LAND-USE POLICY CATALOGUE

National policy assessment support to contribute to a land use evidence review

December 2021

Minogue Environmental Consulting Ltd. & Environmental Protection Agency

Contents

1. Introduction

In support of Action 165 of the EPA's Interim Climate Change Actions 2021, the EPA is undertaking a Phase 1 Land-Use Evidential Review to deliver Action 165b, which is to *"Carry out work programme agreed by Steering Group to prepare evidential review"* by the end of Q4 2021. The scope of this review is to prepare and collate the environmental and socio-economic evidence to inform decision-making with a land-use component, in commitment to the Programme for Government.

The expected outputs of this review is a summary matrix of National strategies, policies and legislation with the clear identification of targets and commitments, with land-use relevance, of each instrument, which is expected to inform the development of future land-use policies. The elements of the review are as follows:

I. *A high level assessment of national plans and policies to create a catalogue of strategies, policies or legislation that is relevant to land use.*
II. *First pass screening for land use relevance*
III. *Extraction of the commitments and/or targets in strategies, policies or legislation into a matrix*

2. Methodology

This research is based on secondary data such as action plans and policy statements as officially released by the concerned agency, and is for the most part qualitative in nature due to the collection and consequent analysis of non-numerical data. The tool used for the grouping and analysis was Microsoft Excel for ease of navigation and presentation. Each task has been presented in a separate Excel file, (titled *Task 1, Task 2,* and *Task 3*), and an overview of each file and its comprising worksheets can be seen in Table 2.1.

Table 2.1 Excel File per task and their contents

Excel File	Worksheet Count	Title of Worksheets (in order)
Task 1	2	*Colour Codes T1* *Overview*
Task 2	18	*Legislation* *Instruments without direct LU* *Missing Instruments* *Agriculture* *Peatlands* *Forestry* *Protected Areas (Biodiversity)* *Transport* *Energy* *Waste Management* *Water Management* *Built Environment* *Tourism Recreation* *Heritage* *Climate Change* *Sustainable Development* *Air*

		Soil
Task 3	16	*Colour Codes T3*
		Agriculture
		Peatlands
		Protected Areas (Biodiversity)
		Forestry
		Water Management
		Transport
		Energy
		Waste Management
		Built Environment
		Tourism Recreation
		Heritage
		Climate Change
		Sustainable Development
		Air
		Soil

Colour codes used in Tasks I and III have been presented in Table 2.2.

Table 2.2 Colour Codes

Task	Hex Code	Significance
I	#FFF2CC	Indicates that the instrument is legislative
	#E2EFD9	Overarching category *Natural Ecosystems*
	#FBE4D5	Overarching category *Infrastucture*
	#C2FAEB	Overarching category *Heritage*
	#D0CECE	Overarching category *Climate Change and Sustainable Development*
III	#FF5050	Target/Commitment has **High Relevance**
	#ED7D31	Target/Commitment has **Medium Relevance**
	#70AD47	Target/Commitment has **Low Relevance**

2.1. Data Collection

This review has used the list of National strategies, policies and plans that are documented in **Chapter 15** of *Ireland's Environment: An Integrated Assessment 2020*[1]. Minogue Environmental Consultancy also maintains a master list (updated on a regular basis) of plans, policies and programmes due to their work on Strategic Environmental Assessment, which was referred to to supplement the EPA list. A total of 132 instruments were collected.

2.2. Analysis

Task I. *A high-level assessment of National plans and policies to create a catalogue of strategies, policies or legislation that is relevant to land use (Excel File: Task 1)*

The list of compiled instruments were categorised under a larger, broad category, and then sub-categorised with the primary land-use activity as the focus. This is outlined in Table 2.3 below.

Table 2.3 Primary Land-use Activities within Overarching Categories

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[1] "Ireland's Environment - An Integrated Assessment 2020."

Overaraching Category	Primary Land-Use Activity
Natural Ecosystems	Agriculture
	Peatlands
	Forestry
	Protected Areas (Biodiversity)
	Soil
Infrastructure	Transport
	Energy
	Water Management (including Flood Risk)
	Waste Management
	Communications
	Built Environment
Tourism and Heritage	Tourism and Recreation
	Heritage
Climate Change and Sustainable Development	Climate Change
	Sustainable Development
	Air

Instruments with dual foci such as the Climate Change Sectoral Adaptation Plans may feature in multiple primary land-use categories, including Climate Change and their relevant sector (Transport,

Health, Flood Risk, and Agriculture). The instruments were then further evaluated for their scale (European, National, or Regional), type (Strategy, Policy, Plan, or Legislation) and their duration (indicated by the Launch Year and Year of Expiry). Instruments with *Ongoing* as year of expiry indicates that the instrument does not have a defined date of expiry due to being continuous, legislative (indicated in #FFF2CC) or guidance measures.

