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

Biodiversity Duty Reporting Guidance for Public Bodies

2025

Table of Contents

Introduction

About this document

This document has been developed as an accompaniment to the online Biodiversity Duty Feedback Form: to assist public bodies in completing the Biodiversity Duty Feedback Form, and to provide practical guidance on incorporating biodiversity considerations into work programmes.

The [Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2023 (Part VA, 59B (a)-(c))](#) introduced a new requirement for public bodies to consider biodiversity and report on the actions they take for biodiversity. Public bodies must now:

- have regard to the objectives and targets of the [National Biodiversity Action Plan](#) (NBAP) in the performance of their functions, and

- report annually on the fulfilment of this obligation by outlining measures adopted and progress made towards objectives of the National Biodiversity Action Plan.

Public bodies can fulfil their 'Biodiversity Duty' reporting obligation by completing the Biodiversity Duty Feedback Form.

This guidance has three parts:

Part A provides information on biodiversity: what it is, the pressures driving biodiversity loss and introduces the 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan.

Part B is a step-by-step guide to completing the online Biodiversity Duty Feedback Form.

Part C gives further information for organisations who wish to identify their organisational impacts and dependencies on biodiversity and become more nature positive.

Part A: Biodiversity – what is it and why does it matter?

Biodiversity - short for biological diversity - describes the variety of life on Earth. It means the variety of all living things and the living systems of which they are a part. This encompasses more than wild flora and fauna – it includes all living species and the living communities they create. For more information, see Chapter 1 of Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan.
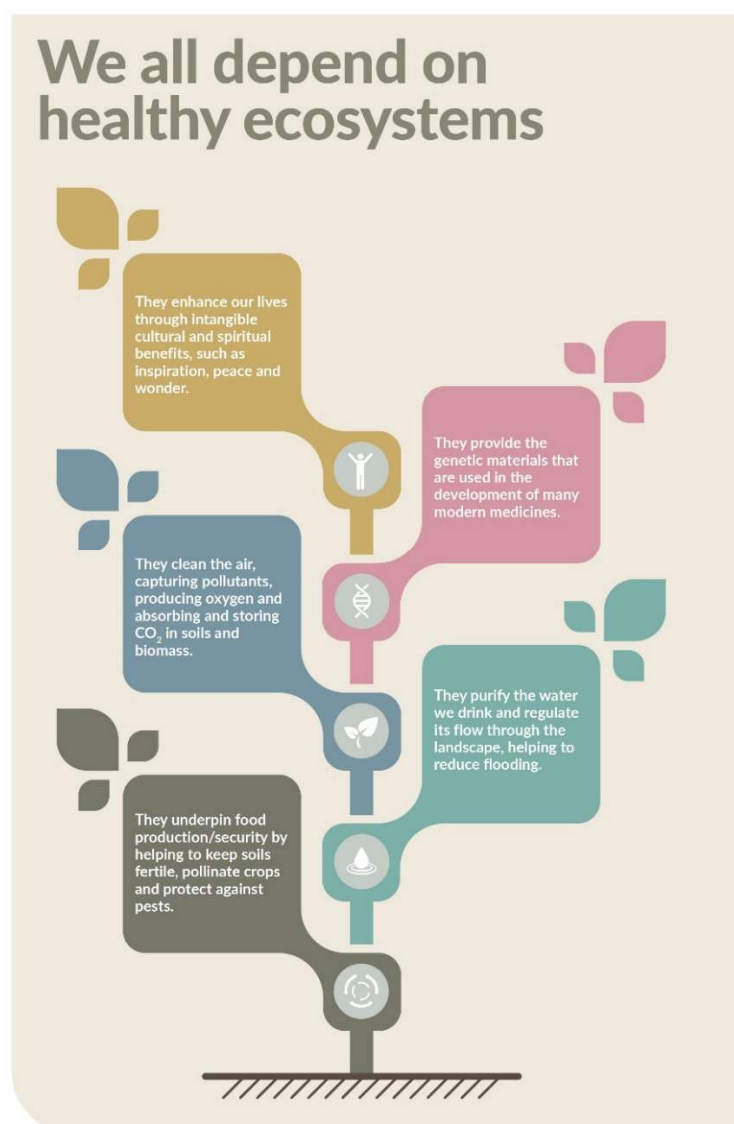

Figure 1: Ecosystem Services, Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan, page 12

Humanity is completely dependent on the goods and services that ecosystems – bogs, forests, rivers, grasslands, etc. - provide; from the production of food, medicines, timber, fuel, and fibre, to the provision of fresh air, clean water, flood mitigation and climate regulation. Ecosystems also benefit our mental and physical wellbeing through recreation and amenity, with intimate and often ancient connections to society, culture and spirituality. Ireland's biodiversity is deeply entwined with the history and use of the Irish language, our folklore and mythology, our artistic, literary and storytelling traditions, as well as our food heritage, major heritage sites and local cultural observances. These and other important benefits are essential to our society, our economic development, and our health, and are worth billions of euro to the Irish economy every year.[1, 2]

Biodiversity loss is happening at an alarming rate. In 2019, the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) defined the five main drivers of biodiversity loss[3]; pollution, invasive species, land use change, climate change and direct exploitation of natural resources and organisms. In an increasingly globalised economy, it has become more important than ever for government and society to work together to address biodiversity loss. Despite globalisation, change needs to start happening at a local and national level.

