

# **A National Landscape Strategy for Ireland**

Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht

## **STRATEGY ISSUES PAPER FOR CONSULTATION**

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*An Roinn  
Ealaíon, Oidhreachta agus Gaeltachta*  

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## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In line with our signing and ratification of the European Landscape Convention, Ireland has a commitment to deliver a National Landscape Strategy. In addition, the success of our economy is intimately related to how well we manage our environment. For example, tourism depends on high quality landscapes and built environments and certain high value-added parts of the food industry depend on Ireland's 'green image' for competitive advantage.

The process of compiling this Strategy commenced with the establishment of a National Landscape Strategy Steering Group and wider consultative panel, which then merged. Issues were identified and tabulated. The process developed with the formation of three focus groups: on policy, landscape character analysis, and public consultation / participation. The Steering Group contained representatives from government departments, agencies and institutions and non-governmental organisations that responded to the initial call, as well as other state representatives considered to have a role in managing, planning and protecting the landscape.

The document now circulated for public consultation will be amended and updated on completion of this exercise. It is intended that the National Landscape Strategy will be put forward for Government consideration in 2012.

## INTRODUCTION

The first decade of the twenty-first century has seen accelerated changes in the Irish landscape. Significant development since the late 1990s has brought changes to settlements, transport patterns and the industrial, agricultural and economic bases, which have in turn altered the traditional urban / rural population balance. A growing awareness of the effects of climate change has brought into stronger focus the value and significance of the national landscape as a physical, economic and cultural resource and setting that is vulnerable to change. The landscape requires active management if we are to develop these resources in a sustainable manner.

Such changes are being experienced throughout the landscape of Europe and in much of the wider world. The European Landscape Convention was adopted in 2000 (done at Florence on 20 October 2000) as a new Council of Europe instrument with which to guide the management, planning and protection of all landscapes in Europe. Ireland is a signatory to this Convention.

This document sets out Ireland's aims and objectives with regard to landscape and positions it in the context of existing strategies, policies and objectives as well as the framework of the European Landscape Convention.

Submissions on the contents and scope of this document must be made in writing and marked "Strategy Issues Paper" and addressed to: Mr Paul McMahon, Built Heritage and Architectural Policy Section, Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, Newtown Road, Wexford. Submissions may also be made by email to the following address: [nls@ahg.gov.ie](mailto:nls@ahg.gov.ie) and marked "Strategy Issues Paper" in the email subject field.

## 1.0 CONTEXT AND OVERVIEW OF STRATEGY

### 1.1 What is a National Landscape Strategy?

The National Landscape Strategy will be one of a suite of national strategies including the National Spatial Strategy (2002-2020) and the National Climate Change Strategy (2007-2012), all approved by Government, which map out paths towards sustainable development and management of our national – human and natural – resources.

***A landscape is an area, as perceived by local people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors.***

The landscape of Ireland – and all countries – is changing, largely due to the role of humans. As is stressed by the European Landscape Convention, there is a need to seek the right balance between management, planning and protection of a landscape. The National Landscape Strategy will be the framework to achieve this balance. It will:

- Recognise the importance of all landscapes in Ireland
- Implement the European Landscape Convention in Ireland
- Promote sustainable development
- Enhance and protect the environment

The National Landscape Strategy is a policy framework shaped for the particular purposes set out above. Landscape affects everybody and crosses the boundaries of almost all types of public policy. Society, economy and our physical environment are interdependent: when one changes it affects the others. The Strategy will co-ordinate to greater effect the many existing administrative and technical systems which are charged with looking after the land and its resources, and the civil society and business interests which work towards these aims.

***The aim of the National Landscape Strategy is the sustainable management of change affecting landscape: it is not the preservation or "freezing" of the landscape at a particular point in its continuing evolution.***

The Strategy will not mean an extension of local authority planning control into areas outside the remit of existing legislation, nor will it curtail property rights. Most importantly, it is not the intent of the Strategy to 'protect' landscape from anyone, least of all those who own, manage or use it.

To manage our landscape effectively we will need to change how we manage the various components that form it. It will also require each individual to take responsibility for their impacts on our shared environment in return for benefiting from what a healthy environment gives us – sustainably managed landscapes can provide us with economic wealth, distinctiveness, health, biodiversity, competitive advantages and a strong sense of identity.

## **1.2 Why is a National Landscape Strategy being developed in Ireland now?**

Ireland, in common with thirty four other countries, has signed and ratified the Council of Europe's European Landscape Convention (2000). The Convention came into effect on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2004. It obliges us to implement certain types of policy changes and objectives concerning landscape. The text of the European Landscape Convention is contained in the appendix.

The National Landscape Strategy will be Ireland's vehicle for complying with the Convention. Suggested objectives to achieve our obligations are drafted in this public consultation document. The Convention also requires us to define 'landscape' in our laws. This definition is contained in the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 (No. 30 of 2010).

***High level objective 1***  
***To define 'landscape' in law***

At the same time we must work towards our commitments under European Union legislation and United Nations protocols to ensure that we steer a course for sustainable development. Many EU directives, which must be transposed into Irish law and are strictly enforced, are framed to reduce direct impacts on the environment, while other EU policies are targeted at potential impacts on the environment. The National Landscape Strategy will help Ireland comply with EU and United Nations' requirements to foster sustainable development.

The National Landscape Strategy has not been devised, however, just to comply with obligations towards others. There is a growing awareness that landscape is a very important focus for humans and human life: it is where people, society, economy, history, identity and natural resources meet and therefore should be accorded a value in our collective decision making processes.

The varied geology of the island has given us very many diverse landscapes, some internationally renowned for their aesthetic qualities. Landscapes are compositions of many physical and spiritual elements, and economic and social factors. Landscapes embody our collective memory, give context to our language and provide the setting for our lives. On a larger scale our sense of geographical identity has been shaped by our existence as an Atlantic island between a continent and an ocean, giving the Irish landscape identity a particular distinctiveness. A society's perception of its landscape changes over time, as the interdependent relationship between people and the landscape changes. Emigration, immigration and tourism also bring new meanings to the landscape – for example, it is recognised that both visitors and descendants of emigrants perceive the landscape of Ireland in particular ways.

Landscape is a dynamic mix of ingredients. Each large and small element changes and regenerates in response to the impacts caused by natural cycles, weather events, water and climate, and economic factors relating to agriculture, industry, energy, transport, settlement and tourism. If a field is not grazed or cropped trees will grow. If one type of agriculture becomes economically unsustainable then it will cease and be replaced by another rural enterprise, such as forestry, energy crops or wind-farms. The landscape we experience differs from that lived in by our parents and ancestors. The way it evolves affects how communities – and their culture – change. We as a society can help to guide future changes to the landscape depending on our actions and the actions of future generations and on changes in weather patterns and climate. In this sense, the active management, planning and protection of our landscape is a key element in this Strategy and its implementation.

The land of Ireland occupies over 70,000 square kilometres, of which about four million hectares are agricultural land, the remainder being mountain, peat bog, forest and settlements. Throughout it all flow waterways and surrounding it are coasts – of some 2,797 km length – and seas. Most of the agricultural landscape and much of the mountain land is private property. Why then should it, and its management, be of importance to those who do

not own it, live on it or make their living from it? The answers lie in changes in perceptions and in the pace of physical change, which has been accelerating since the late twentieth century.

***High Level Objective 2***

***To increase public awareness about landscapes, including the links between the land's resources, the layout of the landscape and the physical, economic and psychological health of its people***

### **1.3 The changing landscape and changing uses**

Since its introduction, nearly 6,000 years ago, agriculture has shaped almost all of the Irish landscape. During that time changes in farming practices changed the appearance and character of places, sometimes gradually, sometimes abruptly. Indeed, much of the landscape that would be perceived as scenery typical of Ireland or considered beautiful was shaped by agricultural activity over the ages – for example, the patchwork of fields demarcated by ditches, hedgerows or stone walls sometimes dotted with grazing cattle or sheep. However over the last fifty years other human activities have begun to overtake farming as shapers of the land.

