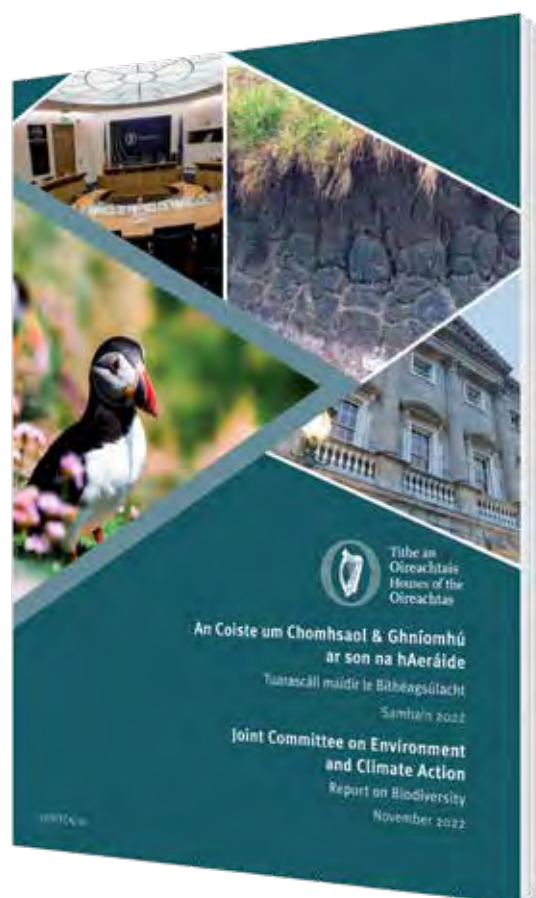
Youth Assembly Vision. Credit: Hazel Hurley

Joint Oireachtas Committee on Biodiversity

In November 2022, the Joint Committee on Environment and Climate Action launched its Report on Biodiversity, which makes 75 recommendations across five key themes identified during engagements with stakeholders and through submissions to the Committee.

Recommendations included:

- The need to prioritise the designation of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) as well as the immediate development and implementation of management plans for existing and future designated MPAs to restore biodiversity and prevent further damage.
- The implementation of a robust agri-environment scheme that would provide farmers with greater incentives to protect and create areas of biodiversity on their land.
- The pursuit of a policy to diversify forestry and to increase the resilience of our forests and improve biodiversity. The implementation of the Continuous Cover Forestry system on a broader basis to provide for greater sustainable forest management.
- Increased resources for research, monitoring and data gathering projects for biodiversity in Ireland to inform future Government policy.
- The introduction of legislative provisions to protect and promote biodiversity on a statutory basis; to set out roles and obligations across all Departments and public bodies in respect of biodiversity.
- The establishment of Biodiversity Officers/Unit within Government Department, Local Authorities and other public bodies where appropriate, to coordinate and promote biodiversity measures.
- The establishment of a Joint Committee on Biodiversity to oversee developments with regard to biodiversity in all environments.





Petalophyllum ralfsii (petalwort). Credit: Dr. Des Callaghan

Chapter Eight

Navigating the NBAP



Navigating the NBAP

Structure

The Plan contains **five Objectives**, each addressing a different theme that will contribute to the realisation of the vision for biodiversity.

Navigation

Each Objective contains a series of **Outcomes** that describe the changes that will occur if **Actions** are achieved.

- Each action has an associated **target**, which is a time-bound description of what the action aims to achieve.
- The actions are interventions that will contribute to the achievement of the outcomes.
- Each action has a measurable indicator(s) which will allow for the monitoring of progress.

Action owners

For the majority of actions there are one or two named organisations who will be responsible for the delivery of, and the reporting on, the implementation of the action. In many cases there are many organisations that will feed into action delivery. These are not all listed, as the lists would be too long or not sufficiently comprehensive. For a small number of actions, there is no perceived lead organisation, as the action may be carried out by, for example, a research network, but may not be exclusive to that network. In these cases, NPWS, supported by the BWG, will follow up on progress made across relevant bodies.

List of acronyms

Acronym	Description
AA	Appropriate Assessment
ABP	An Bord Pleanála
ACRES	Agri-Climate Rural Environment Scheme
AICBRN	All-Island Climate and Biodiversity Research Network
AIPP	All-Island Pollinator Plan
BBNJ	Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction
BWG	Biodiversity Working Group
BF	Biodiversity Forum
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
CAP SP	Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan
CARO	Climate Action Regional Office
CBD	Convention on Biological Diversity
CCAC	Climate Change Advisory Council
COFORD	National Council for Forest Research and Development Ireland
CoP	Community of Practice
CSO	Central Statistics Office
CSRD	Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive
DAERA	Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (Northern Ireland)
DAFM	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
DECC	Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications
DETE	Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment
DFA	Department of Foreign Affairs
DFHERIS	Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science
DFIN	Department of Finance
DHLGH	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
DOE	Department of Education
DOJ	Department of Justice
DOT	Department of Transport
DPENDR	Department of Public Expenditure, NDP Delivery and Reform
DRCD	Department of Rural and Community Development
DTCAGSM	Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport, and Media
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

Acronym	Description
EDRRS	Enhanced Decommissioning Rehabilitation Scheme
EEA	European Environment Agency
EGFSN	Expert Group on Future Skills Needs
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIONET	European Environment Information and Observation Network
EIP	European Innovation Partnership
ENGO	Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
EPSOO	The Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context
EU	European Union
EU IAS	EU Invasive Alien Species
EU LIFE	The LIFE programme is the EU's funding instrument supporting environmental, nature conservation and climate action projects through the EU.
FES	Farm Environmental Study
FNA	Biodiversity Financial Needs Assessment
GBIF	Global Biodiversity Information Facility
GBUE	Green and Blue Urban Environments
GIS	Geographic Information System
GLAS	Green, Low-Carbon, Agri-Environment Scheme
GNDOCB	Garda National Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau
GSI	Geological Survey of Ireland
HNV	High Nature Value
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
IFI	Inland Fisheries Ireland
IDA	Industrial Development Agency
INTERREG	EU initiative to bring people together to share innovative and sustainable solutions to regional development challenges. IFI - Inland Fisheries Ireland
IPBES	Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
IPM	Integrated Pest Management
IRCSET	Irish Research Council for Science, Engineering and Technology
IUCN	International Union for Conservation of Nature
LAWPRO	Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO)
LBAF	Local Biodiversity Action Fund
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan

Acronym	Description
LDCs	Least Developed Countries
LEADER	Government financial supports for private enterprises and community groups who improve quality of life and economic activity in rural areas.
LOETB	Laois & Offaly Education and Training Board
ME	Monitoring & Evaluation
MEA	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment
MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive
NAP	Nitrates Action Plan
NBAP	National Biodiversity Action Plan (Ireland)
NBDC	National Biodiversity Data Centre
NBI	National Biodiversity Indicator
NBS	Nature-based Solutions (UNEA Definition) ¹
NDP	National Development Plan
NDFEM	National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management
NECD	National Emission Reduction Commitments Directive
NESC	National Economic and Social Council
NFS	National Farm Survey
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHA	Natural Heritage Area
NMI	National Museum of Ireland
NIEA	Northern Ireland Environment Agency
NPWS	National Parks and Wildlife Service
NRPA	National Research Priority Area
ODA	Overseas Development Aid
OPR	Office of the Planning Regulator
OPW	Office of Public Works
OREDP	Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan
OSPAR	Mechanism by which 15 Governments & the EU cooperate to protect the marine environment of the North-East Atlantic.
PAF	Prioritised Action Framework
PEACEPLUS	European Union funding programme designed to support peace and prosperity across Northern Ireland and the border counties of Ireland, building upon the work of the previous PEACE and INTERREG Programmes.
RAMSAR	Convention on Wetlands of International Importance Especially as Waterfowl Habitat
RBMPs	River Basin Management Plans

¹ United Nations Environment Assembly, March 2022

Acronym	Description
RPA	Research Priority Areas
SACs	Special Areas of Conservation
SDG	Sustainable Development Goal
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SEEA	System of Environmental Economic Accounting
SFI	Science Foundation Ireland
SFPA	Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority
SOLAS	SOLAS is the State agency tasked with building a world-class Further Education and Training sector to fuel Ireland's future.
SPAs	Special Protection Areas
STEM	Science Technology Engineering Mathematics
TII	Transport Infrastructure Ireland
TRANSLATE	The Met Éireann research project TRANSLATE is aimed at standardising national climate projections for Ireland and developing climate services to meet the Irish adaptation sector's climate information requirements.
UAA	Utilised Agricultural Area
UÉ	Uisce Éireann
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
WCPA	World Commission on Protected Areas
WFD	Water Framework Directive
WI	Waterways Ireland



Limestone pavement. Credit: Deirdre Lynn

Ireland in 2050 – A Vision for Biodiversity

Biodiversity in Ireland is valued, conserved, restored and sustainably used, maintaining ecosystem services, sustaining a healthy planet and delivering benefits essential for all people



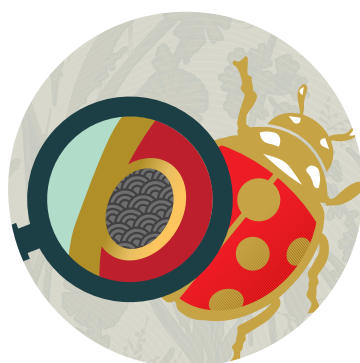
Objective 1:
Adopt a Whole-of-Government, Whole-of-Society Approach to Biodiversity



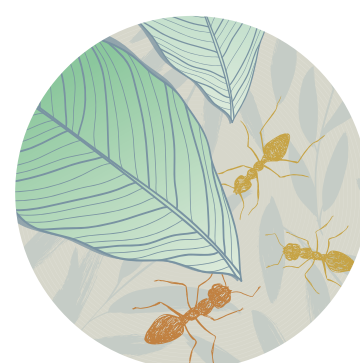
Objective 2:
Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs



Objective 3:
Secure Nature's
Contribution to
People



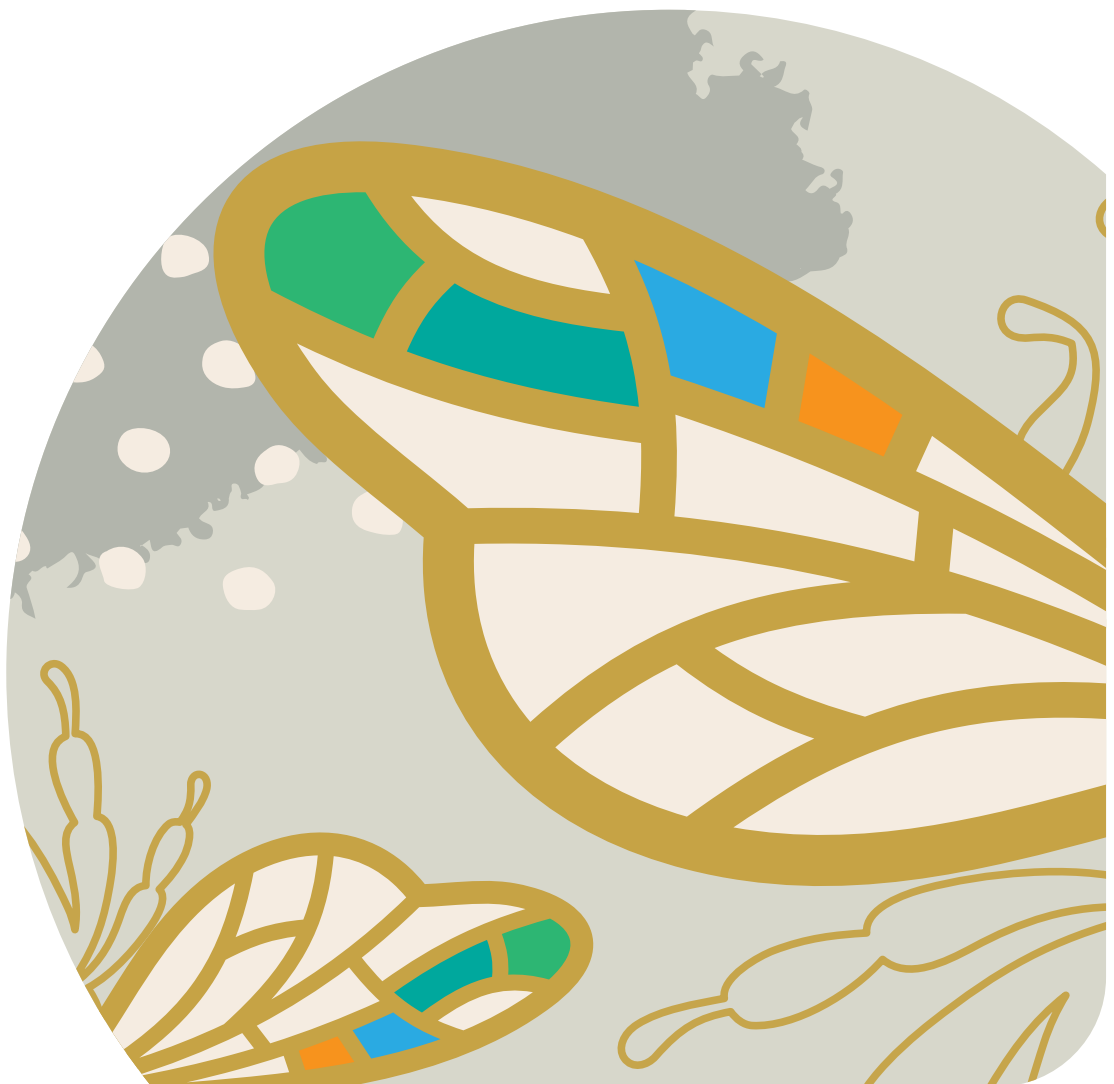
Objective 4:
Enhance the Evidence
Base for Action on
Biodiversity



Objective 5:
Strengthen Ireland's
Contribution to
International
Biodiversity Initiatives

Objective One

Adopt a Whole-of-Government, Whole-of-Society Approach to Biodiversity





Introduction to this Objective

This Objective promotes a Whole-of Government, Whole of Society approach to biodiversity in line with the ambitions of UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) and strengthens the governance arrangements for reporting on the implementation of the Plan.

Ireland's biodiversity is essential to our social progress, to livelihoods and to economic prosperity. Through the ecosystem services it provides, biodiversity underpins the sustainability and productivity of the agricultural, forestry and fisheries sectors, as well as the many businesses and industries which depend on the natural environment or on natural raw materials. It is therefore important that biodiversity is mainstreamed across government and social and economic sectors, and fully considered at all levels of national, regional and local decision-making. This requires all government departments and agencies, local government, the private sector and civil society to commit to action, informed by a strong understanding of the importance of biodiversity.

Awareness-raising needs to be supported by an inclusive process of engagement whereby everybody in Ireland, all sectors, interest groups and communities, are treated as partners that can realise the goals of this Plan together.

Resources and capacity are needed to take informed, proactive, and adequately resourced decisions to safeguard and enhance these relationships. The BWG, with representation across Government, can examine the interlinkages between policies and departmental actions, and the resources required to deliver on those actions.

