



Rialtas na hÉireann
Government of Ireland

Seeds for Nature

National Biodiversity Conference

8 and 9 June 2022

Prepared by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage
gov.ie/housing





The 'Seeds for Nature' conference charter was announced on February 20th 2019 at the inaugural National Biodiversity Conference. The Charter was agreed at a meeting chaired by Minister Josepha Madigan in Dublin Castle on the first day of the conference, which was attended by Minister Bruton, Minister Doyle and other senior leaders from 14 Government Departments, state agencies, private sector and non-governmental organisations. The 'Seeds For Nature' Conference Charter comprises a suite of commitments for nature and biodiversity that go beyond the respective organisations' current work programmes to support, scale up and fast track the implementation of the National Biodiversity Action Plan.

On the launch of the 2nd National Biodiversity Conference, we present an update on these seeds.

Organisation	Description	Biodiversity Conference 2022 update
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Agriculture Commitments: Co-finance with NPWS the development of resources for the “Farming for Nature” project, developed by Burren Beo.	<p>Funding began 2019. Now in Year 4. Farming For Nature aims to support High Nature Value (HNV) farming in Ireland, focussing positive contributions farmers can make. Positive, relatable, farmer case studies. Practical knowledge sharing e.g. via online and hardcopy resources, farm walks, Groundtips podcasts, Voices from the Land podcasts, short films and ‘how to’ videos, newsletters, discussion forum, helpdesk and connecting people. Extensive media engagement and celebrating positive management. Project coordinator dedicated to this work. Allied to the Bord Bia sponsored Farming for Nature Awards.</p> <p>https://www.farmingfornature.ie/</p>
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Marine Commitments: Having 100% of the Irish trawling fleet participating in the Clean Oceans Initiative to collect marine waste and debris at sea and bring it ashore for appropriate disposal.	<p>The Clean Oceans Initiative was launched by the Minister in January 2019 at Union Hall Pier, Co. Cork to address marine plastic pollution being encountered routinely by Irish sea-fishing boats.</p> <p>At that time the Minister called for all Irish trawlers at every pier and every port to actively participate in Ireland’s first co-ordinated initiative on land and at sea to collect, reduce and reuse marine litter and clean up our marine environment.</p> <p>Since the launch in January 2019 to date 244 fishing vessels, with a total of 1,169 crew members have signed up with the 12 ports registered and are actively involved in the initiative. This means that 96% of Irish trawlers were signed up in the first 12 months of the Clean Oceans Initiative. This is a very positive sign that our fishing industry is taking action to tackle the issue of marine litter.</p>

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Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	continued	<p>Also in the first year of the initiative, approximately 202.3 tonnes of marine plastic waste has been collected from 12 of Ireland's busiest fishing ports and 53.7 tonnes of used fishing nets has been collected for recycling by BIM's mobile shredder, the 'Green Machine'.</p> <p>BIM is actively working with the fishing industry to gain 100% participation in the initiative and continue to meet with stakeholders to highlight the importance of this very effective initiative.</p> <p>Funding to support this Initiative has been made available under Ireland's European Maritime and Fisheries Fund (EMFF) to provide on-board storage facilities and on-shore infrastructure for environmentally friendly disposal of all plastics, waste, ghost fishing gear, etc. recovered at sea. The on-shore infrastructure is also available to fishermen and aquaculture operators to dispose of unwanted fishing gear and other items with a plastics content. DAFM is the managing authority for the EMFF in Ireland.</p>
Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications	Work with the NPWS on Phase II of the Observe programme to greatly improve our knowledge of protected species (especially whales and dolphins and seabirds) and sensitive habitats across Ireland's extensive Exclusive Economic Zone.	Phase II of ObSERVE is progressing with the contract for the Aerial Survey Project secured and one summer season of survey work across Ireland's EEZ now completed. Despite some setbacks preparatory work is now underway for the second series of summer surveys.

