

**NATIONAL THEMATIC REPORT ON FOREST ECOSYSTEMS
IRELAND**

Please provide to following details on the origin of this report

Contracting Party	Ireland
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<i>Submission</i>	
Signature of officer responsible for submitting national report:	
Date of submission:	

Please provide summary information on the process by which this report has been prepared, including information on the types of stakeholders who have been actively involved in its preparation and on material which was used as a basis for the report

The report was circulated to the bodies on the attached spreadsheet and their observations invited, four replies were received. These bodies represent a variety of forestry stakeholders. Comments were also received from within the Forest Service particularly in relation to a new Native Woodland Scheme to be launched shortly. This scheme and other Forest Service publications formed part of the basis for this return.

Background

The Forest Service is the forest authority in Ireland and is responsible for overall forest policy, legislation, administering grant aid, forest research, production of forest statistics etc.

The Republic of Ireland has 9% forest cover,

84% (non indigenous plantation conifer) and 16% broadleaf. The percentage of semi-natural forest is low. The most valuable portion of the latter has legal protection as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).

Decision IV/7 on Forest biological Diversity

1. What is the relative priority afforded to implementation of this decision by your country?					
a) High		b) Medium	✓	c) Low	
2. To what extent are the resources available adequate for meeting the obligations and recommendations made?					
a) Good		b) Adequate	✓	c) Limiting	
				d) Severely limiting	

3. Has your country assessed the status and trends of its forest biological diversity and identified options for its conservation and sustainable use? (Decision IV/7, paragraph 12)	
a) no	
b) assessment underway (please give details below)	✓
c) assessment completed (please give details below)	
d) not relevant	

<i>If a developing country Party or a Party with economy in transition -</i>	
4. Has your country requested assistance through the financial mechanism for projects that promote the implementation of the focused work programme on forest biological diversity? (Decision IV/7, paragraph 7)	
a) no	
b) yes (please give details below)	

Programme element 1: Holistic and inter-sectoral ecosystem approaches that integrate the conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity, taking account of social and cultural and economic considerations

5. Has your country identified methodologies for enhancing the integration of forest biological diversity conservation and sustainable use into an holistic approach to sustainable forest management at the national level? (Work Programme, paragraph 13)	
a) no	
b) yes – limited extent (please give details below)	
c) yes – significant extent (please give details below)	✓
d) not applicable	
6. Has your country developed methodologies to advance the integration of traditional forest-related knowledge into sustainable forest management, in accordance with Article 8(j)? (Work Programme, paragraph 14)	
a) no	
b) yes – limited extent (please give details below)	✓
c) yes – significant extent (please give details below)	
d) not applicable	
7. Has your country promoted cooperation on the conservation and sustainable use of forest biological resources at all levels in accordance with Articles 5 and 16 of the Convention? (Work Programme, paragraph 15)	
a) no	

b) yes – limited extent (please give details below)	✓
c) yes – significant extent (please give details below)	
d) not applicable	
8. Has your country promoted the sharing of relevant technical and scientific information on networks at all levels of protected forest areas and networking modalities in all types of forest ecosystems? (Work Programme, paragraph 17)	
a) no	
b) yes – limited extent (please give details below)	
c) yes – significant extent (please give details below)	✓
d) not applicable	

Programme element 2: Comprehensive analysis of the ways in which human activities, in particular forest-management practices, influence biological diversity and assessment of ways to minimize or mitigate negative influences

9. Has your country promoted activities for an enhanced understanding of positive and negative human influences on forest ecosystems by land-use managers, policy makers, scientists and other relevant stakeholders) (Work Programme, paragraph 29)	
a) minimal activity	
b) yes – limited extent (please give details below)	
c) yes – significant extent (please give details below)	✓
d) not relevant	
10. Has your country promoted activities to assemble management experiences and scientific, indigenous and local information at the national and local levels to provide for the sharing of approaches and tools that lead to improved forest practices with regard to forest biological diversity? (Work Programme, paragraph 30)	
a) minimal activity	
b) yes – limited extent (please give details below)	
c) yes – significant extent (please give details below)	✓
d) not relevant	
11. Has your country promoted activities with the aim of providing options to minimize or mitigate negative and to promote positive human influences on forest biological diversity? (Work Programme, paragraph 31)	
a) minimal activity	
b) yes – limited extent (please give details below)	
c) yes – significant extent (please give details below)	✓
d) not relevant	

12. Has your country promoted activities to minimize the impact of harmful alien species on forest biological diversity? (Work Programme, paragraph 32)	
a) minimal activity	
b) yes – limited extent (please give details below)	
c) yes – significant extent (please give details below)	✓
d) not relevant	
13. Has your country identified means and mechanisms to improve the identification and prioritisation of research activities related to influences of human activities, in particular forest management practices, on forest biological diversity? (Work Programme, paragraph 33)	
a) minimal activity	
b) yes – limited extent (please give details below)	
c) yes – significant extent (please give details below)	✓
d) not relevant	
14. Does your country hold research results and syntheses of reports of relevant scientific and traditional knowledge on key forest biological diversity issues and, if so, have these been disseminated as widely as possible? (Work Programme, paragraph 34)	
a) not relevant	
b) some relevant material, but not widely disseminated	
c) significant material that could be more widely disseminated (please give details below)	✓
d) yes – already widely disseminated (please give details below)	
15. Has your country prepared case-studies on assessing impacts of fires and alien species on forest biological diversity and their influences on the management of forest ecosystems and savannahs? (Work Programme, paragraph 35)	
a) no – please indicate below whether this is due to a lack of available case-studies or for other reasons	✓
b) yes – please give below any views you may have on the usefulness of the preparation of case-studies for developing a better biological understanding of the problem and/or better management responses.	

