

Nature Recovery Networks Northern Ireland-Useful terminology

Term	Definition
Agri-Environment Schemes	A governmental support scheme designed to support landowners to deliver a range of environmental measures. More detail on the Schemes can be found at https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/agri-environment . As the European Union's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) provided the overarching framework for farm support in Northern Ireland, having left the EU, Northern Ireland will be developing its own "Post-CAP" framework in the upcoming years.
Biodiversity Strategy	A strategy for Northern Ireland to meet its international obligations and local targets to protect biodiversity and ensure that the environment can continue to support our people and economy. The signatories of the CBD are required to produce a Biodiversity Strategy based on the global Biodiversity Framework coming out of the COP15 Global Conference taking place in May 2022. In response to this DAERA will be producing a new Biodiversity Strategy for Northern Ireland, sitting under the over-arching Environment Strategy . The previous Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy to 2020 with associated final report against targets can be accessed at https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/biodiversity-strategy-northern-ireland-2020-0
Blue & Green Infrastructure (BGI)	Projects that combine traditional grey infrastructure with nature-based solutions to create hybrid systems that improve resilience to climate impacts, while also often resulting in environmental, economic, and social co-benefits. Generally, green (on land) and blue (water bodies) infrastructure is a built or engineered solution such as a green roof or a pond to reduce the effects of storm. You would often see them combined together under the term Blue Green Infrastructure (BGI)
Conference of Parties for the Convention Biological Diversity (CBD)	The Convention was opened for signature in June 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (the Rio "Earth Summit") and entered into force in late 1993 with 189 signatories. It has 3 main objectives i.) The conservation of biological diversity, ii.)The sustainable use of the components of biological diversity, iii.)The fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilization of genetic resources. The CBD sets the global agenda on biodiversity protection and enhancement, and signatories are expected to translate this into local strategies and actions (see 'Biodiversity Strategy' and 'COP15' for more detail).
Conservation Management Plans	Northern Ireland has 58 Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), which have been chosen to protect particular 'features' (habitats or species) of conservation importance. To ensure that these sites are in good condition and to deliver towards the protection of these features, DAERA is currently preparing Conservation Management Plans for each of these sites, in order to assess and address key issues for each SAC. For more info, see https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/conservation-management-plans-northern-irelands-special-areas-conservation
COP15	The 15 th UN meeting of the Conference of Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD), taking place in Kunming, China. The event has been divided into two parts, and will be completing in May, 2022, out of which the post-2020 Biodiversity Framework, including global targets, will come out. More at https://www.cbd.int/doc/press/2021/pr-2021-08-18-cop15-en.pdf
COP26	The 26 th UN meeting of the Conference of Parties on Climate Change. The summit taking place in November 2021 in Glasgow, Scotland, and is aimed to accelerate

	<p>action towards the goals of the Paris Agreement and the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). More at https://unfccc.int/conference/glasgow-climate-change-conference-october-november-2021</p>
Designated Site	<p>A defined portion of landscape, legally protected, devoted to and managed, at least partly for biodiversity conservation and (often) the conservation of cultural values. There are two general types:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Areas primarily designated for the protection and management of nature, such as Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs), and 2) Areas designated for landscape e.g. Areas of Outstanding Beauty (AONB), which, while include protection of nature in their value-base, are not primarily designated for the protection of nature. <p>You can view all of these sites on the NIEA Natural Environment Map Viewer at https://apps.daira-ni.gov.uk/nedmapviewer/</p>
Ecological Network	<p>Bennett (2004) defines ecological networks as “coherent systems of natural or semi-natural landscape elements configured and managed with the objective of maintaining or restoring ecological functions as a means of conserving biodiversity while also providing appropriate opportunities for the sustainable use of natural resources”. While terms Nature Recovery Networks and Ecological Networks often get used interchangeably, ecological networks represent the ecological units, whereas Nature Recovery Networks also incorporate people in the planning and design, taking into account their needs and the (ecosystem-) services that a network provides to society.</p>
Ecosystem	<p>The dynamic complex of plant, animal and micro-organism communities and their non-living environment interacting as a functional unit (CBD). Ecosystems can be defined as areas which share similar features amongst the factors of: climatic conditions, geophysical conditions; dominant use by humans; surface cover (based on type of vegetative cover in terrestrial ecosystems or on fresh water, brackish water, or salt water in aquatic ecosystems); species composition; resource management systems and institutions. More at https://www.cbd.int/ecosystem/description.shtml</p>
Ecosystem Services	<p>These are the benefits that flow from nature to people. They can be provisioning (e.g. the supply of food, clean air and water and materials), regulating (e.g. water and climate regulation, nutrient cycling, pollination, or the formation of fertile soils), or cultural (e.g. recreation opportunities, or the inspiration we draw from nature). Natural ecosystems are multifunctional – they can provide a wide range of services simultaneously. The range and flow of these benefits depends largely on biodiversity and ecosystem condition. More at https://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/ecosystems/index_en.htm</p>
Environment Strategy	<p>Northern Ireland has never had an all-encompassing environment strategy, but due to particularly pressing issues such as climate change and other environmental challenges such as pollution and existing knowledge gaps, alongside policy developments it’s now under development. Due to the all-encompassing nature of environment the Department has stated that the Environment Strategy should fit in with and sit at the same level as other strategies such as the Sustainable Development Strategy, Public Health Strategy and the Economic Strategy. Consultation on the Draft Strategy is currently open (closing in January 2022), and can be accessed at https://www.daira-ni.gov.uk/consultations/environment-strategy-consultation</p>

