

North Eastern Draft River Basin Management Plan

Register of Plans and Programmes

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North Eastern River Basin District

1.0 Introduction

Annex VIIA (paragraph 8) of the Water Framework Directive requires Member States to include ‘*a register of any more detailed programmes and management plans for the River Basin District dealing with particular sub-basins, sectors, issues or water types, together with a summary of their contents.*’ Although River Basin Management Plans (RBMPs) are now the main plans in place in the field of water policy, they are not the only water-related management plans being implemented in Northern Ireland. There is already an array of plans and processes related to land, biodiversity, climate change and water management planning which contribute to the aims of improving and maintaining water quality and enabling sustainable water use. It is important to integrate and co-ordinate these planning processes at a strategic level in order to protect and enhance Northern Ireland’s waters.

Many of these existing strategies, policies, programmes and plans act as drivers for change to the water environment, for example by directing where land-use or development change should take place or by providing agri-environment grant schemes such as the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development’s Northern Ireland Countryside Management Scheme and the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) Management of Sensitive Sites (MOSS) Scheme, to encourage environmentally friendly farming practice. RBMPs and relevant plans and programmes must be coordinated to ensure that water objectives can be achieved and ensure that plans contribute to common goals and reinforce and support each other where necessary. The relationship between River Basin Management Plans and other water protection plans and programmes is two-way, each must influence the others objectives.

The focus of this annex is on key existing and future national frameworks, strategies, policies, programmes and plans that can help achieve Water Framework Directive requirements.

2.0 Planning topics

Ten planning topics have been identified as significant for the North Eastern River Basin District. These are *land use planning, agriculture, water supply and treatment, waste management, natural heritage, forestry, fisheries, coastal, flooding and climate change planning*. Plans and programmes set out under these topics are implemented at national, regional and local levels by a range of statutory bodies and organisations.

2.1 Land use planning

Land use planning mechanisms operate at national (Northern Ireland Regional Development Strategy and Planning Policy Statements) and local level (Development Plans commonly referred to as “Area Plans”). Effective integration between river basin planning and the implementation and ongoing refinement of planning policy is crucial to ensure that development is compatible with water objectives that we have set in our river basin management plan.

‘Shaping Our Future’ the Regional Development Strategy for Northern Ireland 2025 sets

out a strategic planning framework for the sustainable development of Northern Ireland until 2025. The strategy promotes sustainability with a strong focus on social cohesion and economic progress along with conservation and enhancement of the environment. A 5 year review of the Regional Development Strategy has taken place and a number of adjustments have been made to the environmental Strategic Planning Guidelines. One aspect of the adjustments will ensure that stronger links between the strategy and the Water Framework Directive and its requirements are made.

Planning Policy Statements (PPSs) set out policies on land use and other planning matters and apply to the whole of Northern Ireland. Their contents are taken into account in the preparation of Development Plans. PPSs are also used to inform decisions on individual planning applications. NIEA will directly feed into the development and revision of PPSs to ensure that, where applicable, WFD principles and targets are incorporated.

Development Plans may be in the form of area plans, local plans or subject plans and provide an essential framework for guiding investment by public, private and community sectors. They apply the regional policies of the Department at the appropriate local level. Development Plans inform the general public, statutory authorities, developers and other interested bodies of the policy framework and land use proposals that will guide development decisions within their local area.

It is necessary to maintain and strengthen links between land use planning and river basin planning to ensure the successful delivery of the requirements of the WFD.

2.2 Agricultural planning

There are a number of agricultural planning mechanisms that will contribute significantly to achievement of water objectives established in the North Eastern River Basin Management Plan. The Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013 sets out strategic objectives for rural development in Northern Ireland. They include improving the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry in Northern Ireland by supporting development and innovation; improving the environment by supporting land management; improving the quality of life in rural areas; and encouraging diversification of economic activity.

Two schemes are available under the Rural Development Programme, the Northern Ireland Countryside Management Scheme (NICMS) and the Organic Farming Scheme. The NICMS provides grants to farmers to ensure they maintain biodiversity, safeguard water quality and improve the management of landscape and heritage features.

The Organic Farming Scheme encourages farmers to convert to organic farming to meet the demand for organic food and enhance the environment. Participants in the scheme will help deliver a number of environmental benefits through the reduced use of artificial fertilisers, pesticides and herbicides, thereby contributing to soil, and water and air quality, the conservation and enhancement of rural landscapes, and to biodiversity.

The Nitrates Action Programme 2007–2010 was introduced under the Nitrates Action Programme Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2006. The programme includes requirements for a closed period of spreading of organic and inorganic fertilisers; a minimum livestock manure storage requirement; a limit on the amount of nitrogen that

can be applied to land from livestock manures of 170 kg nitrogen per hectare per year; and the inclusion of nitrogen efficiency measures. The programme will be subject to review in 2010. This review will examine the effectiveness of the action programme in meeting the environmental aims and objectives of the Nitrates Directive. During the review an assessment of the contribution of the programme to achieving the objectives in the river basin management plans will also be undertaken, this will allow for decisions to be made on what further measures may be required to ensure that Water Framework Directive objectives are met.

Effective integration between river basin planning and the implementation and refinement of agricultural programmes, plans and grant schemes will ensure that Water Framework Directive objectives are met. Objectives in river basin management plans will also help to inform and target where agricultural inspection and enforcement activity and education and advisory visits are focused.