[1] A review of the range and value of ecosystem services from Irish forests, Bullock et al.
https://journal.societyofirishforesters.ie/index.php/forestry/article/view/10846/9900

[2] Valuing Ireland's Blue Ecosystem Services, Norton et al.
https://www.universityofgalway.ie/media/researchsites/semru/files/marine_ecosystem_service_non_technical_report_final.pdf

[3] Summary for Policymakers of the IPBES Global Assessment Report on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services
https://files.ipbes.net/ipbes-web-prod-public-files/inline/files/ipbes_global_assessment_report_summary_for_policymakers.pdf

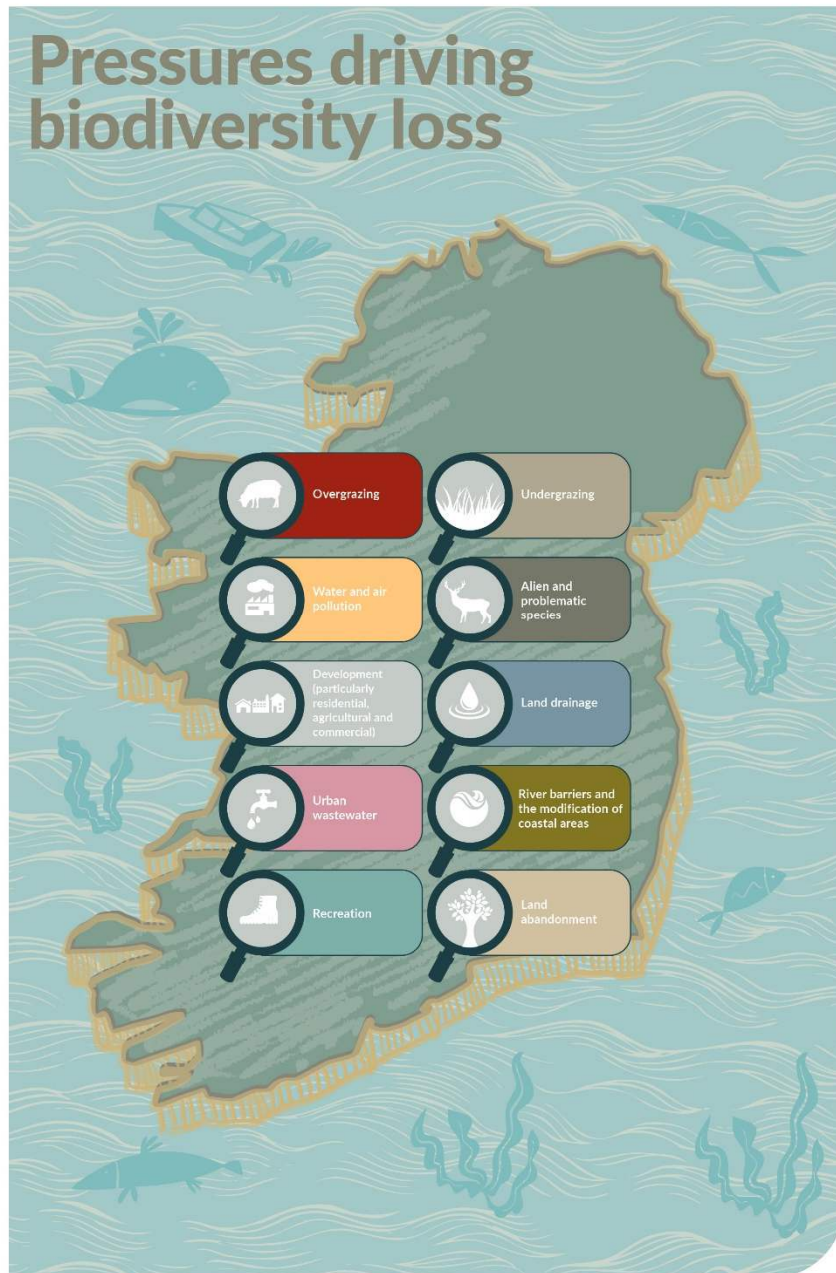**Figure 2: Pressures driving Biodiversity Loss in an Irish context, Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan, page 17**

What does science say about biodiversity in Ireland?

Ireland is home to globally important populations of birds, fish, mammals, invertebrates, plants and fungi across a wide range of terrestrial, freshwater and marine habitats. The seas and coasts surrounding our island support vast colonies of

seabirds, abundant fish and cold-water coral reefs, whales and dolphins, as well as rich algal and invertebrate communities. On land, there is a wealth of species in our mountains, peatlands, turloughs, woodlands, grasslands, lakes, rivers, and coastal habitats. Over 31,000 species have been recorded in Ireland and its surrounding seas and many more have yet to be discovered. However, despite this rich tapestry, our biodiversity is in trouble. Read more on this in Chapter 2 of [Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan 2023-2030 (NBAP).](#)

Ireland's 4th National Biodiversity Action Plan

Ireland's 4th NBAP strives for a 'whole of government, whole of society' approach to the governance and conservation of biodiversity. The aim is to ensure that every citizen, community, business, local authority, semi-state and state agency has an awareness of biodiversity and its importance, and of the implications of its loss, while also understanding how they can act to address the biodiversity emergency as part of a renewed national effort to 'act for nature'.

