



In association with ADAS



**DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT
PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT

(AS REQUIRED UNDER EUROPEAN DIRECTIVE 2001/42/EC)

THE DRAFT NORTHERN IRELAND DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME 2007-2013

JULY 2006

This document has been updated to incorporate minor factual amendments following the public consultation exercise

DRAFT ENVIRONMENTAL REPORT FOR THE DRAFT NORTHERN IRELAND RURAL DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME (NIRDP)

1. Non Technical Summary	7
2. Introduction.....	10
3. Strategic Environmental Assessment.....	10
SEA Requirements and process	10
3.1. The SEA Methodology	11
3.2. Relationship to former programmes	11
3.3. Relationship to needs analysis and SWOT	12
3.4. Spatial and Temporal Scope	12
4. Outline of the NIRDP	12
4.1. General support framework.....	12
4.2. NIRDP Purpose and objectives	15
4.3. Description of measures.....	15
5. Environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected by the programme	17
5.1. Introduction	17
5.2. Northern Ireland Study Area Summary Overview.....	17
5.3. Programme fit with environmental designations	18
5.4. Relationship of the RDP with other Plans and Programmes	21
5.5. Current state	24
Summary of baseline data and trends	24
Biodiversity, fauna and flora	24
Climatic factors and air	24
Cultural heritage - Material assets	25
Human health	25
Landscape.....	26
Population	26
Soil	26
Water.....	27
5.6. Future without the programme	27
5.7. Environmental Problems and Opportunities	30
5.8. Scope of the Assessment.....	31
6. SEA Objectives	32
7. Alternatives.....	33
8. Significant Effects Assessment	36
8.1. Probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the effects.....	36
8.2. Cumulative nature of the effects.....	36
8.3. Trans-boundary nature of the effects	37
8.4. Risks to human health or the environment	37
8.5. Magnitude and spatial extent of the effects	37
8.6. Value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected and the effects on designated areas/landscapes	37
8.7. Interrelationships and cumulative effects	37
8.8. Conclusion	39
9. Proposed mitigation and enhancement measures	40
Commentary on adequacy	40
10. Proposed monitoring and next steps.....	44

10.1.	Monitoring and evaluation.....	44
10.2.	Next Steps	45
Appendix 1:	Summary of the NIRDP Programme Measures and Objectives	46
Appendix 2:	Designations and Other Spatial Characteristics of Northern Ireland.....	51
Appendix 3:	Summary of previous programme evaluations	63
Appendix 4:	Summary of relevant base line indices	67
Appendix 5:	Review of Plans, Programmes and Polices	81
Appendix 6:	Assessment of environmental effects	94
Tables		
Table 1:	Summary of NIRDP Axes, Measures, Objectives and Schemes	16
Table 2:	Programme fit with environmental designations	19
Table 3:	List of Plans Programmes and Polices Reviewed	23
Table 4:	Evolution of the Baseline without the Programme	29
Table 5:	Environmental problems and opportunities.....	30
Table 6:	Table of SEA objectives.....	32
Table 7:	Consideration of alternatives	34
Table 8:	Cumulative interactions of measures and SEA topics	38
Table 9:	Summary of proposed measures to offset significant adverse effects of the programme as expressed in the Draft Programme Document	41
Maps		
Map 1:	Areas of Special Scientific Interest	51
Map 2:	Special Protection Areas	52
Map 3:	Special Areas of Conservation	52
Map 4:	Ramsar Sites	53
Map 5:	Less Favoured Areas.....	53
Map 6:	Environmentally Sensitive Areas	54
Map 7	Designated Water areas	56
Figures		
Figure 1	Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.....	44
Figure 2:	NI Priority Habitats.....	55
Figure 3:	Access to Services	58
Figure 4:	The Northern Ireland Spatial Development Framework.....	61
Figure 5:	The Rural Spatial Development Framework.....	61
Figure 6:	The Tourism Spatial Development Framework	62

HOW TO GIVE YOUR VIEWS

You are invited to send your views on the Environmental Report on the Draft Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 to DARD by **5 September 2006**. Please note that your response may be made publicly available. See reference to the Freedom of Information below.

Please send your response to:-

Fiona Browne
Policy Development Branch
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
Room 359 Dundonald House
Upper Newtownards Road
Belfast
BT4 3SB

Phone No (028) 9052 4725
Fax (028) 9037 8532
e-mail fiona.browne@dardni.gov.uk
Textphone (for those with hearing difficulties) (028) 9052 4420

This document is available on the Internet at www.dardni.gov.uk

Copies of this document in large print, Braille disc, audiocassette can be made available on request.

Freedom of Information - Confidentiality of Responses to Consultations

The Department will publish a summary of responses following completion of the consultation process. Your response, and all other responses to the consultation, may be disclosed on request. The Department can only refuse to disclose information in exceptional circumstances. **Before** you submit your response, please read the paragraphs below on the confidentiality of consultations and they will give you guidance on the legal position about any information given by you in response to this consultation.

The Freedom of Information Act gives the public a right of access to any information held by a public authority, namely, the Department in this case. This right of access to information includes information provided in response to a consultation. The Department cannot automatically consider as confidential, information supplied to it in response to a consultation. However, it does have the responsibility to decide whether any information provided by you in response to this consultation, including information about your identity should be made public or be treated as confidential. If you do not wish information about your identity to be made public please include an explanation in your response.

This means that information provided by you in response to the consultation is

unlikely to be treated as confidential, except in very particular circumstances. The Lord Chancellor's Code of Practice on the Freedom of Information Act provides that:

- the Department should only accept information from third parties in confidence if it is necessary to obtain that information in connection with the exercise of any of the Department's functions and it would not otherwise be provided
- the Department should not agree to hold information received from third parties "in confidence" which is not confidential in nature
- acceptance by the Department of confidentiality provisions must be for good reasons, capable of being justified to the Information Commissioner

For further information about confidentiality of responses please contact the Information Commissioner's Office (or see web site at:

www.informationcommissioner.gov.uk).

Glossary

AONB	Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
ASSI	Areas of Special Scientific Interest
BSP	Programme for Building Sustainable Prosperity
CAP	Common Agricultural Policy
C4S	Centre for Sustainability
CMEF	Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework
CMS	Countryside Management Scheme
DARD	Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
EAFRD	European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development
EAGGF	European Agricultural Guarantee and Guidance Fund
EC	European Commission
EHS	Environment and Heritage Service
ELCMS	Entry Level Countryside Management Scheme
ESA	Environmentally Sensitive Area
EU	European Union
GB	Great Britain
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
LFA	Less Favoured Areas
LFACAS	Less Favoured Areas Compensatory Allowance Scheme
NI	Northern Ireland
OFS	Organic Farming Scheme
ROI	Republic of Ireland
RPA	Review of Public Administration
SAC	Special areas of conservations
SEA	Strategic Environmental Assessment
SLNCI	Site of Local Nature Conservation Importance
SPA	Special protection areas
WGS	Woodland Grant Scheme
WFP	Woodland Farm Premium

1. Non Technical Summary

The Department has prepared this draft Environmental Report on the likely significant environmental effects of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 as required under European Directive 2001/42/EC on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment and the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004.

The objective of the Directive is to provide a high level of protection for the environment and to contribute to the integration of environmental protection issues into the development and preparation of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.

The approach to assessment is generally as follows:

- Collecting and presenting information on the environmental baseline and current problems and their likely future evolution;
- Predicting significant environmental effects of the plan/programme, including those of strategic alternatives;
- Addressing adverse environmental effects through policy construction and/or mitigation measures;
- Consulting the public and authorities with environmental responsibilities as part of the assessment process; and
- Monitoring the environmental effects of the plan/programme during its implementation.

The rural policy context in Northern Ireland has been set following a substantive review of Rural Policy. After a period of consultation in 2005 on the PricewaterhouseCoopers 'Study on Rural Policy'¹, and in line with the Axes (see below) in the European Rural Development Regulation, a draft Rural Strategy for Northern Ireland was issued for public consultation in early 2006. A final Strategy is expected later this year.

The Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme (NIRD DP) will be a major delivery vehicle for implementing this Strategy. It is one of four regional programmes being submitted to the EC by the UK Government for funding under Council Regulation (EC) No.1698/2005 on Support for Rural Development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). Member States are required to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) on their programmes before submission to the Commission.

The Regulation sets out three major objectives (referred to as Priority Axes) for rural development policy for the period 2007–2013. In addition, the Regulation requires that at least 5% of the EAFRD contribution is through local public private partnerships.

¹ Department of Agriculture and Rural Development "Study on Rural Policy" March 2005 Final Report – PricewaterhouseCoopers.

The proposed programme (issued for public consultation on 19 June 2006) will comprise the following 14 measures.

Axis 1 Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sectors by supporting restructuring, development and innovation

- Vocational training and information actions
- Adding value to agricultural products and improving marketing capability

Axis 2 Improving the environment and countryside by supporting land management

- Less Favoured Areas Compensatory Allowance Scheme
- Management of agricultural land within Natura 2000 areas
- Agri-Environment programme
- Animal health and welfare planning scheme
- First afforestation of agricultural land
- Forest environments

Axis 3 Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of economic activity

- Diversification into non-agricultural activities
- Business creation and development
- Encouragement of tourism activities
- Basic Services for the economy and rural population
- Village renewal and development
- Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage

As a preliminary step of the SEA process, a Screening Report and Scoping Report were produced making an initial assessment of the baseline and environmental implications of the programme. The EHS provided feedback on these, which have been incorporated into this Report.

In compiling the Environmental Report, the interaction of the programme with a very wide range of EU, UK, and NI, Policies, Plans and Programmes was assessed, and the results of previous related programme evaluations considered. The assessment of the impacts of the programme was considered around the themes of Biodiversity, Fauna and Flora, Climatic Factors and Air, Cultural Heritage - Material Assets, Human Health, Landscape, Population, Soil and Water.

The broad conclusion of this Report is that the effects of the programme should provide a broadly positive impact on the environment, although particular measures have the potential to create negative impacts. Negative impacts include increases in localised traffic flows, intrusion in the landscape, and potential for damage to cultural heritage assets. The positive aspects stem from the focus of the largest part of the programme on environmental improvement on farms, assistance with farm business adjustment and rural diversification and strengthening the underlying socio-economic aspects of rural communities. The programme has identified and specified a range of

mitigation measures focused on the requirements of applicants to demonstrate regulatory compliance, positive environmental outcomes or, in some cases, to carry out full site specific Environmental Impact Assessment.

This draft Environmental Report is published alongside (and should be read in conjunction with) the draft programme for a public consultation period of 6 weeks. The EHS will also be consulted as part of the process. Following the consultation period, DARD will review this draft Environmental Report and, through the Environmental Statement, will publish how the final programme has been shaped by the process.

2. Introduction

This Environmental Report has been prepared as required in the Ex Ante Guidelines for the Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) of the Rural Development Regulation EC 1698/2005 dated February 2006. European Directive 2001/42/EC *on the assessment of the effects of certain plans and programmes on the environment* (the SEA Directive) was enacted into Northern Ireland law in July 2004 via the Environmental Assessment of Plans and Programmes Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2004 No 280. It represents the major output from the Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) of the Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme and forms an integral part of the ex ante evaluation. It is planned that the draft programme will be submitted to the European Commission in September 2006.

The Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme provides the framework for the use of EAFRD² aimed at improving the competitiveness of farming, improving the rural environment and diversifying and strengthening rural communities. The SEA is an evaluation of the whole programme taking account of the individual measures in the context of the programme. However, it is not the intention of SEA to undertake detailed assessments of individual schemes.

3. Strategic Environmental Assessment

SEA Requirements and process

Strategic Environmental Assessment extends the assessment of environmental impacts from individual development projects to the broader perspective of regional, county and district level plans. It is a systematic process that assists authorities in the identification and assessment of the significant environmental impacts of a programme.

The stated objectives of the SEA Directive are to:

- Provide for a high level of protection of the environment; and
- Contribute to the integration of environmental considerations into the preparation and adoption of plans and programmes with a view to promoting sustainable development.

The main stages of the SEA process are:

- The production of a Scoping Report
- The production of an Environmental Report identifying the likely significant environmental effects of the draft programme;
- Consultation on the draft programme and the accompanying Environmental Report;
- An SEA Statement taking into account the Environmental Report and the results of consultation in decision-making; and providing information when the programme is adopted and showing how the results of the SEA and consultation have been taken into account.

² European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development

Given the time pressures on the development of the NIRDP and with the agreement of the Statutory Environmental body, a Scoping Letter was issued on 12 June 2006 to EHS with a consultation period running for a period of 3 weeks.

The early chapters of this Environmental Report represent some of the information that appeared in the Scoping Letter. As the SEA has progressed, this information has been updated, based on input from the consultants and in response to feedback from consultation with the Statutory Environmental Body and discussion with other stakeholders.

The SEA Regulations require that an Environmental Report is produced which details the assessment of the significant impacts of the draft programme and its alternatives. This Environmental Report is being published to coincide with the consultation on the Rural Development Programme and provides information to the RDP process on the environmental effects of alternative approaches. The SEA Regulations also require that the consultation bodies and the public must be provided with an early and effective opportunity to express their opinions on the content of the Environmental Report.

3.1. The SEA Methodology

BearingPoint is a firm of global management consultants who were appointed to undertake the Ex Ante Appraisal of the NIRDP including the SEA. The assessment stage of the SEA has been carried out by independent consultants ADAS with support from S4C as subcontractors to BearingPoint, and provides an objective evaluation of the likely significant environmental effects of the programme. The SEA team has assessed these effects against SEA objectives that were developed during the initial Scoping phase.

3.2. Relationship to former programmes

This programme replaces the earlier programmes – the Northern Ireland Rural Development Regulation Plan (Accompanying Measures), the Programme for Building Sustainable Prosperity, the NI LEADER+ programme and the EU programme for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE II).

In the Rural Development Regulation Plan (Accompanying Measures), commitments running for up to 10 years were made under the ESA and Countryside Management Schemes. The ongoing nature of these commitments is reflected in the balance of measures and the targets of some of the environmental measures in the new programme for 2007-2013.

Furthermore, this new programme will not preclude rural areas and populations benefiting from measures taken forward under other funding streams such as the Structural Funds and the European Fisheries Fund. Indeed, it is designed to have synergy and complement these other programmes.

It is also designed to complement the regulatory cross compliance requirements of the Single Farm Payment and the implementation of the Water Framework Directive and Farm Waste Regulations.

3.3. Relationship to needs analysis and SWOT

A separate needs analysis, a Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis, has been carried out and will be submitted as Annex 5 of the UK National Strategic Plan to the European Commission. This has been reviewed as part of the ex ante evaluation of the programme.

The purpose of this SEA is not to repeat that overall assessment but to look more closely at the environmental aspects. Key elements are identified in Section 5.2.

3.4. Spatial and Temporal Scope

The spatial scope for the assessment is all of Northern Ireland. However, the assessment has also taken into account not only the potential impacts that could affect the environment throughout Northern Ireland, but also, where appropriate, that in the Republic of Ireland.

The NIRDP runs from 2007 through to 2013 and, as consequence, a 10 year horizon for the assessment was agreed with the Statutory Environmental Body. Some impacts are likely to take longer to be fully seen – for example, some changes in landscape and biodiversity. A 20 year horizon has been considered in these specific cases.

4. Outline of the NIRDP

4.1. General support framework

On 20 September 2005, the European Commission published Council Regulation (EC) No.1698/2005 on Support for Rural Development by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). The purpose of the Regulation is to reinforce the EU's rural development policy and to simplify its implementation by increasing its coherence, transparency and visibility.

The aim of support for rural development under the EAFRD is the promotion of sustainable rural development throughout the Community in a way that complements the market and income support policies of the Common Agricultural Policy, Cohesion Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy.

The Regulation sets out three major objectives (referred to as Priority Axes) for rural development policy for the period 2007–2013, reflecting the November 2003 Salzburg conference conclusions and the outcomes of the Lisbon and Göteborg European Councils.

- Axis 1: Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sectors by supporting restructuring, development and innovation;
- Axis 2: Improving the environment and countryside by supporting land management; and

Axis 3: Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of economic activity.

Furthermore, the Regulation indicates a significantly strengthened role for the LEADER approach within rural development programmes and proposes that each programme should also contain a LEADER Axis, which can cut across the other Axes. This is generally referred to as Axis 4.

To ensure balance and cohesion, a set of Strategic Guidelines for Rural Development (2007–2013) have been produced by the Commission and agreed by the EU Council. These Guidelines:

- aim to ensure coherence and consistency between the strategies of all Member States and between different EU funding instruments (i.e. structural funds and rural development funds).
- set out the areas on which Member States must focus resources provided for in the Rural Development Regulation.
- provide 6 priority areas for Member States when developing their national rural development strategies and their rural development plans.

These priority areas comprise:

- (a) Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sectors. Resources should contribute to a strong and dynamic agri-food sector by focusing on the priorities of knowledge transfer and innovation in the food chain and priority sectors for investment in physical and human capital.
- (b) Improving the environment and countryside. Resources should contribute to biodiversity and preservation of high nature value farming and forestry systems, water and climate change.
- (c) Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification. Resources should contribute to the overarching priority of the creation of employment opportunities.
- (d) Building local capacity for employment and diversification. Improving governance and mobilising the endogenous development potential of rural areas should be overarching priorities.
- (e) Translating priorities into programmes. Member States should ensure compatibility with other EU level strategies and ensure contradictions within rural development programmes are avoided.
- (f) Complementarity between Community Instruments. Member States should ensure coherence between EU funding instruments.

The rural policy context in Northern Ireland has been set following a substantive review of Rural Policy. After a period of consultation in 2005 on the PricewaterhouseCoopers 'Study on Rural Policy'³, and in line with the Axes in the European Rural Development Regulation, a draft Rural Strategy for Northern Ireland

³ Department of Agriculture and Rural Development "Study on Rural Policy" March 2005 Final Report – PricewaterhouseCoopers.

was issued for public consultation in early 2006. A final Strategy is expected later this year.

At the time of this report was concluding the overall theme of the Strategy is: “diversifying the rural economy and sustaining rural communities”.

The proposed Rural Strategy is structured around four broad aims.

Key aim 1: DARD as the rural champion

Key objectives include:

A joined up approach to rural policy across Government; the robust application of rural proofing and the championing rural issues; the equitable access to public services by rural communities; enhanced community facilities which take account of social need.

Key aim 2: Improving performance in the marketplace

Key objectives include:

a) A more competitive agricultural industry achieved through: increased business and technical competence; improved market focus; a dynamic approach to innovation and uptake of new technologies.

b) A more competitive food processing industry achieved through: Increased value-added processing; better product development; more effective marketing.

Key aim 3: Conserving and investing in the rural environment

Key objectives include:

a) Enhancing the environmental sustainability of farming through: improving farmland habitats; increasing biodiversity; improving water quality.

b) Conserving and enhancing the farmed landscape character through appropriate land management practices, particularly in more marginal areas.

c) Encouraging the adoption of higher animal welfare standards.

d) Promoting alternative land use options through: increased conversion of farmland to woodland; increased exploitation of renewable energy opportunities.

Key aim 4: Strengthening the social and economic infrastructure of rural areas

Key objectives include:

a) Greater economic opportunities in rural areas through: re-skilling and training; supporting diversification; developing the potential of tourism and the environmental/economic interface; exploiting the opportunities of ICT.

b) Strong and vibrant communities and community infrastructure through: engaging with rural communities to identify and address problems and opportunities; building community capacity and leadership; adopting a village renewal approach.

4.2. NIRDP Purpose and objectives

The NIRDP will provide EU funded support for rural development activities in Northern Ireland from 2007 until 2013 and will play a key role in delivering many of the objectives of the Rural Strategy. The programme is one of four programmes⁴ being submitted by the UK Government for funding under the EU Rural Development Regulation.

There are three main objectives that are drawn from the overriding objectives of the Regulation, which are referred to as Axes. In the NIRDP these are characterised:

- Axis 1 Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector
- Axis 2 Improving the environment and the countryside
- Axis 3 Improving the quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy.

In addition the Regulation requires that at least 5% of the EAFRD contribution is through local public private partnerships (the LEADER method).

The current draft of the programme identifies the following measures.

4.3. Description of measures

The measures for the programme are summarised in Table 1 Further detail of their objectives and synopsis of schemes is included in Appendix 1.

⁴ The other three programmes relate respectively to England, Wales and Scotland.

Table 1: Summary of NIRD P Axes, Measures, Objectives and Schemes

Axis 1 Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector	
Measure 1.1	Vocational training and information actions
To improve the competitiveness of farm and horticulture businesses in Northern Ireland through the provision of a range of innovative and focussed training and information actions	
Measure 1.2	Adding value to agricultural products and improving marketing capability
To improve the economic performance and international competitiveness of the agri-food processing sector by: adding value to agricultural products through the application of appropriate technology together with sound manufacturing and environmental management practices; and encouraging greater integration and collaboration between producers, processors and others in the food chain, improving the application of technology within the supply chain and improving the marketing capability of businesses.	
Axis 2 Improving the environment and the countryside	
Measure 2.1	Less Favoured Areas Compensatory Allowances Scheme
To support and maintain traditional agriculture in disadvantaged areas that, because of their location, climate and topography, would otherwise be vulnerable to economic decline and depopulation.	
Measure 2.2	Management of agricultural land within Natura 2000 areas.
To contribute to the implementation of the agricultural Natura 2000 network and to the Göteborg commitment to reverse biodiversity decline by 2010.	
Measure 2.3	Agri-environment programme
To support the sustainable development of rural areas by encouraging farmers and other land managers to apply agricultural production methods compatible with the protection and improvement of the environment, the landscape and its features, natural resources, the soil and genetic diversity.	
Measure 2.4	Animal health and welfare planning scheme
To support farmers to develop farm health and welfare plans and raise standards within the cattle and sheep sectors through promoting best practice	
Measure 2.5	First afforestation of agricultural land
To promote development of new afforestation. The Forest Service will optimise funds available under the NIRD P within the constraints of the National funding allocated to the afforestation programme.	
Measure 2.6	Forest environments
To secure significant environmental benefits through the enhancement of biodiversity; to improve the public amenity of woodlands while preserving high value forest ecosystems, by reinforcing the protective value of forests in respect of soil, water and natural hazards; to assist in achieving the expansion, maintenance, enhancement or restoration targets set out in the native woodland habitat action plans, or benefits to the habitats of those woodland species covered by the species action plan.	
Axis 3 The quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy	
Measure 3.1	Diversification into non-agricultural activities
To maintain or increase the income of the farm households through the creation of employment opportunities in non-agricultural activities and services	
Measure 3.2	Business creation and development
To create employment opportunities through promoting entrepreneurship and developing the economic infrastructure in rural areas	
Measure 3.3	Encouragement of tourism activities
To use the natural resources in Northern Ireland's rural areas to create new employment opportunities and develop the rural economy	
Measure 3.4	Basic services for the economy and rural population
To improve or maintain the living conditions and welfare of those living in rural areas and to increase the attractiveness of such areas through the provision of more and better basic services for the economy and the rural population.	
Measure 3.5	Village renewal and development
To support integrated village initiatives which promote community development and regeneration.	
Measure 3.6	Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
To use the natural resources in Northern Ireland's rural areas to create new employment opportunities and develop the rural economy through supporting local village initiatives to preserve and upgrade their rural heritage	
Axis 4 Implementation of the LEADER approach	
The LEADER approach is based on a strategic community partnership led process and will be the primary mechanism for the delivery of Axis 3 measures.	