Like the rest of Europe, farmers and farming now account for a smaller part of the population and the economy while more and more people live and work in settlements. Urbanised populations use and appreciate the countryside in different ways. They expect it to provide scenery, amenities and nature – the narrower view of 'landscape' – as well as food. They also look at the countryside as something separate, and often special, because it enshrines much of what is thought of as being our distinctive culture. However, rural landscapes are most often both scenery as well as working landscapes.

***The reality is that landscape can, and will continue, to accommodate many social, economic and environmental uses and functions, and as a society we have to accommodate many different perceptions of the landscape.***

Human societies and economies are interdependent: rural dwellers need urban settlements and vice versa to allow us work to our best advantage – neither can function fully without the



other. In any case, the buildings and structures of rural places, as much as the architecture and spaces of urban places, are all vital ingredients of the landscape mix.

Thought and creativity need to be applied to managing and planning the landscapes of towns and cities, so that they remain socially and economically vibrant. This will be done more effectively if we sustainably manage the natural resources such as water, open space and ecosystems that both urban and rural areas share. We can utilise the collective benefits of these resources effectively for all users through seeing it as 'green infrastructure', and can make sure that effective regulation keeps it functioning for the benefit of all.

An increasing challenge for both urban and rural dwellers is the equitable sharing of finite as well as renewable natural resources. The consequences of the ways we now live, and of the choices we collectively make or do not make, can contribute to environmental resources becoming degraded or polluted, or can leave outdated infrastructural systems in place. Many aspects of industrial development and housing, agriculture, forestry, infrastructural development, and recreation activity, if not carefully directed, drive habitat degradation and biodiversity loss.

Biodiversity, which includes living things from microscopic mites to ancient trees, is crucial for the maintenance of agriculture, fisheries, industry, and human and animal health and wellbeing. The landscape can be thought of as a range of ecosystems that provide a variety of functions including regulation of climatic processes, breakdown of wastes and recycling of nutrients, filtering of water, protection against flooding, maintenance of soil fertility and the provision of natural resources. Increasingly people are aware of the value of our natural resources and biodiversity and the sensitive balance needed to maintain them and the benefits they provide. Key to maintaining biodiversity is protection and management of designated sites for nature conservation. Adapting the ways in which we manage our landscapes and ecosystems outside of designated sites is also necessary to stem biodiversity loss and ecosystem degradation. Targeted actions such as well designed agri-environment measures are an example of this type of management.

In valuing 'environmental public goods' we have come further than is sometimes appreciated. Many industries, including agriculture, organisations and societies and local communities have put in place programmes, schemes and ways of working with land and nature to the benefit of communities and biodiversity. The agricultural sector is taking

positive steps to care for our natural and cultural heritage. The pioneering Rural Environmental Protection Scheme (REPS) and more recently the requirements for cross-compliance for those receiving EU payments resulting from reform of the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP), make environmental management, including management of landscape features, a farming priority. Throughout the country state-sponsored employment schemes and voluntary action are creating environmentally sustainable economic activity and employment opportunities and improving rural facilities through utilising the features of the landscape and local knowledge of its history and culture.

The National Landscape Strategy is as much about designing the appropriate means of improving or making new landscapes which fit our aspirations as a society, as it is about cherishing existing landscapes that sustain us as a nation – socially, economically and environmentally.

#### **1.4 How will the National Landscape Strategy improve current ways of managing our landscape?**

The definition of landscape drawn up by the European Landscape Convention, which is mirrored by the legal definition of landscape for Ireland (as inserted into the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010) reflects the idea that landscapes evolve through time, as a result of being acted upon by natural forces and human beings. It also underlines that a landscape forms a whole, whose natural and cultural components have to be taken together, not separately.

The National Landscape Strategy will change policies and structures so that we manage our interlinked landscape, society and economy more effectively, in ways that benefit our shared natural resources and all of the inhabitants and visitors, based on understanding its character, its potential and the threats to it. It will set objectives to look at and prepare for the known and suspected changes to the landscape that will arise from climate change, peak oil and the need to reduce our carbon footprint.

A major role of the Strategy will be to co-ordinate and improve how landscape character assessment is carried out in Ireland. It is an objective of the National Landscape Strategy to provide a national standard for the compilation of landscape character assessment – that is, quantitative and qualitative information on all aspects of a landscape area.

### ***High Level Objective 3***

***The National Landscape Strategy will facilitate the development of:***

- a. Landscape character assessment within a national landscape framework, which will provide objective and consistent descriptions of Ireland's landscapes within a standardised format***
- b. Landscape planning and landscape management guidance and facilitatory tools for use with Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA), Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) and Appropriate Assessment (AA) to improve land-use policies, and forward planning and development management practices***
- c. Methods to establish the current state of the landscape through baseline research***

The landscape character assessment process collects, analyses and presents interconnected data and information on:

- what the landscape looks like - ***its appearance***,
- what it holds - ***its natural resources and cultural importance***, and
- what it can sustainably offer - ***its economic, ecological, social and cultural potential*** - to those who own, see or visit it.

Landscape character assessment will incorporate information on the historic landscape as well as the current landscape, as landscape cannot be fully explained without referring to its time-depth. It is central to landscape character assessment that human interaction with the landscape has formed, and continues to form, its character. Landscape character assessment provides a rounded, objective analysis of each landscape area. Landscape character assessment is also a landscape management tool; having analysed landscape it contains the information needed with which to develop criteria for the management, planning and protection of the landscape. Landscape character assessment can be used as the basis from which to develop local, regional, or national policies or proposals – such as those for green infrastructure, recreation or transport.

The suggested objectives in this document, and the explanation of how landscape characterisation works, aim to lead to a fuller understanding by all of us in our local and national communities, of how and why our landscapes exist in their present form, and how they can or should change to meet their owners' and users' needs in ways that make sense over the long term. It is hoped that this increased awareness will help to guide political, intellectual and economic pressure towards resourcing and managing the changes needed to support those communities who own, care for, live in, live off, and interact with the landscapes that are home to our distinctive culture.

Through local influence in developing landscape character assessments and making development plan objectives, land users and landscape interest groups will be more aware that development in the countryside can be fostered by realistic, openly debated positions on farming and the other rural land uses and the economic, social, recreational and tourism functions that are based on land uses. Communities and those looking from outside the locality have the landscape character assessment information to hand that illustrates how, or if, infrastructure needed to ensure the economic viability of urban and rural areas – such as transportation and energy routes, extractive and energy industries – is planned and designed in a way that respects the landscape and its owners' and users' needs.

Through the ways suggested in this document of directing local and regional level objectives, urban and rural dwellers will have the means to participate in developing new ways of dealing with a rapidly urbanising society's new and emerging demands on our landscape.

#### ***High Level Objective 4***

***We will develop effective methods of partnership and engagement in the development of the National Landscape Strategy, to obtain public ownership and agreement on the changes required to achieve the aims of this strategy***

The Strategy aims to raise awareness about the true nature of the landscape, and to identify what it is that Irish people hold to be important about their landscapes. The feedback from the public consultation will help the Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht and the stakeholders in the process to see how best the published Strategy can overcome conflicting perceptions of the landscape. It will inform us as to how awareness-raising measures and

structures can be shaped, so there is effective public participation at all stages of the Strategy.

### **1.5 In what ways will the National Landscape Strategy work?**

The National Landscape Strategy will be a framework for ways of managing our landscape that anticipate and avoid conflict between the present and emerging uses, as society and economy become ever more complicated and increasingly influenced by fast-developing technologies. The structure set up to steer the Strategy will be designed to aid the management of the changing landscape and macro-economic opportunities in a way that guides Ireland on a path of sustainable development. In the first instance it will do this through the land-use planning process, which has a long tradition of being used to manage change and achieve a sustainable balance between conflicting demands. It will give the users of landscape the tools to manage and develop areas that may be valued for agriculture, quarrying or ecology, for instance, as well as recreation, tourism, renewable energy or infrastructure.

#### ***High Level Objective 5***

***The Strategy will ensure that landscape considerations are accommodated in cultural, environmental, agricultural, social, health, education, recreation, tourism, economic and transport policies and all relevant sectors of public administration***

It is only by researching the current state of the landscape, and assessing its character at a national level using carefully worked out criteria, and with the input of the public and all sectors of public administration, that we can begin to work out national objectives for managing it. In turn, regional and local landscapes will be assessed and objectives made at these levels, to contribute and guide land-use planning. Provisions contained in the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010 require the inclusion of a mandatory objective in the development plan of a local authority to 'develop landscape policies, in accordance with relevant policies or objectives for the time being of the Government or any Minister of the Government, relating to providing a framework for identification, assessment, protection, management and planning of landscapes and developed by the Minister having regard to the European Landscape Convention done at Florence on 20 October 2000'.