Programme element 3: Methodologies necessary to advance the elaboration and implementation of criteria and indicators for forest biological diversity

16. Has your country assessed experiences gained in national and regional processes, identifying common elements and gaps in existing initiatives and improving indicators for forest biological diversity? (Work Programme, paragraph 43)	
a) minimal activity	
b) yes – limited assessment made (please give details below)	✓
c) yes – significant assessment made (please give details below)	
d) not relevant	
17. Has your country carried out taxonomic studies and inventories at the national level which provide for a basic assessment of forest biological diversity? (Work Programme, paragraph 43)	
a) minimal activity	
b) yes – limited assessment made (please give details below)	✓
c) yes – significant assessment made (please give details below)	
d) not relevant	

If you have ticked any of the boxes in questions 5 to 17 above which invite you to provide further details, please do so here.

(Information can include descriptions of methodologies and of activities undertaken, reasons for success or failure, outcomes and lessons learned)

Question 3

The Forest Industry and Planning System (FIPS) held by the Forest Service records the location and broad crop types of all forests.

Duchas records all forest Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

A proposed Forest Service/Duchas Native Woodland inventory will assess the status and trends of Ireland's native woodlands.

A Native Woodland Scheme is about to be launched and is intended to encourage the expansion of Ireland's native woodland and associated biodiversity through the application of appropriate close to nature silviculture.

Forest Biodiversity guidelines (Forest Service, 2000 - copy attached) form part of the conditions of Forest Service Grants and Felling Licences.

A research project (Bioforest) will investigate biodiversity in plantation forestry and augment existing research.

Question 5

see answer to question 3 above

Question 6

The revival of the various silvicultural practices, skills and knowledge associated with native woodlands in Ireland is identified as a key function of the Native Woodland Scheme. It is envisaged that these will also have applications in the wider forest sector, particularly in relation to the implementation of SFM.

Question 7

Much research and observations need to be collected and collated.

Question 8

The Heritage Council has published a guide to Habitats in Ireland while Duchas records all forest Special Areas of Conservation (SACs).

Question 10

Under the Native Woodland Scheme various measures are intended to draw together a wide range of management experiences and scientific, indigenous and local information with the expressed purpose of improving practices with regard to native woodlands and related biodiversity. These include a network of Monitoring Sites whereby different management approaches in various native woodland types can be assessed; the development of a *Native Woodland Manual* as a depository for relevant research in the area; and other measures such as professional conferences, training courses and workshops.

Forest Biodiversity Guidelines have also been published.

Question 11

The expressed aim of the Native Woodland Scheme is 'to encourage the proactive protection and expansion of Ireland's native woodland resource and associated biodiversity through the application of close to nature silviculture'. Therefore, continuous cover silviculture, natural regeneration and other

approaches which enhance biodiversity are specifically encouraged, as are operations which minimise site and habitat disturbance.

Question 12

The prevention of natural regeneration by invasive exotic species such as rhododendron and laurel is regarded as a major threat to Ireland's native woodland resource. The control of such species has been included as a grant aided operation under the Native Woodland Scheme.

Question 13

To complement the Native Woodland Scheme, a series of Monitoring Sites has been established to assess different management approaches within various native woodland types, specifically to gather information and to highlight specific areas requiring further research and development. COFORD, the National Council for Forest Research and Development, has prioritised research on plantation forest biodiversity.

Question 14

To complement the Native Woodland Scheme, a Native Woodland Manual will be developed. Through regular updating, this manual will act as a depository for new research, knowledge and information on native woodland ecology and appropriate management, as it emerges. The manual will be widely distributed, being of immediate interest to a wide range of interests involved under the scheme.

The Forest Service Forest Biodiversity Guidelines are based on a paper commissioned from a leading expert in the area.

Question 15

Fires are not a large issue in Ireland. The alien species issue is seen as one where at one end of the spectrum rhododendron ponticum is seen as a particularly harmful alien species to other cases where the issues are more complex and of less urgency. However, the aforementioned network of Monitoring Sites will contain certain controls whereby different management approaches and their impact on biodiversity can be assessed. These include areas affected by fire and alien species.

Question 16

Ireland has produced a National Forest Standard and is in the process of reviewing the measures. Forest biodiversity indicators are seen as scarce at present.

Question 17

There is seen to be a need to collate and collect research and records relating to forest biological diversity.

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Mr.	Tom	Roche		Just Forests	Bury Quay	Tullamore	Co. Offaly	
Mr.	John	McLoughlin	President	Tree Council of Ireland	Royal Hospital Kilmainham	Dublin 8		
Mr.	Larry	Stapleton	Programme Manager	Environmental Protection Agency	Johnstown Castle Estate	Co. Wexford		
Mr.	David	Jeffrey		An Taisce	Tailors Hall	Dublin 8		
Mr.	Michael	Starrett	Chairperson	The Heritage Council	Roth House	Parliament Street	Kilkenny	
			Chairperson	Irish Wildlife Trust	107 Lower Baggot Street	Dublin 2		
Ms.	Melanie	Hamilton	Executive Director Chairperson	Conservation Volunteers Ireland Birdwatch Ireland	The Green Ruttledge House	Griffith College 8 Longford Place	S.C.R. Monkstown	Dublin 8 Co. Dublin
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Mr.	Andrew	Cox	Chairperson	Caretakers of the Environment	c/o Newtown School	Waterford		
Ms.	Jacinta	French	Co-ordinator	Irish Coalition for Sustainable Forestry	7 Upper Camden Street	Dublin 1		
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