Outcome 1A. Governance structures and reporting outputs have improved

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2023, Government has introduced a statutory requirement for National Biodiversity Action Plans	1A1	NPWS has placed the National Biodiversity Action Plan on a statutory footing	NPWS	Legislation passed
By 2024, a new and expanded BWG is convened	1A2	The composition of the inter-departmental BWG will be reviewed to ensure better representation of departments, agencies and sectors	The BWG	Departmental and sectoral participation in the BWG is agreed and operational
By 2024, a progress tracker for the NBAP is established	1A3	NPWS and NBDC will develop a progress tracker for this Plan comparable to the EU Biodiversity Strategy Actions Tracker and which also maps this Plan to Multilateral Environmental Agreements	NPWS and NBDC	Progress tracker is established
By 2024, and in each year thereafter, relevant entities report on their progress against this Plan	1A4	Each entity responsible for actions within this Plan will provide an annual update on progress and contribute to an Interim and Final Review of the Plan	All Relevant Stakeholders	Number of entities with completed reviews each year
By 2026, an Interim Review of the Plan is prepared by a cross-departmental group	1A5	The BWG will prepare an Interim Review of the Plan to assess the degree of implementation and prepare recommendations for improvement or further action	The BWG	Published Interim Review
By December 2030, a cross-departmental group prepare a Final Review of the Plan	1A6	The BWG, with independent inputs, will prepare a Final Review of the Plan to assess the degree of implementation and prepare recommendations for the next NBAP	The BWG	Published Final Review
From 2024, progress reports will be submitted annually to relevant Groups/Committees	1A7	The BWG will report to the 'Senior Officials Group on the Environment and Climate Change' at least twice a year or more often and, if necessary, to any Cabinet Sub Committee on Biodiversity, Nature, Climate or Environment and to any appropriate Oireachtas committee established for the purpose of Biodiversity or Nature	The BWG	Reports to relevant Groups/Committees

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
From 2024, progress reports will be submitted annually to relevant Groups/Committees	1A8	The Minister will receive a report on progress on the implementation on the NBAP at least once a year and will bring that report to Cabinet	All Relevant Bodies	Reports to Cabinet
By 2027 at the latest, this NBAP will be updated to take account of the National Restoration Plan and other relevant emerging policies	1A9	The BWG will update the NBAP after publication of a National Restoration Plan and consideration of relevant emerging policies	The BWG	Renewed Plan
By 2026, there is improved alignment between National Biodiversity Indicators and other policy areas	1A10	The BWG subgroup on indicators will review the current list of National Biodiversity Indicators, map indicators to reporting requirements, and make recommendations on how to fill gaps identified	The BWG	Review of National Biodiversity Indicators; Publication of findings

Outcome 1B. Organisational capacity and resources for biodiversity have increased at all levels of Government

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2024, improved funding arrangements established	1B1	NPWS will seek multiannual funding for investment in biodiversity	NPWS	Multi-annual funding agreed
By 2024, roles and responsibilities of government departments, bodies and agencies as they relate to the achievement of biodiversity action identified	1B2	NPWS will conduct a review of nature governance in Ireland, including the roles and responsibilities of government departments, bodies and agencies as they relate to the achievement of biodiversity actions and commitments	NPWS	Review published
By 2024, cross-departmental capacity and capability required to achieve biodiversity targets reviewed	1B3	All relevant Departments and Government Bodies will explore the biodiversity expertise and training requirements across government to ensure the appropriate expertise is available to implement this Plan	All relevant Departments and Government Bodies	Number of new training courses; Number of staff assigned to biodiversity tasks

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2024, Government has improved oversight of public expenditure impacting biodiversity outcomes in Ireland	1B4	DPENDR will develop and implement systems to track and report expenditure allocations on measures aimed at improving biodiversity	DPENDR	Implementation of systems to report biodiversity expenditure
By 2024, Government has improved oversight of public expenditure impacting biodiversity outcomes in Ireland	1B5	DPENDR will develop and implement systems to track and report expenditure allocations on measures that may adversely affect biodiversity	DPENDR	Tracking and reporting on public expenditure that has the potential to impede the achievement of biodiversity targets
By 2024, Government has improved understanding of current biodiversity expenditure and projected biodiversity financial needs	1B6	NPWS will review the recommendations arising from the Biodiversity Financial Needs Assessment (FNA) research project and propose pathways for their implementation	NPWS	Completion of FNA review; Preparation of proposals for implementing recommendations
By 2024, Government has improved understanding of current biodiversity expenditure and projected biodiversity financial needs	1B7	The Biodiversity Forum (BF) will conduct an independent review of the Biodiversity FNA and other relevant financial plans	BF	Completion of review of NPWS response to the recommendations of the FNA
By 2025, the Strategic Action Plan resulting from the review of the NPWS is implemented	1B8	NPWS will implement the Strategic Action Plan resulting from the NPWS Review	NPWS	Number of NPWS Strategic Action Plan actions implemented
By 2026, all Local Authorities have increased capacity to facilitate and implement all required duties relating to biodiversity at the local level	1B9	The Heritage Council will work with Local Authorities on establishing a Biodiversity Officer Programme with a dedicated Biodiversity Officer in each Local Authority	The Heritage Council	Number of Biodiversity Officers in Local Authorities
By 2024, funding is secured to implement long term biodiversity conservation and restoration	1B10	Relevant Departments and Agencies will implement long term measures to support biodiversity conservation and restoration through the Infrastructure, Climate and Nature Fund	Relevant Departments and Agencies	Measures implemented

Outcome 1C: Responsibility for biodiversity is shared across the whole of government

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2024, recommendations from the Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss have been fully considered	1C1	Government will fully consider the conclusions of the Oireachtas Committee on the Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss	Relevant Departments	Responses to recommendations submitted
By 2024, recommendations from the Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss have been fully considered	1C2	NPWS will explore the ways in which the rights of nature could be formally recognised, including the potential for constitutional change	NPWS	Outcome report
By 2024, the objectives of the NBAP are considered as part of Phase 2 of the National Land Use Review	1C3	Departments and Agencies with responsibility for the NBAP will also contribute to the Phase 2 of the National Land Use Review	Relevant Departments and Agencies	Inputs provided to the National Land Use Review
By 2026, the OPW has implemented its Biodiversity Action Strategy in full	1C4	OPW will implement its Biodiversity Action Strategy 2022-2026, including the appointment of a Biodiversity Officer, in support of NBAP targets	OPW	Appointment of a Biodiversity Officer for OPW; Number of completed actions in OPW Biodiversity Action Strategy
By 2026, all Local Authorities will have a Biodiversity Action Plan in place	1C5	The Heritage Council will publish updated guidelines for the production of Local Biodiversity Action Plans and their integration with City and County Development Plans	The Heritage Council	Publication of updated guidelines for the production of Local Biodiversity Action Plans
By the end of 2026, all Local Authorities will have a Biodiversity Action Plan in place	1C6	All Local Authorities will have a Biodiversity Action Plan adopted by the end of 2026 which is subject to regular review and revision processes in line with relevant guideline standards	All Local Authorities	Number of Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plans in place; Number of Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plans in development

Biodiversity Outcome 1D: Biodiversity initiatives are supported across the whole of society

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2027, public awareness on biodiversity is increased by 20% against a 2024 baseline	1D1	NPWS and other relevant bodies will build on existing biodiversity and awareness barometers to gauge the public connection to biodiversity	NPWS	Establishment of national baseline of biodiversity awareness
By 2027, public awareness on biodiversity is increased by 20% against a 2024 baseline	1D2	Údarás na Gaeltachta will increase awareness and participation on biodiversity issues among Gaeltacht communities via the Community Employment Scheme and Rural Social Scheme	Údarás na Gaeltachta	Progress on biodiversity awareness programmes in conjunction with Gaeltacht community placement providers delivering Community Employment Scheme and Rural Social Scheme
By 2024, a Biodiversity Citizen Science Strategy is published and in progress	1D3	The NBDC will produce and implement a Biodiversity Citizen Science Strategy to promote citizen engagement with both terrestrial, freshwater and marine biodiversity and to develop greater awareness of the value of local biodiversity	NBDC	Publication of and progress against Biodiversity Citizen Science Strategy; National Biodiversity Indicators (NBI)-A.2.iii. Number of biological records submitted to national citizen science-driven monitoring schemes
By 2024, communities are working together to access available funding for biodiversity initiatives	1D4	NPWS, DAFM, the Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) and the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications (DECC) will continue to build support for community biodiversity initiatives such as EIPs, the Small Recording Projects grant scheme, Community Foundation Ireland Environment and Nature Fund, LEADER, Local Agenda 21, Shared Island Fund, The Community Heritage Grants Scheme, Peatlands Community Engagement Scheme and Geological Survey Ireland (GSI) Geoheritage Grant Scheme	NPWS, DAFM, DRCD and DECC	Funding available for biodiversity-related support
By 2027, all Local Authorities are supported to carry out biodiversity related projects on an annual basis	1D5	NPWS will continue to support Local Authorities biodiversity projects through the LBAF, which includes action on invasive alien species, throughout the lifetime of this Plan	NPWS	Amount of funding drawn down through the LBAF

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2026, Business for Biodiversity Ireland receives support to grow	1D6	NPWS and DAFM will fund, support, and promote the work of the Business for Biodiversity Ireland during its initial set up phase of three years	NPWS and DAFM	Amount of funding provided to Business for Biodiversity Platform; Delivery of associated Business for Biodiversity Ireland strategic outputs.
By 2025, 900 businesses are involved in Business for Biodiversity Ireland	1D7	Business for Biodiversity Ireland will engage with business to enhance private sector action on biodiversity	Business for Biodiversity Ireland	Number of businesses involved in Business for Biodiversity Ireland
By 2023, a mechanism for matching private sector resources with appropriate biodiversity projects is established	1D8	Business for Biodiversity Ireland will provide a mechanism to match private sector resources with appropriate biodiversity projects	Business for Biodiversity Ireland	Number of biodiversity projects receiving private sector funding via the Business for Biodiversity Platform
By 2024, the BF will enhance outreach across sectors to more effectively enable their involvement in public policymaking	1D9	The BF will include public engagement and participation facilitators to support inclusivity and representation from diverse sectoral groups	BF	Number of sectoral groups represented by BF
By 2024, a Children and Young People's Biodiversity Forum is in place	1D10	NPWS will support the establishment of a Children and Young People's Biodiversity Forum through an appropriate channel	NPWS	Children and Young People's Biodiversity Forum established
By 2025, public sector staff and contractors working in sensitive environments will have access to specialised nature skills training	1D11	Laois-Offaly Education and Training Board (LOETB) with support from the NPWS, OPW and Solas will pilot the Nature Skills Training Programme with a view to extending it nationwide	LOETB, NPWS, OPW and Solas	Number of contractors who undertake the Nature Skills Training course
By 2026, Ireland has mainstreamed the engagement of the public and stakeholders in biodiversity-related environmental policy implementation and the conservation of biodiversity	1D12	DAFM, DHLGH and other relevant stakeholders will build and enhance engagement with terrestrial, freshwater, coastal and marine stakeholders and the wider community to promote the benefits of biodiversity and ecosystem services, and the responsible, sustainable use of resources	DAFM, DHLGH	Number of outreach events undertaken to promote Ireland's biodiversity and ecosystems; Number of public consultations and fora held to support stakeholder and wider community involvement in environmental policy implementation relating to biodiversity

Outcome 1E. The legislative framework for biodiversity conservation is robust, clear and enforceable

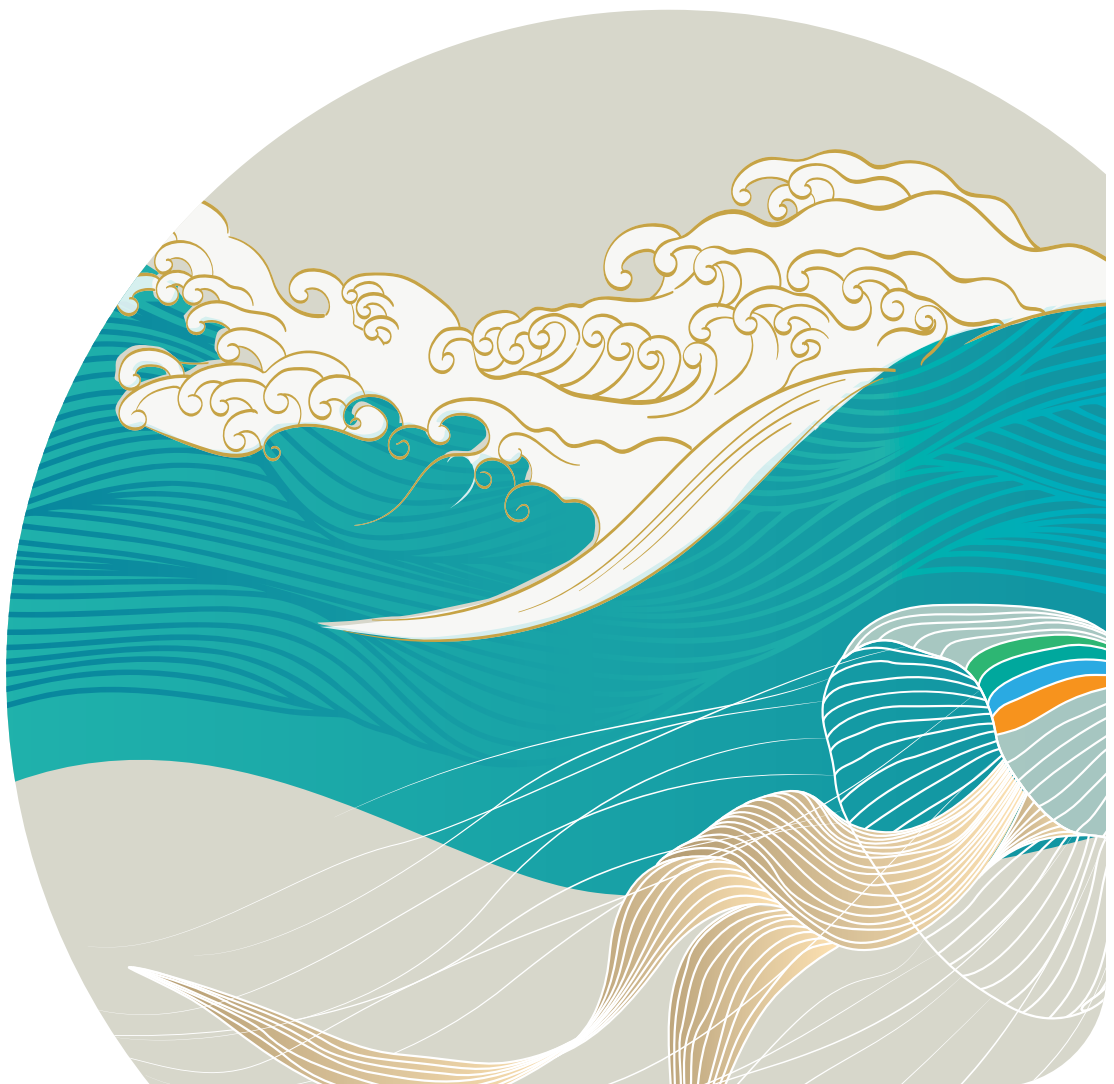
Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2027, the revised legislation arising from the NPWS review of the Wildlife Acts is in place	1E1	NPWS will complete a review of Wildlife legislation	NPWS	Publication of revised legislation
By 2027, the revised legislation arising from the NPWS review of the Wildlife Acts is in place	1E2	NPWS to publish legislation to provide a legal basis for National Parks	NPWS	Publication of legislation
By 2030 there is increased compliance with wildlife legislation in co-operation with agencies through enhanced detection, enforcement and awareness raising	1E3	NPWS will work with relevant groups such as An Garda Síochána, Revenue's Customs Service and the judiciary to ensure adequate training and resourcing to enforce environmental and wildlife legislation	NPWS and relevant bodies	Enforcement resource has increased; Raised public awareness; Increased levels of compliance
By 2024, the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (Agriculture) Regulations will be reviewed	1E4	DAFM will review the EIA (Agriculture) Regulations	DAFM	Completion of review of existing EIA (Agriculture) Regulations
By 2024, the Management of National Parks are underpinned by Management Plans	1E5	Approve Management Plans for National Parks by 2024 in line with the NPWS Strategic Action Plan	NPWS	Management Plans are in place for all NPWS National Parks
By 2024, ensure the principles of wise use are accounted for in the Open Seasons Order	1E6	NPWS to lead a review of the Open Seasons Order	NPWS	Review published



Vaccinium oxycoccos (cranberry). Credit: Michele Adorni

Objective Two

Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs





Introduction to this Objective

The primary aim of Objective 2 is to act on the most urgent national conservation and restoration challenges facing Ireland. Given the extent and complexity of these land, water, marine and wildlife conservation challenges, a significant up-scaling of effort and resources is required. This Objective contains actions to address freshwater, marine, agricultural and forestry challenges, as well as genetic diversity and invasive species. Many of these actions are embedded into existing policies across these sectors/thematic areas.