5. Environmental characteristics of areas likely to be significantly affected by the programme

5.1. Introduction

Northern Ireland is one of four administrative regions of the UK. It is a predominantly rural region with the urban population concentrated in Belfast and a few other centres. The region has a distinctive cultural heritage and retains strong rural dimensions through the importance of agriculture, tourism and their interactions with the landscape.

5.2. Northern Ireland Study Area Summary Overview

Description

Northern Ireland has a population of 1.7 million, of which some 35% live in rural areas. The land mass comprises some 1.4 million hectares, of which some 80% is agricultural use under the management of around 28,000 farms. Farm size is smaller than the rest of the UK at an average of 38.5 hectares. Farming is predominantly grazing livestock based on dairy, beef and sheep, with nearly 90% of farms classed as small or very small. In total, around 48,000 people are employed on farms, including the farmers themselves. Farmers alone comprise some 4.4% of the Northern Ireland work force and in some rural areas this can be much higher. In the UK as a whole, agriculture employment is 1.4% of total civil employment.

Agricultural businesses comprise over one third of Northern Ireland's VAT registered businesses. However, their contribution to the rural economy will continue to decline as farm numbers and employment on farms fall (reflecting the trend over many years) and the industry adapts to the reform of the CAP and increased exposure to world market pressures.

The population of Northern Ireland rural areas is predicted to grow by 9.8% between 2002 and 2017 from a combination of natural growth and in-migration from urban areas. Long-term unemployment in Northern Ireland is at a higher level than in GB overall and higher than in ROI. Despite the Northern Ireland labour market being strong in recent years, average gross weekly earnings of the people living in rural areas were consistently below those living in urban areas. In addition services are less accessible for those living in rural areas.

The natural environment of Northern Ireland is seen as a distinct asset and various measures are in place to secure the value of this asset, which is seen as a fundamental part of the renaissance of the Northern Ireland tourism industry.

A significant proportion of Northern Ireland farmland is considered to be High Nature Value (HNV) Farmland, which is either farmland with a high proportion of semi-natural vegetation, low input, labour intensive, "extensive" farming or a mosaic of semi-natural and cultivated land with small scale features or land which supports rare species or a high proportion of the European or World population of species. It is considered 23% of the Utilised Agricultural Area (UAA) meets these conditions, including areas under agri-environmental scheme management (ESA and CMS), organic management, biodiversity designations and naturally meeting the HNV

definitions. If suitable areas under LFA designation are included, it is estimated that over 50% of the Northern Ireland UAA is of HNV character.

5.3. Programme fit with environmental designations

The fit of the programme with range of environmental designations is depicted in Appendix 2. The scoring is based on: ++ = good fit, + = some fit, 0 = no fit, N/A not applicable. Whilst elements of programme measures may fit better than other elements, an overall assessment for the whole measure has been taken.

Table 2: Programme fit with environmental designations

		Target Group	Relevant Designations	Fit ⁵
Axis 1 Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector				
Measure 1.1	Vocational training and information actions	Farming and farm family members over 16 years of age, farmers growers, spouses and farm workers.	All where farming present or directly related	0
Measure 1.2	Adding value to agricultural products and improving marketing capability	Micro and small and medium sized enterprises involved or wishing to be involved in processing and marketing including groups of collaborating businesses.	Spatial Development Framework	+
Axis 2 Improving the environment and the countryside				
Measure 2.1	Less Favoured Areas Compensatory Allowances Scheme	Farmers in LFAs who use land for breeding herds of beef cattle and sheep.	LFAs, AONBs, Countryside Character Areas, ASSIs, SPAs, SACs, ESAs, Sites of Local Nature Conservation Interest, Designated Water Areas, Areas of High Scenic Value, Local Landscape Policy Areas	++
Measure 2.2	Management of agricultural land within Natura 2000 areas	Farmers with utilised land within or adjacent to a Natura 2000 site.	LFAs, ASSIs, SPAs, SACs, ESAs, Ramsar sites, Designated Water Areas, Sites of Local Nature Conservation Interest	++
Measure 2.3	Agri-environment programme	ESA – land managers within the 5 designated ESAs CMS – land managers outside the 5 ESAs Entry Level CMS – all eligible land managers not currently in and ESA or CMS agreement. Organic Farming Scheme – Farmers wishing to change from conventional to organic management and registered or applied for registration with a recognised licensing body.	LFAs, ASSIs, SPAs, SACs, ESAs, Ramsar sites, AONBs, Countryside Character Areas, Areas of High Scenic Value, Local Landscape Policy Areas	++
Measure 2.4	Animal health and welfare planning scheme	Farmers of livestock (not pigs and poultry) with at least four livestock units.	All	N/A
Measure 2.5	First afforestation of agricultural land	Owners of agricultural and non-agricultural land.	All	+
Measure 2.6	Forest environments	Owners of private woodland.	All	+

⁵ Degree of programme fit: ++ = good fit, + = some fit 0 = no fit N/A not applicable

Axis 3 The quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy				
Measure 3.1	Diversification into non-agricultural activities	Members of the farm household.	AONBs, Landscape Character Areas, Spatial Development Framework areas of Particular Rural Disadvantage, and Trans-regional Development Areas	+
Measure 3.2	Business creation and development	Existing micro enterprises or persons wishing to set up a new micro enterprise in a non-agricultural business. Excluding members of farm households eligible under measure 3.1 or projects eligible under measure 3.3.	Spatial Development Framework areas of Particular Rural Disadvantage and Trans-regional Development Areas	+
Measure 3.3	Encouragement of tourism activities	Existing rural tourism businesses or those wishing to start up a new rural tourism business to deliver small-scale projects.	Spatial Development Framework for Tourism, and Trans-regional Development Areas	+
Measure 3.4	Basic Services for the economy and rural population	A village or group of villages in rural areas.	Spatial Development Framework areas of Particular Rural Disadvantage, village conservation areas	+
Measure 3.5	Village renewal and development	A village or group of villages in rural areas.	Spatial Development Framework areas of Particular Rural Disadvantage, village conservation areas	+
Measure 3.6	Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage	Rural dwellers.	Spatial Development Framework areas of Particular Rural Disadvantage, village conservation areas	+

5.4. Relationship of the RDP with other Plans and Programmes

The SEA Regulations (see schedule 2) state that an Environmental Report should outline:

- The programme's relationship with other relevant plans and programmes; and
- The environmental protection objectives, established at international, Community or Member State level, which are relevant to the plan or programme and the way those objectives and any environmental considerations have been taken into account during its preparation.

In order to fulfil this requirement, a review of the other relevant plans, policies, and programmes was undertaken to identify environmental objectives that may provide constraints or synergies with the programme being formulated. Such objectives are to be taken into account in the programme and SEA. This review has taken in international conventions and EU Directives through to local plans and strategies. The following section provides a summary of the main outcomes of the review with the full review appearing in Appendix 5.

Summary of the Review

Table 3 lists the Plans, Programmes and Policies reviewed for this SEA. The NIRDP has many direct and indirect relationships with a variety of plans and programmes. These encompass those related to environmental protection and conservation, economic development and offsetting social disadvantage and deprivation.

From the review, key points that emerge are that the NIRDP should :-

- ensure there is opportunity for access to information that supports the decision making process and for public consultation;
- facilitate and promote protection and enhancement of biodiversity, and avoiding/reducing habitat fragmentation, and achievement of biodiversity targets;
- ensure designated natural habitat types and species (under the Directive on Conservation of Natural Habitats of Wild Fauna and Flora 92/43EEC 1992) are given priority in the relevant measures;
- positively influence issues such as air quality, soil protection, the sustainable use of pesticides, natural resource use, waste prevention and recycling, and support achievement of relevant standards and targets;
- take account of the strategies supporting the development of the sustainable use of transport;
- consider the impacts it may have on natural resources and historic environments;
- contribute towards the aims of sustainable development;

- ensure all reasonable opportunities are taken forward to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable energy;
- reduce impacts on wetlands and where possible encourage the enhancement and restoration of wetland habitats, as well as minimising negative impacts on water resources;
- help in achieving improvement in performance in the market place, strengthening rural, social and economic infrastructure, help in developing a more sustainable environment, improved health and welfare of animals, plants and fish;
- help in achieving sustainable patterns of development whilst recognising the constraints on development proposed in PPS14 relating to investments on farms, re-use and adaptation of existing buildings, the nature of their use and issues such as scale and character, as well as the constraints of particularly sensitive areas designated as Special Conservation Areas;
- support the innovation and growth of agri-food and other businesses including encouraging local companies to grow and compete globally and support for improvement in skills and competence as well as cluster development;
- help to ensure tourism potential is realised;
- support networks and programmes of benchmarking and public procurement;
- support comprehensive and integrated action towards sustainable and equitable development of disadvantaged rural areas;
- promote balanced community development, equitable access to employment, and protection and enhancement of the natural and built environments;
- compliment the specific waste regulations that apply to farming and the management of farm waste;
- help increase knowledge and understanding in regard to the positive interaction of biodiversity and the environment with sustainable tourism;
- foster the increase in sustainable management of forests and an increase in new afforestation (including transfer from agriculture) including encouraging increased access, measures to control pests and sympathetic and sustainable land use including improvements in biodiversity;
- support decentralised growth focused on a balanced and integrated approach to the development of rural communities;
- recognise the fragility and diversity of protected landscapes, and the designation of the most deprived rural areas and the countryside protection areas.

Table 3: List of Plans, Programmes and Policies Reviewed

International Conventions/Agreements and European legislation
Air Quality Framework Directive 1996/62/EC
Århus Convention
Convention on Biodiversity, Rio de Janeiro (1992)
Council Directive 1999/30/EC on Ambient Air Quality Limits
EC Directive on Conservation of Wild Birds 79/409/EEC 1979
EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats of Wild Fauna and Flora 92/43/EEC 1992
Environment 2010: Our Future, Our Choice (EU Sixth Environment Action Programme)
European Commission White Paper on the European Transport Policy (2001)
European Noise Directive 2002
European Spatial Development Perspective 1999
Johannesburg Declaration of Sustainable Development 2002
Kyoto Protocol
Ramsar Convention
Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC
EC Freshwater Directive 78/659/EEC
EC Shellfish Directive 79/923/EEC
Bathing Water Directive 76/160/EEC
National (UK) Plans, Policies & Programmes
Climate Change: The UK Programme (2001)
Our energy future - creating a low carbon economy (2003) - UK white paper on energy
UK Air Quality Strategy DETR (2000)
UK Air Quality Strategy (ODPM, 2000 amended in 2003)
UK Biodiversity Action Plan - UK BAP (Defra, 1994)
Climate Change The UK Programme (2006)
Regional Plans, Policies & Programmes
DARD Strategic Business Plan 2006-2011
Draft Planning Policy Statement 14
Economic Vision for Northern Ireland
Environment NI - A Vision for the Future
Natural Heritage Strategic Plan
Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy
NI Waste Management Strategy 2006-2020
Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy
Northern Ireland Forestry - A Strategy For Sustainability And Growth
Regional Development Strategy – Shaping Our Future
Shared Horizons - Statement of Policy on Protected Landscapes
Sustainable Development Strategy

5.5. Current state

Summary of baseline data and trends

The SEA Regulations require that the Environmental Report includes an examination of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution of the environment without the implementation of the programme. It is recognised that the future baseline in particular is difficult to describe as trend data are often not available.

The baseline data collected are presented in Appendix 4. The following section outlines the current state of the environment and indicates future trends where possible.

Biodiversity, fauna and flora

There are 52 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) in Northern Ireland, the distribution of which are shown in Appendix 2. They cover around 65,000 hectares, of these 40,000 are assessed as relevant to the Natura 2000 habitats of grassland, heathland, upland, peatland and wetland. The most recent comprehensive assessment of the state of the natural environment is the Countryside Survey 2000. This noted that between 1990 and 1998, the percentage of existing semi-natural habitats relevant to farming activity reduced considerably. For example, neutral grassland (less intensively managed) fell by 32%, fen, marsh and swamp by 19% and bog by 8%. Although not seen as significant, acid grassland also declined by 8%. Increased areas of habitat included improved grassland 33%, coniferous woodland 12% and broadleaved mixed and yew woodland by 9%. Sites formally designated under nature conservation legislation cover only a small proportion of Northern Ireland. Areas which are important for biodiversity in a local context can be identified and designated as Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCIs), which are published in development plans. SLNCIs contribute to halting the loss of biodiversity in Northern Ireland by identifying and protecting sites of substantive biodiversity value for local habitats and species.

Field boundaries are important for biodiversity. Northern Ireland holds 13% of the field boundary stock for the UK. They comprise mostly hedges, earth banks and fences. Dry stone walls, ruined dry stone walls and mortared walls, although present, are less common. The largest reductions in length were ruined dry stone wall – 12.4%, earth bank 10.2% and dry stone wall 7.1%.

Northern Ireland has, at 6%, the lowest forest cover of any of the UK regions. Although there has been an overall decline in new planting, there has been a private sector forest expansion of 26% since 1995, largely as a consequence of the Woodland Grant and Farm Woodland Premium Schemes, and much of this has been in broadleaved tree species. In 2004-5, 93% of new plantings fitted this type.

In addition to the SACs, mentioned above there are 18 Ramsar Sites, 211 Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs), and 13 Special Protection Areas (SPAs). The majority of these are in rural areas and many may be influenced by the activities of farming or rural development.

Climatic factors and air

Mean annual maximum and minimum temperatures in Northern Ireland have been rising since the end of the 19th Century. Mean minimum temperatures in particular

reaching their highest recorded levels in the 1990s. The number of hot days (mean daily temperature above 18°C) has been at high levels from 1980-2002. Such changes in temperature extremes have implications for agriculture and health. Rainfall is also important for agriculture. There is some evidence of an upward trend in mean annual rainfall, with less rain falling in summer months. Growing seasons fluctuate and since the 1980s, there has been a tendency for a longer growing season.

Underlying changes in climate are influenced by greenhouse gas emissions. Agriculture in Northern Ireland is thought to be responsible for 24% of such emissions in the region.

Air quality monitoring shows that standards for key pollutants, sulphur dioxide, lead, and particulate matter were met by the end of 2004. All 26 Councils have completed overall assessments of air quality and eleven have identified areas that are likely to exceed Air Quality Objectives, and eleven of these have declared Air Quality Management Areas.

Solid biomass wood waste and coppice etc, accounts for the bulk of Ireland's (ROI and NI) biomass consumption and represented 55% of total renewable final energy consumption in 2002. Solid biomass use increased from 105 ktoe (thousand tonnes of oil equivalent) in 1990 to 152 ktoe in 2002, an increase of 44% (3% per annum)⁶.

Ammonia emissions from intensive animal waste storage/handling/spreading activities can pose risk to biodiversity of neighbouring sensitive habitats, through nitrogen enrichment.

Cultural heritage - Material assets

The number of conservation areas in Northern Ireland increased from 57 in 2003 to 59 in 2004. The number of listed buildings that were de-listed decreased over that some period, as did the number of new buildings listed. In Buildings at Risk Northern Ireland vol 7 March 2005, it is reported, there has been a conscious focus on smaller rural properties a number of these being thatched, and are always vulnerable to decay, while many are simply deemed by their owners to be too small for modern day living⁷.

Human health

Access to some services within the communities studied was still generally possible and helped to maintain a sense of community, but this is balanced with strong roles for district towns⁸.

⁶ Renewable Energy in Ireland Trends and Issues 1990-2002 Report prepared by Fergal O' Leary, Dr. Brian Ó Gallachóir, and Martin Howley. A View from Northern Ireland prepared by Terry Waugh of Action Renewables. August 2004. Sustainable Energy Ireland and Action Renewables.

⁷ Buildings At Risk Northern Ireland V7 March 2005 - Ulster Architectural Heritage Society

⁸ Rural Policy Perspectives: Assessing Rural Sustainability and Change A Review Report by the Northern Ireland Rural Development Council (RDC) Drawing upon the RDC's Beacon Communities Initiative - 2006

Landscape

The Landscape Character of the whole of Northern Ireland is described for the 130 Landscape Character Areas depicted in Appendix 2. Of particular note are designations which encompass more than one Landscape Character Area. There are 9 Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) designated under either the 1965 Amenity Lands Act or the 1985 Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands Order. Earlier designations were focused on development control and later designations on positive landscape management. Since 1985, there has been an ongoing process of re-designation to achieve a consistent approach.

Currently four areas have been re-designated, namely Mourne, the Causeway Coast, the Antrim Coast and Glens, and the Ring of Gullion. These AONBs are judged to fall within Category V - "Protected Landscapes" - of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN) classification of Protected Areas. As such, the protection of cultural values, the promotion of public enjoyment and the fostering of the social and economic well-being of local communities sit alongside nature conservation. Designation in other cases has not received universal acclaim. In Fermanagh - Erne Lakeland and Fermanagh Caveland – while there was wide support from some sections of the community, there was strong opposition from those who felt that designation would be followed by more restrictive planning policies which would be harmful to rural development.

There is one World Heritage site based on the Giants Causeway and there has been a recommendation that the Mourne Mountains is the area most suited for National Park designation.

Population

The rural population comprises 35% of Northern Ireland total population of 1.7m (based on the 2001 census). Population in rural Northern Ireland is expected to grow by 9.8% between 2002-2017, which is far faster than the 1.3% anticipated for urban areas.

Over a third of VAT registered business in Northern Ireland are agricultural, and around 90% of rural business are micro-businesses.

Agriculture plays an important role in Northern Ireland, although its contribution to the economy has halved over the past 15 years. Employment in agriculture comprises 4% of the total civil employment in Northern Ireland: in rural areas this is significantly higher.

A third of farmers have other gainful activity. Around 11% of farms had diversified by 2003 an increase from 2000, this reduces to 8% if contracting or haulage are discounted⁹.

Soil

Soil degradation is a factor largely of poor husbandry. Cross compliance conditions for the Single Farm Payment (specifically, the Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions – GAEC - requirements) aim to address the general condition. Organic

⁹ EU Farm structure survey 2003 Northern Ireland

farming makes a significant contribution to the enhancement soil condition. Organic farming occupied 3,257 hectares and 0.31 % of the Northern Ireland UAA in 2000, increasing to 6,483 hectares and 0.62% of UAA by 2004.

Upland blanket bogs and lowland raised bogs are well represented in Northern Ireland. Ninety percent of lowland raised bogs have been lost or altered due to peat extraction, forestry and drainage (which affect upland bogs too). Nutrient enrichment is also evident and the quality of habitats has been affected. Many are designated ASSI or given other protected status.

Water

Chemical quality of rivers has improved since 1995 with an increase from 45% to 59% in the length of monitored rivers classified as of Very Good or Good quality under the General Quality Assessment scheme. Compliance with the requirements of the EC Freshwater Fish Directive has also improved from 61% of designated rivers to 91% over the same period¹⁰. Biological condition is mixed. Overall, 62% of monitored rivers were found to be of Very Good or Good biological quality in 2000. However, there was a deterioration of the biological quality of those rivers that were monitored in both 1995 and 2000, with a 9% drop over the period in the length classified as Very Good or Good and a corresponding increase in the length classified as Fairly Good.

Ground water is generally of potable quality, although there are indications of some nitrate, pesticide and bacterial contamination.

Although the number of pollution incidents had been declining generally, the number of reported incidents rose in 2000 to almost 2,600. Of these, 1,700 (66%) were substantiated. Agriculture and industry accounted for almost 60% of these.

5.6. Future without the programme

The SEA Regulations require that information is provided on "... the relevant aspects of the current state of the environment and the likely evolution thereof without implementation of the programme".

It is recognised that the future baseline or "without the programme scenario" in particular is difficult to describe as trend data are often not available. However, this section will attempt to describe the future baseline for each SEA topic (Table 4).

For the purposes of this SEA, the 'without the programme' scenario has been based on the following assumptions:-

- CAP reform leads to increased competitiveness in agriculture, and the need to respond to market pressures. Farmers will have to comply with environmental regulations but receive no new additional support to improve the environment.
- Current ESA, CMS, WGS and WFP agreements will be allowed to run their course to the end of their contracts.

¹⁰ Ref Managing the water environment in Northern Ireland 2000 published by the EHS.

- National support not transferred to the NIRDP but previously available under PEACEII and BSP will be available to communities and businesses.
- Climate, other economic and cultural trends continue.

