



An Roinn Tithíochta,
Rialtais Áitiúil agus Oidhreachta
Department of Housing,
Local Government and Heritage

Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan

Draft for Public Consultation



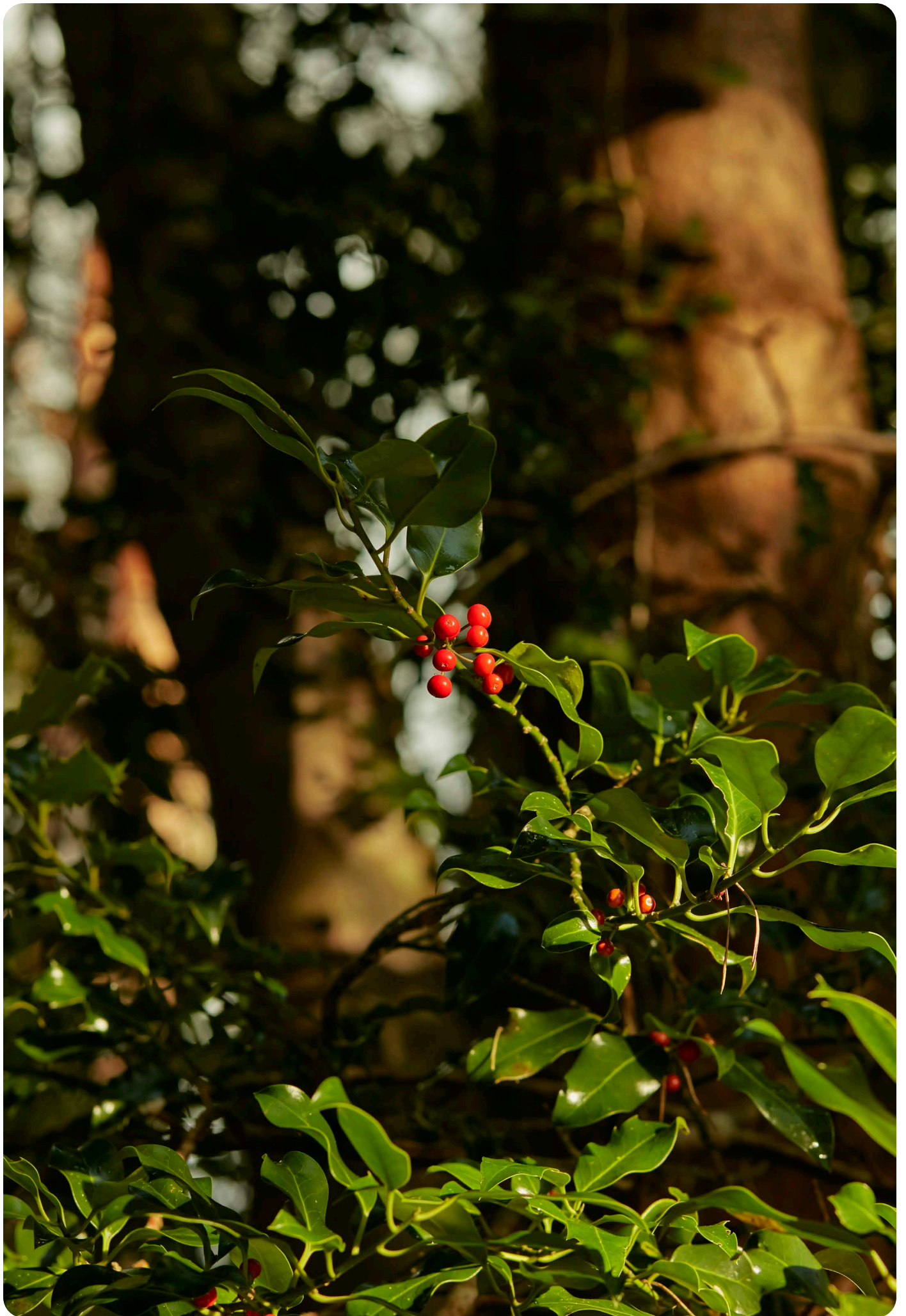
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Ministerial Foreword

Ireland's fourth National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) is set against a backdrop of unprecedented challenges for nature in Ireland and globally. How we collectively and collaboratively address these challenges will define not just our ability to halt biodiversity loss, but how we as a species will survive and thrive into the future.

To that end, we now need to focus on the opportunities that may present to us by agreement on a new Global Biodiversity Framework, on the EU Biodiversity Strategy and Nature Restoration Law and how within that context, we frame an ambitious and deliverable NBAP for Ireland.



We have a lot of positives to draw from and inspire us. The Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss and the parallel Children and Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss will help to inform us on the way forward, through new ideas, new ways of doing things and new ways of collaborating towards the conservation and restoration of nature in Ireland. I think it's of particular importance to include the voices of young people in a meaningful way in our big conversations on nature.

The renewal of the National Parks and Wildlife Service through my action plan will strengthen our collective ability towards ensuring that the next NBAP is an all-of-government and all-of-society response to this great challenge. A strengthened NPWS will be in a much better place to lead on an all of government plan for biodiversity.

The recent 2nd National Biodiversity Conference inspired all in attendance towards this great collective action. People and organisations from diverse backgrounds and often with divergent views on how we address the decline in nature, left with a sense of common purpose.

I am conscious too that the majority of land, including our most valuable habitats and protected areas in Ireland is in private ownership, including under farming or other productive use and that the management of our rivers, seas and lakes involves many stakeholders. I have met many of these stakeholders over the past few years and I know that all want to do the right thing for nature.

I strongly believe that it is possible for nature to flourish alongside thriving rural, coastal and upland local economies; in fact I believe they are interdependent. Nature will thrive side by side with sustainable communities living within the boundaries of nature's ability to provide the services they depend on.

So the big thing for me is the ongoing conversation. For far too long, the debate on nature has been one of conservation vs exploitation/economic development. We haven't always listened to each other. We have made mistakes in the past in the way we set aside land for protection. The new way of doing things must involve active listening and hearing all points of view. It's really important that 'the next National Biodiversity Action Plan be in itself a living document. Yes, it must be actionable and impactful, but it must also reflect the different voices that will inform its content and we must establish means of continuing the conversation, to learn from what works and what doesn't, to adapt and to change as necessary. That's what nature does.

In a time of great worry and concern about the natural world, I remain hopeful that as a curious and creative species, that we possess the tools and empathy to make our planet safe for the other living things we share this earth with.

Our health, prosperity and wellbeing are dependent on healthy ecosystems, clean water and seas teeming with life. I look forward to working with everyone on the great challenge ahead; the restoration and conservation of nature in Ireland through the next National Biodiversity Action Plan.

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A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Malcom Noonan", followed by a horizontal line.

Malcom Noonan TD,
Minister of State for Heritage and Electoral Reform

Introduction

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; the variation between species, the diversity of individuals within a species (their genetic variation), and the variety of different habitats and ecosystems that these species create and inhabit. A fourth level of biodiversity can also be recognised - the landscape level, referring to the diverse and complex natural landscape patterns that habitats and ecosystems help to create. Human beings, as well as livestock and crops, are also a part of biodiversity, as are the various man-made habitats that exist in parks, farmland and gardens.

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) environment of the 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 series of interconnected ecosystems. Within an ecosystem, all aspects of the environment (biodiversity and the non-living surroundings) interact and affect one another.

Healthy ecosystems provide the essential resources upon which all life depends. For example, forests help to regulate the composition of the atmosphere and produce oxygen, while oceans and river systems provide essential fishery resources. A great many ecosystems, including marine areas, forests, grasslands and wetlands, contribute to the regulation of the world’s climate, and can influence local micro-climates. Millions of people worldwide depend directly on ecosystems for the production of food, medicines, timber, fuel, and fibre. Ecosystems also play important roles in the water cycle, regulating the flow of water through the landscape, and the amount of sediment and contaminants which affect important water resources. They also provide important areas for recreation and amenity. These and other important benefits, often called “ecosystem services”, are essential to our society, our economic development, and our health and well-being, and are worth billions of euro to the Irish economy every year (e.g. Bullock *et al.* 2016, Norton *et al.* 2018).

In addition to its various intrinsic and economic values, biodiversity is a core element of our natural heritage, and has intimate connections to our society and culture. Ireland’s biodiversity is deeply connected to the history and use of the Irish language, to our history of storytelling and mythology, to our artistic and literary traditions, to our food heritage, to our major heritage sites and to local cultural observances. Often many of these connections tend to be overlooked by modern Irish society. Yet, during the Covid-19 pandemic, people and communities throughout the island have reconnected with nature; with our parks, gardens and open natural spaces being so important for recreation and social connection.

Biodiversity loss, that is, when the variety of species, genetic resources or communities is reduced, is a huge social, political and economic issue for Ireland and the global community. Humans currently dominate life on Earth, with nearly 95% of land surface modified by activities such as agriculture, city development, energy infrastructure and mining.

Ongoing unsustainable development has 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 but the current extinction rate is unprecedented and accelerating (IPBES 2019). Species decline and extinction are beginning to affect the ecosystem services we utterly depend upon, such as the production of food and water, pollination, flood control, soil formation and nutrient cycling. These services are essential to human survival, to our health and well-being, and to economic prosperity

The Convention on Biological Diversity

During the 1980s, the importance of sustainable development became a key issue for governments around the world, as the impacts and risks that environmental degradation posed for social and economic well-being became increasingly clear. The global nature of many environmental issues, including climate change, ozone depletion, air and water pollution, and biodiversity loss, inspired the world's governments to come together to attempt to tackle these issues in a spirit of partnership and based on sharing of knowledge, experience and resources.

As part of this collective effort, the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, also known as the Biodiversity Convention or CBD for short, opened for signatures by member countries of the UN in 1992, coming into force in 1993. As of 2022 there are 196 Parties to the convention, including the European Union and each of its member countries. Ireland signed the convention in 1992 and ratified it in 1996.

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

The need for a National Biodiversity Action Plan

The main mechanism by which Parties, such as Ireland, implement this global agreement is through the development and implementation of National Biodiversity Strategies and Action Plans, as required under Article 6 of the Convention. Parties are expected to design and regularly review these plans to reflect their national circumstances, and as far as is possible must integrate biodiversity into other relevant sectoral or cross-sectoral plans, programmes and policies. Ireland's first National Biodiversity Action Plan was launched in 2002. The current draft NBAP now open for public consultation will be Ireland's fourth, covering the five-year period from 2023 to 2027.

Since 1992, the scope of the CBD's work and the breadth of thematic areas addressed by the Conference of the Parties has been regularly reviewed and expanded as new environmental issues have emerged and as our understanding of the relationships between biodiversity and other societal challenges has increased. For example, areas of recently focused attention include the linkages between biodiversity and climate change, the importance of biodiversity to human health, and the intricate connections that biodiversity has with culture and community. As the policy implications of new scientific knowledge have been explored, it has become clear that the issue of biodiversity is of relevance to all sectors of society and to all areas of government.

This has two important implications for Ireland – firstly, it requires that Ireland’s NBAP is regularly reviewed and updated where necessary to address the implications of new and emerging issues for Ireland’s biodiversity, and secondly it requires that the impacts of biodiversity (and its loss) on our society and our economy are regularly examined and addressed.

The work of the CBD and individual Parties, including Ireland, has demonstrated that biodiversity is an issue of concern for all government departments and for everyone in Irish society. The CBD calls for biodiversity issues to be mainstreamed across national decision making, and to be integrated into all sectors of the national economy and policy-making framework. Since 2008, following a decision agreed by the Conference of Parties at its 9th meeting in Bonn, Germany, the Parties to the Convention have also been encouraged to integrate biodiversity across “sub-national” levels of government – which in Ireland includes city, regional and county planning - to ensure that the aims of national biodiversity strategies and action plans are brought into a local context, and supported by local decision-making. This is also important to ensure that specific local and regional matters, such as the ways in which local communities, business and economies impact upon, or depend upon, biodiversity, are addressed at the relevant administrative levels. These concepts are reflected in the NBAP, which in line with the CBD and the EU biodiversity strategy, 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 and our natural heritage.

The post-2020 Global Biodiversity Framework

Since 1992, the CBD Conference of Parties has adopted various strategic plans and targets to promote the primary aims of the Convention, usually connected with a 10-year programme of work. The most recent strategic plan for 2011 – 2020 was centred around the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, following from the tenth meeting of the COP in Aichi Prefecture, Japan, in 2010. Discussions and adoption of a new strategic plan has been delayed by the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic, though it is now due to be finalised by the next COP meeting in December 2022. This “post-2020” strategy is focused on adopting a new framework to better address the biodiversity crisis with a renewed focus on transformative actions that can be taken across all areas of society to halt the loss of biodiversity and reverse its loss and restore degraded ecosystems. This new strategy, called the Global Biodiversity Framework, recognises that despite three decades of co-ordinated global action for conservation, the loss of biodiversity continues, posing significant threats to human well-being. This Framework will guide actions worldwide for the decade to 2030 to preserve and protect nature and its essential services to people. It includes a vision for biodiversity governance further into the future, aiming for a global effort towards living in harmony with nature by the year 2050.

At the time of writing for this draft NBAP, the current version of the GBF comprises 21 targets and ten “milestones” up to the year 2030. Some of these key targets include:

- Ensure that at least 30 per cent globally of land areas and of sea areas, especially areas of particular importance for biodiversity and its contributions to people, are conserved through effectively and equitably managed, ecologically representative and well-connected systems of protected areas and other effective area-based conservation measures and integrated into the wider landscapes and seascapes.
- Prevent or reduce the rate of introduction and establishment of invasive alien species by 50%, and control or eradicate such species to eliminate or reduce their impacts.

- Reduce nutrients lost to the environment by at least half, pesticides by at least two thirds, and eliminate discharge of plastic waste.
- Use ecosystem-based approaches to contribute to mitigation and adaptation to climate change, contributing at least 10 GtCO₂e per year to mitigation; and ensure that all mitigation and adaptation efforts avoid negative impacts on biodiversity.
- Redirect, repurpose, reform or eliminate incentives harmful for biodiversity in a just and equitable way, reducing them by at least \$500 billion per year.

The working draft of the GBF has been considered in developing this NBAP, so that as far as is possible and practicable Ireland's efforts to address the biodiversity crisis can support international efforts to 2030 and beyond.

The state of biodiversity in Ireland

Global trends of biodiversity loss are reflected in Irish land and waterscapes. Intensive agricultural and forestry practices, overfishing, invasive species, changes in land use (particularly for residential, agricultural and commercial development) and the over-exploitation of resources such as peatland are the main drivers of biodiversity loss.

Research has shown that more than half of Ireland's bee species have undergone substantial declines in numbers since 1980, with 30% of species considered threatened with extinction from Ireland (Fitzpatrick *et al.*, 2007). Many people are now noticing the general lack of insects in their surroundings, for example in gardens and on vehicle windscreens. If insect species and population declines continue, we will lose the vital ecological functions performed by these small but mighty allies, such as pollination, decomposition and food for other wildlife.