The protection and restoration of existing designated areas and species are crucial to the achievement of this Objective. The EU Biodiversity Strategy and the GBF provides for ambitious restoration targets and the expansion of Terrestrial and Marine Protected Areas. Actions under this Objective address these new targets, along with the preparation and implementation of conservation and restoration plans for habitats and species.

Biodiversity regulates climate and protects us from extreme weather and other effects of climate change. Climate change is a growing driver of biodiversity loss. Projections are predicted to change the distribution of species. Degraded habitats are less resilient to the impacts of climate change and they are less able to provide the ecosystem services humans need to be resilient to climate change. Actions centre around the implementation of the Biodiversity Climate Change Adaptation Plan with a particular focus on peatlands rehabilitation and restoration.

Objective 2 also focuses on invasive species management. Invasive species are a significant driver of biodiversity loss as they tend to reproduce quickly and out-compete native species for food, water and space.

This Objective also sets out actions for safeguarding the genetic diversity of wild populations and cultivated and domesticated species. Genetic diversity is important because it gives a better chance of survival in the face of environmental change. The breakup and loss of habitats can lower genetic diversity by creating smaller, inbreeding populations. These populations then struggle to adapt to environmental changes such as drought. Implementation of the CBD Nagoya Protocol and its associated EU Regulation will provide a strong basis for greater legal certainty and transparency for both providers and users of genetic resources.

Outcome 2A: The protection of existing designated areas and protected species is strengthened and conservation and restoration within the existing protected area network are enhanced

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2024, enhanced implementation of the Habitats and Birds Directives	2A1	NPWS will complete the selection and notification of sites for the protection of Annex habitats and species listed on the EU Habitats and Birds Directives	NPWS	Proportion of SACs and SPAs designated by Statutory Instrument
By 2024, enhanced implementation of the Habitats and Birds Directives	2A2	NPWS will publish detailed site-specific conservation objectives, along with the approach used, for all existing SACs and SPAs	NPWS	Proportion of SACs and SPAs with published SSCOs
By 2030, trends in the status of the protected habitats and species under the Habitats and Birds Directives are improving	2A3	NPWS and relevant stakeholders will implement the conservation measures necessary to achieve the conservation objectives for Natura 2000 sites, and will develop and implement additional measures as necessary, to contribute towards achieving favourable conservation status nationally	NPWS and relevant stakeholders	Trends in the status of the protected habitats and species under the Habitats and Birds Directives
By 2025, NPWS has reviewed its licensing and consent system to facilitate sustainable activities within Natura 2000 sites	2A4	NPWS, after consultation with other relevant bodies, will complete a review of its licencing and consent systems to facilitate sustainable activities within Natura 2000 sites	NPWS	Completion of review of licencing and consent systems
By 2030, in line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy, habitats and species under the Habitats and Birds Directives show no deterioration in conservation trends and status and at least 30% of those not in favourable status will reach that status or show a positive trend	2A5	NPWS will publish and implement Species Action or Threat Response Plans with population targets for threatened and endangered species that are in unfavourable status or have declining trends	NPWS	Number of Threat Response and Species Action Plans published and implemented; National Biodiversity Indicators (NBI)-B.6 Trends in the status of threatened and endangered species;
By 2030, in line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy, habitats and species under the Habitats and Birds Directives show no deterioration in conservation trends and status and at least 30% of those not in favourable status will reach that status or show a positive trend	2A6	NPWS and other relevant organisations will support species and habitat-specific conservation programmes	NPWS and relevant stakeholders	Trends in the status of the protected habitats and species under the Directives

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2030, in line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy, habitats and species under the Habitats and Birds Directives show no deterioration in conservation trends and status and at least 30% of those not in favourable status will reach that status or show a positive trend	2A7	Údarás na Gaeltachta will undertake a review of estates and lands within their operational zones, with a view to creating site specific management plans; identifying areas within or ecologically connected to Natura 2000 lands to support delivery on the conservation objectives of these sites; identifying lands suitable for inclusion in the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and potentially become a partner in the plan; identifying lands suitable for Biodiversity Corridors, imitating the structure and diversity of native vegetation	Údarás na Gaeltachta	Completion of review of lands; Implementation of appropriate actions
By 2024, Ireland has identified preliminary areas that will be pledged as future protected areas under the EU Biodiversity Strategy	2A8	NPWS, with relevant stakeholders will identify areas that will be pledged as protected areas following the criteria laid out under the EU Biodiversity Strategy	NPWS and relevant stakeholders	Extent of pledged areas
By 2030, deliver management actions for threatened species	2A9	NPWS, OPW and other relevant organisations will support <i>ex situ</i> conservation initiatives, and will work with zoos, aquaria, and botanic gardens to identify native species in need of conservation that may benefit from <i>ex-situ</i> management	NPWS, OPW	Number of <i>ex-situ</i> conservation initiatives supported
By 2030, deliver management actions for threatened species	2A10	Dublin Zoo will establish a National Centre for Species Survival at Dublin Zoo, increasing national capacity for species conservation assessments, conservation planning and action	Dublin Zoo	National Centre for Species Survival established and operational
By 2030, NPWS has increased and enhanced its network of National Parks and Nature Reserves	2A11	Support the establishment, expansion and enhancement of National Parks and Nature Reserves	NPWS	Increased investment in new and existing National Parks and Nature Reserves

Outcome 2B: Biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider countryside are conserved and restored – agriculture & forestry

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2027, optimised opportunities under agriculture and rural development and other relevant policies to benefit biodiversity are in place	2B1	DAFM will ensure that farmers are incentivised to create and maintain habitats on farms as part of Ireland's CAP SP 2023-2027 and the Rural Development Plan, which sits under the CAP SP	DAFM	<p>CAP SP R.31: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments for supporting biodiversity conservation or restoration including high-nature-value farming practices;</p> <p>CAP SP R.32: Share of farms benefitting from CAP investment support contributing to biodiversity</p> <p>CAP SP R.33 Share of total Natura 2000 area under supported commitments</p> <p>CAP SP R.34: Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments for managing landscape features, including hedgerows and trees</p>
By 2027, optimised opportunities under agriculture and rural development and other relevant policies to benefit biodiversity are in place	2B2	DAFM and relevant stakeholders will support and incentivise results-based Agri Climate Rural Environment Scheme (ACRES) and associated Farm Sustainability Plans as part of Ireland's CAP SP	DAFM and relevant stakeholders	<p>Status of habitats and species impacted by agricultural practices</p> <p>CAP SP R.31 Preserving habitats and species: Share of Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA) under management commitments supporting biodiversity conservation or restoration including HNV farming practices;</p> <p>CAP SP R.33 Improving Natura 2000 management: Share of total Natura 2000 area under supported commitments;</p> <p>CAP SP R.34 Preserving landscape features: Share of Utilised Agricultural Area under commitments for managing landscape features, including hedgerows and trees</p>

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2027, optimised opportunities under agriculture and rural development, forestry, and other relevant policies to benefit biodiversity are in place	2B3	NPWS and DAFM will support Farming for Nature initiatives that specifically enhance ecological connectivity in the landscape, including initiatives in Northern Ireland through the Shared Island Fund	NPWS and DAFM	National Biodiversity Indicators (NBI)-F.1.iii. Number of farms or amount of money provided to farmers in Natura subsidies for biodiversity conservation; Extent of area where management activities are in place for increasing connectivity where appropriate
By 2030, land under organic farming is increased to 10%	2B4	DAFM and other relevant stakeholders will support farmers to transition to organic farming	DAFM and relevant stakeholders	Area of land under organic production; R.29 Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) supported by the CAP for organic farming with a split between maintenance and conversion
By 2030, at least 4% of agricultural land has biodiversity rich landscape features	2B5	DAFM and other relevant stakeholders will support farmers to protect, restore and create on-farm biodiversity rich landscape features	DAFM and relevant stakeholders	Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments for managing landscape features, including hedgerows and trees
By 2030, in line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy, the use and risk of pesticides is reduced by 50%	2B6	DAFM, Local Authorities and other relevant stakeholders will implement existing and new measures to reduce chemical pesticide use, in line with the EU regulatory framework for pesticides	DAFM, Local Authorities and relevant stakeholders	Percentage reduction in use and risk of chemical pesticides, and the use of hazardous pesticide, in line with the EU regulatory framework for pesticides
By 2027, definitions, tools and safeguards to maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services associated with agro-ecology systems are in place	2B7	DAFM, NPWS, the Heritage Council, academia and research institutions will work together to develop measures and support tools to maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services associated with agro-ecology systems including High Nature Value farming and farmland	DAFM, NPWS, the Heritage Council and relevant stakeholders	Funding provided to support the HNV Ireland Programme; CAP SP R.31 Preserving habitats and species: Share of UAA under management commitments supporting biodiversity conservation or restoration including HNV farming practices

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2030, address key issues in relation to fire management and emerging wildfire issues in Ireland	2B8	DAFM, NPWS and NDFEM will continue to work with all relevant stakeholders to develop a national fire management strategy	DAFM, NPWS and NDFEM	Establishment of an interdepartmental Fire Management Group with all relevant stakeholders Development of a national fire management strategy that conforms to international best practice
By 2030, address key issues in relation to the management of deer in Ireland	2B9	NPWS will continue to work with DAFM and all relevant stakeholders to develop recommendations with the aim of improving the effectiveness of managing wild deer in Ireland	NPWS, DAFM and relevant stakeholders	Recommendations made by the stakeholders via the Deer Management Strategy Group: Implementation plan agreed by NPWS, DAFM & stakeholders Progress regarding delivery of the implementation plan including reducing deer numbers. Number of recommendations implemented
By 2024, Ireland's National Forest Strategy and Forestry Programme has identified clear actions to enhance biodiversity	2B10	DAFM will deliver actions to enhance biodiversity, including the enhancement of cultural services from Ireland's forests through the National Forest Strategy and the Forest Programme 2023-2027.	DAFM	Number of actions to enhance biodiversity and cultural services in the National Forest Strategy and Forestry Programme
Continued support for native tree planting	2B11	DAFM will continue to promote and/or support native tree planting by Local Authorities and other State/semi-state bodies	DAFM	Increase in area under native tree cover; Uptake of any relevant schemes for Local Authorities or other State/semi-state bodies
By 2027, a diversified national and local native plant stock is available for tree and landscape planting schemes	2B12	Local Authorities, Transport Infrastructure Ireland (TII), NPWS and OPW will encourage a more reliable supply and use native species, varieties, and landraces from appropriate native sources in their landscaping works, where possible	Local Authorities, TII, NPWS and OPW	Availability of national/local sources of native species, varieties, and landraces; % of native trees used in landscaping works compared to benchmark

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2030, in line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy, the decline of pollinators is halted and reversed	2B13	NBDC with partners in Northern Ireland and other actors listed in the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021-2025 will implement appropriate actions listed in the Plan and support farmland pollinator conservation activities post-2025	NBDC and relevant stakeholders	Number of All-Ireland Pollinator Plan actions implemented; Evidence of action to support farmland pollinators post-2026
By 2030, in line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy, the decline of pollinators is halted and reversed	2B14	NPWS and DAFM will continue to provide funding for NBDCs monitoring of pollinators, including an expert review of the adequacy of existing conservation interventions	NPWS and DAFM	Funding for NBDC pollinator monitoring activities; National Biodiversity Indicators (NBI) – B.2. Trends in the Status of Insects; Review published
By 2027, optimised opportunities under agriculture, rural development, forestry and other relevant policies to benefit biodiversity are in place	2B15	The NPWS will ensure that the NPWS Farm Plan Scheme is adequately resourced to expand the number of farms delivering conservation measures.	NPWS	Number of farmers in Farm Plan Scheme
By 2024, ensure that the impact of water quality measures on biodiversity is minimised	2B16	DAFM, DHLGH and NPWS will support the undertaking of research by Teagasc on the implications of the Nitrates Action Plan shallow cultivation measure on birds in the wider countryside	DAFM, DHLGH and NPWS	Publication of research
By 2030, increased enhancement and restoration effort across the Coillte estate	2B17	Coillte will enhance and restore existing biodiversity on its estate (90,000 hectares; 20%)	Coillte	Area of Coillte estate enhanced and restored
By 2025, increase the proportion of the Coillte estate managed for nature	2B18	Coillte will increase the area of its estate to be managed primarily for nature from 20% to 30% (an additional 44,000 hectares) in the short-term (by 2025)	Coillte	Proportion of estate managed for nature
By 2030, increase the proportion of the Coillte forest estate managed for nature	2B19	Coillte will increase the area of its forest estate being managed primarily for nature from 20% to 50% in the long term, by enhancing and restoring biodiversity and planting new forests, half of which will be native woodlands	Coillte	Proportion of Coillte forest estate managed for nature Area of native woodlands planted

Outcome 2C: Biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider countryside are conserved and restored – peatlands & climate action

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2025, measures under the National Peatlands Strategy are implemented	2C1	NPWS, Bord na Móna, DECC, DAFM, Coillte and other relevant stakeholders will implement the National Peatlands Strategy 2015-2025, and subsequent policy changes, taking account of the 2021 mid-term review	All relevant stakeholders	Number of completed actions in the National Peatlands Strategy
By end of 2024, an updated Bord na Móna Biodiversity Action Plan is published	2C2	Bord na Móna will develop and publish an updated Biodiversity Action Plan	Bord na Móna	Publication of Bord na Móna Biodiversity Action Plan; Number of actions implemented to enhance biodiversity
By 2026, Bord na Móna to rehabilitate 33,000 hectares of its peatlands under the Enhanced Decommissioning, Restoration and Rehabilitation Scheme (EDRRS)	2C3	Bord na Móna as operator of the Enhanced Decommissioning Rehabilitation and Restoration Scheme (EDRRS), NPWS as Regulator of the scheme, and other relevant Departments will work in partnership to implement the scheme. Programmes will be in place on the EDRRS peatlands to monitor carbon emissions, water quality, vegetation, habitat and biodiversity	Bord na Móna, NPWS and relevant stakeholders	Published metrics from EDRRS including hectares of peatlands rehabilitated; water quality measures; results of biodiversity surveys; results of carbon emissions monitoring; Ongoing monitoring to assess impact of measures
By 2024, NPWS will review the sectoral Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan 2019-2024	2C4	NPWS will review and publish the outcome of Ireland's Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan 2019	NPWS	Publication of report on Ireland's Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan
By 2024, climate adaptation policy and practice are strengthened through explicit consideration of biodiversity in the next cycle of sectoral climate adaptation plans	2C5	The next National Adaptation Framework will consider recommendations relevant to biodiversity from the 2022 Review of the National Adaptation Framework (NAF) including those relating to the integration of relevant national policy areas, cross-sectoral co-operation and nature-based solutions	DECC	Relevant recommendations implemented in the NAF