The 4th NBAP takes account of the wide range of policies, strategies, conventions, laws and targets at the global, EU and national level that influence our shared environment in order to scale up biodiversity action.

Many actions in the NBAP have one or two named organisations that will lead on delivery of the action. It's important to note that, although not every public body is assigned an action in the Plan, **all public bodies must have regard to the objectives and targets of the National Biodiversity Action Plan in the performance of their functions and must report on the measures they adopted**. Completion of the online Biodiversity Duty Feedback Form allows public bodies to describe the action they have taken and fulfils their reporting obligation.

Opportunities to incorporate biodiversity

The following section provides simple suggestions on how biodiversity may be incorporated into existing programmes of work.

1. **Procurement and funding**
   - Specify biodiversity requirements in the tendering process
   - Prioritise environmentally friendly products

2. **Building and construction**
   - Design-in sustainable urban drainage systems
   - Consider storm water management systems
   - Harmonise new builds into existing landscapes using green infrastructure or biophilic design
   - Use green roofs to manage heat and rainwater
   - Consider biodiversity at planning and design stage
   - Restore, instead of building from scratch

3. **Landscape management**
   - Create biodiverse landscapes in new developments
   - Manage land beside rivers and lakes for biodiversity
   - Protect wetland areas and hedgerows
   - Reduce mowing and hedge trimming
   - Incorporate wildlife friendly planting
   - Consider low intervention and peat free horticulture
   - Consider the creation of allotments
   - Explore opportunities to help monitor protected species

4. **Public engagement and education**
   - Consider making space for community gardens, local nature reserves, etc.
   - Create nature trails and cycle paths
   - Work with volunteers, schools and local businesses to improve habitats
   - Improve access to existing biodiverse areas

Biodiversity in Public Bodies – further action

Make a commitment to nature. You have the power to shape the future of your organisation. Listed below is a selection of key resources to review and steps to undertake when you are ready to progress on your journey to escalate action for biodiversity.

Use available resources

-   The [UN Convention on Biological Diversity](#) website provides guidance on developing local biodiversity plans
-   The [Action for Biodiversity](#) website provides access to a valuable source of information on existing Biodiversity Action Plans completed by different sectors
-   The [IUCN](#) have developed guidance on planning and monitoring corporate biodiversity
-   The [Heritage Council Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plan Guidelines](#)
-   [Business for Biodiversity Ireland](#) has developed a Roadmap to Nature Positive to help organisations in Ireland progress on their journey
-   [The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan](#) has lots of useful guidance to support pollinator biodiversity
-   [The Taskforce on Nature-related Financial Disclosures](#) can help you assess your impacts, dependencies, risks and opportunities for biodiversity
-   [The World Business Council on Sustainable Development](#) has created sector roadmaps to nature positive
-   Consider applying the natural capital[4] approach to make environmental risk and opportunity visible in accounting systems
-   Review the [National Economic and Social Council (NESC) Guide for Action on Natural Capital Accounting](#)

Set meaningful targets

Setting targets around eliminating or reducing impacts and managing nature-related risk is vital. Include strategic objectives to mitigate impacts as well as on-site actions to support local biodiversity. Credible actions for biodiversity include:

-   Develop (or update) your biodiversity action and implementation strategy in line with prevailing guidance and legislation
-   Conduct a skills gap analysis (ecologists, statisticians, planners/engineers with nature-based solutions expertise, researchers etc.)
-   Consider how to measure biodiversity baselines

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[4] Natural Capital Accounting (NCA) definition from INCASE Report (2023)
https://www.incaseproject.com/_files/ugd/94066f_fe8c30a8dfe14863b8923ba3ead59899.pdf

- Conduct a data gap analysis
- Create robust governance structures for biodiversity at senior level so that nature is incorporated into decision-making
- Review existing policies to ensure they comply with your biodiversity duty, advocate for improvement of existing policies
- Include biodiversity in all your public body's policies, plans and decision-making processes.

Support local biodiversity

- Engagement with local communities in relation to raising awareness about local biodiversity.
- Consult the All Ireland Pollinator Plan for best practice on supporting pollinating insects
- Consult invasives.ie for guidelines on managing invasive species
- Engage with the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) and relevant environmental NGOs for guidance on supporting native species

Deepen understanding

Lift the baseline knowledge of all staff to ensure robust implementation. Ensure that the people within your organisation know that individual choices and actions matter for nature and climate.

Collaborate

The NBAP sets out a whole-of-government and whole-of-society approach; find ways to incorporate this in your organisation.
- Mainstream biodiversity concepts throughout the organisation and incorporate biodiversity into decision-making
- Review existing organisational structures, such as climate teams, to include biodiversity considerations.
- Build a network of passionate people who will drive change, within and outside of your organisation. Facilitate peer-to-peer learning and support for biodiversity-related initiatives.

- Find out about local and national biodiversity projects. Explore how you could contribute.
- Get to know who the local Biodiversity Officers and Heritage Officers are and seek to support them with biodiversity projects.
- Connect with the local Climate Action Regional Office staff
- Engage with the Public Participation Networks
- Engage with local businesses, nature organisations and community groups

Implement

Plan how your public body will deliver on its biodiversity duty in line with the objectives and targets of the NBAP and other legislation.