As well as using existing research, combining the information and benefits from all sectors and administrative systems, and developing objectives for the sustainable use of our landscape, the Strategy aims to put in place a network of links for public interaction in landscape-related policymaking, from national aspirations down to local implementation. It is a central aim that the National Landscape Strategy will assist people in local areas who live in them and know them intimately, to effectively share in caring for them and planning sensitively for the future of the land and its resources, whether privately owned or shared in common.

***High Level Objective 6***

***Ireland will sign and/or ratify international conventions related to the protection and management of landscape***

## **1.6 National Landscape Framework and Landscape Character Assessment**

To manage and develop the landscape, it is essential to have a knowledge base from which decisions and strategies can be informed. Landscape character assessment is a means of giving us the information about our landscape – its physical and cultural elements – which describes its multiple layers and tells us how it may be sensitive to change through natural causes and events or through human intervention, as a consequence of economic, social and physical processes.

Draft guidelines *Landscape and Landscape Assessment* were issued in 2000.<sup>1</sup> This prompted many local authorities, which welcomed this method of planning, to prepare landscape character assessments. Most local authorities developed landscape policies and objectives in development plans, however this landscape planning approach varied in method and content, and the mechanism of the use of landscape character assessment within the local authority planning system was not clearly defined. A purely county-based remit also presents problems of continuity and co-ordination when a regional or national approach is required.

As set out in the draft objectives in this document, it is intended to set up a national landscape framework for landscape character assessment at the national scale, which will

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<sup>1</sup> Department of the Environment and Local Government 2000.

set a template at a regional and local scale. This framework will deal more effectively with the complex interconnected elements of landscape, to give both a broad and a detailed view. It can present information to assist in dealing with environmental and ecological issues as well as emphasising the social, cultural and historical dimensions of landscape.

At all scales landscape character assessment should provide a way of seeing and recognising the continuity and connectivity of the landscape and the hand of human activity in it. This will be of fundamental importance, for example, when managing water and promoting biodiversity through green infrastructure and ecological corridors and networks, some of which will involve managing public interaction and activities. The outcome of the landscape character assessment process in each case will be to target opportunities for landscape changes that can secure and support ecosystems and human health and well-being. The landscape character assessment process will, through public, community and stakeholder involvement, explore the ways that our landscape can be managed. In itself the production of a landscape character assessment can become a vehicle for the educational processes for professionals and the general public alike, whilst absorbing local knowledge and values.

The national landscape framework will set out the criteria and the process for landscape character assessment with due attention to resolving the issues of scale, value and the dynamics of change. It will develop a standardised template that will form the structure of the landscape character assessment to ensure compatibility between this assessment and geographical continuity, ensuring consistency at every scale. The template will provide a skeleton at the largest scale which is objective and will be supported with available data sets.

It is an objective of the National Landscape Strategy that guidance documents and tools will be produced to facilitate the creation of regional, county and local input into the landscape character assessment at the finer grain scale. The appropriate authorities to manage and co-ordinate landscape character assessment are the designated bodies within the planning system.

Decisions on assigning landscape 'value' and 'sensitivity' are judgements that can be both objective and subjective. An example of the objective might be ground water quality, whereas a subjective designation for a landscape would be a statement of its beauty. It is at

the local scale that subjective value assessments and the establishment of aspects of the sensitivity of the landscapes will be carried out, with the engagement and participation of the local community and stakeholders. Much data will be required for the detail of finer-scale landscape character assessments. This could be provided for and by the local community in engagement with an awareness raising and educational programme. This mechanism for local information data banks should provide for future addition of data as well as assist to monitor change within the landscape.

The landscape character assessment may provide a good framework and setting for Appropriate Assessment in considering whether a plan or project will have adverse effects on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site. The landscape character assessment should be used in conjunction with the Appropriate Assessment statement and other information collected on the site and the likely effects on it.

### **1.7 Managing and planning landscapes of quality**

A National Landscape Strategy should make us more aware of the complexity and diversity of our landscapes and the complexity and diversity of the needs and aspirations of all its users. It is through knowledge gained about their landscape, its users and their preferences that communities can participate more confidently and powerfully at county, town and city level – for example in the public consultation phase of drafting development plans – to achieve quality outcomes.

As stated in the *Government Policy on Architecture 2009-2015*,<sup>2</sup> the quality of our environment profoundly affects the quality of our everyday lives. This understanding is one of the key drivers behind the management and continual regeneration of our landscape. It is the reason that so few people are passive when it comes to holding and expressing a view on whether that quality is being addressed or neglected in their immediate, local, national or even international environment. However, we must know where we are at present before we can predict if our actions are likely to bear fruit. Baseline research on the state of the landscape will help us to understand how healthy its many parts are and is vital if we are to monitor the effects of the actions we carry out, whether intentional or accidental.

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<sup>2</sup> Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, 2009.



In rising to the environmental challenges facing our country there is a need, through research on the built and natural environment, to make informed choices on how we use our existing places, buildings, landscapes and natural resources. Therefore, as well as putting together a framework for managing, planning and protecting the landscape, the National Landscape Strategy seeks to promote awareness and understanding of the contribution of good design to the daily life and well being of society as a whole. The realisation of quality in the design of landscapes is fundamentally about much more than individual sites, buildings or areas. It must also concern itself with the realisation of an acceptable human environment for all.

The National Landscape Strategy includes objectives to promote good spatial layout, high quality and sustainable landscape design and green infrastructure linkages in the retrofitting of under-functioning landscapes and in the design of new places and rehabilitation of degraded landscapes. Multi-disciplinary working methods incorporating a landscape-centred approach to the design of new places will also be supported. Research, links and exchanges will be fostered at a European level to ensure Ireland stays abreast of international research and application.

## 2.0 SHAPING OUR FUTURE WITH THE NATIONAL LANDSCAPE STRATEGY

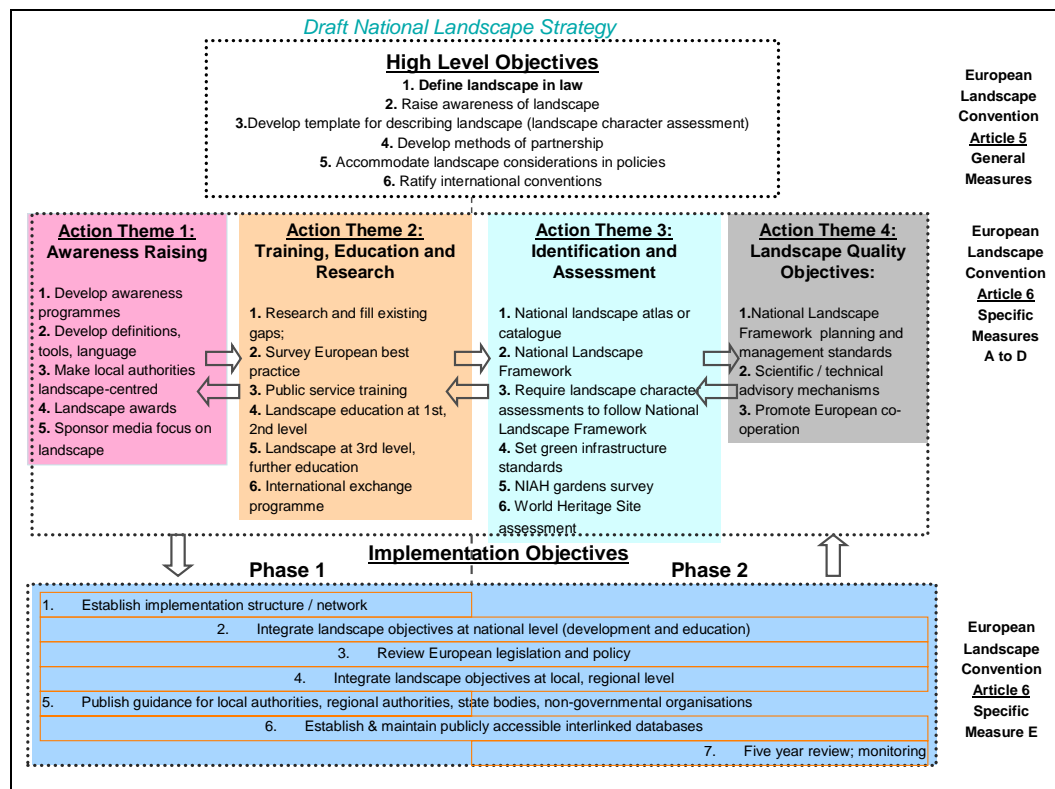
The National Landscape Strategy will ask us to visualise a better future for ourselves within our physical environment while valuing what we consider important about the past and present landscape. Positioning landscape at the centre of policy decisions across sectors assists and supports decision makers to accord with principles of sustainability, as the landscape is the conceptual focus for integrating society, economy and the environment.