The latest review of Birds of Conservation Concern from BirdWatch Ireland states that a staggering 63% of species, including previously common birds such as House Sparrows and Starlings, are declining at alarming rates (Gilbert *et al.*, 2021). Article 12 reporting, under the EU Birds Directive, on the long-term status and trends Ireland's bird species shows population declines of 9% and 24% respectively for breeding and wintering taxa (www.eea.europa.eu). Iconic species such as the curlew and corncrake are on the brink of extinction.

The 2019 conservation status assessments, required under Article 17 of the EU Habitats Directive, reported that 46% of EU protected habitats and 15% of EU protected species demonstrated ongoing declines over a 12-year period (NPWS, 2019), with freshwater species most at risk. However, many mammal species such as seals, dolphins, several whale and bat species were assessed favourably.

About half of our rivers and lakes are in an unhealthy ecological state, mainly owing to nutrient inputs from wastewater and agriculture. The number of pristine river sites has dropped from 500 to 20 over the past 40 years (EPA, 2019). These water quality declines have major consequences for many freshwater species, such as the freshwater pearl mussel, Ireland's longest living animal, which is under threat owing to water quality issues in addition to changes to river flow and hydrology.

Despite ongoing conservation and restoration efforts, Ireland's biodiversity is in a state of crisis and urgent, impactful action is imperative to prevent the continued erosion of our natural heritage. We should remain hopeful as nature is resilient and the right actions in the right place will yield a recovery in our precious wildlife and secure ecosystem services for future generations.

Developing Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan

Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) has been in development since October 2021. The Plan will set the national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2027 and aims to deliver the transformative changes required to the ways in which we value and protect nature.

Key considerations in the development of the draft NBAP are set out below:

- 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
- Embed biodiversity at the heart of climate action
- 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

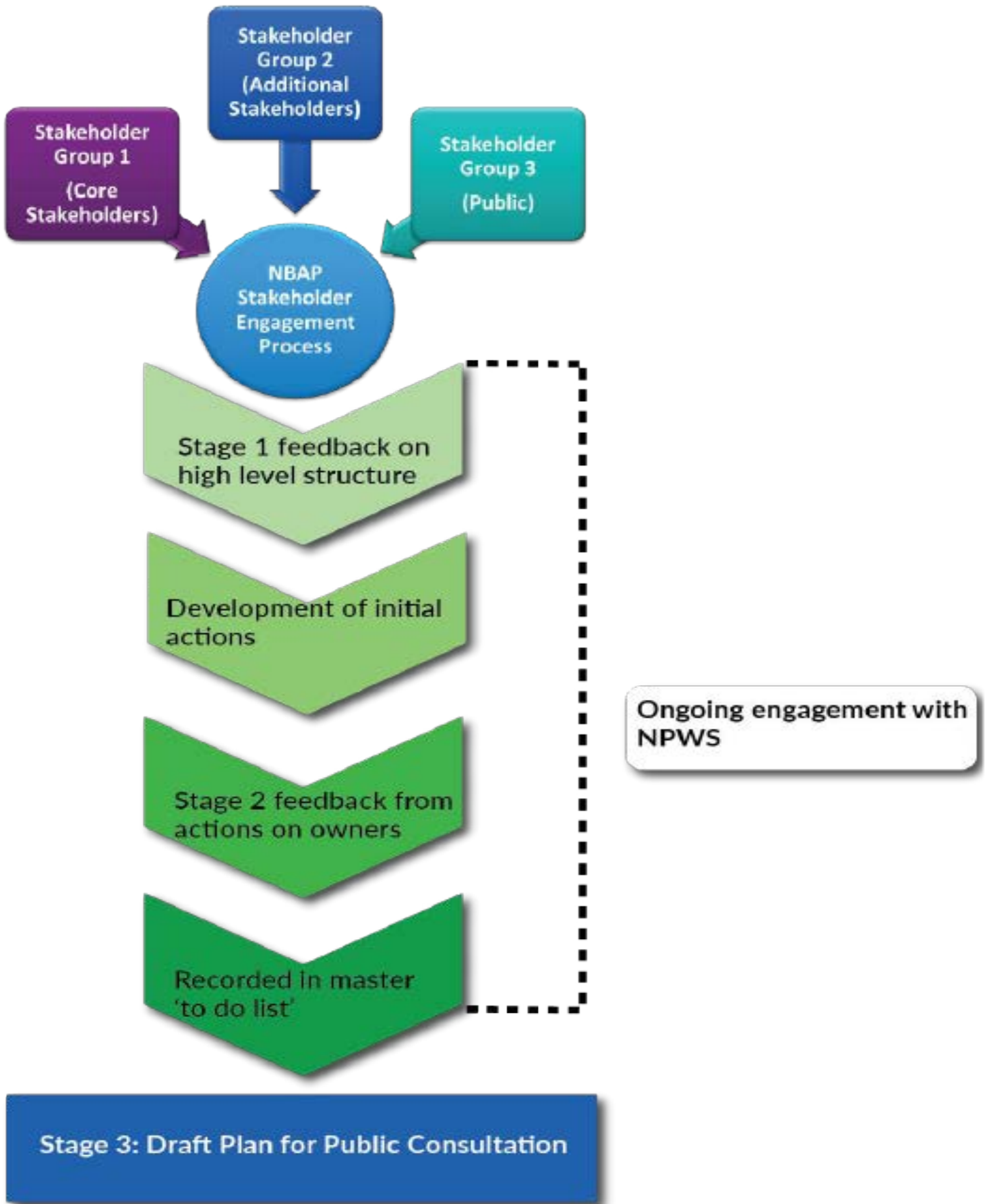
Policy Review

A consortium consisting of KPMG, Natural Capital Ireland, Optimise and the Institute for Development of Environmental-Economic Accounting (IDEEA) were contracted to support NPWS in drafting the 4th NBAP. The first phase of work involved an extensive review of national, European, and international policies, strategies, legislation and science relating to biodiversity. This review helped to inform a first draft of the Plan, which brought forward for the stakeholder engagement process described below.

Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement has been central to development of this draft of Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan. Extensive engagement with stakeholders, as well consultation with the wider public, will strengthen the actions proposed and help to ensure a 'whole of Government', 'whole of society' approach to the biodiversity crisis. Support and buy-in from key stakeholders and the general public is crucial to the successful implementation of the Plan.

The stakeholder engagement process for the Draft NBAP has been designed to incorporate three distinct stages, each of which targets a different stakeholder group. To date, two of the three stages have been completed. The current and third stage of stakeholder engagement consists of this public consultation.



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 National Biodiversity Forum:** The Forum is an independent group of biodiversity experts. The Forum was established in the lifetime of the first National Biodiversity Action Plan to encourage improved stakeholder awareness and involvement in biodiversity policy. The current membership of the Forum can be found in the Appendix.
- **The Biodiversity Working Group:** The Biodiversity Working Group 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 current membership of the Biodiversity Working Group can be found in the Appendix.
- **The Business for Biodiversity Advisory Platform:** The Platform was established in 2021 and is supported by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and the National Parks and Wildlife Service (Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage). 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. The current membership of the Business for Biodiversity Advisory Platform can be found in the Appendix.

KPMG held dedicated workshops 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:** An online survey was circulated to all Government Departments and relevant state bodies. This survey sought to gather high-level views on the structure of the Plan and the proposed Objectives and Outcomes. A virtual group workshop was also held on the 7th April 2022 to discuss emerging feedback. State bodies in this sub-group were selected on the basis of a review of the previous National Biodiversity Action Plans, a detailed policy review and guidance from Group 1 Stakeholders.

Further detailed engagement was pursued with those Departments and organisations that were proposed action owners under the Draft Plan. This group received a list of proposed actions for their Department or organisation for review and response. Departments without specific ownership of actions were also engaged and participated in workshops.

Feedback was sought on the wording of actions and associated targets and indicators. Follow-up bilateral discussions were held where required to discuss, explore and further refine actions.

- **Local Authorities:** An online survey was circulated to all Local Authorities to capture their views on key requirements for the 4th NBAP and local biodiversity activities. A virtual information session was also held to inform Local Authorities of progress on the Draft Plan and the various channels and opportunities for engagement throughout its development process. Seventeen Local Authorities made submissions via the online survey. It should be noted that some Local Authorities opted instead to engage through this public consultation process.
- **Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations (eNGOs) and Community Groups:** An online survey was circulated to various eNGOs and community groups to gather their thoughts on the structure of the Draft Plan and the proposed Objectives and Outcomes. Many participants in this sub-group were identified through engagement with the Irish Environmental Network (IEN). The IEN is an umbrella network of Irish environmental organisations. A coordinator for the IEN circulated the survey to member organisations, and issued an invitation to participate in a group workshop. Additional stakeholders were selected based on a review of previous National Biodiversity Action Plans, a detailed policy review and guidance from Group 1 Stakeholders. A virtual group workshop was held on the 25th March 2022 to discuss emerging feedback. Follow up feedback was also provided by email to the project team.

Feedback received throughout Stage 2 has been used to further revise and refine actions and to identify suitable action owners. This feedback has directly informed the development of this iteration of the Draft Plan that is now subject to the public consultation process.

Stage 3 – Public Consultation

Stage 3 is the current stage of the stakeholder engagement process. This comprises an open public consultation on the Draft Plan. The Draft Plan has now been published along with an open invitation for all biodiversity stakeholders, public and private organisations, community groups and members of the public to express their views and ideas on the 4th NBAP. The public consultation will be open for responses for 10 weeks.

Following the public consultation period, all submissions will be reviewed in detail by the NBAP project team. A public consultation report that details the content of the submissions received will be released after the publication of the NBAP.



Thematic analysis of feedback

The development of this Draft Plan has been an iterative process, shaped by extensive stakeholder consultation to ensure the development of a Plan that is both ambitious and actionable. All feedback to date has been recorded and collated, with each item noted and tracked to reflect whether it had been actioned or addressed.

A summary overview of key thematic areas raised throughout Stages 1 and 2 of the stakeholder engagement process are set out below. As noted above, a summary report of feedback received through this public consultation will be prepared and published after the publication of the NBAP.

Theme	Overview
Ensuring a 'Whole of Society' Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for greater focus on education and awareness • Targeting approaches for community initiatives • Capturing the role of the arts in engaging and enhancing awareness of biodiversity • Capturing the role of the private sector in the NBAP
Ensuring a 'Whole of Government' Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to align ambitions across Government • Need to ensure appropriate resourcing and skills across Government Departments and state bodies • Need to pursue a legal basis for the NBAP
Enabling the successful implementation of the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for clear, defined responsibility for stakeholders assigned roles and actions across the Plan • Need for a legal basis to secure the implementation of the Plan • Promote useful sharing of information and enable Government departments to effectively communicate with the public around progress with the Plan
Facilitating ongoing monitoring of the Plan and building a comprehensive evidence base	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that biodiversity-related data is accessible, consolidating disparate data into a centralised repository • Need for standardisation and coherence across data collection efforts • Need to support citizen science, recognising the invaluable role that voluntary recording and monitoring schemes play in recording data. • Need to identify and address the root causes of biodiversity loss in Ireland

Theme	Overview
Securing Nature's Contribution to People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Capturing the essential contribution that biodiversity makes to our physical and mental wellbeing • The COVID-19 pandemic has led to greater awareness of the importance of biodiversity to our everyday lives • Reflecting the social and cultural value of biodiversity in Ireland
Biodiversity and Climate Action	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Like the Climate Action Plan 2021, the National Biodiversity Action Plan should continue to adopt an ambitious and cross-sectoral approach • Need to ensure balance between decarbonisation efforts and biodiversity, so that climate adaptation/mitigation efforts do not contribute to biodiversity loss
Local Authorities and Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The essential role local authorities play in engaging with communities to support local biodiversity • The need for training and funding to enhance the capacity of local authorities to manage biodiversity and enforce protection measures • Ensuring that all local authorities have access to a biodiversity officer and the expertise necessary for biodiversity monitoring and enforcement
Rural Biodiversity and Farming	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that biodiversity data collected by farmers is captured and utilised • Ensuring that farmers are adequately compensated / remunerated for managing their land to support biodiversity • Revising and enhancing the viability of farm forestry
Biodiversity and Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role of the planning process in safeguarding biodiversity • Supporting best practice to ensure positive outcomes for biodiversity
Conservation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need for further focus on habitats and species that lie outside of protected sites

Feedback from the National Biodiversity Conference

The second National Biodiversity Conference was held in Dublin Castle on June 8th and 9th 2022 (www.biodiversityconference.ie). The conference aimed to raise awareness of the biodiversity crisis in Ireland and to encourage public and business engagement with the development of the fourth National Biodiversity Action Plan.

In particular, the conference focused on the need for a whole-of-government, whole-of-society approach to the biodiversity crisis in Ireland. Speakers and attendees were asked to explore how this approach can be best realised, and how different sectors can best respond to the biodiversity crisis. Another key issue was the need for new and enhanced partnerships for nature across all levels of society and the economy in Ireland – partnerships between government agencies, between communities and businesses, between local authorities and civil society groups, etc. This includes partnerships on an all-island basis, recognising that biodiversity ignores political and social borders and is the combined concern of everybody on the island of Ireland.

A full report on the conference outcomes is being prepared, taking account of the discussions held at each of the conference sessions and feedback from conference attendees. It is intended that the report will inform the development of the NBAP as part of the wider public consultation process.

Citizens' Assembly

In recognition of the vital role that biodiversity has in the health of our society, economy and the planet, the Programme for Government includes a commitment to convene a Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss. The Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss was convened in April 2022 to examine how the State can improve its response to the issue of biodiversity loss, and to bring forward proposals in that regard. The Assembly is constituted of a total of 100 members, including an independent Chairperson and 99 randomly selected members of the public.

The Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss will consider the international, European, national, regional and local dimensions to the biodiversity emergency and the threats presented by biodiversity loss, together with the opportunities to reverse this loss. It will examine the main drivers of biodiversity loss, their impacts and the opportunity of addressing these drivers. The Assembly will consider the perspectives of the general public, representative groups, advocacy groups, experts and policy makers on biodiversity loss, and will explore opportunities to develop greater policy coherence and strategic synergies between biodiversity policy and other policy priorities including, economic development, climate action, sustainable development, agriculture and tourism.

The Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss will conclude its work within an eight-month period and submit its report by December 2022. Recommendations from the Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss will be reviewed and incorporated into the final version of the NBAP.

Work on convening a Children and Young People's Assembly on Biodiversity Loss is underway. An advisory panel of young people is being convened to further develop the framework and terms under which the Assembly will work.

Monitoring & Evaluation

The importance of Monitoring and Evaluation

Regular monitoring of the 4th NBAP will determine the degree of progress made on the objectives, outcomes, targets, actions and indicators. Crucially, periodic monitoring and evaluation will allow those responsible for the Plan to adapt or change course at different points in the lifetime of the Plan if there is a risk that targets will not be met, or desired outcomes not achieved. Regular evaluation of the 4th NBAP will allow those responsible for the Plan to assess what has been delivered successfully and in what areas.