- Determine the cost or benefits of implementing action, if any
- Prioritise action. Determine where funding should be allocated to maximise positive impact
- Find out about available biodiversity funds (Climate, Infrastructure & Nature fund; other funding streams)
- Be transparent and disclose your biodiversity strategy and implementation plan

Transform your organisation

- Adopt a culture of continuous improvement: monitor and evaluate progress regularly
- Compliance: regularly update plans to comply with any changes in policy
- Measurement: measure impact qualitatively in the absence of quantitative measurements
- Disclosure: embrace transparency by publicly reporting on achievements, missed targets/milestones, challenges and discussing learnings. Publicly report on the value of work done (monetary and non-monetary value where possible)
- Accountability: engage accountability through governance structures
- Leadership: be a role model to the private sector.

Part B: The Biodiversity Duty Feedback Form

The [Biodiversity Duty Feedback Form](#) sets out a list of questions that enables public bodies to report on their fulfilment of their biodiversity duty. It also helps identify organisational impacts and dependencies on biodiversity, thereby informing future actions for biodiversity.

The Biodiversity Duty Feedback Form comprises two sections:

Section 1: General information
Section 2: Recording measures adopted and progress made for biodiversity

Complete both sections

The information provided will be used to assess compliance with the public sector biodiversity duty.

Responses to Question (1) and Question (2) (outline action taken for biodiversity) will be made publicly available, in line with the privacy statement.

Information provided in response to other questions will not be published.

Which public bodies must complete the Biodiversity Duty Feedback Form?

The public bodies that are required to report on their action for biodiversity are:

- a Minister of the Government;
- Bord Iascaigh Mhara;
- Bord na Móna;
- An Bord Pleanála;
- Coillte Teoranta (being a company formed and registered under the Companies Acts as provided for by section 9 of the Forestry Act 1988);
- Commission for Aviation Regulation;
- Commission for Communications Regulation;
- Commission for Railway Regulation;
- Commission for Regulation of Utilities;
- Commissioners of Public Works in Ireland;

- a company formed in respect of a harbour in accordance with section 7 of the Harbours Act 1996;

- Eirgrid;

- Electricity Supply Board;

- Enterprise Ireland;

- The Environmental Protection Agency;

- Ervia[5];

- Geological Survey Ireland

- The Heritage Council;

- Iarnród Éireann-Irish Rail;

- Industrial Development Agency (Ireland);

- Inland Fisheries Ireland;

- Irish Lights Commission;

- a local authority within the meaning of section 2 of the Local Government Act 2001;

- The Marine Institute;

- The National Roads Authority;

- The Office of the Revenue Commissioners;

- a planning authority within the meaning of the Planning and Development Act 2000;

- The Sea-Fisheries Protection Authority;

- Teagasc-The Agriculture and Food Development Authority;

- Údarás na Gaeltachta.

The Minister may prescribe other bodies, persons, companies, organisations or groups to be a public body if the Minister is of the opinion that they have, or may have, a bearing on matters concerning biodiversity, or is in a position to promote the conservation of biodiversity.

[5] Ervia separated into Uisce Éireann and Ervia-Gas Networks Ireland in 2023

Guidance for Completion

A public body may submit a return at organisation/division /section level, as appropriate. For instance, large Departments may wish to submit multiple forms, completed by different divisions/sections. Smaller organisations may wish to collate information and submit one form.

The character limit for each free text box is displayed at the bottom of the box.

Section 1: General Information

Questions that require an answer are indicated by an asterisk.

The drop down list includes the name of each organisation that is assigned as an action 'Partner' in the 4th NBAP. Select the name/acronym of your organisation from the drop down list. **If your organisation is not listed, select 'Relevant Bodies' from the drop down list and enter your organisation name**.

Indicate whether you are responding on behalf of the entire organisation, or on behalf of a section/division only. If responding on behalf of a section/division only, enter the section/division name.

Enter your name, role and contact email address. These details will not be published, but will be used by the NPWS to contact you if clarification is needed.

Section 2: Recording measures adopted and progress made for biodiversity

The questions in this section are used to gather information to assess how organisations are contributing to the objectives of the NBAP. The information provided will be used to assess compliance with the biodiversity duty.

Question 1

Question 1 asks about actions listed in the NBAP that are assigned to your organisation. Many actions in the NBAP have one or two named organisations that will lead on delivery of the action. A full list of NBAP actions is available in the drop down list for this question and a list with associated partners is available of the NBAP Tracker website. If your organisation is listed against an action in the NBAP, select the action from the drop down list and briefly describe any progress towards implementing the

action in the 'Describe progress to date' text box. Additional actions may be added by clicking on the + symbol under 'Click + to report on additional actions'.

Question 2

Question 2 relates to any work ongoing that will contribute to the overall objectives of the NBAP, but that are not associated with a specific action, or assigned an action number. The information gathered here is useful, because although not every public body is assigned an action, all public bodies can contribute towards achieving NBAP objectives. Projects do not have to be specific biodiversity projects – it may be that projects relate to one or more of the five main drivers of biodiversity loss[6], e.g.:

- Emissions reduction, waste reduction, sustainable urban drainage schemes, constructed wetlands, rain gardens, elimination of single use plastic (Driver: pollution)

- On site eradication of Japanese knotweed, rhododendron or other botanical alien species (Driver: invasive species)

- Capital or infrastructure projects which have a biodiversity consideration, onsite evidence-based biodiversity actions (Driver: land/sea use change/management)

- GHG emissions reduction, net zero ambition, energy efficiencies, renewables infrastructure, local sourcing policy (Driver: climate change)

- Water stewardship initiatives, zero deforestation procurement policies, sustainable sourcing or products or commodities (Driver: direct exploitation of natural resources)

Click 'Yes' to enter brief details of any policies or projects that support biodiversity, providing links as appropriate.