***The outcome of the public consultation on the draft aims and policy objectives will inform the future direction of our landscape***

In order to adopt the types and range of policies that will make the National Landscape Strategy an effective strategy, we need to visualise the Ireland we would like to see a generation from now. We can foresee some unavoidable changes but not others; we can however foresee in a general way how Ireland might be and its inhabitants might live, if we make choices now and in the future that will assist us to achieve sustainable development and the promotion of the common good.

The National Landscape Strategy will work towards a more sustainable Ireland where the national approach to landscape management will support the population in leading productive lives that are healthier, more sustainable and contribute to social, economic and environmental well being. This future Ireland will recognise that our landscape, in addition to providing us all with a quality environment in which to live and work, is a significant cultural, heritage, recreation and tourism resource. The issues and tensions relating to land functions and uses such as water management, agricultural practices, forestry, bogs, biodiversity, energy supply, public access, and location of industry and housing will be assessed on all of their impacts, and the potential impacts upon our landscape of climate change. All who live in, work in or visit Ireland will appreciate the benefits of conserving, managing and planning for quality landscapes, including the facilities the landscape provides for recreation and enjoyment.

**Diagram 1: National Landscape Strategy Draft Objectives**



## 2.1 High level Objectives and the European Landscape Convention

Articles 5 and 6 of the European Landscape Convention require each country to prepare both general and specific measures to implement the Convention. The following six high level objectives set out the core strategy areas of the National Landscape Strategy and relate to the General Measures of Article 5 of the European Landscape Convention, worded so as to be relevant to the Irish situation. A number of existing policies and schemes support the implementation of the Convention. The objectives drafted in this consultation document should cover the range of outstanding issues required to be dealt with in terms of central policy objectives but may be revised upon consideration of the feedback gained from the public consultation process.

The first high level objective is, as per European Landscape Convention General Measure 5a:

*To recognise landscapes in law as an essential component of people's surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity*

This is provided for in the Planning and Development (Amendment) Act 2010. Complementary historic landscape provisions are proposed in the forthcoming Monuments Bill.

The other high level objectives are:

1. To increase public awareness about landscapes, including the links between the land's resources, the layout of the landscape and the physical, economic and psychological health of its people.

This objective is considered to be a starting point to engage the public in order to ensure the successful implementation of the National Landscape Strategy. The ways in which public awareness may be developed are dealt with in Action Theme 1 below.

2. To facilitate the development of:

- a.* Landscape character assessment within a national landscape framework, which will provide objective and consistent descriptions of Ireland's landscapes within a standardised format
- b.* Landscape planning and landscape management guidance and facilitatory tools for use with Strategic Environmental Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment to improve land-use policies, and forward planning and development management practices.
- c.* Methods to establish the current state of the landscape through baseline research.

This objective corresponds to General Measure Article 5b.

3. To develop effective methods of partnership and engagement in the development of the National Landscape Strategy, and to obtain public ownership and agreement in changes required to achieve the aims of this strategy

This objective corresponds to General Measure Article 5c.

4. To accommodate landscape considerations in cultural, environmental, agricultural, social, health, education, recreation, tourism, economic and transport policies and all relevant sectors of public administration

This objective corresponds to General Measure Article 5d.

5. To sign and/or ratify international conventions related to the protection and management of landscape e.g.: Council of Europe - Framework Convention on the Value of Cultural Heritage for Society (CETS no. 199, Faro 2005); UN-ECE Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-Making and Access to Justice in Environmental Matters (Aarhus 1998)

This objective is complementary to the aim of Measure 5a.

## **2.2 Specific objectives to support the National Landscape Strategy's high level objectives**

The Strategy follows the European Landscape Convention's strong preference for the principle of subsidiarity, the taking of decisions at the most local level feasible. The Convention also makes clear that some actions are best done at a central or aggregate level, for example, guidance, policy co-ordination, and the holding of data or information banks. The objectives suggested in this draft reflect this mix of assigning local and national responsibilities to ensure local implementation to national templates and standards.

To manage a complex undertaking such as this Strategy, its objectives need to be organised coherently and in achievable steps. It is envisaged that implementation will take place in two phases. Some of the objectives will involve work in both phases. This is covered in more detail below. The following draft objectives are contained in four Action themes, following the themes outlined in Article 6 of the Convention. These are: awareness-raising; training, education and research; identification and assessment; and landscape quality objectives. Other possible actions may be suggested under these headings, or revisions considered to these draft actions upon receipt of feedback.

### **ACTION 1: Awareness-raising**

The Strategy will promote awareness-raising about the role of landscape. This draft – and the European Landscape Convention – point out that landscapes have always changed and will continue to change, through both natural processes and human action. The Convention

articulates that the aim should be to manage future changes in a way which recognises the great diversity and the quality of the landscapes that we inherit, and which seeks to preserve, or even enhance, that diversity and quality instead of allowing it to decline. To do this we need to accept the extent to which humans have played a role in the establishment and maintenance of the rural landscape, and that this role will continue as the landscape must serve 21<sup>st</sup> century needs. Equally, we have to change the assumption that urban settlements can always accommodate further development, without looking carefully at what nature and extent of development might be appropriate to the character of a place.

The following draft actions are suggested:-

1. Develop programmes to increase awareness in society about the true nature of the landscape, and of ways of using landscape sustainably, including how it affects and is affected by the resource demands of a rapidly urbanising society.
2. Develop definitions, tools and language to impart simply but clearly the nature of landscape, that the processes that form the landscape are dynamic and that landscape character areas belong to all of us. Such tools will be used to word objectives that are easily understood by non-specialists and can be useful for a multiplicity of purposes.
3. Develop ways of thinking and acting within local, regional and national authorities that put those who occupy and use their landscapes at the centre of sustainable development policy and actions. Provide appropriate landscape expert support to public participation initiatives to ensure that landscape change management is effective and based on best practice.
4. Develop national landscape awards to generate public interest in the landscapes they identify as worth valuing. Encourage participation of at least one nomination a year to the European Landscape Awards.
  - a. Incorporate landscape categories into established award schemes, for example those relating to architecture, urban planning, science, biodiversity, recreation, tourism, agriculture and food production

5. Sponsor radio/television programmes that explain the National Landscape Strategy in a way that is intelligible and accessible to the general public, and which encourage participative methods such as competitions.

## **ACTION 2: Training, education and research**

This set of measures specifies the steps needed to ensure that all of those involved in landscape planning and management will be adequately trained, and that all others who have responsibilities in their official capacity or private existence to make or contribute to decisions about landscape will be sufficiently informed to do so through formal education or life-long learning.

Measures are required to successfully identify and bridge current knowledge and understanding gaps between professional and administrative disciplines, to ensure holistic and effective management of landscape. They will include training in landscape assessment / appraisal at several levels from basic to advanced. The pooling of scientific and technical data, the participation in research and the exchange of specialists will be encouraged. Landscape character assessment will be a principal training vehicle for both professional and community use as it links the dimensions of the landscape, develops skills in identifying objective and subjective landscape criteria and is designed to foster creative landscape management.

