



The Nature Restoration Regulation - NRL

Overarching objective



“...to contribute to the continuous, long-term and sustained recovery of biodiverse and resilient nature across the EU’s land and sea areas through the restoration of ecosystems.”

Ecosystems to be restored

- ▶ Terrestrial, coastal and freshwater ecosystems (listed habitats and species throughout the State)
- ▶ Marine ecosystems (listed marine habitats and species throughout territorial waters)
- ▶ Urban ecosystems (green space and tree cover)
- ▶ Natural connectivity of rivers and functions of floodplains
- ▶ Pollinator populations
- ▶ Agricultural ecosystems (including drained peatlands)
- ▶ Forest ecosystems

Restoration Ambition

- **Article 4 - Wetlands, forests, grasslands, river and lakes, heath & scrub, rocky habitats & dunes**
 - improve and re-establish biodiverse habitats on a large scale,
 - bring back species populations by improving and enlarge their habitats
- **Article 5 - marine ecosystems**
 - restore marine habitats such as seagrass beds or sediment bottoms
 - restore the habitats of iconic marine species such as dolphins and porpoises, sharks and seabirds.

Target - 30% of Habitats currently defined as not in Good Condition



Restoration Ambition



- **Article 8 Urban Ecosystems**

- no net loss of green urban space by 2030, and an increase in the total area covered by green urban space by 2040 and 2050
- An increasing trend of urban tree canopy

- **Article 9 River Ecosystems**

- Remove artificial barriers that prevent the connectivity of surface waters.
- Restore floodplains and add to the target of 25,000 km of free-flowing rivers by 2030

Article 9 Restoration of the natural connectivity of rivers and natural functions of the related floodplains

- ▶ 1. Member States shall make an inventory of artificial barriers to the connectivity of surface waters and, taking into account the socio-economic functions of the artificial barriers, identify the barriers that need to be removed to contribute to meeting the restoration targets set out in Article 4 of this Regulation and fulfilling the objective of restoring at least 25 000 km of rivers into free-flowing rivers in the Union by 2030,**

Article 9 Restoration of the natural connectivity of rivers and natural functions of the related floodplains

- ▶ 2. Member States shall remove the artificial barriers to the connectivity of surface waters identified in the inventory made pursuant to paragraph 1 of this Article, in accordance with the plan for their removal referred to in Article 15(3), points (i) and (n). When removing artificial barriers, **Member States shall address, as a priority, obsolete barriers,** namely those that are no longer needed for renewable energy generation, inland navigation, water supply, flood protection or other uses.

Article 9 Restoration of the natural connectivity of rivers and natural functions of the related floodplains

- ▶ **3. Member States shall complement the removal of artificial barriers in accordance with paragraph 2 by the measures necessary to improve the natural functions of the related floodplains.**
- ▶ **4. Member States shall ensure that the natural connectivity of rivers and natural functions of the related floodplains restored in accordance with paragraphs 2 and 3 are maintained.**

Restoration Ambition

- **Article 10 Pollinating Insects**

- reverse the decline of pollinator populations by 2030

- **Article 11 Agricultural ecosystems**

- increase grassland butterflies and farmland birds,
- Increase the stock of organic carbon in cropland mineral soils, and the share of agricultural land with high-diversity landscape features;
- restore drained peatlands under agricultural use

Target: Restore 30% of drained peatland with at least ¼ of the restoration to be rewetting



Restoration Ambition

- **Article 12 forest ecosystems**

- achieve an increasing trend for standing and lying deadwood, uneven aged forests, forest connectivity, abundance of common forest birds and stock of organic carbon

- **Article 13 Planting of 3 Billion additional trees.**

- member states shall contribute to the commitment to plant 3 Billion trees
- Prioritisation of native trees.

Other considerations

Article 6 - Energy from renewable sources

- Certain developments may have an assumed overriding public interest in certain circumstances.

Article 7 - National Defence

- Areas used for activities with the sole purpose of National Defence may be exempt in some circumstances.

National Restoration Plan (NRP)

A NRP will be required within 24 months of regulation coming into force.

The plan needs to:

- Quantify and map areas to be restored
- Set the baseline from which progress can be measured
- Capture and represent the requirements of Strategic Partners and Stakeholders
- Identify and develop measures and actions for inclusion in the plan;
- Develop schemes and programmes to incentivise or enhance delivery
- Outline timescales, monitoring requirements, financing needs



Art 4

Art 11

Art 9

Art 10

Art 12 & 13

Art 6 & 7



Art 5

Art 6 & 7

Art 18



Art 8

Art 4

Art 9

Art 10

Art 13



NRL Advisory Committee

- ▶ Preparation of a draft plan for Government approval
- ▶ oversee all aspects of the plan incl outputs from the thematic groups
 - ▶ Approval of measures and actions for inclusion in the plan;
 - ▶ Evaluation and consideration of the outputs from the public engagement exercise
 - ▶ Consideration of schemes for future funding under the FIICN Act.
 - ▶ Provide input and feedback to the thematic working groups

NRP thematic working groups

Oversee all aspects of the plan including

- ▶ Technical expert input into setting the baselines, based on existing scientific data.
- ▶ Identify and develop measures and actions for inclusion in the plan;
- ▶ Detailed evaluation and consideration of the outputs from the public engagement exercise
- ▶ Development of schemes for future funding under the FIICN Bill.

Public Engagement

- ▶ Thematic workshops across the country (multiple iterations) seeking public opinion on shaping the NRP.
- ▶ Sectoral representation including, Agri Sector, eNGOs, Marine, Heritage, Academic research
- ▶ online forum
- ▶ Traditional public consultation model

Funding

EU Funding - no new funding planned at this stage.

Gov funding

€3.15bn Climate and Nature Fund announced in Budget 2024.

Other funding

Some Practical Challenges

- Extremely tight timeframes for
 - quantification of targets and measures
 - preparation of national restoration plan,
 - delivery of targets.
- a considerable amount of scientific data collection, collation and analysis required.
- A significant resource is needed to develop the plan.

▶ Questions and suggestions

▶ Email restoration@npws.gov.ie