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Office of Public Works	Develop a National Seed Bank conserving Irish flora in the National Botanic Gardens and complementing ongoing plant conservation measures. The measures already underway to protect our rarest plants will be expanded to cover all threatened plant species in the State, identified by the recent Red Data Listing.	The National Seed Bank is now operational. Staff in the National Botanic Gardens have been trained in seed conservation techniques with the Millennium Seed Bank in Kew Gardens. NBG staff have formed a partnership with National Parks and Wildlife Service staff to help with collecting seed. Seed collected in 2020 and 2021 has been processed and deposited into the seed bank. Further collections are due in 2022. The seed bank will work closely with other seed bank initiatives, such as those in DAFM and Trinity College Dublin to collaborate on best practice collection and storage of duplicate material.
Office of Public Works	Partner with the EPA on a major new research project – Slow Waters – which is a strategic assessment of natural water retention measures and with Trinity College Dublin on ecosystem services of Ireland’s forests for flood protection.	NWRM features have been constructed at two demonstration sites in Cork and Wexford. The performance of these features is being actively monitored. Research papers are currently being drafted which will detail the outcomes of reviews and evaluation of existing practice in Ireland as well as international best practice.

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Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Expand the Marine Protected Area network.	<p>The final report 'Expanding Ireland's Marine Protected Area Network', of the MPA Advisory Group was published on 26 January 2021.</p> <p>In tandem with the Ministers' and Department's detailed consideration of the expert group's findings, a public consultation phase centred around the report and the wider MPA process began in mid-February 2021 and extended over more than five months to the end of July 2021.</p> <p>The feedback received through the public consultation was then the subject of an Independent Analysis and Report on Marine Protected Area (MPA) Public Consultation Submissions received. The findings and conclusions from this study are available in the form of a detailed report which presents key data and other information gathered through the consultation process in an accessible manner. This report was published on 31 March 2022.</p> <p>Informed by all of these important steps and the resulting information, the Department is now in the process of developing stand-alone legislation to enable the identification, designation and management of MPAs in accordance with Ireland's national and international commitments. This work is expected to continue for a good part of 2022.</p>
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Provide Planning Policy Guidance to support the integrated planning for green infrastructure within statutory land use plans, in line with the objectives of the National Planning Framework.	The Draft Development Plan Guidelines (a version of which was published in August 2021 and the final version of which will be published in the coming weeks) include guidance on the role of nature-based solutions in highlighting the value of the natural environment in acting as a moderator of climate change. The guidance notes the importance of both green and blue infrastructure in this regard, and the final version of the Guidelines will include a case study of the Cork City Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy.

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Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Double the fund for Heritage and Biodiversity officers to implement biodiversity actions, including action to tackle Invasive Alien Species at local level (co-delivered with the City and County Managers' Association).	<p>The Local Biodiversity Action Fund (previously NBAP Local Authority Biodiversity Grant Scheme) was increased from €223k in 2018 to €1.5m available for local authorities to carry out projects in support of the National Biodiversity Action Plan. The scheme has proved hugely popular with local authorities, with all 31 local authorities allocated funding for projects in 2021. 119 projects in total were supported in a range of areas, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biodiversity awareness • Invasive Alien Species policy development • Invasive Alien Species awareness • Invasive Alien Species removal • Pollinators • Dune restoration • Wetland creation
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Work with An Garda Síochána to progress a Memorandum of Understanding that provides for a closer working relationship, particularly for combatting wildlife crime.	In 2021 the NPWS and the Garda formally signed a joint protocol on cooperation and collaboration on wildlife crime issues.
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Run a Communications Campaign to inspire and motivate Irish citizens to take action for nature.	Since moving from DHGH to DHLGH, the Heritage Division has been assigned a dedicated Communications Officer who is co-ordinating communications content across NPWS. The NPWS Action Plan recognises the need for a Communications expert. The primary role of this expert will be to develop a Communications Campaign for Nature.

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Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Establish an Irish Business and Biodiversity Platform with the Minister for Business, Heather Humphreys T.D. The Platform will promote best practice and seek commitments for biodiversity action and reporting from the private sector. Founding members (in principle, subject to Terms of Reference) include Gas Networks Ireland, Eirgrid, Kepak, Dawn Meats, Coillte and Bord na Mona.	The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine have jointly funded the development of a national business and biodiversity platform to promote and support measurable, certifiable actions on biodiversity within the private sector. The purpose of the Platform is to encourage and incentivise Irish businesses to assess their impacts and dependencies on biodiversity, with a view to mitigating and availing of associated risks and opportunities respectively.
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Establish a Climate Action Programme within my Department. Provide funding for research to improve our understanding of the impacts of climate change on biodiversity and also for assessing the potential of nature-based solutions for mitigating and adapting to climate change. We will join forces with the EPA to support a bid for transnational funding on these important societal challenges.	A Climate Action team within DHLGH co-ordinates climate action updates across all sections. There were no eligible Irish submissions for the BiodivERsA research call, however DHLGH have funded a network officer to support the work of the All Island Climate and Biodiversity Research Network and the EPA continue to fund research which improves our understanding of the impacts of Climate Change on Biodiversity.