Monitoring and Evaluation in the 3rd NBAP

Ireland's 3rd National Biodiversity Action Plan was monitored in three stages.

The first intervention was an Interim Review, prepared by NPWS with updates provided by action owners. This was published in 2020 and is available [here](#). The Interim Review found that, of 119 actions in the 3rd NBAP, 8 were implemented, 98 were ongoing and, for 13, there was limited progress.

The second intervention was an independent review conducted by the National Biodiversity Forum, available [here](#). This review stated that the next NBAP must establish specific, measurable, actionable, realistic and time-bound (SMART) targets and Key Performance Indicators that will measure positive impacts on biodiversity. Targets should be focused on measurable results-based outcomes and actions with a strong evidence base for effectiveness.

It was also recommended that Government should establish a secretariat and provide resources for the National Biodiversity Forum, so that the NBF can undertake more comprehensive oversight of the next Plan and make more detailed recommendations.

The third stage of monitoring and evaluation of the 3rd NBAP will come in the form of the Final Review of the Plan. This Final Review is currently being prepared by NPWS with updates provided by action owners. This is expected to be published later in 2022.

Overall, it has been noted that the 3rd NBAP was difficult to monitor and evaluate given the open-ended nature of many of the actions.

Monitoring and Evaluation in the 4th NBAP

A Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework will be developed for the 4th NBAP following the public consultation. The details of the framework and resources for the governance of the Plan will be agreed between those responsible for the governance and delivery of the Plan. Some of the elements to be agreed include:

- **Action ownership:** Many actions in the Plan involve multiple stakeholders. It is anticipated that each action will require a single owner that would be ultimately responsible for delivery of the action. The action owner role could involve coordinating stakeholders and reporting on progress throughout the lifetime of the Plan.

- **Indicators:** Some actions/indicators will have direct benefits for biodiversity (e.g. conservation measures), while others such as the establishment of working groups, guidelines will have indirect benefits for biodiversity (e.g. improved governance and mainstreaming of biodiversity). The measurement of progress against the 4th NBAP should be a mix of direct and indirect benefits for biodiversity. It is recognised that many indicators presented in this draft plan will require considerable review following the finalisation of the actions.
- **Roles and responsibilities for monitoring:** Who is responsible for monitoring for each indicator, how monitoring will be undertaken, the types of data to be collected and the frequency of data collection.
- **Reporting:** How frequently and in what format reporting should occur.
- **Independent Auditor / Assurance:** The National Biodiversity Forum, as an independent auditor, may be asked to carry out a review of the NBAP. The evaluation could involve a review of progress against the Plan as well as an evaluation of the impact of the Plan.

Below are the actions relating to monitoring and evaluation of the 4th NBAP.

Target	Action number	Action	Indicator
By 2023, a progress tracker for the NBAP is established	ME1	DHLGH and NBDC will develop a progress tracker for this Plan comparable to the EU Biodiversity Strategy Actions Planner and which also maps this Plan to the Multilateral Environmental Agreements	Progress tracker is established by 2023
By 2023, and in each year thereafter, relevant entities report on their progress against this Plan	ME2	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	Number of entities with completed reviews each year
An Interim Review of the Plan is prepared by a cross-departmental group by June 2025	ME3	The Biodiversity Working Group will prepare an Interim Review of the Plan to assess the degree of implementation and prepare recommendations for improvement or further action	Published Interim Review by 2025

Target	Action number	Action	Indicator
A cross-departmental group prepare a Final Review of the Plan by December 2027	ME4	The Biodiversity Working Group, with independent scientific inputs, will prepare a Final Review of the Plan to assess the degree of implementation and prepare recommendations for the next NBAP	Published Final Review by 2027
An independent scientific evaluation of the impact of the NBAP on the biodiversity crisis, accounting for ongoing monitoring and assessment efforts, is carried out by December 2027	ME5	An independent scientific evaluation of the impact of the NBAP on the biodiversity crisis will be carried out, for example by the National Biodiversity Forum, accounting for ongoing monitoring and assessment efforts, and issued as a compendium to annual progress report/Final Review	Published scientific evaluation of the NBAP by 2026

Draft 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan

Navigating the NBAP

Structure

This Plan is structured around the delivery of Ireland's vision for biodiversity by 2050. The Plan contains six 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 designated owner(s).
- Each action has a measurable indicator(s) that will allow for the monitoring of progress.



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

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.

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 sector, to forestry, to fisheries and for the many businesses and industries that 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, together, realise the goals of this Plan.

Resources and capacity are needed to take informed, proactive, and adequately resourced decisions to safeguard and enhance this relationship. The Biodiversity Working Group with representation from all sectors can examine the interlinkages between policies and departmental actions. This includes the urgent need to ensure that sustainability is at the forefront of the incentives and practices proposed agriculture, forestry and the marine.

Outcome 1A: Organisational capacity and resources for biodiversity have increased at all levels of Government

This Outcome would see adequate financial and human resources allocated across all levels of Government. This Outcome will be achieved through the identification of current gaps in biodiversity financing and expertise, and also by incorporating the recommendations of the NPWS Strategic Review.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
Implement improved progress reporting arrangements in 2023 to track delivery of NBAP actions on an annual basis	1A1	DHLGH, with input from the inter-departmental Biodiversity Working Group, will prepare an annual progress report on the implementation of NBAP actions for presentation to the Cabinet Committee on the Environment and Climate Change	Publication of an Annual Progress Report
By 2025, the Strategic Action Plan resulting from the NPWS Review is implemented	1A2	DHLGH will implement the Strategic Action Plan resulting from the NPWS Review	Number of NPWS Strategic Action Plan actions implemented by 2025
By 2024, Government has improved understanding of current biodiversity expenditure and projected biodiversity financial needs	1A3	DHLGH will review the recommendations arising from the Biodiversity Financial Needs Assessment research project and propose pathways for their implementation	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	1A4	The NBF will conduct an independent review of the Biodiversity Financial Needs Assessment	Completion of review of DHLGH response to the recommendations of the FNA
By 2024, Government has improved understanding of current biodiversity expenditure and projected biodiversity financial needs	1A5	Government will put forward proposals for the tagging of biodiversity expenditure across government	National Biodiversity Indicators (NBI)-D.4.i. National expenditure on biodiversity

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
Review cross-departmental capacity and capability to address the biodiversity crisis in 2023 and implement capacity building recommendations in 2024	1A6	All relevant Departments and Government Bodies will explore the biodiversity expertise and training requirements across the civil service, and implement recommendations for improved governance, implementation, and training arrangements	Implementation of improved governance arrangements; no. of new training courses; presence of biodiversity expertise across Departments
By 2026, OPW has implemented its Biodiversity Action Strategy in full	1A7	OPW will implement its Biodiversity Action Strategy 2022-2026, including the appointment of a Biodiversity Officer, in support of NBAP targets	Appointment of a Biodiversity Officer for OPW; Number of completed actions in OPW Biodiversity Action Strategy



Outcome 1B: Responsibility for biodiversity, including financing for conservation and restoration, is shared across the whole of Government

This Outcome acknowledges that responding to the biodiversity crisis is not the sole responsibility of one department or organisation, but rather a shared challenge that touches many aspects of national, regional and local policy. Actions under this Outcome aim to broaden the governance of biodiversity across Government departments and Local Authorities.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
By 2023, Government has considered introducing a statutory requirement for National Biodiversity Action Plans	1B1	DHLGH will explore placing the National Biodiversity Action Plan on a statutory footing	Strengthen the basis of the National Biodiversity Action Plan
A new and expanded Biodiversity Working Group is convened by February 2023	1B2	The composition of the inter-departmental working group will be reviewed to ensure better representation of departments, agencies, and sectors	Departmental and sectoral participation in the Biodiversity Working Group is agreed and operational
By 2023, the strategic role and remit of the NBDC is captured in new Articles of Association	1B3	DHLGH and the Heritage Council will define the strategic role and remit of the National Biodiversity Data Centre in meeting Ireland's biodiversity data and information needs and in assisting in the delivery of this Plan	Publication of new Articles of Association for the NBDC
By 2026, Local Authorities have increased capacity to facilitate and implement all required duties relating to biodiversity at the local level	1B4	DHLGH will work with Local Authorities on establishing a Biodiversity Officer Programme with a dedicated Biodiversity Officer in each Local Authority and dedicated guidance on their role by 2026	Number of Biodiversity Officers in Local Authorities
All Local Authorities will have a Biodiversity Action Plan in place by end of 2026	1B5	The Heritage Council will publish updated guidelines for the production of Local Biodiversity Action Plans and their integration with City and County Development Plans by 2024	Publication of updated guidelines for the production of Local Biodiversity Action Plans
All Local Authorities will have a Biodiversity Action Plan in place by end of 2026	1B6	All Local Authorities will have a Biodiversity Action Plan in place by the end of 2026 that is subject to regular review and revision processes in line with relevant guideline standards	Number of Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plans in place and in development

Outcome 1C: The root causes and key drivers of biodiversity loss are tackled by each responsible department

The aim of this Outcome is to assess and address the root causes of biodiversity loss, as highlighted in Ireland's Article 17 reports and EPA State of the Environment reports. Actions are proposed to confront the multiple pressures on biodiversity in Ireland and take effective action to reduce or eliminate these pressures. This outcome will be supported by actions in Objective 2.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
National Land Use Review is complete by 2023	1C1	Departments and Agencies with responsibility for the National Biodiversity Action Plan will also contribute to the National Land Use Review	Inputs provided to the National Land Use Review
By 2027, measures for biodiversity implemented under the Common Agricultural Policy are monitored for their impact and efficacy	1C2	DAFM will monitor and report on the efficacy of actions to promote biodiversity under the CAP SP	Actions taken by DAFM to monitor efficacy of CAP actions
Agricultural policy and incentives support on-farm biodiversity initiatives by 2024	1C3	DAFM will ensure that farmers are incentivised to create and maintain habitats on farms as part of Ireland's Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan 2023-2027 and the Rural Development Plan, which sits under the CAP SP	Incentives for farmers to create habitats for wildlife are in place by 2023
By 2026, there is improved alignment between National Biodiversity Indicators and other policy areas	1C4	DHLGH will establish a subgroup of the Biodiversity Working Group to explore how the National Biodiversity Indicators can incorporate relevant policy areas	Review of National Biodiversity Indicators; Publication of findings

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

Outcome 1D proposes to increase engagement with and public awareness of biodiversity in Ireland. Through increased funding, community initiatives, awareness programmes and private sector engagement, this Outcome also aims to broaden the connection with biodiversity across all of Irish society.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
By 2027, public awareness on biodiversity is increased by 20% against a 2023 baseline	1D1	A communications expert will be appointed to NPWS to generate public awareness and support for conservation and restoration	Communications expert is appointed
By 2027, public awareness on biodiversity is increased by 20% against a 2023 baseline	1D2	DHLGH and other relevant bodies will build on existing biodiversity and awareness barometers to gauge the public connection to biodiversity	Establishment of national baseline of public awareness
By 2027, public awareness on biodiversity is increased by 20% against a 2023 baseline	1D3	Údarás na Gaeltachta will increase awareness and participation on biodiversity issues among Gaeltacht communities via the Community Employment Scheme and Rural Social Scheme	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	1D4	The NBDC will produce and implement a Biodiversity Citizen Science Strategy to promote citizen engagement with both terrestrial and marine biodiversity and to develop greater awareness of the value of local biodiversity	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

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
By 2023, a baseline funding level for community biodiversity initiatives is established	1D5	DHLGH, DRCD and DECC will continue to build support for community biodiversity initiatives such as the Small Recording Projects grant scheme, Community Foundation Ireland Environment and Nature Fund, LEADER, Local Agenda 21, Shared Island Fund, Peatlands Community Engagement Scheme and GSI Geoheritage Grant Scheme	Number of actions taken to support community biodiversity initiatives
All Local Authorities are supported to carry out biodiversity related projects on an annual basis by 2027	1D6	DHLGH will continue to support Local Authorities biodiversity projects through the Local Biodiversity Action Fund throughout the lifetime of this Plan	Number of Local Authorities awarded funding annually
The Business for Biodiversity platform receives support to establish and grow by 2026	1D7	DHLGH and DAFM will fund, support, and promote the work of the Business for Biodiversity platform during its initial set up phase of three years	Amount of funding provided to Business for Biodiversity platform
By 2025, 900 businesses are involved in the Business for Biodiversity platform	1D8	The Business for Biodiversity platform will engage with business to enhance private sector action on biodiversity	Number of businesses involved in the Business for Biodiversity platform
By 2023, a mechanism for matching private sector resources with appropriate biodiversity projects is established	1D9	The Business for Biodiversity platform will provide a mechanism to match private sector resources with appropriate biodiversity projects	Number of biodiversity projects receiving private sector funding via the Business for Biodiversity platform

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

A range of national and EU legislation is in place to protect biodiversity in Ireland. This Outcome aims to strengthen the enforcement of this existing legislation through increased compliance and training programmes. It also seeks to review and add to legislation as required to strengthen protection for biodiversity.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
By 2027, the revised legislation arising from a review of Wildlife legislation is in place	1E1	DHLGH will complete a review of Wildlife legislation	Publication of legislation
By 2027, the revised legislation arising from the review is in place	1E2	DHLGH to publish legislation to provide a legal basis for National Parks	Publication of legislation
By 2030, there is increased compliance with Wildlife legislation through increased enforcement	1E3	DHLGH 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	Enforcement resource has increased; Raised public awareness; Increased levels of compliance
By 2025, the EIA (Agriculture) regulations will be reviewed	1E4	DAFM will review the EIA (Agriculture) Regulations	Completion of review of existing EIA (Agriculture) Regulations



Objective 2

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.

The protection and restoration of existing designated areas and species are crucial to the achievement of this objective. The EU Biodiversity Strategy and recent draft Nature Restoration Regulation will provide for ambitious new restoration targets and the expansion of Terrestrial and Marine Protected Areas. Actions under this Objective address these new targets, along with landscape ecological connectivity and conservation and restoration plans for habitats and species.

Conservation and restoration of biodiversity are equally important in the wider countryside, beyond protected areas, as is supporting wildlife in our cities and towns. Tracking change in a broad range of species and habitats in the wider countryside, towns and cities helps us to identify conservation priorities.

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.