2.3 Water supply and treatment planning

The Northern Ireland Water (NIW) Capital Works Programme prioritises upgrade and investment in water and sewerage infrastructure. The Capital Works Programme Strategic Business Plan has been agreed to cover the period March 2007 to March 2010. The majority of the investment in this current Capital Works Programme is directed towards sewerage assets reflecting the necessary priority given to meeting required standards and realising environmental improvements. This will ensure that improvements are delivered to meet the requirements of European Directives such as the Shellfish Waters, Bathing Waters and Urban Waste Water Treatment Directives which all contribute to achieving the objectives outlined in the River Basin Management Plan.

The planned Capital Works Programme for the period 2010 – 2014 will be confirmed as part of the 2009 periodic review of prices by the Northern Ireland Authority for Utility Regulation and the associated Northern Ireland Asset Management Plan (NIAMP3). NIEA will review the environmental investment required during this period and beyond 2015 and will work with Northern Ireland Water to prioritise the environmental problems so that indicative lists can be developed. These lists will prioritise schemes on the basis of the scale of the environmental, social and economic benefits that can be delivered. The output from this process will be the basis of NIEA's submission to the next Northern Ireland investment round and will also be used to provide the basis for identifying indicative Water Framework Directive objectives for 2021 and 2027.

The Water Framework Directive places a strong emphasis on source control to reduce pollutants entering water supplies. Drinking Water Safety Plans will be developed which will identify where catchment based measures are required to protect drinking water sources. NIW has initiated a programme to develop Drinking Water Safety Plans by 2010. Production of these plans will link directly with the river basin planning process and both plans will help promote and deliver catchment based measures to protect drinking water supplies.

2.4 Waste management planning

The Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy and Regional Waste Management Plans direct waste management planning and control in Northern Ireland and will

contribute to the achievement of Water Framework Directive objectives.

2.5 Natural heritage planning

There are a variety of natural heritage plans in place in Northern Ireland such as Habitat Action Plans, Species Action Plans, Local Biodiversity Action Plans and Conservation Objectives for Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas and Areas of Special Scientific Interest. The main areas where river basin planning and natural heritage planning have the potential to interact are the development of objectives and delivery of measures to maintain, enhance or protect water dependent habitats and species. Objectives and management actions within natural heritage plans will also contribute to achievement of objectives for water bodies in the River Basin Management Plan.

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan provides a programme of action for the UK's most threatened or rarest habitats and species. Implementation of the programme is established through development of Species and Habitat Action Plans and through a network of Local Biodiversity Action Plans. Some of the actions within these plans, which are related to water dependent habitats and species, will contribute to achievement of objectives in the River Basin Management Plans, likewise measures that are implemented as part of the River Basin Management Plans will also help to achieve the objectives of these plans.

Sites are designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) under the Birds Directive. Collectively they are referred to as the "Natura 2000" network. The Water Framework Directive objective is to achieve favourable conservation status by 2015, where appropriate for those Natura sites with water dependent features. River basin planning can help in the planning process to restore those Natura 2000 sites, which have water dependent features that are not in favourable condition.

2.6 Forestry planning

The UK Forestry Standard provides the policy framework to the UK government's commitment that forests will be managed in a sustainable way. "Northern Ireland Forestry – A Strategy for Sustainability and Growth" confirms this and provides a strategy for delivery in a Northern Ireland context.

Forest management plans are the basis for monitoring sustainable forest management. All Forest Service plantations and woodlands in receipt of assistance from the DARD will have a plan, the detail and complexity of which will vary. Plans cover the whole range of major forest operations including harvesting, planting, aerial fertilising and road-making. Clear proposals for management of riparian areas are an integral part of all plans. In addition, all Forest Service plantation and a proportion of private woodland, amounting to 74% of all woodland in Northern Ireland, is subject to independent certification approval and audit against the UK Woodland Assurance Standard (UKWAS). This is a voluntary certification standard which addresses concerns such as the impact of management practice on biological diversity, the impact of timber haulage on roads, consultation with stakeholders and sustainable management of forests.

2.7 Fisheries planning

Freshwater fisheries planning in Northern Ireland concentrates on Atlantic Salmon and eels. There are requirements for the production of management plans for these species. These management plans will be developed in line with River Basin Management Plan objectives and will contribute to the fulfilment of Water Framework Directive requirements. Through coordination with river basin planning there will be opportunities to identify measures and actions to be undertaken by a range of Departments that will deliver against priorities shared with river basin management plans. Implementation of measures outlined in the River Basin Management Plans will also ensure that objectives outlined in fishery management plans are also realised.

The Co-ordinated Local Aquaculture Management System (CLAMS) process is an all-island initiative to manage the development of aquaculture in bays and inshore waters at a local level. Management plans are produced for the development of aquaculture in individual sea loughs. In each case the plan fully integrates aquaculture interests with relevant European and national policies as well as with the interests of all other groups using the marine environment and other initiatives such as Integrated Coastal Zone Management. The CLAMS process has been implemented in Carlingford and Larne Loughs in Northern Ireland and has been widely adopted in areas with fish and shellfish farming around the Irish coast. River basin management planning measures to tackle, for example, diffuse pollution have the potential to improve the environment for aquaculture.

2.8 Coastal planning

In Northern Ireland Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation Plans for Ports and Harbours and a Coastal Contingency Plan have been prepared to provide a structured framework to address coastal pollution incidents. The draft Marine Bill that will be implemented in Northern Ireland will provide an integrated single marine planning framework that will further augment coastal planning and protection and contribute to the achievement of River Basin Management Plan objectives.

The first stage of implementation of the Marine Bill will be the development of a UK wide marine policy statement to create a more integrated approach to marine management and setting short and long term objectives for sustainable use of the marine environment. The second stage will be the creation of a series of marine plans which will implement the policy in specific areas.