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Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Promote draft legislation introducing a biodiversity duty which will place a requirement on public bodies to embed biodiversity in carrying out their functions as to promote or restore nature.	<p>The amendments made in the Seanad include the insertion of sections dealing with Biodiversity, including the National Biodiversity Action Plan, however these amendments were not confirmed by Dáil Eireann before its dissolution on 14th January 2020, and the fall of the Bill.</p> <p>Government is working to have the Bill restored to the Order Paper and also working in consultation with the OPC regarding the amendments made in the Seanad in order to ensure they are worded correctly and legally robust.</p>
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Undertake a Financial Needs Assessment for biodiversity to determine what we need to spend to achieve our national targets and work towards a resource mobilisation strategy for the National Biodiversity Action Plan.	A Financial Needs Assessment has been drafted by UCD. Coherence with the NPWS Review and Action Plan needs to be undertaken.
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Provide a small grant scheme to help specialist biodiversity recorders carry out field surveys on some of our most under-studied species.	<p>The NPWS Grants for Small Recordings launched in 2019 and is now in its fourth year. The primary aim of these grants is to support and encourage the current network of naturalists recording in Ireland and to develop the next generation of specialist recorders. Grants are aimed at volunteer, unpaid recorders, or groups, societies and associations of recorders who have limited/no access to financial supports for their work.</p> <p>A total of 31 projects were financed from 2019 to 2021, worth over € 113,992. A further 77 projects have been approved for 2022 with funding of €97k.</p>

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Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Make a proposal to Government on Natural Capital to raise awareness across Government of the natural capital approach to valuing and accounting for the benefits that nature provides to people and to the economy.	This memo was considered redundant as the concepts of Natural Capital are being recognised and incorporated into government policies.
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Fund the work the Biodiversity Forum in overseeing the delivery of the National Biodiversity Action Plan.	The NPWS continues to support the Biodiversity Forum through funding and the provision of a secretariat. In 2020, the NPWS funded the Forum to carry out an independent review of the Interim review on the implementation of the 3rd NBAP: https://www.biodiversityimpactplan.ie/
Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Continue to fund the National Biodiversity Data Centre and its citizen science programmes.	The NBDC has proven to be a very successful programme and has grown from strength to strength since its inception in 2006. Following an independent review of the programme and the recommendations of a taskforce set up to establish the optimal scope, structure and future governance arrangement for the successor to the current NBDC arrangements, Government approval was given for the establishment of the NBDC as a company limited by guarantee (CLG). The taskforce is working to establish the CLG by the end of 2022.

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City and County Managers' Association	Provide appropriate match funding (i.e. 15% or more) to the funding to Biodiversity and Heritage Officers to implement biodiversity actions, including action to tackle Invasive Alien Species at local level (Relates to #13 above under DCHG: Double the fund for Heritage and Biodiversity officers to implement biodiversity actions, including action to tackle Invasive Alien Species at local level).	Funding Allocated.
Community Foundation for Ireland	Launch a €250,000 Environment and Nature Fund in 2019. CFI hopes to grow this further this year and in the coming years.	Local plans to protect plants and wildlife are being advanced in 155 communities with the support from trained ecologists across the country. Grants were also given to a suite of eNGOs in 2020 to undertake outreach activities. The grants are being provided by The Community Foundation for Ireland in partnership with the National Parks and Wildlife Service at the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage as part of a joint Environment and Nature Fund, which is now in its 4th year. The fund has awarded grants related to Biodiversity work totalling of just over 1 million with €450,000 provided by the NPWS to date, with a commitment of €350,000 in 2022 (€150,000 from NPWS).

