

IRELAND

Competent authority(ies) for nature & biodiversity:

Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government: <http://www.environ.ie/en/>

Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources: <http://www.dcmnr.gov.ie/>

National Parks and Wildlife Service: <http://www.npws.ie/en/>

Most recent national/subnational biodiversity strategy/action plan:

National Biodiversity Plan (2002): <http://www.npws.ie/en/media/Media,4590,en.pdf>

Latest review of the implementation of biodiversity strategy/action plan:**Alignment with EU biodiversity plan:****Alignment with EU 2010 Biodiversity Indicators (SEBI 2010):****Key sources of official nature & biodiversity information used for evaluation:**

- Department of Environment, Heritage and Local Government: <http://www.environ.ie/en/>
- Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources:
<http://www.dcmnr.gov.ie/>
 - National Parks and Wildlife Service: <http://www.npws.ie/en/>
 - Irish Spatial Strategy: <http://www.irishspatialstrategy.ie/>
 - Notice Nature: <http://www.noticenature.ie/>
 - Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority:
<http://www.teagasc.ie/index.htm>
 - National Development Plan: http://www.ndp.ie/docs/NDP_Homepage/1131.htm
 - Environment Protection Agency, Ireland: <http://www.epa.ie/>
 - Ireland's National Platform for Biodiversity Research:
<http://www.biodiversityresearch.ie/>
 - Irish Sea Fisheries Board: <http://www.bim.ie/templates/homepage.asp>
 - Irish Marine Institute: <http://www.marine.ie/home/>

SUMMARY OF PROGRESS IN DELIVERY OF OBJECTIVES OF EU BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN

A. THE TEN PRIORITY OBJECTIVES

POLICY AREA 1: BIODIVERSITY IN THE EU

1. To safeguard the EU's most important habitats and species.

Natura 2000 sites (terrestrial and marine) (A.1.1, A.1.2 & A.1.4)

	<i>Number of sites</i>	<i>Area (km²)</i>
Total SCIs/SACs (Habitats Directive)	423	13 553
SCIs/SACs with marine component (Habitats Directive)	96	6 010
Total SPAs (Birds Directive)	131	2 815
SPAs with marine component (Birds Directive)	66	810

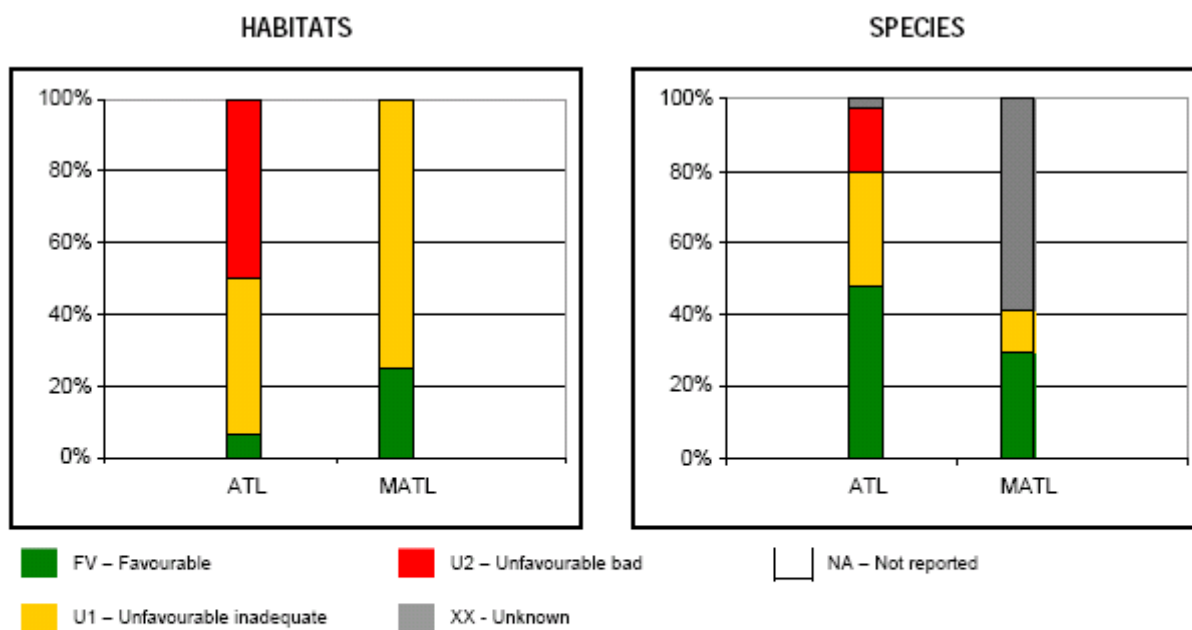
Number of SCIs and SACs - Natura 2000 Barometer – June 2008 (Source: European Topic Centre on Biological Diversity based on data supplied by Member State)

Ireland was considered in June 2008 to have achieved a level of sufficiency of 86 % for site selection for species and habitat types under Habitats Directive, in its territory. The Irish authority has stated that 45 management plans are currently in preparation for Natura 2000 sites.

According to the EC LIFE Programme/Database, under the LIFE Nature programme, there was a total of 7 projects in Ireland with an EC contribution of EUR 10 320 083, during the period 2000-2006. For the year 2007, the Irish project received EUR 2 944 000 under its indicative national allocation for LIFE+ funds.