2.9 Flood planning

Rivers Agency an Executive Agency of the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development is the statutory drainage and flood defence authority for Northern Ireland. Rivers Agency responsibilities include maintaining watercourses and sea defences and constructing and maintaining drainage and flood defence structures.

The EC Floods Directive 2007/60/EC came into force in 2007 and will help establish stronger links between river basin planning and flood risk management planning in the second river basin planning cycle. The Directive aims to reduce the adverse consequences of floods on human health, the environment, cultural heritage and economic activity. To achieve this, the Directive establishes a framework for the

assessment and management of flood risks. This framework requires member states to take action in three areas:

- Produce preliminary flood risk assessments (by December 2011)
- Produce flood hazard maps and flood risk maps (by December 2013)
- Produce flood risk management plans (by December 2015)

Significant work is underway to fulfill the requirements of the Floods Directive, for example a policy framework 'Living with Rivers and the Sea' published in September 2008 sets out a framework for the delivery of flood risk management in Northern Ireland for the next 10 years. Rivers Agency have produced an interim Flood Mapping Strategy, a Strategic Flood Map for Northern Ireland and are in the process of completing flood risk assessments and developing flood risk management plans. The Floods Directive promotes the enhancement and restoration of natural floodplains which may also help deliver certain WFD objectives. All this work will be aligned with the River Basin Management Plan and its objectives.

2.10 Climate change planning

Commitments and targets for the UK to achieve its goals of reducing carbon dioxide emissions are currently set out in the Draft Climate Change Bill. Northern Ireland's long term approach to climate change is to ensure its consideration is fully incorporated into all policy, strategy and future plans. Climate change considerations must be fully integrated into the river basin planning process, it may be necessary to adapt to the impacts of climate change on our waters but it will also be necessary to ensure that the measures that are adopted as part of the River Basin Management Plan do not contribute to climate change (i.e. through increased emissions) but rather contribute to climate change adaptation, by for example through measures to support sustainable flood management.

2.11 Miscellaneous plans and programmes

Plans and programmes that do not fit directly into the 10 planning topics are included in the *miscellaneous* section of the table.

2.12 Plans and programmes specific to the North Eastern District

There are a number of local plans and programmes that are being implemented in the North Eastern River Basin District. These include issue logs which have been developed by NIEA, which in some cases have been developed in conjunction with a number of angling clubs to identify problems angling club members have highlighted in the catchment and implement a number of measures to resolve problems.

Key Plans and Programmes	Details
Land Use Planning	
Northern Ireland Regional Development Strategy 2025	<p>This strategy published in 2001 guides the future development of Northern Ireland to 2025 and helps meet the needs of a fast growing region. It sets strategic guidance on a range of Social, Economic and Environmental matters and is implemented through the Plans and Strategies of Government Departments.</p> <p>The strategy sets out the strategic planning framework for the promotion of sustainable development in the region. The strategy recognises that a high quality environment is an essential component of the quality of life and that economic development must be integrated with environmental quality. The strategy informs strategies, objectives and proposals which emerge in development plans.</p>
<p>Relevant Planning Policy Statements (PPS) are listed below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PPS 2 Planning and Nature Conservation • PPS 4 Industrial Development • PPS 7 Quality Residential Developments • PPS 11 Planning and Waste Management • PPS 14 Sustainable Development in the Countryside - now entitled PPS 21 Sustainable Development in the Countryside (issued for public consultation on 25th November 2008) • PPS 15 Planning and Flood Risk 	<p>Planning Policy Statements contain policies on land-use and other planning matters, for example telecommunications or the built heritage, and apply to the whole of Northern Ireland. They set out the main planning considerations that the Planning Department takes into account in assessing proposals for the various forms of development and are also often relevant to the preparation of development plans.</p> <p>All Planning Policy Statements refer to the context in which their particular policies are formulated. The context in turn refers to the requirements of relevant European Directives thus policy formulation should conform with all the relevant legal /statutory requirements.</p>
<p>Specific development plans relevant in the North Eastern River Basin District include the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft Antrim, Ballymena and Larne Area Plan 2016 • Draft Ards and Down Area Plan 2015 • Draft Belfast Metropolitan Area Plan 2015 • Draft Northern Area Plan 2016 • Draft Banbridge, Newry and Mourne Area Plan 2015 	<p>Development Plans may be in the form of area plans, local plans or subject plans. They apply the regional policies of the Planning Department of the Department of the Environment at the appropriate local level. Development Plans inform the general public, statutory authorities, developers and other interested bodies of the policy framework and land use proposals that will guide development decisions within their local area. These Plans will identify any local environmental features that should be considered for effective protection of the environment.</p>