Organisation	Description	Biodiversity Conference 2022 update
Bord na Móna	Rehabilitate 20,000 hectares of cutaway bog to wetland and woodland mosaics by 2025.	<p>Bord na Móna announced the cessation of industrial peat extraction in 2021.</p> <p>Bord na Móna and the Government developed the Peatlands Climate Action Scheme (PCAS) in 2020.</p> <p>PCAS will significantly go beyond what is required to meet rehabilitation and decommissioning obligations.</p> <p>PCAS outlines BnM's new ambition in relation to climate action and re-wetting. €108 Million investment – funded by the Government and BnM, targeting re-wetting 33,000 ha of BnM lands.</p> <p>Supports Bord na Mona/midlands Just Transition.</p> <p>Key objective – optimising hydrological conditions across BnM cutaway for climate action and other ecosystem service benefits.</p> <p>Climate Action benefits (carbon storage – residual peat, avoided emissions via new trajectory).</p> <p>The starting point of the BnM sites is variable. Some sites have the potential to develop Sphagnum-rich vegetation while others will develop fen and wetland habitats. Some cutaway will still remain dry and develop in the future as Birch woodland.</p> <p>This will support other ecosystem service benefits, for biodiversity, water, landscape and communities.</p>

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Bord na Móna	continued	<p>Significant planning took place in 2020 and 2021 and many of the team that had been focused on peat extraction activities have now been refocused on peatland rehabilitation and restoration. In 2021, over 8000 ha re-wetted as part of PCAS across 18 sites. In 2022 work has started on re-wetted about 6000 ha across another 18 sites.</p> <p>There was ongoing cutaway rehabilitation in 2019 as part of the Littleton Bog Rehabilitation Programme, working across 5000 ha.</p> <p>Re-wetting carried out in Kileen, Baunmore, Derryville, Lanespark, Ballybeg and Derryhogan (Littleton). This accounted for 525 ha completed in 2019.</p> <p>The change in BnM strategy and the development of PCAS means that this overall commitment (20,000 ha) will likely be surpassed by 2025.</p>
Bord na Móna	Restore a further 1,000 hectares of raised bog habitat by 2025.	<p>The Bord na Móna Raised Bog Restoration Programme is ongoing. Over 3100 ha now complete across 27 different sites.</p> <p>Since 2019, Clonwhelan (142 ha), Baunmore (40 ha) Newtown-Loughgore (140 ha), part of Mostrim (150 ha) and Kellysgrove (118 ha) has been restored. (Total since 2019 = 590 ha).</p>

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Bord na Móna	continued	<p>Glenlough (262 ha) and Lisclogher West (164 ha) are targeted for restoration in 2022. Tirrir-Derrymore (245 ha) targeted for restoration in 2023.</p> <p>Overall target for raised bog restoration likely to be surpassed.</p> <p>Overall target is 4200 ha of restored raised bog habitat (high bog).</p> <p>This will contribute to Irelands national commitments on raised bog restoration and the Natural Raised Bog SAC Management Plan 2017-2022. It is expected that several of these sites will form part of the new network of protected raised bog sites.</p> <p>Note that NPWS committed to designate some of these sites in the NRBMP. There are still turf-cutting (turbary) and other management issues to resolve across these sites that are outside the scope of Bord na Mona but are continuing to have negative impacts.</p>
Bord na Móna	Fund Green House Gas research on Birch woodland habitats on rehabilitated cutaway bogs.	<p>Bord na Móna is funding GHG research at Lullymore. This is a joint project in collaboration with UCC and TCD. Using GHG Eddy Co-variance tower constructed at the site. Studying GHG fluxes from Birch woodland and wetland at Lullymore. Hannah Mulcahy (UUC) is in 3rd year of PhD funded by BnM. This project is expected to be completed in 2023. Initial results from the flux tower indicate that during summer the woodland is a sink for carbon due to high growth rates. The tower had to be raised during the project due to growth of trees.</p>



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Bord na Móna	Fund Green House Gas research on Birch woodland habitats on rehabilitated cutaway bogs.	<p>Bord na Móna are also supporting other GHG research projects (EPA-funded SMARTBOG) with several BnM sites included (Ummeras, Cavemount, Garryduff)</p> <p>Stephen Barry, BnM Carbon Research Lead, joined the company in 2021. This is a new role is focused on monitoring and verification of climate action benefits of peatland re-wetting.</p> <p>Additional GHG Research now being developed via PCAS – funded by BnM and the Government.</p>
Bord na Móna	Continue to deliver on the actions set out in the Bord na Móna Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2021.	<p>Since 2019, Bord na Móna has radically transformed with the move away from industrial peat extraction.</p> <p>It is now focused on developing as Ireland's premier Climate Solutions company by developing renewable energy to address both climate action targets and security of energy supply issues, providing professional peatland rehabilitation and restoration services, and providing other services in sustainable waste management.</p> <p>The priority in 2020 and 2021 was planning and implementing the Peatlands Climate Action Scheme and delivering on peatland re-wetting with significant progress made in 2021 with the re-wetting of 8000 ha.</p> <p>The current BnM BAP ran to 2021. BnM will review this plan and develop a new BAP that reflects the new BnM peatlands landscape and the new BnM strategy in the near future.</p>