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

This Outcome aims to enhance Ireland’s implementation of key EU Directives such as the Habitats and Birds Directives as well as the new EU Biodiversity Strategy to 2030. It also contains actions to enhance the connectivity of existing protected areas and the process for their establishment.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
Enhanced implementation of the Habitats and Birds Directives by 2024	2A1	DHLGH will complete the selection and notification of sites for the protection of Annex habitats and species listed on the EU Habitats and Birds Directives	Proportion of SACs and SPAs designated by Statutory Instrument
Enhanced implementation of the Habitats and Birds Directives by 2024	2A2	DHLGH will publish detailed site-specific conservation objectives for all SACs and SPAs	Number of sites in respect of which SSCOs are published
By 2025, DHLGH has reviewed its licensing and consent system to facilitate sustainable activities within Natura 2000 sites	2A3	DHLGH, after consultation with other relevant bodies, will complete a review of its licencing and consent systems to facilitate sustainable activities within Natura 2000 sites	Completion of review of licencing and consent systems
In line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy, habitats and species under the Habitats and Birds Directives show no deterioration in conservation trends and status by 2030, and at least 30% of those not in favourable status will reach that status or show a positive trend	2A4	DHLGH will publish and implement Threat Species Action or Threat Response Plans with population targets for threatened and endangered species that are in Unfavourable status or have declining trends	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
In line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy, habitats and species under the Habitats and Birds Directives show no deterioration in conservation trends and status by 2030, and at least 30% of those not in favourable status will reach that status or show a positive trend	2A5	DHLGH and other relevant organisations will support species and habitat-specific conservation programmes	Trends in the status of the protected habitats and species under the Directives are improving

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
In line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy, habitats and species under the Habitats and Birds Directives show no deterioration in conservation trends and status by 2030, and at least 30% of those not in favourable status will reach that status or show a positive trend	2A6	DHLGH will work to ensure that support for farming for nature is appropriately resourced to enhance the number of farms in such schemes	Number of farmers participating in farmer for nature-based initiatives
By end 2023, Ireland has identified areas that will be pledged as future protected areas under the EU Biodiversity Strategy	2A7	DHLGH with relevant stakeholders will identify areas that will be pledged as protected areas following the criteria laid out under the EU Biodiversity Strategy	Extent of pledged areas
All Habitats and Species are in, or moving towards Favourable status as required under the Habitats and Birds Directives with favourable status assessments of Habitat and Species reflecting an increasing trend by 2030	2A8	DHLGH, 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	Extent of <i>ex situ</i> conservation initiatives supported
All Habitats and Species are in, or moving towards Favourable status as required under the Habitats and Birds Directives with status assessments of Habitat and Species reflecting an increasing trend by 2030	2A9	Dublin Zoo will establish a National Centre for Species Survival at Dublin Zoo, increasing national capacity for species conservation assessments, conservation planning and action	National Centre for Species Survival established and operational

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
All Habitats and Species are in, or moving towards Favourable status as required under the Habitats and Birds Directives with status assessments of Habitat and Species reflecting an increasing trend by 2030	2A10	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	Completion of review of lands; Implementation of appropriate actions

Outcome 2B: Biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider countryside are conserved

This Outcome includes conservation actions for the wider countryside. This refers to areas that may not be protected but may nevertheless provide habitat to protected species and be areas of importance for biodiversity. These include actions on farming, forestry, flood risk and peatlands.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
Optimised opportunities under agriculture and rural development and other relevant policies to benefit biodiversity are in place by 2027	2B1	DAFM and Teagasc will develop and implement realistic and widely applicable results based agri-environmental climate measures (AECM) as part of Ireland's CAP SP that include significant habitat maintenance and restoration measures	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; CAP SP R.33 Improving Natura 2000 management: Share of total Natura 2000 area under supported commitments; CAP SP R.34 Preserving landscape features: Share of Utilised Agricultural Area under commitments for managing landscape features, including hedgerows and trees
Optimised opportunities under agriculture and rural development, forestry, and other relevant policies to benefit biodiversity are in place by 2027	2B2	DHLGH 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	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

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
By 2030, land under organic farming is increased to 7.5% and at least 4% of agricultural land has biodiversity rich landscape features	2B3	DAFM and Teagasc will support farmers to transition to organic farming	Area of land under organic production
In line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy, the use and risk of pesticides is reduced by 50% by 2030	2B4	DAFM, Teagasc, Local Authorities and other relevant stakeholders will put forward measures to reduce pesticide use in Ireland by 50% by 2030	Percentage reduction in pesticide use against established baseline
Tools to maintain and enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services associated with agro-ecology systems are in place by 2027	2B5	DAFM, DHLGH, 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	€ funding provided to support the HNV Ireland Programme; 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
Measures under the National Peatlands Strategy are implemented by 2025 and updated by 2026	2B6	DHLGH, Bord na Móna, DECC, DAFM and other relevant stakeholders will implement the National Peatlands Strategy 2015-2025, and subsequent policy changes, taking account of the 2021 mid-term review	Number of completed actions in National Peatlands Strategy
An updated Bord na Mona Biodiversity Action Plan is published by end of 2023	2B7	Bord na Móna will develop and publish an updated Biodiversity Action Plan	Publication of Bord na Móna Biodiversity Action Plan; Number of actions implemented
By 2024, Ireland's National Forest Strategy and Forestry Programme has identified clear actions to enhance biodiversity	2B8	DAFM will identify appropriate actions to enhance biodiversity, including the enhancement of cultural ecosystem services from Ireland's forests, in the preparation of the new National Forest Strategy and the next Forestry Programme	Number of actions to enhance biodiversity and cultural ecosystem services in the National Forest Strategy and Forestry Programme

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
Native tree planting continues to be a supported action area by 2027	2B9	DAFM will continue to promote and/or support native tree planting by Local Authorities and other State/semi-state bodies	Increase in area under native tree cover; Uptake of any relevant schemes for Local Authorities or other State/semi-state bodies
A diversified national and local native plant stock is available for tree and landscape planting schemes by 2027	2B10	DAFM, Local Authorities, TII, DHLGH and OPW will strive to use native species, varieties, and landraces from appropriate native sources in their landscaping works, where the use of such material is appropriate	Availability of national/local sources of native species, varieties, and landraces
In line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy, the decline of pollinators is halted and reversed by 2030	2B11	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	Number of All-Ireland Pollinator Plan actions implemented; Evidence of action to support farmland pollinators post-2025
In line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy, the decline of pollinators is halted and reversed by 2030	2B12	NPWS and DAFM will continue to provide funding for NBDCs monitoring of pollinators	€ in funding for NBDC pollinator monitoring activities
Continued collaboration on conservation/restoration programmes including those funded by the EU	2B13	Departments and agencies will continue to collaborate on relevant projects that contribute to the objective of improving biodiversity, climate, water quality and other environmental objectives including funding provided by the EU	Number and extent of projects supported nationally
Optimised benefits in flood risk management planning and drainage schemes are in place by 2027	2B14	OPW will work with relevant authorities to ensure that Flood Risk Management planning and associated SEA, EIA and AA, minimises loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services through policies to promote more catchment-wide and non-structural flood risk management measures	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

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
Optimised benefits in flood risk management planning and drainage schemes are in place by 2027	2B15	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	Inclusion of biodiversity considerations in drainage programmes; Number of assessments on drainage works
Optimised benefits in flood risk management planning and drainage schemes are in place by 2027	2B16	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	Completion of SLOWWATERS research project; Completion of NBS-CM feasibility assessments to inform flood relief scheme development.
Optimised benefits in flood risk management planning and drainage schemes are in place by 2027	2B17	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	Number of schemes retrofitted; Guidance updated



Outcome 2C: All freshwater bodies are of at least 'Good Ecological Status' as defined under the EU Water Framework Directive

The EU Water Framework Directive is the policy under which European freshwater bodies are managed and the Directive requires all Member States to conserve and restore their rivers and lakes to 'good ecological status' by 2027. This Outcome contains actions to support that effort.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
By 2027, protection and restoration measures detailed in the 2022-2027 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 good ecological status	2C1	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 Water Framework Directive (2022-2027)	National Biodiversity Indicators (NBI)-B.7.ii Number of freshwater habitats reported as 'Good Ecological Status' under Water Framework Directive monitoring Status of water quality in Ireland; Number of RBMP (Programme of Measures) measures implemented
Implementation of all actions of the Nitrates Action Plan by December 2025	2C2	DAFM will ensure that Ireland's CAP SP will provide circular and localised nutrient management and reduce loss of Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and soil to the aquatic environment, taking account of nature-based solutions	National Biodiversity Indicators (NBI)-B.7.ii Number of freshwater habitats reported as 'Good Ecological Status' under Water Framework 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

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
<p>By 2027, protection and restoration measures detailed in the 2022-2027 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 good ecological status</p>	2C3	<p>Irish Water 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</p>	<p>Progress on the implementation of Irish Water Strategic Plan (2015-2040)</p>
<p>Protection and restoration measures detailed in the 2022-2027 RBMPs 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 good ecological status</p>	2C4	<p>DHLGH and LAWPRO will ensure that high status water bodies are effectively protected and restored via the Blue Dot Catchments Programme</p>	<p>High status catchment delineation and prioritisation for protection measures; Output from national a monitoring system; Centralised GIS database or activities database is established and operational</p>

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
Protection and restoration measures detailed in the 2022-2027 RBMPs 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 good ecological status	2C5	DHLGH will develop an Action Plan to urgently protect 3110 Oligotrophic Lake Habitat that was assessed as having a Bad Conservation Status as part of Article 17 Reporting 2019	Publication of Oligotrophic Lake Habitat Action Plan; Progress against Action Plan; Trends in conservation status

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

This Outcome includes actions to safeguard Ireland’s genetic diversity, including through supporting biobanking initiatives, conducting research in this area, and establishing a cross-departmental working group on this topic.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
Working Group on the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources formed by end of 2024	2D1	DAFM together with relevant organisations, will establish an All-Island Genetic Resources Working Group and continue the work of the Forest Genetic Resources Working Group	Establishment of working group on genetic resources
The proportion of species that have at least 90% of their genetic diversity maintained has increased by 2030	2D2	DAFM and partners will launch an integrated work programme on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Genetic resources	National Biodiversity Indicators (NBI)-B.4.i Status of rare breeds, cultivars and crop wild relatives; Number of species, varieties, or landraces for which conservation measures are being undertaken
The Nagoya Protocol is ratified by 2023	2D3	DHLGH will progress the ratification of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilisation to the Convention on Biological Diversity and enact necessary regulations	Ratification of the Nagoya Protocol
By 2027, national initiatives on biobanking for key species to support biological diversity are supported	2D4	DHLGH, 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	Number of biobanking initiatives supported
By 2027, resources and capacity for national wildlife biobanking initiatives is increased to safeguard the genetic future of Ireland’s wildlife	2D5	Dublin Zoo will establish a national wildlife biobanking hub	Number of species biobanked at the National Wildlife Biobanking Hub at Dublin Zoo

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
The number of species, varieties and landraces for which conservation measures are being undertaken is significantly increased by 2030	2D6	DAFM, the National Botanic Gardens and the Irish Seed Savers Association will continue to implement the National Genetic Conservation Strategies for animals and plants	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	2D7	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	Number of measures completed in National Strategy for Plant Conservation
By 2027, Irish seed banks are collaborating to maintain a collection of seeds from all plants native to Ireland	2D8	The National Seed Bank in the National Botanic Gardens will collaborate with other seed banks such as the Threatened Seed Bank in Trinity College Dublin, the Crop Wild Relative Seed Bank in DAFM Backweston, and the Irish Seed Savers Association, to maintain a collection of seeds from all plants native to Ireland	Number of seeds collected, processed and accessioned in the seed bank
By 2027, understanding of genetic diversity across native and domesticated species is enhanced	2D9	Relevant organisations will conduct studies and publications on genetic resources of wild species, heritage crops and gene banks to develop the understanding of genetic diversity across native and domesticated species	Number of species studies completed and published. Number of gene banks characterised

Outcome 2E: A National Restoration Plan is in place to meet EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030 nature restoration targets

The EU Nature Restoration Regulation proposes a legislative framework for ecosystem restoration on at least 20% of EU territory by 2030. Details of the regulation framework were announced in June 2022. This Outcome will be further developed as more details are made available and as Ireland prepares its response to this Regulation.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
Adherence to statutory targets under the EU Biodiversity Strategy	2E1	Progress on key initiatives to support targets under the EU Biodiversity Strategy	Key initiatives supported
In line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy, 300 km of rivers are restored to a free-flowing state by 2030	2E2	DHLGH, Inland Fisheries Ireland, OPW and other relevant bodies will explore the restoration of 300 km or rivers to a free-flowing state in line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030	Km of rivers restored to a free-flowing state



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

This Outcome aims to ensure significant progress towards ‘good environmental status’ of marine waters, as defined under the EU’s Marine Strategy Framework Directive. Actions are also proposed to ensure healthy fish stock levels and restore marine ecosystems.

Target	Action Number	Action	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	2F1	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	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	2F2	DHLGH will adopt and complete the integration of Ireland's marine environmental targets established under the MSFD, and Water Framework Directive 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	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; No degradation of transitional and coastal water status under the WFD as a result of human activities.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
<p>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</p>	<p>2F3</p>	<p>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 and also 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</p>	<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; 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>
<p>By 2026, Ireland has actively enabled and contributed to the ongoing achievement of OSPAR's North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy 2030 (NEAES)</p>	<p>2F4</p>	<p>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 North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy 2030</p>	<p>Number of NEAES operational objectives and underlying tasks being actively supported and resourced by Ireland; Number of NEAES tasks for which Ireland is assigned as the task lead; Number of NEAES tasks completed with Ireland's active input and resourcing</p>

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
Commercial fish and shellfish stock levels are maintained or restored to levels that can produce maximum sustainable yield as soon as possible, and no later than 2026	2F5	DAFM and other relevant stakeholders will continue to implement the EU's Common Fisheries Policy 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 that can produce maximum sustainable yield	Number of fish and shellfish stocks that 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, and no later than 2026	2F6	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	Number of fish and shellfish stocks that are being fished sustainably; Number of fish and shellfish stocks newly achieving or maintaining Good Environmental Status under the MSFD
As soon as possible and no later than 2026, 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	2F7	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	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	Indicator
As soon as possible and no later than 2026, 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	2F8	DAFM, SFPA and other relevant stakeholders will continue to take concerted action to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing	A reducing number of on-land inspections that detect non-compliances with the EU CFP, while maintaining or augmenting inspection levels nationally; A reducing number of at-sea inspections that detect non-compliances with the EU CFP, while maintaining or augmenting inspection levels nationally; A reducing number of CFP infringements determined as serious by the Determination Panel
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	2F9	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	Number of high level research studies undertaken of coastal, continental shelf and deep sea habitats in Irish waters; Percentage coverage of Ireland's maritime area by the INFOMAR programme and associated habitat studies
As soon as possible and no later than 2026, ensure that Ireland has mainstreamed the engagement of the public and stakeholders in marine environmental policy implementation and the conservation of marine biodiversity	2F10	DAFM, DHLGH and other relevant stakeholders will build and enhance engagement with coastal and marine stakeholders, maritime sectors and the wider community to promote the benefits of marine biodiversity and ecosystem services, and the responsible, sustainable use of marine resources	Number of outreach events undertaken to promote Ireland's marine biodiversity and ecosystems; Number of public consultations and fora held to support stakeholder and wider community involvement in marine environmental policy implementation