Table 4: Evolution of the Baseline without the Programme

SEA Topic	Evolution of the baseline without the programme
Biodiversity, fauna and flora	<p>The improvements resulting from the current Woodland, ESA and CMS schemes will continue to be seen whilst they exist and for some time after, but this will decline as contracts come to an end. Farmers will be forced to focus on market returns and environmental conditions will decline, but possibly not to former levels as regulations take effect, although this may be dependent on the robustness of the inspection and enforcement regimes and the demands of produce buyers. Pressures on designated areas will increase.</p> <p>Land abandonment in some areas would lead to degradation of managed habitats but may deliver some new habitats. Environmental regulation would prevent degradation of farmed land.</p>
Climatic factors and air	<p>Trends will continue. Less biomass will be planted as biomass driven by supply chain and opportunity cost of mainstream farming. Some lessening of greenhouse gas emissions from farming as stock numbers decline and regulation on farm waste is implemented.</p>
Cultural heritage Human health	<p>Trends in the decline in farm numbers will continue and be likely to accelerate. Farms will continue to diversify. With decline in environmental support, more are likely to diversify into other gainful activity or employment in response to economic pressures. This could create positive or negative outcomes for cultural heritage, depending on the ability to adapt. As there will be no targeted support to facilitate change, it is likely more will leave farming altogether with consequences, for employment and communities. Loss of farmers and workers from less accessible areas would risk degrading existing social capital. In more accessible areas, new jobs would be required – loss of economic activity would affect demand for service sector.</p> <p>Service provision will continue to come under pressure.</p>
Landscape	<p>Economic pressures from the reform of the CAP and the need to diversify will place increasing pressures on the landscape. There will be pressure to increase efficiency which is likely to increase rates of decline in linear features and important habitats especially in LFAs and less productive areas. High unit costs of production relative to commodity prices would encourage most to neglect rather than remove hedges/walls but some loss in more productive areas. Many fewer farmers, farming larger areas on a more extensive basis would have more impact on the landscape than biodiversity.</p>
Material assets	<p>Pressure on environmentally designated areas will increase. Pressures to accelerate wider economic diversity and create employment will increase development pressures on communities.</p>
Population	<p>The trend in increasing rural population will continue although mitigated through the increased pace of decline in employment in farming. This will create pressures for new employment opportunities and training, with some likely to leave rural areas altogether. For the more remote communities this could be significant.</p>
Soil	<p>The rate of organic farming will only grow in response to market demand, which is likely to continue current trends. The risks of entering the market and the associated costs of conversion will increase the barrier to entry. So the rate of growth will slow, unless premia become significant. Continuing degradation and loss of peatland habitats.</p>
Water	<p>Pressures to increase competitiveness of farming should lead to improved management of nutrients to ensure efficiency. Financial pressures are likely to lead to a minimum compliance approach to meeting regulation requirements and pollution trends are thus likely to continue, or accelerate.</p>

5.7. Environmental Problems and Opportunities

The SEA Directive requires an analysis of any environmental problems of relevance to the Programme. Table 5 summarises the problems identified and the opportunities presented by the Programme to address them.

Table 5: Environmental problems and opportunities

Topic Area	Problems	Opportunities presented by NIRDP
Biodiversity, fauna and flora	Degradation through intensive farming practices	Measures under Axis 1 include training in cross compliance and environmental management. Axis 2 measures promote improvements in habitat management and creation beyond those required by cross compliance. Woodland planting is aimed at improving biodiversity through sustainable management of new plantings.
Climatic factors and air	Need to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and ammonia emissions from agriculture. Take steps to reduce ammonia emissions from agriculture. Level of greenhouse gas emissions from agriculture	New plantings of woodland, including Short Rotation Coppice, will contribute to sequestration of carbon as well as the encouragement for bio-renewable fuel that will also provide substitutes for fossil fuels. Improvements in farm waste management. Limited opportunity to redress agricultural emissions except through education in Measure 1.1.
Cultural heritage	Changing basis of rural population and employment, buildings and sites at risk	Sustainable diversification, small business creation and rural tourism all can contribute to supporting the maintenance of heritage assets. Training under Measure 1.1 and 3.1 could reinforce the links between cultural heritage and product benefits for some businesses and duty of care in others.
Human health	Some aspects of rural health worse than in urban areas.	Through Axis 3 measures of village renewal, opportunity arises to address some local health issues, improvements in local job opportunities through diversification and support for small business.
Landscape	Degradation of farmed landscapes through changes in habitat and in lack of maintenance of features such as walls, hedges etc.	LFACAS supports the continuance of farming and active use of the farmed landscape in LFAs. Axis 2 measures promote environmental improvements that will enhance landscape which will be further encouraged by the landscape approach adopted in the new programme. New woodland planting can enhance landscape character.

Topic Area	Problems	Opportunities presented by NIRD
Material assets	Changing basis of rural population and employment, buildings and sites at risk. Degradation through market driven farming practices.	Sustainable diversification, small business creation and rural tourism all can contribute to supporting the maintenance of heritage assets. Measures under Axis 1 include training in cross compliance and environmental management. Axis 2 measures promote improvements in habitat management and creation beyond those required by cross compliance. Woodland planting is aimed at improving biodiversity through sustainable management of new plantings.
Population	Changing demography and employment patterns.	Farm diversification and small business support create new employment opportunities locally.
Soil	Degradation and erosion	Through promotion of cross compliance, environmental management and in particular encouragement for organic farming.
Water	Contamination of ground and surface water	Through promotion of cross compliance, environmental management measures to improve water quality, including requirements to improve farm waste management.

5.8. Scope of the Assessment

The NIRD has the high-level objective of improving the environment and the countryside by supporting land management through:

- Promoting environmental service and animal friendly farming practices;
- Preserving the farmed landscape;
- Encouraging the development of new and existing forests and woodlands; and
- Supporting the growth of organic farming.

These are expected to contribute to improvement in biodiversity, water quality, climate change, soil quality and the avoidance of marginalisation and land abandonment.

The programme also has the objective of improving the quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy. Of particular note is the focus on regenerating villages and their surrounding areas by improving economic prospects and the quality of life, encouraging tourism built on the sustainable development of natural resources, cultural and natural heritage and the maintenance, restoring and upgrading of the natural and built heritage.

The following list provides a summary of relevant environmental objectives for the programme:

- Protection and enhancement of biodiversity, particularly with regard to designated areas and priority legally protected species / habitats;
- Reduction in emissions (air pollution and climate change);
- Protecting landscape character;
- Minimising water pollution;
- Using natural resources prudently;
- Encouraging energy efficiency; and
- Encouraging sustainable economic development.

6. SEA Objectives

The SEA Objectives, set out in Table 6, were developed following the consultation based on the Screening and Scoping exercises, the analysis in Appendix 6, expert opinion and consultation within DARD, and drawing on the analyses of the baseline review (Section 4.6) and interaction with other Plans, Policies and Programmes (Section 4.3). The SEA Objectives reflect, therefore, the environmental and socio-economic assets the NIRDP could potentially affect. These provide the basis for the assessment of potential environmental effects.

Table 6: Table of SEA objectives

No.	Objective
1	Biodiversity To enhance the biodiversity of rural areas, and protect specific habitats and wildlife
2	Soil To reduce degradation of soil resources
3	Water To reduce surface and ground water contamination from agriculture
4	Landscape To enhance landscape quality
5	Cultural heritage To protect and maintain cultural heritage features To encourage the sustainable use of cultural heritage assets
6	Population To provide new local job opportunities through sustainable farm diversification and small business development To foster sustainable rural communities
7	Climate and Air To contribute to reducing green house gas emissions and increasing carbon sequestration

7. Alternatives

The NIRDP builds on four former programmes the Rural Development Regulation Plan (EAGGF accompanying measures), the Programme for Building Sustainable Prosperity, the NI LEADER+ programme and the EU programme for Peace and Reconciliation (PEACE II).

The main developments from the previous programmes has been the alignment of the four funding streams into one, and proposed changes in delivery consequent upon the introduction of the RPA (Review of Public Administration) recommendations.

The new programme will adopt the general direction of the former programmes but with some changes in emphasis. A specific measure has been proposed to improve the management of Natura 2000 sites and their environs, and the Entry Level Countryside Management Scheme (ELCMS) will provide a low level of environmental measure support over and above regulatory and cross compliance requirements. Finally support to assist farmers to develop Animal Health and Welfare plans has been suggested.

The SEA Directive requires an outline of the reasons for selecting the alternatives dealt with. A summary analysis is provided in [Table 7](#). The conclusion from this analysis is that the current programme provides the greatest environmental gain from the options considered.

Table 7: Consideration of alternatives

SEA Topic	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Proposed Programme
	Do nothing – current programmes run their course and the new Rural Development Regulation is not adopted in Northern Ireland. UK matching funding would also be removed.	Continue the previous programmes but through one funding mechanism rather than 4.	As alternative 2 but with addition of ELCMS, CMS, Natura 2000 measures, and Animal Health and Welfare Measures. Measures not transferred to the programme are assumed to be funded from other national sources.
Biodiversity, fauna and flora	Decline in biodiversity improvements and environmental conditions, but possibly not to former levels as regulations take effect. Pressures on designated areas will increase.	Biodiversity gains would be cumulative and continue, with enhancement of species diversity, maintaining semi natural grasslands.	Biodiversity gains are enhanced, with increasing emphasis on priority habitats, Natura 2000 areas, and the ELCMS will extend the area of enhanced benefit. Additional funds will allow more to be achieved. Knowledge transfer will help embed good practice.
Climatic factors and air	Trends will continue. Less biomass will be planted. Greenhouse gases from agriculture will reduce overall with predicted reductions in stock numbers.	Environmental, carbon sequestration and renewable energy gains will continue and will grow as forestry investments become increasingly mature. Gaseous emissions from agriculture will reduce.	Further gains will be made through improved environmental management and increased areas planted. Gaseous emissions may reduce as market drivers mitigated by environmental payments.
Cultural heritage Human health	Decline in farm numbers will continue and be likely to accelerate. Farms will continue to diversify and it is likely more will leave farming altogether with consequences for employment and communities. There will be pressure for efficiency on farms with less cash for environmental management, cultural assets may suffer. Service provision will continue to come under pressure.	Support for farm and wider economic diversification, along with tourism linkages will encourage the strengthening of communities and help protect cultural heritage. Knowledge of role of cultural assets to food and diversified business will continue.	The impact will be similar to Alternative 2.
Landscape	There will be increasing pressures on the landscape. There is likely to be an increase in rate of decline in linear features and important habitat – landscape interactions.	Gains in landscape protection and enhancement will continue and be cumulative as the changes build over time.	Gains will be extended through changes to habitat targeting and increased budgets.

SEA Topic	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Proposed Programme
Material assets	Pressure on environmentally designated areas will increase. Pressures to accelerate wider economic diversity and create employment will increase development pressures on communities.	Gains in the communities supported will continue.	Gains in the communities supported will continue. Targeting such as that for the Natura 2000 measure will help protect designated areas.
Population	The trend in increasing rural population will continue mitigated through the increased pace of decline in employment in farming which will create pressures for new employment opportunities and training. Some likely to leave rural areas altogether. For the more remote communities this could be significant.	Gains in assisting with farm adjustment through support for farm diversification and business and employment creation will continue.	An enhanced contribution to promoting and enhancing the environmental sustainability of the agricultural industry in Northern Ireland. It will achieve this by means of an expansion of the agri-environment programme, through cross compliance conditions linked to the agri-environment and LFA support measures and through a vocational training measure aimed at equipping Northern Ireland farmers and farm families with the competencies to address increased environmental concerns and controls while maintaining sustainable and competitive farm businesses.
Soil	The rate of growth in organic farming will slow unless market premia become significant. The risks of entering the market and the associated costs of conversion will increase the barrier to entry. Degradation of peatlands would continue.	Gains achieved through ESA, CMS and OFS will continue.	Gains will be increased through extension of the programme and the introduction of the ELCMS.
Water	Increasing competitiveness of farming should lead to improved management of nutrients to ensure efficiency. Pollution trends are likely to continue, or accelerate. Concentration of farming in productive areas with potential impacts.	Gains achieved will continue and be cumulative.	Gains will be enhanced from expansion of the programme and through introduction of the ELCMS.

8. Significant Effects Assessment

The SEA Directive requires an analysis of the likely significant effects on the environment including issues such as biodiversity, population, human health, fauna and flora, soil, water, air, climate factors, cultural heritage, landscape and the interrelation between them.

The NIRDP is focussed on the rural areas of Northern Ireland in which some 35% of the region's population live. Of the land mass of Northern Ireland, 80% is in agricultural use, under the management of around 28,000 farms and farmers alone comprise some 4.4 % of the Northern Ireland work force and in some rural areas this can be much higher. Thus, in general terms, the majority of Northern Ireland's territory will be affected by some part of this programme.

The nature of the effects was assessed using professional opinion and consultation within DARD. The summary of that assessment is set out in Appendix 6. Each measure was mapped against the main SEA Directive topic areas and a score allocated on the likely impact of that measure in environmental terms. A scale from -3 to + 3 was used where -3 = potential for major negative impact, and + 3 = potential for major positive impact 0 = neutral, N/A not considered applicable. A negative impact would be where the environmental asset would be damaged or degraded or polluted in some way and a positive impact as one where the outcome was enhanced environmental performance or benefit.

The following assessment is based upon assessments made by the officials involved in drawing up the programme (drawing on previous programme experience) and in consultation with officials in other Departments. Expert opinion has also been sought.

8.1. Probability, duration, frequency, and reversibility of the effects

As a minimum, the environmental effects of the agri-environment programme will last for the duration of the Programme and for approximately 5 years beyond because of the length of agreements offered to participants. While all are reversible should the participant return to earlier practices, there is an expectation that at least a proportion of the revised farming practices will be embedded, generating longer-term benefits in terms of sustainability and biodiversity. The effects of the forestry measures will last considerably longer, reflecting the likely lifespan of newly establish broadleaved woodlands.

8.2. Cumulative nature of the effects

This proposal builds on the earlier successful Northern Ireland Rural Development Regulation Plan (Accompanying Measures) 2000-2006 and, as such, the environmental effects are cumulative in nature in terms of the extent of the Northern Ireland land mass that will be subject either to agri-environment conditions, cross compliance or converted to forestry. The programme will also serve to increase the level of environmental awareness across the rural community and help to embed the principles of environmental sustainability.

8.3. Trans-boundary nature of the effects

Water quality and biodiversity improvements can potentially be trans-boundary. Contributions to combating climate change and air pollution will also have trans-boundary effects. Monies are available under Axis 3 for trans-boundary projects and it is hoped this will extend to renewable energy type projects.

8.4. Risks to human health or the environment

The programme will have a positive impact on the environment and no additional risks to human health are foreseen.

8.5. Magnitude and spatial extent of the effects

The Plan will cover all of rural Northern Ireland, comprising some 588,651 people or 35% of the population. This includes around 28,000 farms and the 53,000 people who work on them.

8.6. Value and vulnerability of the area likely to be affected and the effects on designated areas/landscapes

The agri-environment element of the programme is designed to protect and support vulnerable areas, e.g. Natura 2000 sites. The proposal also aims to maintain high nature value farming and forestry areas and to support and maintain traditional agriculture in Less Favoured Areas. The agri-environment options offered are required to exceed environmental quality standards set by the EU Commission. The Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition element of Cross Compliance also goes beyond minimum environmental quality standards. Consequently, a significant proportion of the agricultural land in Northern Ireland will be impacted positively by this proposed programme.

8.7. Interrelationships and cumulative effects

Table 8 provides some insights to the cumulative interactions between the measures in the programme and the SEA topic areas. The scores have been added with no attempt to weight the impacts. The impacts have been assessed against the whole of the rural area of Northern Ireland, so whilst effects may be strongly beneficial to some sectors, the overall effect may be less.

Whilst only indicative, it shows that overall, the programme has a positive effect on the topic areas, particularly Biodiversity, landscape, cultural heritage, population and health and material assets. The measures too are generally positive, except for that relating to Animal Health and Welfare, which will be neutral.

This assessment is based on the programme as presented including proposed mitigation measures. The scoring takes balanced views of the overall impact. In this context, significant positive or negative impacts are noted where they are felt to occur and in this table, the sum of those scores accounted for, the scale used was:

- 3 potential for major negative impact
- + 3 potential for major positive impact
- 0 = neutral,
- N/A not considered applicable.

Table 8: Cumulative interactions of measures and SEA topics

Axis	Measure	Biodiversity fauna and flora	Soil	Water	Air	Climate	Landscape	Cultural Heritage	Population	Health	Material assets	Total Score for each measure
1	1.1 Vocational training	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	11
1	1.2 Adding value to Ag. Products	0	0	0	0	1	-1	0	1	1	2	4
2	2.1 LFA Compensatory Allowances	0	0	0	0	0	1	2	2	1	1	7
2	2.2 Man Ag Land within Natura 2000 areas	3	2	2	0	0	2	2	0	0	1	11
2	2.3 Ag Env Prog	3	2	2	0	1	2	2	1	1	1	13
2	2.4 Animal Health and Welfare Planning Scheme	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
2	2.5 First Afforestation of Agricultural Land	2	0	1	1	2	1	0	-1	1	N/A	7
2	2.6 Forest environment payments	3	2	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	1	9
3	3.1 Diversification into non-agricultural activities	0	0	0	-1	-1	0	1	2	1	1	3
3	3.2 Business creation and development	0	0	0	-1	-1	0	1	2	1	1	3
3	3.3 Encouragement of tourism activities	0	0	0	-1	-2	0	1	2	1	1	2
3	3.4 Basic services for the economy and rural population	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	2	3	1	6
3	3.5 Village renewal and development	0	0	0	1	1	1	2	3	2	2	12
3	3.6 Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage	0	0	0	0	0	1	3	2	1	2	9
	Total Score for each SEA topic	12	5	8	0	2	9	14	17	14	16	

8.8. Conclusion

The assessment has demonstrated that the effects of the programme will be largely positive for the environment and for the social and economic well-being of the rural population. As such, these positive impacts reflect the overall aims and objectives of the programme.

The negative impacts identified will be largely localised or minor in nature, or in the case of increased transport for tourism or food processing business, important for the economic sustainability of the rural economy.

Where there are potential negative aspects, there are proposed mitigation measures in place to help offset these.

9. Proposed mitigation and enhancement measures

The SEA Directive requires an analysis of the measures envisaged to prevent, reduce and, as fully as possible, offset any significant adverse effects of implementing the programme. Summaries of proposals contained in the programme to offset adverse effects are contained in Table 9.

Commentary on adequacy

Considerable experience on mitigation of adverse effects arising from measures upon which this programme is built is forthcoming from the previous programmes. The environmental measures all require positive actions in excess of minimum environmental regulatory requirements.

Axis 1 measures will either promote the knowledge transfer of environmental implications of agricultural practices or those associated with development will have conditions attached that promote aspects of good environmental practice or compliance with environmental conditions.

Axis 3 measures equally will be required to meet environmental compliance conditions or will be required to carry out an EIA.

The mitigation measures overall are considered adequately to protect, and will in many cases promote, environmental gain, provided detailed measure guidance and conditions take the opportunity to encourage positive environmental gain on business development or community development projects, and require compliance or synergy with specific policies or official guidance.

Table 9: Summary of proposed measures to offset significant adverse effects of the programme as expressed in the Draft Programme Document

Axis 1 Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector	
Measure 1.1	Vocational Training and Information Actions
This will include the responsibilities associated with the payment – e.g., cross compliance and good agricultural and environmental practice. Furthermore, exploration of the options available to farm families will include signposting to environmental schemes, forestry and woodland schemes, renewable energy projects etc and, therefore, should have an overall positive environmental impact.	
Measure 1.2	Adding Value to Agricultural Products and Improving Marketing Capability
Conditions depending on scheme will require that projects will have to comply with one or more aims including: encourage the better use/elimination of by-products/waste; promote the production and processing of renewable energy, encourage the development of innovative, speciality or organic products; develop regional distinctiveness and use primarily EU sourced products. Projects will have to comply with environmental legislation including planning requirements.	
Axis 2 Improving the environment and the countryside	
Measure 2.1	Less Favoured Areas Compensatory Allowances Scheme
Applicants will have to among other things adhere to the requirements of Council Regulation (EC) No 1782/2003 on cross-compliance;	
Measure 2.2	Management of Agricultural Land within Natura 2000 areas
All payments made under this Measure are for activities in excess of those required for cross-compliance. All beneficiaries of this Measure must, as a general environmental condition of payment, maintain their land in compliance with Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAEC) and adhere to environmental legislation in force, including the nineteen Statutory Management Requirements under cross compliance as they are phased in.	
Measure 2.3	Agri-Environment Programme
The agri-environment schemes will provide incentives to do more than that statutory minimum cross compliance required under the Single Farm Payment. All beneficiaries of this Measure must, as a general environmental condition of payment, maintain their land in compliance with Good Agricultural and Environmental Conditions (GAEC) and adhere to environmental legislation in force, including the nineteen Statutory Management Requirements under cross compliance as they are phased in.	
Environmentally Sensitive Areas - The farmer must comply with certain field boundary and farm waste management standards across the whole farm, and either (a) sensitively manage any of a range of existing on-farm habitats or (b) undertake the creation or management of at least one of a range of optional habitats. They are linked to specific aspects of the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Action Plan and specific priority species.	
Countryside Management Scheme - The farmer must comply with certain field boundary and farm waste management standards across the whole farm, and either (a) sensitively manage any of a range of existing on-farm habitats or (b) undertake the creation or management of at least one of a range of optional habitats. They are linked to specific aspects of the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Action Plan and specific priority species.	
Entry level Countryside Management Scheme – The farmer must undertake a compulsory field boundary management activity and choose a further option from each of the following categories a) water quality, b) biodiversity.	
Organic Farming Scheme - The potential for pollution and other environmental damage is lessened as organic farming avoids the use of artificial fertilisers and synthetic pesticides.	