Functional connectivity	The degree of unobstructed movement of individuals, genes and propagules in the landscape between populations and ecosystems. This differs from ‘ structural connectivity ’ which simply incorporates the physical attributes of connectivity, such as a landscape corridor without the respect to how well they function for species’ needs.
Green Growth	The approach of aligning economic growth and development, with sustainable use of natural resources and the environmental services they provide. The Northern Ireland Executive is currently consulting on the Green Growth Strategy. More information can be found at http://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-draft-green-growth-strategy-northern-ireland
Grey Infrastructure	Man-made structures such as dams, seawalls, roads, pipes or water treatment plants. As healthy ecosystems can provide cost-effective alternatives to traditional ‘grey’ infrastructure, the use of nature-based green and blue infrastructure, or indeed a mix of green-grey solutions should be promoted.
Habitat Networks	A habitat network is one that is focused on the connectivity of a single habitat or species. The focus on a habitat may be more or less specific, e.g. woodland in general, or Caledonian pinewood specifically. The main aim of a habitat network is to enhance biodiversity. It does this by improving individual areas of habitat and tackling the problem of habitat fragmentation. This allows species to move between one suitable area and another. Connectivity will be even more crucial as climate change takes hold and species are forced to seek out new areas with the right climatic conditions
‘Lawton’ Principles	The principles of More, Bigger, Better and more joined-up spaces for nature, as were highlighted in the 2010 report ‘Making Space for Nature’ to DEFRA, by Sir Lawton et al. The report can be accessed at https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/ukgwa/20130402170324/http://archive.defra.gov.uk/environment/biodiversity/documents/201009space-for-nature.pdf
Local Development Plans	As per NI planning policy, each NI local authority must prepare a development plan for their area in consultation with the local community. The aim of the plan is to make sure there is enough land available for the area's housing, employment and community facilities, while protecting important landscape and environmental features. More at https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/development-plans
Natural Capital	World’s stocks of natural assets which include geology, soil, air, water and all living things.
Natural Infrastructure	Projects that use existing or rebuilt natural landscapes (i.e., forests, floodplains, and wetlands) to increase resilience to climate impacts, often resulting in environmental, economic, and social co-benefits.
Nature-Based Solutions (NBSs)	Restoring and/or emulating nature in order to increase human, ecosystem, and infrastructure resilience to climate impacts. These solutions often result in environmental, economic, and social co-benefits, including carbon sequestration—a key tool in mitigating greenhouse gas emissions. Nature-based solutions includes both green and natural infrastructure. See for example the British Ecological Society 2021 report at https://www.britishecologicalsociety.org/policy/nature-based-solutions/read-the-report/
Net Gain	The concept of any development leaving the environment in a better state than before.

New Decade, New Approach	The 2020 agreement underpinning the restoration of the Northern Ireland Executive, since it fell in early 2017. Can be accessed at https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/856998/2020-01-08_a_new_decade_a_new_approach.pdf
OECMs	Other Effective Area-Based Conservation Measures. An area that is not legally protected but managed (e.g. by NGOs) in such a way to promote biodiversity conservation (IUCN WCPA, 2019). See for more at https://www.iucn.org/commissions/world-commission-protected-areas/our-work/oecms
Peatland Strategy	As peatlands and their restoration are considered crucial in tackling both the climate and biodiversity crises, DAERA is currently producing a Northern Ireland Peatland Strategy to support the delivery of policy measures and work with partners to invest in restoring and managing peatlands across Northern Ireland. A stakeholder consultation took place in Summer/Autumn 2021 and you can review the consultation documentation at https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/consultations/ni-peatland-strategy-consultation
Program for Government (PFG)	A strategy document which lays out the Government's plans and goals for each year. Northern Ireland Executive's 2021 PFG can be found at https://www.northernireland.gov.uk/programme-government-pfg-2021
Resilience	In the context of ecological networks for conservation, the capacity of a part or the whole of an ecological network to withstand changes to the processes that control its structures and functions (Holling & Gunderson 2002). More at https://portals.iucn.org/library/sites/library/files/documents/PAG-030-En.pdf
Structural Connectivity	A measure of physical proximity based on the arrangements of habitat patches, elements. Structural connectivity is often presumed to be a proxy for functional connectivity but the latter also depends on a species' life history.
30 by 30	Protected Areas play an important role in conserving biodiversity. The scientific community is now urging that for them to be meaningful, they should cover at least 30% of land and sea and this 30% by 2030, an ambition likely to be included in the CBD Biodiversity Framework coming out of the COP15 conference. The Northern Ireland Environment Link (NIEL) has produced a briefing setting out the current thinking around the need, and pathways to achieve the 30by30 ambition in Northern Ireland, which can be accessed at https://www.nienvironmentlink.org/cmsfiles/30-x-30-land-NI-3.pdf