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
As soon as possible and no later than 2026, ensure that Ireland has an effective and coordinated national marine environmental education and awareness programme	2F11	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	Number of new educational and awareness-raising initiatives undertaken to promote Ireland's marine biodiversity and ecosystems; Number of new online and physical resources and facilities developed to support public awareness of Ireland's marine biodiversity and our seas and ocean; Statistical evidence indicating increased public awareness of and engagement with marine environment and biodiversity subject matter
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	2F12	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	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

Outcome 2G: 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

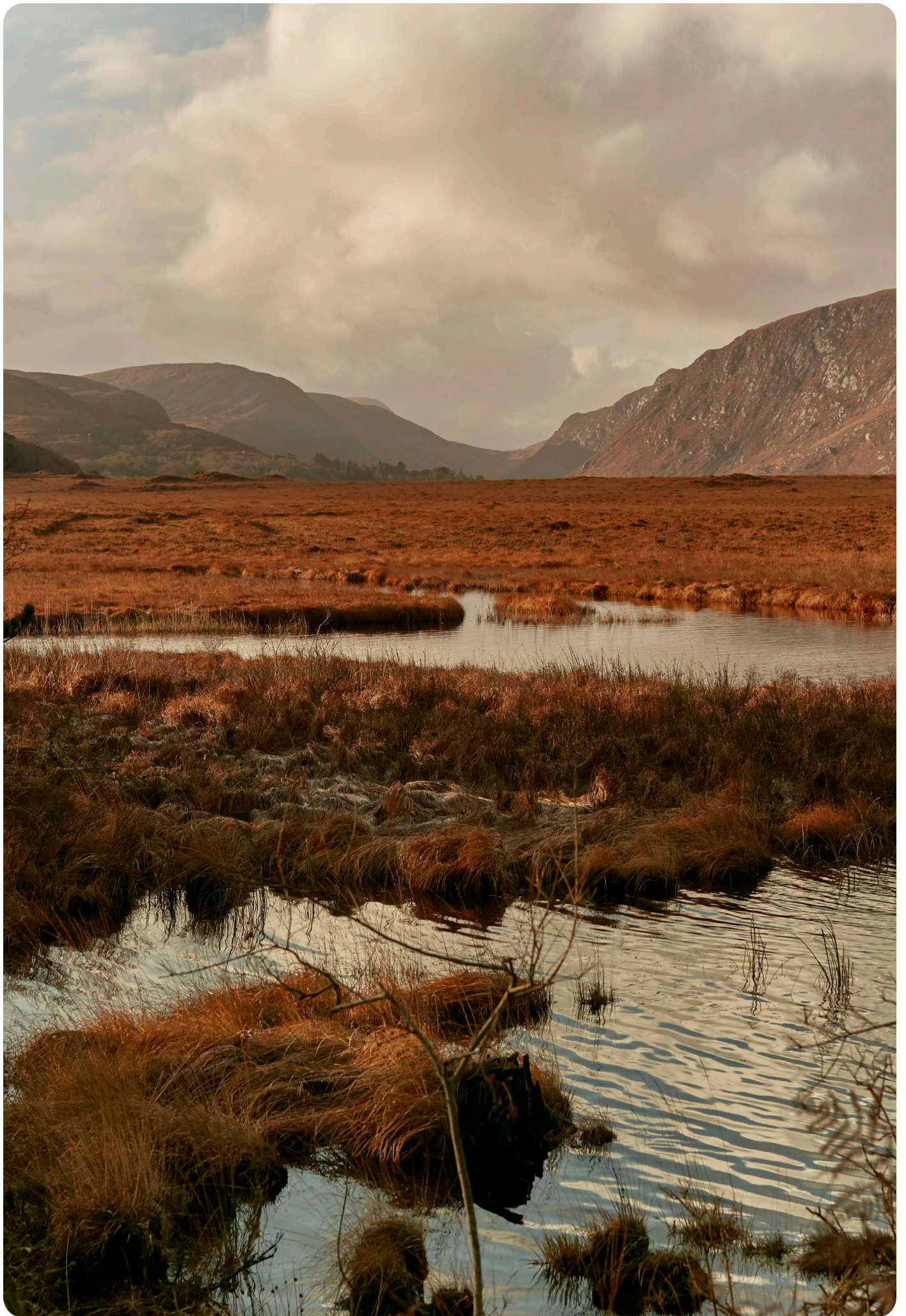
Actions presented under Outcome 2G aim to prevent the arrival of invasive species in Ireland, and ensure a rapid response to new invasions where they occur. Actions are also proposed for the effective control of those invasive species already present in Ireland.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
By 2030, invasive species are controlled, managed, and where possible, eliminated	2G1	DHLGH will establish an invasive alien species (IAS) unit to expedite implementation of the legislative and policy framework, including specific resources for enforcement	IAS unit and enforcement unit established and operational within DHLGH
By 2030, invasive species are controlled, managed, and where possible, eliminated	2G2	DHLGH together, with other relevant Departments and public bodies, will develop national plans to implement the EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation and relevant national legislation, as well as work on cooperative plans where there is an all-island or N-S aspect for IAS impacts	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, invasive 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	2G3	DHLGH in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, will resource and implement on-the-ground actions to remove stands of invasive species from native woodlands and peatlands within Protected Areas and National Parks	National Biodiversity Indicators (NBI)-D.3.i Area implementing invasive species management

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
By 2030, invasive 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	2G4	DHLGH, NBDC and relevant partners will develop dedicated biosecurity protocols, standard operating procedures and guidelines for government departments by 2024	Number of protocols, procedures and guidelines produced
By 2030, invasive 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	2G5	DHLGH, NBDC and relevant partners will implement recommended measures arising from the 2021 EPA Report No. 368 Prevention, Control and Eradication of Invasive Alien Species by 2026	Number of measures implemented
By 2030, invasive 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	2G6	NBDC will continue to produce Risk Assessments for potential invasive alien species	Number of Risk Assessments complete; National Biodiversity Indicators (NBI)-C.3.i Number of newly introduced IAS
By 2030, invasive species are controlled, managed, and where possible, eliminated	2G7	DHLGH 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	Legislation to implement the EU IAS Regulation in the national context is published and enacted

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
By 2030, invasive 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	2G8	Ireland will ratify the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships Ballast Water and Sediments and DOT will prepare a plan of implementation	Ratification of the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships Ballast Water and Sediments





Objective

3

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 cultural ecosystem services that include physical health and mental wellbeing, tourism, heritage, spiritual and religious connections, knowledge and learning, 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

This Outcome seeks to recognise and strengthen the deep connection between biodiversity and heritage by enhancing and promoting Ireland’s diverse natural landscape through our cultural attractions including tourism, media, sports, arts, language, traditional practices, and education.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
All actions relating to biodiversity and natural heritage are in progress or completed by 2027	3A1	DHLGH will fund and deliver on Heritage Ireland 2030, Ireland's 10-year national heritage plan	Number of actions from Heritage Ireland 2030 Plan that are in progress or completed
Strategy on biodiversity and traditional crafts, trades and farming practices is published by the end of 2024	3A2	The Heritage Officer Network will consider methods of including biodiversity in efforts to protect, promote and revive traditional crafts, trades and farming practices that are central to our heritage, and prepare a strategy document to guide future investments in these sectors	An increase in resources devoted to promoting, reviving and enhancing use of traditional farming, and nature-based crafts and trades;
DTCAGSM infrastructure funded under the National Development Plan will incorporate biodiversity and ecosystem services, by the end of 2024	3A3	DTCAGSM will incorporate biodiversity and ecosystem services, particularly cultural ecosystem services, in placemaking efforts and investment in Cultural Regional Infrastructure into its capital project appraisal processes	Biodiversity and ecosystem services criteria included in the appraisal of DTCAGSM investment projects
The biocultural value of green and blue urban environments in all local authority areas is enhanced by the end of 2027	3A4	Local Authorities will work to identify and respond to opportunities for enhancing the biocultural value of green and blue urban environments (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 ecosystem services in local biodiversity action plans	Number of LBAPs that include actions on enhancing the biocultural value of green and blue urban environments

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
By 2027, biodiversity-related cultural attractions have enhanced their contributions towards public engagement, awareness-raising and behaviour change	3A5	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	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
Policy statement on biodiversity, landscape, topography, community development and the Irish language is published by the end of 2024, with an action plan in place by the end of 2025	3A6	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	Publication of policy statement and recommended actions; % implementation of recommended actions
By 2027, the role of Gaeltacht Islands and Island communities in securing and protecting cultural and natural heritage is recognised	3A7	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	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 National Biodiversity Plan	3A8	The Sustainable Tourism Policy to be published in 2023 will take account of the National Biodiversity Action Plan with a view to conserving and restoring our biodiversity and, in turn, ensuring the overall quality of our tourism	Number of actions integrating biodiversity and ecosystem services in follow-up plan post 2023
By 2024, biodiversity considerations are integrated into refurbishment and development plans for key heritage sites	3A9	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	Documented actions taken during refurbishment to account for biodiversity, or documented reasons why such actions were not required

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
By 2024, OPW is working to enhance biodiversity at National Historic Property sites	3A10	OPW will conduct biodiversity audits at multiple sites, implement enhancements and recommendations, and share the data gathered	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 National Biodiversity Action Plan	3A11	DOE, DHERIS and DHLGH will work together to align the aims of the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development - ESD to 2030 and the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan and to develop and progress mutual actions	Number of relevant actions from the Education for Sustainable Development 2030 Strategy that are implemented

Outcome 3B: The relationship between biodiversity, health and wellbeing is recognised, valued and reflected in national health and biodiversity strategies

This Outcome aims to highlight and strengthen this connection and link biodiversity and health at a national level through embedding within new upcoming national strategies.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
By 2023, Ireland's National Outdoor Recreation Strategy incorporates biodiversity considerations	3B1	DRCD with Comhairle na Tuaithe will incorporate biodiversity considerations, particularly the value of cultural ecosystem services to mental health and wellbeing, into the forthcoming National Outdoor Recreation Strategy	Number of biodiversity-related actions in the National Outdoor Recreation Strategy



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

Many Irish businesses depend on biodiversity for the delivery of key ecosystem goods and services, such as raw materials and water filtration, and many others have a wide range of impacts on local and global biodiversity, through land use change, resource use and pollution. This Outcome contains actions that aim to help businesses understand and integrate biodiversity into their future planning. Actions are also proposed to assess the knowledge and skills required for a future in which biodiversity loss is halted and reversed.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
By 2024, Irish businesses report in line with the EU CSRD requirements, including biodiversity	3C1	DETE will lead on the implementation of the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) when adopted, which requires the reporting of environmental information including biodiversity	Transposition and implementation of the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive
Enterprise Ireland is incorporating biodiversity into its activities by end 2023	3C2	DETE will work with Enterprise Ireland to integrate biodiversity into relevant programmes and activities	Number of Enterprise Ireland programmes incorporating a biodiversity component
By 2024, IDA has delivered on the biodiversity measures in its 2021-2024 strategy	3C3	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	Impact of IDA biodiversity measures
DFIN will mainstream biodiversity within its climate and sustainable finance work.	3C4	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	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	3C5	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	Number of recommendations for the sustainable use and protection of biodiversity and natural capital in the National Bioeconomy Action Plan

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
By 2027, feasibility assessments for bioeconomy projects include environmental and social feasibility as standard	3C6	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	Number of research and demonstration proposals for bioeconomy development with environmental and social feasibility studies; Number of bioeconomy research & demonstration proposals that demonstrate biodiversity enhancement
An assessment of biodiversity skills needs for sustainable businesses has been completed by 2023	3C7	Relevant entities such as the National Skills Council, the nine Regional Skills Fora, the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (hosted in SOLAS), the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (under DETE) and the National Training Fund Advisory Group (under DFHERIS) will assess the biodiversity skills needs to support the development of sustainable businesses including eco-tourism, eco-innovation, nature-based enterprises etc.	Review of Biodiversity Skills Needs; Number of professionals with needed skills newly trained / employed; National Biodiversity Indicators (NBI)-D.5.i. Number of professional ecologists and environmental managers
By 2023, the Origin Green programme is tracking and reporting farm and company member actions on biodiversity on an annual basis	3C8	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	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	3C9	The Business and Biodiversity Platform 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	Completed review of how the Climate Toolkit 4 Business could include biodiversity action

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
90% of Business for Biodiversity platform members have conducted an assessment of impacts and dependencies on biodiversity by the end of 2027, with at least 60% by end of 2025	3C10	The Business for Biodiversity platform will support businesses in conducting materiality assessments and determining their impacts and dependencies on nature and biodiversity	% of Business for Biodiversity Platform members with completed assessments
The Business for Biodiversity platform has published ten guidance documents for business by end 2025	3C11	The Business for Biodiversity platform 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.	National Biodiversity Indicators (NBI)-E.2. Number of biodiversity-related guidance documents published

Outcome 3D: Planning and development will facilitate and secure biodiversity’s contributions to people

Outcome 3D proposes actions for the planning system that aim to enhance its positive contribution to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, including through updated guidance and standards for the application of green infrastructure and nature-based solutions in planning and development.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
By 2024 guidance is available on best practice for biodiversity, green infrastructure and nature-based solutions in planning and development	3D1	The 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.	Case Study Paper published by 2026

Objective

4

Embed Biodiversity at the Heart of Climate Action

Introduction to this Objective

This Objective aims to make the connection between addressing climate change and restoring biodiversity. This link between biodiversity and climate change is enshrined in Irish law through the National Climate Objective that commits to pursue and achieve no later than 2050, the transition to a climate resilient, biodiversity-rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy.

As set out in the Climate Action Plan, climate change will have a devastating impact on nature, bringing about irreversible changes to ecosystems and the services on which human well-being depends. Higher temperatures and extreme weather events will result in huge costs to Ireland's and the EU's economy and society (Climate Action Plan, 2021). Climate change can also exacerbate other threats to biodiversity such as invasive species.

As Ireland embarks on its net zero transition, this Objective recognises that there are co-benefits and trade-offs for biodiversity, for example putting aside land for bioenergy could have impacts on local biodiversity and offshore wind sites could interact with sensitive marine areas. These actions aim to present an integrated approach to ensure that Ireland's transition to carbon neutrality does not come at the expense of increased biodiversity loss.