Measure 2.4	Animal Health and Welfare Planning Scheme
<p>Standards applied under this Measure will go significantly beyond the minimum requirements set out in EU and domestic legislation, particularly in terms of diseases which are not currently covered by statutory disease control regimes but whose reduction would have obvious positive benefits in terms of animal welfare.</p> <p>In particular, standards will exceed those established by Regulation (EC) 1782/2003 Council Directive and by 91/629/EEC (laying down minimum standards for the protection of calves, Council Directive 91/630/EEC (laying down minimum standards for the protection of pigs and Council Directive 95/58/EC (concerning the protection of animals kept for farming purposes). The Measure also goes beyond Regulation (EC) No 852/2004 and Regulation (EC) No 853/2004 by considering both non-notifiable zoonotic and other animal diseases, which are either known to be present or which could be introduced.</p>	
Measure 2.5	First Afforestation of Agricultural Land
<p>Environmental safeguards are an essential component of first afforestation and are enforced through contract approval and monitoring procedures. On receipt, all applications are assessed to ensure that they meet the environmental standards set out in the “UK Forestry Standard” and the associated guidelines. In addition, proposals for first afforestation which are likely to have a significant effect on the environment are subject to Environment Impact Assessment under the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 (Council Directive 85/337/EEC as amended by Council Directive 97/11/EC). These Regulations include thresholds that determine the need for an Environmental Impact Assessment.</p> <p>Landowners growing Christmas trees or farmers benefiting from early retirement support are not eligible for support towards first afforestation of agricultural land.</p>	

Measure 2.6	Forest Environments
<p>The focus of this measure is for environmental improvement. Support will be available for participants who make a voluntary commitment to undertake agreed forest-environment actions to improve the ecosystems within private forests and woodlands and prevent damage by domestic and wild animals. This will include ongoing maintenance required to control invasive species such as laurel and rhododendron and for the clearance of stream sides and other open ground. The commitments will be for 5 to 7 years and standards will exceed the relevant mandatory requirements. It will provide support for one-off financial commitments to achieve environmental objectives or to enhance the public amenity value of existing forests but which do not lead to any significant increase in the value or profitability of the agricultural or forestry holding.</p>	
Axis 3 The quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy	
<p>The impact and potential impact of projects on the environment and on promoting environmental sustainability will be assessed from the project level upwards. This assessment will be made on applications as they are received using the techniques of Development Path Analysis (DPA) recommended by the European Commission. Selection Criteria will ensure that every project that is approved meets minimum environmental regulations. It is proposed that any activities of the project which might result in a negative impact on the environment are subjected to an Environmental Impact Assessment or similar process.</p>	
Measure 3.1	Diversification into non-agricultural activities
None specified	
Measure 3.2	Business creation and development
None specified	
Measure 3.3	Encouragement of tourism activities
None specified	
Measure 3.4	Basic Services for the economy and rural population
None specified	
Measure 3.5	Village renewal and development
None specified	
Measure 3.6	Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
None specified	
Axis 4 Implementation of the LEADER approach	
None specified	
<p>The LEADER approach is based on the development of local strategies by partnerships who have to consider the environmental aspects of their activity.</p>	

10. Proposed monitoring and next steps

10.1. Monitoring and evaluation

The SEA Directive requires a description of the measures envisaged concerning monitoring.

The Regulation EC 1698/2005 which underpins the NIRD DP sets out under Articles 77 – 87 the framework required for Monitoring and Evaluation the programme. Article 84 (2) of Council Regulation 1698/2005 stipulates that:

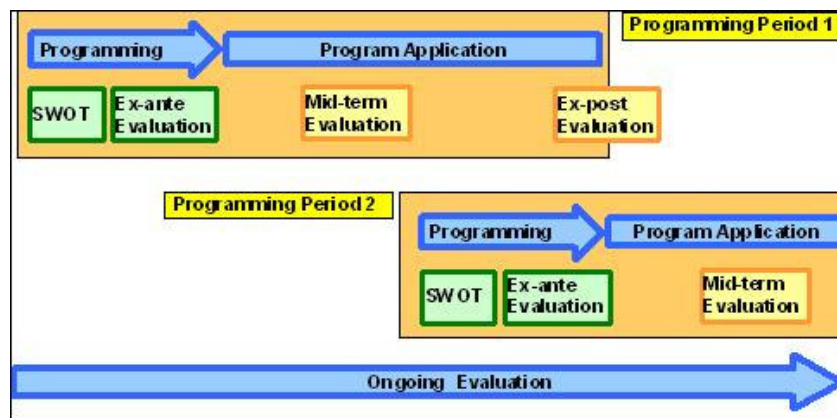
“Evaluations shall aim to improve the quality, efficiency and effectiveness of the implementation of rural development programmes. They shall assess the impact of the programmes as regards the strategic guidelines of the Community provided for in Art. 9 and the rural development problems specific to the Member States and regions concerned, taking into account sustainable development requirements and environmental impact, meeting the requirements of relevant Community legislation.”

A Monitoring Committee is required to be set up within 3 months of the start of the programme. Its responsibilities include:

- setting of selection criteria;
- reviewing progress towards the achievement of targets;
- approval of the annual reports; and
- proposing adjustments to the programme aimed to help achieve the objectives of the EAFRD, or improving its management.

The regulation provides detailed guidance on a Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (CMEF) to which all approved programmes throughout the EU have to adhere. This sets out a structure of indicators that can be used to monitor progress against targets. These can be added to if deemed relevant. A summary of those from the CMEF and others appropriate to monitor the environmental aspects of the programme are included at Appendix 4. The formal framework for evaluation is shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1 Common Monitoring and Evaluation Framework



The detailed range of questions that will need to be answered has not been finally set by the EC. DARD has, however, begun work on determining the detailed approach they will follow, which includes the indicators shown in Appendix 4. The final set of programme indicators will in due course have to be formally agreed with the EC.

It is proposed the annual cycle of ongoing monitoring will review the achievement of the programme in regard to its outputs and results, and progress towards impacts will be reviewed in detail in the Mid-Term Evaluation, which in this programme will take place in 2010. The final evaluation of the programme will take place in 2015. The Mid-Term Evaluation is required to judge the degree to which measures and programmes as a whole are meeting their targets and contributing to achieving their objectives, and to identify the need to change the programme where applicable.

It is a requirement of the EC regulations that such formal evaluations are carried out by independent evaluators, who have no direct involvement in the implementation, management or financing of the Programme. They are required to follow the EC guidelines and address the common evaluation questions.

It is proposed that detailed assessment of the indicators that are not part of the CMEF is carried out as part of the Mid-Term Evaluation. Other bodies hold the data needs of some of these elements and data availability will be determined by their own cycle of collection. It is proposed that the Monitoring Committee consider the impact of the programme against the wider environmental objectives as well as the detailed EC programming requirements.

The first report on the programme will be in 2008 and will describe the full detail of the agreed evaluation system.

10.2. Next Steps

Following the consultation on the draft NIRDP and this Environmental Report, and along with the outcome of the ex ante evaluation, the Department will review the responses and consider what, if any, adjustments to the proposed Programme may be required. The Programme will be forwarded to the Commission along with the ex ante evaluation and this Environmental Report. It is normal for further refinements to be negotiated by the Commission with Member States following submission, and prior to formal adoption. At that point, an Environmental Statement will be published that is required to document how the programme has changed from the original draft on which the SEA was carried out, what implications that may have for the environment, if any, and to document how the Programme and environmental report has developed following the consultation on it. It is anticipated the formal process of adoption will commence in December 2006.

Appendix 1: Summary of the NIRD Programme Measures and Objectives

Axis 1	Improving the competitiveness of the agricultural and forestry sector	
	Measure 1.1	Vocational training and information actions
	Objective	To improve the competitiveness of farm and horticulture businesses in Northern Ireland through the provision of a range of innovative and focussed training and information actions
	Synopsis	<p>Comprises three schemes delivering training and information actions:</p> <p>(a) Farm Family Options will assist farmers and farm family members to analyse their present position and determine their options for the future. Training will cover economic, technical and social issues and will assist farm families to effectively adapt to change.</p> <p>(b) Focus Farms will assist in the development of selected farm businesses as Focus Farms to communicate to visiting farmers a range of new and emerging technologies and to provide a coaching /mentoring facility. A Focus Farm Centre will also be required to promote and deliver the scheme.</p> <p>(c) Better Business for Farmers and Growers will provide support through innovative learning programmes in benchmarking and marketing. Effective benchmarking and marketing have proven potential to improve agriculture and commercial horticulture business competitiveness through the development of farm/horticulture business plans, participation in physical and financial benchmarking systems and support for the subsequent development of business links with processors and retailers.</p>
	Measure 1.2	Adding value to agricultural products and improving marketing capability
	Objective	<p>To improve the economic performance and international competitiveness of the agri-food processing sector by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • adding value to agricultural products through the application of appropriate technology together with sound manufacturing and environmental management practices; and • encouraging greater integration and collaboration between producers, processors and others in the food chain, improving the application of technology within the supply chain and improving the marketing capability of businesses
	Synopsis	<p>Comprises two schemes</p> <p>(a) the Agricultural Processing and Marketing Grant Scheme will provide support towards capital expenditure on buildings and new equipment (including computer software), the cost of a business plan/feasibility study for the project, and directly related general costs such as architects', engineers' and consultants' fees (to a maximum of 10% of total eligible costs).</p> <p>(b) the Agricultural Marketing Development Grant Scheme will provide support for businesses engaged in the marketing of the produce of agriculture (including horticulture) or of products derived from such produce.</p>
Axis 2	Improving the environment and the countryside	
	Measure 2.1	Less Favoured Areas Compensatory Allowances Scheme
	Objective	To support and maintain traditional agriculture in disadvantaged areas that, because of their location, climate and topography, would otherwise be vulnerable to economic decline and depopulation
	Synopsis	The Scheme will provide support for farmers in Less Favoured Areas (LFAs) to compensate for additional costs and income foregone related to maintaining agricultural production in such areas. To support and maintain traditional agriculture in disadvantaged areas that, because of their location, climate and topography, would otherwise be vulnerable to economic decline and depopulation.

	Measure 2.2	Management of agricultural land within Natura 2000 areas
	Objective	To contribute to the implementation of the agricultural Natura 2000 network and to the Göteborg commitment to reverse biodiversity decline by 2010
	Synopsis	<p>Payments will be made to land managers who are participants in the Environmentally Sensitive Area/Countryside Management agri-environment schemes and who have eligible habitats (e.g. heathland, woodland and certain grasslands) on holdings which form part of or are adjacent to a Natura 2000 site.</p> <p>The annual management payments are in compensation for income foregone and costs (including transaction costs) incurred. As appropriate, support is also available for the costs of certain essential capital enhancement works</p>
	Measure 2.3	Agri-environment programme
	Objective	To support the sustainable development of rural areas by encouraging farmers and other land managers to apply agricultural production methods compatible with the protection and improvement of the environment, the landscape and its features, natural resources, the soil and genetic diversity.
	Synopsis	<p>This will comprise four schemes:</p> <p>(a) The Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA) Scheme; which operates in parallel with</p> <p>(b) The Countryside Management Scheme (CMS).</p> <p>These schemes operate on a “whole farm” basis. Financial support is for 5 year commitments for the environmentally sensitive management of all their land as well as the management or creation of specialised or priority habitats or features on the farm. Priority habitats and features, which must be brought under agreement and managed according to the scheme’s prescriptions, are listed. Optional habitats and features and support for the breeding of indigenous but endangered breeds may also be brought under agreement are listed.</p> <p>Participants will receive annual management payments in compensation for income foregone and costs (including transaction costs) incurred by them. Financial assistance may also be available towards the costs of certain capital enhancement works</p> <p>c) The Entry-level Countryside Management Scheme will support those farmers who have not yet engaged in the ESA or CMS agri-environment schemes and who enter into five-year agreements. Participants will receive financial support to undertake land management activities that address environmental improvement of field boundaries, water quality and biodiversity.</p> <p>d) The Organic Farming Scheme will provide financial support over a 7-year period during conversion of land from conventional to organic management. It will not offer support in relation to existing organic land or converted land beyond the 7-year period. It is a requirement of the scheme that any grassland should be grazed primarily by organic livestock or animals undergoing conversion. Participants are required to adhere to environmental and animal welfare conditions that are more rigorous than those applying to non-organic farmers.</p> <p>Payments are for works in addition to those required for regulatory cross compliance.</p>
	Measure 2.4	Animal health and welfare planning scheme
	Objective	To support farmers to develop farm health and welfare plans and raise standards within the cattle and sheep sectors through promoting best practice

	Synopsis	<p>Support will be provided to those farmers willing to enter into a five-year commitment to work with their private veterinary practitioners and other relevant advisers to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. Assess animal health and welfare standards on their farms; b. Develop, document and agree an action programme; and c. To implement identified actions to raise standards. <p>Standards applied under this Measure will go significantly beyond the minimum requirements set out in EU and domestic legislation.</p>
	Measure 2.5	First afforestation of agricultural land
	Objective	To promote development of new afforestation. The Forest Service will optimise funds available under the NIRD P within the constraints of the National funding allocated to the afforestation programme.
	Synopsis	<p>This Measure will provide financial support for:</p> <p>1&3) The first afforestation of agricultural land (including agricultural land owned by public authorities). This will be done through the following schemes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS) will support the establishment costs of first afforestation on agricultural land, which may include short rotation coppice. If applications exceed the resource allocated, a scoring mechanism will be introduced to prioritise the applications made, giving preference to those applications that meet the strategic objectives of the Forest Service. 70% of aid will be paid at establishment with the balance in five years. • The Farm Woodland Premium Scheme (FWPS) will provide annual payments for up to a maximum of 15 years for agricultural income foregone as a result of first afforestation on agricultural land under the WGS. <p>In relation to agricultural land owned by public authorities and for short rotation coppice willow grown for energy use, support will be provided only for establishment costs. 70% of aid will be paid at establishment with the balance in five years (or, in the case of short rotation coppice willow for energy production, in the second year).</p> <p>Landowners growing Christmas trees or farmers benefiting from early retirement support are not eligible for support towards first afforestation of agricultural land.</p> <p>2) The first afforestation of agro-forestry schemes on agricultural land</p> <p>Financial support for the first establishment of agro-forestry systems combining extensive agriculture and forestry systems and will be provided through the Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS). 70% of aid will be paid at establishment with the balance in five years</p> <p>Full grant aid will be paid for a minimum density of 1100 trees per hectare. If there are fewer trees established, grant aid will be reduced pro rata. Landowners growing Christmas trees or fast growing species for short-term cultivation are not eligible for support.</p> <p>4) The first afforestation of non-agricultural land</p> <p>Financial support for the first afforestation of non-agricultural land will be provided through the Woodland Grant Scheme (WGS), which will support the establishment costs of first afforestation on non-agricultural land. 70% of aid will be paid at establishment with the balance in five years. Support will also be available towards additional costs associated with providing woodland for public access use.</p> <p>Landowners growing Christmas trees are not eligible for support towards first afforestation of non-agricultural land.</p>
	Measure 2.6	Forest environments

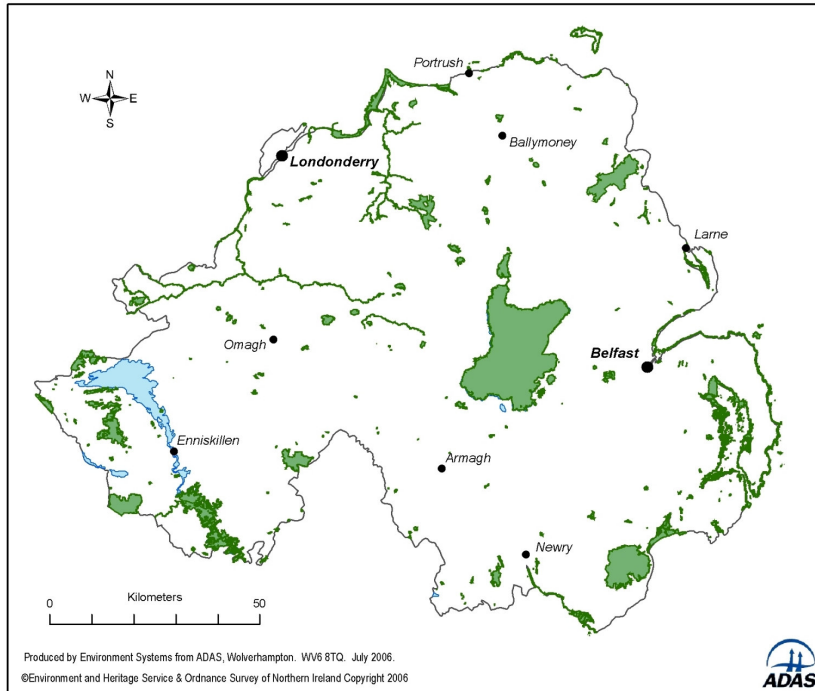
	Objective	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To secure significant environmental benefits through the enhancement of biodiversity. To improve the public amenity of woodlands while preserving high value forest ecosystems, by reinforcing the protective value of forests in respect of soil, water and natural hazards. To assist in achieving the expansion, maintenance, enhancement or restoration targets set out in the native woodland Habitat Action Plans, or benefits to the habitats of those woodland species covered by the Species Action Plan.
	Synopsis	<p>1. Support for forest environment actions will be available under the Sustainable Forestry Operations Grant Scheme.</p> <p>For participants who make a voluntary commitment to undertake agreed forest-environment actions to improve the ecosystems within private forests and woodlands and prevent damage by domestic and wild animals. Includes ongoing maintenance required to control invasive and for the clearance of stream-sides and other open ground. Commitments will be for 5 years and standards will exceed the relevant mandatory requirements. Forest environment payments will be predominantly aimed at semi-mature and mature woodland areas, although premature woodlands may, in some cases, be eligible for payments.</p> <p>2. Support may be provided under a Woodland Environment Grant for one-off financial commitments to achieve environmental objectives or to enhance the public amenity value of existing forests but which do not lead to any significant increase in the value or profitability of the forestry holding.</p> <p>For one-off capital payments for environment projects such as fencing to prevent the entry of rabbits and deer and the eradication of animals such as grey squirrels, also for improvements in public amenity value infrastructure such as pathways, access and car parking to facilitate public access. In addition, subject to state aid approval assistance to forest owners to restore woodland following harvesting.</p>
Axis 3	The quality of life in rural areas and diversification of the rural economy	
	Measure 3.1	Diversification into non-agricultural activities
	Objective	To maintain or increase the income of the farm households through the creation of employment opportunities in non-agricultural activities and services
	Synopsis	<p>This Measure will provide support to members of a farm household who wish to diversify into non-agricultural activities , through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Grant aid towards the costs of capital investment; Marketing support Bespoke training to facilitate diversification, where not available from another provider Technical support
	Measure 3.2	Business creation and development
	Objective	To create employment opportunities through promoting entrepreneurship and developing the economic infrastructure in rural areas
	Synopsis	This Measure will provide support to existing micro enterprises or to persons wishing to set up a new micro enterprise in a non-agricultural business.

	Measure 3.3	Encouragement of tourism activities
	Objective	To use the natural resources in Northern Ireland's rural areas to create new employment opportunities and develop the rural economy
	Synopsis	This Measure will provide support to existing rural tourism enterprises or to persons wishing to set up a new rural tourism enterprise.
	Measure 3.4	Basic Services for the economy and rural population
	Objective	To improve or maintain the living conditions and welfare of those living in rural areas and to increase the attractiveness of such areas through the provision of more and better basic services for the economy and the rural population.
	Synopsis	This Measure will support the improvement of basic services in rural areas, including cultural and leisure activities and related small-scale infrastructure.
	Measure 3.5	Village renewal and development
	Objective	To support integrated village initiatives which promote community development and regeneration.
	Synopsis	This Measure will support capacity building within and between villages and their surrounding rural areas, the improvement of the village environment and the provision of community areas.
	Measure 3.6	Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage
	Objective	To use the natural resources in Northern Ireland's rural areas to create new employment opportunities and develop the rural economy through supporting local village initiatives to preserve and upgrade their rural heritage
	Synopsis	This Measure will support local small-scale projects to conserve or enhance the natural or cultural rural heritage.
Axis 4	Implementation of the Leader approach	
		The LEADER approach is based on a strategic community partnership led process and will be the primary mechanism for the delivery of Axis 3 measures.