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2025, there is significant progress to restore and rewet raised bog and blanket bog protected areas	2C6	NPWS will implement the restoration/rewetting actions set out in the National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017-2022, in Ireland's 2023 Climate Action Plan and will also escalate blanket bog restoration	NPWS	Number of actions implemented; Area of peatland restored/rehabilitated
By 2025, nature-based solutions are contributing to national climate ambitions	2C7	To support the National Climate Objective of achieving a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy, DECC, DAFM, DHLGH, Local Authorities, and Climate Action Regional Offices will promote terrestrial nature-based solutions in national, regional, and local rural and urban programmes	All relevant stakeholders	Number of programs and policies that incorporate nature-based solutions
By 2025, nature-based solutions are contributing to national climate ambitions	2C8	To support the National Climate Objective of achieving a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy, NPWS and other relevant bodies will promote freshwater, transitional, coastal, and marine nature-based solutions (such as coastal, and wetland restoration and restoring 'blue carbon' ecosystems') in national, regional, and local rural and urban programmes	NPWS	Funding for the restoration of blue carbon habitats (e.g., seagrass and saltmarsh); Area of transitional, coastal, and marine covered by restoration programmes

Outcome 2D: Biodiversity and ecosystem services in the marine and freshwater environment are conserved and restored

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2027, protection and restoration measures detailed in Ireland's third RBMP are implemented to ensure that our natural waters are sustainably managed, that freshwater resources are protected so that there is no further deterioration; and where required, Ireland's rivers, lakes and coastal water bodies are restored to at least good ecological status	2D1	Relevant bodies such as DHLGH, DAFM, Local Authorities and partners will deliver a RBMP to better protect, enhance and monitor the ecological status of water during the third cycle of the RBMP	All Relevant Bodies	National Biodiversity Indicators (NBI)-B.7.ii Number of freshwater habitats reported as 'Good Ecological Status' under Water Framework Directive (WFD) monitoring Status of water quality in Ireland; Number of RBMP measures (Programme of Measures) implemented
By 2027, protection and restoration measures detailed in Ireland's third RBMP are implemented to ensure that our natural waters are sustainably managed; that freshwater resources are protected so that there is no further deterioration; and where required, Ireland's rivers, lakes and coastal water bodies are restored to at least good ecological status	2D2	Uisce Éireann will implement its Water Services Strategic Plan (2015-2040), in particular its objective to protect and enhance the environment, together with its Biodiversity Action Plan	Uisce Éireann	Progress on the implementation of Water Services Strategic Plan (2015-2040)
By 2027, protection and restoration measures detailed in Ireland's third RBMP will be implemented to ensure that our natural waters are sustainably managed, that freshwater resources are protected so that there is no further deterioration; and where required, Ireland's rivers, lakes and coastal water bodies are restored to at least good ecological status	2D3	DHLGH and LAWPRO will ensure that high status water bodies are effectively protected and restored via the Blue Dot Catchments Programme	DHLGH and LAWPRO	High status catchment delineation and prioritisation for protection measures; Output from national monitoring system; Centralised GIS database or activities database is established and operational

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2025, implementation of all actions of the Nitrates Action Plan (NAP)	2D4	DAFM will support the ambitions of the NAP by ensuring that Ireland's CAP SP will encourage circular and localised nutrient management and reduce loss of Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and soil to the aquatic environment, taking account of nature-based solutions	DAFM	Number of freshwater habitats reported as "Good Ecological Status" under the WFD surveillance monitoring dataset for the Nitrates Directive monitoring; CAP SP R.21: Protecting water quality Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments for the quality of water bodies; CAP SP R.22 Sustainable nutrient management: Share of Utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments related to improved nutrient management
By 2027, optimised benefits in flood risk management planning and drainage schemes are in place	2D5	OPW will work with relevant authorities to ensure that Flood Risk Management planning and associated Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), EIA and Appropriate Assessment (AA), minimises loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services through policies to promote more catchment-wide and non-structural flood risk management measures	OPW and relevant stakeholders	Assessment to identify and promote natural flood management techniques that may be suitable for application in Ireland; Inclusion of catchment-wide and non-structural measures within the options assessed by Flood Risk Management Plans
By 2027, optimised benefits in flood risk management planning and drainage schemes are in place	2D6	OPW will ensure that all significant drainage (arterial drainage), including both initial drainage and maintenance drainage will be assessed for its implications for biodiversity, particularly for wetlands	OPW	Inclusion of biodiversity considerations in drainage programmes; Number of assessments on drainage works
By 2027, optimised benefits in flood risk management planning and drainage schemes are in place	2D7	The OPW, in coordination with other relevant stakeholders, will continue to enhance its knowledge and capacity with regards to Nature-based Solutions for Catchment Management (NBS-CM) and will assess the potential NBS-CM as part of the development of the future flood relief schemes	OPW and relevant stakeholders	Completion of SLOWWATERS research project; Completion of NBS-CM feasibility assessments to inform flood relief scheme development.

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2027, optimised benefits in flood risk management planning and drainage schemes are in place	2D8	OPW will review existing flood relief schemes, identifying opportunities for retrofit of biodiversity enhancement measures, and developing biodiversity good practice from the lessons learned into guidance for new schemes	OPW	Number of schemes retrofitted; Guidance updated
By 2026, Ireland is meeting all requirements for its transitional, coastal, and marine environment under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), thereby achieving and maintaining High or Good Ecological Status and Good Environmental Status, respectively	2D9	DHLGH will implement and update national programmes of measures to achieve High or Good Ecological Status and Good Environmental Status within transitional, coastal, and marine waters, acting further to support OSPAR Decisions, Recommendations and Other Agreements, and to bolster marine biodiversity throughout the North-East Atlantic region	DHLGH	Percentage of Ireland's transitional, coastal, and marine environment reported to be in High or Good Ecological Status under the WFD and Good Environmental Status under the MSFD; Percentage of species and habitats newly achieving Good Environmental Status, while maintaining existing good status results for marine flora, fauna, and habitats
By 2026, Ireland is meeting all requirements for its transitional, coastal, and marine environment under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), thereby achieving and maintaining High or Good Ecological Status and Good Environmental Status, respectively	2D10	DHLGH will adopt and complete the integration of Ireland's marine environmental targets established under the MSFD, and WFD Status Objectives, into the planning, consenting and operational systems for human activities in Ireland's maritime area, thereby ensuring the sustainable use of resources and the conservation of marine biodiversity and ecosystem services	DHLGH	Attainment of all of Ireland's environmental targets under the MSFD, including through implementation of the National Marine Planning Framework; Further establishment of new environmental targets under MSFD Descriptors 1 to 11, as required to achieve and maintain Good Environmental Status

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2026, Ireland is meeting all requirements for its transitional, coastal, and marine environment under the Water Framework Directive (WFD) and the Marine Strategy Framework Directive (MSFD), thereby achieving and maintaining High or Good Ecological Status and Good Environmental Status, respectively	2D11	DHLGH will enact and implement comprehensive legislation enabling the designation and management of Marine Protected Areas (MPAs) and the expansion of Ireland's network of area-based conservation measures in the coastal and marine environment. This legislation will cover species and habitats beyond those listed in EU Directives as well as features providing ecosystem services, including climate change mitigation and adaptation, and capturing transboundary considerations where possible, thereby acting further to support MSFD requirements, the OSPAR Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic, and marine biodiversity throughout the region	DHLGH	<p>Number and spatial coverage of designated MPAs within Ireland's maritime area, reaching $\geq 10\%$ MPA coverage as soon as practicable, and 30% by 2030;</p> <p>Number of species, habitats and other features beyond those listed under the Wildlife Acts and the Birds and Habitats Directives, for which MPAs have been designated; Associated substantive contribution of Irish MPA sites to the OSPAR MPA network</p>
By 2026, Ireland has actively enabled and contributed to the ongoing achievement of OSPAR's North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy 2030 (NEAES)	2D12	DHLGH will continue to work nationally, internationally with OSPAR contracting parties, and with external organisations and bodies to support and ensure effective delivery of the 12 strategic objectives and 54 operational objectives set out in OSPAR's NEAES 2030	DHLGH	<p>Number of NEAES operational objectives and underlying tasks being actively supported and resourced by Ireland;</p> <p>Number of NEAES tasks for which Ireland is assigned as the task lead;</p> <p>Number of NEAES tasks completed with Ireland's active input and resourcing</p>

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
Commercial fish and shellfish stock levels are maintained or restored to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as soon as possible, in accordance with the EU Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) through ongoing implementation of Multiannual Plans and remedial measures for vulnerable stocks	2D13	DAFM and other relevant stakeholders will continue to implement the EU's CFP in order to provide for the long-term conservation and survivability of fish and shellfish stocks and marine biodiversity. Ensure the ongoing implementation of both Multiannual Plans and remedial measures for vulnerable stocks, which aim to ensure that the exploitation of living marine biological resources restores and maintains populations of harvested species above levels which can produce maximum sustainable yield	DAFM and relevant stakeholders	Number of fish and shellfish stocks which are being fished sustainably; Number of fish and shellfish stocks newly achieving or maintaining Good Environmental Status under the MSFD
Commercial fish and shellfish stock levels are maintained or restored to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as soon as possible, at national level within the six nautical mile limit and at regional EU level outside the six nautical mile limit in accordance with the EU CFP	2D14	DAFM, the Marine Institute and other relevant stakeholders will continue to develop and implement fishery management measures at national level within the 6 nautical mile limit and at regional EU level outside the 6 nautical mile limit to conserve biodiversity and fish and shellfish stock levels	DAFM, the Marine Institute and relevant stakeholders	Number of fish and shellfish stocks which are being fished sustainably; Number of fish and shellfish stocks newly achieving or maintaining Good Environmental Status under the MSFD
Continue to ensure commercial fisheries and aquaculture in Ireland are carried out without causing significant adverse effects on EU Natura 2000 sites or their qualifying marine habitats and species in accordance with relevant legislation	2D15	DAFM, DHLGH and other relevant stakeholders will implement measures to ensure that there are no significant adverse effects from marine fisheries and aquaculture in and adjacent to EU Natura 2000 sites	DAFM, DHLGH and relevant stakeholders	Percentage of marine Natura 2000 sites in Ireland for which all site-specific conservation objectives (SSCOs) continue to be met; Number of Natura 2000 qualifying marine habitats and species found to be in favourable conservation status through cyclical monitoring and assessment

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
Continue to ensure that all commercial fishing in Irish waters is carried out in full compliance with the EU Common Fisheries Policy, with national and EU conservation legislation, and all associated regulations	2D16	DAFM, Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority (SFPA) and other relevant stakeholders will continue to take concerted action to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing	DAFM, SFPA and relevant stakeholders	<p>Number of on-land inspections that detect non-compliances with the EU CFP;</p> <p>Number of at-sea inspections that detect non-compliances with the EU CFP;</p> <p>Number of CFP infringements determined as serious by the Determination Panel</p>
By 2026, ensure that Ireland's coastal and marine habitats are comprehensively studied and mapped in order to deliver high quality knowledge and data on Ireland's marine biological diversity and ecological features	2D17	DHLGH and DAFM will continue to undertake high quality research into and mapping of Ireland's coastal and wider marine environments, including the deep ocean, thereby supporting the identification of biologically diverse, naturally productive and eco-systemically important areas within Ireland's maritime area, including those of importance to climate resilience, carbon capture and storage	DHLGH and DAFM	<p>Number of high-level research studies undertaken of coastal, continental shelf and deep sea habitats in Irish waters;</p> <p>Percentage coverage of Ireland's maritime area by the INFOMAR programme and associated habitat studies</p>
By 2026, ensure that Ireland has an effective and coordinated national marine environmental education and awareness programme	2D18	DAFM, DHLGH and other relevant stakeholders will continue to build and support national capacity and delivery in marine environmental education and outreach, thereby raising awareness of Ireland's seas and its marine biological diversity and ecosystems among people of all ages. Establish a national coordination group of key Departments and Agencies to focus on individual and collective educational actions and outputs, and to coordinate outreach work so that national marine environmental policy is communicated coherently and consistently to all	DAFM, DHLGH and relevant stakeholders	<p>Number of new educational and awareness-raising initiatives undertaken to promote Ireland's marine biodiversity and ecosystems;</p> <p>Number of new online and physical resources and facilities developed to support public awareness of Ireland's marine biodiversity and our seas and ocean;</p> <p>Statistical evidence indicating increased public awareness of and engagement with marine environment and biodiversity subject matter</p>

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2026, ensure that Ireland has mainstreamed the inclusion of Citizen Science in marine environmental policy implementation and actions contributing to the conservation of marine biodiversity	2D19	DHLGH will build, enhance and support biodiversity information and data gathering and archiving by Citizen Science initiatives conducted around Ireland's coastline and in inshore and offshore waters. This will include initiatives to build on existing public data collection efforts conducted by NGOs	DHLGH	Number of marine Citizen Science initiatives and projects that are actively supported and delivering information of value to national marine biodiversity status assessments and monitoring; Number of coastal and marine species and habitat types for which public data are added to the National Biodiversity Data Centre's archive and resources; Number of biological records submitted to national citizen science-driven monitoring schemes
By 2023, Biodiversity representatives will be included as part of the revised Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (ORED II) process	2D20	DECC will ensure that the governance framework established as part of the work on a revised ORED II will include biodiversity representatives to ensure that marine biodiversity objectives are included in the development of the Plan, and as part of the updated cycle for the Plan	DECC	At least one biodiversity representative sits on the Data and Scientific Group and the Steering Group for the ORED II
By 2030, 300 km of rivers are restored to a free-flowing state	2D21	DHLGH, Inland Fisheries Ireland, OPW and other relevant bodies will explore the restoration of 300 km of rivers to a free-flowing state	DHLGH, IFI, OPW and other relevant bodies	Km of rivers restored to a free-flowing state

Outcome 2E: Genetic diversity of wild and domesticated species is safeguarded

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
Continue to support conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources in Ireland	2E1	Promote the conservation and sustainable use of the genetic resources in Ireland through the work of the DAFM Genetic Resources Grant Aid	DAFM	Number and value of grant supported projects/ programmes
By 2030, work towards genetically characterising all native tree species to identify populations for conservation	2E2	DAFM, National Botanical Gardens and other relevant organisations continue the work of the Forest Genetic Resources Working Group	DAFM, National Botanical Gardens and relevant stakeholders	Number of tree species genetically characterised
By 2027, resources and capacity for national wildlife biobanking initiatives are increased to safeguard the genetic future of Ireland's wildlife	2E3	Dublin Zoo will establish a national wildlife Biobanking Hub	Dublin Zoo	Number of species biobanked at the National Wildlife Biobanking Hub at Dublin Zoo
By 2027, national initiatives on biobanking for key species to support biological diversity are supported	2E4	NPWS, DAFM and relevant departments and agencies will ensure that resources and capacity for national biobanking initiatives will be increased, working with existing partners such as Dublin Zoo to safeguard the genetic future of key species	NPWS, DAFM and relevant stakeholders	Number of biobanking initiatives supported
By 2030, the number of species, varieties and landraces for which conservation measures are being undertaken is significantly increased	2E5	DAFM, the National Botanic Gardens and the Irish Seed Savers Association will continue to implement the National Genetic Conservation Strategies for animals and plants	DAFM, the National Botanic Gardens and the Irish Seed Savers Association	Number of species, varieties, or landraces for which conservation measures are being undertaken
By 2027, Ireland is making progress on the National Strategy for Plant Conservation	2E6	The National Botanic Gardens will update and assess progress against Ireland's National Strategy for Plant Conservation, in line with the Global Strategy for Plant Conservation	National Botanic Gardens	Number of measures completed in National Strategy for Plant Conservation

