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# National Peatlands Strategy Mid-Term Review and Implementation Plan

Prepared by the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage

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## Background

The National Peatlands Strategy 2015-2025 has as its vision statement “*to provide a long-term framework within which all of the peatlands within the State can be managed responsibly in order to optimise their social, environmental and economic contribution to the well-being of this and future generations*”. It sets out a cross-governmental approach to managing issues that relate to peatlands, including: compliance with relevant national and international environmental legislation, agreements, plans and policies; climate change; forestry; water quality; flood control; energy; nature conservation and restoration; land use planning; and agriculture. The Strategy has been developed in partnership between relevant Government Departments/State bodies and key stakeholders through the Peatlands Council.

It is underlined by 25 key principles and commits to the undertaking of 32 actions across various sectors and themes, including, *inter alia*, Research, Tourism, Agriculture, Forestry, Conservation, Restoration, Peat Extraction, Energy, Water Quality and Climate Change.

Progress reports on the Strategy have been published for 2017 and for 2018/2019, and this review has been carried out in the context of those reports.

## Introductory context

The original principles and actions of the Strategy were a positive attempt to stake out a plan in a rapidly changing context, with the understanding that circumstances were evolving and that goals and actions would need to be updated to match them: it was always intended as a living document. Hence the mechanism of the mid-term review.

The purpose of this mid-term review is, therefore, not to reiterate the progress reports but to provide a broader assessment on where the Strategy currently is, what it can achieve over the next three years, and, if necessary, to propose changes to the actions set out in the Strategy to refocus it in line with its overall goals and the current context.

A significant achievement of the Strategy is the coordinated focus and attention it has brought to bear on peatlands issues and the concomitant cooperation between Government Departments, State agencies and State bodies it has enabled.

For each action under the Strategy, a lead body is designated for its implementation, with other bodies also being indicated in most cases. A number of major projects and initiatives have begun or been continued as part of the implementation of the actions of the Strategy, which suggests the explicit setting of concrete goals and working to fulfil them has been an effective approach. However, progress in the implementation of some actions has been slow.

## **What has changed since publication of the Strategy?**

A number of other significant policies, programmes and plans of relevance have come into existence since the National Peatlands Strategy was published in 2015, including:

- The National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017-2022;
- The Climate Action Plan 2019;
- The Climate Action Plan 2021 and Annex of Actions;
- The Climate Action and Low Carbon Development Act 2021;
- National Climate Mitigation Plan;
- The European Green Deal;
- The National Biodiversity Action Plan 2017-2021;
- Bord na Móna Biodiversity Action Plan;
- The Biodiversity Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan 2019;
- The EU Biodiversity Strategy for 2030;
- Draft Territorial Just Transition Plan;
- EU & National Recovery and Resilience Plan;
- Habitats of Cutover Raised Bog (Irish Wildlife Manuals 128);
- The Wildlife (Amendment) Bill 2016;
- Heritage Ireland 2030;
- Water Quality and Water Services Infrastructure Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plan (2019);
- River Basin Management Plan 2018-2021;
- Land use, land-use change and forestry (LULUCF) Regulation for 2021-2030;
- Forestry Regulations 2017;
- Public Consultation held on draft Wind Energy Development Guidelines;
- Sustainable Development Goals National Implementation Plan;
- 2020 Programme for Government;
- National Landscape Strategy;
- Prioritised Action Framework for Ireland 2021-2027;
- Project Ireland 2040;
- National Development Plan 2021- 2030
- Regional Spatial and Economic Strategies;
- County Development Plans;
- Article 17 Reports (The Status of EU Protected Habitats and Species in Ireland - 2019);
- Bord na Móna’s Brown to Green Strategy;
- Review of the use of Peat Moss in Horticulture - Final Report of the Chairman of the Working Group;
- 2022 Working Paper to address challenges related to peat supply in the Horticulture Sector, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine;
- Coillte’s New Forestry Strategic Vision 2022;
- Bord na Mona’s Peatlands Enhanced Decommissioning, Rehabilitation and Restoration Scheme (EDRRS), Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications;
- Wild Atlantic Nature Integrated EU LIFE Programme (funded) Project, Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage;
- Peatlands and People EU LIFE Programme (funded) Project, Department of Housing, Local

- Government and Heritage;
- Establishment of Citizens' Assembly on Biodiversity Loss;
  - EIP (European Innovation Partnership) FARMPEAT Project, Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine;
  - National Land Use Review;
  - Fáilte Ireland's programme for Ireland's Hidden Heartlands.