Appendix 2: Designations and Other Spatial Characteristics of Northern Ireland¹¹

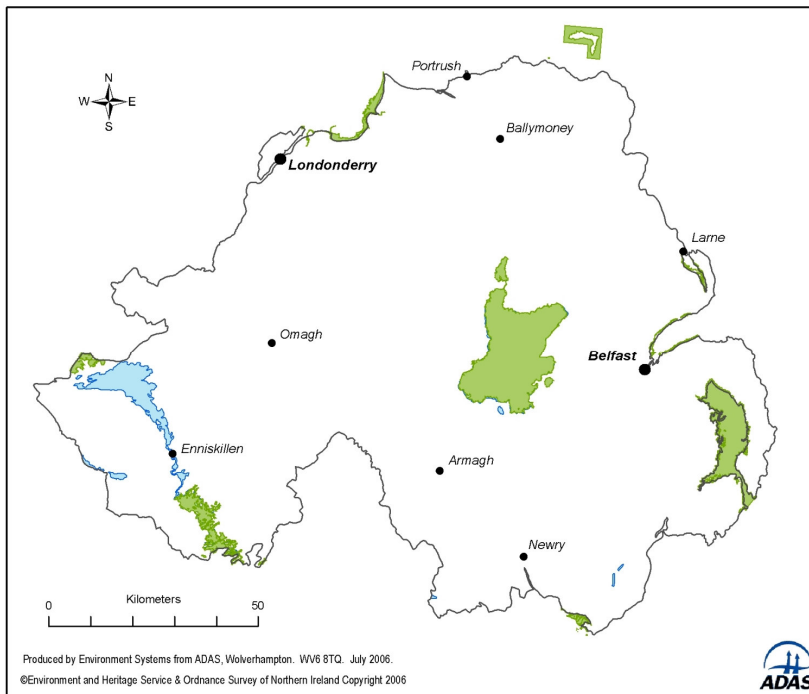
Biodiversity, fauna and flora

Map 1: Areas of Special Scientific Interest

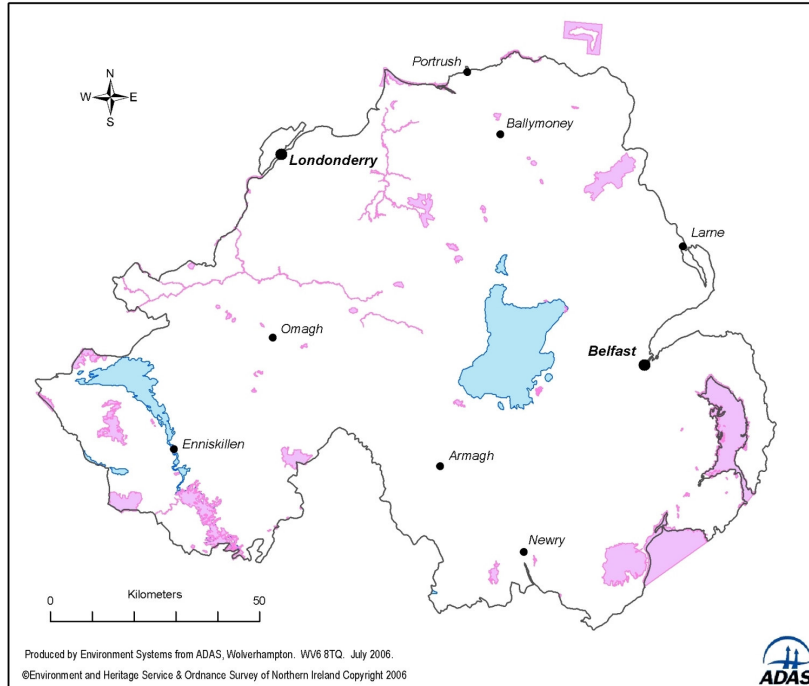


¹¹ The process of designation is not yet complete – more sites will be designated within the life of the NI RDP

Map 2: Special Protection Areas*



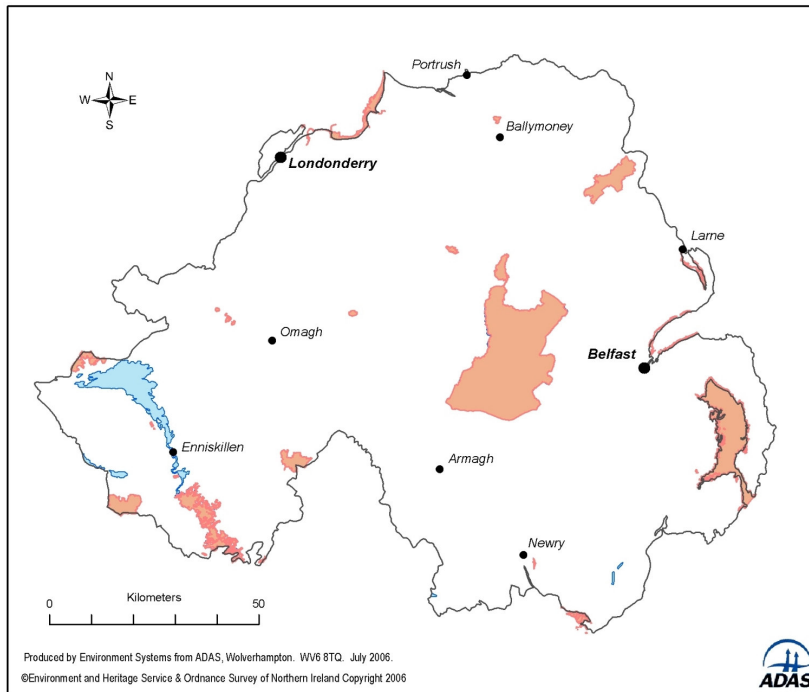
Map 3: Special Areas of Conservation*



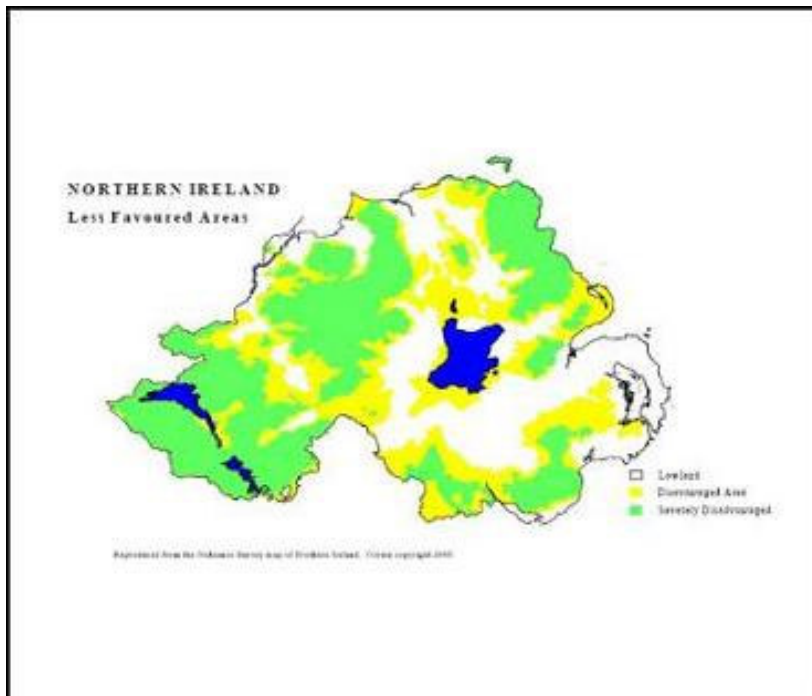
* Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are designated under the European Commission Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (The Birds Directive).

* SACs are designated under the Habitats Directive

Map 4: Ramsar Sites#



Map 5: Less Favoured Areas



Sites are designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat – Ramsar Convention

Source: DARDNI Less Favoured Area Statistics 2005 <http://www.dardni.gov.uk/section8.pdf> 29-06-06

Map 6: Environmentally Sensitive Areas



Source: <http://eservices.ruralni.gov.uk/environment/countryside/schemes/index.htm> 27-06-06

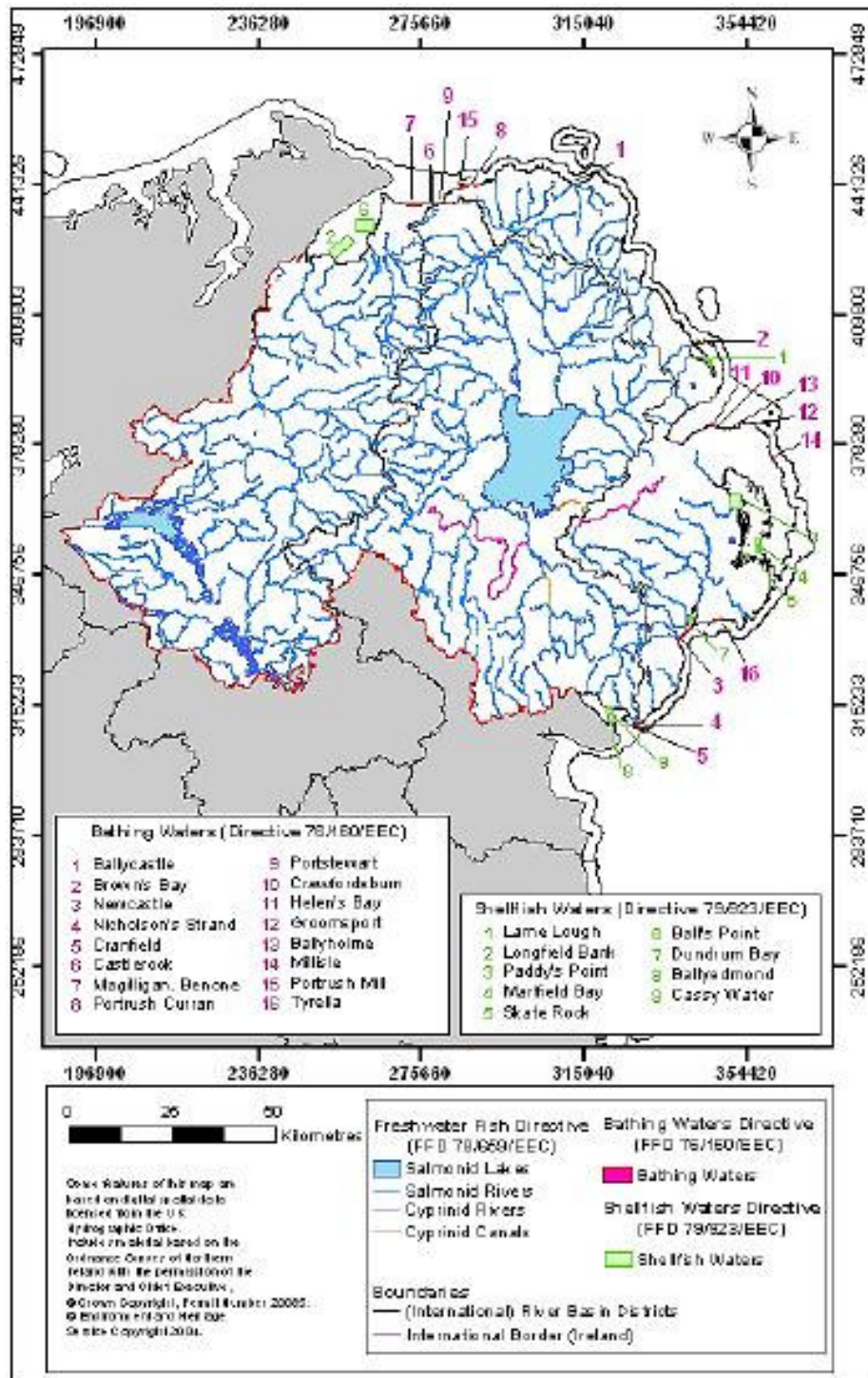
Figure 2: Northern Ireland Priority Habitats

PRIORITY HABITAT	STATUS IN NORTHERN IRELAND
Upland mixed ashwoods	Widespread but limited extent, small proportion of UK/Irish area
Upland oakwood	Local and limited extent, small proportion of UK/Irish area
Wet woodland	Widespread but limited extent
Lowland woodland pasture and parkland	Local
Ancient and/or species rich hedgerows	Widespread and high proportion of UK resource
Cereal field margins	Very local, small proportion of UK/Irish resource but rapidly declining and important for several priority species
Lowland meadows	Very local, but probably significant proportion of UK area and rapidly declining
Lowland dry acid grassland	Local
Purple moor grass and rush pastures	Large proportion of UK resource (especially Fermanagh)
Upland calcareous grassland	Significant proportion of UK resources (especially Western Fermanagh Uplands)
Lowland heathland	Significant proportion of UK resources (especially Mourne and Rathlin) and rapidly declining
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	Large proportion of UK resources (especially around Lough Neagh and Lough Erne)
Fens	Large proportion of UK resource (especially in East and West Lowlands)
Reedbeds	Widespread but limited extent
Lowland raised bog	Large proportion of UK resource (especially Bann Valley and Western Lowlands)
Aquifer-fed naturally fluctuating water	Fermanagh contains the main area for turloughs in the UK
Eutrophic standing waters	Large proportion of UK resources (especially Lough Neagh and Lough Erne and throughout the East and West Lowlands) and declining in quality
Mesotrophic lakes	Large proportion of UK resources occur around upland margins
Marl lakes*	Important local concentrations occur in the limestone areas of Fermanagh
Crowfoot rivers*	Widespread and important for priority species
Montane heath*	Very local and confined to the highest mountains and declining
Upland heathland	Widespread but declining (especially in Mourne)
Blanket bog	High proportion of UK/Irish resource (in all upland areas)
Maritime cliffs and slopes	Widespread (especially the Causeway Coast and Rathlin Island)
Coastal sand dunes	Moderate proportion of UK/Irish resource (mainly at Magilligan, the Causeway Coast and Dundrum Bay)
Coastal vegetated shingle	Poorly represented
Mudflats	Moderate proportion of UK/Irish resource occurs in sea loughs
Sheltered muddy gravels	Sea Loughs e.g. Lough Foyle
Coastal saltmarsh	A relatively small proportion of UK/Irish resource (mainly in sea loughs)
Maerl beds	Scattered (extensive examples off the north–east Antrim coast)
Mud habitats in deep water	Sea Loughs e.g. Carlingford Lough
Saline lagoons	Very local a relatively small proportion of UK/Irish resource (occurs in sea loughs)
Seagrass beds	Well developed on littoral sediment but less extensive on inshore sediment (occurs in sea loughs)
<i>Sabellaria alveolata</i> reefs	Restricted to Mourne Coast
<i>Modiolus modiolus</i> beds	Important part of the UK resource, several examples occur (particularly extensive in Strangford Lough)
Tidal rapids	Important part of the UK resource, well developed in Strangford Lough
Sub-littoral sands and gravels	Widely found around the coast, extensive sub-littoral sands occur in Dundrum Bay
Limestone pavement	Moderate examples compared with GB and Ireland (restricted to the West Fermanagh Uplands)

* not UK priority habitats

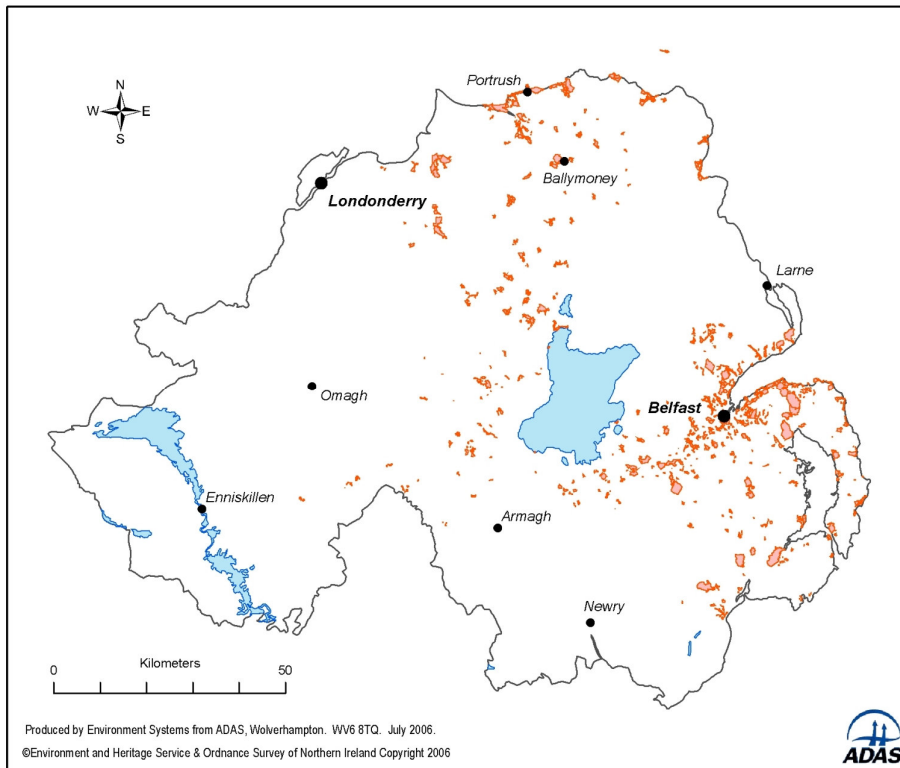
Source: Biodiversity In Northern Ireland Recommendations to Government for a Biodiversity Strategy
Northern Ireland Biodiversity Group October 2000

Map 7 Designated Water areas*



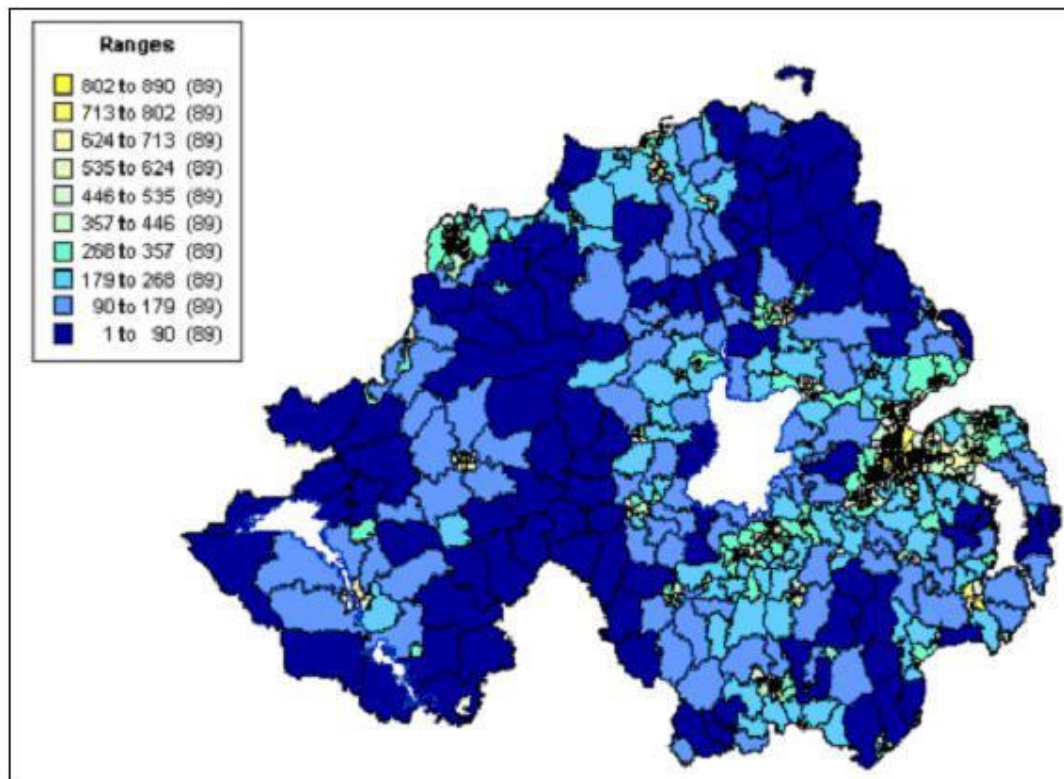
* Source: Environment and Heritage Service
http://www.ehnsi.gov.uk/pubs/publications/GBNI_RPA_EconSig.pdf

Map 8: Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance



Human health

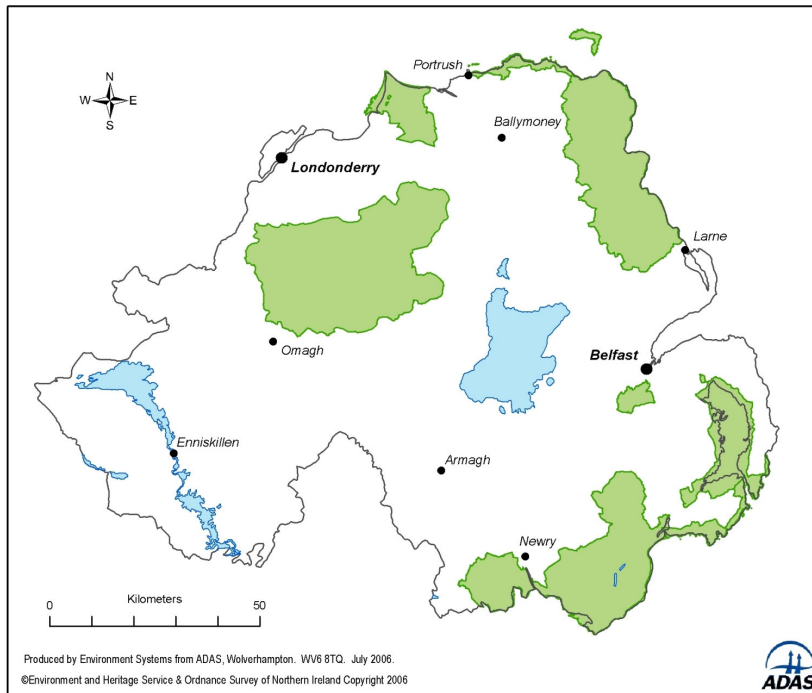
Figure 3: Access to Services[®]



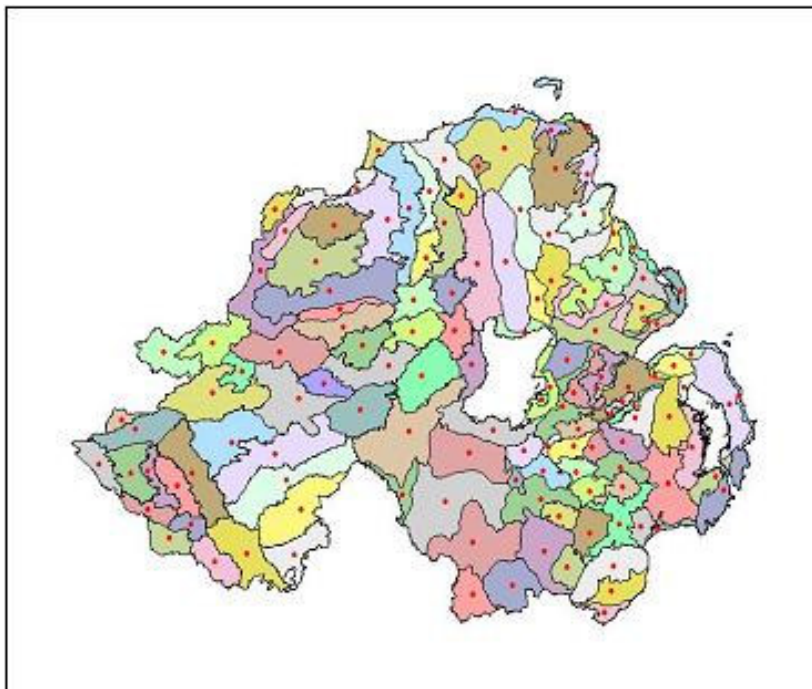
[®] Source: Rural Policy Perspectives – Assessing Rural Sustainability and Change – Rural Development Council 2006