If you answer 'No' or 'Don't know' to both Question 1 AND Question 2, you must describe in Q2a, in general terms, how your organisation took biodiversity into account in its' day-to-day operations – in other words, how your organisation is fulfilling its' biodiversity duty.

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[6] The five main drivers of biodiversity loss are pollution, invasive species, land use change, climate change and direct exploitation of natural resources https://www.ipbes.net/models-drivers-biodiversity-ecosystem-change

Question 3

Question 3 relates to Action 1B3 of the NBAP, which states that *'All relevant Departments and Government Bodies will explore the biodiversity expertise and training requirements across government to ensure the appropriate expertise is available to implement this Plan'*. The information gathered here will allow organisations to reflect on their training needs. Q3a relates specifically to ecology related positions within your organisation. For instance, public bodies may employ an Environmental/Sustainability Manager, or local authorities may employ ecologists in a Biodiversity Officer role. Q3b relates to the training needs for your organisation as whole and could encompass biodiversity training for specific roles (i.e. planners, engineers) or general biodiversity awareness. The information provided here is for internal use and will not be published.

Question 4

Question 4 facilitates the gathering of information for Action 1B2 of the NBAP, for the NPWS to '*conduct a review of nature governance in Ireland, including the roles and responsibilities of government departments, bodies and agencies as they relate to the achievement of biodiversity actions and commitments'.* Tick all that apply. The information provided here is for internal use and will not be published.

Question 5

Question 5 and 6 relate to Outcomes 1A - 1C of the NBAP concerning a 'whole of Government' approach to biodiversity loss and explore how public bodies are reacting to the shared responsibility for biodiversity. If your organisation has a dedicated role with responsibility for biodiversity, please provide the job title. The information provided here is for internal use and will not be published.

Question 6

If your organisation has a biodiversity strategy or plan, this is an opportunity to consider if you can link actions in your current strategy with those that may have been identified in the NBAP. Public bodies are not required to have a BAP, but they must take biodiversity into account. If your organisation does not have a biodiversity strategy in place, this is an opportunity to begin the process. See section 'Biodiversity in Public Bodies – For Future Generations' in Part A above for a list of resources or Part C below for a step by step guide to getting started on creating a meaningful biodiversity

strategy that is aligned with prevailing guidance. The information provided here is for internal use and will not be published.

Part C: Guidance on Developing a Biodiversity Action Plan

The questions in this section provide a useful template for organisations to begin assessing their impacts and dependencies on biodiversity. Answering these questions is not required when filling in the Biodiversity Feedback Form, but they will serve as a guide for those organisations who are developing a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). Local Authorities developing Local Authority Biodiversity Action Plans (LABAPs) should consult the guidance document published by The Heritage Council to assist Biodiversity Officers in LABAP development and implementation.

Assessing organisational impacts and dependencies on biodiversity

The questions below are set out in six stages, to encourage organisations to start thinking about their impacts and dependencies on biodiversity. The questions provide the foundations for organisations to prepare a meaningful Biodiversity Action Plan and enable public bodies to determine how best to deliver on their biodiversity duty and obligations under the NBAP. This exercise will also help you to develop an implementation plan that aligns with national and global policy and reflects current best practice.

If your organisation already has a strategy or BAP in place, we recommend that you revisit it to ensure that it aligns with current biodiversity policy and best practice. See 'Use available resources' under '

Biodiversity in Public Bodies – ' in Part A for useful reference material.

The six stages are:

- Stage 1: Assessing baseline knowledge and awareness of biodiversity and legislation relating to biodiversity

- Stage 2: Understanding your organisation's context in relation to biodiversity

- Stage 3: Assessing your organisation's direct impacts and dependencies on biodiversity

- Stage 4: Assessing your value chain impacts and dependencies on biodiversity

- Stage 5: Identifying and managing nature-related risk

- Stage 6: Managing your land for biodiversity

The Biodiversity Indicators Partnership provides guidance on the use of biodiversity indicators. The National Biodiversity Indicators 2020 Status and Trends (2021) published by the National Biodiversity Data Centre also includes valuable information on using biodiversity indicators to measure biodiversity and track changes and is a useful tool for guiding content of a biodiversity plan.

Stage 1: Assessing baseline knowledge and awareness on biodiversity and legislation relating to biodiversity

The purpose of the questioning in Stage 1 is to ascertain the level of working knowledge on the biodiversity crisis that exists within your organisation.

Questions in Stage 1 allow for the gathering information on the level of employee engagement and learning opportunities presented to employees. This will help develop an understanding of if and how information about the biodiversity crisis is being disseminated and what the broad level of understanding might be within your organisation.

Stage 1 questions explore the awareness that exists within your organisation in relation to the obligations of public bodies in relation to biodiversity. Having an understanding of current policy will enhance development of biodiversity strategies and it is important that public bodies are aware of national, European, and global biodiversity policy. The policy landscape is dynamic and evolving, reflecting the urgency to take action to mitigate risk from the biodiversity loss and climate change crises. It is therefore important to be aware of any policy changes that relate to public bodies obligations and ensure a nature positive journey accounts for any such policy requirements.