While these have not taken over the functions of the National Peatlands Strategy, it is necessary that the future direction of the Strategy should take the goals of these other plans and policies into consideration, especially where there may be overlap with desired outcomes or actions of the Strategy.

More broadly, the conversations around peatland use, environmental and biodiversity goals, climate action, and the commercial use of peat have all changed significantly over the past seven years and the prevailing principles and actions in the Strategy have been reviewed in that context.

As part of the plan for a more sustainable island, the National Development Plan states that there is a need for coordinated investment to conserve cross-border region peatlands to support biodiversity, provide valuable ecosystem services and act as carbon sinks. It is also noted that an action in the Programme for Government is to 'explore how bodies established under the Good Friday Agreement can ensure that there is a joined-up approach to environmental issues on an all-island basis and seek to develop an all-island strategy to tackle climate breakdown and the biodiversity crisis'. The actions set out in this interim review supports these aims.

Additionally, on a positive note, a number of the specific actions set out in the Strategy have been completed. Therefore, in this mid-term review, an assessment has been made of which actions could be closed, which actions need only be monitored, and which actions require a combination of both.

### **What can be achieved in the next 4 years (2022 to 2025) of the National Peatlands Strategy?**

In the second half of the Strategy's ten-year duration, the focus must shift to accomplishing as much as possible in service of the Strategy's Principles. As much measurable progress as possible needs to be made in the implementation of the Strategy. Any new areas that may come into prominence could be considered in a successor Strategy.

With that in mind the actions set out in the National Peatlands Strategy have been updated into a new Implementation Plan, which focuses on refining outstanding actions and prioritising measurable, achievable objectives.

This revision of the Strategy will increase the effectiveness of the Strategy in achieving its ultimate goals, improve coordination and communication between relevant Government Departments, State agencies and State bodies, and set out the actions that are being prioritised and will be undertaken over the next four years. The Implementation Plan is intended as a pragmatic and practical approach to focus on what is achievable, what should be prioritised, and what can be measured and reported on effectively, through the National Peatlands Strategy progress reports.

Certain actions set out in the National Peatlands Strategy have been achieved at this point or have progressed to a stage where they require monitoring of implementation. These actions will continue to

be monitored by the Peatlands Strategy Implementation Group (comprised of representatives of the relevant Government Departments and State bodies) as appropriate.

## **Public Consultation**

A National Peatlands Strategy mid-term review document was subject to a two month public consultation period ending on 30 June 2021. Forty-three submissions were received during the consultation and are available at [http:// www.npws.ie](http://www.npws.ie). The submissions were from a wide variety of stakeholders in the peatlands sector, including individuals, community groups, professional associations, groups representing young people, farmers, NGOs, and local authorities. A majority of individual submissions were from the midlands region.

The vast majority of submissions welcomed the mid-term review in general, and considered it a positive move in the development of the National Peatlands Strategy. An interest in, and concern for, climate change and biodiversity was evident throughout the submissions received, with many noting the changes in official policy in this area since 2015 and the Government's acknowledgement of a Climate Emergency in 2019. The value of peatlands for carbon sequestration was also repeatedly stressed. Throughout a number of submissions there were concerns regarding the prevalence of turf-cutting contrary to national and EU law. There were also concerns expressed regarding the impact of planning legislation in relation to the production of peat for use in horticulture, as well as perceived gaps in planning legislation allowing harvesting on smaller sites. A number of groups asked for a mechanism to be introduced to suggest sites for designation. Bord na Móna's announcement of an end to peat extraction on its properties was a feature in a number of submissions, which also focused on what is perceived to be the lack of a landscape-level planning approach for peatlands in Ireland. Concerns around employment, economics, tourism, and turf cutting traditions were prevalent in the submissions, with a number of submissions noting the importance of traditional turbarry rights, as well as loss of access to fuel/energy supplies and loss of land value that can occur for farmers and turf cutters when sites are protected.

The submissions received have been taken into account in the finalisation of the National Peatlands Strategy mid-term review and Implementation Plan.

## **Climate Action Plan 2021 and Annex of Actions**

The Climate Action Plan 2021 provides a detailed plan for taking decisive action to achieve a 51% reduction in overall greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 and sets Ireland on a path to reach net-zero emissions by no later than 2050, as committed to in the Programme for Government and set out in the Climate Act Plan 2021. An Annex of Actions, including actions relating to peatlands, supports the delivery of the Climate Action Plan 2021. Given the significant role of peatlands in climate action, and, to give a complete overview of all national peatlands actions in this document, peatland actions from the Climate Action Plan Annex of Actions have been included in this National Peatlands Strategy Implementation Plan 2022-2025. It is noted that the Climate Action Plan 2023 is currently under preparation. The publication of this Plan will be welcomed as another important document regarding the evolution of peatlands management in Ireland.

**Note on the table *Implementation of Prioritised Actions 2022-2025* set out below.**

Actions A – P relate to actions set out in the National Peatlands Strategy, however, these actions have been refined to take into account developing national policies and programmes related to peatlands. Actions Q - GG in the table below are peatland actions which are set out in the Climate Action Plan 2021, Annex of Actions.

Appendix 2 relates to actions in the 2020 Programme for Government regarding peatlands to maximise the benefits for biodiversity.

### National Peatlands Strategy – – Implementation of Prioritised Actions 2022-2025

Actions as per the National Peatlands Strategy which have been refined to take account of developing national policies and programmes related to peatlands.	Relevant Action Ref Nos <sup>1</sup>	Lead Body	Timeline for Completion
A The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage will provide appropriate information and advice to the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in the course of updating the Prescribed Burning Code of Practice to ensure best practice regarding appropriate land management for peatlands is upheld.	4	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Q4 2022
B The Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and Coillte will work with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage to ensure the successor document to the Forestry Programme 2014-2020 commits to creating guidance and criteria for the identification and appropriate future management of peat areas currently afforested, including restoration, as well as to develop guidance on future afforestation of peat soils.	7	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Q4 2022
C The Peatlands Strategy Implementation Group will take a strategic role in continuing to monitor progress and provide support on initiatives designed to increase the delivery of ecosystem services of naturally functioning peatlands, and in particular for all-island and cross border projects such as the EU INTERREG CABB (Ireland/UK Co-operation Across Borders for Biodiversity 2017 to 2022) and CANN (Collaboration Across Natura Network) projects and future Shared Island peatland initiatives; relevant Bord na Móna research projects; relevant Environmental Protection Agency and other research projects; restoration measures under the National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan and the Bord na Móna’s Peatlands Enhanced Decommissioning, Rehabilitation and Restoration Scheme (EDRRS); actions undertaken within the EU LIFE Programme funded Integrated Project ‘Wild Atlantic Nature’; and other actions taken under relevant projects that may be established in the timeframe 2022-2025.	8	Peatlands Strategy Implementation Group	Ongoing through 2022 - 2025

<sup>1</sup> These numbers refer to the original action/s in the National Peatlands Strategy that the actions in this Implementation Plan are derived from.

D	Bord na Móna, in conjunction with the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, will continue its trials of Sphagnum moss cultivation and initiate trials of other paludiculture techniques and report on the outcomes. Consideration will be given to publication of the results, subject to commercial sensitivity.	10	Bord na Móna	Ongoing through 2022-2025 as part of EDRRS
E	The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage and the Environmental Protection Agency are funding and overseeing the project 'The vulnerability of peatland ecosystems to a changing climate and increases in the frequency and severity of droughts'	14	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Project commenced Q1 2021
F	The Office of Public Works, in cooperation with the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, will implement the follow on actions and recommendations from the fen Special Area of Conservation pilot conservation management project. A report on the pilot project will be published together with an outline of the key elements of the project to be implemented.	15	Office of Public Works	Ongoing through 2022-2025 (with the report on the pilot project to be published by the end of Q4 2022)
G	The strategies contained in the National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan, to endeavour to ensure that turf-cutting on protected raised bogs only takes place in such a way that the integrity of the Special Areas of Conservation is not threatened, will continue to be implemented. (Aligns with Action 21 in the Annex of Actions to the Climate Action Plan 2021 – Deliver the NPWS/DHLGH Peatlands Restoration Programme for the raised bog habitat within the Special Area of Conservation and Natural Heritage Area networks)	16	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Ongoing through 2022 and to 2025
H	Strategies in relation to turf-cutting on blanket bog Special Areas of Conservation will be considered within the EU LIFE Programme funded Integrated Project 'Wild Atlantic Nature'.	16	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Ongoing through 2022-2025