Landscape

Map 9: Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty

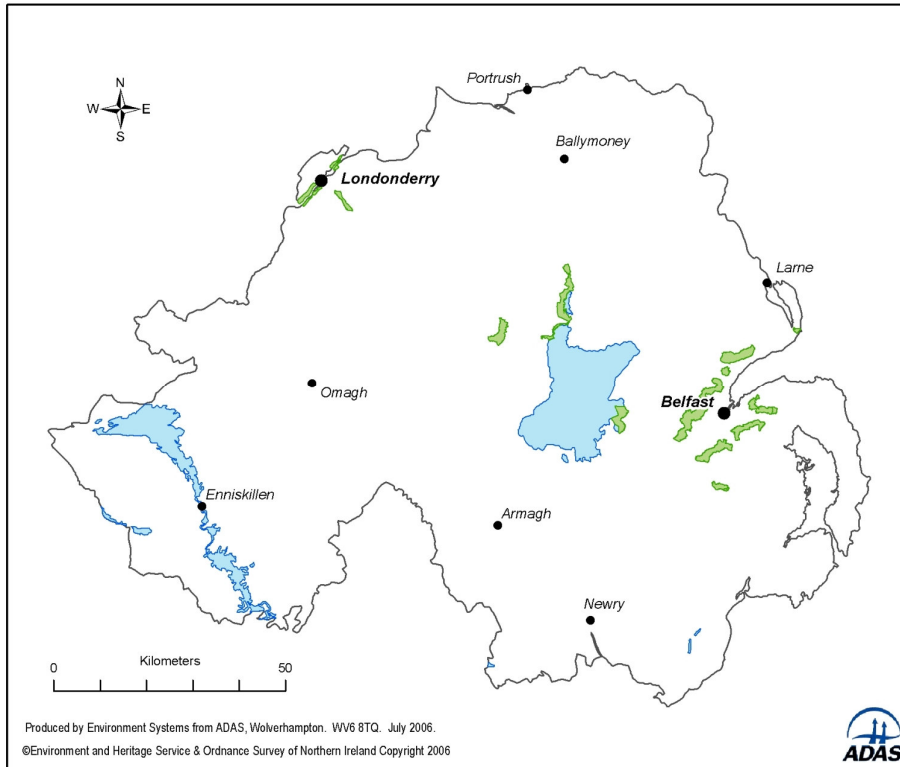


Map 10: Landscape Character Areas

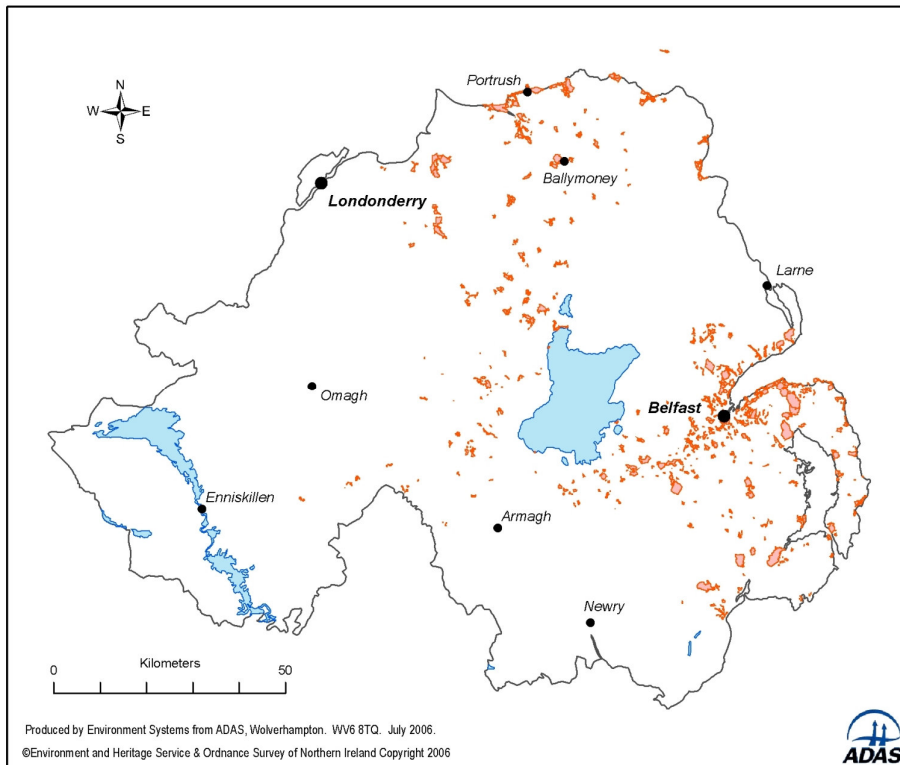


Source: http://www.ehsni.gov.uk/natural/country/country_landscape.shtml 27-06-06

Map 11: Areas of High Scenic Value



Map 12: Local Landscape Policy Areas



Material assets – Population - Cultural heritage

Figure 4: The Northern Ireland Spatial Development Framework^⓪

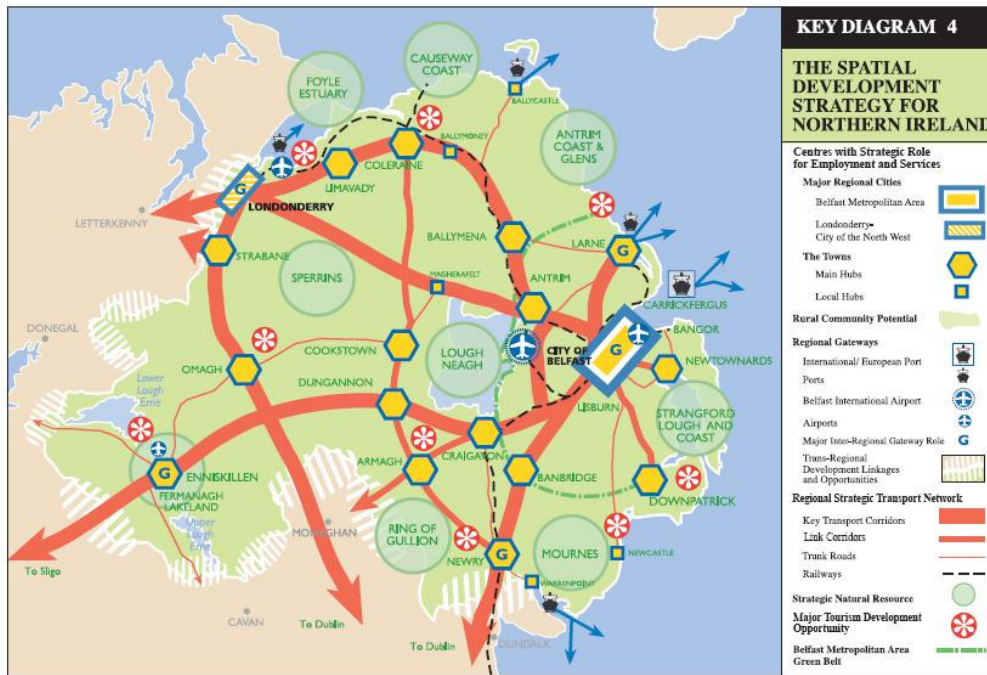
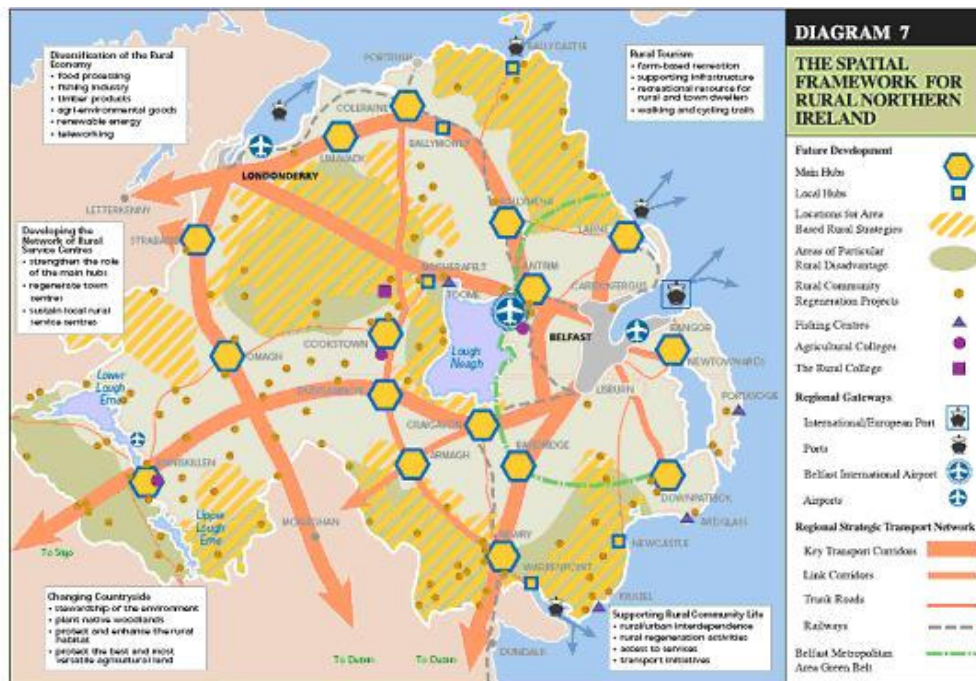
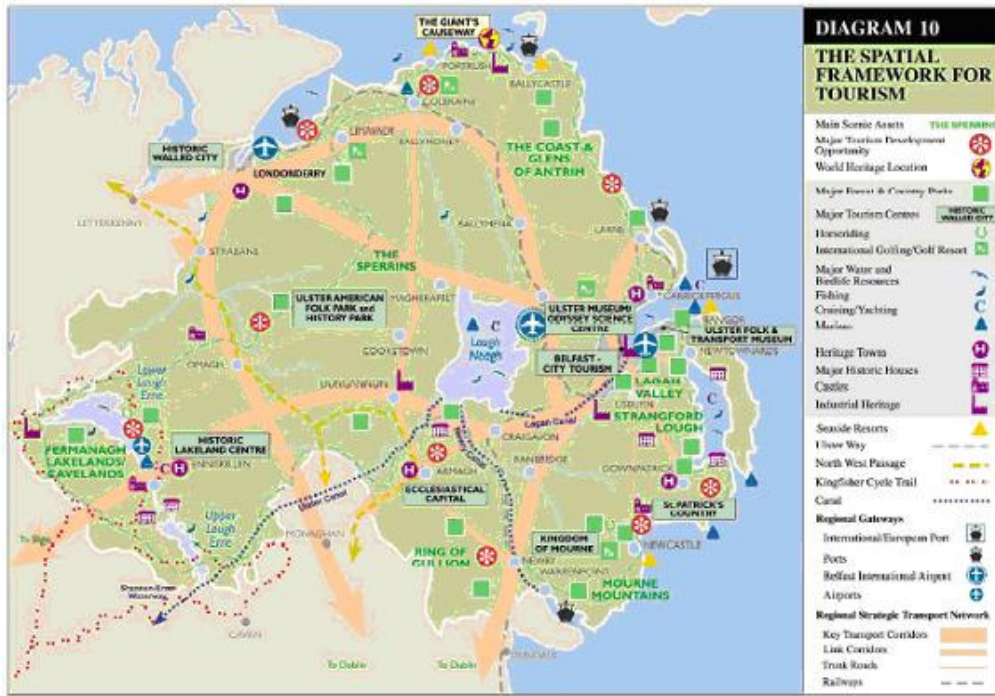


Figure 5: The Rural Spatial Development Framework^⓪



^⓪ Source: Shaping Our Future Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 Department for Regional Development

Figure 6: The Tourism Spatial Development Framework



Appendix 3: Summary of previous programme evaluations

Document Title	Description	Environmental impacts
<p>Environmentally Sensitive Areas in Northern Ireland: Monitoring and Evaluating the ESA Scheme between 1993 and 2003 (March 2004)</p>	<p>The Environmentally Sensitive Area (ESA) Scheme was introduced in 1988 to help safeguard areas of the countryside where the landscape, wildlife or historic interest is of particular importance. Each ESA has a significant environmental interest, in terms of landscape, ecological or heather moorland. There are five designated areas in Northern Ireland.</p>	<p>“Plant and invertebrate species richness of sampled habitats under ESA agreement has been maintained.”</p> <p>There were “indications of enhancement of plant and invertebrate communities on habitats under agreement.”</p> <p>“Decreases in soil fertility on wet pasture, limestone grassland and hay meadows in the West Fermanagh and Lakeland ESA are likely to be due to reduced fertiliser inputs on grasslands under agreement. This may have led to changes in plant species composition and should in the long-term increase species diversity.”</p> <p>“Monitoring of grassland sites in the West Fermanagh and Lakeland ESA indicates that the scheme has been successful in maintaining the condition of semi-natural grasslands.”</p> <p>“The effects of grazing exclusion on woodlands under ESA agreement are as yet unclear.”</p> <p>There was “evidence to suggest that the ESA scheme has generally been successful in the maintenance and enhancement of biodiversity on target habitats.”</p> <p>Attitude studies showed “an apparent shift to a position of greater understanding for the environment and wildlife. However the main reason stated for joining agri-environment schemes is the increased farm income.”</p> <p>“The results of landscape monitoring between 1995 and 1998 showed a continued rise in ESA scheme participation with the consequent increase in areas of threatened habitat under the protection of the scheme.”</p>
<p>Mid-term evaluation of the Northern Ireland LEADER+ Programme</p>	<p>The objective of the Northern Ireland LEADER + Programme is: ‘to increase the economic and employment contribution that very small businesses, including small farms, make to the rural economy by encouraging local partnerships to test out new approaches to micro-business development and, where beneficial, to work in collaboration with similar partnerships in other rural areas’.</p>	<p>Difficult to define specific environmental impacts as “the specification of targets across the Local Action Group (LAG) strategies was weak”.</p> <p>“The micro-business focus of the Northern Ireland programme does not lend itself particularly to outright environmental projects.”</p> <p>“At this stage of the programme it is too early to assess the impact that these arrangements are having on the environment.”</p>

Document Title	Description	Environmental impacts
Mid-term evaluation of Interreg IIIa (Nov 2003)	INTERREG III is designed to strengthen economic and social cohesion throughout the EU, by fostering the balanced development of the continent through crossborder, transnational and inter-regional cooperation. INTERREG III is financed through the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF).	<p>“The environmental impact assessment revealed that Measure 1.4 and 2.1 have the potential to result in negative impacts on the environment. The findings show that at this early stage in the Programme the Development Path Analysis has not yet been conducted on approved projects and this should be undertaken across all Measures and in particular in respect of the two aforementioned Measures.”</p> <p>" The potentially negative impacts on the environment arise in the areas of economic and infrastructure investment under Measure 1.4 and 2.1 as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Measure 1.4 ‘Rural Development Initiative’; this Measure aims to promote growth in economic development. The environmental impact assessment noted that such growth could lead, among other negative impacts, to an increase in the use of resources and in the level of transport. To negate this, environmentally sustainable economic activities would help minimise the negative impact; and • Measure 2.1 ‘Inter-regional Economic Infrastructure’; this Measure aims to support Enterprise Parks which could potentially result in increased level of transport whilst Telecommunications activities supported under the Measures could potentially result in the establishment of masts. However, on the other hand, shared water resources in Enterprise Parks could reduce environmental impacts and increased use of ICT could lead to reductions in transport levels. Therefore the environmental side effects of activities supported under this Measure could be potentially traded-off."
Mid-term Evaluation of Building Sustainable Prosperity (BSP) 2000-2006	The Northern Ireland Programme for Building Sustainable Prosperity and the new Peace Programme (referred to as ‘Peace II’) operate together under the authority of the Northern Ireland Community Support Framework (CSF).	<p>Two of the 5 priorities have direct environmental impacts: Priority 4 Agriculture, rural development, forestry and fisheries: “The review of payment rates showed that Priority 4 is making slow progress. This is not immediately obvious from the output indicator for projects and programmes receiving support. Attainment on this output indicator is estimated at 33 %, which compares with the Performance Reserve target for end-2003 of 38 %.”</p> <p>Priority 5 Environment: “This Priority is on course to meet its targets for both water and sewage treatment schemes. According to the latest information from DRD, two water treatment schemes were fully complete and one scheme was 45 % complete. Similarly, one sewage treatment scheme has been completed while the second was 95 % complete.”</p>

Document Title	Description	Environmental impacts
Mid-Term evaluation of PEACE II Programme and mid-term update	The mid term update reviews the implementation of the mid term evaluation recommendations and assesses progress of the PEACE II Programme to date.	The three indicators are not measured by environmental impacts. These are: number of participants, individuals achieving accreditation and jobs created.
Mid-term evaluation of Measures funded by EAGGF	This is a mid-term evaluation of measures funded by European Agriculture Guidance and Guarantee Fund from which four DARD programmes receive funding. The four programmes are: BSP 2000-2006; PEACE II; the Rural Development Regulation Plan (Accompanying Measures) for Northern Ireland 2000-2006; the LEADER+ Programme 2001-2006.	<p>The monitoring arrangements for the fund are “not specifically based on the common evaluation questions (CEQs) and will not, in and of themselves, enable the CEQs to be answered at the time of the ex-post evaluation.”</p> <p>BSP - Forestry - “The CEQs have a strong focus on economic impact. This is limiting as the objectives of the Forestry measure in Northern Ireland focuses on the environmental, landscape and recreational benefits from woodlands. There is therefore a mismatch between the focus of the CEQs and the current forestry schemes in Northern Ireland.”</p> <p>Adaptation and development of rural areas - “Impacts are being monitored at a project level and we have concerns about the consistency of this monitoring and its effect on subsequent grossing up to measure level.”</p> <p>PEACE II - Promoting the adaptation and development of rural areas - Impacts are being monitored at a project level and we have concerns about the consistency of this monitoring and its effect on subsequent grossing up.</p> <p>Less Favoured Areas - impact indicators are inadequate and DARD’s means of measuring the success of LFACA should be revised.</p> <p>Forestry - This measure is making good progress. It is well managed and monitored. Short rotation coppicing has a target, but there has been limited uptake due to the lack of a market.</p> <p>“Clearly it is always difficult to establish whether maximum benefit has been obtained for the agri-food, forestry and fishing sectors and the broader community. In many cases, there are factors out of the control of scheme managers including market demand, which has affected uptake of the both the Organic Farming Scheme and the woodland schemes. For the agri-environment schemes the payments relate mostly to preserving and enhancing public goods rather than benefit to the sectors alone.”</p> <p>Secondly it “is too early to assess the full impact of the Rural Development Regulation Plan. For example, with the Processing and Marketing grant under Chapter VII, the delayed start means that it is too early to see measurable impacts, and therefore too early to draw conclusions regarding the scheme’s effectiveness.”</p>

Document Title	Description	Environmental impacts
Short internal review of focus farms	The main objective of the Focus Farm programme is to facilitate farmer led learning using farm businesses to promote the adoption of good production, business and environmental practice.	One of the targets – “Farmers adopting better practices as a result of visiting Focus Farms” – achieved 2270 (making changes) and 3106 (more business-like) out of an overall target of 2530.
Review of Support from Government for Farm Diversification in Northern Ireland.	This review is a response to the recommendation that “Government must strive to ensure that this creates an enhanced environment for entrepreneurship and for the creation of alternative employment and diversification opportunities for farmers”.	No direct environmental indicators or impacts.
Mid-Term Evaluation of Rural Development Programme in Northern Ireland 2001 - 2006	The Rural Development Programme lays out the plan and rationale for funding provision in Northern Ireland. The central aim is “to promote comprehensive and integrated action towards sustainable and equitable development in rural areas and, in doing so, contribute to the economic environmental, social and cultural well-being of the rural community for the benefit of the whole economy of Northern Ireland.”	The impacts of the programme are yet to be realised, as of December 2005 only 44% of funding had been spent (however 81% had been allocated). Also the time of writing of the MTE Rural Development Programme, an SEA was not required and as such there is limited environmental information available in the report.