In addition to knowing your obligations, is it also beneficial to take steps to expand your knowledge in relation to our dependence on biodiversity and the catastrophic risks due to biodiversity loss. Each organisation can play a role in halting and reversing biodiversity loss. The Business for Biodiversity Ireland (BFBI) platform, a government-funded initiative includes useful information on the importance of biodiversity to our

lives, societies and economies, and highlights the need for global societies to become nature positive[7].

No.	Question
1.	Is there a role within your organisation with responsibility for biodiversity action?
2.	Does your organisation have a current biodiversity plan, programme or strategy?
3.	If you have a Biodiversity Strategy, does it reflect the current policy landscape? For instance, has it taken into account the Objectives of the 4th NBAP or the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework)?
4.	For public bodies, do you understand your organisation's obligations under the Wildlife (Amendment) Act 2023 [Part VA, 59B (a)-(c)]?
5.	Have you identified your obligations under the 4th NBAP Including actions assigned to all relevant bodies?
6.	Are you aware of Agenda 2030 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)?
7.	Are you aware of The Biodiversity Plan For Life on Earth (the first phase of implementing the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework 2022)?
8.	Are you aware of EU Biodiversity Strategy 2030?
9.	Are you aware of any other relevant regulations relating to biodiversity that should be included in this Section?
10.	Has your employee body been issued with advice on how they can support biodiversity within their role in the organisation?
11.	Has your employee body been presented with opportunities to learn about the biodiversity crisis?
12.	Are you aware of the **five drivers of biodiversity loss** as outlined by IPBES in 2019?

[7] Nature Positive is a global societal goal defined as 'Halt and Reverse Nature Loss by 2030 on a 2020 baseline, and achieve full recovery by 2050'. https://www.naturepositive.org/app/uploads/2024/02/The-Definition-of-Nature-Positive.pdf

Stage 2: Understanding your organisation's context in relation to biodiversity

What is the context of your organisation within the biodiversity emergency[8]? This set of questions will help you to understand how your organisation interacts with nature and biodiversity and where potential pressures on the five drivers of biodiversity loss might exist. This includes roles and responsibilities of government departments, bodies, and agencies as they relate to the achievement of biodiversity action (NBAP Action 1B2) and cross-departmental capacity and capability needed to achieve biodiversity targets (NBAP Action 1B3). Consideration should be given to conducting a skills gap analysis in order to understand how your organisation interacts with biodiversity. There are many areas of expertise that need to be employed to get a clear understanding of these interactions, i.e. ecologists, statisticians, planners/engineers with nature-based solutions expertise, researchers, etc.

Land and sea use-change is one of the key drivers of biodiversity loss and this driver is of particular significance here in Ireland. Many of Ireland's public bodies occupy and manage large banks of land. The way this land is managed or how its use changes over time may have long-lasting impacts on biodiversity. There may also be deforestation-linked commodities, like palm, soy, beef or forest products hidden within your value chain that are causing biodiversity loss in another country, possibly in a key biodiversity area. Water abstraction and use can have significant impacts on biodiversity. Public bodies need to understand, measure and manage their water dependencies, water sources and their waste water discharges into groundwater, surface water and soils. Is your organisation engaged in activities that generate noise pollution? Noise pollution can interfere with wildlife communication processes and human sources of noise pollution are usually generated from building works, mining or industrial activity. Artificial night-time lighting also impacts biodiversity.

In terms of inputs, every public body will have certain natural capital inputs, such as water and energy. In terms of outputs, every public body will have outputs like emissions and waste. There are likely to be many more that need to be identified. These inputs and outputs will vary relative to your activities.

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[8] The Government of Ireland declared a biodiversity emergency in 2019

No.	Question
13	Does your organisation directly engage in activities that result in a change of land or sea use? (Housing, built environment, infrastructure, etc.)
14.	Does your organisation consider the impact on biodiversity when procuring raw materials or commodities, directly or through your value chain?
	High risk commodities include (but not limited to):
	- Peat alternatives - Forest products, including paper and wood - Soy - Palm products - Beef - Fish (trawling, extraction) - Mined materials
15.	Do the activities conducted by your organisation have a water[9] demand that may impact biodiversity?
16.	Does your organisation engage in activities that generate high levels of noise[10] that may impact biodiversity? (i.e. building, mining, operation of industrial facilities, transport, etc.)
17.	Does your organisation engage in activities that require artificial night-time lighting[11] that may impact biodiversity?
18.	Has your organisation quantified its greenhouse gas emissions[12] with consideration to its impact on biodiversity?

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[9] Water and Biodiversity, Summary of the findings of the Fourth Edition of the Global Biodiversity Outlook as they relate to water (2015) https://www.cbd.int/gbo/gbo4/gbo4-water-en.pdf

[10] A meta-analysis of the influence of anthropogenic noise on terrestrial wildlife communication strategies https://besjournals.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1365-2664.13880

[11] Artificial night-time lighting impacts visual ecology links between flowers, pollinators and predators https://www.nature.com/articles/s41467-021-24394-0

[12] NSAI IS) 14064 Greenhouse gases (Carbon footprint) https://www.nsai.ie/certification/management-systems/carbon-accounting/

19.	Does your organisation measure air quality in and around each managed site with consideration to potential impacts on biodiversity?
20.	Has your organisation considered the impact on biodiversity in relation to its waste generation?
21.	Has your organisation reviewed biodiversity strategies, plans or programmes that have been adopted by other public bodies, either in Ireland or within other jurisdictions? (such reviews may help development and/or updating of your own organisation's biodiversity strategy).

Stage 3: Assessing direct impacts and dependencies on biodiversity

The questions asked in this section aim to enable you to get a high-level overview of your organisation's activities and operations and how they impact and depend on biodiversity.

The World Economic Forum Global Risks Report ranks biodiversity loss and ecosystem collapse 2nd in the global risks over the next ten years. The top four global risks in the next ten years are environmental (*Extreme weather events; Biodiversity and ecosystem collapse, Critical change in Earth systems; and Natural resources shortages*) with pollution ranked in the top 10 global risks. Each of these risks are interrelated and compound each other. These risks are a direct threat to our natural capital[13] (which includes biodiversity), and stem largely from our failure to conserve and restore it.

All organisations - whether public, semi-state, or private - impact and depend on nature. The term 'direct impacts and dependencies' in the context of this guidance document, relates to your direct activities and operations and how they impact and depend on biodiversity (it does not include upstream or downstream activities which are considered indirect or 'value chain' activities).

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[13] Natural Capital describes the earth's natural environment, including living (plants, animals and microorganisms, and their interactions and functions) and non-living elements (including land, water, and air), considered as assets or stocks that yield a flow of services and benefits to people. Also known as Natural Assets. *(adapted from Natural Capital Protocol via Atkinson and Pearce 1995; Jansson et al. 1994)*

There are links provided on the [Business for Biodiversity Ireland](#) website which has useful informational resources on nature-related impacts and dependencies. It is a useful exercise to create a high-level map of your organisation's direct impacts and dependencies on biodiversity.

All public bodies have a responsibility to understand their use of land and water and how it impacts on local biodiversity. Questions relating to your land and marine banks aim to elicit information on their extent, the types of ecosystems within, and whether protected areas[14] or species[15] are located within. Knowing where to find this information is important in terms of understanding what you have within your land and marine banks. This will help build a picture of your nature-related impacts and dependencies. The National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) provides online access to biodiversity [maps and data](#). Information on sensitive or unpublished data, such as locations of rare species, can be requested using a data request form in the [Open Data Policy](#) section of the NPWS website. [Biodiversity Maps](#) the biodiversity data and mapping portal managed by the National Biodiversity Data Centre, is another valuable source of information on what species have been recorded at different locations. This site also has a useful tagging system to allow for searching of threatened, protected or invasive alien species.

Questions relating to specific sustainability strategies listed in Question 36(a-3) are aimed at identifying strategies that crosscut with biodiversity and ultimately yield positive benefits to nature.

No.	Question
IMPACTS AND DEPENDENCIES	
22.	Has your organisation carried out an assessment of your direct biodiversity impacts and dependencies?
23.	Have you developed strategy to mitigate your direct impacts on biodiversity relating to activities within your organisation?

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[14] Protected areas include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Natural Heritage Areas (NHA), Special Protection Areas (SPA), (see definitions under NPWS Protected Sites https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites.), and Marine Protected Areas (https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/2fd71-general-scheme-of-marine-protected-areas-bill-2022/).

[15] Protected species include those under the EU [Habitats Directive](#), Ireland's [Red Lists](#), and the Irish [Flora (Protection) Order](#) 2022.

24.	Have you developed a strategy to mitigate risks associated with your direct dependencies on biodiversity relating to activities within your organisation?
25.	Are you aware of informational resources to aid you in identifying your organisation's direct impacts and dependencies on biodiversity?
LAND	
26.	Does your organisation have a land bank?
27.	Do you consider the impact on biodiversity in relation to your organisation's land footprint[16]?
28.	Has your land bank been mapped?
29.	Are there any protected [17]areas or [18]species within or near your land bank?
30	Do you know how to access data on the types of ecosystems within or near your land bank?
MARINE	
31.	Does your organisation have a marine bank? If no, proceed to Q35.
32.	Has your marine bank been mapped?
33	Are there any protected [19]areas or species within or near your marine bank?
34.	Do you know how to access data on the types of ecosystems within your marine bank?[20]
WATER	
35.	Do you consider the impact on biodiversity in relation to your organisation's water footprint[21]?
SUSTAINABILITY	

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[16] Land footprint (land demand) https://www.foeeurope.org/sites/default/files/publications/seri_land_footprint_scenario_nov2013_1.pdf

[17] Protected areas include Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Natural Heritage Areas (NHA), Special Protection Areas (SPA), (see definitions under NPWS Protected Sites https://www.npws.ie/protected-sites.)

[18] Protected species include those under the EU Habitats Directive, Ireland's Red Lists, and the Irish Flora (Protection) Order 2022.