I	The results of the review of Ireland’s raised bog Natural Heritage Areas will be implemented, contingent on the enactment of the Wildlife (Amendment) Bill 2016 and its commencement.	17	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Q1 2023
J	The extent and impact of use of the Difco cutter or ‘sausage’ machine in peatlands will be assessed within the EU LIFE Programme funded Integrated Project 'Wild Atlantic Nature'.	20	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	EU LIFE Programme Integrated Project ‘Wild Atlantic Nature’ has commenced
K	The Peatlands Strategy Implementation Group will assess the potential application of the Environmental Protection Agency/Ordinance Survey of Ireland National Land Cover map (due for completion by Q4 2022) and the Land Use Review Phases 1 and 2 as resources for peatlands policy, research and actions. Phase 1 of the review, to provide an evidence base to determine an appropriate land use indicator set for Ireland, as well as determining the environmental, ecological, and economic characteristics of land types across Ireland, is being led by the Environmental Protection Agency and a synthesis report is scheduled for completion in Q4 2022. Phase 2 of the land use review will commence after completion of the first phase, building on the momentum generated by the evidence review. This phase will consider the wider policies, measures, and actions for land-use in the context of the Government’s wider economic, social and climate objectives. Part of this work will involve connecting the evidence base from the first phase with the policy frameworks and recent policy developments across Government.	9,12, 21	Peatlands Strategy Implementation Group	Q4 2022 (Phase 1 of Land Use Review)  Q4 2022 (Completion of National Land Cover Map)
L	The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, in consultation with the members of the National Appropriate Assessment Forum, will complete the ongoing plans for updated Appropriate Assessment guidance.	22	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Q2 2023

M	The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage will publish revised planning guidelines in relation to wind energy development, which will include an Annex in relation to peatlands. This will follow on from the publication of draft revised Wind Energy Development Guidelines for public consultation in 2019 (the draft guidelines included an Annex on Best Practice for Wind Energy Development in Peatlands).	24	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Q2 2023
N	The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage will convene a meeting of all relevant authorities and working groups to outline each organisation's activity in education and public awareness regarding peatlands in line with the EPA Bogland Report. An updated report on bogs and education, including on activities by community groups, will be prepared as a result of this meeting and published.	27, 29	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Q1 2023
O	The Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage will conduct a feasibility study on the creation of a national peatlands/wetlands park.	28	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Q1 2023
P	Current and future peatlands research project results from the Environmental Protection Agency and other organisations will, where appropriate, be taken on board by the Peatlands Strategy Implementation Group, disseminated to group members, and used to assist in future policy development as appropriate. In that context, a research project included in an Environmental Protection Agency research call is entitled "A state of knowledge of bogland research". The call sets out 'it is now timely to have a synthesis of all the research work carried out to date to summarise key learnings and insights, identify knowledge gaps as well as risks, trends and opportunities, etc., with a view to informing future evidence needs, as well as supporting the long-term sustainable management of Ireland's peatlands. This research will support the ongoing and planned national restoration and rehabilitation programmes for peatlands including the tasks to be delivered under the EU LIFE Programme funded Peatlands & People project'. The results of this project should provide a useful baseline for the preparation of the next National Peatlands Strategy.	32	Peatlands Strategy Implementation Group	Ongoing through 2022 - 2025

<b>Peatland actions which are set out in the Climate Action Plan 2021, Annex of Actions.</b>		<b>Lead Body</b>	<b>Timeline for completion</b>
Q	With the assistance of the Peatlands Strategy Implementation Group, the Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage will co-ordinate the actions in the 2020 Programme for Government regarding peatlands to maximise the benefits for biodiversity. <sup>2</sup>	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Ongoing through 2022 - 2025
R	Deliver the EU LIFE People and Peatlands Project (Action 22 in the Annex of Actions to the Climate Action Plan 2021)	Bord na Móna	Ongoing through 2022-2027
S	Deliver the Enhanced Decommissioning, Rehabilitation and Restoration (EDRRS) Scheme for Bord na Móna peatlands (at the end of which Bord an Móna will produce a best practice manual on peatlands restoration on commercial peat extraction sites, to be peer reviewed by the NPWS, based on its experience in implementing the Scheme) (Action 33 in the Annex of Actions to the Climate Action Plan 2021)	Bord na Móna	Ongoing through 2022-2026
T	Develop an agri-environment framework that facilitates the roll-out of a Results Based Payment Scheme that has been designed specifically to achieve improved blanket bog biodiversity with net benefits to climate and water objectives (Action 332 in the Annex of Actions to the Climate Action Plan 2021)	Departments of Agriculture, Food and the Marine and Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Q4 2022
U	Continued investment, monitoring, and evaluation of the EIP “FARMPEAT” Pilot Project and “Green Restoration Ireland” Pilot Project (Action 386 in the Annex of Actions to the Climate Action Plan 2021)	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Q2 2023 and Q3 2023

<sup>2</sup> This action was not derived directly from an action in the National Peatlands Strategy but is in line with recent developments and is in service of the Principles set out in the Strategy. It is also Action 402 in the Annex of Actions to the Climate Action Plan 2021.

V	Incentivise reduced management intensity of grasslands through the next CAP Strategic Plan, pending approval, rollout an agri-environment and climate measure (AECM) for reduced management intensity of agricultural drained organic soils (Action 386 in the Annex of Actions to the Climate Action Plan 2021)	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Q4 2027 (Target of 40,000 ha of reduced management intensity of grasslands)
W	Complete RePEAT Project “A Modern Resurvey of Mapped Irish Peatlands to Refine Assessment of Land Use Change and Progress Greenhouse Gas Removal and Emissions Inventories” - and continue to monitor and evaluate results (Action 387 in the Annex of Actions to the Climate Action Plan 2021)	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Q1 2025
X	Participate in an EU Joint Research Centre-led project on peatland mapping-SEPLA “Satellite-based Mapping and Monitoring of European Peatlands and Wetlands for LULUCF and Agriculture” (Action 387 in the Annex of Actions to the Climate Action Plan 2021)	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Q2 2023
Y	Identify opportunities for additional peatlands for enhanced rehabilitation, to bring significant benefits and contribute to Ireland’s target of being carbon-neutral by 2050 (Action 392 in the Annex of Actions to the Climate Action Plan 2021)	Departments of Housing, Local Government and Heritage, the Environment, Climate and Communications, and Agriculture, Food and the Marine	Q4 2023 (Scoping report on peatlands identification to be completed)

Z	Assess the status and mitigation potential for other commercial and private peat extraction across Ireland (As part of this action, a new national synthesis research project on the state of knowledge and best practice for peatlands restoration/rehabilitation was included in the 2022 EPA research call and is currently under evaluation. This synthesis research report will contribute in a substantive way to mitigation interventions on all peatland extraction sites nationally.) (Action 401 in the Annex of Actions to the Climate Action Plan 2021)	Environmental Protection Agency	Ongoing through 2022 - 2025
A A	Provision of funding to support peatland community initiatives (Action 403 in the Annex of Actions to the Climate Action Plan 2021)	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Q4 2023
B B	Produce scoping study (using Tellus Airborne Geophysics) report on mapping peat depth and carbon storage (Action 404 in the Annex of Actions to the Climate Action Plan 2021)	Geological Survey Ireland and the Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications	Q4 2023
C C	Publish restoration plan for 60 hectares of blanket bog in the Wicklow Mountains National Park (Action 406 in the Annex of Actions to the Climate Action Plan 2021)	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Q2 2023
D D	Expand and catalogue features with benefits to climate through the NPWS/DHLGH Farm Plan Scheme, including those relating to trees, scrub, peat soils/bogs, drainage, species rich grassland, multispecies swards, soil care, extensification of practices (Action 406 in the Annex of Actions to the Climate Action Plan 2021)	Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage	Q4 2022
E E	Publish restoration plan for 40 hectares of blanket bog from coniferous forestry in Connemara Bog Complex SAC under active restoration (Action 406 in the Annex of Actions to the Climate Action Plan 2021)	Coillte	Q4 2022

F	Publish restoration plan for 116 hectares of blanket bog from coniferous forestry in	Coillte	Q4 2022
F	Glenamoy Bog Complex SAC under active restoration (Action 406 in the Annex of Actions to the Climate Action Plan 2021)		
G	Assess the contributing factors which led to 3 major peatland failures in 2020 for use by	Geological Survey	Q4 2022
G	agencies developing policy relating to planning and land use (Action 466 in the Annex of Actions to the Climate Action Plan 2021)	Ireland	

### Appendix 1 – National Peatlands Strategy Actions Closed and/or moved to Monitoring

Action Ref No	Description
1	Good agricultural and environmental practices (GAEC) and statutory management requirements (SMRs) continue to be upheld, and the provisions under Cross Compliance continue to provide safeguards for farmland protection. The Peatlands Strategy Implementation Group will continue to monitor the success of this action. [Close & Monitor]
2	The management of commonage lands, under DAFM schemes, will be designed so as to ensure appropriate, sustainable grazing regimes for upland peat soils. [Close]
3	The success of the ongoing European Innovation Partnerships that relate to peatlands, uplands and Natura areas, and the Locally Led Agri-Environment Scheme for the eight designated Freshwater Pearl Mussel areas, will be monitored by the Peatlands Strategy Implementation Group. [Monitor]
5	Following the publication of the review report on the use of peat moss in the horticultural industry, a working group, including representatives from relevant Government Departments and State Agencies, Environmental Non-Governmental Organisations and industry stakeholders under an independent chairperson examined the issues which were identified during the review. The final report of the chairman of the working group was published in January 2022 with the interim report of the chairman included as an Appendix to the final report. Arising from the final report, a working paper to address challenges related to peat supply in the Horticulture Sector (setting out a joint series of actions) was published in January 2022 by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine working in collaboration with the Departments of the Environment, Climate and Communications and Housing, Local Government and Heritage. [Close and monitor implementation of joint series of actions developed by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine]
6	The Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications, Bord na Móna, and the ESB will continue to oversee the transition of power generation away from peat in line with the Government’s Just Transition programme. [Monitor]
11	An assessment of the use of cutaway peatlands for flood attenuation, considered in terms of the River Shannon, was conducted in 2017 and found to be unviable at that time. [Close]

Action Ref No	Description
13	Eddy Covariance (EC) towers have been installed at two peatland sites, Clara Bog Special Area of Conservation (near-natural) and Lullymore Bog (former industrial cutaway site with post rehabilitation works), to monitor temporal fluxes in carbon dioxide and are currently subject to research via the Environmental Protection Agency project SmartBog. The National Parks and Wildlife Service/Department of Housing, Local Government and Heritage plans to install two EC towers as part of the national raised bog designated sites restoration programme and the EU LIFE Programme funded Integrated Project “Wild Atlantic Nature”, and together these four EC towers will form a peatland-climate monitoring network across Ireland. Monitoring of the temporal fluxes will continue. [Close & Monitor]
18	A comprehensive programme of restoration of raised bog Special Areas of Conservation and Natural Heritage Areas has been developed through the National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017-2022, including the drafting of restoration plans for Natural Heritage Areas. Restoration works will continue to be implemented in partnership with affected land-owners and other stakeholders. [Close & Monitor]
19, 23	In 2022, a Working Paper to address challenges related to peat supply in the Horticulture Sector was published by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine. The paper sets out a series of actions that have been put in place by the Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine in conjunction with the Departments of the Environment, Climate and Communications and Housing, Local Government and Heritage to alleviate the difficulties being faced by horticultural growers who are dependent on peat as a growing medium. It also sets out that the dual consent system for large scale peat extraction (the requirement to obtain planning permission and an Integrated Pollution Control licence from the Environmental Protection Agency) is being retained. This is on the basis that the current legislative framework is both legally fit for purpose and proportionate to the environmental impacts of industrial peat extraction. [Completed as regards the legal framework for the regulation of large-scale peat extraction]
25	This principle will be applied through Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment where appropriate. [Close]
26	This principle has been taken into consideration in the development of the River Basin Management Plan for Ireland 2018-2021 and the Bord na Móna Biodiversity Action Plan 2016-2021, and will be applied as appropriate going forward. [Close]
30	The consideration of peatlands as an amenity will be considered as part of current and future restoration and other plans but does not require a specific action at this time. [Close]



Action Ref No	Description
31	This has been incorporated into the National Raised Bog Special Areas of Conservation Management Plan 2017-2022. [Close]

**Appendix 2 - Actions in the 2020 Programme for Government regarding peatlands to maximise the benefits for biodiversity**

<b>PfG Action</b>	<b>Lead Body</b>	<b>Progress on completion of action</b>	<b>Timeline for completion of action</b>
Evaluate, before the end of 2020, whether Ireland should include wetlands in its land use inventory notified under EU regulations	Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications	Ireland has opted to include the impact of managed wetland on greenhouse gas emissions and removals from the beginning of 2021.	Completed
Incentivise the rewetting of carbon-rich soils	Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine		Ongoing through 2022-2025
Undertake a national land use review, including farmland, forests, and peatlands, so that optimal land use options inform all relevant government decisions. The review will balance environmental, social, and economic considerations and involve a process of evaluation of the ecological characteristics of the land. It will include consideration of emissions to air and water, carbon sequestration, and climate adaptation challenges. Policy co-benefits, such as rewetting	Departments of Agriculture, Food and the Marine, the Environment, Climate and Communications and the Environmental Protection Agency.	<p>A Land Use Review is being carried out in two distinct phases:</p> <p>Phase 1 of the review is underway and being led by the Environmental Protection Agency. Phase 1 aims to provide evidence base to determine an appropriate land use indicator set for Ireland, as well as determining the environmental, ecological, and economic characteristics of land types across Ireland.</p> <p>Building on the evidence base from Phase 1, Phase 2 will identify appropriate policies, measures and actions in the context of the government’s wider economic, social and climate objectives.</p>	Phase 1 of the Land Use Review is scheduled for completion in Q4 2022.

<p>or forest regrowth to mitigate flooding risks in river catchments, will be considered. All stakeholders will be consulted. Such a review would allow knowledge transfer to policymakers, advisory services, and landowners, to assist farmers in making an informed choice as to how best to use their land, while also benefiting from available supports and incentives.</p>			
<p>Ensure Bord na Móna is required to take into account climate, biodiversity and water objectives as they deliver on their commercial mandate through an amendment to the Turf Development Act 1998.</p>	<p>Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications</p>	<p>When assessing its landholding for alternative uses all of these objectives are considered by Bord na Móna from a strategic point of view. The majority of commercial developments require a range of consents including planning permission. Assessment of water, climate and biodiversity will be considered as part of Bord na Móna's planning permission application process for any future commercial use proposals.</p>	<p>Ongoing through 2022-2025</p>
<p>Support a just transition for the workers and regions impacted as peat and coal fired power generation is phased out</p>	<p>Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications</p>		<p>Ongoing through 2022-2025</p>

<p>Support the Just Transition Commissioner in designing a comprehensive and inclusive response (to the transition out of peat in the Midlands)</p>	<p>Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications</p>		
<p>Publish and implement a detailed all-of-Government implementation plan consistent with the recommendations of the first report of the Just Transition Commissioner</p>	<p>Department of the Environment, Climate and Communications</p>	<p>The Government published a Just Transition Implementation Plan for the Midlands Region, in response to the recommendations of the Just Transition Commissioner, as part of the 2021 Climate Action Plan. This Plan will continue as part of the forthcoming update to the Climate Action Plan.</p>	<p>Ongoing through 2022-2025</p>

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