The following draft actions are suggested:-

1. Co-ordinate the relevant authorities to survey and establish the existing level of evidence-based landscape and landscape education research, and identify and fill gaps that require to be remedied.
2. Commission or facilitate the survey and identification of best landscape management and policy practice in Europe as evidenced by European Landscape Convention actions to date, possibly in conjunction with a third level institution, and itemise pointers of relevance and use for the Irish situation.
3. Facilitate provision of training at all appropriate levels in local and regional authorities and state bodies in landscape character assessment. Link to related planning tools such as Strategic Environmental Assessment, Environmental Impact Assessment and

Appropriate Assessment to ensure best practice in carrying out assessments by such bodies.

4. Facilitate the introduction of landscape education into the primary and secondary school curriculum through disciplines such as geography, history, the natural sciences, economics, literature, art, architecture, engineering and civic education, exploring the opportunities that existing schemes such as Green Schools and transition year offer. Develop associated teacher training programmes in landscape management, development and conservation.
5. Facilitate the development of appropriate third level and further education programmes.
  - a. In disciplines directly linked to landscape, as well as appropriate modules for use within courses for related disciplines, with programmes complying with appropriate National Framework of Qualifications levels, to include courseware, evidence-based research and publications
  - b. Building on existing all-island work, develop continuing professional development or other appropriate forms of training for local authority and public bodies to create the necessary skill sets for identifying, managing and assessing impacts to landscape
  - c. Develop a landscape module at an appropriate National Framework of Qualifications level to be integrated into agricultural training programmes for advisors, farmers and in agricultural colleges
6. Develop an international landscape exchange programme for education and training and build on existing exchange schemes.

### **ACTION 3: Identification and assessment**

This set of measures is central to the strategy as it provides the data and qualitative information for the Irish landscape as a whole that will underpin effective landscape-centred decision making. The measures must result in the gathering of sufficient detail to positively assist framing development plan and other strategic management processes. Identification and categorising of landscapes should be done in co-operation with the authorities in



Northern Ireland in order to fully describe and appropriately evaluate trans-boundary landscapes.

The following draft actions are suggested:-

1. Promote a framework in which to develop a national landscape atlas or catalogue, which will contain:
  - An analysis of morphological, archaeological, historical, cultural and natural characteristics of landscapes and their interrelations and habitats
  - An analysis of major changes to date
  - An analysis of public perception of the landscape from the viewpoint of both its historical development and its recent significance
  - Virtual access to national and international mapping systems such as:
    - CORINE [EU standardised land-cover classification system]
    - Ordnance Survey Ireland topographic mapping
    - Geological Survey of Ireland geology mapping
    - Teagasc Indicative Soil and Subsoil Map
    - INFOMAR [Geological Survey Ireland and Marine Institute] seabed mapping
    - National Parks and Wildlife Service Natura 2000 sites mapping
  - Virtual access to, or copies of all local and national landscape character assessment reports upon publication

The Department of Arts, Heritage and the Gaeltacht, in partnership with the National Landscape Strategy implementation body as appropriate, will:

2. Prepare a national landscape framework that facilitates and co-ordinates the preparation of landscape character assessment and related policies and management practices at county level, in accordance with the following:
  - (i) *Objectives*

1. To provide an authoritative co-ordinating structure for the description of the landscapes of the island of Ireland, to include
  - a. A set of descriptors of names – and characteristics – that would be used as the referencing standards for all sub-regional descriptions and related policies and actions
  - b. Standardised criteria and guidance for carrying out landscape character assessments to take account of the variety of scales required to be mapped with requirements as to the accessibility and legibility of the resulting landscape character assessments

(ii) *Proposed Output*

1. A map of the major areas of Ireland that identifies areas of broadly similar character – referred to as ‘Character Areas’;
2. An accompanying narrative that provides:-
  - A description of the methods used to prepare the map
  - A description of the principal factors that give rise to the character
  - A description of the sources used to derive those factors
  - A glossary of standard descriptors used
  - A ‘protocol’ on how to apply the mapping

(iii) *Content*

A map depicting large-scale landscape character areas that are legible and consistent at a national and regional scale – e.g. *The North Midland Drumlin Belt* – or *The South Munster Folded Valley System* [National Landscape Character Map] - that would, in turn, be used for landscape character descriptions at a county and sub-county level – e.g. *The Blackwater Valley lies within the South Munster Folded Valley System* [Cork County Landscape Assessment]

- To include a list of generic Irish landscape character types to be proofed by use of public participation and interaction.

(iv) *Sources*

To be authoritative the mapping and descriptors will be derived from the existing international / national data sets with the least level of interpretation, contained in the national atlas / catalogue (augmented as necessary by data generated at local or regional level):

- To include settlement, infrastructure, geology, landcover, habitats, soil, water resources, agricultural resources, and cultural heritage
3. Require planning authorities to carry out landscape character assessment for their functional areas in accordance with the methods and standards specified in the national landscape framework. In particular they will be obliged to ensure consistency in the boundaries of character areas that cross functional areas. They will be further required to co-ordinate policies that apply to such areas.
  4. Establish green infrastructure appraisal standards and forward planning mechanisms for local and regional authorities in relation to spatial strategy, transport planning, recreation planning, tourism planning, energy infrastructure planning, urban design etc.
  5. Continue the work of the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) in recording structures of special interest and the Historic Gardens and Designed Landscapes survey.
  6. Assess candidate World Heritage sites, and develop management and planning policies for such sites, in accordance with the national landscape framework

**ACTION 4: Landscape quality objectives**

The National Landscape Strategy applies to ordinary landscapes no less than to outstanding ones. Thus everyday, outstanding and damaged landscapes all come within its scope. This comprehensive coverage is justified for the following reasons: every landscape forms the setting for the lives of the population concerned; urban and rural landscapes interlock in complex ways; more people now live in towns and cities (large or small), the quality of whose landscapes greatly affects their lives; and rural landscapes occupy an important place in our consciousness as well as being important habitats and vital for our economy. It is also

justified by the profound changes which landscapes, particularly peri-urban ones, are now undergoing.

The European Landscape Convention uses the word 'quality' many times. Some qualities can be disputed as they are subjective values that humans ascribe, while others are intrinsic, or objective, derived from the inherent physical components of the landscape. Ideas about the symbolic or aesthetic importance of landscape differ greatly, while aspirations for what the landscape can offer may wax and wane depending, for example, on natural impacts or processes or the management of the landscape.

Certain parts of landscapes, and indeed entire landscapes, are more highly valued than others. The characteristics – the qualities – that give rise to such values need to be identified and cared for. Landscape quality objectives will be formulated once a landscape has been identified, described and given a value by those carrying out the landscape character assessment, including the characteristics which local people want recognised in their surroundings. Landscape quality objectives may cover matters such as the care of particular landscape features, or management practices that sustain these valued characteristics. They may involve the identification of development pressures and desirable outcomes. They must be achievable, whether over the short or long term, and must be seen to be reasonable, with a clear relationship between the objective and the evidence base.

The European Landscape Convention seeks the aspirations of the public in formulating landscape quality objectives for specific landscapes. Responses to this document on what the Irish public thinks of as quality in landscape, both general and particular, are welcome.

The following draft actions are suggested:-

1. Derive from the national landscape framework guidance on multi-disciplinary development and management of landscapes, for local authorities in the carrying out of their planning, engineering, environmental, social, heritage and transport functions. The guidance will include advice on sustainably managing green infrastructure
2. Facilitate the establishment of advisory mechanisms to provide scientific and technical guidance with a view to ensuring consistency and high standards in the care of

landscapes. Such scientific and technical committees would assist in the production of periodic state of the landscape reports and landscape policy review

3. Promote European co-operation to improve knowledge of relevant emerging issues and techniques. Encourage Irish participation in the European Landscape Convention organisations RECEP-ENELC<sup>3</sup> for local and regional authorities; UniScape<sup>4</sup> for universities; and CivilScape<sup>5</sup> for civil society organisations

### **3.0 DEVELOPING MECHANISMS FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE NATIONAL LANDSCAPE STRATEGY**

The framework of the National Landscape Strategy is a new way of managing policy which affects many different sectors within the State. As such it will take time to become established.

Where there are ambitious objectives the phasing of these into short- and medium-term actions should assist to make change feasible and gain momentum. Therefore, it is envisaged that the National Landscape Strategy will be implemented in two distinct phases. While the phases will be formally separated by a mid-term review, the work involved in each will span both sides of the review.

