

**GUIDELINES FOR THE  
PRODUCTION OF SECTORAL  
BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLANS  
BY GOVERNMENT  
DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES**

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## **1. Guidelines for the Production of a Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plan**

These guidelines are intended for use by Government Departments and relevant state agencies to assist in the production of Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plans and to provide background information on biodiversity and the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The Guidelines outline the need for Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plans, offer suggestions on the process that should be followed and indicate the main issues that should be addressed. Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plans are required under the National Biodiversity Plan, which was adopted by Government in 2002.

The opportunities for conservation of biodiversity and the impacts of departmental activities on biodiversity depend on the remit of the relevant Department or state agency. However, all Departments and agencies have a responsibility and a role to play in the conservation of biodiversity. Only by ensuring a committed approach across Government Departments and agencies, by integrating biodiversity conservation concerns into the policy and activities in all sectors and by having clear and achievable targets can the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of its components be achieved.

## **2. Biological Diversity**

Biological diversity, or biodiversity, is the term given to the variety of life on Earth and the natural patterns it forms. The biodiversity we see today is the result of billions of years of evolution, shaped by natural processes and, increasingly, by the influence of humans. It forms the web of life of which we are an integral part and upon which we so fully depend.

This diversity is often understood in terms of the wide variety of plants, animals and micro-organisms. So far, about 1.75 million species have been identified, mostly small creatures such as insects. Scientists reckon that there are actually about 13 million species, though estimates range from 3 to 100 million.

Biodiversity also includes genetic differences within each species, for example, between varieties of crops or between breeds of livestock. Chromosomes, genes, and DNA, the building blocks of life, determine the uniqueness of each individual and each species.

It is the combination of life forms and their interactions with each other and the rest of the environment that had made Earth a uniquely habitable place for humans. Biodiversity provides a large number of goods and services that sustain our lives.

## **3. Loss of Biodiversity**

Unfortunately, the world's biodiversity has become increasingly threatened. Many species and habitats are in decline and in some cases their future is endangered. The current global rate of species extinction is thought to be many thousands of times greater

than in prehistoric times. The extinction of a species means the loss of genetic adaptations that have typically evolved over hundreds of thousands of years.

Approximately 24% of the world's mammals and 12% of the world's bird species are regarded as threatened. Little is known about the conservation status of many other groups of species. The EU Biodiversity Action Plans notes that 64 endemic plants of Europe have become extinct in nature and 45% of butterflies, 38% of birds species, 24% of the species and subspecies of certain groups of plants, and some 5% of mollusc species are already considered threatened. Such negative trends are largely human induced, the main causes include habitat loss and fragmentation, climate change, pollution, the effects of introduced species, over-fishing and hunting.

Mirroring global trends, biodiversity in Ireland is undergoing a decline. Habitat loss and degradation is the main factor causing loss of biodiversity in Ireland. This includes habitat loss through development, changes in agricultural practices, and poorly managed afforestation and habitat degradation through drainage, pollution, and the impacts of invasive species. Other factors such as overexploitation and climate change also have a significant impact on Irish biodiversity. The activities of virtually all sectors can affect biodiversity.

#### **4. The Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**

In 1992 Government representatives from more than 180 countries met in Rio de Janeiro for the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), at which an historic set of agreements were signed. One of the most significant international agreements on biodiversity emerged from this meeting, namely the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). Over 150 countries signed the document at the Rio conference, and since then more than 180 countries have ratified the agreement. Ireland signed the Convention in 1992 and ratified it in 1996.

The three main goals of the CBD are

- ?? *“the conservation of biological diversity,*
- ?? *the sustainable use of the components of biodiversity, and*
- ?? *The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources”.*

A key provision of the Convention is the preparation of national biodiversity strategies or plans and the integration of biodiversity concerns into all relevant sectors. This obligation is contained in Article 6 of the Convention, which sets out the general measures for conservation and sustainable use:

**Article 6A** requires each Contracting Party to *‘develop national strategies, plans or programmes for the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity or adopt for this purpose existing strategies, plans or*

*programmes which shall reflect, inter alia, the measures set out in this Convention relevant to the Contracting Party concerned.'*

**Article 6B** requires each Contracting Party to *'integrate, as far as possible and as appropriate, the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral or cross sectoral plans, programmes and policies'*.