Key Plans and Programmes	Details
Agricultural Planning	
Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme 2007-2013	<p>The Northern Ireland Rural Development Programme is part-financed by the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development with co-funding provided by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development. It has four main themes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improving the competitiveness of agriculture and forestry by supporting restructuring, development and innovation. ▪ Improving the environment and countryside by supporting land management. ▪ Improving the quality of life in rural areas and encouraging diversification of economic activity. ▪ Using a LEADER-type approach.
Nitrates Action Programme / Plan 2007-2010	<p>The Nitrates Action Programme requires farmers to observe rules to reduce nitrate pollution, with measures on storing manure and periods when spreading manure and manufactured fertiliser to land is not allowed. Key measures include: a closed period for the application of organic and inorganic fertilisers; a minimum livestock manure storage requirement; a limit on the amount of nitrogen that can be applied to land from livestock manures of 170 kg nitrogen per hectare per year; and the inclusion of nitrogen efficiency measures.</p>
Northern Ireland Countryside Management Scheme	<p>This scheme provides grants to farmers to ensure they maintain biodiversity, safeguard water quality and improve the management of landscape and heritage features. The scheme aims to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Improve biodiversity. ▪ Improve water quality ▪ Mitigate climate change ▪ Improve soil quality ▪ Avoid marginalisation and land abandonment. <p>The scheme will address reversing the decline in farmland biodiversity; enhancing the landscape; and managing our natural resources to improve the quality of our water, air and soil. Effective pollution control is a requirement of the scheme and scheme participants are provided with farm nutrient and pollution control advice as part of their application process. The scheme requires participants to draw up obligatory farm waste management plans.</p> <p>There are options for participants to take up new farm waterway and riparian zone management measures which aim to enhance river and riverbank biodiversity and act as a buffer reducing pollution of water rivers and lakes by fertilisers and pesticides.</p>
Organic Farming Scheme 2007-2013	<p>The Organic Farming Scheme has been set up to encourage farmers to convert to organic farming to meet the demand for organic food and benefit the environment, it reduces the potential for pollution and other environmental damage.</p> <p>In 2006 only 0.9% (10,154 hectares) of Northern Ireland's total agricultural land area was under organic production. However targets for an increase of over 5% of total area of land under organic management have been set.</p>

Key Plans and Programmes	Details
Farm Nutrient Management Scheme	The Farm Nutrient Management Scheme was introduced by the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development in 2005 to enable farmers to comply with the Nitrates Directive and reduce water pollution by improved storage and use of livestock manures. The scheme provided 60% capital grant to farmers for building manure and slurry storage facilities and participants are required to have all works in place by the end of December this year.
Education and awareness programme run by the College of Agriculture, Food and Rural Enterprise (CAFRE)	The programme aims to encourage a greater understanding of the role farmers play in caring for their environment, issues affecting agriculture and the environment, by providing information on biodiversity, sustainable agriculture, habitat management, endangered species, water quality and waste management.
Water / Wastewater Treatment and Supply Planning	
Northern Ireland Water Capital Works Programme 2007/08 2009/10	This investment programme sets out priorities for water and sewerage infrastructure to be upgraded with specific dates for completion. As a result of the current programme the percentage of the population equivalent served by compliant wastewater treatment works will increase markedly from 77% to 94%. Leakage rates, which have reduced over the past 5 years by 42%, are expected to decrease by a further 20% from 2007/08 to 2009/10.
Small works upgrade programme	For small wastewater treatment works a priority list has been developed by Northern Ireland Water in conjunction with Planning Service and NIEA, upgrades to works will be delivered in 3 phases.
Drinking Water Safety Plans	Drinking Water Safety Plans are currently being prepared by Northern Ireland Water. They act as a means of assessing hazards and controlling any risks from those hazards within the collection, abstraction, treatment and distribution of drinking water. This process enables Northern Ireland Water to determine whether any actions are required to reduce or eliminate the risk. The actions could be improved operational or maintenance procedures or they could require capital investment in new controls or barriers. Drinking Water Safety Plans will also help identify where catchment based measures are required to protect drinking water sources.
Drainage Area Plans	The sewer network in a number of towns and villages throughout Northern Ireland has been or will be appraised through Drainage Area Studies. Northern Ireland Water is taking forward this programme of just over 100 drainage-area studies across the larger areas of population in Northern Ireland. The studies use models to assess the hydraulic capability of the drainage systems to cater for current and future development. The drainage-area studies will determine the improvements required to the sewerage network in order to reduce pollution and the risk of flooding and to meet environmental objectives within a 30-year horizon. Drainage Area Plans are developed and implemented as a result of these studies.
Waste Management Planning	
Towards Resource Management – The Northern Ireland Waste Management Strategy 2006-2020	The aim of the Waste Management Strategy is to manage waste and resources effectively by using material resources in a way that reduces the quantities of waste produced and, where waste is generated, to manage it in a way that minimises its impact on the environment and public health. The strategy places emphasis on waste prevention and reinforces the need to increase waste recycling and recovery through a mixture of approaches including the renewal of recycling targets, focused awareness campaigns and the possible introduction of incentive schemes.

Key Plans and Programmes	Details
Waste Management Grant Scheme (2006 -2008)	NIEA continued to provide grant aid to District Councils to cover the last two years of the Waste Management Grant Scheme (2006 -2008). This helped Councils invest in the minor infrastructure needed to implement their Waste Management Plans.
Landfill site closure plans	<p>A Strategic Plan for the Closure of Landfill Sites in Northern Ireland was finalised at the start of 2008. Closure plans for individual landfill sites address a number of issues including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the current site conditions, both environmentally and physically; • recommendations for works to minimise the environmental impact of the site after the site's closure, and to comply with the requirements of the Landfill Directive; and • provisional cost estimates for the recommended works.
Arc 21 (Eastern) Region Waste Management Plan 2006-2020	<p>The Arc21 (formerly Eastern Region Waste Management Group) Waste Management Plan was adopted in January 2003. The central focus of the plan is an analysis of the waste streams arising in the Arc21 Region and associated potential for waste prevention, recycling and recovery and disposal. The plan sets out the range of facilities that will be needed to deliver the strategic targets and criteria for locating these.</p> <p>The Arc21 region plan is governed by a collective agreement by eleven councils (Ballymena Borough Council, Antrim Borough Council, Ards Borough Council, Down District Council, Carrickfergus Borough Council, Newtownabbey Borough Council, North Down Borough Council, Castlereagh Borough Council, Larne Borough Council and Belfast and Lisburn City Councils).</p>
Southern Region Waste Management Plan 2006-2020	<p>The purpose of the Plan is to set out a framework for the management of controlled wastes arising in the southern region of Northern Ireland over the period 2006 to 2020. This includes identifying capacity needs, potential sites and/or siting criteria, and the services needed for the collection, treatment and disposal of the wastes.</p> <p>The Southern regional plan is managed by the Southern Waste Management Partnership comprised of eight councils (Fermanagh District Council, Omagh District Council, Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council, Cookstown District Council, Armagh City and District Council, Craigavon Borough Council, Banbridge District Council, Newry and Mourne District Council).</p>
Port Waste Management Plans	The Merchant Shipping (Port Waste Reception Facilities) Regulations 2003 (S.R. 2003/1809) require harbour authorities in the UK to prepare a waste management plan with respect to the provision and use of facilities for the management of prescribed wastes from ships using the port. This encourages the regular disposal of vessel generated wastes in an environmentally correct manner.
Natural Heritage Planning (Natura 2000 and Biodiversity)	
Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy	In October 2000 the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Group's 'Recommendations to Government for a Biodiversity Strategy' outlined a series of recommendations to further protect Northern Ireland's biodiversity. It provided specific recommendations to produce a range of Habitat and Species Action Plans which aimed to protect Northern Ireland's wetlands and coastal resource. Following on from this in August 2002 the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy was launched.

Key Plans and Programmes	Details
Northern Ireland Biodiversity Delivery Groups	Following on from the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Group's 'Recommendations to Government for a Biodiversity Strategy' in 2000 Six Biodiversity Delivery Groups have been set up. One of these groups looks specifically at Wetland Habitats and Species. Whilst other groups cover water dependent habitats and species such as the Peatlands and Uplands Biodiversity Delivery Group and the Coastal and Marine Biodiversity Group.
UK Biodiversity Action Plan	The UK Biodiversity Action Plan sets out the governments commitments to the Convention on Biological Diversity signed in 1992. It provides a detailed plan for the protection of these resources and includes Species Action Plans, Habitat Action Plans and Local Biodiversity Action Plans.
Northern Ireland Habitat Action Plans (HAPs)	Habitat Action Plans have been developed for 37 priority habitats in Northern Ireland, of which a variety are water dependent. Linkages between the River Basin Management Plan and the Habitat Action Plans are required to ensure that conservation and Water Framework Directive requirements are met and aligned. Details on each of these plans can be found in the Biodiversity section of the NIEA website (http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/biodiversity).
Northern Ireland Species Action Plans (SAPs)	A list of Northern Ireland priority species was published in March 2004 and subsequently approved by the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Group in October 2004. This list formed the basis for selecting species requiring Northern Ireland Species Action Plans. To date detailed SAPs have been developed for 34 priority species in Northern Ireland and for 7 species at an All-Ireland level. A number of these species are water dependent and therefore linkages between the River Basin Management Plan and the individual Species Action Plan are required to ensure that conservation and Water Framework Directive requirements are met. Details on each of these plans can be found in the Biodiversity section of the NIEA website (http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/biodiversity).
Regional Management Groups	Across Northern Ireland there are a series of regional management groups, such as the Strangford Lough Management Committee and the Lough Neagh Advisory Committee. These regional management groups consist of representatives with an interest in the management of their wetland and coastal resource. Several of these groups have developed Management Strategies and/or websites which take into account the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment.
Local Biodiversity Action Plans in the North Eastern River Basin District include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Antrim Local Biodiversity Action Plan • Belfast Local Biodiversity Action Plan • Larne Local Biodiversity Action Plan • Newtownabbey Local Biodiversity Action Plan 	The Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) listed have been developed by local councils in conjunction with the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and NGOs. They aim to conserve biodiversity through local partnerships, taking into account both national and local priorities. LBAPs involve local people and local organisations through the practical delivery of biodiversity conservation.
'Our Nature with Aggregates' Strategy	The strategy aims to conserve and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity in the Aggregates and Quarry Products Industry in Northern Ireland. It is a five year strategy that guides the protection, enhancement and management of biodiversity and geodiversity on the variety of quarries and associated products manufacturing sites belonging to Quarry Products Association NI (QPANI) member companies. Under the strategy the QPANI and its member companies will work together with government, planners, councils and nature conservation organisations to achieve shared goals, for the benefit of wildlife and society.

Key Plans and Programmes	Details
Aggregates Levy Credit Scheme (ALCS)	On joining the ALCS mineral extractors, including quarry operators and sand and gravel extractors sign a legal agreement to comply with all regulatory requirements and to carry out environmental improvements identified by the Department of the Environment (DOE), following periodic review. On joining the Scheme operators receive a Code of Practice and Audit Protocol which identifies the type of environmental requirements needed to remain within the Scheme. In order to avail of the Scheme (80% reduction in the Levy), an operator must have in place and comply with all relevant environmental consents/licenses. Regular audits are carried out by the DOE to assess compliance with the scheme.
Local Biodiversity Action Plans for quarries	A number of QPANI member companies have prepared company site Biodiversity Action Plans, detailing priority habitat and species and management plans.
<p>Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) in the North Eastern River Basin District have Conservation Objectives, these SACs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ North Antrim Coast ▪ Lecale Fens ▪ Hollymount ▪ Ballykilbeg ▪ Murlough ▪ Eastern Mournes ▪ Rathlin Island ▪ Breen Wood ▪ Garron Plateau ▪ Strangford Lough ▪ Aghnadarragh ▪ Turmennan ▪ Gary Bog <p>Special Area of Protection (SPAs) in the North Eastern River Basin District have Conservation Objectives these SPAs include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sheep Island ▪ Rathlin Island ▪ Swan Island ▪ Larne Lough ▪ Belfast Lough ▪ Strangford Lough ▪ Antrim Hills ▪ Outer Ards ▪ Killough Bay 	<p>SAC and SPA Conservation Objectives include descriptive information about the site and have a management framework section which outlines objectives and management actions for the site.</p> <p>Site condition is monitored as a requirement of the Habitats Directive through Common Standards Monitoring. Through this monitoring these sites are classified into condition categories based upon their features.</p> <p>Restoration Plans will be produced for those sites which are deemed to be in unfavourable condition.</p> <p>NIEA requires an Appropriate Assessment to be carried out on activities that could potentially be damaging to these sites under Article 6 of the Habitats Directive.</p>

Key Plans and Programmes	Details
Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs)	<p>Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs) are areas that have been identified as being of the highest degree of conservation value. ASSIs are found across Northern Ireland in each of our River Basin Districts. Many of these ASSIs contain water dependent habitats and species.</p> <p>ASSI Conservation Objectives include descriptive information about the site and have a management framework section which outlines objectives and management actions for the site.</p> <p>Details of ASSIs can be found in the Biodiversity Section of the NIEA website (http://www.ni-environment.gov.uk/biodiversity).</p>
NIEA Natural Heritage Grant Aid Programme	<p>The Northern Ireland Environment Agency administers the Natural Heritage Grant Programme to support projects in Northern Ireland to encourage the conservation and enhancement of key elements of the environment and its wildlife, and the provision of facilities which help as wide a range of people as possible to enjoy and appreciate our natural heritage.</p>
Management of Sensitive Sites (MOSS) Scheme	<p>MOSS is a voluntary scheme, administered by NIEA, which is designed to ensure the positive management of land within ASSIs. Its key objectives are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To conserve and enhance the nature conservation interests of the land. • To conserve and enhance the diversity of plant and animal species found in each ASSI. • To introduce or continue a land management regime that will create the conditions necessary to ensure that the special interests of the ASSI are maintained or enhanced.
Natural Heritage Research and Development Strategy 2004-2009	<p>The Northern Ireland Environment Agency through the Natural Heritage Research and Development Strategy and the Natural Heritage Research Partnership carries out research. The information gathered through research is used by NIEA Natural Heritage to make informed decisions on the protection of Northern Ireland's natural environment.</p>
Zebra Mussel Management Strategy for Northern Ireland 2004-2010	<p>The strategy aims to minimise the spread of zebra mussels in Northern Ireland through raising awareness, developing policy and legislation, monitoring and research and developing contingency plans for immediate action in the event of further zebra mussel spread.</p>

Key Plans and Programmes	Details
Forestry Planning	
Northern Ireland Forestry – A Strategy for Sustainability and Growth	The strategy focuses on how more forests can be created and on the sustainable management of existing forests. This document provides a strategy for the delivery of forestry policy in Northern Ireland and identifies a commitment to increasing long term forest cover. An indicative map for new woodland planting identifies areas where afforestation should be encouraged as well as those areas where it should be discouraged.
Forest Management Plans	All Forest Service woodlands are subject to a detailed management planning process and are reviewed on a five-yearly rolling basis. The plans cover the full range of major forest operations. The protection and improvement of water quality is a key consideration when preparing forest management plans. Design plans are prepared clearly identifying riparian zones and their future management objective of improvement of biodiversity. Plans are subject to wide consultation ranging from statutory bodies to local populations.
Short Rotation Coppice Scheme	This scheme supports the planting of Short Rotation Coppice crops for renewable energy purposes. All proposed Woodland Grant Schemes must comply with the UK Forestry Standard and Guidelines including the Forests and Water Guidelines. Special conditions may apply where planting is proposed within sensitive water catchment areas following consultation with NIEA. Grants are conditional on such conditions being met.
Woodland Grant Scheme	This scheme aims to encourage the creation of new woodlands and the management of existing woodlands by providing money towards the cost of the work involved.
Farm Woodland Premium Scheme	This scheme is designed to encourage the creation of new woodlands on farms through annual payments which help offset the loss of income resulting from taking the land out of agriculture.
Woodland Certification under the UK Woodland Assurance Standard	The UK Woodland Assurance Standard is a voluntary standard primarily for use in UK woodlands and verified through independent audit. This standard covers the key components of sustainable forest management. It addresses legislative issues, management planning, and the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity. The majority of woodlands in Northern Ireland have been certified in accordance with this standard.

Key Plans and Programmes	Details										
Fishery Planning											
Northern Ireland Atlantic Salmon Management Strategy and plans 2008 - 2012	<p>The main objective of the Atlantic Salmon Management Strategy is to conserve, enhance, restore and rationally manage salmon stocks in catchments throughout Northern Ireland through Catchment Management Plans (CMPs). The core concept of the plans is to establish spawning targets at a river and regional level. The central aim of management is to ensure that in most rivers in most years sufficient adult salmon are spawning to maximise output of smolts from freshwater. The river or catchment is monitored for salmon numbers and where levels are not being attained the problem is identified and addressed. Implementation of the plans is reported to and assessed by the North Atlantic Salmon Conservation Organization (NASCO).</p> <p>CMPs will aim to provide a scientific evaluation of each salmon population and its habitats at catchment or sub catchment level including an assessment of Conservation Limits, an evaluation of quantity and quality of habitat units, identification of impacts and threats, and prioritisation of management actions in consultation with stakeholders.</p> <p>Work to compile CMPs for the Bush and Main catchments will commence in 2008. Subsequent catchment Management Plans will be developed in line with the following schedule:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="801 738 1803 930"> <thead> <tr> <th>2009</th> <th>2010</th> <th>2011</th> <th>2012</th> <th>2013</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Blackwater and tributaries Glendun Moneycarragh Garvary</td> <td>Upper Bann Clady Shimna</td> <td>Sixmilewater Agivey Glenarm and other Antrim rivers Ballinderry</td> <td>Inver Moyola Quoile Enler Lagan Lower Bann</td> <td>Crumlin /Glenavy Ballymoney / Ballycastle Ballinamallard Kesh</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	Blackwater and tributaries Glendun Moneycarragh Garvary	Upper Bann Clady Shimna	Sixmilewater Agivey Glenarm and other Antrim rivers Ballinderry	Inver Moyola Quoile Enler Lagan Lower Bann	Crumlin /Glenavy Ballymoney / Ballycastle Ballinamallard Kesh
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Eel management plans	<p>The European Commission adopted the European Eel Regulation (EC) No 1100/2007 on 18 September 2007 which aims to establish measures for the recovery of the European eel stock. The Regulation requires the establishment of Eel Management Plans for each river basin district.</p> <p>Plans for the Neagh Bann, North Eastern, and North Western River Basin Districts are currently being drawn up by the Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure in consultation with the Irish authorities and must be completed by the end of this year. Approved plans must be implemented from July 2009. The main aim is to permit the escapement to the sea of at least 40% of the biomass of adult eels relative to the best estimate of escapement that would have existed if no human influences had impacted the stock. Measures to attain this target might include reduction in commercial fishing effort, restocking measures, improvement of passage, combating predators and addressing problems caused by hydro electric power stations.</p>										
Loughs Agency Riverwatch Outreach education programme: 'Adopt a stream' 'Salmon in the Classroom'	A number of out reach programmes are undertaken such as 'Salmon in the Classroom' and 'Adopt a Stream' which target schools within the Foyle and Carlingford areas. The Adopt a stream programme encourages groups to tidy up local streams. The various outreach education programmes increase stakeholders knowledge and level of understanding and encourage stakeholders to take ownership of waterways.										

Key Plans and Programmes	Details
Co-ordinated Local Aquaculture Management System (CLAMS) for Larne Lough	Co-ordinated Local Aquaculture Management Systems (CLAMS) is a process to develop, at local level, a management plan for the development of aquaculture in individual sea loughs. In each case the plan fully integrates aquaculture interests with relevant European and national policies as well as with the interests of all other groups using the marine environment and other initiatives such as Integrated Coastal Zone Management.
Coastal Planning	
Integrated Coastal Zone Management Strategy for Northern Ireland 2006-2026	The Strategy forms the basis for a new approach to the management of the coastal area and will provide a useful framework for all users, planners, managers and developers in deciding how best to balance competing resource demands with environmental needs. It will also aid the development of an integrated programme of social, environmental and economic improvements for future generations.
Draft Marine Bill	<p>The draft UK Marine Bill is being finalised by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) for introduction to Parliament before the end of 2008. This extends to Northern Ireland in a number of areas, including a new marine licensing regime. The changes that are proposed are intended to result in better, more consistent licensing decisions delivered more quickly and at less cost to all by a system that is proportionate and easier to understand and to use. They will integrate delivery across a range of sectors.</p> <p>The Bill also introduces the concept of marine planning. This will clarify marine objectives and priorities for the future, and will assist decision-makers and users towards more efficient, sustainable use and protection of our marine resources. The first stage of this marine planning system will be the creation of a UK-wide marine policy statement to create a more integrated approach to marine management and setting both our short and longer-term objectives for sustainable use of the marine environment. It is then intended that the second stage will be the creation of a series of marine plans, which will implement the policy statement in specific areas, using information about spatial uses and needs in those areas.</p>
UK National Contingency Plan	After saving human life, the key purpose of responding to a maritime incident is to protect human health, and the marine and terrestrial environment. The UK National Contingency Plan sets out detailed plans to ensure there is a timely, measured and effective response to marine pollution incidents.
Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation Plans for Ports and Harbours	A statutory duty has been imposed on harbour authorities, harbours and oil handling facilities of a certain size and or turnover to produce plans to respond to marine pollution incidents in their waters. These plans are commonly referred to as Oil Pollution Preparedness, Response and Co-operation Plans and dovetail with the UK National Contingency Plan to ensure an effective response to marine pollution incidents.
Northern Ireland Coastal Contingency Plan	This plan details the actions to be taken to minimise the effects of unauthorised discharges of polluting substances to coastal waters.
Flood Risk Management Planning	
Rivers Agency Interim Flood Mapping Strategy	This strategy sets out a structured programme of fluvial and coastal flood risk mapping that is based on current knowledge of the mapping requirements for PPS15 (Planning Policy Statement 15 planning and flood risk) and the Floods Directive.
Watercourse Maintenance Programme 2008-2009	This programme involves routine maintenance work on designated main, minor and urban watercourses, and also minor works regarding repair / refurbishment to ancillary structures and installations to ensure that watercourses are kept free flowing to prevent flooding.

Key Plans and Programmes	Details
Flood Risk Management Plans	The Floods Directive which entered into force on 26 th November 2007 has a requirement for preparation and implementation of flood risk management plans by 2015.
Climate Change Planning	
UK Climate Change Bill	This Bill provides a long-term framework for the UK to achieve its goals of reducing carbon dioxide emissions and will ensure that steps are taken towards adapting to the impacts of climate change. The Bill puts into statute the UK's targets to reduce carbon dioxide emissions through domestic and international action by 80% by 2050 and 26-32% by 2020, against a 1990 baseline.
UK Climate Change Programme	The Programme is the UK's key strategy for its work on tackling climate change. It sets out the policies and measures which the UK is using to cut its emissions of greenhouse gases. It also explains how the UK plans to adapt to the impacts of climate change.
Carbon Reduction Commitment Scheme	This new scheme will apply mandatory emissions trading to cut carbon emissions from large commercial and public sector organisations (including supermarkets, hotel chains, government departments, large local authority buildings) by 1.1 MtC / year by 2020.
'Preparing for a Changing Climate in Northern Ireland'	This focuses on the ways in which Northern Ireland must respond to meet the opportunities and threats presented by the impact of a changing climate. Risk analysis has been carried out and impacts have been identified. Adaptation strategies for each impact have been prepared.
Miscellaneous plans and programmes	
UK Shared Framework for Sustainable Development 'One future – different paths'	The UK Shared Framework for Sustainable Development sets out the common challenges and goals for the UK. The framework affirms that, although powers have been devolved to democratic bodies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the UK will work to common goals.
Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy and Implementation Plan	<p>The Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy was published in May 2006. The document focused on six priority areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sustainable Consumption and Production • Natural Resource Protection and Environmental Enhancement • Sustainable Communities • Climate Change and Energy • Learning and Communication • Governance and Sustainable Development <p>The Implementation Plan has been developed around this framework and detailed targets have been set for each priority. The Plan also contains details of how each government department will address sustainability issues across the full range of their policy and operational areas.</p>

Key Plans and Programmes	Details
Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland – 'Building a Better Future' Draft Investment Strategy 2008–2018	<p>The strategy identifies priority areas for investment and is intended to assist government and private sector partners to plan ahead to deliver the investment programme. There are a number of cross cutting objectives of the strategy based on economics, society and the environment. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic – investment in infrastructure to accelerate economic growth and improve competitiveness of business; • Societal – investment in infrastructure to promote equality of opportunity and the desirability of good relations, promote regional balance in future development, and tackle areas of social disadvantage; and • Environmental – investment in infrastructure to protect and enhance our environment, particularly addressing areas affected by EU Directives.
Programme for Government 2008-2011	<p>The Programme for Government sets out strategic priorities and key plans for 2008-2011. The Programme for Government is used to determine the Budget and Investment Strategy and together, these demonstrate how resources and capital investment will be allocated in support of priorities.</p> <p>Priorities under the Programme for Government are divided into a number of key Public Service Agreements (PSAs). These confirm the key actions that will be taken in support of priorities, and the outcomes and targets that will be achieved over the 2008-2011 period.</p> <p>A number of these PSAs are applicable to the Water Framework Directive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PSA 22 - Protecting our environment and reducing our carbon footprint; • PSA 15 - Water and sewerage infrastructure; and • PSA 23 - Managing the risk of flooding from rivers and the sea.
NIEA Better Regulation Programme 2008-2010	<p>The Better Regulation Programme will modernise and simplify NIEA's approach to regulation to help the competitive position of business by lowering the administrative burden and, at the same time, improve the quality of the environment. NIEA are committed to delivering effective, risk-based, streamlined regulation and by improving awareness and compliance assistance, through effective and consistent enforcement, and by simplifying permitting and data returns, NIEA will be able to provide a more balanced and integrated system of protection for the environment.</p>
Plans and Programmes in the North Eastern River Basin District	
Larne Lough Issue Log	<p>Catchment investigations into the reported toxic effects of water quality on shellfish and aquaculture in Larne Lough are being completed by NIEA staff. NIEA have also completed associated investigations into the effects of foaming in the Lough and other catchment water quality and pressure investigations. Marine water quality monitoring in the area has been increased by NIEA.</p>
River Bush Issue Log	<p>Preliminary catchment investigations into poor water quality monitoring results are being carried out by NIEA Regional Operations staff. A number of river walks have been carried out and potential pollution pressures have been identified.</p>
Bog Meadows Issue Log	<p>Catchment investigations into poor water quality monitoring results in rivers feeding the Bog Meadows Nature Reserve have been carried out by NIEA Regional Operations staff. NIEA staff are working in conjunction with Rivers Agency and Belfast City Council to resolve a number of issues. NIEA staff identified a number of Northern Ireland Water sewage infrastructure problems and combined sewer overflow blockages which have been resolved. Water quality has since improved.</p>

Key Plans and Programmes	Details
Connswater Issue Log	Catchment investigations into poor water quality monitoring results affecting the Connswater are being carried out by NIEA Regional Operations staff. A number of problems affecting the rivers have been identified. NIEA have worked with Northern Ireland Water (NIW) to resolve a number of problems and are continuing to work with NIW to resolve additional combined sewer overflow and infrastructure problems in the catchment.
Lagan Issue Log	Catchment investigations into poor water quality monitoring results are being carried out by NIEA Regional Operations staff. NIEA staff have been working with the Iveagh Angling Club and the Ulster Angling Federation to identify pressures affecting the River Lagan. A number of pressures have been identified and NIEA staff are working to resolve these with other government departments and agencies.
Dibney Issue Log	Preliminary catchment investigations into poor water quality monitoring results are being carried out by NIEA Regional Operations staff. NIEA are working on the resolution of a number of historical problems affecting water management in the catchment.
Quoile System Issue Log	Catchment investigations into poor water quality monitoring results are being carried out by NIEA Regional Operations staff. Work was being carried out to look at this catchment before a fishkill at the end of August 2008, however work has become more focused since that event. NIEA staff have identified a number of potential pollution problems affecting small water courses that run into the Quoile catchment. Water quality investigations have been carried out to locate the source of these so that they can be resolved. NIEA staff have worked with members of the Lecale Conservation Society to identify other potential pollution problems, and are currently working to resolve these.