#### **3.1 Implementation phases**

**Phase One**, the first five years of the ten year strategy, will be a preparatory period, gathering the research, evidence and opinions that will facilitate an informed national reflection about the best ways to care for and develop the Irish landscape. In Phase One the procedures to enable this to happen will be put in place. High-level objectives 1, 2 and 3 will be initiated and developed in this phase, while the groundwork will be commenced for fulfilling objectives 4 and 5.

**Phase Two**, the second five year phase, will involve the review and completion of the objectives and actions arising from them which are commenced in Phase One. It will

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<sup>3</sup> European Network of Local and Regional Authorities for the Implementation of the European Landscape Convention; [www.recep-enelc.net](http://www.recep-enelc.net)

<sup>4</sup> European Network of Universities for the Implementation of the European Landscape Convention; [www.uniscape.eu](http://www.uniscape.eu)

<sup>5</sup> Non-Governmental Organisations for the European Landscape Convention; [www.civilscape.eu](http://www.civilscape.eu)

examine and review the progress of actions which involve changes to existing systems, for example the local authority framework and the education system. It will bring to fruition those which are new types of procedures or processes, such as a landscape atlas, a national landscape framework and the structures which allow for effective public participation. During Phase Two landscape character assessment to the national landscape framework template will be introduced nationwide. To successfully complete the landscape character assessment objective over the lifespan of the National Landscape Strategy will require many awareness, identification and quality actions to contribute towards it. Phase Two will include monitoring of the effectiveness and outcomes of Phase One in order to inform the direction of the National Landscape Strategy.

### **Phasing of actions:**

These actions, which relate directly to the themes of Article **6 of the European Landscape Convention**, will be phased strategically to best implement the National Landscape Strategy. Some will require phasing and many will span the lifetime of the Strategy.

*Action theme 1* on the raising of awareness about landscape is a requirement of successfully introducing the National Landscape Strategy to the public and decision makers. Draft actions 1.1, 1.2, 1.4 and 1.5 should be developed and commenced (some may be completed) within the time-frame of Phase One. Draft action 1.3 will take time to develop and implement and will most likely span Phases One and Two.

*Action theme 2* covers matters which will be ongoing once established, as they underpin the knowledge management that will make Ireland a landscape-focussed society. Some, if not most, should be commenced and developed within Phase One, e.g. draft actions 2.1, 2.2, 2.3 and 2.6. Draft actions 2.4 and 2.5 may be initiated in Phase One, however it is most likely that modules will be integrated into educational curricula during Phase Two.

*Action theme 3* requires specific actions to be taken at national and local level in order to increase landscape knowledge in the public domain. The actions will span Phases One and Two. Draft actions 3.1 and 3.2, covering the collection and distribution of knowledge to national formats, must precede draft actions 3.3, 3.4 and 3.6. Draft action 3.5 is already established. It is expected that it will be completed within the span of Phase One. While draft action 3.6 requires preparatory work it can fit into an existing framework and is intended

therefore to be part of Phase One. Draft actions 3.3 and 3.4 should commence, perhaps with pilot projects, in Phase One for nationwide roll-out in Phase Two.

*Action theme 4* is responsible for ensuring that national standards for describing and cataloguing landscapes follow through to ensure objective analysis of landscape quality at national level, through national and European scientific co-operation. Action theme 4 relates most closely to themes 2 and 3, specifically draft actions 2.3, 2.5, 2.6, 3.1, 3.2, and 3.4. The main work in Action theme 4 will happen in Phase Two, however all three actions could most usefully commence in Phase One.

### **3.2 Implementation objectives**

The draft implementation objectives relate to Article 6 of the European Landscape Convention [ specific measure *E* ]. They correlate and group the actions of the four themes developed above. Most will involve work over both phases of the National Landscape Strategy.

The following draft implementation objectives are suggested:-

#### **Implementation Objective 1:**

To establish an inter-departmental structure or network with appropriate local authority and state body representation, and non-governmental organisation / public participation mechanisms, to:

- a. oversee and monitor the implementation of the objectives and actions set out in the National Landscape Strategy, to engage with the Council of Europe [Spatial Planning and Landscape Division],
- b. examine and implement funding mechanisms to support the National Landscape Strategy at national level, and
- c. report to the primary government department.

Objective 1 is a pre-requisite and must be the first act of Phase One.

**The implementing body will co-ordinate the following objectives:**

**Implementation Objective 2:**

To make landscape objectives integral to all existing national development policies and programmes and national training/educational programmes.

Objective 2 groups the aims of draft actions 2.3, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1, 3.4, 4.1. It will commence in Phase One and implementation will be rolled out through to the end of Phase Two.

**Implementation Objective 3:**

To commission periodic evaluations of relevant European legislation and policy to keep Irish policy-making informed on landscape and to make recommendations as to new structures, measures or actions that would assist to further the objectives of the National Landscape Strategy.

Objective 3 draws on draft action 2.2. It is envisaged that it will start in Phase One and continue through Phase Two. Implementation of this objective is necessary to contribute to the monitoring and review process.

**Implementation Objective 4:**

To make landscape objectives integral to all plans, policies and programmes drawn up by regional and local authorities, city and county development boards, and state bodies, and to

- a. set in place structures to ensure that this policy is implemented through the development of policy objectives.
- b. ensure appropriate priority for landscape objectives in the hierarchy of policies and performance of their statutory functions.

Objective 4 works towards the aims of draft actions 1.2, 1.3, 3.2, 3.4, and 4.1. It will span both phases of the National Landscape Strategy.

**Implementation Objective 5:**

To provide appropriate guidance for planning authorities (local and regional) and state and non-governmental organisation bodies to enable the implementation of all relevant actions of



the National Landscape Strategy undertaken by or participated in by these authorities and bodies.

Objective 5 is relevant to the aims of draft actions 1.1, 1.3, 2.1, 2.3, 4.3. It is hoped to publish guidance on national landscape framework / landscape character assessment within Phase One.

**Implementation Objective 6:**

To provide and maintain publicly accessible and easily understandable data at a locally accessible level on landscape survey and assessments, with a view to developing a capacity to correlate and overlay surveys so as to allow a comprehensive analysis of landscape on the part of those who live, work and use the landscape, visit the landscape or are contemplating proposals with a potential impact on the landscape

Objective 6 involves draft actions 1.1, 2.1, 2.4, 2.5, 3.1. The provision of information should be commenced in Phase One. However, building interactive capacity is likely to be carried out in Phase Two.

**Implementation Objective 7:**

The implementing body will carry out a review of the implementation of the strategy at five-year intervals, to consider, amongst other matters, progress on:

- a. Integrating research on landscape into the actions and objectives
- b. Establishing mechanisms and achieving outcomes on public participation
- c. The impact of landscape character assessments carried out at local and regional authority level on policy formation
- d. Training and education in landscape, and
- e. The effectiveness of consultation with, and participation of, sectoral interests, state bodies, local and regional authorities and civil society groups, in carrying out the National Landscape Strategy

Objective 7 will be carried out in preparation for the end of both phases of the National Landscape Strategy

### **3.3 Implementation and Monitoring Framework**

Implementation of the National Landscape Strategy will be managed within the framework of available resources set out in the four-year budgetary strategy.

As set out in Implementation Objective 1 it is envisaged that the National Landscape Strategy will be co-ordinated by an implementing body in the form of an inter-departmental structure or network. The departments or bodies responsible for objectives or groups of actions will be nominated after reviewing the public submissions. Each will report periodically to the implementing body and will present progress and seek guidance / offer advice as found necessary in the course of carrying out the objectives. The implementation structures will be designed to include representation or consultation, as appropriate, to represent the views of a wide range of interests and will include the different administrative levels.

The inter-departmental structure or network will implement objectives within existing laws, regulations and policies. The realisation of many actions will happen through co-ordination of national, sectoral and local bodies representing different classes of land user and civil society interests, channelled through the land use planning system at local and regional level. Implementation in accordance with the spirit of the European Landscape Convention will require the delegation of much responsibility to civil society, and genuine public influence in the formulation of policies at the regional and local level and joint decision making. The implementing body will assist local, regional and national authorities to put the National Landscape Strategy into effect.