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2027, Irish seed banks are collaborating to maintain a collection of seeds from all plants native to Ireland	2E7	The National Botanic Gardens Wild Flora Seed Bank will collaborate with other seed banks such as the Threatened Seed Bank in Trinity College Dublin, the Crop Wild Relative, Cereal and Potato Seed Bank in DAFM the Apples and Vegetable Seed Bank held by the Irish Seed Savers Association and the Grassland and Clover Seed Bank held by Teagasc to ensure maintenance of a full collection of seeds from all plants native to Ireland	National Botanic Gardens	Number of seeds collected, processed and accessioned in the seed bank
By 2024, an operational framework for the implementation of the Nagoya Protocol will be in place	2E8	NPWS will put in place an operational framework to facilitate implementation in conjunction with other stakeholders/competent authorities across sectors and other Government agencies	NPWS	Operational framework in place

Outcome 2F: A National Restoration Plan is in place to contribute to the ambition of the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 and global restoration targets

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2026, a National Restoration Plan is published	2F1	NPWS and DAFM and other relevant stakeholders will work to align existing indicators and/or establish new ones for monitoring restoration of ecosystems	NPWS and DAFM and other relevant stakeholders	Suitable indicators in place for measuring progress
By 2026, a National Restoration Plan is published	2F2	DHLGH, in collaboration with DAFM, OPW and DECC, and other relevant bodies, will identify synergies between nature restoration and climate change mitigation/adaptation and disaster prevention, and prioritise these measures	DHLGH, DAFM, OPW, DECC and relevant stakeholders	Nature restoration measures with synergies as described are prioritised in the National Restoration Plan
By 2026, a National Restoration Plan is published	2F3	DHLGH, in collaboration with DAFM, OPW and DECC will engage with stakeholders and the public during the development of a National Restoration Plan	DHLGH, DAFM, OPW, DECC and relevant stakeholders	Public consultation process for National Restoration Plan documented
By 2026, a National Restoration Plan is published	2F4	DHLGH, in collaboration with DAFM, OPW and DECC, will develop a National Restoration Plan	DHLGH, DAFM, OPW, DECC and relevant stakeholders	National Restoration Plan published
By 2027, implementation of a National Restoration Plan has begun	2F5	DHLGH and all stakeholders across Government, will put in place restoration measures as described in the National Restoration Plan, within the appropriate timeframes	DHLGH and relevant stakeholders	Restoration measures in place according to the timeframe to be outlined in the National Restoration Plan
By 2027, implementation of the National Restoration Plan is monitored	2F6	DHLGH and all stakeholders across Government, will monitor implementation of the National Restoration Plan	DHLGH and relevant stakeholders	Monitoring regimes in place

Outcome 2H: Invasive alien species (IAS) are controlled and managed on an all-island basis to reduce the harmful impact they have on biodiversity and measures are undertaken to tackle the introduction and spread of new IAS to the environment

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2030, IAS are controlled, managed, and where possible, eradicated	2H1	NPWS will establish an IAS unit to expedite implementation of the legislative and policy framework, including specific resources for enforcement	NPWS	IAS unit and enforcement unit established and operational within NPWS
By 2030, IAS are controlled, managed, and where possible, eradicated	2H2	NPWS, together with other relevant Departments and public bodies, will develop national plans to implement aspects of the EU IAS Regulation and relevant national legislation, as well as work on cooperative plans where there is an all-island or North-South aspect for IAS impacts	NPWS and relevant stakeholders	National plans are in place to implement the relevant articles of the EU IAS Regulation (1143/2014) fulfilling Member State obligations; National Management Plan for Invasive Alien Species will be developed and implemented as set out in the programme for government; All-island cooperation on IAS between relevant authorities is agreed
By 2030, IAS are controlled, managed, and where possible, eradicated	2H3	NPWS will introduce new national legislation to update existing legislation and give effect to aspects of the EU IAS Regulation 1143/2014, as well as assigning responsibilities for aquatic IAS	NPWS	Legislation to implement the EU IAS Regulation in the national context is published and enacted
By 2030, IAS are controlled, managed, and where possible, eradicated within Protected Areas and effectively controlled in urban, peri-urban areas, the wider countryside and marine and coastal areas	2H4	NPWS in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders will resource and implement on-the-ground actions to control, manage and where possible and feasible, eradicate occurrences of invasive alien species, including the removal of stands of invasive species from Protected Areas and National Parks	NPWS and relevant stakeholders	National Biodiversity Indicators (NBI)-D.3.i Area implementing invasive species management

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2030, IAS are controlled, managed, and where possible, eradicated within Protected Areas and effectively controlled in urban, peri-urban areas, the wider countryside and marine and coastal areas	2H5	NPWS, NBDC and relevant partners will develop dedicated biosecurity protocols, standard operating procedures and guidelines for Government Departments	NPWS, NBDC and relevant stakeholders	Number of protocols, procedures and guidelines produced
By 2030, invasive alien species are controlled, managed, and where possible, eradicated within Protected Areas and effectively controlled in urban, peri-urban areas, the wider countryside and marine and coastal areas	2H6	NPWS, NBDC and relevant partners will implement recommended measures arising from the 2021 EPA Report No. 368 Prevention, Control and Eradication of Invasive Alien Species	NPWS, NBDC and relevant stakeholders	Number of measures implemented
By 2030, invasive alien species are controlled, managed, and where possible, eradicated within Protected Areas and effectively controlled in urban, peri-urban areas, the wider countryside and marine and coastal areas	2H7	NBDC will continue to produce Risk Assessments for potential invasive alien species	NBDC	Number of Risk Assessments complete; National Biodiversity Indicators (NBI)-C.3.i Number of newly introduced IAS
By 2030, invasive alien species are controlled, managed, and where possible, eradicated within Protected Areas and effectively controlled in urban, peri-urban areas, the wider countryside and marine and coastal areas	2H8	Ireland will accede to the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships Ballast Water and Sediments, with the Department of Transport (DOT) enforcing the requirements aboard Irish flagged ships, in its role as a flag state and aboard foreign flagged ships in Irish ports under port state control. DOT will also participate in the Paris MOU's Concentrated Inspection Campaign on implementation of the Ballast Water Convention in 2025	DOT	Ratification of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships Ballast Water and Sediments

Objective Three

Secure Nature's Contribution to People





Introduction to this Objective

Biodiversity underpins our everyday life, from the familiar habitats and species that we interact with day-to-day, to more intangible support such as the mental health benefits we get from being in contact with nature, or the cultural and linguistic traditions of our plants and landscapes. These direct and indirect benefits are known as ecosystem services.

This Objective aims to recognise and secure the wide range of services that nature provides, with a particular focus on tourism, heritage and language. For example, Irish culture can strengthen our knowledge and connection to the natural world, including through the Irish language and the biodiversity and landscapes of Gaeltacht areas. As a nation, we can discover our distinctive approach of seeing and explaining our relationship with our natural world.

Ireland's planning system has an important role in safeguarding biodiversity by ensuring that new development is sustainable and does not have a negative impact on the environment. There are opportunities to deliver for biodiversity in the assessment of new planning applications, as well as the application of best-practice principles for urban design and landscape management, such as green infrastructure and nature-based solutions.

This Objective also seeks to ensure that we have people with the right skills and education to help protect and restore biodiversity for generations to come. The private sector must also play its part in these efforts, and actions are included to accelerate efforts from the business and financial sectors.

Outcome 3A: Ireland's natural heritage and biocultural diversity is recognised, valued, enhanced and promoted in policy and practice

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2027, all actions relating to biodiversity and natural heritage are in progress or completed	3A1	DHLGH will fund and deliver on Heritage Ireland 2030, Ireland's 10-year national heritage plan	DHLGH	Number of actions from Heritage Ireland 2030 Plan that are in progress or completed
By the end of 2024, the Department of Tourism, Culture, Arts, Gaeltacht, Sport and Media (DTCAGSM) infrastructure funded under the National Development Plan (NDP) will incorporate biodiversity and ecosystem services	3A2	DTCAGSM will incorporate biodiversity and ecosystem services, particularly cultural services, in placemaking efforts and investment in Cultural Regional Infrastructure into its capital project appraisal processes	DTCAGSM	Biodiversity and ecosystem services criteria included in the appraisal of DTCAGSM investment projects
By the end of 2027, the biocultural value of green and blue urban environments (GBUE) in all local authority areas is enhanced	3A3	Local Authorities will work to identify and respond to opportunities for enhancing the biocultural value of GBUE through appropriate design strategies, the use of visual and performing arts, and enhancing equity of access and promoting use of GBUE by community groups, and integrating cultural services in local biodiversity action plans	Local Authorities	Number of LBAPs which include actions on enhancing the biocultural value of GBUE
By 2027, biodiversity-related cultural attractions have enhanced their contributions towards public engagement, awareness-raising and behaviour change	3A4	Dublin Zoo and other relevant authorities and organisations will further develop the contributions of biodiversity-related cultural attractions towards public engagement, awareness-raising, and behaviour change	Dublin Zoo and relevant stakeholders	An increase in the number of biodiversity-related awareness-raising campaigns at Dublin Zoo, and the instigation of new dedicated behaviour-change campaigns to create measurable impact among visitors
By the end of 2024, policy statement on biodiversity, landscape, topography, community development and the Irish language is published, with an action plan in place by the end of 2025	3A5	Údarás na Gaeltachta and DTCAGSM will produce a policy statement on the relationship between biodiversity, landscape, topography, community development and the Irish language, and identify actions for integrating conservation of biodiversity and language promotion initiatives	Údarás na Gaeltachta and DTCAGSM	Publication of policy statement and recommended actions; % implementation of recommended actions

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2027, the role of Gaeltacht Islands and Island communities in securing and protecting cultural and natural heritage is recognised	3A6	Údarás na Gaeltachta will seek to raise the important role Gaeltacht Islands and Island communities can play in securing and protecting cultural and natural heritage, in the context of Údarás na Gaeltachta's Glas Strategy	Údarás na Gaeltachta	Progress against Údarás na Gaeltachta's Glas Strategy; Participation of Gaeltacht Island Development Groups in securing and protecting cultural and natural heritage
By 2023, Ireland's Sustainable Tourism Policy aligns with and supports the implementation of the NBAP	3A7	The Sustainable Tourism Policy to be published in 2023 will take account of the NBAP with a view to conserving and restoring our biodiversity and, in turn, ensuring the overall quality of our tourism offering	DTCAGSM	Number of actions integrating biodiversity and ecosystem services in follow-up plan post 2024
By 2024, biodiversity considerations are integrated into refurbishment and development plans for key heritage sites	3A8	OPW will carry out a review of policies and practices on refurbishment and development of OPW visitor infrastructure and interpretation at key heritage sites across the country, ensuring that biodiversity considerations are appropriately integrated into future projects and enhancements	OPW	Documented actions taken during refurbishment to account for biodiversity, or documented reasons why such actions were not required
By 2024, the OPW is working to enhance biodiversity at National Historic Property sites	3A9	OPW will conduct biodiversity audits at multiple sites, implement enhancements and recommendations, and share the data gathered	OPW	Number of site audits conducted; Number of actions implemented to enhance biodiversity on audited sites; Number of datasets on audited sites that have been shared
By 2023, relevant departments have identified the synergies between the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development - ESD to 2030 and the 4th NBAP	3A10	Department of Education (DOE), Department of Further and Higher Education, Research, Innovation and Science (DFHERIS) and NPWS (as listed in the strategy) will work together to align the aims of the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development - ESD to 2030 and the 4th NBAP and to develop and progress mutual actions	DoE , DFHERIS and NPWS	Number of relevant actions from the Education for Sustainable Development Strategy 2030 that are implemented

Outcome 3B: The role of biodiversity in supporting wellbeing, livelihoods, enterprise and employment is recognised and enhanced

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2023, Ireland's National Outdoor Recreation Strategy incorporates biodiversity considerations	3B1	The Department of Rural and Community Development (DRCD) with Comhairle na Tuaithe will ensure biodiversity considerations, particularly the value of cultural services to mental health and wellbeing, are taken into account in the National Outdoor Recreation Strategy	DRCD with Comhairle na Tuaithe	Number of biodiversity-related actions in the National Outdoor Recreation Strategy
By 2024, Irish businesses report in line with the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) requirements, including biodiversity	3B2	The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE) will lead on the implementation of the EU CSRD when adopted, which requires the reporting of environmental information including biodiversity	DETE	Transposition and implementation of the The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Employment (DETE)
By 2024, Enterprise Ireland is incorporating biodiversity into its activities	3B3	DETE will work with Enterprise Ireland to integrate biodiversity into relevant programmes and activities	DETE and Enterprise Ireland	Number of Enterprise Ireland programmes incorporating a biodiversity component
By 2024, the Industrial Development Agency (IDA) has delivered on the biodiversity measures in its 2021-2024 strategy Driving Recovery and Sustainable Growth	3B4	DETE will work with IDA Ireland to develop biodiversity measures across their property programme, in line with the commitment to biodiversity measures outlined in IDA's 2021-2024 strategy, Driving Recovery and Sustainable Growth	DETE and IDA	Biodiversity measures developed and delivered
By 2023, the Department of Finance (DFIN) will mainstream biodiversity within its climate and sustainable finance work	3B5	DFIN will include biodiversity in its work on climate and sustainable finance, including taking it into account in financial services, multilateral development financing and fiscal policymaking, as appropriate	DFIN	Inclusion of consideration of biodiversity in the budget documentation and in other policies
By 2023, the National Bioeconomy Action Plan contains recommendations for the sustainable use and protection of biodiversity and natural capital	3B6	The High-Level National Bioeconomy Implementation Group, under DECC and DAFM, will make recommendations for the sustainable use and protection of biodiversity and natural capital as part of the National Bioeconomy Action Plan and ensure alignment with the National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy	High-Level National Bioeconomy Implementation Group	Number of recommendations for the sustainable use and protection of biodiversity and natural capital in the National Bioeconomy Action Plan

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2027, feasibility assessments for bioeconomy projects include environmental and social feasibility as standard	3B7	In line with the sustainability principle set out in the National Policy Statement on the Bioeconomy, the High-Level National Bioeconomy Implementation Group under DECC and DAFM will ensure that feasibility assessments for bioeconomy projects include environmental and social feasibility and that, at a minimum, bioeconomy activities do not reduce resilience or degrade biodiversity and strive towards biodiversity enhancement	High-Level National Bioeconomy Implementation Group	Number of research and demonstration proposals for bioeconomy development with environmental and social feasibility studies; Number of bioeconomy research and demonstration proposals that demonstrate biodiversity enhancement
By 2024, an assessment of biodiversity skills needs for sustainable businesses has been completed	3B8	Business for Biodiversity Ireland will assess the biodiversity skills needs to support the development of sustainable businesses and present the findings to the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit and other relevant entities for their consideration	Business for Biodiversity Ireland	Assessment of biodiversity skills needs
By 2023, the Origin Green programme is tracking and reporting farm and company member actions on biodiversity on an annual basis	3B9	Bord Bia and relevant Departments will work to ensure that the Origin Green programme produces measurable benefits for biodiversity, including through the Farming for Nature programme, in collaboration with the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan and other initiatives	Bord Bia and relevant stakeholders	Relevant biodiversity indicators under Origin Green programme
By 2023, small businesses have guidance on how to reduce their impact on biodiversity and contribute to the actions within the NBAP	3B10	Business for Biodiversity Ireland will explore how the Climate Toolkit 4 Business could include biodiversity-related actions for small businesses to help them reduce their impact on biodiversity and to contribute to the achievement of this NBAP	Business for Biodiversity Ireland	Completed review of how the Climate Toolkit 4 Business could include biodiversity action