All Parties must also submit national reports. Ireland has submitted its first and second National Biodiversity Reports, as well as thematic reports on alien species, forest biodiversity, technology transfer and protected areas, which can be found on the website of the CBD.

Further information on the Convention on Biological Diversity can be found on the Convention's web site: [www.biodiv.org](http://www.biodiv.org)

## **5. The National Biodiversity Plan**

In response to Ireland's commitment to the UN Convention on Biological Diversity, the Irish government adopted and published the National Biodiversity Plan in April 2002. This plan sets out a series of actions to promote and assist in the conservation of Ireland's biological diversity, at a national and also local level, as well as to contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity globally. The integration of biodiversity concerns into sectoral activities is a core focus of the National Biodiversity Plan. The key means of achieving this will be through the preparation of Biodiversity Plans by each Government Department and relevant agency, as well as by Local Authorities. Such work is generally in its initial stages and these guidelines have been prepared to assist Departments and agencies with the preparation of their Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plans. Complementary Guidelines have been drawn up to facilitate the preparation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans by Local Authorities.

All Government Departments have been informed of specific actions they are responsible for or have a lead role in carrying out. An Interdepartmental Biodiversity Steering Group comprising representatives from all Government Departments has already been put in place. The purpose of this group is to drive and monitor implementation of the National Biodiversity Plan as well as to provide the necessary national co-ordination for, and input into, the Convention on Biological Diversity. This Interdepartmental Group will be an important information exchange and co-ordination mechanism for the preparation and implementation of sectoral Biodiversity Action Plans. A National Biodiversity Research Platform has been established and the establishment of a National Biodiversity Forum, representative of all stakeholders is at an advanced stage.

A number of actions in the National Biodiversity Plan relate directly to the integration of biodiversity into the work of Government Departments, agencies and sectors generally – these are set out in the following table:

### **Actions 1-5 of the National Biodiversity Plan**

#### *Action 1*

Relevant Government Departments and State agencies to prepare, with stakeholders, their own Biodiversity Action Plan in line with agreed guidelines to ensure and promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

#### *Action 2*

Improve generation and management of information on biodiversity within Government Departments and agencies.

#### *Action 3*

Create Biodiversity Units or posts within relevant Government Departments and State agencies whose functions will include the preparation of biodiversity action plans within the framework of the National Biodiversity Plan.

#### *Action 4*

Ensure that all relevant plans and programmes and all new legislation, and key existing legislation, incorporates provisions requiring the conservation of biological diversity.

#### *Action 5*

Ensure biodiversity continues to be fully addressed in the implementation of the operational programmes of the National Development Plan, and in the preparation of future National Plans (e.g. National Development Plan, National Sustainable Development Strategy) ensure the integration and enhancement of biodiversity will be a key consideration.

Copies of the National Biodiversity Plan are available at [www.environ.ie](http://www.environ.ie)

## **6. Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plans**

For the purpose of these guidelines, “Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plans” refers to Biodiversity Action Plans produced by Government Departments and by relevant State agencies. The key means of achieving the integration of biodiversity will be by the drawing up by each Department and relevant state agency of their own Biodiversity Action Plans. The provisions from the National Biodiversity Plan in respect of Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plans are shown in the following table:

### **Sectoral Biodiversity Plans (from National Biodiversity Plan)**

- ?? A key component to implementing the National Biodiversity Plan will be the Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plans drawn up by each relevant Department and agency. These Sectoral Action Plans will aim to ensure that 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.
  
- ?? Each Plan should aim to ensure the Department's or agency's activities, and that of the sector it is responsible for:
  - ☞ minimise adverse impacts on biodiversity;
  - ☞ eliminate significant adverse impacts; and
  - ☞ encourage and promote beneficial effects on biodiversity.
  
- ?? Each Plan will include objectives and actions.
  
- ?? Each Plan will seek to encourage the sector to which it relates to play a proactive part in relation to biodiversity.
  
- ?? The Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plans will be subject to review after a period of five years

Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plans produced by all Departments and relevant State agencies should serve as a detailed framework for action to help conserve biodiversity in Ireland and, where relevant, abroad. These Action Plans are a key measure in ensuring that actions to promote the conservation of biodiversity are integrated into all sectors, and that policy, legislation and programmes of Departments and agencies supports biodiversity. Departments and agencies must not only ensure that their activities prevent significant damage to biodiversity, they must also actively promote the conservation of biodiversity.