Outcome 4A: Threats to ecosystem services posed by climate change are recognised, addressed and mitigated

The effects being driven by climate change on biodiversity are becoming increasingly clear and this Outcome will improve our understanding of these impacts across Ireland through public campaigns and academic research. This Outcome aims to promote the implementation of Ireland's Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan and strengthen future incorporation of biodiversity in climate change policy.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
By 2024, DHLGH will conclude the sectoral Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan 2019 -2024	4A1	DHLGH will review and publish the outcome of Ireland's Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan 2019	Publication of report on Ireland's Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan 2019
By 2026, the evidence base of the current and future impacts of climate change on biodiversity has been strengthened	4A2	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	A more robust evidence-base of the current and future impacts of climate change on biodiversity
By 2024, climate adaptation policy and practice is strengthened through explicit consideration of biodiversity in the next cycle of sectoral climate adaptation plans	4A3	The National Adaptation Framework (NAF) Review will, <i>inter alia</i> , examine the efficacy of current biodiversity references and measures contained in national climate adaptation policy and practice, including those related to enhanced governance, nature-based solutions and cross-sectoral co-operation	A report on the future of the NAF will be made to the Minister at end Q3 2022 with recommendations for future national adaptation policy

Outcome 4B: Climate change adaptation and mitigation measures contribute, where practical, to biodiversity and ecosystem conservation

As Ireland increases its efforts to mitigate and adapt to climate change, whether through increasing offshore wind capacity or rehabilitating peatlands, there are opportunities to simultaneously enhance and restore biodiversity. This Outcome proposes actions to ensure that climate adaptation and mitigation measures contribute where practical to biodiversity and ecosystem conservation.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
33,000 hectares of Bord na Móna owned peatlands will be rehabilitated by 2026 under the Enhanced Decommissioning Rehabilitation and Restoration Scheme (EDRRS)	4B1	Bord na Móna as operator of the Enhanced Decommissioning Rehabilitation and Restoration Scheme (EDRRS), DHLGH 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	Published metrics from EDRSS including hectares of peatlands rehabilitated; water quality measures; results of biodiversity surveys; results of carbon emissions monitoring
Biodiversity representatives will be included as part of the revised Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (ORED II) process by 2023	4B2	DECC will ensure that the governance framework established as part of the work on a revised Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (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	At least one biodiversity representative sits on the Data and Scientific Group and the Steering Group for the ORED II
Ongoing monitoring programme for agricultural bioenergy sources is developed by end of 2023 and implemented by mid-2024	4B3	DAFM and other relevant organisations will work together and develop a monitoring programme to ensure that the target to double the biomass supply for fossil fuel substitution in Ireland, as set out in the Climate Action Plan 2021, maximises benefits for biodiversity and minimises or eliminates negative impacts on biodiversity	Development of monitoring programme

Outcome 4C: Nature-based solutions that combine benefits for biodiversity, and climate change adaptation are being widely implemented at a national, regional, and local scale

Nature-based solutions are actions that simultaneously protect nature and address societal challenges. ‘Win-win’ solutions can build climate resilience and biodiversity-rich environments. This Outcome aims to increase the number of nature-based solutions implemented across urban and rural areas and bring together a wide range of community groups who will be vital to their success.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
Nature-based solutions are contributing to national climate ambitions by 2025	4C1	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 programs	Number of programs that incorporate NBSs
Nature-based solutions are contributing to national climate ambitions by 2025	4C2	To support the National Climate Objective of achieving a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy, DHLGH 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 programs	€ in funding in investment for the restoration of blue carbon habitats (e.g. seagrass and saltmarsh); Area of transitional, coastal, and marine covered by restoration programmes
By 2023, there is significant progress to restore and rewet raised bog protected areas, as set out in the National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017-2022 and Ireland's 2021 Climate Action Plan	4C3	DHLGH will implement the restoration/rewetting actions set out in the National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017-2022, as set out in Ireland's 2021 Climate Action Plan	Degree of implementation of the National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017 - 2022



Objective 5

Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity

Introduction to this Objective

Objective 5 aims to enhance the evidence base for action on biodiversity, which will underpin and strengthen future decisions relating to biodiversity.

The proposed actions aim to provide the research community with the resources needed to fill research gaps and fund ongoing research on biodiversity and conservation needs. There are many valuable research programmes already in place and this Objective will build on those, such as the newly established All-Island Climate and Biodiversity Research Network (AICBRN) and the extensive work on water quality carried out by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). 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.

Biodiversity 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 data. A dedicated research programme on agricultural biodiversity is also proposed.

Outcome 5A: The research community has increased capacity to address biodiversity research gaps and skills needs

This Outcome aims to address capacity and skills gaps in the research community through the introduction or enhancement of dedicated research programmes, research calls, and further opportunities in educational institutions.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
By 2026, a review of biodiversity skills gaps is complete (conditional on an application made to the EGFSN)	5A1	An application will be made by relevant organisations to the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs to conduct a review of skills needs to address the biodiversity crisis e.g., ecologists, taxonomists, and biodiversity data experts	Completed application to Expert Group on Future Skills Needs; 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	5A2	Relevant research and policy networks will assess research priorities and knowledge gaps relating to biodiversity conservation and restoration	Publication of national biodiversity research priorities
By 2024, relevant government bodies will reflect biodiversity research priorities into research calls	5A3	Government bodies responsible for funding biodiversity research will evaluate opportunities to incorporate relevant biodiversity research priorities into research calls as appropriate	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 for biodiversity research

Outcome 5B: Data relevant to biodiversity and ecosystems, including conservation needs, is widely accessible and standardised

Biodiversity data will provide the evidence that underpins many of the actions in this plan. Many organisations and citizen scientists already collect direct biodiversity (e.g. species abundance) and biodiversity-related data (e.g. water quality). This Outcome aims to increase the amount of publicly available biodiversity data and standardise data collection approaches. As well as making data more accessible, this Outcome focuses on increasing funding and funnelling the resources needed to protect biodiversity through a financial needs assessment (FNA) approach.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
By the end of 2024, an ongoing conservation needs assessment is implemented to ensure that there is a continued focus on providing appropriate resources for species and habitats of most concern	5B1	Relevant research organisations, such as the NBF will devise a programme of ongoing conservation needs assessments to address key conservation needs and to advise on appropriate distribution of resources	Establishment of conservation needs programme and associated data architecture
By the end of 2025, data relating to industrial consents and licences, and associated monitoring data is more readily available and can be used to inform future projects	5B2	The EPA will assess the possibility of an integrated site and monitoring data solution to make data available relating to industrial consents and licences and associated monitoring data collected pre and post projects	Assessment of integrated site and data monitoring solution complete
By 2027, OPW has made all relevant biodiversity datasets publicly available	5B3	OPW will collect biodiversity data in standardised way and make these data publicly available	Number of OPW biodiversity datasets made available
By 2027, the National Botanic Gardens has digitised the Irish vascular plant herbarium specimens	5B4	The National Botanic Gardens will provide data from digitised herbarium specimens from the National Herbarium according to EU FAIR principles	Digitisation of herbarium specimens; Publication of herbarium specimen data
Research projects on sustainable diets and nutrition, high-nature value farmland, horticulture, integrated pest management (IPM), genetic diversity, and forestry are underway by end-2025	5B5	DAFM will work towards establishing a national research forum dedicated to sustainable food systems and forestry working with the farming and fishing communities and the private sector	Number of research projects on each topic underway by end-2025

Outcome 5C: Long-term monitoring programmes are in place to guide conservation and restoration goals

Recognising the importance of long-term monitoring for biodiversity action, and the need to fulfil our national, regional, and global reporting obligations, this Outcome proposes actions to continue monitoring efforts and to assess the effectiveness of biodiversity measures. The valuable contributions from citizen science programmes and volunteer data projects will also be supported.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
By 2024 biodiversity monitoring programmes are sufficiently robust to detect changes over time and fulfil our national, regional and global reporting obligations	5C1	A site-based monitoring programme to monitor changes in biodiversity over time will be developed	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	5C2	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	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	5C3	The contribution from citizen science to support biodiversity monitoring will be supported by all relevant organisations	A more robust set of citizen science-managed initiatives
By 2024 biodiversity monitoring programmes are sufficiently robust to detect changes over time and fulfil our national, regional and global reporting obligations	5C4	Monitoring of habitats and species listed on the EU Nature Directives will be continued and enhanced where required by DHLGH and DECC	Number of listed species included in monitoring programmes

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
Improved guidance and methodology for habitat surveying and mapping will be available by 2024	5C5	The Heritage Council will review and update the Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Survey And Mapping to better reflect needs and constraints in habitat mapping for urban conditions	Publication of updated Guidance by 2024
Ongoing publication of relevant Red Lists over the Plan period	5C6	Red List assessments will be updated by all relevant organisations to identify conservation priority terrestrial and marine species and knowledge gaps for prioritised species	Number of Red List assessments updated and published
By 2023 the National Land Cover Map will be published	5C7	The National Land Cover Map will be published	Publication of National Land Cover Map
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 by 2024	5C8	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	Updated state of knowledge and key knowledge gaps in Ireland's biodiversity report; National biodiversity monitoring framework developed by 2024
By end of 2023, a systematic baseline survey of priority invasive species and key hot-spot sites has been undertaken with subsequent periodic monitoring	5C9	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	Baseline survey undertaken in 2023

Outcome 5D: Ireland has prepared national assessments of ecosystem services and natural capital

To support Ireland’s conservation and restoration actions, this Outcome proposes a large-scale assessment of Ireland’s ecosystem services and natural capital. This Outcome aims to achieve recognition for the value that Ireland’s biodiversity holds and proposes regular assessments of ecosystem services to reflect this.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
First national assessment of ecosystem services is completed by end-2024	5D1	A network of experts in Natural Capital and Ecosystem Accounting will be established for the island of Ireland	Establishment of the network
Systems and standards for natural capital accounting are being developed and implemented in Ireland by the end of 2025	5D2	Relevant bodies will collaborate to advance ecosystem accounting and reporting methods and standards in Ireland, in line with the SEEA-EA framework, and provide appropriate guidance to key sectors (e.g., banking, finance, insurance) on use of ecosystem accounting	Inclusion of ecosystem assets, biodiversity, and ecosystem services in the CSO ecosystem accounts outputs
First national assessment of ecosystem services is completed by 2027	5D3	Relevant organisations, including the CSO, 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	Completed national assessment of ecosystem services by end-2024
Habitat biodiversity assessments are conducted on all National Farm Survey (NFS) farms by 2030	5D4	DAFM and Teagasc will work with NBDC to build capacity to work towards ensuring habitat biodiversity assessments are conducted on all NFS farms on a continuous basis	Number of completed habitat biodiversity assessments on all NFS farms by 2030

Outcome 5E: Biodiversity is mainstreamed across relevant research disciplines

This Outcome proposes actions to show how biodiversity is relevant to a range of disciplines, such as STEM, humanities, and engineering, and ensure that human resources with knowledge on biodiversity across different fields can be used to deliver impactful action.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
By 2027, alignment is achieved between relevant EU LIFE projects that work separately	5E1	DECC and DHLGH will facilitate integration and alignment and knowledge sharing between EU LIFE projects that deliver benefits for biodiversity, climate, and water	Actions to promote knowledge-sharing between EU LIFE projects e.g., conferences, meetings





Objective 6

Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives

Introduction to this Objective

Objective 6 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).

An all-island approach to the biodiversity crisis aims to ensure that Ireland can contribute effectively on an international level. This approach aims to make use of existing cross-border bodies, such as the All-Island Climate and Biodiversity Research Network, to advance efforts on specific issues like invasive species and funding.

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).

Links with other objectives

- Objective 6 is also closely linked with Objective 1, which sets out how Ireland can improve the mainstreaming of biodiversity across all levels of Government, sectors and society.
- There is also links with Objective 5, where the enhanced data on biodiversity will be shared to contribute to the global biodiversity data drive.

Outcome 6A: Science, policy and action on biodiversity conservation and restoration is effectively coordinated in an all-island approach

This outcome will see increased collaboration across the island of Ireland to address the biodiversity crisis, using existing research bodies and tackling pressing issues that affect North and South, such as invasive species and biodiversity funding. This outcome will also bring about increased knowledge sharing and engagement on biodiversity related research that will extend beyond the island, to include other UK governments.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
By 2024 cross-border consortia will secure grant funding to deliver biodiversity-related projects	6A1	DHLGH 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	National Biodiversity Indicators (NBI)-D.4.ii Amount of funding for biodiversity leveraged from EU LIFE Programme; Number of cross-border biodiversity projects
Ireland has adopted an all-island approach to invasive species by 2025	6A2	DHLGH and other relevant stakeholders will deliver on the National Invasive Species Management Plan (forthcoming), including all-island actions	Publication of all-island plan for invasive species
By 2027, investment priorities on biodiversity in Shared Island chapter of the revised National Development Plan are implemented	6A3	DHLGH 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.	Number of investment priorities implemented
By 2027, the AICBRN is advancing climate and biodiversity research with the support of government	6A4	The Government will work with NIEA and DAERA to support the work of the All-Island Climate and Biodiversity Research Network	€ in annual funding to AICBRN
Support the All-Island Pollinator Plan and other all-island biodiversity initiatives	6A5	Relevant bodies will continue to support and utilise the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan	Number of AIPP actions achieved

Outcome 6B: Ireland supports international initiatives on the governance of biodiversity and ecosystem services

This outcome will see Ireland increase its contribution of funds, knowledge, and capacity for research internationally through participation and support for regional (EU) and global initiatives.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
By 2025, Ireland has enhanced its engagement with international biodiversity initiatives	6B1	Ireland will enhance its engagement with EU and international biodiversity initiatives and research, e.g., EU Biodiversity Platform, CBD, OSPAR, RAMSAR and IPBES	Engagement makes a clear contribution to national biodiversity initiatives



Outcome 6C: Ireland takes action internationally to cooperate with other countries, sectors, disciplines and communities to address the biodiversity crisis

This Outcome proposes actions for increased collaboration with other countries on biodiversity matters. Through knowledge sharing and financial support, particularly with Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States, Ireland will join other international players that are developing solutions to the biodiversity crisis, such as nature-based solutions and marine action.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
By 2023, Ireland has strengthened the inclusion of biodiversity in international diplomacy and financing	6C1	Ireland's Climate Finance Roadmap will include biodiversity and nature-based solutions as one of its priority areas	Actions on biodiversity and nature-based solutions in Ireland's Climate Finance Roadmap
By 2023, Ireland has strengthened the inclusion of biodiversity in international diplomacy and financing	6C2	DFA will increase Ireland's Overseas Development Aid contributions to biodiversity-related projects including Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States	€ of ODA associated with biodiversity- or climate-related projects, such as marine protection funding; Reporting on biodiversity financing DFA annual Climate and Environmental Finance Report
By 2023, Ireland has strengthened the inclusion of biodiversity in international diplomacy and financing	6C3	Ireland will strongly support efforts to conclude a new global treaty on marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ)	Adoption of a new global treaty on Biodiversity Beyond National Jurisdiction

Outcome 6D: Ireland enhances its contributions to the international biodiversity data drive

Sharing data with international data hubs contributes to the global effort to better understand biodiversity and develop evidence-based solutions to respond to the biodiversity crisis. This Outcome proposes actions for Ireland to increase its contributions to the ongoing international data drive for biodiversity.