Conservation status assessment (A.1.2)

Under the Habitats Directive Ireland has one biogeographical region (atlantic). The results of the first conservation status assessment for species and habitats of community interest are as follows:



Region / Conclusion	HABITATS					SPECIES				
	FV	U1	U2	XX	NA	FV	U1	U2	XX	NA
Atlantic	6	44	50			48	33	18	3	
Marine Atlantic	25	75				30	11		59	
Member State	7	46	47			41	24	10	25	

*The conservation status categories: FV = favourable, U1 = unfavourable-inadequate, U2 = unfavourable-bad, XX = unknown, NA = no evaluation given by MS

Overall assessment of conservation status by biogeographical region (Analysis by the European Topic centre on Biological Diversity based on data supplied by Member State)

Red Data Books/Lists, National/Sub-national Atlases, Action Plans (A.1.3)

Ireland has red data lists for mammals (1993), Birds (1999, 2007), Amphibians (1993), Reptiles (1993), vascular plants (1998), Mosses (2006) and with a number in preparation. Atlases have also been prepared for different groups of mammals (2000, 2003, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008), birds (1976, 1979, 1993, 2002), dragonflies (2004), vascular plants (2002) and bryophytes (2003). An atlas for water beetles is currently being prepared.

Common bird monitoring (A.1.3)

Ireland has a common bird monitoring programme, the Countryside Bird Survey (CBS). Most of the species of conservation concern appear to have at least remained stable since the late 1990s. However, the present rates of annual change in Skylark and Swallow, as well as other species such as Kestrel, Swift and Wheatear, are of particular concern. These significant declines were apparent throughout all regions where trends were measured. Of these species, trends were measured in Northern Ireland for Skylark and Swallow only, and over a marginally longer time period, since 1994. Neither species was shown to decline significantly.

Ex-situ conservation (A.1.3)

Ireland has a number of ex-situ conservation activities, such as seed collections stored in the Irish Threatened Plant Gene bank, housed at Trinity College, Dublin and the Irish Threatened

Plant Species Conservation Programme. Dublin Zoo and Fota Island Zoo participate in a number of programmes of ex-situ conservation in relation to endangered species.

2. To conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider EU countryside.

Rural Development Programmes (A2.1.1, 2.1.2 & 2.1.8):

According to information supplied by the Irish authorities, the environment/land management budget (Axis 2) of the Rural Development Programme (RDP) accounts for about 79 % of EAFRD allocations (including co-financing). The majority of Axis 2 funds are focused on agri-environment (AE) payments, amounting to some EUR 2 089 000 000, which is 49 % of the national EAFRD budget. Funding for Natura 2000 areas accounts for approximately 9 % of the budget. Both measures receive significant amounts of additional national financing (EUR 414 000 000 for AE payments and EUR 64 000 000 for Natura 2000 areas).

Agri-environment payments are delivered through the Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS), and schemes for Organic Farming, Heritage Farm Buildings and Maintenance of the Visual Appearance of the Farmyard. Objectives include the conservation of High Nature Value (HNV) habitats and more generally the promotion of agricultural land uses compatible with the protection and improvement of the environment, biodiversity, the landscape and its features, climate change, natural resources, water quality, the soil and genetic diversity. There is no specific support for forestry within the RDP, although the sector does receive state aids totalling EUR 945 000 000, mostly for afforestation (outside Natura 2000 areas).

Agricultural genetic diversity (A2.1.11):

The management of plant and animal genetic resources for agriculture in Ireland is coordinated by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. A budget is in place to grant-aid research and development activities for the conservation of genetic resources. In-situ conservation of endangered local breeds (Kerry cattle, Irish Maol cattle, Dexter cattle, Galway sheep, Connemara pony, Irish Draught horse and Kerry Bog pony) is aided under Ireland's Agri-environment programme (known as REPS). This programme also provides funding for the establishment of heritage apple orchards for varieties specific to Ireland. A national scheme is also in place to support the Kerry cattle breed.

Ireland participates in the European Regional Focal Point for Animal Genetic Resources (EFRP), the European implementation of the FAO's global strategy for the management of farm animal genetic resources. Ireland also participates in the European Cooperative for Plant Genetic Resources, which facilitates the long-term conservation and increased utilisation of plant genetic resources in Europe.

Ireland's National Strategy for Plant Conservation includes targets for the conservation of agricultural genetic diversity. These include for example target 13 to safeguard traditional practices based on plant resources and target 9 on the conservation of genetic diversity of all known indigenous traditional Irish agricultural plant varieties of crops, land races and crop relatives as well as other socio-economically valuable plant species.

Agricultural cross-compliance measures (A2.1.4 & 2.1.10):

Ireland has designated a range of Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAEC) Minimum Level of Maintenance measures (as referred to in article 5 of Council Regulation (EC) No 1782/2003) that may provide significant biodiversity conservation benefits. These include rules for the maintenance of pasture (undergrazing to be avoided) and arable land not in agricultural production (natural regeneration to be managed). There are a number of standards relating to the retention of landscape features including external farm boundaries, protected habitats, and protected archaeological sites and monuments. In addition there are rules prohibiting the burning of vegetation on uncultivated land or in any hedge or ditch

between the dates of 1 March to 31 August.

Afforestation / deforestation policies and biodiversity (A2.1.5):

In Ireland afforestation operations require prior approval and are subject to a statutory consent system. Furthermore, the Forest Service will consult with the National Parks and Wildlife Service for any proposed afforestation and deforestation within 3 km of any Natura 2000 site. Each assessment of an afforestation proposal considers biodiversity implications. Further planning tools such as SEA, GIS, guidance documents and biodiversity surveys are in place regarding afforestation activities. EIA, GIS and biodiversity surveys also apply to deforestation operations. In addition, the Forest Biodiversity Guidelines require 15 % of each afforestation project to be devoted to biodiversity.