The implementation of the National Landscape Strategy will be reviewed on a periodic basis – at the end of the first phase and near the end of the second phase – to determine both if it is being carried out according to plan and to make considered changes to either the objectives or their implementation as may be desired or required as time passes. The periodic ‘state of the landscape’ report will be the mechanism for publication of such reviews. The Department responsible for the Strategy will liaise with the Council of Europe and country partners, especially with Northern Ireland, as part of its monitoring and oversight responsibilities.

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Appropriate Assessment:	A focused and detailed impact assessment of the implications of a plan or project, alone and in combination with other plans and projects, on the integrity of a Natura 2000 site in view of its conservation objectives
Biodiversity:	The variety of life on the planet and how it interacts within habitats and ecosystems. Biodiversity covers all plants, animals and micro-organisms on land and in water
Environmental Impact Assessment	An assessment / a statement about the expected effects on the environment of a proposed project or development such as a new road or waste water treatment plant, including how any severe effects on the environment will be addressed
Ecosystem:	A community of organisms that depend on each other and the environment they inhabit
European Landscape Convention:	An instrument devoted exclusively to the protection, management and planning of all landscapes in Europe. Reproduced in full in Appendix 1
Environmental public goods:	Finite or renewable goods, both natural and manmade, that are available to the public in common, for example clean air, clean water, flora, fauna, beaches, public parks
EU Directive:	A legislative act of the European Union, legally binding on the member states to which they are addressed, which requires these members to change national law to comply with the directive
Green infrastructure:	Strategically planned and managed networks of natural lands, working landscapes and other open spaces that conserve ecosystems values and functions, and provide associated benefits to human populations

Green Schools: An international environmental education programme and award scheme (co-ordinated by An Taisce in Ireland)

Habitat	The area occupied by a community or species (group of animals or plants), such as a forest floor, desert or Strategic Environmental Assessment shore
Landscape Character Assessment	Interconnected data and information on the appearance, natural resources, cultural importance and economic, ecological, social and cultural potential of a landscape unit
Natura 2000 site	A network of important ecological sites across the European Union, comprised of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)
REPS	A scheme designed to reward environmentally friendly farming, run by the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food. It is now closed
Strategic Environmental Assessment	An assessment of the likely significant environmental effects of plans and programmes prior to their adoption
Sustainable Development:	Development using land or energy sources in a way that meets the needs of people today without reducing the ability of future generations to meet their own needs

## **APPENDIX I TEXT OF THE EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION TOGETHER WITH EXPLANATORY INFORMATION**

# **EUROPEAN LANDSCAPE CONVENTION**

**Florence, 20.X.2000**

## **Preamble**

The member States of the Council of Europe signatory hereto,

Considering that the aim of the Council of Europe is to achieve a greater unity between its members for the purpose of safeguarding and realising the ideals and principles which are their common heritage, and that this aim is pursued in particular through agreements in the economic and social fields;

Concerned to achieve sustainable development based on a balanced and harmonious relationship between social needs, economic activity and the environment;

**Noting that the landscape has an important public interest role in the cultural, ecological, environmental and social fields, and constitutes a resource favourable to economic activity and whose protection, management and planning can contribute to job creation;**

Aware that the landscape contributes to the formation of local cultures and that it is a basic component of the European natural and cultural heritage, contributing to human well-being and consolidation of the European identity;

**Acknowledging that the landscape is an important part of the quality of life for people everywhere: in urban areas and in the countryside, in degraded areas as well as in areas of high quality, in areas recognised as being of outstanding beauty as well as everyday areas;**

Noting that developments in agriculture, forestry, industrial and mineral production techniques and in regional planning, town planning, transport, infrastructure, tourism and recreation and, at a more general level, changes in the world economy are in many cases accelerating the transformation of landscapes;

**Wishing to respond to the public's wish to enjoy high quality landscapes and to play an active part in the development of landscapes;**

Believing that the landscape is a key element of individual and social well-being and that its protection, management and planning entail rights and responsibilities for everyone;

Having regard to the legal texts existing at international level in the field of protection and management of the natural and cultural heritage, regional and spatial planning, local self-government and transfrontier co-operation, in particular the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern, 19 September 1979), the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada, 3 October 1985), the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (revised) (Valletta, 16 January 1992), the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (Madrid, 21 May 1980) and its additional protocols, the European Charter of Local Self-government (Strasbourg, 15 October 1985), the Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio, 5 June 1992), the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Paris, 16 November 1972), and the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice on Environmental Matters (Aarhus, 25 June 1998);

Acknowledging that the quality and diversity of European landscapes constitute a common resource, and that it is important to co-operate towards its protection, management and planning;

Wishing to provide a new instrument devoted exclusively to the protection, management and planning of all landscapes in Europe,

Have agreed as follows:

## **CHAPTER I – GENERAL PROVISIONS**

### **Article 1 – Definitions**

For the purposes of the Convention:

- a “Landscape” means an area, as perceived by people, whose character is the result of the action and interaction of natural and/or human factors;
- b “Landscape policy” means an expression by the competent public authorities of general principles, strategies and guidelines that permit the taking of specific measures aimed at the protection, management and planning of landscapes;
- c “Landscape quality objective” means, for a specific landscape, the formulation by the competent public authorities of the aspirations of the public with regard to the landscape features of their surroundings;
- d “Landscape protection” means actions to conserve and maintain the significant or characteristic features of a landscape, justified by its heritage value derived from its natural configuration and/or from human activity;
- e “Landscape management” means action, from a perspective of sustainable development, to ensure the regular upkeep of a landscape, so as to guide and harmonise changes which are brought about by social, economic and environmental processes;
- f “Landscape planning” means strong forward-looking action to enhance, restore or create landscapes.

### **Article 2 – Scope**

Subject to the provisions contained in Article 15, this Convention applies to the entire territory of the Parties and covers natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas. It includes land, inland water and marine areas. It concerns landscapes that might be considered outstanding as well as everyday or degraded landscapes.



### **Article 3 – Aims**

The aims of this Convention are to promote landscape protection, management and planning, and to organise European co-operation on landscape issues.

## **CHAPTER II – NATIONAL MEASURES**

### **Article 4 – Division of responsibilities**

Each Party shall implement this Convention, in particular Articles 5 and 6, according to its own division of powers, in conformity with its constitutional principles and administrative arrangements, and respecting the principle of subsidiarity, taking into account the European Charter of Local Self-government. Without derogating from the provisions of this Convention, each Party shall harmonise the implementation of this Convention with its own policies.

### **Article 5 – General measures**

Each Party undertakes:

- a to recognise landscapes in law as an essential component of people's surroundings, an expression of the diversity of their shared cultural and natural heritage, and a foundation of their identity;
- b to establish and implement landscape policies aimed at landscape protection, management and planning through the adoption of the specific measures set out in Article 6;
- c to establish procedures for the participation of the general public, local and regional authorities, and other parties with an interest in the definition and implementation of the landscape policies mentioned in paragraph *b* above;
- d to integrate landscape into its regional and town planning policies and in its cultural, environmental, agricultural, social and economic policies, as well as in any other policies with possible direct or indirect impact on landscape.

### **Article 6 – Specific measures**

*A Awareness-raising*

Each Party undertakes to increase awareness among the civil society, private organisations, and public authorities of the value of landscapes, their role and changes to them.

#### *B Training and education*

Each Party undertakes to promote:

- a training for specialists in landscape appraisal and operations;
- b multidisciplinary training programmes in landscape policy, protection, management and planning, for professionals in the private and public sectors and for associations concerned;
- c school and university courses which, in the relevant subject areas, address the values attaching to landscapes and the issues raised by their protection, management and planning.

#### *C Identification and assessment*

- 1 With the active participation of the interested parties, as stipulated in Article 5.c, and with a view to improving knowledge of its landscapes, each Party undertakes:
  - a
    - i to identify its own landscapes throughout its territory;
    - ii to analyse their characteristics and the forces and pressures transforming them;
    - iii to take note of changes;
  - b to assess the landscapes thus identified, taking into account the particular values assigned to them by the interested parties and the population concerned.