Target	Action Number	Action	Indicator
From 2024, a system is in place to facilitate enhanced contributions to EU and international data hubs and networks	6D1	DHLGH 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 European Environment Agency	Number of data contributions to EU and international data hubs and networks





Appendix

SEA and AA Screening Statement

Strategic Environmental Assessment

A Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) is a formal, open, and systematic evaluation of the potential significant environmental impacts that may arise through implementing a plan or program, or a variation to a plan or program, before a decision is made to adopt it.

The process of SEA has been formalised throughout the European Union by the Strategic Environmental Assessment Directive of 2001 (formally titled Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment). The primary legislation that transposes the Directive into Irish law includes the European Communities (Environmental Assessment of Certain Plans and Programmes) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 435 of 2004) and the Planning and Development Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) Regulations 2004 (S.I. 436 of 2004). These statutes have been amended several times to account for new legislation on the environment, planning and development, and to respond to emerging and cross-cutting environmental issues, court judgements, and broader policy contexts.

In principle, the SEA Directive applies to a wide range of public plans and programmes that may be adopted by governments, or by national and regional authorities (including local authorities), and at national or local level. This includes plans for land use, transport, agriculture, energy, waste, marine exploration, etc. The SEA Directive does not directly relate to policies, but rather to the overarching programmes and frameworks that seek to implement policies and that may, by allowing for changes in use of land or water resources or other key environmental assets, result in impacts on the environment.

The process for SEA is similar to that for Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA, which is governed by the Environmental Impact Assessment Directive of 1985). However, EIA is generally carried out on specific projects (housing or infrastructure development, land conversion, waste management projects, etc), whilst SEA is aimed at the higher-level plans that would facilitate or enable those projects to be carried out. SEA is therefore aimed at plans and programmes prepared by a national, regional or local authority.

The first step in the SEA process is screening; this is an assessment of whether the proposed plan or programme is mandatory under the EU or national legislation, and whether it is likely to have any significant effects on the environment. Some categories of plans and programmes automatically require a full SEA and the publication of a detailed assessment report, including plans prepared for agriculture, forestry, fisheries, energy, industry, transport, waste management, water resource management, telecommunications, tourism, town & country planning or land use, and which create a framework for future development consents of certain projects.

Following the public consultation phase for the fourth NBAP, once the proposed actions are updated based on submissions from the Irish people and various stakeholder groups, a full screening assessment will be carried out to determine whether the NBAP is likely to have any significant effects on the environment. If the screening process determines that environmental effects are likely to arise from the implementation of the NBAP, then the SEA process will move to the next phase, called scoping; this is the process by which the range of potential environmental impacts is identified. The next stage would be to carry out a detailed assessment of the likelihood, extent and severity of those potential impacts, and the production of a Strategic Environmental

Assessment Report (SEAR). This report would then be open to consultation, and the relevant environmental consideration would be factored into the NBAP prior to it being finalised. The final step would be the publication of an SEA Statement, outlining the likely environmental effects, how they were identified, and how they are dealt with under the final Plan. At this stage of the NBAP development process, a generalised preliminary review has determined that an SEA is not automatically required under the SEA Directive or the related Irish implementing legislation, as the NBAP does not fall into any of the categories of plans or programmes for which SEA is mandatory, and it does not set out any policy structures or frameworks for development or planning consents. This initial review has also indicated that if fully implemented, the outcomes of the NBAP, as listed under each of the Objectives of this draft document, would be positive for Ireland's biodiversity and the wider environment, setting a framework for further positive impacts into the future. However, noting that the actions under the NBAP (and therefore the potential outcomes) will not be finalised until after the public consultation process is completed, a detailed screening assessment will not be possible until that time. The results of the SEA screening process for the fourth NBAP will be published by the National Parks and Wildlife Service prior to the fourth NBAP being finalised, early in 2023.

Appropriate Assessment

An Appropriate Assessment (AA) is an assessment of the potential negative implications of a plan or project on sites within the Natura 2000 network – these are Special Areas of Conservation designated for wildlife under the EU Habitats Directive, and Special Protection Areas specifically designated for the conservation of birds under the EU Birds Directive¹. The process for Appropriate Assessment has many parallels with both SEA and EIA, beginning with a screening assessment to see whether an AA is required. The requirement for “Appropriate Assessment” is set out in Articles 6(3) and 6(4) of the Habitats Directive.

For AA, the screening stage must determine, on the basis of a preliminary assessment and objective criteria, whether a plan or project, alone and in combination with other plans or projects, could have significant effects on a Natura 2000 site, taking specific account of the site's conservation objectives and interests. In simplest terms, it must determine whether the proposed plan or project could impact upon the habitats or species for which a site or sites is /are designated, or otherwise impact upon the conservation objectives for the site or sites in question.

In both SEA and AA (and also in EIA) processes, the precautionary principle must be applied in making any key determinations relating to environmental impacts. This means that a lack of certainty as to the likelihood or severity of potential impacts cannot be taken as grounds for not considering those potential impacts. In practice, this means that for any plan where it is determined that significant effects either are likely, uncertain or unknown at screening stage, a full AA will be required.

European case law has established that assessments should be undertaken on the basis of the best scientific evidence and methods. Accordingly, data and information on the project and on the site and an analysis of potential effects on the site must be obtained. Once the detailed assessment of the potential for impact on the site or sites is completed, a detailed impact assessment report (called a Natura Impact Statement, NIS) is completed and published for consultation.

1 The Habitats Directive is formally titled the European Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. The Birds Directive is formally titled the Directive of the European Parliament and Council 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds. The Birds Directive was originally adopted in 1979, making it the oldest piece of environmental legislation in the EU. Both directives are transposed into Irish law by the European Communities (Birds and Natural Habitats) Regulations 2011, as amended.

Following the preliminary SEA screening review, a similar review of the potential impacts of the draft of the fourth NBAP was carried out by the NBAP development team. This has determined that, if the NBAP is implemented, the impacts on Natura 2000 sites should only be positive, based on the Objectives and Outcomes presented in this document. For example, efforts to strengthen wildlife legislation, to address the impacts of climate change on protected sites and species, and to resort biodiversity across the Irish landscape should have measurable positive impacts on all of Ireland's Natura 2000 sites. However, as with the SEA screening process, a full and formal AA screening assessment will be required on the updated draft of the NBAP that will be prepared following the completion of the public consultation and consideration of further input from stakeholders phase in early 2023.



Table of all actions in 4th NBAP

Action Number	Action
ME1	DHLGH and NBDC will develop a progress tracker for this Plan comparable to the EU Biodiversity Strategy Actions Tracker and that also maps this Plan to Multilateral Environmental Agreements
ME2	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
ME3	The Biodiversity Working Group will prepare an Interim Review of the Plan to assess the degree of implementation and prepare recommendations for improvement or further action
ME4	The Biodiversity Working Group, with independent scientific inputs, will prepare a Final Review of the Plan to assess the degree of implementation and prepare recommendations for the next NBAP
ME5	An independent scientific evaluation of the impact of the NBAP on the biodiversity crisis will be carried out, for example by the National Biodiversity Forum, accounting for ongoing monitoring and assessment efforts, and issued as a compendium to annual progress report/Final Review
1A1	DHLGH, with input from the inter-departmental Biodiversity Working Group, will prepare an annual progress report on the implementation of NBAP actions for presentation to the Cabinet Committee on the Environment and Climate Change
1A2	DHLGH will implement the Strategic Action Plan resulting from the NPWS Review
1A3	DHLGH will review the recommendations arising from the Biodiversity Financial Needs Assessment research project and propose pathways for their implementation
1A4	The NBF will conduct an independent review of the Biodiversity Financial Needs Assessment
1A5	Government will put forward proposals for the tagging of biodiversity expenditure across government
1A6	All relevant Departments and Government Bodies will explore the biodiversity expertise and training requirements across the civil service, and implement recommendations for improved governance, implementation, and training arrangements
1A7	OPW will implement its Biodiversity Action Strategy 2022-2026, including the appointment of a Biodiversity Officer, in support of NBAP targets
1B1	DHLGH will explore placing the National Biodiversity Action Plan on a statutory footing
1B2	The composition of the inter-departmental working group will be reviewed to ensure better representation of departments, agencies, and sectors
1B3	DHLGH and the Heritage Council will define the strategic role and remit of the National Biodiversity Data Centre in meeting Ireland's biodiversity data and information needs and in assisting in the delivery of this Plan
1B4	DHLGH will work with Local Authorities on establishing a Biodiversity Officer Programme with a dedicated Biodiversity Officer in each Local Authority and dedicated guidance on their role by 2026

Action Number	Action
1B5	The Heritage Council will publish updated guidelines for the production of Local Biodiversity Action Plans and their integration with City and County Development Plans by 2024
1B6	All Local Authorities will have a Biodiversity Action Plan in place by the end of 2026 that is subject to regular review and revision processes in line with relevant guideline standards
1C1	Departments and Agencies with responsibility for the National Biodiversity Action Plan will also contribute to the National Land Use Review
1C2	DAFM will monitor and report on the efficacy of actions to promote biodiversity under the CAP SP
1C3	DAFM will ensure that farmers are incentivised to create and maintain habitats on farms as part of Ireland's Common Agricultural Policy Strategic Plan 2023-2027 and the Rural Development Plan, which sits under the CAP SP
1C4	DHLGH will establish a subgroup of the Biodiversity Working Group to explore how the National Biodiversity Indicators can incorporate relevant policy areas
1D1	A communications expert will be appointed to NPWS to generate public awareness and support for conservation and restoration
1D2	DHLGH and other relevant bodies will build on existing biodiversity and awareness barometers to gauge the public connection to biodiversity
1D3	Údarás na Gaeltachta will increase awareness and participation on biodiversity issues among Gaeltacht communities via the Community Employment Scheme and Rural Social Scheme
1D4	The NBDC will produce and implement a Biodiversity Citizen Science Strategy to promote citizen engagement with both terrestrial and marine biodiversity and to develop greater awareness of the value of local biodiversity
1D5	DHLGH, DRCD and DECC will continue to build support for community biodiversity initiatives such as the Small Recording Projects grant scheme, Community Foundation Ireland Environment and Nature Fund, LEADER, Local Agenda 21, Shared Island Fund, Peatlands Community Engagement Scheme and GSI Geoheritage Grant Scheme
1D6	DHLGH will continue to support Local Authorities biodiversity projects through the Local Biodiversity Action Fund throughout the lifetime of this Plan
1D7	DHLGH and DAFM will fund, support, and promote the work of the Business for Biodiversity platform during its initial set up phase of three years
1D8	The Business for Biodiversity platform will engage with business to enhance private sector action on biodiversity
1D9	The Business for Biodiversity platform will provide a mechanism to match private sector resources with appropriate biodiversity projects
1E1	DHLGH will complete a review of Wildlife legislation
1E2	DHLGH to publish legislation to provide a legal basis for National Parks
1E3	DHLGH 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

Action Number	Action
1E4	DAFM will review the EIA (Agriculture) Regulations
2A1	DHLGH will complete the selection and notification of sites for the protection of Annex habitats and species listed on the EU Habitats and Birds Directives
2A2	DHLGH will publish detailed site-specific conservation objectives for all SACs and SPAs
2A3	DHLGH, after consultation with other relevant bodies, will complete a review of its licencing and consent systems to facilitate sustainable activities within Natura 2000 sites
2A4	DHLGH 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
2A5	DHLGH and other relevant organisations will support species and habitat-specific conservation programmes
2A6	DHLGH will work to ensure that support for farming for nature is appropriately resourced to enhance the number of farms in such schemes
2A7	DHLGH with relevant stakeholders will identify areas that will be pledged as protected areas following the criteria laid out under the EU Biodiversity Strategy
2A8	DHLGH, OPW and other relevant organisations will support ex situ conservation initiatives, and will work with zoos, aquaria, and botanic gardens to identify native species in need of conservation that may benefit from ex situ management
2A9	Dublin Zoo will establish a National Centre for Species Survival at Dublin Zoo, increasing national capacity for species conservation assessments, conservation planning and action
2A10	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
2B1	DAFM and Teagasc will develop and implement realistic and widely applicable results based agri-environmental climate measures (AECM) as part of Ireland's CAP SP that include significant habitat maintenance and restoration measures
2B2	DHLGH 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
2B3	DAFM and Teagasc will support farmers to transition to organic farming
2B4	DAFM, Teagasc, Local Authorities and other relevant stakeholders will put forward measures to reduce pesticide use in Ireland by 50% by 2030
2B5	DAFM, DHLGH, 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

Action Number	Action
2B6	DHLGH, Bord na Móna, DECC, DAFM and other relevant stakeholders will implement the National Peatlands Strategy 2015-2025, and subsequent policy changes, taking account of the 2021 mid-term review
2B7	Bord na Móna will develop and publish an updated Biodiversity Action Plan
2B8	DAFM will identify appropriate actions to enhance biodiversity, including the enhancement of cultural ecosystem services from Ireland's forests, in the preparation of the new National Forest Strategy and the next Forestry Programme
2B9	DAFM will continue to promote and/or support native tree planting by Local Authorities and other State/semi-state bodies
2B10	DAFM, Local Authorities, TII, DHLGH and OPW will strive to use native species, varieties, and landraces from appropriate native sources in their landscaping works, where the use of such material is appropriate
2B11	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
2B12	NPWS and DAFM will continue to provide funding for NBDCs monitoring of pollinators
2B13	Departments and agencies will continue to collaborate on relevant projects that contribute to the objective of improving biodiversity, climate, water quality and other environmental objectives including funding provided by the EU
2B14	OPW will work with relevant authorities to ensure that Flood Risk Management planning and associated SEA, EIA and AA, minimises loss of biodiversity and ecosystem services through policies to promote more catchment-wide and non-structural flood risk management measures
2B15	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
2B16	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
2B17	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
2C1	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 Water Framework Directive (2022-2027)
2C2	DAFM will ensure that Ireland's CAP SP will provide circular and localised nutrient management and reduce loss of Nitrogen, Phosphorus, and soil to the aquatic environment, taking account of nature-based solutions
2C3	Irish Water 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

Action Number	Action
2C4	DHLGH and LAWPRO will ensure that high status water bodies are effectively protected and restored via the Blue Dot Catchments Programme
2C5	DHLGH will develop an Action Plan to urgently protect 3110 Oligotrophic Lake Habitat that was assessed as having a Bad Conservation Status as part of Article 17 Reporting 2019
2D1	DAFM together with relevant organisations, will establish an All-Island Genetic Resources Working Group and continue the work of the Forest Genetic Resources Working Group
2D2	DAFM and partners will launch an integrated work programme on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Genetic resources
2D3	DHLGH will progress the ratification of the Nagoya Protocol on Access to Genetic Resources and the Fair and Equitable Sharing of Benefits Arising from their Utilisation to the Convention on Biological Diversity and enact necessary regulations
2D4	DHLGH, 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
2D5	Dublin Zoo will establish a national wildlife biobanking hub
2D6	DAFM, the National Botanic Gardens and the Irish Seed Savers Association will continue to implement the National Genetic Conservation Strategies for animals and plants
2D7	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
2D8	The National Seed Bank in the National Botanic Gardens will collaborate with other seed banks such as the Threatened Seed Bank in Trinity College Dublin, the Crop Wild Relative Seed Bank in DAFM Backweston, and the Irish Seed Savers Association, to maintain a collection of seeds from all plants native to Ireland
2D9	Relevant organisations will conduct studies and publications on genetic resources of wild species, heritage crops and gene banks to develop the understanding of genetic diversity across native and domesticated species
2E1	Progress on key initiatives to support targets under the EU Biodiversity Strategy
2E2	DHLGH, Inland Fisheries Ireland, OPW and other relevant bodies will explore the restoration of 300 km of rivers to a free-flowing state in line with the EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030
2F1	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
2F2	DHLGH will adopt and complete the integration of Ireland's marine environmental targets established under the MSFD, and Water Framework Directive 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