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Bord na Móna	By 2025 we will develop the necessary plans for the rehabilitation of all Bord na Móna bogs.	<p>Bord na Móna has developed draft rehabilitation plans for all Bord na Móna bogs as per the conditions of our IPC peat extraction licences.</p> <p>There has been significant engagement with EPA in 2021 and 19 rehab plans for 19 separate sites have been finalized and were approved to support PCAS rehabilitation. This is ongoing in 2022 and so far, an additional 8 plans have been finalized and approved.</p> <p>Bord na Móna continues to work to finalise these plans for sites that have become available for rehabilitation on an ongoing basis and continues to engage with key stakeholders.</p>
Bord na Móna	We will explore the use of the United Nations SEEA (System of Environmental and Economic Accounting) to develop Natural Capital approaches to rehabilitation outcomes.	<p>Bord na Móna carried out a pilot Natural Capital study in 2018/2019.</p> <p>This project worked with IDEEA consultants to explore the application of United Nations SEEA methodology and the Natural Capital Approach to develop Natural Capital accounts for Bord na Móna sites and to develop value for Bord na Móna in the areas of reporting, decision-making and communications. The study developed ecosystem asset accounts, started to develop ecosystem service accounts and carbon sequestration service accounts.</p> <p>This pilot study now needs to be refreshed to align with the BnM decision to cease all industrial peat extraction in 2021 and with BnMs new business strategy.</p>

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Bord na Móna	We will explore the use of the United Nations SEEA (System of Environmental and Economic Accounting) to develop Natural Capital approaches to rehabilitation outcomes.	Natural Capital approaches have the potential to develop value and future opportunities for Bord na Móna in the areas of reporting, decision-making and communications.
Bord na Móna	Continue to work with statutory bodies, including state agencies and ENGOs, to ensure compliance and benefits are realised by a wide range of stakeholders.	<p>Since 2019, Bord na Móna has radically transformed with the move away from industrial peat extraction.</p> <p>It is now focused on developing as Ireland's premier Climate Solutions company by developing renewable energy to address both climate action targets and security of energy supply issues, providing professional peatland rehabilitation and restoration services, and providing other services in sustainable waste management.</p> <p>The priority in 2020 and 2021 was planning and implementing the Peatlands Climate Action Scheme and delivering on peatland re-wetting with significant progress made in 2021 with the re-wetting of 8000 ha.</p> <p>The current BnM BAP ran to 2021. BnM will review this plan and develop a new BAP that reflects the new BnM peatlands landscape and the new BnM strategy in the near future.</p>

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Coillte	Restore Hazelwood Forest, a 130 ha woodland in a Special Area of Conservation on the banks of Lough Gill. The work will take 2-3 years to complete at a cost of around €500,000.	<p>In 2020, surveying of the site was carried out and a biodiversity management plan developed in cooperation with an ecologist, forester and the Coillte Nature team. In consultation with NPWS and IFI, a Natura Conservation Management Statement and Ecological Impact Report were drawn up for the entire site. Since then, almost 30ha of this woodland has been cleared of rhododendron and cherry laurel using a combination of hand-cutting and large machinery. After cutting and mulching, the stumps are treated with herbicide to stop regrowth. This year, the final 12ha of 40ha total of rhododendron and laurel will be removed.</p> <p>To increase the percentage of native species growing in the mixed woodland area, a thinning is being carried out using Continuous Cover Forestry (CCF) principles. 46ha of woodland has been marked to be thinned later this year. This will allow more sunlight to reach the forest floor allowing natural regeneration of trees, shrubs and ground dwelling floral species, and give more space to native trees already growing in the forest canopy. This will create the conditions for the woodland to become more diverse in future, in terms of tree size, age and species.</p> <p>A small area of 4.3ha comprising commercial conifer forestry in an area beside the alluvial woodland was harvested in 2018 and has been replanted with native tree species, using a mix that mimics the adjacent alluvial woodland community. A further 4.7ha of spruce will be felled later this year and planted similarly with native woodland.</p> <p>The project has been communicated to users of the woodland and to the community through a range of engagement activities. Interpretive signage has been erected throughout the woodland explaining the various stages of the project and informative videos and news updates have been posted online.</p>