Appendix 4: Summary of relevant base line indices

Biodiversity, fauna and flora							
Indicator	Measurement	Data	Unit	Data boundary	Source	Year	Trend
Biodiversity: population of farmland birds	Trends of index of population of farmland birds (2000 = 100)	97.0		UK region	Eurostat: PECBM (Pan-European Common Bird Monitoring)	2003	
	Lapwing population	n/a	1000	NI	RSPB,CEDar	2006	
	Yellowhammer population	n/a	1000	NI	RSPB,CEDar	2006	
Biodiversity: high nature value farmland areas	UAA High Nature Value farmland areas	0.2	Million ha (indicative) of UAA	NUTS1	European Environment Agency: UAA of High Nature Value Farmland areas	1999 or 2000	
	OFS, CMS and ESA higher tier options		hectare	NI	DARD	2006	Gradual increase
	Irish Hare population	60.0	1000	NI	EHS CEDar	2005	Gradual increase
	Invertebrate Community		%	NI	EHS CEDar	2005	
Biodiversity: tree species composition	% of Forest and Other Wooded Land predominantly coniferous	95.6	%	NI	MCPFE 2003	various years - see MCPFE 2003	Static
	% of Forest and Other Wooded Land predominantly broadleaved	2.0	%	NI	MCPFE 2004	various years - see MCPFE 2004	Gradual increase
	% of Forest and Other Wooded Land mixed	2.5	%	NI	MCPFE 2005	various years - see MCPFE 2005	Gradual increase
	CMS and ESA farm woodland and scrub	3000.0	hectare	NI	DARD	2006	Gradual increase

Natura 2000 area	% UAA under Natura 2000 (SCI)	1.2	%	NUTS 1	IRENA 4	2004	
	% of territory under Natura 2000	2.8	%	NUTS 1		2005	
	% forest under Natura	5.4	%	NUTS 1		2000	
Biodiversity: protected forest	% FOWL area protected under MCPFE class 1.1	46.0	%	NUTS1	MCPFE 2003	2000/2002	
Development of forest area	Average annual increase of forest and other wooded land area	0.6	500 ha per year	NI		2000-2005	Gradual increase
Forest ecosystem health	% of trees (all species) in defoliation classes 2-4	N/A	% of sampled trees	NUTS1	ICP 2005	2004	
	% of conifers in defoliation classes 2-4	44.0	% of sampled trees	NUTS1	ICP 2005	2004	
	% of broadleaved in defoliation classes 2-4	18.0	% of sampled trees	NUTS1	ICP 2005	2004	

Biodiversity, fauna and flora							
	Measurement	Data	Unit	Data boundary	Source	Year	Trend
Ramsars	Cumulative number and area of sites	18 (87,769.2)	Ha	NUTS 1	EHS DRD	2005	
ASSI	Cumulative number and area of sites	211 (92663.18)	Ha	NUTS 1	EHS DRD	2005	
SPAs	Cumulative number and area of sites	13 (72549.26)	Ha	NUTS 1	EHS DRD	2005	
SACs	Cumulative number and area of sites	52 (44,419)	Ha	NUTS 1	EHS DRD	2005	
AONBs	Cumulative number and area of sites	9 (284948)	Ha	NUTS 1	EHS DRD	2005	
Nature reserves	Cumulative number and area of sites	64 (5586.7)	Ha	NUTS 1	EHS DRD	2005	
New woodland created	Area of new woodland created	500.0	Ha	NI	DARD	2004	Gradual increase
Area of woodland managed sustainably	Certified against DARD standards	64200.0	Ha	NUTS1	DARD	2004	Static
ESAs	Area of agreements in ESA Schemes		Ha	NI	DARD	2006	Increase
CMS	Area of agreements in CMS		Ha	NI	DARD	2006	Increase
NI BAP Priority Habitats	Area under ESA/CMS Agreement		Ha	NI	DARD	2006	Increase

Climatic factors and air							
Indicator	Measurement	Data	Unit	Data boundary	Source	Year	Trend
Climate change: production of renewable energy from agriculture and forestry	Production of renewable energy from agriculture	8.0	kToe	UK region	EurObserER	2004	
	Production of renewable energy from forestry (Wood and wood wastes)	1034.0	kToe	UK region	Eurostats: Energy Statistics	2003	
Climate change: UAA devoted to renewable energy	UAA devoted to energy and biomass crops	88.6	1000 ha	UK region	DG AGRI	2004	
Climate change: GHG emissions from agriculture	Agricultural emissions of greenhouse gases	4900.0	Kt of CO2	NUTS 1	Eurostat	2003	Static
	OFS and CMS and ESA higher tier options		Ha	NI	DARD	2006	Increase
Climate change: production of renewable energy from agriculture and forestry	Production of renewable energy from agriculture	9.0	ktons	UK region	EurObserER	2004	
Climate change: production of renewable energy from agriculture and forestry	Production of renewable energy from forestry (Wood and wood wastes)	1034.0	kToe	UK region	Eurostat	2003	
Climate change: UAA devoted to renewable energy	UAA devoted to energy and biomass crops	88.6	1000 ha	UK region	DG AGRI	2004	

Cultural heritage							
Indicator	Measurement	Data	Unit	Data boundary	Source	Year	Trend
Protected areas of environmental quality	Areas of townscape village character	53.0	Number Adopted in Plans	NUTS 1	Planning Service	2005	
Protected areas of environmental quality	Landscape character assessment areas	130.0	Number	NUTS 1	DoE/EHS	2005	
Protected areas of environmental quality	Conservation areas	59.0	Number	NUTS 1	DoE/EHS	2004	Increase
Number of sites and monuments schedule	Number of sites and monuments scheduled under the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order	1650.0	Number	NUTS 1	EHS	2004	Increase
Number of Archaeological sites	Number of Archaeological sites	14500.0	Number	NUTS 1	EHS	2005	
Traditional farm buildings & features	Number of relevant enhancement projects in ESA/CMS agreements		Number	NI	DARD	2006	Increase
	No. of historic monument on ESA/CMS land		Number	NI	DARD	2006	
Community involvement	Share of population covered by Local action Groups	34.6	%	NUTS 1			

Human health

Indicator	Measurement	Data	Unit	Data boundary	Source	Year	Trend
Access to services	Proportion of service use within beacon communities	40.0	Percent	Beacon communities in NI	Rural Policy Perspectives - Assessing rural sustainability and change - Beacon communities		

Landscape							
Indicator	Measurement	Data	Unit	Data boundary	Source	Year	Trend
AONBs	Cumulative number and area of sites	9 (284948)	Ha	NUTS1	EHS DRD	2005	
Protected areas of environmental quality	Landscape character assessment areas	130.0	Number	NUTS 1	DoE/EHS	2005	
ESA and CMS	Area of agreement in ESA		ha		DARD	2006	
	Area of agreement in CMS		ha		DARD	2006	
	Length of hedgerow restored		Km		DARD	2006	
	Area of farm woodland/scrub		ha		DARD	2006	
	Area of NI BAP Priority Habitats		ha		DARD	2006	
Protected areas of environmental quality	Local Landscape Policy Areas	320.0	Number in adopted plans	NUTS 1			
Protected areas of environmental quality	Areas of High Scenic Value						
NI BAP Priority Habitats	Area under ESA/CMS Agreement		Ha		DARD	2006	
Protected areas of environmental quality	Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance	134.0	Number in adopted plans	NUTS 1	Planning Service	2005	No Data

Material assets							
Indicator	Measurement	Data	Unit	Data boundary	Source	Year	Trend
Protected areas of environmental quality	Conservation areas	59.0	Number	NUTS 1	DoE/EHS	2004	Increase
Number of sites and monuments schedule	Number of sites and monuments scheduled under the Historic Monuments and Archaeological Objects (NI) Order	1650.0	Number	NUTS 1	EHS	2004	Increase
Number of Archaeological sites	Number of Archaeological sites	14500.0	Number	NUTS 1	EHS	2005	
Number of Listed Buildings	Number Listed	35.0	Number	NUTS 1	NI Annual Abstracts of Statistics 2003-4 and EHS	2004	
Number of Listed Buildings	Number Delisted	53.0	Number	NUTS1	NI Annual Abstracts of Statistics 2003-4 and EHS	2004	
Vernacular buildings remaining in NI from 1909	Percentage intact	12.0	%	NUTS1	EHS	2005	
Traditional farm buildings	Number restored in ESA/CMS enhancement plans		Number		DARD	2006	
Ramsars	Cumulative number and area of sites	18 (87,769.2)	Ha	NUTS 1	EHS DRD	2005	
ASSI	Cumulative number and area of sites	211 (92663.18)	Ha	NUTS 1	EHS DRD	2005	
SPAs	Cumulative number and area of sites	13 (72549.26)	Ha	NUTS 1	EHS DRD	2005	
SACs	Cumulative number and area of sites	52 (44,419)	Ha	NUTS 1	EHS DRD	2005	
AONBs	Cumulative number and area of sites	9 (284948)	Ha	NUTS 1	EHS DRD	2005	
Nature reserves	Cumulative number and area of sites	64 (5586.7)	Ha	NUTS 1	EHS DRD	2005	

Population							
Indicator	Measurement	Data	Unit	Data boundary	Source	Year	Trend
Population density	population density	119.8	hab./km2	NUTS 2	Eurostat Regional Statistics	2003	
Age structure	% people aged (0-14 y.o.)	22.0	%	NUTS 2	Eurostat - Population Census	2001	
Age structure	% people aged (15-64 y.o.)	64.7	%	NUTS 2	Eurostat - Population Census	2001	
Age structure	% people aged (>=65 y.o.)	13.3	%	NUTS 2	Eurostat - Population Census	2001	
Rural employment accessible rural	Proportion of workforce in full time employment	36.0	%	NUTS1	Family Resources Survey Urban rural Report Northern Ireland	2003	
Rural employment less accessible rural	Proportion of workforce in part time employment	36.0	%	NUTS1	Family Resources Survey Urban rural Report Northern Ireland	2003	
Rural employment accessible rural	Proportion of workforce in employment	12.0	%	NUTS1	Family Resources Survey Urban rural Report Northern Ireland	2003	
Rural employment less accessible rural	Proportion of workforce in employment	9.0	%	NUTS1	Family Resources Survey Urban rural Report Northern Ireland	2003	
Rural employment accessible rural	Proportion of workforce in full time self employed	12.0	%	NUTS1	Family Resources Survey Urban rural Report Northern Ireland	2003	
Rural employment less accessible rural	Proportion of workforce in full time self employed	12.0	%	NUTS1	Family Resources Survey Urban rural Report Northern Ireland	2003	
Rural employment accessible rural	Proportion of workforce in part time self employed	2.0	%	NUTS1	Family Resources Survey Urban rural Report Northern Ireland	2003	
Rural employment less accessible rural	Proportion of workforce in part time self employed	1.0	%	NUTS1	Family Resources Survey Urban rural Report Northern Ireland	2003	

Population							
Indicator	Measurement	Data	Unit	Data boundary	Source	Year	Trend
Numbers of farmers	Full Time	18159.0	Number	NUTS1	Northern Ireland Agricultural Census	2005	Decrease
Numbers of farmers	Part Time	14367.0	Number	NUTS1	Northern Ireland Agricultural Census	2005	Decrease
Numbers of workers	Full Time	2553.0	Number	NUTS1	Northern Ireland Agricultural Census	2005	Decrease
Numbers of workers	Part Time	2514.0	Number	NUTS1	Northern Ireland Agricultural Census	2005	Decrease
Total workforce	Self employed and employees	30520.0	Number	NUTS1	Northern Ireland Agricultural Census	2005	Decrease
Numbers resident in rural areas	Residents in rural reas defined on settlement basis	588651.0	Number	NUTS1	Population Census	2001	

Soil							
Indicator	Measurement	Data	Unit	Data boundary	Source	Year	Trend
Soil: Areas at risk from soil erosion	Areas at risk of soil erosion	0.2	Ton/ha/year	NUTS 2	JRC	2004	
Soil: Organic farming	Utilised Agricultural Area under organic farming	5.9	Thousands ha	NUTS 1	Institute of Rural Studies, University of Wales, Aberystwyth (copyright: Nicolas Lampkin) / Eurostat - Farm Structure Survey	2003	
	Area under OFS agreement		Ha		DARD	2006	
Peatlands under threat	Area of peatland under environmental management agreements		ha		DARD	2006	

Water							
	Measurement	Data	Unit	Data boundary	Source	Year	Trend
Water quality: Gross nutrient balances	Surplus of Nitrogen	117.9	kg/ha	NUTS 1	European Environment Agency:IRENA	2000	
Water quality: Pollution by nitrates and pesticides	Trends in the concentrations of nitrate in surface waters	91.3	mg/l, 1992-1994=100	UK region	European Environment Agency	2000-2002	
Water quality	% territory designated as Nitrate Vulnerable Zone	100.0	%	NUTS 1	DG ENV.	2005	
	Area per River Basin District under ESA/CMS agreement		Ha		DARD/EHS	2006	
	Number of ESA/CMS agreements in NI River SACs		Number		DARD/ EHS	2006	
Water use	% irrigated 'UAA'	0.1	%	NUTS 1	Eurostat (FSS)	2003	
Water quality: Gross Nutrient Balances	Surplus of Nitrogen	45.0	kg/ha	UK region	European Environment Agency	2000	
Water quality: Pollution by nitrates and pesticides	Trends in the concentrations of nitrate in surface waters	91.3	mg/l, 1992-1994=100	UK region	European Environment Agency	2000-2002	
Chemical quality of river waters	Percentage classed as very good	11.8	%		EHS	2002-2004	Increase
	Percentage classed as good	46.1	%		EHS	2002-2004	Decrease
	Percentage classed as fairly good	27.4	%		EHS	2002-2004	Increase
	Percentage classed as fair	7.8	%		EHS	2002-2004	Decrease
	Percentage classed as poor	5.8	%		EHS	2002-2004	Decrease
	Percentage classed as bad	1.1	%		EHS	2002-2004	Increase
	Biological quality of river waters	Percentage classed as very good	13.2	%		EHS	2004
Percentage classed as good		37.9	%		EHS	2004	N/A
Percentage classed as fairly good		33.5	%		EHS	2004	N/A
Percentage classed as fair		13.0	%		EHS	2004	N/A

Water							
	Measurement	Data	Unit	Data boundary	Source	Year	Trend
Biological quality of river waters (cont'd)	Percentage classed as poor	2.2	%		EHS	2004	N/A
	Percentage classed as bad	0.2	%		EHS	2004	N/A
Compliance with EC Freshwater Fish Directive	Percentage of water complying with EC Freshwater Fish Directive - Rivers	90.4	%		EHS	2004	N/A
Compliance with EC Freshwater Fish Directive	Percentage of water complying with EC Freshwater Fish Directive - Lakes	9.1	%		EHS	2004	N/A
Compliance in drinking water standards set in NI Water Regulations 2001 to 2003	Percentage compliance	99.31	%		EHS	2003	Increase
Compliance with Urban Waste Water Treatment Directive 2001 – 2004	Percentage compliance	43	%		EHS	2004	
Quality of coastal bathing waters	Mandatory compliance	94	%		EHS	2005	
Quality of coastal bathing waters	Guideline compliance	68.75	%		EHS	2005	
Bathing waters complying with EC bathing Water Directive Coliform Standards 2002 and 2005	Percentage compliance	94	%		EHS	2005	
Percentage of waters complying with EC Shellfish Water Directive 2001-2004	Percentage compliance	100	%		EHS		

Water							
	Measurement	Data	Unit	Data boundary	Source	Year	Trend
	Abundance of consented Fish farms in the Programme Area	Fish farms in NI 40 Fish hatcheries in NI 24 Shell hatcheries in NI 7			EHS		
	Percentage Water Bodies that are at risk as derived under System B of the Water Framework Directive	Rivers 97.8 Coastal 95 Lakes 95.8 Transitional 100 Groundwater 22.4	%				

Appendix 5: Review of Plans, Programmes and Policies

International Conventions/Agreements and European legislation

Document Title	Objectives/requirements of the Plans / Programmes	Implications for the RDP and SEA
Air Quality Framework Directive 1996/62/EC	<p>This Directive covers the revision of previously existing legislation and the introduction of new air quality standards for previously unregulated air pollutants, setting the timetable for the development of daughter directives on a range of pollutants. The list of atmospheric pollutants to be considered includes sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter, lead and ozone – pollutants governed by already existing ambient air quality objectives- and benzene, carbon monoxide, poly-aromatic hydrocarbons, cadmium, arsenic, nickel and mercury.</p> <p>Establishes mandatory standards for air quality and sets limits and guides values for sulphur and nitrogen dioxide, suspended particulates and lead in air.</p>	<p>The RDP should help to improve air quality and ensure that standards for air quality are not exceeded. The SEA should include objectives on air quality.</p>
Århus Convention	<p>The Århus Convention establishes a number of rights of the public (citizens and their associations) with regard to the environment. Public authorities (at national, regional or local level) are to contribute to allowing these rights to become effective. The Convention provides for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The right of everyone to receive environmental information that is held by public authorities. This can include information on the state of the environment, but also on policies or measures taken, or on the state of human health and safety where this can be affected by the state of the environment. Public authorities are obliged, under the Convention, to actively disseminate environmental information in their possession; ▪ The right to participate from an early stage in environmental decision-making. Arrangements are to be made by public authorities to enable citizens and environmental organisations to comment on, for example, proposals for projects affecting the environment, or plans and programmes relating to the environment. ▪ The right to challenge, in a court of law, public decisions that have been made without respecting the two aforementioned rights or environmental law in general. <p>The Convention creates obligations in three fields or 'pillars':</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Public access to environmental information ▪ Public participation in decision-making on matters related to the environment: 	<p>Public consultation and access to information supporting the decision-making process must be introduced in the procedures for drawing up of RDP. The SEA Directive requires that public consultation is carried out on the Draft Plan and its accompanying Environmental Report.</p>

Document Title	Objectives/requirements of the Plans / Programmes	Implications for the RDP and SEA
	<p>provision</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Access to justice (i.e. administrative or judicial review proceedings) in environmental matters. 	
Convention on Biodiversity, Rio de Janeiro (1992)	The convention requires development of strategies plans and programmes for conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity.	The RDP should aim to facilitate the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. The SEA should include objectives on protecting and enhancing biodiversity.
Council Directive 1999/30/EC on Ambient Air Quality Limits	This Directive reached a common position across European Member States for the setting of Limit Values for sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, particulate and lead. The directives prescribe how they should be assessed in a way that covers the entire EU territory, in terms that are sometimes general and sometimes specific, how the assessment should be reported to the Commission as well as to the public and when reduction plans should be developed to reduce the pollutant concentrations where they are too high.	The RDP should ensure that standards for air quality are not exceeded. The SEA should include objectives on air quality.
EC Directive on Conservation of Wild Birds 79/409/EEC 1979	Member States have the duty to sustain populations of naturally occurring wild birds by sustaining areas of habitats in order to maintain populations at ecologically and scientifically sound levels. This applies to birds, their nests and habitats.	The strategy should be to promote this aim by promoting biodiversity and avoiding/reducing habitat fragmentation. The SEA should include objectives on biodiversity.
EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats of Wild Fauna and Flora 92/43/EEC 1992	Maintain or restore in a favourable condition designated natural habitat types and habitats of designated species listed in Annexes I and II respectively of the Directive. If a project compromising one of these habitats must proceed in spite of negative conservation impacts due to it being in the public interest, compensatory measures must be provided for. Linear structures such as rivers/streams, hedgerows, field boundaries, ponds, etc., that enable movement and migration of species should be preserved.	<p>Accept the primacy of nature conservation objectives and clearly take note of these designations in setting SEA objectives and defining options in the RDP.</p> <p>Ensure the locations of designated sites are clear and taken into account in any options.</p> <p>Prioritise policies that avoid or result in minimal damage to designated areas.</p> <p>Review the extent to which policy options would damage or destroy these features, or sever habitats over a wide area or long distance, and use less damaging options or appropriate mitigation measures.</p>
Environment 2010: Our Future, Our Choice (EU Sixth)	The latest Environment Action Programme gives a strategic direction to the European Commission's environmental policy over the decade 2001 - 2010, as the Community expands its boundaries.	In developing policies the plan makers need to be aware of these strategies and consider how their programme can positively influence

Document Title	Objectives/requirements of the Plans / Programmes	Implications for the RDP and SEA
Environment Action Programme)	<p>The programme identifies four environmental areas to be tackled for improvements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Climate Change ▪ Nature and Biodiversity ▪ Environment and Health and Quality of Life ▪ Natural Resources and Waste <p>Recognises that land use planning and management decisions in the Member States can have a major influence on the environment, leading to fragmentation of the countryside and pressures in urban areas and the coast. Also includes objectives on stabilising greenhouse gases, halting biodiversity loss, reducing pollution and resource use. Under the EAP framework, Thematic Strategies are being developed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Air quality ▪ Soil Protection ▪ Sustainable use of Pesticides ▪ Waste Prevention and Recycling ▪ Sustainable Use of Natural Resources ▪ Urban Environment 	<p>issues such as air quality, soil protection, the sustainable use of pesticides, natural resource use, waste prevention and recycling.</p>
European Commission White Paper on the European Transport Policy (2001)	<p>This paper describes what has been achieved so far both at the Union and the Member State levels and what should be done in the near future.</p> <p>The principal measures suggested in the White Paper include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Revitalising the railways ▪ Improving quality in the road transport sector ▪ Striking a balance between growth in air transport and the environment ▪ Turning inter-modality into reality ▪ Improving road safety ▪ Adopting a policy on effective charging for transport ▪ Recognising the rights and obligations of users ▪ Developing high-quality urban transport ▪ Developing medium and long-term environmental objectives for a sustainable transport system 	<p>The RDP should aim to contribute to these aims by setting appropriate objectives and measures to protect the environment.</p>
European Noise Directive 2002	<p>On 3rd January 2002, a new EU Noise Directive came into force, which has a big impact on the outdoor power equipment industry. The new directive affects all outdoor equipment used in the UK, such as domestic lawnmowers and trimmers,</p>	<p>The RDP should aim to ensure the avoidance, reduction and mitigation of man-made noise in rural areas.</p>

Document Title	Objectives/requirements of the Plans / Programmes	Implications for the RDP and SEA
	<p>and outdoor power equipment used at stadiums, golf courses, public gardens, cemeteries, etc. - either through labelling stating the noise level emitted, or by a label and sound power limits. In total 22 types of equipment are subjected to limits and labelling, whilst a further 57 types of equipment are subject to labelling alone. Some examples of the first category include compressors, welding equipment, lawnmowers, power generators and earth moving equipment, whilst second category examples include brush cutters, chain saws, conveyor belts, trenchers and water pump units.</p>	
European Spatial Development Perspective 1999	<p>By adopting the ESDP, the Member States and the Commission reached agreement on common objectives and concepts for the future development of the territory of the European Union.</p> <p>The aim of spatial development policies is to work towards a balanced and sustainable development of the territory of the European Union. The ESDP aims to ensure that the three fundamental goals of European policy are achieved equally in all the regions of the EU:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Economic and social cohesion; ▪ Conservation and management of natural resources and the cultural heritage; ▪ More balanced competitiveness of the European territory. <p>European cultural landscapes, cities and towns, as well as a variety of natural and historic monuments are part of the European Heritage. Its fostering should be an important part of modern architecture, urban and landscape planning in all regions of the EU.</p> <p>A big challenge for spatial development policy is to contribute to the objectives, announced by the EU during international conferences concerning the environment and climate, of reducing emissions into the global ecological system.</p>	<p>The RDP should consider the impacts it may have on natural resources and historic environments. The SEA should include objectives on natural resources (e.g. soil) and cultural heritage.</p>
Johannesburg Declaration of Sustainable Development 2002	<p>This declaration was signed at the World Summit on Sustainable Development, where the principles of international commitment to sustainable development were reaffirmed, 30 years after the Stockholm Summit and ten years after the Rio Declaration of 1992.</p> <p>Undertake to strengthen and improve governance at all levels, for the effective implementation of Agenda 21.</p>	<p>The RDP should consider the aims of the declaration and try to contribute to towards their achievement.</p>
Kyoto Protocol	<p>Signing up to the 1997 Kyoto Protocol, 38 Countries (plus the EU) have committed to individual, legally binding targets to limit or reduce their greenhouse gas emissions. These add up to a total cut in greenhouse-gas emissions of at least 5% from 1990 levels in the commitment period 2008-2012. The UK has committed to an</p>	<p>The RDP should ensure all reasonable opportunities are taken forward to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and promote renewable energy and higher energy</p>