Action Number	Action
2F3	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 and also 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
2F4	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 North-East Atlantic Environment Strategy 2030
2F5	DAFM and other relevant stakeholders will continue to implement the EU's Common Fisheries Policy 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 that can produce maximum sustainable yield
2F6	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
2F7	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
2F8	DAFM, SFPA and other relevant stakeholders will continue to take concerted action to combat illegal, unreported, and unregulated fishing
2F9	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
2F10	DAFM, DHLGH and other relevant stakeholders will build and enhance engagement with coastal and marine stakeholders, maritime sectors and the wider community to promote the benefits of marine biodiversity and ecosystem services, and the responsible, sustainable use of marine resources
2F11	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

Action Number	Action
2F12	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
2G1	DHLGH will establish an invasive alien species (IAS) unit to expedite implementation of the legislative and policy framework, including specific resources for enforcement
2G2	DHLGH together, with other relevant Departments and public bodies, will develop national plans to implement the EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation and relevant national legislation, as well as work on cooperative plans where there is an all-island or N-S aspect for IAS impacts
2G3	DHLGH in collaboration with all relevant stakeholders, will resource and implement on-the-ground actions to remove stands of invasive species from native woodlands and peatlands within Protected Areas and National Parks
2G4	DHLGH, NBDC and relevant partners will develop dedicated biosecurity protocols, standard operating procedures and guidelines for government departments by 2024
2G5	DHLGH, NBDC and relevant partners will implement recommended measures arising from the 2021 EPA Report No. 368 Prevention, Control and Eradication of Invasive Alien Species by 2026
2G6	NBDC will continue to produce Risk Assessments for potential invasive alien species
2G7	DHLGH 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
2G8	Ireland will ratify the International Convention for the Control and Management of Ships Ballast Water and Sediments and DOT will prepare a plan of implementation
3A1	DHLGH will fund and deliver on Heritage Ireland 2030, Ireland's 10-year national heritage plan
3A2	The Heritage Officer Network will consider methods of including biodiversity in efforts to protect, promote and revive traditional crafts, trades and farming practices that are central to our heritage, and prepare a strategy document to guide future investments in these sectors
3A3	DTCAGSM will incorporate biodiversity and ecosystem services, particularly cultural ecosystem services, in placemaking efforts and investment in Cultural Regional Infrastructure into its capital project appraisal processes
3A4	Local Authorities will work to identify and respond to opportunities for enhancing the biocultural value of green and blue urban environments (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 ecosystem services in local biodiversity action plans
3A5	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

Action Number	Action
3A6	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
3A7	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
3A8	The Sustainable Tourism Policy to be published in 2023 will take account of the National Biodiversity Action Plan with a view to conserving and restoring our biodiversity and, in turn, ensuring the overall quality of our tourism offering
3A9	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
3A10	OPW will conduct biodiversity audits at multiple sites, implement enhancements and recommendations, and share the data gathered
3A11	DOE, DHERIS and DHLGH will work together to align the aims of the National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development - ESD to 2030 and the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan and to develop and progress mutual actions
3B1	DRCD with Comhairle na Tuaithe will incorporate biodiversity considerations, particularly the value of cultural ecosystem services to mental health and wellbeing, into the forthcoming National Outdoor Recreation Strategy
3C1	DETE will lead on the implementation of the EU Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD) when adopted, which requires the reporting of environmental information including biodiversity
3C2	DETE will work with Enterprise Ireland to integrate biodiversity into relevant programmes and activities
3C3	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
3C4	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
3C5	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
3C6	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

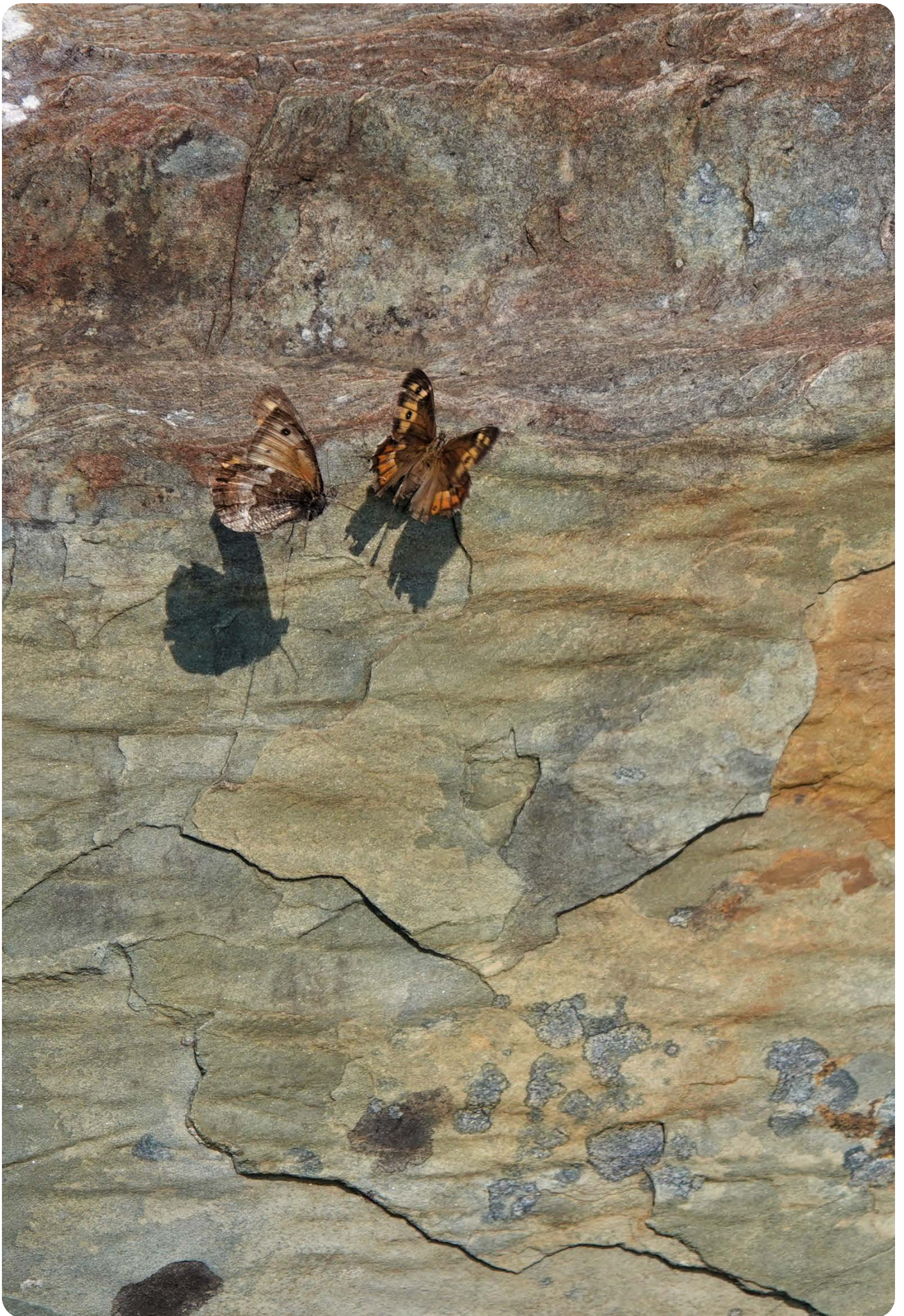
Action Number	Action
3C7	Relevant entities such as the National Skills Council, the nine Regional Skills Fora, the Skills and Labour Market Research Unit (hosted in SOLAS), the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs (under DETE) and the National Training Fund Advisory Group (under DFHERIS) will assess the biodiversity skills needs to support the development of sustainable businesses including eco-tourism, eco-innovation, nature-based enterprises etc.
3C8	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
3C9	The Business and Biodiversity Platform 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
3C10	The Business for Biodiversity platform will support businesses in conducting materiality assessments and determining their impacts and dependencies on nature and biodiversity
3C11	The Business for Biodiversity platform 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.
3D1	The 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.
4A1	DHLGH will review and publish the outcome of Ireland's Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan 2019
4A2	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
4A3	The National Adaptation Framework (NAF) Review will, inter alia, examine the efficacy of current biodiversity references and measures contained in national climate adaptation policy and practice, including those related to enhanced governance, nature-based solutions and cross-sectoral co-operation
4B1	Bord na Móna as operator of the Enhanced Decommissioning Rehabilitation and Restoration Scheme (EDRRS), DHLGH 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
4B2	DECC will ensure that the governance framework established as part of the work on a revised Offshore Renewable Energy Development Plan (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

Action Number	Action
4B3	DAFM and other relevant organisations will work together and develop a monitoring programme to ensure that the target to double the biomass supply for fossil fuel substitution in Ireland, as set out in the Climate Action Plan 2021, maximises benefits for biodiversity and minimises or eliminates negative impacts on biodiversity
4C1	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 programs
4C2	To support the National Climate Objective of achieving a climate resilient, biodiversity rich, environmentally sustainable and climate neutral economy, DHLGH 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 programs
4C3	DHLGH will implement the restoration/rewetting actions set out in the National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017-2022, as set out in Ireland's 2021 Climate Action Plan
5A1	An application will be made by relevant organisations to the Expert Group on Future Skills Needs to conduct a review of skills needs to address the biodiversity crisis e.g., ecologists, taxonomists, and biodiversity data experts
5A2	Relevant research and policy networks will assess research priorities and knowledge gaps relating to biodiversity conservation and restoration
5A3	Government bodies responsible for funding biodiversity research will evaluate opportunities to incorporate relevant biodiversity research priorities into research calls as appropriate
5B1	Relevant research organisations, such as the NBF will devise a programme of ongoing conservation needs assessment to address key conservation needs and to advise on appropriate distribution of resources
5B2	The EPA will assess the possibility of an integrated site and monitoring data solution to make data available relating to industrial consents and licences and associated monitoring data collected pre and post projects
5B3	OPW will collect biodiversity data in standardised way and make these data publicly available
5B4	The National Botanic Gardens will provide data from digitised herbarium specimens from the National Herbarium according to EU FAIR principles
5B5	DAFM will work towards establishing a national research forum dedicated to sustainable food systems and forestry working with the farming and fishing communities and the private sector
5C1	A site-based monitoring programme to monitor changes in biodiversity over time will be developed
5C2	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
5C3	The contribution from citizen science to support biodiversity monitoring will be supported by all relevant organisations

Action Number	Action
5C4	Monitoring of habitats and species listed on the EU Nature Directives will be continued and enhanced where required by DHLGH and DECC
5C5	The Heritage Council will review and update the Best Practice Guidance for Habitat Survey And Mapping to better reflect needs and constraints in habitat mapping for urban conditions
5C6	Red List assessments will be updated by all relevant organisations to identify conservation priority terrestrial and marine species and knowledge gaps for prioritised species
5C7	The National Land Cover Map will be published
5C8	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
5C9	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
5D1	A network of experts in Natural Capital and Ecosystem Accounting will be established for the island of Ireland
5D2	Relevant bodies will collaborate to advance ecosystem accounting and reporting methods and standards in Ireland, in line with the SEEA-EA framework, and provide appropriate guidance will be provided to key sectors (e.g., banking, finance, insurance) on use of ecosystem accounting
5D3	Relevant organisations, including the CSO, 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
5D4	DAFM and Teagasc will work with NBDC to build capacity to work towards ensuring habitat biodiversity assessments are conducted on all NFS farms on a continuous basis
5E1	DECC and DHLGH will facilitate integration and alignment and knowledge sharing between EU LIFE projects that deliver benefits for biodiversity, climate, and water
6A1	DHLGH 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
6A2	DHLGH and other relevant stakeholders will deliver on the National Invasive Species Management Plan (forthcoming), including all-island actions
6A3	DHLGH 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.
6A4	The Government will work with NIEA and DAERA to support the work of the All-Ireland Climate and Biodiversity Research Network
6A5	Relevant bodies will continue to support and utilise the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan

Action Number	Action
6B1	Ireland will enhance its engagement with EU and international biodiversity initiatives and research, e.g., EU Biodiversity Platform, CBD, OSPAR, RAMSAR and IPBES
6C1	Ireland's Climate Finance Roadmap will include biodiversity and nature-based solutions as one of its priority areas
6C2	DFA will increase Ireland's Overseas Development Aid contributions to biodiversity-related projects including Least Developed Countries and Small Island Developing States
6C3	Ireland will strongly support efforts to conclude a new global treaty on marine biodiversity beyond national jurisdiction (BBNJ)
6D1	DHLGH 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 European Environment Agency





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List of Acronyms

Acronym	Description
EIA	Environmental Impact Assessment
EIONET	European Environment Information and Observation Network
EIP-AGRI	Agricultural European Innovation Partnership
ENGO	Environmental Non-Governmental Organisation
EPA	Environmental Protection Agency
ESPOO	The Convention on Environmental Impact Assessment in a Transboundary Context, known as the Espoo Convention sets out the obligations of Parties to assess the environmental impact of certain activities at an early stage of planning
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
GNDOCB	Garda National Drugs and Organised Crime Bureau
GSI	Geological Survey of Ireland
HNV	High Nature Value
IAS	Invasive Alien Species
IDA	Industrial Development Agency
INTERREG	EU initiative to bring people together to share innovative and sustainable solutions to regional development challenges.
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
LA's	Local Authorities
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
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.
ME	Monitoring & Evaluation
MEA	Millennium Ecosystem Assessment
MSFD	Marine Strategy Framework Directive

Acronym	Description
NBAP	National Biodiversity Action Plan (Ireland)
NBDC	National Biodiversity Data Centre
NBF	National Biodiversity Forum
NBI	National Biodiversity Indicator
NBS	Nature-based Solution
NDP	National Development Plan
NECD	National Emission Reduction Commitments Directive
NESC	National Economic and Social Council
NFS	National Farm Survey
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NHA	Natural Heritage Area
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
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
SNaP	Strategic Nature Project
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

Acronym	Description
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
UK	United Kingdom
UN	United Nations
WCPA	World Commission on Protected Areas
WFD	Water Framework Directive
WI	Waterways Ireland

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