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Dublin Port Company	DPC will develop a Natural Capital Policy for Dublin Port to provide a framework for the Port to achieve sustainability, complementing the implementation of Masterplan 2040 (reviewed 2018) as part of which €1 billion will be invested in port infrastructure in Dublin over the next ten years.	DPC have advertised for the positions of Port Environmental Scientist and Port Ecologist .
Gas Networks Ireland	Manage all infrastructure, asset base and office locations on the island of Ireland and in Scotland in line with biodiversity best practice by 2025.	<p>Gas Networks Ireland Biodiversity Strategy and Biodiversity Action Plan was produced in 2021. This includes incorporating biodiversity best practice into asset management, providing supports to staff to enable delivery of the plan and collaborating with our stakeholders, like key contractors to promote better biodiversity success. The Biodiversity Strategy was presented to the Gas Networks Ireland Board in 2021.</p> <p>In 2021, Gas Networks Ireland developed and published “Landscaping for Biodiversity Guidelines” for use by all Gas Networks Ireland functions that interact with land use, including our contractors.</p> <p>The All Ireland Pollinator Plan has been adopted at two key offices locations in Dublin with further measures planned for Gas Networks Ireland’s Cork Head Quarters.</p>

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Gas Networks Ireland	Manage all infrastructure, asset base and office locations on the island of Ireland and in Scotland in line with biodiversity best practice by 2025.	<p>Gas Networks Ireland recently won the 'Green Public Sector Organisation of the Year' Award at the 2022 Green Awards. Gas Networks Ireland also won "Green Business of the Year" and "Green Large Organisation of the Year" at the 2021 Green Awards.</p> <p>In 2021, Gas Networks Ireland published their third Sustainability Report and met the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) Standard for the first time.</p> <p>The new Gas Networks Ireland "National Services Works Contract" and appointment of two main contractors commenced in 2021. Works include the maintenance and landscaping of our gas sites and delivery of infrastructure projects. Gas Networks Ireland have included in the contract as a client requirement that all projects strive for a net positive impact on Biodiversity and a Biodiversity Action Plan to be delivered as part of the new contract in line with Gas Networks Irelands Biodiversity commitments. Both contractors also are required to be Business Supporters of the All Ireland Pollinator Plan.</p>
Gas Networks Ireland	As part of our renewable gas strategy, support the All Ireland Pollinator Plan and the promotion of Red Clover (which is good for bees and the soil) by encouraging farmers to grow this as a feedstock crop to be used for the production of biogas.	<p>In 2021 Gas Networks Ireland supported the publication of "Sustainability of Biomethane Production in Ireland" report. Multi-species swards were shown to be the most sustainable farm scenario for an Anaerobic Digestion feedstock crop, improving both flora & fauna biodiversity.</p> <p>In 2021 Presented at several webinar workshops including Teagasc Signpost Series on 'Renewable Gas and the Mitchelstown Central Grid Injection facility'.</p>

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Gas Networks Ireland	Strive for Net Positive Impact on biodiversity on all works and to engaging with the communities in which it operates and seeking to enhance biodiversity in collaboration with those communities.	<p>In 2021 Gas Networks Ireland developed bespoke natural capital accounting method for measuring biodiversity net gain or loss and identifying biodiversity potential.</p> <p>In 2020 and 2021 Gas Networks Ireland developed a decommissioned site case study in Cork for biodiversity.</p> <p>Due to COVID restrictions Gas Networks Ireland carried out a number of biodiversity themed webinars for both the public and employees in 2021. For example, Gas Networks Ireland supports the “Laois Barn Owl Project” and in March 2021, Gas Networks Ireland hosted a “Barn Owl” webinar with Don Conroy, to promote awareness of the Barn Owl. This webinar was made available to the public. Don has spent many years merging his love of drawing and wildlife conservation to share a very important message.</p> <p>As part of 2021 National Biodiversity Week, Gas Networks Ireland continued to support the Irish Examiner annual Biodiversity publication. In 2021 the informative biodiversity booklet ‘Working Together For Biodiversity’ was published. Gas Networks Ireland also supported The Irish Times publication of the “Trees of Ireland” poster as part of 2021 National Tree Week.</p> <p>Gas Networks Ireland continue to focus on stakeholder engagement including the delivery of internal biodiversity awareness talks, nature walks to educate staff about biodiversity and presenting to other Business. Spot” programme. The Leave No Trace Hot Spot programme is a critical initiative designed to address areas impacted by outdoor activities and heavy use so they can be restored and thrive again.</p>

