

Independent Advisory Committee on Nature Restoration

Meeting 1: 29th January 2025

Venue: Custom House

Time: 11am – 2:30pm

Attendees: See Annex I

Meeting report

The inaugural meeting of the Independent Advisory Committee (IAC) on Nature Restoration took place on 29th January to agree the proposed functioning of the Committee and receive a high-level briefing from the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) on the Nature Restoration Law (NRL) and the preparations for drafting the National Restoration Plan (NRP).

1. The Director General of the National Parks and Wildlife Service (NPWS) Mr Niall Ó Donnchú welcomed the members of the IAC and thanked them for their support in this important matter.
2. The Chairperson Dr Aoibhinn Ní Shúilleabháin provided introductory remarks and set the scene for the IAC's work, highlighting the fact that the NRP must be coherent, ambitious and implementable, taking into account the scientific evidence base while integrating stakeholder views.
3. Key outcomes on the functioning of the IAC:
 - a. The proposed draft Terms of Reference were agreed.
 - b. The proposed draft Guiding Principles of Engagement were agreed.
 - c. The proposed draft Rules & Procedures were agreed subject to the following amendment:
 - 1.ii. Meetings will take place *approx.* every 4-8 weeks. This addition is to cater for the fact that meetings have to align with the outputs of the Interdepartmental Working Groups which may accelerate over time.
4. Ms Áinle NiBhriain, Director for International and EU Affairs of the NPWS, provided the Committee with a briefing on the NRL and its targets.

5. Dr David Fenner (NPWS) provided an overview of the proposed model for preparing the NRP.

Dr Rebecca Jeffrey (NPWS, Chair of the NRP Interdepartmental Working Group on Land) elaborated on the scope of the technical and scientific work which will underpin the NRP target-setting process.

In relation to the stakeholder engagement as part of the drafting process of the NRP, the IAC recommended quarterly meetings of the proposed Leaders Forum beginning at the end of March. The NPWS was requested to provide an update on the preparations for the stakeholder engagement process at the next IAC meeting.

The IAC Members voiced their concerns regarding the lack of administrative capacity of the NPWS to effectively coordinate the timely delivery of the NRP.

6. The upcoming schedule of preferably in-person meetings was agreed with the next meeting scheduled on 31st March.

Annex I – IAC Meeting 1 Attendees

- Dr Aoibhinn Ní Shúilleabháin, Chair
- Mr David Kerr
- Ms Linda Lennon
- Mrs Norah Parke
- Professor Tasman Crowe
- Mr Joe MacGrath
- Mr Paul O'Brien
- Mr Colm O'Donnell
- Ms Marina Conway
- Mr David Flynn
- Dr Micheál Ó Briain
- Mr Niall Ó Donnchú, Director General, NPWS
- Ms Áinle NiBhriain, Director for International and EU Affairs, NPWS
- Dr Rebecca Jeffrey, NPWS
- Dr David Fenner, NPWS