Soil protection and biodiversity (A2.2.1):

According to Ireland's questionnaire response, its Forest Service Guidelines address issues such as soil erosion, compaction and the acidification of soil and receiving waters. Risks of these issues must be identified and taken into account in the application of these guidelines at an operational and individual site level. Monitoring soil biodiversity is a feature of the BIOSOIL project. Research projects such as PENRICH (Forestry Operations and Eutrophication), SILTATION (Forestry operations – Quantification and management of erosion and phosphorous release), WATERAC (Evaluation of the use of the Sodium Dominance Index as a potential measure of acid sensitivity) as well as current monitoring as part of the implementation of the Water Framework Directive have considered the identification of potential risks.

Measures to improve the ecological status of freshwaters (A2.3.1):

Ireland has completed all the legal transposition and the implementation elements of the Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC (WFD) which have deadlines during 2004, 2005 and 2007. These include the production of a River Basin District Report and River Basin Analysis report and Monitoring Network Report.

Measures to reduce air pollution impacts on biodiversity (A2.4.2 & 2.4.3):

According to Ireland's 2006 National Programme Report under the NEC Directive, projections indicate that emissions for all four pollutants will continue to fall in the period to 2010 and beyond. This is as a result of further implementation of policies and measures across the economy, in particular with respect to the power-generation, transport and agriculture sectors. There are also likely to be significant reductions in NO_x in the industry sector from the implementation of Best Available Technology (BAT) measures under the IPPC Directive (96/61/EC). For three of the four pollutants, SO₂, VOCs and NH₃, Ireland is on target to comply, or significantly over-comply, with the ceilings set out in Annex I of the directive. However, for NO_x, the ceiling as it is currently set presents a difficulty for Ireland even with the implementation of additional measures. Further additional measures including possible regulatory, fiscal or voluntary instruments will be considered to assess the viability and cost effectiveness of introducing such measures to reduce NO_x emissions further, principally in the energy supply, transport, residential, industry and commercial service sectors.

3. To conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider EU marine environment.

Good marine ecological status (A3.1a):

Ireland launched the a marine strategy entitled 'Sea Change: A Marine Knowledge, Research and Innovation Strategy for Ireland 2007- 2013', which has an objective to strengthen the competitiveness and environmental sustainability of the marine sector by developing a much greater alignment between public sector & third-level research capacity and industry needs.

According to the SEBI 12, Article 17 Reports, 25 % of Ireland's Atlantic-Marine environments have a 'favourable' status. The remaining 75 % have an 'unfavourable-inadequate' status.

Integrated coastal zone management (ICZM) (A.3.1.b):

A formal ICZM strategy has not been developed for Ireland; however, there is ongoing activity in exploring mechanisms to implement the principles of ICZM in Ireland - most notably through involvement in EU research projects - COREPOINT, ENCORA and SPICOSA. The most relevant document to analyse strategic approaches to management of coastal zones is the National Spatial Strategy for Ireland 2002-2020. A draft policy document for ICZM was produced in 1997, but was never implemented, and it is unclear if this document influenced the National Spatial Strategy for Ireland.

Pollution: Bathing water quality (A3.2)

According to the Bathing Water Report for the 2006 Season, the average bathing water quality for coastal zones is comparable with the previous season. An increase with 0.8 % (from 95.9 to 96.7 %) was observed in the rate of compliance with the mandatory values but a decrease of 0.8 % (from 91.8 to 91.0 %) for the guide values. The percentage of bathing areas that were not compliant in 2006 decreased by 0.8 % compared to the previous season.

Ecosystem approaches in Fisheries management measures (A3.3):

Whilst developing the Strategy for a Restructured, Sustainable and Profitable Irish Seafood Industry 2007-2013, a call was made for the Marine Institute to allocate additional resources both human and financial to improving fisheries databases, assessments including mathematical modelling, and developing real models of relevance to the Irish fisheries situation on the effects of applying maximum sustainable yield (MSY) and the ecosystem approach. The implemented Strategy itself is centred on innovation, product development, sustainable management of marine resources and ecosystems and value maximisation for Ireland's coastal communities.

Also, as part of the Sea Change Marine Strategy for 2007-2013, Ireland's Marine Institute will be drafting a strategy for fisheries data integration and analysis which will facilitate the ecosystem approach.

Community and National Financing under European Fisheries Funds (EFF) (A3.4):

According to information on web site of DG FISH no operational programme has yet been adopted for Ireland for 2007-2013. Ireland indicated in their Biodiversity Action Plan Member State Questionnaire response that 8.79 % of the overall EFF budget will go to 'Productive investments in aquaculture (Article 29)' and an additional 14.2 % will go to 'Measures intended to protect and develop aquatic fauna and flora (Article 38)'.

Restoration programmes for diadromous species (A3.5.a):

Following legal action by the European Commission the mixed stock fishery for salmon, which involved the use of drift nets at sea, has been closed as it failed to ensure the sufficient protection of stocks returning to Salmon SACs in Ireland. Fishermen are being compensated for this loss. A detailed system for management of stocks in rivers is in place, although there does not appear to be a national management plan or strategy at present. No clarification on national plan or strategy for the management of salmon or sea trout stocks exists.

The National Salmon Commission (NSC) is a statutory body, which includes representatives of the commercial sector, the angling sector and other relevant stakeholders. It assists and advises the Minister in relation to the conservation, management, protection and development of the national salmon resource. It also makes recommendations to the Minister in relation to the management, development and conservation of stocks of wild salmon or sea trout, the tagging of such fish and the setting of a national total allowable catch and quotas for the taking of salmon, in consultation with the fisheries boards, the Marine Institute and other such

bodies.

There are eel management plans under development. The DCMNR convened a National Working Group to establish the management plan process in March 2006. They drafted regulations to require eel management plans for each river basin district by December 2008. The deadline for implementing management plans is 1 July 2009.

Ongoing research is being carried out for salmon, eel and sea trout by the Irish Marine Institute.

Fishing Capacity-Decommissioning (3.5.b):

There is not a general national decommissioning scheme, but there is a decommissioning scheme in operation to permanently withdraw capacity from the whitefish sector of the Irish Fishing Fleet. As part of the Strategy for a Restructured, Sustainable and Profitable Seafood Industry 2007-2013, Ireland is also investigating the need for a targeted decommissioning scheme for vessels less than 18m in length.

Action plans and conservation status for marine species and habitats (A3.6):

Ireland has plans to develop an action plan for cetaceans. Cetaceans are currently monitored by several projects in Ireland. Sightings and strandings of whales and dolphins are collected through ISCOPE by the Irish Whale and Dolphin Group. A population assessment of bottlenose dolphins is currently underway in the Lower River Shannon candidate SAC (cSAC). Also, surveys for large whales are partly funded by National Parks & Wildlife Service (NPWS) through European-wide SCANS II, the shelf-edge CODA project and many surveys on Ships-of-Opportunity (ShOps). In addition, the NPWS is funding a PhD project on the biology and ecology of small cetaceans on the western seaboard of Ireland to inform on the distribution and importance of sites for small cetaceans outside of currently designated sites.

Other species being monitored include grey seals - the first national survey of grey seals was completed during the autumn and winter of 2005 - and leatherback turtles. University College Cork, with funding from NPWS is carrying out a satellite monitoring programme for leatherback turtles tagged in Irish waters.

Marine and coastal habitats in Ireland are also being monitored. A national inventory of Irish sea cliff and coastal heath sites was completed in 2004. A total of 140 potential sites have been identified, with concentrations in Donegal, Mayo, Kerry and Cork. A detailed field survey has just commenced. In addition, the conservation status of a range of coastal dune and salt marsh habitats is currently being assessed. A series of monitoring stops have been visited to assess various attributes such as typical species or negative indicators. The extent of each habitat is mapped and the impacts and activities recorded.

Aquaculture planning and biodiversity (A3.7):

A significant development of aquaculture is foreseen under the National Development Plan, with financial support from the NDP. However, there are still problems being encountered with aquaculture developments in Natura 2000 areas without correct application of Article 6 of Habitats Directive that need to be resolved. According to information on web site of DG FISH no operational programme has (yet) been adopted for Ireland for the 2007-2013 period.

4. To reinforce compatibility of regional and territorial development with biodiversity in the EU.

Biodiversity spending under Cohesion and structural funds:

There is not data available for Ireland for expenditures foreseen under the Cohesion and structural funds for the period 2007-2013 in the areas of Biodiversity & nature protection, Promotion of Natural Assets or Natural Heritage.

5. To substantially reduce the impact on EU biodiversity of invasive alien species and alien genotypes.

Strategies to reduce impacts from invasive alien species (A5.1.2):

Ireland has implemented IAS legislation covering trade issues and intentional introductions. In Ireland, the importation of wild animals and birds is subject to licence. The Ministry may also issue regulations prohibiting possession of any species of wild animal or flora. The main regulation dealing with the introduction of animals and plants is the Wildlife Act. In addition, in response to the recommendations made after a review of IAS in Ireland and Northern Ireland, the 'Invasive Species in Ireland' project started. It set several IAS targets related to risk reduction, control, codes of good practices, raising public awareness and reviews of current legislation. A risk protocol has been developed. Exclusion strategies, contingency plans and management strategies are being prepared for species identified as the principal threats. Future options will be reviewed, which may result in a separate stand-alone IAS strategy.

The National Biodiversity Data Centre in conjunction with the 'Invasive Species in Ireland' project and the National Botanical Gardens are developing a National Invasive Species Database. Records for a limited number of high impact species are being compiled and will be publicly available in the coming months. The Environmental Protection Agency has also funded the National Biodiversity Data Centre to develop a GIS database of the location of all reported aquatic invasive species.

Biosafety measures to reduce impacts from alien genotypes (A5.1.2 & 5.1.3):

Ireland has transposed existing EU GMO legislation into national law, which achieves full compliance with the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety. EU Directive 2001/18/EC on the deliberate release into the environment of genetically modified organisms has been transposed into Irish law under the Genetically Modified Organisms (Deliberate Release) Regulations (S.I. No. 500 of 2003).

Ireland has prepared draft measures for the efficient co-existence of genetically modified crops with conventional and organic farming and these are currently being considered at Departmental level.

B. POLICY AREA 2: THE EU AND GLOBAL BIODIVERSITY

6. To substantially strengthen effectiveness of international governance for biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Ireland adopted the National Biodiversity Plan in 2002. The Third National Report to the CBD was submitted in 2006. Ireland has submitted the following thematic reports to the CBD: Alien Species, Forest Ecosystem, Voluntary Report on the Expanded Programme of Work on Forests, Protected Areas, and Technology Transfer and Cooperation.

The National Parks and Wildlife Service of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government allocated EUR 69 636 000 000 for the implementation of the National Biodiversity Plan for the years 2002-2004. Other Departments such as Agriculture and Food, Communication Marine and Natural Resources, Foreign Affairs and the Environment Protection Agency have also allocated significant financial resources towards the implementation of the National Biodiversity Plan. Financial resources, totalling EUR 3 000

000 over the 2002-2004 period, were provided to developing countries through the establishment of the UNEP/Development Cooperation Multilateral Environmental Trust Fund.

Ireland paid the annual contributions to CBD, Ramsar, CMS, AEWA, World Heritage Convention and the UNEP Environment Fund.