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Gas Networks Ireland	continued	<p>In a European first, Gas Networks Ireland marked the launch of its 2020 sustainability report by partnering with environmental group, Leave No Trace Ireland, to help restore Glengarra Wood in Co. Tipperary as part of the international “Hot Spot” programme. The Leave No Trace Hot Spot programme is a critical initiative designed to address areas impacted by outdoor activities and heavy use so they can be restored and thrive again.</p> <p>Gas Networks Ireland are collaborating with Technical University Dublin (TUD) on a Sustainability charter which will include the development of Biodiversity initiatives.</p> <p>Gas Networks Ireland are also currently assisting Dublin City Council and a PhD research student from University College Dublin on a green roof project. Gas Networks Ireland’s office building in Dublin with its green roof is part of the research project.</p> <p>Gas Networks Ireland are collaborating with Technical University Dublin (TUD) on a Sustainability charter which will include the development of Biodiversity initiatives.</p> <p>Gas Networks Ireland are also currently assisting Dublin City Council and a PhD research student from University College Dublin on a green roof project. Gas Networks Ireland’s office building in Dublin with its green roof is part of the research project.</p>

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The European Commission (DG Environment)	Work in partnership with Ireland to optimise investments for biodiversity under EU funds for the next financing period and commits to a stakeholder workshop in Ireland to explore these opportunities in May 2019.	NPWS facilitated a day workshop in May 2019 to explore funding opportunities for biodiversity in an Irish context, with a particular focus on the draft Prioritised Action Framework for Ireland to cover the period 2021 to 2027. DG Environment staff and contractors, staff from DCHG and other Irish government departments and local authorities were in attendance, as well representatives from DAERA and EU funded projects in Northern Ireland, and including academics and farming and environmental NGOs. The stakeholder workshop was well attended and was well received.
The Irish Forum on Natural Capital	Continue to work with Government, financial institutions and corporates to develop natural capital accounts and to further integrate biodiversity in natural capital accounting.	<p>Since 2020 NCI (formally IFNC) contributed to the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Policy Contributions • The Climate Action Plan • EPA Land Use Review • Public Consultation on Carbon Budgets • Public Consultation on EU Just Transition Fund • EPA Strategic Plan 2022-2026 • Draft River Basin Management Plan 2022-2027 • Heritage Council Strategy • Draft Leitrim County Development Plan • Marine Strategy Framework Directive <p>Planned and organised the following Projects & Events:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Data 4 Nature Workshos • Peatlands Gathering Conference • Nature-Based Solution CARO Workshop Series • Peatland Finance Ireland – Phase 1 • The National Business for Biodiversity Platform



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The Irish Forum on Natural Capital	continued	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of Expert Support to Draft the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan • National Biodiversity Conference 2022 <p>Have been involved in the following Research Projects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • INCASE - NCI provides communication and dissemination services to the EPA-funded INCASE project, which is piloting natural capital accounting in Ireland for the first time. • COFORD Forestry ES Desk Study Carried out Surveys in the following areas: • Survey of Irish third-level institutions - NCI launched an online survey of third-level institutions to gauge the status of teaching of natural capital and ecosystem services approaches in Ireland • Survey of NCI memberships' Research Interests and Capabilities - Between June and August 2021, NCI conducted a survey to see what kind of research interests and expertise is held by its members.
The Heritage Council	Expand the Heritage in Schools Programme to Second Level, with a particular emphasis on biodiversity.	As part of the new Heritage Council five-year strategic plan, the Heritage in Schools Programme will be reviewed with an objective to expand its programme into second level schools, pending dialogue with the Department of Education and Science and educationalists. This will include a priority focus on nature in the expanded programme.