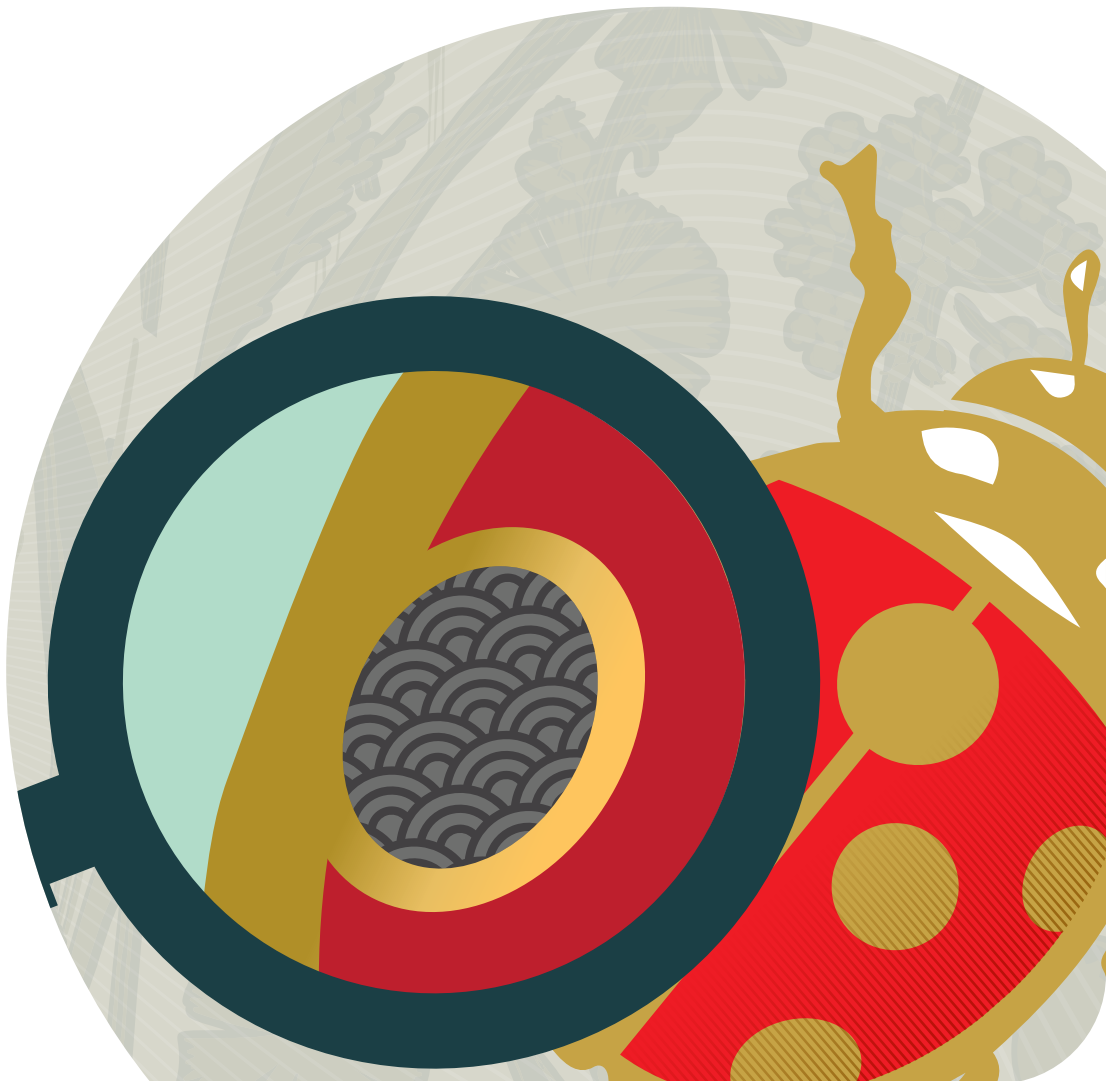
Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By the end of 2027, 90% of Business for Biodiversity Ireland members have conducted an assessment of impacts and dependencies on biodiversity, with at least 60% by end of 2025	3B11	Business for Biodiversity Ireland will support businesses in conducting materiality assessments and determining their impacts and dependencies on nature and biodiversity	Business for Biodiversity Ireland	% of Business for Biodiversity Ireland members with completed assessments of impacts and dependencies on biodiversity
By end 2025, Business for Biodiversity Ireland has published six sectoral best practice guidelines for business	3B12	Business for Biodiversity Ireland will produce guidance for Irish businesses on relevant international initiatives such as the Taskforce for Nature-related Financial Disclosures, and Science-based Targets for Nature etc.	Business for Biodiversity Ireland	National Biodiversity Indicators (NBI)-E.2. Number of biodiversity-related guidance documents published
By 2025, NPWS is supporting the development of a nature conservation volunteering project	3B13	Seek to establish nature conservation volunteering opportunities through collaborative partnerships	NPWS	Nature conservation volunteering opportunities are publicly available

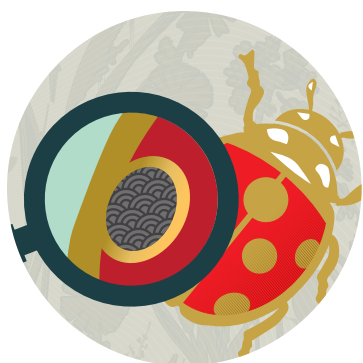
Outcome 3C: Planning and development will facilitate and secure biodiversity's contributions to people

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2030, shared responsibility for the conservation of biodiversity acted on	3C1	All Public Authorities and private sector bodies move towards no net loss of biodiversity through strategies, planning, mitigation measures, appropriate offsetting and/or investment in Blue-Green infrastructure	All relevant stakeholders	Number of plans articulating no net loss targets
By 2024, guidance is available on best practice for biodiversity, green infrastructure and nature-based solutions in planning and development	3C2	The Office of the Planning Regulator (OPR) will work to prepare and publish a Case Study Paper examining best practice in integrating green infrastructure, nature-based solutions and ecosystem services into the preparation of land use plans	OPR	Case Study Paper published by 2027
By 2030, the objectives of the NBAP, where relevant, are aligned with and integrated, within the statutory landuse plans of the Regional Assemblies and Planning Authorities and within LBAPs	3C3	All Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies, City and County Development Plans, Local Area Plans and LBAP's shall be aligned with the objectives of the NBAP, where relevant	DHLGH, [Regional Assemblies, Planning Authorities, Local Authorities, Office of the Planning Regulator]	Number of Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies, City and County Development Plans, Local Area Plans and LBAPs that align with the objectives of the NBAP
By 2024, DOT to enhance the consideration of local environmental impacts, including Biodiversity impacts, in transport scheme appraisal	3C4	DOT will update transport appraisal guidance and methodologies to include enhanced consideration of local environmental and biodiversity impacts	DOT	Publication of the Transport Appraisal Framework (TAF)

Objective Four

Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity





Introduction to this Objective

Objective Four aims to enhance the evidence base for action on biodiversity, which will underpin and strengthen future decisions relating to biodiversity.

The actions will identify research gaps which will facilitate more focussed research calls from funding bodies.

Actions are proposed to identify and address skills needs for biodiversity, such as ecology and taxonomy skills, as well as the need to mainstream biodiversity across other research disciplines.

Natural Capital (NC) is an economic metaphor for nature that frames nature in terms of its multiple values to human life and well-being. Our NC includes our biodiversity, ecosystems and other earth systems. The NC approach involves recognising, measuring and valuing these entities and processes. These accounts show changes in the health of our NC over time and can be used to inform decisions on national policy including land-use, human health, climate change mitigation and adaptation, energy, transport, taxation, education, etc.

When integrated with the system of national accounting, natural capital accounts make visible the economic cost of continuing to degrade nature and can inform new roadmaps toward a safer, healthier and more economically viable future for all. Action will focus on collaboration to advance ecosystem accounting and work towards assessment of stocks, flows and trends in ecosystem services.

Biodiversity and ecosystem data and monitoring are the other key focus areas under this Objective as these will provide the evidence required to assess Ireland's progress against this Plan. The actions proposed will continue and establish new long-term data collection and monitoring programmes and help to standardise the collection and dissemination of biodiversity and ecosystem data.

Outcome 4A: Research funding bodies will have an improved understanding of the research and skills required to address biodiversity research gaps

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2026, a review of biodiversity skills gaps is complete	4A1	An application will be made by relevant organisations to the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (EGFSN) to conduct a review of skills needs to address the biodiversity crisis e.g., ecologists, taxonomists, and biodiversity data experts	Relevant bodies	Completed application to EGFSN; Decision of EGFSN to complete assessment; Actions taken to address skills gaps (conditional on acceptance and completion of assessment)
By 2024, biodiversity research gaps, essential for supporting conservation and restoration, are identified and prioritised	4A2	Relevant research and policy networks will assess research priorities and knowledge gaps relating to biodiversity conservation and restoration	Relevant bodies	Publication of national biodiversity research priorities
By 2024, relevant government bodies will reflect biodiversity research priorities into research calls	4A3	Government bodies responsible for funding biodiversity research will evaluate opportunities to incorporate relevant biodiversity research priorities into research calls as appropriate	Government bodies	National inventory of funding opportunities that support biodiversity conservation and restoration; Number of biodiversity research priorities incorporated in research calls; Amount of national and EU funding accessed for biodiversity research
The National Museum of Ireland (NMI) will provide ongoing training for key taxonomic groups	4A4	NMI will lead identification workshops for key taxonomic groups	NMI	Delivery of annual identification workshops

Outcome 4B: Data relevant to biodiversity and ecosystems, including conservation needs, is widely accessible and standardised

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By the end of 2028, relevant environmental data relating to environmental authorisations associated with environmental assessments (EIA, AA) is more readily available and can be used to inform future project-related environmental assessments	4B1	The EPA, with the support of DHLGH/NPWS, will commission an assessment of the feasibility of an integrated site and monitoring data solution to make available centrally environmental monitoring data relating to environmental authorisations and associated monitoring data collected pre and post authorisations.	EPA	Feasibility of providing integrated site and data monitoring solutions undertaken by 2028 including recommendations for next phase
By 2027, OPW has made all relevant biodiversity datasets publicly available	4B2	OPW will collect biodiversity data in standardised way and make these data publicly available	OPW	Number of OPW biodiversity datasets made available
By 2027, the National Botanic Gardens has digitised the Irish vascular plant herbarium specimens	4B3	The National Botanic Gardens will provide data from digitised herbarium specimens from the National Herbarium according to EU FAIR	National Botanic Gardens	Digitisation of herbarium specimens; Publication of herbarium specimen data
By 2029, NMI will produce catalogues of sections of its biodiversity holdings	4B4	NMI will publish catalogues of Polychaeta, Platyhelminthes and Aculeata collections	NMI	Number of catalogues published as peer-reviewed articles and books
By 2030, the NMI will expand the available genetic samples of Irish cetaceans donated by citizen scientists and continue to make them available for research	4B5	NMI will expand the infrastructure for housing the Irish Cetacean Genetic Tissue Bank, and continue to provide sampling kits and training in their use to citizen scientists	NMI	Distribution of sampling kits to citizen scientists (estimate over 1,000) Repository of and access to genetic samples of Irish cetaceans will be available for research
By 2027, knowledge sharing between EU LIFE projects is facilitated	4B6	DECC and DHLGH will facilitate integration and alignment and knowledge sharing between EU LIFE projects that deliver benefits for biodiversity, climate and water	DECC and DHLGH	Actions to promote knowledge-sharing between EU LIFE projects e.g., conferences, meetings
By 2030, biodiversity and related data is widely accessible	4B7	NPWS and other relevant bodies will ensure that biodiversity and related data adheres to national open data policy	NPWS	Number of open data sets relating to biodiversity
By 2026, improved access to field derived habitat data	4B8	NBDC, in partnership with NPWS will examine the integration of habitat mapping with landcover mapping and assess data gaps	NBDC and NPWS	A process for the integration of habitat data into landcover mapping is established

Outcome 4C: Long-term monitoring programmes are in place to guide conservation and restoration goals

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2024, biodiversity monitoring programmes are sufficiently robust to detect changes over time and fulfil our national, regional and global reporting obligations	4C1	Monitoring of habitats and species listed on the EU Nature Directives will be continued and enhanced where required by NPWS and DECC	NPWS and DECC	Number of listed species included in monitoring programmes
By 2024, biodiversity monitoring programmes are sufficiently robust to detect changes over time and fulfil our national, regional and global reporting obligations	4C2	NPWS and relevant organisations will develop a site-based monitoring programme to monitor changes in biodiversity over time	NPWS	Programme is developed
By 2024, biodiversity monitoring programmes are sufficiently robust to detect changes over time and fulfil our national, regional, and global reporting obligations	4C3	Collaboration across Government to support biodiversity monitoring will be enhanced, in particular to support the biodiversity-related reporting requirements for the WFD, MSFD, NECD, EU Biodiversity Strategy and the CBD	Relevant Government Bodies	Number of strategic government collaborations in place; % biodiversity-related reporting requirements being met
By 2024, biodiversity monitoring programmes are sufficiently robust to detect changes over time and fulfil our national, regional and global reporting obligations	4C4	The contribution from citizen science to support biodiversity monitoring will be supported by all relevant organisations	All relevant stakeholders	A more robust set of citizen science-managed initiatives
By 2026, improved guidance and methodology for habitat surveying and mapping will be available	4C5	The Heritage Council will review and update the Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Survey And Mapping to better reflect changing needs and constraints in habitat mapping	The Heritage Council	Publication of updated Guidance by 2027
Ongoing publication of relevant Red Lists over the Plan period	4C6	NPWS, with input from relevant organisations, will publish Red List assessments for new species groups and update existing Red Lists to identify conservation priority terrestrial and marine species and knowledge gaps for prioritised species	NPWS and relevant stakeholders	Number of Red List assessments updated and published

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2024, Ireland's Biodiversity State of Knowledge report (by NBDC in 2010) is updated to demonstrate key knowledge gaps and utilised to develop a national biodiversity monitoring framework	4C7	NBDC will update the State of Knowledge and Key Knowledge Gaps in Ireland's Biodiversity report as the basis for development of a national biodiversity monitoring framework	NBDC	Updated state of knowledge and key knowledge gaps in Ireland's biodiversity report; National biodiversity monitoring framework developed by 2025
By end of 2023, a systematic baseline survey of priority invasive species and key hot-spot sites has been undertaken with subsequent periodic monitoring	4C8	The NBDC will, with relevant state partners, devise and undertake a systematic baseline survey for priority invasive species and hot-spot introduction sites with subsequent monitoring. This will be state-led and supported by Citizen Science engagement programmes	NBDC	Baseline survey results published
By 2027, measures for biodiversity implemented under the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) are monitored for their impact	4C9	DAFM will monitor the trends in measures beneficial for biodiversity supported under the CAP SP	DAFM	Status of habitats and species impacted by agricultural practices; Share of farms benefitting from CAP investment support contributing to biodiversity; Share of farms benefitting from CAP investment support contributing to biodiversity; Share of total Natura 2000 area under supported commitments; Share of utilised agricultural area (UAA) under supported commitments for managing landscape features, including hedgerows and trees; Changes in Result based Payment Scheme scoring under agri-environmental scheme support