[19] Protected areas include Marine Protected Areas https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/2fd71-general-scheme-of-marine-protected-areas-bill-2022/

[20] Marine Institute Interactive Maps https://www.marine.ie/site-area/data-services/interactive-maps/interactive-maps?language=ga

[21] Water footprint https://knowledge4policy.ec.europa.eu/glossary-item/water-footprint_en

36.	Some sustainability initiatives will have positive impacts on biodiversity. (*The term in brackets makes reference to the associated key driver of biodiversity loss*). Does your organisation have:
	(a) Zero waste to landfill Strategy? (Pollution)
	(b) Water Stewardship Strategy (Natural resource use and exploitation)
	(c) Invasive Species Strategy (Invasive Species)
	(d) Net Zero Strategy (Climate Change)
	(e) Pesticide Use Policy (Pollution)
37.	List any other internal strategies or policies that you think may have a positive impact on biodiversity.

Stage 4: Exploring value chain impacts and dependencies on biodiversity

Stage 4 examines the indirect impacts and dependencies of activities carried out within your value chain. This relates to activities upstream and downstream of your direct operations.

The purpose of Stage 4 is to gather information on organisation indirect or 'value chain' impacts and dependencies on biodiversity. A key consideration is the location of suppliers within your value chain. Are they adjacent to key biodiversity areas and are their activities impacting biodiversity in their locality? Are you procuring uniforms, equipment or chemicals that might require raw materials which cause ecological harm when extracted or harvested?

There are links provided in the Business for Biodiversity Ireland website which have useful informational resources on nature-related impacts and dependencies.

No.	Question
38.	Have you assessed your value chain for actual or potential impact or dependencies on biodiversity?
39.	Do you have strategy to mitigate your indirect impacts on biodiversity relating to activities within your organisation's value chain?

40.	Do you have strategy to mitigate your indirect <u>dependencies</u> on biodiversity relating to activities within your organisation?
41.	Are you aware of <u>informational resources</u> to aid you in identifying your value chain <u>impacts</u> and dependencies on biodiversity? (Upstream and downstream).

Stage 5: Identifying and managing nature-related risks

Stage 5 focuses on managing the risks associated with nature loss and how to manage those risks. The purpose of these questions is to direct focus on potential risks due to activities carried out by your organisation which can inform your biodiversity strategy.

Nature-related risk can manifest in multiple ways. Every business depends on nature with over half of the world's GDP moderately or highly dependent on nature and its services[22]. This creates physical risks, when organisations depend directly on nature for operations, supply-chain performance, real estate asset values, physical security and business continuity. Biodiversity loss results in risks to business operations, capital assets and supply chains[23].

Transition risks occur when the direct and indirect impacts of business on nature trigger negative business consequences, such as losing customers or entire markets, costly legal action and adverse regulatory changes. We are seeing a manifestation of transition risks through regulatory pressures, like the Corporate Sustainability Reporting Directive (CSRD), increasing expectations and demands from investors and consumer, social and peer pressures.

The Taskforce for Nature-related Financial Disclosures has developed a <u>risk register worksheet template</u> for businesses that is useful identifying nature-related risks.

Question 44 relates to risk registers[24] for biodiversity. The National Risk Assessment 2023[i] was published by the Department of the Taoiseach and includes a section

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[22] World Economic Forum https://www.weforum.org/press/2020/01/half-of-world-s-gdp-moderately-or-highly-dependent-on-nature-says-new-report/

[23] Biodiversity: Finance and the Economic and Business Case for Action https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/biodiversity-finance-and-the-economic-and-business-case-for-action_a3147942-en.html

[24] A risk register, or risk log is a risk management tool that's used to identify potential risks that could affect the execution of a project plan.

relating to risks as a result of biodiversity loss (DoT, 2023). Such risks include degradation and habitat loss, fragmentation, invasive species, declining water and air quality and declines in pollinator populations (DoT, 2023). Public bodies need to be aware of these risks in order to mitigate impacts as a result of biodiversity loss and to develop actions to reduce these risks. This includes the risk of not enforcing or funding the implementation of national and international policies related to biodiversity.

No.	Question
42.	Have you identified any [25]nature-related risks?
43.	If yes, do you have strategic objectives on mitigating these nature-related risks?
44.	Have you created a risk register for biodiversity?

Stage 6: Managing your land bank for biodiversity

Public bodies hold land banks of varying sizes. Regardless of the size of your land bank, there are positive actions you can take to support biodiversity in your locality. Before you implement any improvement projects, it is useful to map the habitats[26] in your land bank and conduct a baseline survey of plant and animal species. This way, when you invest in improving and managing the space for wildlife, your actions can be targeted, and you can measure the uplift in biodiversity. It is vital that when you are developing an improvement or management plan, you consult the latest guidelines to ensure that your actions are evidence-based. The All Ireland Pollinator Plan has lots of useful guidance on how to support pollinators through appropriate land management approaches.

Other approaches, like nature-based solutions (NbS) such as rain gardens or Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS), can be implemented to manage run-off from car parks and support biodiversity in areas of hard landscaping.

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[25] Nature-related risks – risks from biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation.

[26] Heritage Council National Landcover and Habitat Mapping Programme for Ireland
https://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/Landcover%20and%20Habitat_Mapping.pdf

No.	Question
45.	Have you carried out any surveys within your land bank to determine a biodiversity baseline?
46.	Have you assessed any of your land bank for potential on-site actions for biodiversity?
47.	Have you made any improvements to your land bank to support local biodiversity?
48.	Have these improvements to support local biodiversity been evidence-based actions?

Many of the stages above are covered in the plans below:
- OPW Biodiversity Strategy 2022-2026
- Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown County Biodiversity Action Plan 2021-2025

The Department of
Housing, Local Government and Heritage