It should be noted that instruments with no available information (See Task II below) have been excluded from this layer to be included in Excel file *Task 2*, and therefore the total count is 122 instruments.

Task II. *Rapid screening of the catalogue of strategies, policies or legislation to provide a basic categorisation of the relationship or potential impact on land use (high, medium or low relevance, substantiated with definitions for the same) (Excel File: Task 2)*

The collated insturments were sorted into separate worksheets within the Excel File entitled *Task 2* as follows:

- Per **primary land-use activity** (titled *Agriculture, Peatlands, Forestry, Protected Areas (Biodiversity), Soil, Transport, Energy, Water Management (Including Flood Risk), Waste Management, Communications, Built Environment, Tourism and Recreation, Heritage, Climate Change, Sustainable Development* and *Air*).
- Instruments **without direct land-use relevance** (titled *Instruments without direct LU*), i.e. instruments lacking a direct land-use target or commitment.
- **Legislative instruments** (titled *Legislation*), which were accompanied by available information pertaining to previous or upcoming milestones.
- Instruments that were collected during the first pass screening but **have no information available** due to delays or indefinite suspension (titled *Missing Instruments*).

Relevant targets and commitments with land-use relevance were extracted verbatim to avoid misrepresentation and grouped according to the following criteria:

- *High relevance* implies that the instrument provides for **direct** and **well-defined** land-use targets or commitments. E.g. *Increase the current area under organic production to 350,000 hectares by 2030*.
- Targets classed under *Medium relevance* indicate **direct land-use implications** but are **ambiguous** in their objectives. E.g. *Co-design green spaces and wildlife refuges in cities and peri-urban areas with local communities to provide habitats for species under threat from climate change and to connect people to biodiversity*.
- Targets with *Low relevance* have an **indirect** or **extensively localised** impact on land-use. L ow relevance targets are designed focusing on objectives that are largely unrelated to land-use but may involve land-use modifications in achieving them. E.g. *Consider the inclusion of adaptation needs as a criterion in projects relating to future transport energy (recharging and refuelling) infrastructure networks, under any relevant further calls of the Climate Action Fund*.

Task III. *Extract the commitments and/or targets in strategies, policies or legislation into a matrix (Excel File: Task 3)*

For the third task, the extracted targets were finally collated as <mark>High</mark>, <mark>Medium</mark>, and <mark>Low</mark> relevance per land-use activity and colour-coded red, yellow and green respectively. Targets were accompanied by their (intended) year of accomplishment. Targets with specific dates of achieving were recorded accordingly. The indicated lifetime of plans, with unspecified dates of its targets, was considered. Targets with *ongoing* deadlines exceed the lifetime of the plan.

3. Data gaps and scope for further research

The review collated an initial list of instruments that included unfinished plans and strategies that may be suspended until further review or ceased due to infeasibility. These instruments have been included in a separate list with pertinent, available information.

The collated information can be expanded in the future with the availability of new instruments. Futhermore, it would be beneficial to observe whether the targets/commitments in Task 3 have been delivered once they have surpassed their intended dates of achievement.

The grouping of the targets according to their relevance will aid in the decision-making process while designing any instruments with a land-use relevance to identify synergies and/or conflicts with existing instruments. It is recommended that an analysis of the targets to assess which are complimentary and which might conflict with each other would be valuable research in the future. Finally, this research template has the potential to be adopted and applied to other areas pertaining to environmental and/or resource management.

4. Conclusion

This review was undertaken in alignment with Action 165 of the EPA's Interim Climate Change Actions 2021, under which a Phase 1 Evidential Review was to be delivered for Action 165b, *"Carry out work programme agreed by Steering Group to prepare evidential review"* pertaining to the existing state of policy for land-use in Ireland.

The review attempts to improve knowledge and close existing data gaps pertaining to land-use in Ireland. The collated information may prove to be useful for both statutory and non-statutory agencies in Ireland. Agencies launching future plans and policies will be able to use this review to identify existing targets that may conflict or cooperate with other instruments during their design phase. The inclusion of lifetime of the reviewed instruments and their comprising targets may aid in understanding the evolution of policy design to understand the current state of intended land-use throughout Ireland. Therefore, the identification and prioritisation of imperative actions within the current climate can be achieved to minimise and conceivably prevent implementation failure. Given that policies and practices pertaining to land and soil have, for example, direct implications on biodiversity, climate change, air quality and aquatic environments, the coordination of the management of land-cover actions across different sectors would prove vital in Ireland's response to climate change and environmental management.

References

"Ireland's Environment - An Integrated Assessment 2020." EPA Ireland, 2020.