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# Proposal for a Regulation on Nature Restoration

# Context



Under the European Green Deal, the **EU Biodiversity Strategy** for 2030 sets out the general objective of reversing biodiversity loss, so that Europe's biodiversity is on the path to recovery by 2030 and that by 2050 all of the EU's ecosystems are restored, resilient and adequately protected.

One of the commitments in the Biodiversity Strategy is to put forward a proposal for **legally binding EU nature restoration targets**. The proposed regulation on nature restoration aims to fulfil this commitment.

# 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."*

*"...establishes a framework within which Member States shall put in place, without delay, effective and area-based restoration measures which together shall cover, by 2030, at least 20% of the Union's land and sea areas and, by 2050, all ecosystems in need of restoration."*

# Nature Restoration Regulation - Content



22(3) Articles in six chapters:

- I General provisions (Articles 1 to 3)
  - II Restoration targets and obligations (Articles 4 to 10)**
  - III National restoration plans (Articles 11 to 15)**
  - IV Monitoring and reporting (Articles 17 and 18)
  - V Delegated powers and committee procedure (Articles 19 to 21)
  - VI Final provisions (Articles 22 and 23)
- Seven annexes (containing lists of habitats, species and indicators associated with specific articles)

# 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.

# Restoration Ambition



- **Article 6 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

- **Article 7 River Connectivity**

- Remove artificial barriers that prevent the connectivity of surface waters, so that at least 25 000 km of rivers are restored to a free-flowing state by 2030

- **Article 8 Pollinating Insects**

- reverse the decline of pollinator populations by 2030

# Restoration Ambition



- **Article 9 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

- **Article 10 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 9 Restoration of Agricultural Ecosystems

The latest draft of the Council text calls for Member States to “*put in place restoration measures for organic soils in agricultural use constituting drained peatlands*”,

Those measures shall be in place on at least:

- (a) 30 % of such areas by 2030, of which at least a quarter shall be rewetted;
- (b) ~~40~~**50** % of such areas by 2040, of which at least half shall be rewetted;
- (c) ~~50~~**70** % of such areas by 2050, of which at least half shall be rewetted.



# Article 9 Restoration of Agricultural Ecosystems

The latest draft of the Council text defines *“rewetting peatland” means the process of changing a drained peat soil towards a wet soil;*

This definition will allow member states the flexibility to determine what level of rewetting is appropriate

The actions a member states can take can be passive or active

# Article 9 Restoration of Agricultural Ecosystems

- Restoration measures, including rewetting, in areas of peat extraction sites can count toward the targets.
- There is sufficient capacity in State owned lands to reach targets to 2030 and beyond.
- Where duly justified, the extent of the rewetting of peatland under agricultural use may be reduced to less than required by a Member State if such rewetting risks having significant negative impacts on infrastructure, buildings, climate adaptation or other public interests

# National Restoration Plan



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

The plan will

- specify how targets are to be delivered (by 2030, 2040 and 2050)
- Will cover the period until 2050, but with reviews at 2032 and 2042

The plan needs to:

- Quantify and map areas to be restored
- Describe restoration measures in place and how targets will be reached.
- Outline timescales, monitoring requirements, financing needs

# Indicative Timeframe for Progression of Regulation



June 2022	Proposed regulation published by Commission
Current	Negotiations between Commission, Presidency and MS (WP ENV meets fortnightly). Presidency have set a deadline of end May to agree text.
20 June 2023	Council of Ministers meeting.
Mid-2023	Trilogues between European Parliament, Council and Commission
2024	Regulation comes into force
2026	NRP to be prepared
2026-2030	Implementation of NRP, including monitoring and reporting by 2030

# Some Implications



- The draft Regulation encompasses a wide range of land/sea uses including in marine, urban, agricultural and afforested environments, both in State and private ownership – with policy, legislative and sectoral implications across many Government Departments – therefore a whole of Government approach is essential.
- Engagement and consultation with multiple stakeholders will be essential in developing the National Plan.
- There will be legally binding restoration targets for a broad suite of terrestrial and marine habitats and species.

# Some Practical Challenges



- Extremely tight timeframes for quantification of targets and measures and for the preparation of national restoration plan, **and for delivery of targets.**
- There will need to be a considerable amount of scientific data collection, collation and analysis, including emerging information from the Land Use Review.
- The resources required for preparing, implementing and monitoring the national restoration plan are not currently in place.
- A dedicated EU funding instrument is not foreseen.
- The requirements for consultation and engagement are considerable.

# What Next?



- NPWS will continue to engage with the Council on behalf of Ireland to try to achieve the best outcome
- A public consultation and stakeholder engagement regime is being developed and in the meantime we welcome engagement and submissions on the regulation
- Investment and financial resource requirement will be developed in the coming months.



Questions and suggestions

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