Document Title	Objectives/requirements of the Plans / Programmes	Implications for the RDP and SEA
	<p>8% reduction (base year = 1990). Achieve a reduction in anthropogenic CO2 levels to at least 5% below 1990 levels by 2012. Consider afforestation and reforestation as carbon sinks.</p>	<p>efficiency. The SEA should include objectives on climatic factors.</p>
Ramsar Convention	<p>The Ramsar Convention on wetlands of international importance especially as waterfowl habitat (1971) provides a framework for the conservation of wetlands and their resources. 146 parties signed the convention with 1469 wetland sites, totalling 128.9 million hectares, designated for inclusion in the Ramsar List of Wetlands of International Importance.</p> <p>The mission of the Ramsar Convention is "the conservation and wise use of all wetlands through local, regional and national actions and international cooperation, as a contribution towards achieving sustainable development throughout the world".</p> <p>Contracting Parties are requested to make a commitment to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Designate at least one site that meets the Ramsar criteria for inclusion in the List of Wetlands of International Importance. ▪ Protect the ecological character of listed sites. ▪ Include wetland conservation within their national land-use planning. ▪ Establish nature reserves on wetlands and promote wetland training. ▪ Consult with other Contracting Parties about the implementation of the Convention. 	<p>To support this convention the RDP should reduce impacts on wetlands and where possible encourage the enhancement and restoration of wetland habitats. The SEA should include objectives on biodiversity.</p>

Document Title	Objectives/requirements of the Plans / Programmes	Implications for the RDP and SEA
Water Framework Directive 2000/60/EC	<p>The Water Framework Directive seeks to protect surface freshwaters, estuaries, transitional waters, coastal waters and groundwater. It sets environmental objectives focused on ecological quality, which take account of the full range of pressures upon the aquatic environment (pollution, abstraction, flow regulation/transfer and habitat impact). Ecological quality is divided into five classes (high, good, moderate, poor and bad) and is derived from measurements of biological, hydro morphological and physio-chemical elements. The Directive also promotes the sustainable use of water resources that include drinking water sources and nature conservation sites. It defines a planning, management and reporting system centred on River Basin Districts and International River Basin Districts. These are based upon river catchment basins and associated groundwater. The Directive involves social participation and transparency along with an economic analysis of water use. Member States have to involve as many parties as possible (e.g. stakeholders, local and regional authorities, water users and environmental groups) in drafting, discussing and updating River Basin Management Plans. The primary aim of the Water Framework Directive is to achieve 'good' status for all waters by 2015' It has the following key aims:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Expanding the scope of water protection to all waters, surface waters and groundwater ▪ Achieving "good status" for all waters by a set deadline ▪ Water management based on river basins ▪ "Combined approach" of emission limit values and quality standards ▪ Getting the prices right ▪ Getting the citizen involved more closely ▪ Streamlining legislation 	<p>The RDP should contribute to the objectives of the framework by minimising negative impacts on water resources. The SEA should include objectives on water resources.</p>

Document Title	Objectives/requirements of the Plans / Programmes	Implications for the RDP and SEA
EC Freshwater Directive 78/659/EEC	<p>The Freshwater Directive seeks to protect freshwater bodies identified by member states as water suitable for sustaining fish populations. It requires that certain designated stretches of water (rivers, lakes or reservoirs) meet quality standards that should enable fish to live or breed in the designated water, although this will also depend on physical conditions. The Directive identifies two categories of water; those suitable for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • salmonid fish (salmon and trout) - these are generally fast flowing stretches of river that have a high oxygen content and a low level of nutrients • cyprinid fish (coarse fish - carp, tench, barbel, rudd, roach) - these are slower flowing waters, that often flow through lowlands The Directive sets different standards for salmonid and cyprinid waters. 	<p>The RDP should contribute to the protection of the chemical and physical quality of stretches of water identified by the state under this Directive. The SEA should include objectives on water quality and biodiversity.</p>
EC Shellfish Directive 79/923/EEC	<p>The Shellfish Directive seeks to protect and improve shellfish waters in order to support shellfish life and growth and contribute to the high quality of shellfish products directly edible by man. The Directive sets physical, chemical and microbiological water quality requirements that designated shellfish waters must either comply with or endeavour to meet.</p>	<p>The RDP should contribute to the protection of shellfish sites designated under this Directive. The SEA should include objectives on water quality and biodiversity.</p>
Bathing Water Directive 76/160/EEC	<p>The objective of the Bathing Water Directive is to protect public health and the environment from faecal pollution at bathing waters. The Directive requires Member States to identify popular bathing areas and monitor the bathing waters for indicators of microbiological pollution throughout the bathing season which runs from May to September. A revised Bathing Water Directive (2006/7/EC) came into force on 24 March 2006 and must be transposed into UK law within two years of this date. Key changes include a tightening of water quality standards and a requirement to provide information about bathing waters to the public.</p>	<p>The RDP should consider the impacts it may have on bathing water quality. The SEA should include objectives on water quality.</p>

National (UK) Plans, Policies & Programmes

Document Title	Objectives/requirements of the Plans / Programmes	Implications for the RDP and SEA
Climate Change: The UK Programme (2001)	The UK's climate change programme sets out Government's and the devolved administrations' approaches to the challenge of climate change. It explains why the climate is changing and what its effects might be. Moreover, it explains the new measures the Government and the devolved administrations are introducing to reduce emissions further and achieve the UK's climate change targets, Also explains how climate change is expected to affect the UK, how the UK might need to adapt, and the action the Government and the devolved administrations have started to take to prepare for this.	The programme should promote measures to improve energy efficiency by stimulating both investment in energy saving and cost cutting actions targeted at reducing carbon emissions. The SEA should include objectives relating to climate change.
Our energy future - creating a low carbon economy' (2003) - UK white paper on energy	The white paper defines a long-term strategic vision for energy policy combining our environmental, security of supply, competitiveness and social goals. The implementation of the White Paper is being taken forward via the Sustainable Energy Policy Network (SEPN).	The program needs to help deliver the goal of reducing carbon emissions. The program should encourage adoption of regulations to improve energy efficiency in all building works. The program should also support the use of renewable energy and other low carbon technologies.
UK Biodiversity Action Plan - UK BAP (Defra, 1994)	The UK BAP is the UK Government's response to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) signed in 1992. It describes the UK's biological resources, and commits a detailed plan for the protection of these resources. It contains 391 Species Action Plans, 45 Habitat Action Plans and 162 Local Biodiversity Action Plans with targeted actions. Overall objectives are to maintain, promote and enhance biodiversity.	The program should contribute to the overarching strategy of species and habitat protection and enhancement. Specifically it must help to achieve the specific targets set out in the 6 local biodiversity action plans in Northern Ireland
Securing the Future – UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy (2005)	This strategy aims to promote sustainable development. It contains <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Five principles (with a more explicit focus on environmental limits) ▪ Four agreed priorities (sustainable consumption and production, climate change, natural resource production and sustainable communities) ▪ A new indicator set with new indicators such as on well being The new objectives included within the strategy are: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Living within environmental limits ▪ Promoting good governance ▪ Using sound science responsibly 	The program must help to deliver the measures set out in the sustainable development action plan for Northern Ireland. It should also take account of the Community Action 2020 program, providing skills training and improved access to funding and mentoring. The SEA should address the protection of natural resource and enhancement of the environment set out in the strategy, which specifically includes environmental stewardship to incentivise farmers to deliver environmental benefit.

Document Title	Objectives/requirements of the Plans / Programmes	Implications for the RDP and SEA
UK Air Quality Strategy (ODPM, 2000 amended in 2003)	<p>This Strategy describes the plans drawn up by the Government and the devolved administrations to improve and protect ambient air quality in the UK in the medium-term. The plan sets a number of air quality objectives for pollutants including sulphur dioxide, nitrogen dioxide, particulate matter, lead and ozone.</p> <p>The purpose of the air quality strategy is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ To provide the best practicable protection to human health by setting health based objectives for eight main air pollutants (objectives are maximum recommended exposure levels). ▪ To contribute to the protection of the natural environment by setting objectives for two pollutants (nitrogen and sulphur dioxide) for the protection of vegetation and ecosystems. 	<p>The programs need to reflect the inclusion of eight specified pollutants within the strategy, the majority of which are sourced from fuel combustion especially petrol and diesel in road transport. The SEA should include objectives on air quality considered appropriate.</p>
Climate Change The UK Programme (2006)	<p>The devolved administrations are committed to making an equitable contribution to efforts aimed at meeting the UK's Kyoto target, moving towards the UK's national goal.</p>	<p>The programme should recognise the potential of crop derived fuels to mitigate for transport related emissions; the potential for biomass from crops for heat and electricity generation to meet renewable energy commitments; the contribution forestry can make to reduction of carbon dioxide emissions by carbon uptake and the use of wood to substitute for energy intensive materials such as concrete and steel.</p> <p>An steering group representing the Department for Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP), DETI and DOE is overseeing the development of proposals for a renewable energy policy for DARD. The program should be compatible with this policy. The SEA should include objectives on climate change.</p>

Regional Plans, Policies & Programmes

Document Title	Objectives/requirements of the Plans / Programmes	Implications for the RDP and SEA
Draft Planning Policy Statement 14	<p>Reinforces the commitment to conserve the landscape and natural resources of the rural area and to protect them from excessive, inappropriate or obtrusive development and from the actual and potential effects of pollution.</p> <p>The aim of PPS 14 is: To manage development in the countryside in a manner consistent with achieving the strategic objectives of the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025.</p> <p>The objectives of PPS 14 are: To manage growth in the countryside to achieve appropriate and sustainable patterns of development that meet the essential needs of a vibrant rural community; to conserve the landscape and natural resources of the rural area and to protect it from excessive, inappropriate or obtrusive development and from the actual or potential effects of pollution; to facilitate development necessary to achieve a sustainable rural economy; and to promote high standards in the design, siting and landscaping of development in the countryside.</p>	<p>The RDP should aim to help in achieving sustainable patterns of development whilst recognising the constraints on development set out in PPS14 relating to investments on farms, re-use and adaptation of existing buildings, the nature of their use and issues such as scale and character, as well as the particular constraints of particularly sensitive areas designated as Special Conservation Areas. The SEA should include objectives relating to sustainable communities, heritage and landscape.</p>
Economic Vision for Northern Ireland	<p>The Economic Vision for Northern Ireland recognises the importance of encouraging sustainable development of the tourism industry, shaping the implementation of a broadly based strategy for the growth of the Northern Ireland agri-food sector and ensuring that those in the rural community have access to programmes to upskill and reskill.</p> <p>The Economic Vision identifies the following key drivers for the future development of the Northern Ireland economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase investment in R&D and promote innovation/creativity. • Promote and encourage enterprise. • Ensure our people have the right skills for future employment opportunities. • Ensure we have modern infrastructure in place to support business and consumers. 	<p>The RDP should aim to support the innovation and growth of agri-food and other businesses including encouraging local companies to grow and compete globally, helping to ensure tourism potential is realised, and support networks and programmes of benchmarking and public procurement. It should support comprehensive and integrated action towards sustainable and equitable development of disadvantaged rural areas. Business development should also include support for improving skills and competence and cluster development.</p>
Environment NI - A Vision for the Future	<p>Outlines EHS's vision for Northern Ireland's environment. Three areas are considered –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving the environment, • changing public attitude and behaviour and • environmental sustainability- <p>The Vision covers 13 measures, each with clear targets.</p>	<p>The programme should help in improving the environment including biodiversity, improved water quality, improved protection for priority habitats and species, protection of landscapes, sustainable conservation of listed and heritage environment.</p> <p>The SEA should include objectives relating to climate, biodiversity, cultural heritage, water quality.</p>

Document Title	Objectives/requirements of the Plans / Programmes	Implications for the RDP and SEA
Natural Heritage Strategic Plan	Sets out the direction, which EHS plans to follow in its work on conserving the natural heritage of Northern Ireland. It has no fixed timetable; it seeks to define not so much the rate at which we will progress but the routes that we will take.	The RDP should support improvements in conservation of biodiversity, freshwater quality issues, promote sustainable development, support the management of sites of special scientific interest and help in addressing climate change issues. The SEA should include objectives on biodiversity, climate and water quality.
Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy	Aims to develop economic activity in the most deprived neighbourhoods and connect them to the wider economy. Typical activities involve encouraging investment and business development in the most deprived communities; helping people in the most deprived communities overcome barriers to work such as poor transport or lack of suitable childcare; supporting training and transport schemes that can help people get to the jobs that are available elsewhere; and supporting social economy programmes that can encourage community and social enterprises.	Fostering the most deprived rural neighbourhoods should be included in the programme including support for promoting balanced community development, equitable access to employment, and protection and enhancement of the natural and built environments including the vitality and viability of rural town centres. The SEA should include objectives relating to the development of the rural population.
NI Waste Management Strategy 2006-2020	Sets out plans to modernise waste management policies and practices to take account of new EU directives and recent advances in waste management technologies. Recognizes the need for an approach that realises the resource potential and opportunities in waste. Waste prevention is the fundamental principle with disposal being the last resort and this approach needs to become integral to our thinking at home and for business.	The RDP should recognise and not frustrate, the specific waste regulations that apply to farming and the management of farm waste, and support related biodiversity, landscape, water, and sustainable use of natural resources. Including reducing buildings at risk and sustainable conservation in re-use of heritage assets. The SEA should include biodiversity, water, landscape and natural resource objectives.
Northern Ireland Forestry - A Strategy For Sustainability And Growth	Focuses on how more forests can be created and the sustainable management of existing forests. Target at present is to secure an additional 1,500 hectares of forest area by 2008	Support for the increase in sustainable management of forests and an increase in new afforestation (including transfer from agriculture) should feature in the RDP. This should include fostering increase access, measures to control pests and sympathetic and sustainable land use including improvements in biodiversity. Relevant SEA objectives will be on biodiversity and landscape.

Document Title	Objectives/requirements of the Plans / Programmes	Implications for the RDP and SEA
Regional Development Strategy – Shaping Our Future	<p>A comprehensive policy framework for the development of Northern Ireland up to 2025. The Strategy is an important reference document for Government Departments in the development of policies and programmes and the setting of funding priorities. The overarching vision of the Regional Development Strategy fits well with that of the current Rural Development Programme and accords well with the direction mapped out in this draft Rural Strategy. The Strategy dedicates an entire chapter (Chapter 8) to the strategic importance of the rural economy in Northern Ireland, stating that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural Northern Ireland is a diverse area with a distinctive settlement pattern, formed from a rich mosaic of main and small towns, villages and dwellings in the open countryside that is unique within the UK; • The rural community has experienced the fastest rate of population growth, reversing a long-term trend of population decline and reflecting, in part, the success of rural regeneration activities; • In the open countryside, the largest growth of population over the past 25 years has been in the Belfast 'travel to work' hinterland, reflecting the trend to use the countryside as a residential area for townspeople; • A notable feature and asset for the future of rural society is the vibrant community life in rural areas expressed through the many community organisations, churches and community activities; <i>and</i> • The Regional Development Strategy Landscape Character Assessment for all of Northern Ireland illustrates that in many areas, the delicate and high quality rural landscape and the visual amenity of the countryside is compromised or threatened by inappropriate development. These growing pressures present a threat to the open countryside, which is a vital resource for sustaining the rural community. 	<p>The RDP should support decentralised growth focused on a balanced and integrated approach to the development of rural communities. This should include issues associated with employment, renewal and revitalisation of towns and villages, accessibility to employment, services and amenities, and enhance the natural and built heritage. It should recognise the designation of the most deprived rural areas and the countryside protection areas. The SEA should include objectives on cultural heritage and population.</p>
Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy	<p>Sets out a series of actions to protect and enhance biodiversity in Northern Ireland. The Strategy contains 76 recommendations aimed at halting Northern Ireland's biodiversity loss by 2016. The majority of the recommendations are for Government to achieve and an independent Biodiversity Group has been appointed to oversee the achievement of these recommendations.</p>	<p>The RDP should help to redress the loss of biodiversity in Northern Ireland, recognising the need for increased knowledge and understanding and the positive interaction with sustainable tourism.</p>
Shared Horizons - Statement of Policy on Protected Landscapes	<p>Sets out the issues associated with the protection and sustainable use of Northern Ireland's finest landscapes and indicates the way in which we plan to address them. These areas fall within the internationally recognized description of 'Protected Landscapes' and are usually recognized by some form of designation, which sets them apart from the wider countryside.</p>	<p>The RDP should recognise the fragility and diversity of protected landscapes. The SEA objectives should include Landscape.</p>

Document Title	Objectives/requirements of the Plans / Programmes	Implications for the RDP and SEA
Sustainable Development Strategy	This Strategy represents the first steps in establishing the focus for tackling the challenges ahead toward the long term objective of securing a better future for the present generation and protecting the future for generations to come. The principles underpinning the strategy recognise the need to link actions to ensure a healthy environment, a thriving economy, prosperity and quality of life.	There should be some emphasis on biodiversity and water quality issues and related agricultural activities, help reduce economic inequalities, improve skills and qualifications, help in developing a strong diverse rural economy and help in increasing the development of indigenous renewable energy sources.

Appendix 6: Assessment of environmental effects

Note: Based on programme as presented including proposed mitigation measures. Scoring takes balanced view of overall impact. Significant positive or negative impacts are noted where they are felt to occur.

Scale: from -3 potential for major negative impact to + 3 potential for major positive impact 0 = neutral, N/A not considered applicable. Some assessment criteria will contain two numerical value; this is demonstrative of both positive and negative effects.

Axis	Measure	Biodiversity, fauna and flora	Soil	Water	Air	Climate	Landscape	Cultural Heritage	Population	Health	Material assets	Comments
1	1.1 Vocational training	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1	+2	The 3 Schemes will cover cross compliance issues and environmental issues which should address areas 1-6 positively the degree dependent on conditions of the schemes. Area 7 will be addressed positively by enhancing competitiveness in farming, areas 9 and 10 through helping farmers adjust and easing new burdens and 10 through guidance on maintaining viable businesses
1	1.2 Adding value to Ag. Products	0	0	0	-1, +1	-1, +2	-2, +1	-1, +1	+1	+1	+2	Effect will be largely localised, impacts likely to be largely neutral to generally positive owing to improved resource efficiencies in food distribution, conditions demand environmental compliance and preclude non essential import of raw materials. There is encouragement for development of organic and regional distinctiveness. There may be some intrusion into the landscape for large projects. Nice product projects linked to landscape and heritage will support environmental goals. Localising supply chains by adding value should reduce transport and have positive impact on climate
2	2.1 LFA Compensatory Allowances	0	0	0	0	0	+1	+2	+2	+1	+1	Rationale for the support based on of setting natural disadvantage of hill farming through helping maintain viable rural society, maintaining the countryside and promoting sustainable farming. Focus is about maintaining farming in these areas. Cross compliance and adherence to environmental requirements are conditions of payment.

Axis	Measure	Biodiversity, fauna and flora	Soil	Water	Air	Climate	Landscape	Cultural Heritage	Population	Health	Material assets	Comments
2	2.2 Man Ag Land within Natura 2000 areas	+3	+1	+2	0	0	+2	+2	0	0	+1	Focus is enhanced payments for management of land in or adjacent to these designated areas. Objective is to reverse biodiversity decline. Payments for certain essential capital enhancement works are covered.
2	2.3 Agri-environment Programme	+3	+1	+2	0	+1	+2	+1	+1	+1	+1	Objective is enhanced environmental management of agricultural land and will include incentive to reduce fertiliser and pesticide usage. Includes support for Organic farming. Payments are for commitments that exceed statutory requirements for conservation of wild birds, ground water protection, protection of the environment, use of sewage sludge, nitrate pollution, and conservation of natural habitats. Also supports breeding of endangered agricultural species.
2	2.4 Animal Health and Welfare Planning Scheme	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	The aim is to raise standards within the cattle and sheep sectors.
2	2.5 First Afforestation of Agricultural Land	-1, +3	0	+1	+1	+2	+1	-1, +1	-1	+1	N/A	Objective is to improve forest resources thereby contributing to the protection of the environment and helping to mitigate climate change. Potential for damage to archaeological and environmental sites. Proposals that will have significant impact on the environment will be subject to Environmental Impact Assessment. Support includes short rotation coppice. Forests as a resource for recreation should have health benefits. Encourages combination of extensive agriculture and forestry systems that have high ecological value.
2	2.6 Forest environment payments	+3	+2	+2	0	-1, +1	+1	0	0	0	+1	Aims to enhance biodiversity, preserve high value forest ecosystems, respect forest value in regard to soil erosion, and water quality. Also supports increased public access and amenity which could cause some increase in transport use.

Axis	Measure	Biodiversity, fauna and flora	Soil	Water	Air	Climate	Landscape	Cultural Heritage	Population	Health	Material assets	Comments
3	3.1 Diversification into non-agricultural activities	0	0	0	-1	-1	-1, +1	+1	+2	+1	+1	Aim is to maintain or increase farm family income. It is assumed that conditions relating to environmental neutral or enhancement will be required. Benefits will be through some fostering of cultural heritage through restored buildings, visitor attractions etc, families maintained in rural area and less stress from better financial position. Some climate negative effect from tourism and traffic could ensue.
3	3.2 Business creation and development	0	0	0	-1	-1	-1, +1	+1	+2	+1	+1	Focus employment creation through promoting entrepreneurship, and economic infrastructure. Issues essential similar to 3.1.
3	3.3 Encouragement of tourism activities	0	0	0	-1	-2	-1, +1	+1	+2	+1	+1	Focus use of NI natural resources to create new employment opportunities. Issues similar to 3.1 and 3.2 but emphasises on tourism might impact more on air and climate through increased travel.
3	3.4 Basic services for the economy and rural population	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	+2	+3	+1	Focus is improving or maintaining living conditions and welfare of rural population through more and better services. Leisure, childcare, local transport and telecoms are mentioned. Presumed environmental impact will be largely local and tackled through normal means. Local transport might reduce car dependence, other aspects could increase use.
3	3.5 Village renewal and development	0	0	0	+1	+1	+1	+2	+3	+2	+2	Aim is the support for local partners to develop sustainable regeneration plans for their communities and surrounding areas. Will include cross community development and renewable energy initiatives. Will enable re-use of buildings, improve local environment, develop community capacity and stimulate some demand for renewable energy.
3	3.6 Conservation and upgrading of the rural heritage	0	0	0	0	0	+1	+3	+2	+1	+2	The focus is for a bottom-up approach to identify needs and develop plans to support the stewardship of natural resources. Will enable small improvements to the built heritage and the local environment.

ISBN 1 85527 881 2



Department of
**Agriculture and
Rural Development**

www.dardni.gov.uk

AN ROINN

**Talmhaíochta agus
Forbartha Tuaithe**

MÁNNYSTRIE O

**Fairms an
Kintra Fordèrin**



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE