



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan



Prepared by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
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Summary of Work to Date

This document presents a summary of work to date on the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan to inform and accompany the National Biodiversity Conference in June 2022

Introduction

The 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan (NBAP) will set the national biodiversity agenda for the period 2023-2027.

The Plan will aim to improve the governance of biodiversity in Ireland so that we can better respond to the biodiversity crisis. This means ensuring a 'whole of Government', 'whole of society' approach to this crisis, and properly recognising biodiversity's contributions to people, the economy and society. The Plan will also address the connections between biodiversity and climate change, and the need to enhance the evidence base for biodiversity conservation policy and practice.

The Plan has been in development since October 2021. 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 was circulated to an initial group of stakeholders for feedback.

The feedback from this first group of stakeholders is currently being incorporated into a second draft of the Plan, which will be issued for public consultation later in 2022. The final version of the Plan will be published in early 2023, to allow the recommendations of the ongoing Citizens Assembly on Biodiversity to be reviewed and incorporated where appropriate.

The 4th National Biodiversity Plan follows on from the work of the first, second and third National Biodiversity Plans



First National Biodiversity Plan
(April 2002)



Second National Biodiversity Plan
(2011 - 2016)



Third National Biodiversity Plan
(2017 - 2021)

Development of the 4th NBAP – Key Considerations

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

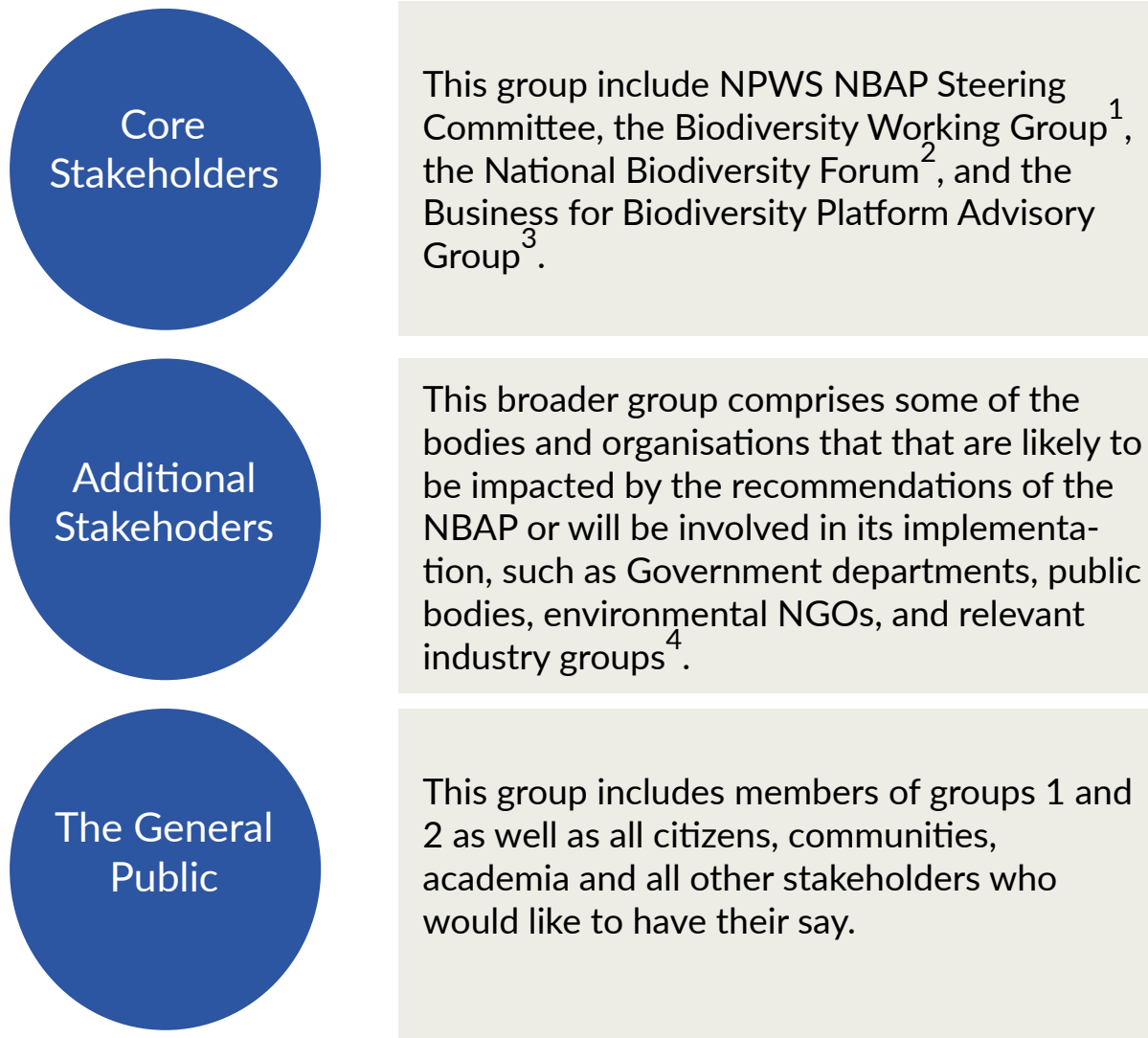
- Build on the successes of previous NBAPs, while addressing shortfalls and the implementation challenges that they faced
- Embed biodiversity at the heart of climate action
- Achieve greater coherence between biodiversity policy and other policy areas
- Achieve buy-in and ownership of the Plan across all levels of government and society
- Expand the governance and oversight of the NBAP to ensure cross-departmental cooperation and policy alignment on biodiversity
- Strengthen compliance and enforcement of existing legislation
- Increase focus on the root causes 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



Stakeholder Engagement

Stakeholder engagement is integral to the development of the 4th NBAP. Engaging with a wide range of stakeholders helps to strengthen actions and achieve broad buy-in and ownership of the plan.

Broadly, three stakeholder groups will be targeted as part of this process:



- (1) The Biodiversity Working Group comprises Departments, Agencies and other bodies that have a role in implementing the Plan.
- (2) The National Biodiversity Forum is an independent multi-sectoral forum which monitors the implementation of the National Biodiversity Action Plan and provides feedback to the Minister.
- (3) The Advisory Group is the leadership team of the newly-formed Business & Biodiversity Platform.
- (4) A stakeholder mapping exercise was carried out to identify stakeholders relevant to Group 2.

Progress to Date

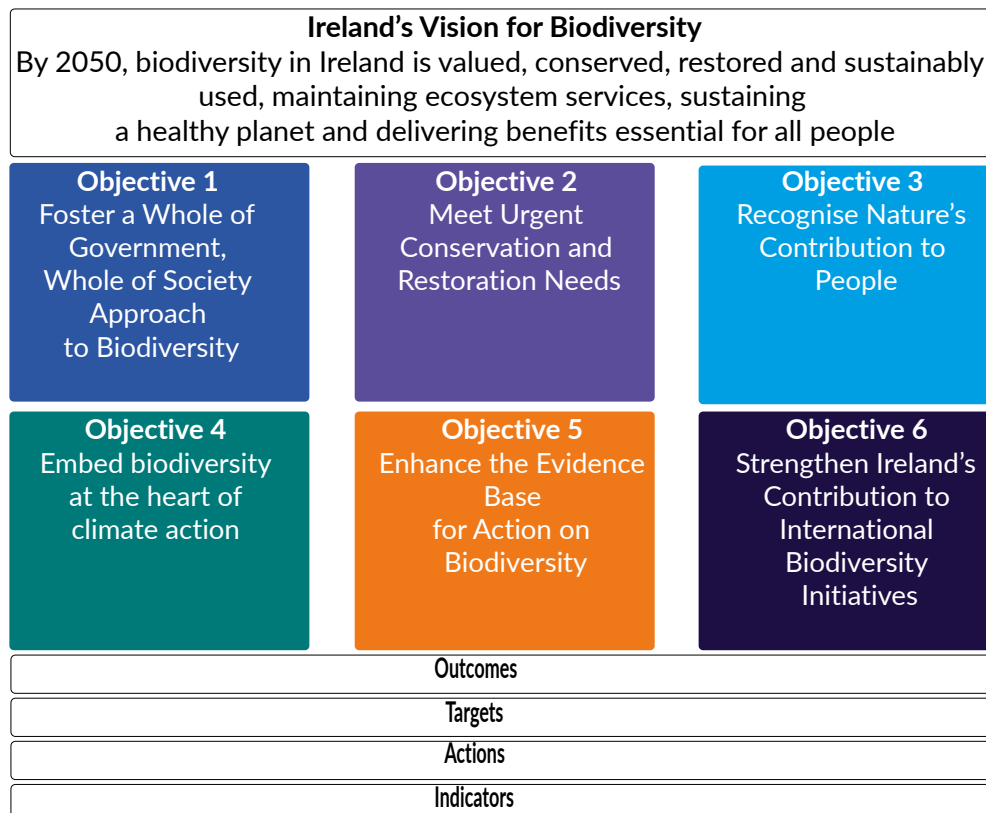
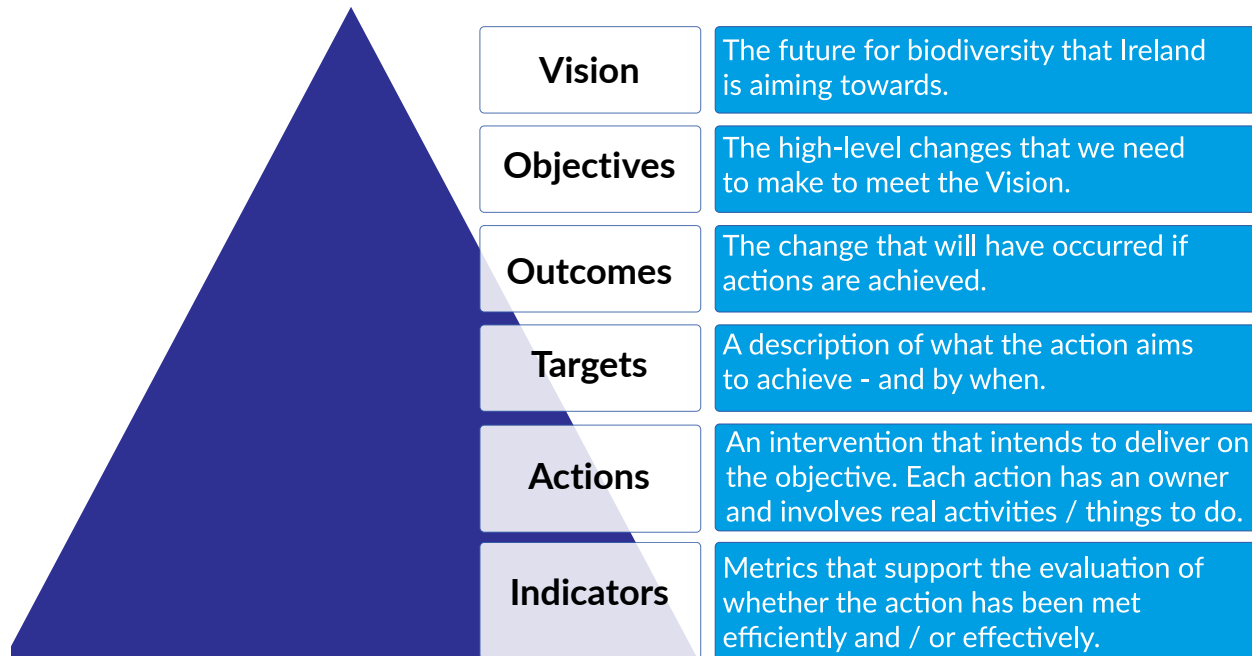
As of June 2022, Stakeholder Groups 1 and 2 have been engaged on a preliminary draft of the Plan. Stakeholder engagement has been in the form of exploratory discussions, surveys, and detailed workshops. The feedback gathered to date has been instrumental in developing the draft plan that will be presented for public consultation.

The 2022 National Biodiversity Conference forms a key element of public and cross-sector outreach, with the outputs from conference discussions helping to inform further refinement of the NBAP.



Draft Structure of the 4th NBAP

The 4th NBAP is supported by a set of objectives, outcomes, targets, actions, and indicators which are interdependent and set out how Ireland will achieve its vision for biodiversity.



Overview of Objectives

Each Objective contains several underlying Outcomes and subsequent Targets, Actions and Indicators which contribute to the higher-level vision.

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

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

Objective 2: Meet Urgent Conservation and Restoration Needs

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

Objective 3: Recognise Nature's Contribution to People

- Objective 3 will introduce actions that highlight the relationship between nature and people in Ireland. This includes recognising the tangible and intangible values of biodiversity, promoting nature's importance to our culture and heritage and recognising how biodiversity supports our society and our economy.

Objective 4: Embed biodiversity at the heart of climate action

- Supporting actions recognise that achieving climate and biodiversity objectives should be mutually supportive and that nature-based solutions are a fundamental part of action for climate and biodiversity.

Objective 5: Enhance the Evidence Base for Action on Biodiversity

- Objective 5 focuses on biodiversity research needs, as well as the development and strengthening of long-term monitoring programmes that will underpin and strengthen future decision making.

Objective 6: Strengthen Ireland's Contribution to International Biodiversity Initiatives

- Objective 6 aims to strengthen Ireland's contribution to international biodiversity initiatives, including a shared island approach.

The example below shows how content is structured in the 4th NBAP. This example relates to Objective 3:

Objective 3: Recognise Nature's Contribution to People

- Outcome: The role of biodiversity in supporting livelihoods, enterprise and employment is recognised and enhanced
- Target: The Business for Biodiversity platform has published a series of guidance documents for business by end 2025
- Action: 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
- Indicator: Number of biodiversity-related guidance documents published



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