7. To substantially strengthen support for biodiversity and ecosystem services in EU external assistance.

Funds allocated for biodiversity projects and programmes in developing countries (A7.1.3 & 7.1.6):

Irish Aid, a Division of the Department of Foreign Affairs, is the official aid programme of the Irish Government. The aid programme's overarching objective is to reduce global poverty in all its manifestations.

The Government White Paper on Irish Aid highlights the environment as one of four priority areas that inform all aspects of Ireland's development cooperation. This means that environmental sustainability is now mainstreamed into the planning, implementation and evaluation of all Irish Aid activities. The Irish Aid Environment Policy for Sustainable Development provides the framework for addressing the environment throughout the programme.

The primary regional focus of the programme is with nine programme countries; seven in Africa (Ethiopia, Lesotho, Malawi, Mozambique, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia), Timor-Leste and Vietnam.

According to the most recent OECD data (for 2005) there was no annual spending on biodiversity-related bilateral aid. However, information from the Member States indicates that Irish Aid's programme countries are undertaking measures to mainstream environmental sustainability and are also engaging in programmes, which safeguard the environment while securing local livelihoods. An example of Irish Aid funding on biodiversity is the provision of EUR2m towards The Sustainable Resource Management Programme for the Bale Mountains in Ethiopia over a 6 year period. The programme supports improved planning and management of the largest area of Afroalpine habitat on the African continent.

Integration of biodiversity considerations into development programmes and projects impacts on biodiversity (Action B7.2.2 & 7.2.5):

A review of environmental assessment regimes of bilateral and multilateral development agencies by the Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA), on behalf of the OECD, found that drafted environmental guidelines have been developed, which promote good practices for environmental assessment. The approach aims to ensure that environmental concerns are fully integrated into the planning, design, implementation and evaluation of all policies, programmes and projects.

8. To substantially reduce the impact of international trade on global biodiversity and ecosystem services.

Ireland has not yet provided the biennial report to CITES for 2005/06 so all information relates to the period 2003/04. For 2003/04, Ireland reported a very low level of trade in CITES species, with numbers of permits for import, export, re-export and intra-EU trade all being below 25. No permit applications were denied. No figures for seizures can be presented as the annex to the biennial report for 2003/04 that contains the information is not available. National capacity building included improvement of national networks and computerisation. Advice/guidance and training was provided to the Management and Scientific Authorities and to the enforcement authorities. The National Biodiversity Plan lists an action to increase

training and capacity for border controls. Ireland provided EUR 5,000 to the sponsored delegates for COP 13 in 2004. The annual contribution to the CITES Trust Funds was paid as pledged.

C. POLICY AREA 3: BIODIVERSITY AND CLIMATE CHANGE

9. To support biodiversity adaptation to climate change.

Progress on Kyoto targets (C9.1.1):

Ireland's energy intensity is among the lowest in the EU and has been falling since 1990. Nevertheless, in 2005 greenhouse gas emissions were 69.9 billion tonnes, an increase of 25.4 % compared to base levels. According to projections for 2010 Ireland will not meet its Kyoto target (of stabilizing emissions at 13 % over the base year level) with existing policies and measures. However, it may slightly over-deliver on its target (by 0.7 %) by using additional policies and measures, Kyoto mechanisms and carbon sinks.

Adaptation measures to increase biodiversity resilience to climate change (C9.4.1 & 9.4.3):

The National Climate Change Strategy, for 2007-13 provides a framework for Ireland to meet its commitments under the Kyoto Protocol. The strategy recognises the importance of land management and carbon sink issues and includes a section on adaptation measures. Work will commence on a National Adaptation Strategy during 2008.

According to Ireland's 4th UNFCCC Report (2007), research is underway (at NUI Maynooth) to improve the probabilistic analysis of impacts and risks for key sectors, e.g. agriculture, ecosystems and to inform adaptation decision. A report to be published by the EPA (Environment Protection Agency), 'Climate Change – Refining the Impacts', considers the impacts of climate change on key habitats in Ireland (publication expected in July 08).

D. POLICY AREA 4: THE KNOWLEDGE BASE

10. To substantially strengthen the knowledge base for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, in the EU and globally.

National research programmes (D10.1):

The National Platform for Biodiversity Research was started in 2003 and established a National Framework for Biodiversity Research. The National Platform will be re-established during 2008 by the EPA and the National Parks and Wildlife Service. The aim of the Platform is to facilitate biodiversity research in Ireland, taking into account the needs of the research community, stakeholders, policy makers and the public.

E. THE FOUR KEY SUPPORTING MEASURES

1. Ensuring adequate financing

Overall use of Community funds for biodiversity:

Agri-environment and other land management schemes

Under axis 2 of Ireland's Rural Development Plan (2008-2013) there are roughly EUR 3 300 000 000 allocated to biodiversity related activities, of which 55 % is to be covered by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development.

Axis	Total Public	EAFRD* contribution	EAFRD Contribution
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	Expenditure (EUR)	rate (in %)	(EUR)
Axis 2	3 385 298 800	55 %	1 861 914 340

* EAFRD: European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

The main priority areas for Axis 2, which represent 80 % of the total funds of the Irish RDP, are the protection of the environment and environmentally friendly farming techniques, support to prevent land abandonment & the protection of landscape features. Activities under this axis include: Environmentally-friendly farming methods to enhance biodiversity; Suitable farming systems to preserve the rural landscape; and Protection of the environment on agricultural land and in areas of high nature value/Natura 2000

2. Strengthening EU decision-making

Plans and follow-up to UN Millennium Ecosystem Assessment (E2.1):

Ireland does not have plans or a strategy to follow-up the Millennium Ecosystem Assessment.