Certain sectors such as agriculture, forestry, marine, and planning have a particularly important role to play in the conservation of biodiversity and there are many examples of measures already in place. However, all Departments and sectors have a role to play and a responsibility within their jurisdictions in the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.

## **7. Scope of a Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plan**

The extent of the interaction between the responsibilities/activities of Departments and biodiversity varies across Departments. Hence the scope and extent of Biodiversity Action Plans are likely to vary between Departments. However, as all Departments and sectors have a responsibility for biodiversity, each Department will prepare a Biodiversity Action Plan.

If there are several sectors or state agencies under the remit of one Department, it may be appropriate to have a number of Biodiversity Action Plans, one for each sector or agency. For example, the Department of Communications, Marine and Natural Resources may find it most useful to have separate plans for forestry and for the marine sector. While it may be decided to prepare individual sectoral plans for different sectors in some Departments, it would be best to draw these together eventually into one overall departmental Biodiversity Action Plan.

In addition, where the responsibilities/activities of particular State agencies have significant implications for biodiversity, they too should draw up a Biodiversity Action Plan.

## **8. Drafting a Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plan**

There are a number of steps, summarised below, which could usefully be followed, in the drafting process for Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plans:

- Establish an Internal Working group
- Identify Information Gaps
- Consultation

## **9. Establish an Internal Working group**

Departments/agencies may wish to establish an internal Working Group to draft, or oversee the drafting of, their Biodiversity Action Plan. In any event, it will be important to involve individuals from all relevant sections of the Department, including representatives from any relevant State agencies, in the drafting process, preferably from the outset.

Departments/agencies may wish to employ a consultant to prepare an initial draft of their Biodiversity Action Plan. This may be particularly appropriate where Departments/agencies do not have in-house biodiversity expertise.

At this stage it can be decided if one Biodiversity Action Plan for the whole Department is appropriate or if separate ones may be required for the different sectors under the

Department's remit. It should also be decided which State agencies under a particular Department will need to prepare a separate Biodiversity Action Plan.

## **10. Identify Information Gaps**

An analysis of Department's or agency's role and responsibilities in the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of its components, as well as positive schemes and actions already in place will be a useful starting point to identify any gaps and areas that are in need of particular improvement.

It will be essential to consider the implications for a particular Department/agency of the requirements of the Convention on Biological Diversity (including relevant decisions from the Conferences of the Parties) and of the National Biodiversity Plan.

## **11. Consultation**

Drafting a Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plan should be an inclusive process. Consultation should involve all stakeholders, including major conservation and sectoral non-governmental organisations, and other Government Departments/agencies as appropriate. It may also be appropriate to consult with the corresponding Department/agency in Northern Ireland.

Consultation can be done in a variety of ways. It could involve placing an advertisement in the national newspapers calling for submissions, or holding seminars or workshops with relevant parties *etc.* Direct contact should also be made with organisations and in some cases individual experts whose views, advice and experience would be of benefit to the process.

It could also be decided that once a draft of the Biodiversity Action Plan is available, it will be circulated for consultation (e.g. circulated to stakeholders for comment or discussion at a seminar).

There should also be widespread internal consultation within the Department/agency itself. As well as providing feedback from those who may eventually be charged with assisting in the implementation of the plan, such a consultation process should raise awareness of biodiversity within the Department and facilitate a greater understanding of the requirements of the National Biodiversity Plan. It is also vital that there is an awareness of and commitment to biodiversity conservation among senior figures in the Department/agency. This will ensure that the mandate for implementation of the plan is strong and will strengthen the pressure and commitment to the Plan within the Department/agency.

The process of drafting the Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plan would also benefit from input from consultative structures/mechanisms which are being put in place under the

National Biodiversity Plan, as well as any existing ones specific to particular Departments/agencies. Relevant structures under the National Biodiversity Plan are

- ?? the Inter-Departmental Biodiversity Steering Group;
- ?? the National Biodiversity Research Platform; and
- ?? The Biodiversity Forum.

Participation in these by Department representatives should also be beneficial through providing the Department with advice and opportunities for discussion.