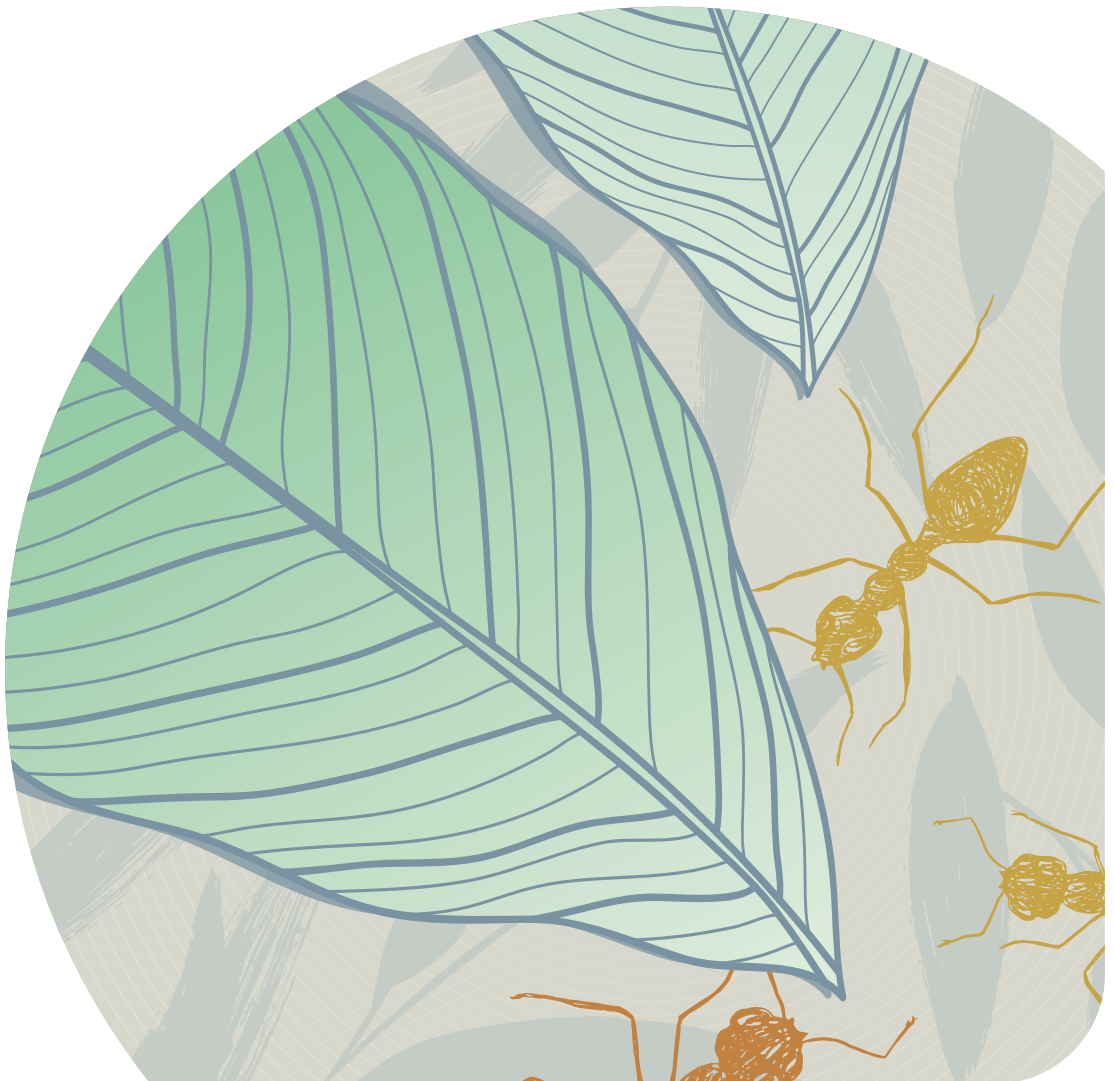
Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2030, habitat biodiversity assessments are conducted on all National Farm Survey (NFS) farms	4C10	DAFM and Teagasc and other relevant stakeholders will build capacity to work towards ensuring habitat biodiversity assessments are conducted on all NFS farms on a regular basis, and will endeavour to include biodiversity assessments on the Small Farms Survey	DAFM and Teagasc	Number of completed habitat biodiversity assessments on all NFS farms
By 2025, a national long-term programme is in place to assess and monitor habitat quality, quantity, connectivity and change on agricultural lands	4C11	DAFM and other relevant stakeholders will collaborate to establish the programme which will improve availability of data to better assess the impact of existing policies and better inform future policy	DAFM and relevant stakeholders	Programme established
NMI will provide guidance, ongoing support and resources to ensure long-term storage of voucher specimens from monitoring programmes	4C12	NMI will manage voucher specimen deposits from monitoring and research managed by partner organisations including NMI, NBDC and others	NMI	Guidance published on sample preparation, labelling, transport and long-term storage; Accessible repository of voucher specimens from long-term monitoring programmes associated with their digitised records

Outcome 4D: Ireland has prepared national assessments of ecosystem services

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2027, systems and standards for natural capital accounting are being developed and implemented in Ireland	4D1	A network of experts in Natural Capital Accounting will be established for the island of Ireland	DECC, DHLGH and relevant stakeholders	Establishment of the network
By 2027, systems and standards for natural capital accounting are being developed and implemented in Ireland	4D2	The Central Statistics Office (CSO) will collaborate to advance ecosystem accounting and reporting methods and standards in Ireland, in line with the SEEA-EA framework	CSO	The ecosystem accounts of Ireland will be developed in line with the SEEA-EA framework
By 2027, mainstream the natural capital approach across sectors	4D3	Relevant bodies will develop appropriate guidance for key sectors on the use of Natural Capital Accounting.	Relevant bodies	Guidance developed
By 2027, first national ecosystem accounts completed	4D4	CSO will develop ecosystem accounts for Ireland	CSO	Ireland has prepared national ecosystems accounts
By 2027, first national assessment of ecosystem accounts is completed	4D5	Relevant organisations will conduct a national assessment of stocks, flows and trends in ecosystem services to identify priority ecosystems and threats to natural capital using appropriate tools, to be coordinated with relevant authorities in NI	Relevant organisations	Completed national assessment of ecosystem services

Objective Five

Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives





Introduction to this Objective

Objective Five aims to strengthen Ireland's contribution to international biodiversity initiatives, including those related to science and data, such as the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES), and the EU Biodiversity Platform. This Objective also deals with how Ireland participates in international governance processes, such as the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity (UN CBD).

The importance of an all-island approach is recognised, particularly relating to supporting research networks and tackling invasive alien species.

Collaboration with other countries will play a key role in the realisation of this objective, particularly in relation to the support Ireland can provide to Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States through financial aid and knowledge sharing.

Ireland will also collate and contribute our biodiversity data to global data hubs and networks working to better understand the global state of biodiversity, such as the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) and the European Environment Agency (EEA).

Outcome 5A: Science, policy and action on biodiversity conservation and restoration is effectively coordinated in an all-island approach

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2024, cross-border consortia will collaborate to secure grant funding to deliver biodiversity-related projects	5A1	NPWS will maintain biodiversity as a focus area under the Shared Island initiative, and incentivise groups to avail of joint funding opportunities such as EU LIFE, PEACE Plus and INTERREG	NPWS	National Biodiversity Indicators (NBI)-D.4.ii Amount of funding for biodiversity leveraged from EU LIFE Programme; Number of cross-border biodiversity projects
By 2025, Ireland has adopted an all-island approach to invasive species	5A2	NPWS and other relevant stakeholders will deliver on the National Invasive Species Management Plan (forthcoming), and continue to cooperate with NI authorities on identifying and delivering on all-island actions to control and manage IAS	NPWS and relevant stakeholders	National Management Plan for Invasive Alien Species is developed and implemented; All-island cooperation on IAS between relevant authorities is codified
By 2027, investment priorities on biodiversity in Shared Island chapter of the revised National Development Plan are implemented	5A3	NPWS and other relevant Departments will implement the Shared Island biodiversity investment objectives in the revised NDP, resourced through the Shared Island Fund and other sources.	NPWS and relevant stakeholders	Number of investment priorities implemented
By 2027, the AICBRN is advancing climate and biodiversity research with the support of government	5A4	The Government will work with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (Northern Ireland) (DAERA) to support the work of the All-Island Climate and Biodiversity Research Network	Relevant bodies	Funding to AICBRN
By 2025, the All-Island Pollinator Plan (AIPP) is supported	5A5	Relevant bodies will continue to support and utilise the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan	Relevant bodies	Number of AIPP actions achieved
By 2028, the evidence base of the current and future impacts of climate change on biodiversity has been strengthened	5A6	Relevant departments, agencies, and relevant academic institutions North and South will build on research to explore current and projected impacts of climate change on biodiversity	Relevant bodies	Number of research projects funded on impacts of climate change on biodiversity

Outcome 5B: Ireland takes action internationally to cooperate with other countries, sectors, disciplines and communities to address the biodiversity crisis

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2023, Ireland has strengthened the inclusion of biodiversity in international diplomacy and financing	5B1	In line with Ireland's Climate Finance Roadmap 2022, and to further the aims of the GBF to protect 30% of land and seas by 2030, the Department of Foreign Affairs (DFA) will increase Ireland's Overseas Development Aid contributions to biodiversity-related projects, prioritising Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States	DFA	At least 15% of Ireland's annual Climate Finance will have biodiversity protection/restoration as one of the intended objectives of programming; Ireland will scale up support for the designation and management of marine protected areas
By 2023, Ireland has strengthened the inclusion of biodiversity in international diplomacy and financing	5B2	The DFA will advocate for sustainable ocean management, ocean protection and vulnerable coastal communities through participation in international fora, particularly the to UNFCCC and related Dialogues, and the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD, recognising the important role of the ocean in climate action and in the preservation of global biodiversity	DFA	Increased engagement with Small Island Developing States on Ocean and Nature initiatives through funding and international advocacy
By 2023, Ireland has strengthened the inclusion of biodiversity in international diplomacy and financing	5B3	Ireland will support efforts to achieve the swift entry into force of the new global Agreement on Marine Biodiversity beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ), the establishment of its structures, and ambitious plans of work within its framework	Relevant bodies	Ratification by Ireland of the Agreement on the conservation and sustainable use of marine biological diversity of areas beyond national jurisdiction by end of 2024
By 2025, Ireland has enhanced its engagement with international biodiversity initiatives	5B4	Ireland will enhance its engagement with EU and international biodiversity initiatives and research, e.g., EU Biodiversity Platform, CBD, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, OSPAR, RAMSAR and IPBES	Relevant bodies	Engagement makes a clear contribution to national biodiversity initiatives

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2025, Ireland has enhanced its engagement with international biodiversity initiatives	5B5	NPWS, with relevant research funding organisations and research performing organisations, will explore ways to incentivise increased participation from Ireland's research community in IPBES assessment reports, meetings and nomination processes	NPWS	Number of scientific staff and/or institutions participating in the IPBES assessment process; Number of IPBES meetings attended by Ireland-based expert personnel
By 2025, Ireland takes enhanced measures to safeguard against the risk of fraud and other indirect effects of its renewable transport fuels policy and targets for the use of biofuels, considering the potential high ILUC-risk and detrimental impact to global biodiversity	5B6	DOT will establish a working group to progress a voluntary vulnerability assessment of the current and projected future biofuels supply into Ireland, with a view to identifying scope for risk of biofuel fraud (leading to high ILUC-risk) and other indirect impacts and making recommendations concerning improvements	DOT	Renewable Transport Fuels Policy 2023-2025/RTFO Certification Scheme

Outcome 5C: Ireland enhances its contributions to the international biodiversity data drive

Target	Action number	Action	Partner(s)	Indicator
By 2024, a system is in place to facilitate enhanced contributions to EU and international data hubs and networks	5C1	NPWS, NMI and NBDC will ensure that Ireland increases the quantity and quality of its contributions to European and international biodiversity data hubs and networks such as the Global Biodiversity Information Facility and the EEA	NPWS, NMI and NBDC	Number of data contributions to EU and international data hubs and networks

Members of the Biodiversity Working Group

Department/Organisation
National Parks & Wildlife Service
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine
Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications
Department of Education
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
Department of Rural and Community Development
Environmental Protection Agency
Inland Fisheries Ireland
Uisce Éireann
Marine Institute
National Biodiversity Data Centre
Office of Public Works
Teagasc
Heritage Council
Bord Na Móna
County and City Management Association
Department of Foreign Affairs
Central Statistics Office
UCD - Chair of Biodiversity Forum
Department of Transport

Members of the Biodiversity Forum

Organisation
University College Dublin
Irish Wildlife Trust
Coillte
An Taisce
Atlantic Technological University
Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management
Birdwatch Ireland
Heritage Officer, Sligo CoCo
Biodiversity Officer, DLR CoCo
FACE Ireland/NARGC
Dublin Zoo
Irish Rural Link
Irish Whale and Dolphin Group
Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (NI)
University College Cork
IBEC

Members of the Business for Biodiversity Platform Advisory Group

Organisation
Natural Capital Ireland
Business in the Community Ireland
National Biodiversity Data Centre
National Parks & Wildlife Service
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine

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Appendix 1

Alignment with the Global Biodiversity Framework

GBF TARGET	TARGET	Contribution of NBAP, or other relevant Government policy, to the Global Biodiversity Targets
TARGET 1	Ensure that all areas are under participatory, integrated and biodiversity inclusive spatial planning and/or effective management processes addressing land- and seause change, to bring the loss of areas of high biodiversity importance, including ecosystems of high ecological integrity, close to zero by 2030, while respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities.	The NBAP works on the principle that existing regulations associated with EU Directives relating to the protection of biodiversity will be implemented. This includes Article 6 of the Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) which obliges member states to undertake an ‘appropriate assessment’ (AA) for any plan or project which may have a likely significant effect on any European Site; the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive (2011/92/EU) which covers environmental assessment which can be undertaken for individual projects; the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive (2001/42/EC) for public plans or programmes; and the Environmental Liabilities Directive (2004/35/CE) based on the “polluter pays” principle to prevent and remedy environmental damage. All impact assessment processes require public consultation.
TARGET 2	Ensure that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of areas of degraded terrestrial, inland water, and marine and coastal ecosystems are under effective restoration, in order to enhance biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, ecological integrity and connectivity.	Actions within the NBAP include the preparation and delivery of a National Restoration Plan.
TARGET 3	Ensure and enable that by 2030 at least 30 per cent of terrestrial and inland water areas, and of marine and coastal areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, are effectively conserved and managed through ecologically representative, well-connected and equitably governed systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures, recognizing indigenous and traditional territories, where applicable, and integrated into wider landscapes, seascapes and the ocean, while ensuring that any sustainable use, where appropriate in such areas, is fully consistent with conservation outcomes, recognizing and respecting the rights of indigenous peoples and local communities, including over their traditional territories.	The selection and notification of sites for the protection of Annex habitats and species listed on the EU Habitats and Birds Directives will be completed. Areas are being examined for the pledging process following the criteria laid out under the EU Biodiversity Strategy. Commitments have been made to enact and implement comprehensive legislation enabling the designation and management of MPAs and the expansion of Ireland’s network of area-based conservation measures in the coastal and marine environment with the number and spatial coverage of designated MPAs reaching 30% by 2030.