Alignment of national biodiversity strategies with EU (E2.2):

The National Biodiversity Plan, developed in 2002, integrates biodiversity and ecosystem service benefits into wider decision making. A key component to implementing the National Biodiversity Plan will be the Biodiversity Action Plans drawn up by each relevant Department and agency. These Sectoral Action Plans will aim to ensure the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is actively pursued by each Government Department and agency. Each Sectoral Plan will provide an overview of the Government Department's/agency's biodiversity responsibilities, the interactions (both positive and negative) between the Government Department's/agency's and sectors activities and biodiversity; and the value of biodiversity for the sector.

In order to assist Government Departments and agencies in developing competence and expertise in dealing with biodiversity issues in their own area of influence, dedicated biodiversity units will be established to provide for the integration of biodiversity into the activities of relevant Departments and agencies.

The Biodiversity Plan has not yet been updated in light of the EU Communication 'Halting the loss of biodiversity by 2010 and beyond.'

Effective integration of Natura 2000, Rural development, river basin management and other territorial plans and programmes in support for biodiversity (E2.5):

The National Biodiversity Plan indicates that the new Planning and Development Act stipulates that Development Plans must have mandatory objectives for the conservation of European and nationally important sites and for the conservation of biodiversity in general. Rural development planning considers the impacts of biodiversity; for example, the problem of overgrazing by sheep in the upland parts of Counties Mayo, Galway, Donegal and Kerry. As a consequence of hedge payments to farmers, sheep numbers have increased considerably and are in excess of sustainable densities. Habitats most affected are uplands, peatlands, heaths and coastal habitats with consequent adverse impacts on flora and fauna. As well as direct impacts, overgrazing has caused adverse effects in aquatic ecosystems due to erosion of peat. This problem is being resolved, inter alia, by the preparation of detailed Commonage Framework Plans under the joint supervision of the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands and the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development. It is expected that cross-compliance and appropriate monitoring will further contribute to adequately addressing the overgrazing problem.

In addition, the introduction of a code of Good Farming Practice and the implementation of the Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS) are significant further steps towards the integration of farming with the preservation of biodiversity and the natural environment.

One of the objectives of the National Biodiversity Plan is to "maintain and expand the

catchment-based national strategy for the protection and improvement of water quality in rivers and lakes by the establishment by Local Authorities of comprehensive projects for river basin management in relation to all inland and coastal waters, and groundwater. These projects will provide a major input, to be complemented by other appropriate measures by other public authorities, to the implementation of the EU Water Framework Directive and the achievement of at least “good status” in relation to all waters.”

Natura 2000 is effectively integrated into the National Development Plan 2007-2013 as are management plans for National Parks and Nature Reserves.

According to the Third National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Ireland is in the process of developing a set of indicators to monitor the effects of agri-environmental measures, including biodiversity. In addition, specific indicators are being derived by the National Parks and Wildlife Service to assess conservation status at a habitat or species level. These will also tie into the EU set of Headline Indicators where appropriate.

3. Building partnerships

National partnerships for biodiversity including private sector involvement (E3.1):

Ireland has a number of national initiatives aimed at promoting biodiversity partnerships, specifically in the agricultural, tourism and SME sectors.

The Rural Environment Protection Scheme (REPS) was set up in 1994. It is a scheme designed to reward farmers for carrying out their farming activities in an environmentally friendly manner and to bring about environmental improvement on existing farms. The number of farmers currently signed up to REPS is over 50,000. REPS also help to conserve bird populations through measures such as those to protect the corncrake and to grow food for wild birds through the LINNET project.

Other REPS measures aimed at enhancing and protecting biodiversity generally also benefit bird populations through preserving habitats and food supplies: e.g. measures dealing with hedgerows, habitats, field margins; and biodiversity options such as nature corridors, species-rich grassland, tree planting and environmental management of set-aside.

Fáilte Ireland, the National Tourism Development Authority works in strategic partnership with tourism interests to support the industry in its efforts to be more competitive and more profitable and to help individual enterprises to enhance their performance. It was allocated funding under the Tourism Product Development Scheme 2002-2006 to develop the tourism product in a sustainable way that widens the spatial spread of tourism, diverts pressure from highly developed areas and increases under-performing Regions' share of overseas tourism revenue. Fáilte Ireland has recently established an environmental unit to promote sustainable tourism and have a specific remit to comment on planning applications. The tourism industry has also recently developed guidelines for developing sustainable green walkways and loop walks for tourists.

As part of ‘Notice Nature’, Ireland’s public awareness campaign on biodiversity, guidelines on the protection of biodiversity and the development of biodiversity action plans have been developed for the Tourism, Business, and Construction and Development Sectors.

Ireland does not currently have a business award scheme to promote engagement with biodiversity, but initial discussions have taken place on the development of such an award, perhaps linked to CSR awards, to reward positive action by business to protect biodiversity.

4. Building public education, awareness and participation

National/Sub-national public awareness campaigns/initiatives (E4.1):

Based on the ECNC analysis of the Flash Eurobarometer Report, over half of the respondents from Ireland had never heard of biodiversity (52 %). This compares unfavourably with an

EU-27 average of 35 % of respondents who have never heard of biodiversity. Of those who had heard of biodiversity in Ireland, 22 % knew what it meant. In addition, 22 % of respondents felt that they were well informed about biodiversity loss. A substantial number of respondents from Ireland had never heard of the Natura 2000 network (94 %). Of those who had, only 1 % knew what it meant. Despite not knowing what it means, 71 % of respondents from Ireland felt they made personal efforts to protect biodiversity.