## **12 Structure of a Sectoral Biodiversity Plan**

The following gives an overview of the sections that should be considered in a Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plan:

### **Overall structure of Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plans**

- Introduction.
- An analysis of the role and impacts of the Department in the conservation of biodiversity
- Overall Aim
- Objectives
- Targets and Actions.
- Monitoring and Review.

## **13. Introduction**

The introductory section should outline the remit and work of the Department or agency, and should provide an overview of the role of the Department/agency in the conservation of biodiversity. It is also important to indicate the measures that are already in place which are relevant to the conservation of biodiversity and the sustainable use of its components. This section will be important to highlight gaps in existing initiatives and particular areas that may need to be targeted for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity. The Plan should also attempt to outline the direct and indirect value of biodiversity to the Department/agency and sector in question.

## **14. An analysis of the role and impacts of the Department in the Conservation of biodiversity**

The most critical part of the plan will be a detailed analysis of how all the areas of work of the Department or agency impact, or potentially impact, upon biodiversity - whether positively or negatively. The impacts of legislation, policies, programmes and actions under the Department's remit should all be assessed.

## **15. Overall Aim**

The overall aim of each plan is likely to take the form of a broad statement setting out what the Department or agency seeks to achieve in relation to biodiversity.

The National Biodiversity Plan states that

*the sectoral Biodiversity Action Plans should aim to ensure that the Departments or agency's activity and that of the sector it is responsible for minimise adverse impacts on biodiversity; eliminate significant adverse impacts; and encourage and promote beneficial effects on biodiversity.*

These elements should be incorporated into the overall aim of the plan.

## **16. Objectives**

Each plan should contain a number of key objectives. Objectives should be based on priorities derived from national, EU and international biodiversity policy and plans where appropriate. The National Biodiversity Plan should provide the basis for a number of the objectives, particularly in relation to Agriculture, Forests, Inland Waters and Wetlands, and Marine and Coastal. Obligations arising from the Convention on Biological Diversity (including work programmes and other decisions relevant to particular Departments/sectors) should also be reflected in the objectives where appropriate. In addition, priorities identified by environmental and sectoral non-governmental organisations can also be used to assist in the formulation of objectives.

## **17. Targets and Actions**

The targets and actions defined in the plan should lay out the details of how the objectives and hence the overall aim will be achieved. Targets should if relevant, include a timeframe. Actions necessary to achieve the targets should be listed, along with the key players. If possible, and where relevant, estimated costs and potential sources of funding should be provided. Targets and actions should be realistic yet ambitious.

In the case of some Departments or sectors there may be a large number of possible targets and actions that could contribute to the objectives of the plan. Given that resources are finite, it will be necessary to prioritise actions. A number of criteria could be employed in defining priorities including firstly, conservation priority, as well as levels of support, achievability, effectiveness, and efficiency of resource use. Consultation with relevant stakeholders would be important in defining and prioritising targets and actions.

Some actions may simply require adjustments to or revisions of existing policies and programmes. However, other actions may require the development of new initiatives and programmes.

All Departments and relevant agencies should determine which of the categories below are relevant to their activities. For example, all Government Departments and agencies should address biodiversity concerns and sustainability in new policies.

## **18. Monitoring and Review**

It is important to ensure that Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plans put in place a process of action for biodiversity by each Department and relevant agency. The production of Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plans is only the first step and the key task is to actually implement the Plan. Progress in the implementation of the Plan should be subject to monitoring and review. Monitoring will in the first instance entail an assessment of whether the objectives, targets and actions in the Plan have been met and what further work needs to be carried out. If possible, more sophisticated indicators should be developed and used to assess the effectiveness of the plan.

Department/agencies will be required to submit annual reports on the progress with the Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plans to the Inter-Departmental Biodiversity Steering Group. In addition, the National Biodiversity Plan states that the Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plans will be subject to review after five years. It is also recommended that a midterm review (after 3 years) be conducted to assess the implementation of the plan, its effectiveness and to make any necessary alterations to the Plan.

## **19. Agreement and Publication of the Biodiversity Action Plan**

Once the plan has been drafted, it will need to be presented to the Minister and the Government if appropriate, for approval. Acceptance and awareness of the Biodiversity Action Plan from the highest levels is important. The Working Group can decide whether or not the plan is published per se. However, it is recommended that Departments and agencies, which impact significantly on biodiversity should publish their plans. All Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plans should be available on the Department/agency website and should be available for distribution to interested parties.