GBF TARGET	TARGET	Contribution of NBAP, or other relevant Government policy, to the Global Biodiversity Targets
TARGET 4	Ensure urgent management actions to halt human induced extinction of known threatened species and for the recovery and conservation of species, in particular threatened species, to significantly reduce extinction risk, as well as to maintain and restore the genetic diversity within and between populations of native, wild and domesticated species to maintain their adaptive potential, including through in situ and ex situ conservation and sustainable management practices, and effectively manage human-wildlife interactions to minimize human-wildlife conflict for coexistence.	NBAP actions specify the implementation of conservation measures necessary to achieve the conservation objectives for Natura 2000 sites and the implementation of Species Action or Threat Response Plans. This includes setting population targets for threatened and endangered species that are in Unfavourable status or have declining trends, support for species conservation programmes, support for <i>ex situ</i> conservation including seed banks and biobanks. A National Restoration Plan will also include actions to safeguard habitat for species.
TARGET 5	Ensure that the use, harvesting and trade of wild species is sustainable, safe and legal, preventing overexploitation, minimizing impacts on non-target species and ecosystems, and reducing the risk of pathogen spillover, applying the ecosystem approach, while respecting and protecting customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities.	Consent systems are in place for the management of the exploitation of protected species. The NBAP includes an action to review this licensing and consent system.
TARGET 6	Eliminate, minimize, reduce and or mitigate the impacts of invasive alien species on biodiversity and ecosystem services by identifying and managing pathways of the introduction of alien species, preventing the introduction and establishment of priority invasive alien species, reducing the rates of introduction and establishment of other known or potential invasive alien species by at least 50 per cent by 2030, and eradicating or controlling invasive alien species, especially in priority sites, such as islands.	The NBAP has high ambition for the control of invasive alien species, including the development of national plans to implement aspects of the EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation and relevant national legislation, implementation of conservation action to control and remove invasive alien species, publication of risk assessments, the development of biosecurity protocols and standard operating procedures.
TARGET 7	Reduce pollution risks and the negative impact of pollution from all sources by 2030, to levels that are not harmful to biodiversity and ecosystem functions and services, considering cumulative effects, including: (a) by reducing excess nutrients lost to the environment by at least half, including through more efficient nutrient cycling and use; (b) by reducing the overall risk from pesticides and highly hazardous chemicals by at least half, including through integrated pest management, based on science, taking into account food security and livelihoods; and (c) by preventing, reducing, and working towards eliminating plastic pollution.	Pollution control is covered by many policies, including the imminent 3rd RBMP which will outline the approach that Ireland will take as it works to protect and restore its rivers, lakes, estuaries and coastal waters over the third-cycle of the EU WFD. The NAP encourages circular and localised nutrient management and reduced loss of Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and soil to the aquatic environment. There are commitments to implement existing and new measures to reduce chemical pesticide use and risk, as well as the use of more hazardous pesticides in line with the EU regulatory framework for pesticides. Minimising the impacts from plastic pollution is covered in the <i>Waste Action Plan for a Circular Economy</i> .

GBF TARGET	TARGET	Contribution of NBAP, or other relevant Government policy, to the Global Biodiversity Targets
TARGET 8	Minimize the impact of climate change and ocean acidification on biodiversity and increase its resilience through mitigation, adaptation, and disaster risk reduction actions, including through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches, while minimizing negative and fostering positive impacts of climate action on biodiversity.	The links with Climate Change manifest through restoration efforts on habitats that improve resilience to climate change, particularly peatlands. Nature-based Solutions (NBS) will be promoted in national, regional and local programmes, including flood relief schemes. Best practise will be developed relating to the integration of NBS into the preparation of land use plans.
TARGET 9	Ensure that the management and use of wild species are sustainable, thereby providing social, economic and environmental benefits for people, especially those in vulnerable situations and those most dependent on biodiversity, including through sustainable biodiversity-based activities, products and services that enhance biodiversity, and protecting and encouraging customary sustainable use by indigenous peoples and local communities.	A foreshore licence is required to extract seaweed from the foreshore. Maximum sustainable yield principles are applied to fish and shellfish. Consent systems are also in place for all protected species.
TARGET 10	Ensure that areas under agriculture, aquaculture, fisheries and forestry are managed sustainably, in particular through the sustainable use of biodiversity, including through a substantial increase of the application of biodiversity friendly practices, such as sustainable intensification, agroecological and other innovative approaches, contributing to the resilience and long-term efficiency and productivity of these production systems, and to food security, conserving and restoring biodiversity and maintaining nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services.	The ACRES under the CAP SP aims to help address biodiversity decline via a results-based approach, as well as tailored farm and landscape actions. Proposals for the new Forestry Programme include an annual broadleaf target to increase to 50% of total planting and targeted measures for native forests and ecosystem services. This policy will promote expansion of native forests and areas planted can be managed for wood production using Continuous Cover Forestry practices where it is compatible with onsite biodiversity. Ireland will continue to implement the EU's CFP in order to provide for the long-term conservation of fish and shellfish stocks and marine biodiversity. Multiannual Plans and remedial measures for vulnerable stocks aim to ensure that the exploitation of living marine biological resources restores and maintains populations of harvested.
TARGET 11	Restore, maintain and enhance nature's contributions to people, including ecosystem functions and services, such as the regulation of air, water and climate, soil health, pollination and reduction of disease risk, as well as protection from natural hazards and disasters, through nature-based solutions and/or ecosystem-based approaches for the benefit of all people and nature.	NBS will be promoted in national, regional and local programmes, including flood relief schemes. Best practise will be developed relating to the integration of NBS into the preparation of land use plans. The NBAP has a restoration focus which will enhance Nature's Contribution to People.

GBF TARGET	TARGET	Contribution of NBAP, or other relevant Government policy, to the Global Biodiversity Targets
TARGET 12	Significantly increase the area and quality, and connectivity of, access to, and benefits from green and blue spaces in urban and densely populated areas sustainably, by mainstreaming the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, and ensure biodiversity-inclusive urban planning, enhancing native biodiversity, ecological connectivity and integrity, and improving human health and well-being and connection to nature, and contributing to inclusive and sustainable urbanization and to the provision of ecosystem functions and services.	Local Authorities will work to identify and respond to opportunities for enhancing the biocultural value of green and blue urban environments.
TARGET 13	Take effective legal, policy, administrative and capacity-building measures at all levels, as appropriate, to ensure the fair and equitable sharing of benefits that arise from the utilization of genetic resources and from digital sequence information on genetic resources, as well as traditional knowledge associated with genetic resources, and facilitating appropriate access to genetic resources, and by 2030, facilitating a significant increase of the benefits shared, in accordance with applicable international access and benefit-sharing instruments.	Ireland has recently ratified the Nagoya Protocol and will put in place an operational framework to facilitate implementation in conjunction with other stakeholders/competent authorities across sectors and other Government agencies
TARGET 14	Ensure the full integration of biodiversity and its multiple values into policies, regulations, planning and development processes, poverty eradication strategies, strategic environmental assessments, environmental impact assessments and, as appropriate, national accounting, within and across all levels of government and across all sectors, in particular those with significant impacts on biodiversity, progressively aligning all relevant public and private activities, and fiscal and financial flows with the goals and targets of this framework.	The NBAP has committed to collate estimates of Government investment in biodiversity. Other actions focus on collaboration to advance ecosystem accounting and work towards assessment of stocks, flows and trends in ecosystem services.

GBF TARGET	TARGET	Contribution of NBAP, or other relevant Government policy, to the Global Biodiversity Targets
TARGET 15	<p>Take legal, administrative or policy measures to encourage and enable business, and in particular to ensure that large and transnational companies and financial institutions:</p> <p>(a) Regularly monitor, assess, and transparently disclose their risks, dependencies and impacts on biodiversity, including with requirements for all large as well as transnational companies and financial institutions along their operations, supply and value chains, and portfolios; (b) Provide information needed to consumers to promote sustainable consumption patterns; (c) Report on compliance with access and benefit-sharing regulations and measures, as applicable; in order to progressively reduce negative impacts on biodiversity, increase positive impacts, reduce biodiversity-related risks to business and financial institutions, and promote actions to ensure sustainable patterns of production.</p>	<p>The Sustainable Finance Disclosure Regulation (SFDR) is a European regulation introduced to improve transparency in the market for sustainable investment products, to prevent greenwashing and to increase transparency around sustainability claims made by financial market participants. Business for Biodiversity Ireland is a Government funded Platform set up to encourage and incentivise Irish businesses to assess their impacts and dependencies on biodiversity, with a view to managing and availing of associated risks and opportunities respectively. The NBAP commits to providing support to this Platform.</p>
TARGET 16	<p>Ensure that people are encouraged and enabled to make sustainable consumption choices, including by establishing supportive policy, legislative or regulatory frameworks, improving education and access to relevant and accurate information and alternatives, and by 2030, reduce the global footprint of consumption in an equitable manner, including through halving global food waste, significantly reducing overconsumption and substantially reducing waste generation, in order for all people to live well in harmony with Mother Earth.</p>	<p>The draft National Food Waste Prevention Roadmap sets out information on the context of food waste and the components of the food supply chain that are included in the roadmap (primary production, manufacturing and processing, retail and distribution, restaurants and food services, and households). There are also proposed targets to achieve a food waste reduction of 50% by 2030. This will feed into the Circular Economy Strategy and the Waste Action Plan for the Circular Economy.</p>
TARGET 17	<p>Establish, strengthen capacity for, and implement in all countries, biosafety measures as set out in Article 8(g) of the Convention on Biological Diversity and measures for the handling of biotechnology and distribution of its benefits as set out in Article 19 of the Convention.</p>	<p>Under Regulation (EC) No. 1829/2003, only EU-authorized Genetically Modified (GM) foods may be placed on the market in Ireland. Stringent traceability and labelling rules must be observed for the marketing of these foods. GM crops, food and feed are subject to a comprehensive risk assessment by the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) and subsequent regulatory votes by Member States before they are authorised for use in the EU. The risk assessment is designed to ensure GM crops and GM food and feed do not pose a risk to human health, animal health and the environment.</p>

GBF TARGET	TARGET	Contribution of NBAP, or other relevant Government policy, to the Global Biodiversity Targets
TARGET 18	Identify by 2025, and eliminate, phase out or reform incentives, including subsidies, harmful for biodiversity, in a proportionate, just, fair, effective and equitable way, while substantially and progressively reducing them by at least \$500 billion per year by 2030, starting with the most harmful incentives, and scale up positive incentives for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.	The NBAP has committed to develop proposals and implement systems to track and report expenditure allocations on measures that may adversely affect biodiversity.
TARGET 19	Substantially and progressively increase the level of financial resources from all sources, in an effective, timely and easily accessible manner, including domestic, international, public and private resources, in accordance with Article 20 of the Convention, to implement national biodiversity strategies and action plans, mobilizing at least \$200 billion per year by 2030, including by: (a) Increasing total biodiversity related international financial resources from developed countries, including official development assistance, and from countries that voluntarily assume obligations of developed country Parties, to developing countries, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States, as well as countries with economies in transition, to at least \$20 billion per year by 2025, and to at least \$30 billion per year by 2030; (b) Significantly increasing domestic resource mobilization, facilitated by the preparation and implementation of national biodiversity finance plans or similar instruments according to national needs, priorities and circumstances; (c) Leveraging private finance, promoting blended finance, implementing strategies for raising new and additional resources, and encouraging the private sector to invest in biodiversity, including through impact funds and other instruments; (d) Stimulating innovative schemes such as payment for ecosystem services, green bonds, biodiversity offsets and credits, and benefit-sharing mechanisms, with environmental and social safeguards; (e) Optimizing co-benefits and synergies of finance targeting the biodiversity and climate crises; (f) Enhancing the role of collective actions, including by indigenous peoples and local communities, Mother Earth centric actions and non-market-based approaches including community based natural resource management and civil society cooperation and solidarity aimed at the conservation of biodiversity; (g) Enhancing the effectiveness, efficiency and transparency of resource provision and use;	The NBAP will be supported by a Infrastructure, Climate and Nature Fund; mechanisms to blend finance from the private sector will also be considered. Overseas Development Aid for Biodiversity-related projects will be increased.

GBF TARGET	TARGET	Contribution of NBAP, or other relevant Government policy, to the Global Biodiversity Targets
TARGET 20	Strengthen capacity-building and development, access to and transfer of technology, and promote development of and access to innovation and technical and scientific cooperation, including through South-South, North-South and triangular cooperation, to meet the needs for effective implementation, particularly in developing countries, fostering joint technology development and joint scientific research programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity and strengthening scientific research and monitoring capacities, commensurate with the ambition of the goals and targets of the Framework.	Actions focus on collaboration across the island of Ireland and within the EU to improve research capabilities and expand monitoring programmes.
TARGET 21	Ensure that the best available data, information and knowledge are accessible to decision makers, practitioners and the public to guide effective and equitable governance, integrated and participatory management of biodiversity, and to strengthen communication, awareness-raising, education, monitoring, research and knowledge management and, also in this context, traditional knowledge, innovations, practices and technologies of indigenous peoples and local communities should only be accessed with their free, prior and informed consent, in accordance with national legislation.	Open data access is promoted in the NBAP. Exploration of how to make data associated with environmental authorisations more widely accessible will be undertaken
TARGET 22	Ensure the full, equitable, inclusive, effective and gender-responsive representation and participation in decision-making, and access to justice and information related to biodiversity by indigenous peoples and local communities, respecting their cultures and their rights over lands, territories, resources, and traditional knowledge, as well as by women and girls, children and youth, and persons with disabilities and ensure the full protection of environmental human rights defenders.	The Aarhus Convention and its Protocol on Pollutant Release and Transfer Registers empower people with the rights to access information, participate in decision-making in environmental matters and to seek justice. Extensive stakeholder engagement was undertaken during the development of this NBAP, including a national conference, public consultation process and parallel citizens and youth assemblies on biodiversity loss.
TARGET 23	Ensure gender equality in the implementation of the Framework through a gender-responsive approach, where all women and girls have equal opportunity and capacity to contribute to the three objectives of the Convention, including by recognizing their equal rights and access to land and natural resources and their full, equitable, meaningful and informed participation and leadership at all levels of action, engagement, policy and decision-making related to biodiversity.	The Constitution of Ireland provides that “all citizens shall, as human persons, be held equal before the law”. The Civil Service Renewal Plan launched in 2014 contains a commitment to improving gender balance. A “Balance for Better Business” was launched in 2018 to set companies on a path towards the equal representation of men and women on their boards and leadership teams. Government funding is provided for positive action for gender equality and initiatives to promote equality for women and girls under the National Strategy for Women and Girls.

Appendix 2

NBAP Objectives supporting the Sustainable Development Goals

The NBAP Objectives focus on the conservation and restoration of biodiversity and promotes a whole-of-society approach to tackling the challenge of biodiversity loss. This means that the associated actions have a key role underpinning many of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Biodiversity is essential to food provision and is an important determinant of food quality. The different crop varieties and animal breeds used in agriculture are derived from the genetic diversity of biodiversity. In addition, biodiversity directly supports agriculture systems by helping to ensure soil fertility, pollination and pest control (Goal 2, zero hunger); Intact ecosystems and biodiversity help mitigate the spread and impact of pollution, by both sequestering and eliminating certain types of air, water and soil pollution. Water-related ecosystem services, including the sustainable supply of clean freshwater, are delivered through ecosystem functions underpinned by biodiversity and healthy ecosystems (Goal 6, clean water and sanitation); Biodiversity and healthy ecosystems can provide reliable and cost-effective green infrastructure that can be resilient to a changing climate. Examples include coastal zone and river margin habitats that provide flood risk protection and storm-water management and urban green spaces that help protect against air pollution (Goal 9, industry, innovation and infrastructure & Goal 13, climate action); Biodiversity is essential for the functioning and well-being of human settlements, underpinning the core natural resources, such as water and food supply, regulating temperature and absorbing pollution, reducing disaster risk, and providing healthy urban environments (Global 11, sustainable cities and communities).

Goal 14 (life below water) and Goal 15 (life on land) are the more explicit biodiversity-related targets. The targets underpinning these Goals are aimed at the conservation, restoration and sustainable use of ecosystems, the protection of threatened species, combatting Invasive Alien Species, the integration of biodiversity values into planning and development strategies and accounts and the increased mobilisation of resources for conservation from all sources.

Improved governance, inclusivity and transparency in the delivery of this NBAP supports Goal 16 (peace justice and strong institutions) and Goal 17 (partnerships for the goals).

The table below links the NBAP objectives with the most relevant SDG Goal.

NBAP Objective	SDG Goals
 Objective 1: Adopt a Whole-of-Government, Whole-of-Society Approach to Biodiversity	 15 16
 Objective 2: Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs	 2 6 13 14 15
 Objective 3: Secure Nature's Contribution to People	 8 9 11
 Objective 4: Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity	 13 14 15
 Objective 5: Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives	 10 17



Sisyrinchium bermudiana (blue-eyed grass). Credit: Aoife Delaney