Two objectives of the National Biodiversity Plan involve improving public awareness of biodiversity issues. They are: to develop a targeted education and awareness strategy for the specific purpose of promoting the objectives of the Convention on Biological Diversity in Ireland; and to develop an Internet-based national Clearing House Mechanism.

A national public awareness campaign on biodiversity titled 'Notice Nature' won an EU award in 2007 of the Green Spider Network (GSN) for best practice in communicating environmental issues. The aim of the campaign is to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity and to encourage everyone to play their part in its protection.

F. MONITORING

The Third National Report to the CBD (2006) explains that a set of indicators are being developed by Teagasc (The Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority) to monitor the effect of national agri-environmental measures. Specific indicators are being derived by the National Parks and Wildlife Service to assess conservation status at a habitat or species level. These will also tie into the EU set of Headline Indicators where appropriate.

An extensive programme to monitor the conservation status of species and habitats has been put in place both in relation to the Habitats and Birds Directive, especially with a view to the Article 17 Habitats Directive reporting for 2007. The monitoring schemes cover specific habitats such as raised bogs, coastal dune systems and associated salt marshes, benthic macro-invertebrates and physico-chemical parameters in rivers and other inland waters, as well as a range of species, including bats, Otter (*Lutra lutra*), birds (Countryside Bird Survey; specific species such as wintering water birds and breeding seabirds), Natterjack Toad (*Bufo calamita*), salmon, the freshwater mussel *Margaritifera margaritifera* and Yellow Marsh Saxifrage (*Saxifraga hirculus*).

DATA SOURCES

A1. To safeguard the EU's most important habitats and species:

A.1.1, A.1.2 & A.1.4

http://ec.EURpa.eu/environment/nature/natura2000/barometer/index_en.htm

<http://dataservice.eea.EURpa.eu/atlas/viewdata/viewpub.asp?id=2639>

A.1.3

http://www.birdwatchireland.ie/Portals/0/pdfs/CBS_Report06.pdf

Crowe, O. and R. Coombes. 2005. Monitoring breeding bird populations in the Republic of Ireland. *Bird Census News* 18, 42-51.

Newson, S. E., O. Crowe and D. G. Noble. 2004. *Scoping study on integrating Countryside Bird Survey and Breeding Bird Survey data to generate all-Ireland trends*. BTO Research Report No. 376

A.1.3

<http://www.cbd.int/doc/world/ie/ie-nr-03-en.doc>

A2. To conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider EU countryside

A2.1.1, 2.1.2 & 2.1.8

Published National Rural Development Programmes (IEEP database 2008)

European Commission unpublished data (2008)

MS questionnaire

[A2.1.11](#)

Third National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity (2005)

<http://www.cbd.int/doc/world/ie/ie-nr-03-en.pdf>

[A2.1.4 & 2.1.10](#)

Alliance Environment (2007). Evaluation of the application of cross compliance as foreseen under Regulation 1782/2003. Part I: Descriptive Report - 26/07/2007. Report to the European Commission.

[A2.1.5 & A2.2.1](#)

MS Questionnaire

www.environ.ie/en/DevelopmentandHousing/PlanningDevelopment/Environmental/EnvironmentalAssessment/EIASEALegislation

[A2.3.1](#)

WFD Scoreboard http://ec.EURpa.eu/environment/water/water-framework/transp_rep/scoreboard_en.htm

[A2.4.2 & 2.4.3](#)

Ireland NEC Directive submission (04 Jan 2008)

<http://cdr.eionet.EURpa.eu/ie/eu/nec>

NEC Directive National Programmes

http://ec.EURpa.eu/environment/air/nationalprogr_dir200181.htm

MS reporting to NEC Directive

http://ec.EURpa.eu/environment/air/implem_nec_directive.htm

A3. To conserve and restore biodiversity and ecosystem services in the wider EU marine environment

[A3.1a:](#)

<http://www.marine.ie/home/SeaChange.htm>

SEBI 12 Article 17 Report

[A3.1b:](#)

<http://www.dcmnr.gov.ie/Marine/Coastal+Zone+Management/>

http://ec.EURpa.eu/environment/iczm/evaluation/iczm_national_reporting_ireland.htm

[A3.2:](#)

http://ec.EURpa.eu/water/water-bathing/report_2007.html

[A3.3:](#)

http://www.bim.ie/uploads/text_content/docs/96540154%20BIM%20Steering.pdf

http://www.marine.ie/NR/rdonlyres/CFA292C5-8D09-4E8C-AB73-6138A394CA42/0/FS_PDoc_Fisheries_Data_Integration_Final_TOR_July07.pdf

[A3.4:](#)

http://ec.EURpa.eu/fisheries/cfp/structural_measures/operational_programmes_en.htm

MS Questionnaire

[A3.5a:](#)

http://www.cfb.ie/fishing_in_ireland/salmon2008.htm

<http://www.dcmnr.gov.ie/Press+Releases/Pat+the+Cope+Announces+New+National+Salmon+Commission.htm>

http://www.marine.ie/NR/rdonlyres/A88DC003-9ADB-4FF2-B9AF-00CF7E2A7A9C/0/FS_DK_Eel_Data_Final_TOR_July07.pdf

<http://www.marine.ie/home/services/operational/stock/home.htm>

[A3.5b:](#)

http://www.bim.ie/templates/text_content.asp?node_id=194

<http://ec.EURpa.eu/fisheries/publications/fishyearbook2007.pdf>

<http://ec.EURpa.eu/fisheries/fleetstatistics/index.cfm?lng=en>

[A3.6:](#)

<http://www.npws.ie/en/PublicationsLiterature/SpeciesActionPlans/>

<http://www.npws.ie/en/CurrentResearchProjects/AnimalSpecies/>

<http://www.npws.ie/en/CurrentResearchProjects/HabitatSite/>

[A3.7:](#)