## **20. Management of Information on Biodiversity**

An important step in many sectoral Biodiversity Action Plans will be the improved generation and management of information on biodiversity within Government Departments and agencies. Departments and agencies should give consideration to their role in delivering on the obligations set out in Article 7 of the Convention on Biological Diversity.

Some Departments and agencies generate a lot of information on biodiversity (e.g. agriculture and forestry). Departments should set up a register of their own biological data, and assess the best ways to manage it. The issue of linkages to, and compatibility with, other sources and databases of biodiversity information will also need to be considered.

## **21. Sustainability**

Each Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plan should include a section which assesses the day to day activities and management practices of the Department or agency. Areas which should be examined include:

- ?? As a consumer of raw materials, of furniture, paper, water etc and a producer of waste
- ?? As a consumer of energy
- ?? As an operator
- ?? As a funder of projects, subsidies, and contracts

Further details of possible actions are provided in Appendix 4. The Government's Sustainable Development Strategy outlines a number of measures which Departments should take in order to help achieve sustainability in their activities.

## **22. Policy**

Existing sectoral policy should be assessed for any negative impacts it has on biodiversity. There should be a commitment to assess all new policy for its impact on biodiversity, and that efforts to enhance biodiversity through policy will be encouraged. Biodiversity concerns should be built into any advice, guidance, etc to be issued. Subsidies and grant schemes should take biodiversity concerns into account. In addition, EU and international conservation strategies should be incorporated into policy by Departments and agencies where relevant. Enhanced communication between Government Departments will be necessary and the Interdepartmental Biodiversity Steering Group should play an important role to this end.

## 23. Legislation

The Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plans should outline the obligations pertaining to their Department/agency with regard to legislation and conventions relating to biodiversity (e.g. the Birds and Habitats Directives, the Water Framework Directive, and the Wildlife Acts 1976 and 2000). A list of relevant legislation, etc is provided in Appendix 3.

## 24. Land Use and Management

A number of Government Departments and agencies own land. Departments and agencies should pay particular attention to such lands and each Department and, or, agency should issue a statement of commitment to conserve and where possible enhance biodiversity on all of the lands owned or managed by it. Each Department/agency should assess the lands owned by it, including by compiling a list of any conservation designations on their lands, and their conservation significance at a local or national level. Measures to minimise adverse impacts and to enhance biodiversity should be actively promoted on these lands. Examples of such measures are outlined below:

### Examples of ways in which each Department or agency can help to conserve and enhance biodiversity on lands (& buildings) owned and managed by it

- Identify any conservation designations on land owned and/or managed by it and its conservation significance at both a local and a national level
- Plant native trees and hedges as determined by the local landscape character
- Use tree stocks from local seed sources (if available)
- Introduce grass cutting regimes that are compatible with biodiversity enhancement
- Introduce hedge cutting regimes to enhance biodiversity and which adhere to wildlife legislation (generally no cutting between 1<sup>st</sup> of March and 31<sup>st</sup> August)
- Reduce and where possible eliminate the use of pesticides, herbicides and chemical fertilisers
- Eliminate peat based compost and instead use peat free products
- When considering works on buildings or other structures (e.g. bridges), ensure, including through survey where appropriate, that protected or other important species are properly protected (e.g. it is an offence to interfere with or destroy the breeding or roosting places of bats)
- Consider creating ponds or other wetland areas
- Leave areas aside as wildlife havens
- Restore degraded habitats
- Safeguard and manage species of national significance which occur on its land

- Ensure that biodiversity surveys are undertaken to inform changes to land use or when undertaking development
- Where important sites or extensive land is owned e.g. national parks, state owned forests, state owned peatlands etc, specific management plan(s) may be appropriate
- Erect bird and bat boxes
- Protect bat roosts when repairing bridges, buildings, etc
- Manage water courses and their margins to benefit biological diversity
- Discourage the canalisation or culverting of water courses and ensure the design of culverts and bridges allow for passage of aquatic life
- Where relevant and appropriate, permit public access on lands owned and/or, provide educational and recreational facilities for the public use *e.g.* land in built up areas
- Encourage contractors and consultants to adopt the principles of biodiversity enhancement in designing development sites and adhere to best practice
- Promote the distinctiveness and quality of the area's biodiversity.

Indeed buildings or other structures owned or managed by Departments and agencies can be important for at least certain wildlife species (e.g. bat species). Opportunities to provide for wildlife may be available and more importantly it is necessary to comply with the legal requirements in respect of protected species. This may require a survey in the first instance to determine if bats, protected bird or animal species are present.

## **25. Development**

Development of many kinds has the potential to have significant effects on biodiversity. Effective use of environmental impact assessment and mitigation measures should be employed by Departments including when constructing roads, buildings, facilities, and when undertaking significant land use changes of any kind. The conservation of biodiversity could be considered in developments, for example, by the provision of wildlife corridors and the enhancement of certain areas to compensate for habitat loss in other areas.

## **26. Raising awareness/education**

Each Sectoral Biodiversity Action Plan should have an objective(s) and target(s) that involves raising awareness among staff, as well as among relevant stakeholders and the general public. Actions could include

- ?? An information day/workshop to ensure that staff are aware of the importance of biodiversity and the role of their Department/agency in its conservation and sustainable use;

- ?? Publicise, and bring to the attention of relevant external audiences, Departmental policy and actions to promote the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity;
- ?? Resources could be provided to environmental and sectoral NGOs to work in partnership with the relevant sectors to raise awareness of the need to conserve biodiversity;
- ?? Guidelines could be compiled for businesses or other sectors to demonstrate how biodiversity concerns can be integrated into their activities.

## **27. Cross border initiatives**

The conservation of biodiversity in the Republic of Ireland should not be pursued in isolation from that in Northern Ireland. Departments and agencies should endeavour to enhance communication with their corresponding Departments/agencies in Northern Ireland with regard to biodiversity. There are likely to be many issues and projects where co-operation or joint projects would benefit biodiversity both north and south.

## **28. Conserving biodiversity at an international level**

The National Biodiversity Plan requires that Ireland participates in, and contributes to, efforts for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity at the EU and global levels. Each sectoral Biodiversity Action Plan should address these dimensions.

## **Appendix 1: Examples of Objectives, Targets and Actions**

Examples of objectives, targets and actions under the category of education and awareness.

**Objective:** To raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity within the Department and amongst all relevant stakeholders

**Target 1:** To ensure that all departmental staff are aware of the importance of biodiversity and of their obligations under the National Biodiversity Plan

**Action 1:** To hold a staff training day on the National Biodiversity Plan, the Departmental Biodiversity Action Plan and on relevant legislation within 3 months of the completion of the sectoral Biodiversity Action Plan.

Key players include the coordinator of the sectoral Biodiversity Action Plan, the internal Biodiversity Working Group with input from the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government. No additional resources will be required.

**Action 2:** Develop a biodiversity link on the departmental website which includes the sectoral Biodiversity Action Plan and any other relevant information by December, 2003.

Key players will include the Biodiversity Working Group and other staff members.

**Target 2:** To promote awareness of biodiversity and promote best practice amongst stakeholders and the general public

**Action 1:** To produce guidelines and codes of best practice for relevant stakeholders demonstrating how biodiversity concerns can be integrated into their activities by April 2004.

Key players include the coordinator of the sectoral Biodiversity Action Plan with input from the Biodiversity Working Group, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government.

## **Appendix 2: Sustainable Actions**

Examples of ways in which all Departments can contribute to the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity through achieving sustainability in day to day activities and administrative functions of their activities.

- 1) Examine and Implement the Government's National Sustainable Development Strategy

### **As a consumer of raw materials, of furniture, paper, water etc and as a producer of waste**

- 2) Use sustainably produced products
- 3) Use certified timbers for furniture and construction *etc*
- 4) Reduce resource consumption *e.g.* use recycled paper and purchase duplex printers, and double sided photocopiers so that both sides of the paper can be used
- 5) Use recycled and recyclable products such as stationary and toilet tissues and products that come in recyclable packaging
- 6) Where non recycled paper is used, ensure that it is produced from sustainably managed forests
- 7) Recycle and reuse paper, stationary, packaging and other equipment
- 8) Collect and recycle printer cartridges
- 9) Purchase organic and locally produced foods in the office and sustainably produced teas and coffees
- 10) Ensure that IT equipment complies with national and EU regulations on the use of environmentally hazardous substances
- 11) Ensure that all equipment is non-polluting and that it is free from ozone depleting chemicals or other damaging substances
- 12) Reduce water consumption
- 13) Choose environmentally friendly cleaning products
- 14) Install low flush toilets to reduce water consumption.