<http://www.ndp.ie/viewdoc.asp?DocID=1808>

http://ec.EURpa.eu/fisheries/cfp/structural_measures/operational_programmes_en.htm

A4. To reinforce compatibility of regional and territorial development with biodiversity in the EU

Infoview Data (DG Regio)

A5. To substantially reduce the impact on EU biodiversity of invasive alien species and alien genotypes

A5.1.2

MS questionnaire

Miller, C., Kettunen, M. & Shine, C. 2006. Scope options for EU action on invasive alien species (IAS) Final report for the European Commission. Institute for European Environmental Policy (IEEP), Brussels, Belgium.

www.irishstatutebook.ie/2000/en/act/pub/0038/index.html

www.revenue.ie/customs/tariff2008/tariff2008-part2.doc

www.invasivespeciesireland.com.

A5.1.2 & 5.1.3

National Report on the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety

<http://www.cbd.int/biosafety/parties/reports.shtml?report=NR-CPB-01>

European Commission Report on the Implementation of National Measures on the Coexistence of Genetically Modified Crops with Conventional and Organic Farming

http://ec.EURpa.eu/agriculture/coexistence/index_en.htm

National legislation and information

[http://www.viron.ie/en/GMO/](http://www.environ.ie/en/GMO/)

B6: To substantially strengthen effectiveness of international governance for biodiversity and ecosystem services

B.6

<http://www.cbd.int/doc/world/ie/ie-nr-03-en.pdf>

<http://www.cbd.int/countries/?country=ie>

<http://www.cbd.int/convention/parties/contributions.shtml?tab=2&yr=2007>

http://www.ramsar.org/res/key_res_ix_12_e.htm

http://www.cms.int/bodies/StC/32_stc_meeting/French/Doc_09_Fonds_Affectation_avec_Annexes.pdf

http://www.unep-aewa.org/meetings/en/stc_meetings/stc4docs/pdf/stc4_9_income_expenditures.pdf

<http://whc.unesco.org/en/sessions/31COM/documents/>

http://www.unep.org/rmu/en/Financing_of_UNEP/Environment_Fund/Table_2007/index.asp

B7. To substantially strengthen support for biodiversity and ecosystem services in EU external assistance

B7.1.3 & 7.1.6:

www.oecd.org/dac/stats/crs.

OECD Development Cooperation Directorate

http://www.oecd.org/department/0,3355,en_2649_33721_1_1_1_1_1,00.html

B7.2.2 & 7.2.5:

<http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/CIDAWEB/acdicida.nsf/En/REN-218131217-PEH>

B8. To substantially reduce the impact of international trade on global biodiversity and ecosystem services

B.8

<http://www.cites.org/eng/resources/reports/biennial.shtml>

<http://www.cites.org/eng/cop/14/doc/E14-07-1.pdf>

<http://www.cbd.int/countries/?country=ie>

C9: To support biodiversity adaptation to climate change

C9.1.1

EC (2007) Communication from the Commission. Progress towards achieving the Kyoto objectives.

http://ec.EURpa.eu/environment/climat/gge_progress.htm

C9.4.1 & 9.4.3

Third National Report to the Convention on Biological Diversity

<http://www.cbd.int/doc/world/ie/ie-nr-03-en.doc>

Fourth National Communication On Climate Change to the UNFCCC

<http://unfccc.int/resource/docs/natc/irenc4.pdf>

National Climate Strategy

<http://www.viron.ie/en/publicationsdocuments/filedownload.1861.en.pdf>

D10. To substantially strengthen the knowledge base for conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity, in the EU and globally

D10.1:

MS Questionnaire

<http://www.epa.ie/downloads/pubs/research/biodiversity/name.12166.en.html>
<http://biodiversityresearch.ie/index.php>
<http://www.npws.ie/en/media/Media.3751.en.pdf> (sections 40-44)
<http://www.epa.ie>
<http://www.nwps.ie>

E1. Ensuring adequate financing

http://ec.EURpa.eu/environment/life/countries/documents/ireland_en_oct06.pdf
<http://EURpa.eu/rapid/pressReleasesAction.do?reference=MEMO/07/310&format=HTML&aged=0&language=EN&guiLanguage=en>

E2. Strengthening EU decision-making

E2.1:

MS Questionnaire

E2.2 :

<http://www.npws.ie/en/media/Media.4590.en.pdf>

E2.5 :

<http://www.npws.ie/en/media/Media.4590.en.pdf>

http://www.ndp.ie/docs/NDP_2007-2013_-_All_sections_downloadable_by_chapter/1900.htm

<http://www.teagasc.ie/advisory/environment/rep.htm>

<http://www.cbd.int/doc/world/ie/ie-nr-03-en.pdf>

E3. Building partnerships

E3.1:

MS Questionnaire

<http://www.nwps.ie>

http://www.noticenature.ie/files/tourism_guidelines.pdf

http://www.noticenature.ie/files/documents/Business_option%20v10.pdf

http://www.noticenature.ie/files/Construction_v12.pdf

<http://www.noticenature.ie/agriculture.html>

<http://www.walking.ireland.ie/Criteria-for-Developers.aspx>

E4. Building public education, awareness and participation

E4.1:

http://ec.EURpa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm

<http://www.npws.ie/en/media/Media.4590.en.pdf>

<http://www.noticenature.ie/>

F1-4. Monitoring, evaluation and review

F

<http://www.cbd.int/doc/world/ie/ie-nr-03-en.pdf>

<http://www.environ.ie/en/Heritage/NationalParksandWildlife/Biodiversity/>

<http://eumon.ckff.si/>