### **As a consumer of energy**

- 15) Using energy efficient equipment and electric goods
- 16) Buy fuel efficient vehicles
- 17) Buy vehicles that minimise damaging emissions to the environment
- 18) Use alternatively fuelled vehicles
- 19) Reduce business vehicle mileage
- 20) Organise office car shares for journeys to and from work and encourage the use of public transport
- 21) Switch to a green electricity scheme.

### **As an operator**

- 22) Monitor and mitigate pollution through emissions or waste disposal as result of Departmental activities which may impact upon the environment
- 23) Minimise impacts to biodiversity when changing land use or management methods
- 24) Ensure that property managers comply with legal requirements for disposing of waste
- 25) Undertake all new construction in a sustainable manner, taking into account the impacts that the building materials used, building design and energy requirements etc may have on biodiversity.

**As a funder of projects, subsidies and contracts etc**

- 26) Identify issues and activities in contracts awarded that may impact upon biodiversity and ensure that any negative impacts are mitigated and that measures to enhance biodiversity are incorporated
- 27) Ensure that the contract award criteria include, where possible, environmental and social requirements
- 28) Tender letters should request tenderers to identify environmental impacts and mitigation measures
- 29) Sponsor biodiversity conservation projects.

### **Appendix 3: Legislation relevant to Biodiversity**

List of relevant Irish, European, and international legislation, strategies and conventions relevant to the conservation of biodiversity.

#### **Irish Wildlife and Planning Legislation and Plans**

- ?? The Local Government (Planning and Development Acts, 1963-2000).
- ?? Continental Shelf Act, 1968
- ?? The Wildlife Act, 1976.
- ?? The Heritage Act, 1995.
- ?? Planning and Development Act, 2000.
- ?? European Communities (Natural Habitats) Regulations, 1997
- ?? Sustainable Development: A Strategy for Ireland, 1997
- ?? The National Development Plan 2000-2006.
- ?? Wildlife (Amendment Act), 2000.
- ?? National Climate Change Strategy, 2000.
- ?? The National Heritage Plan, 2002.
- ?? The National Biodiversity Plan, 2002.
- ?? National Spatial Strategy, 2002.
- ?? Local Authorities and Sustainable Development: Guidelines on Local Agenda 21.

#### **European Directives**

- ?? EU Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC), 1979.
- ?? EU Directive on Public Access to Environmental Information (Council Directive 90/313/EEC on the freedom of access to information on the environment) 1990.
- ?? EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC), 1992.
- ?? EU Directive on Environmental Impacts (Council Directive 97/11/EC amending Directive 85/337/EEC on the assessment of the effects of certain public and private projects on the environment) 1997.
- ?? EU Water Framework Directive (Council Directive 2000/60/EC establishing a framework for Community Action in the field of water policy) 2000.

#### **European Plans and Strategies**

- ?? European Biodiversity Strategy, 1998 (COM (98) 42 final).
- ?? Biodiversity Action Plans in the areas of Conservation of Natural resources, Agriculture, Fisheries, and Development and Economic Co-operation, 2001 (COM (2001)162 final).
- ?? The European Union Strategy for Sustainable Development, 2001 (COM (2001)264 final).
- ?? The Sixth EU Environmental Action Programme, Our Future, Our choice, 2001 (COM(2001)31).

## **International Conventions**

- ?? Agreement on Conservation of Bats in Europe (Bonn Convention), 1993.
- ?? Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds (AEWA), 1996.
- ?? Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Berne Convention, 1979).
- ?? Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn Convention), 1979.
- ?? Convention of Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar Convention, 1971).
- ?? Convention for the Protection of the Marine Environment of the North-East Atlantic (OSPAR), 1992 (including Annex V on marine biodiversity).
- ?? Convention on Biological Diversity, 1992.
- ?? Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES), 1974.
- ?? International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, 1946.
- ?? International Tropical Timber Agreement 1994, (1996).
- ?? Pan-European Biological and Landscape Diversity Strategy, 1995.
- ?? United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, 1992.
- ?? UNESCO Convention for the protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage.

#### Appendix 4: Useful websites.

- ✍✍ [www.biodiv.org](http://www.biodiv.org) Website of the Convention on Biological Diversity
- ✍✍ <http://www.biodiv.org/world/map.asp?lg=0&ctr=ie> First and Second National Biodiversity Reports of Ireland and thematic reports on Alien and Invasive Species, Forest Ecosystems, Protected Areas, and Technology Transfer. Also contains Ireland's National Biodiversity Plan and Irish contact points for the CBD.
- ✍✍ <http://www.un.org/esa/sustdev/> The United Nations Sustainable Development website, including Agenda 21.
- ✍✍ <http://www.environ.ie/> Website of the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government
- ✍✍ <http://biodiversity-chm.eea.eu.int/> EU Clearing House Mechanism
- ✍✍ [http://biodiversity-chm.eea.eu.int/convention/cbd\\_ec](http://biodiversity-chm.eea.eu.int/convention/cbd_ec) EU Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plans
- ✍✍ [www.earthwatch.org/europe/publications.html](http://www.earthwatch.org/europe/publications.html) Earthwatch, for copies of 'Business and Biodiversity' and 'Case Studies in Business and Biodiversity'.
- ✍✍ <http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/> The UK Sustainable Development website
- ✍✍ [www.defra.gov.uk/](http://www.defra.gov.uk/) UK Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) homepage
- ✍✍ [www.english-nature.org.uk/about/sector/default.htm](http://www.english-nature.org.uk/about/sector/default.htm) This website provides information on sector analysis policy in the UK. Sector analysis is a policy tool which helps English Nature to understand the ways in which key businesses and industry impact on nature conservation.
- ✍✍ <http://iucn.org/themes/carbon/> This online resource gives guidance on designing carbon projects that are financially attractive, as well as environmentally and socially sound. The site provides advice for investors, developing country negotiators, project developers and managers on how to design and implement Kyoto Protocol projects that deliver the mix of goods and services to fulfil climate, development and environment objectives.

## Appendix 5: Further Reading.

- ~~///~~ *A Guide to the Habitats in Ireland.* (2000) The Heritage Council.
- ~~///~~ *A Guide to the Convention on Biological Diversity,* (1994). I.U.C.N., Gland and Cambridge.
- ~~///~~ *Birds of Conservation Concern in Ireland.* Newton, S. Donaghy, A. Allen, D. & Gibbons, D. (1999) *Irish Birds* **6**:333-344.
- ~~///~~ *Biodiversity in Ireland* (2001) The Environmental Protection Agency.
- ~~///~~ *Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament, Biodiversity Action Plans in the areas of Conservation of Natural Resources, Agriculture, Fisheries, and Development and Economic Co-operation, COM(2001)62 final.*
- ~~///~~ *Evaluation of Environmental Designations in Ireland* (second edition). The Heritage Council (1997).
- ~~///~~ *Ireland's First National Report on the Implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity, 1998.*
- ~~///~~ *Irish Peatland Conservation Plan 2000.* (1996) Irish Peatland Conservation Council.
- ~~///~~ *National Biodiversity Plan,* (2002) Government of Ireland.
- ~~///~~ *National Heritage Plan,* (2002) Government of Ireland.
- ~~///~~ *New Atlas of the British and Irish Flora.* Preston, C.D. *et al.* (2002) Botanical Society of the British Isles.
- ~~///~~ *Red Data Books of Britain & Ireland: Stoneworts.* N.F. Stewart & J.M. Church (1992) JNCC, Peterborough.
- ~~///~~ *The Irish Red Data Book: 1 Vascular Plants.* T.G.F. Curtis & H.N. McGough (1988) Government Stationery Office.
- ~~///~~ *The Millennium Atlas of Butterflies in Britain and Ireland.* Asher, J. *et al* (2001). University Press, Oxford.
- ~~///~~ *The New Atlas of Breeding Birds in Britain and Ireland: 1988-1991.* D.W.Gibbons, Reid, J.B & Chapman, R.A. (1993) T.& A.D. Poyser.
- ~~///~~ *Threatened Mammals, Birds, Amphibians and Fish in Ireland. Irish Red Data Book 2: Vertebrates.* A. Whilde (1993) HMSO, Belfast.