- 2 These identification and assessment procedures shall be guided by the exchanges of experience and methodology, organised between the Parties at European level pursuant to Article 8.

*D Landscape quality objectives*

Each Party undertakes to define landscape quality objectives for the landscapes identified and assessed, after public consultation in accordance with Article 5.c.

*E Implementation*

To put landscape policies into effect, each Party undertakes to introduce instruments aimed at protecting, managing and/or planning the landscape.

## **CHAPTER III – EUROPEAN CO-OPERATION**

### **Article 7 – International policies and programmes**

Parties undertake to co-operate in the consideration of the landscape dimension of international policies and programmes, and to recommend, where relevant, the inclusion in them of landscape considerations.

### **Article 8 – Mutual assistance and exchange of information**

**The Parties undertake to co-operate in order to enhance the effectiveness of measures taken under other articles of this Convention, and in particular:**

- a to render each other technical and scientific assistance in landscape matters through the pooling and exchange of experience, and the results of research projects;
- b to promote the exchange of landscape specialists in particular for training and information purposes;
- c to exchange information on all matters covered by the provisions of the Convention.

### **Article 9 – Transfrontier landscapes**

**The Parties shall encourage transfrontier co-operation on local and regional level and, wherever necessary, prepare and implement joint landscape programmes.**

### **Article 10 – Monitoring of the implementation of the Convention**

- 1 Existing competent Committees of Experts set up under Article 17 of the Statute of the Council of Europe shall be designated by the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe to be responsible for monitoring the implementation of the Convention.**

- 2 Following each meeting of the Committees of Experts, the Secretary General of the Council of Europe shall transmit a report on the work carried out and on the operation of the Convention to the Committee of Ministers.
- 3 **The Committees of Experts shall propose to the Committee of Ministers the criteria for conferring and the rules governing the Landscape award of the Council of Europe.**

#### **Article 11 – Landscape award of the Council of Europe**

- 1 The Landscape award of the Council of Europe is a distinction which may be conferred on local and regional authorities and their groupings that have instituted, as part of the landscape policy of a Party to this Convention, a policy or measures to protect, manage and/or plan their landscape, which have proved lastingly effective and can thus serve as an example to other territorial authorities in Europe. The distinction may be also conferred on non-governmental organisations having made particularly remarkable contributions to landscape protection, management or planning.
- 2 Applications for the Landscape award of the Council of Europe shall be submitted to the Committees of Experts mentioned in Article 10 by the Parties. Transfrontier local and regional authorities and groupings of local and regional authorities concerned, may apply provided that they jointly manage the landscape in question.
- 3 On proposals from the Committees of Experts mentioned in Article 10 the Committee of Ministers shall define and publish the criteria for conferring the Landscape award of the Council of Europe, adopt the relevant rules and confer the Award.
- 4 The granting of the Landscape award of the Council of Europe is to encourage those receiving the award to ensure the sustainable protection, management and/or planning of the landscape areas concerned.

## **CHAPTER IV – FINAL CLAUSES**

### **Article 12 – Relationship with other instruments**

The provisions of this Convention shall not prejudice stricter provisions concerning landscape protection, management and planning contained in other existing or future binding national or international instruments.

### **Article 13 – Signature, ratification and entry into force**

- 1 This Convention shall be open for signature by the member States of the Council of Europe. It shall be subject to ratification, acceptance or approval. Instruments of ratification, acceptance or approval shall be deposited with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.
- 2 The Convention shall enter into force on the first day of the month following the expiry of a period of three months after the date on which ten member States of the Council of Europe have expressed their consent to be bound by the Convention in accordance with the provisions of the preceding paragraph.
- 3 In respect of any signatory State which subsequently expresses its consent to be bound by it, the Convention shall enter into force on the first day of the month following the expiry of a period of three months after the date of the deposit of the instrument of ratification, acceptance or approval.

### **Article 14 – Accession**

- 1 After the entry into force of this Convention, the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe may invite the European Community and any European State which is not a member of the Council of Europe, to accede to the Convention by a majority decision as provided in Article 20.d of the Council of Europe Statute, and by the unanimous vote of the States parties entitled to hold seats in the Committee of Ministers.
- 2 In respect of any acceding State, or the European Community in the event of its accession, this Convention shall enter into force on the first day of the month

following the expiry of a period of three months after the date of deposit of the instrument of accession with the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.

#### **Article 15 – Territorial application**

- 1 Any State or the European Community may, at the time of signature or when depositing its instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession, specify the territory or territories to which the Convention shall apply.
- 2 Any Party may, at any later date, by declaration addressed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe, extend the application of this Convention to any other territory specified in the declaration. The Convention shall take effect in respect of such territory on the first day of the month following the expiry of a period of three months after the date of receipt of the declaration by the Secretary General.
- 3 Any declaration made under the two paragraphs above may, in respect of any territory mentioned in such declaration, be withdrawn by notification addressed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe. Such withdrawal shall become effective on the first day of the month following the expiry of a period of three months after the date of receipt of the notification by the Secretary General.

#### **Article 16 – Denunciation**

- 1 Any Party may, at any time, denounce this Convention by means of a notification addressed to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe.
- 2 Such denunciation shall become effective on the first day of the month following the expiry of a period of three months after the date of receipt of the notification by the Secretary General.

#### **Article 17 – Amendments**

- 1 Any Party or the Committees of Experts mentioned in Article 10 may propose amendments to this Convention.



- 2 Any proposal for amendment shall be notified to the Secretary General of the Council of Europe who shall communicate it to the member States of the Council of Europe, to the others Parties, and to any European non-member State which has been invited to accede to this Convention in accordance with the provisions of Article 14.
- 3 The Committees of Experts mentioned in Article 10 shall examine any amendment proposed and submit the text adopted by a majority of three-quarters of the Parties' representatives to the Committee of Ministers for adoption. Following its adoption by the Committee of Ministers by the majority provided for in Article 20.d of the Statute of the Council of Europe and by the unanimous vote of the States parties entitled to hold seats in the Committee of Ministers, the text shall be forwarded to the Parties for acceptance.
- 4 Any amendment shall enter into force in respect of the Parties which have accepted it on the first day of the month following the expiry of a period of three months after the date on which three Council of Europe member States have informed the Secretary General of their acceptance. In respect of any Party which subsequently accepts it, such amendment shall enter into force on the first day of the month following the expiry of a period of three months after the date on which the said Party has informed the Secretary General of its acceptance.

#### **Article 18 – Notifications**

The Secretary General of the Council of Europe shall notify the member States of the Council of Europe, any State or the European Community having acceded to this Convention, of:

- a any signature;
- b the deposit of any instrument of ratification, acceptance, approval or accession;
- c any date of entry into force of this Convention in accordance with Articles 13, 14 and 15;
- d any declaration made under Article 15;

- e any denunciation made under Article 16;
- f any proposal for amendment, any amendment adopted pursuant to Article 17 and the date on which it comes into force;
- g any other act, notification, information or communication relating to this Convention.

In witness whereof the undersigned, being duly authorised thereto, have signed this Convention.

Done at Florence, this 20th day of October 2000, in English and in French, both texts being equally authentic, in a single copy which shall be deposited in the archives of the Council of Europe. The Secretary General of the Council of Europe shall transmit certified copies to each member State of the Council of Europe and to any State or to the European Community invited to accede to this Convention.

## **The European Landscape Convention: explanatory information:**

### **1.0 Introduction to the European Landscape Convention**

The European Landscape Convention was adopted in 2000 (Florence) and ratified by Ireland in 2002. It came into force on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2004. Ratification of the Convention obliges a state to implement the Convention, in conformity with its constitutional principles and administrative arrangements, and respecting the principle of subsidiarity (Chapter II – National measures).

The landscape, as defined in the European Landscape Convention, covers the national territory, including land, inland water and seascapes of each member state. It refers equally to natural, rural, urban and peri-urban areas, from the outstanding to the degraded. It covers, in short, the entire physical environment as specified by each country upon ratification of the Convention.

### **2.0 Purpose of the Europe Landscape Convention**

The European Landscape Convention is concerned with safeguarding the physical environment of Europe for many reasons.

- The landscape is an economic resource (it contains life-giving nutrients, holds our water reserves, cleans our air) and contributes to distinctiveness and competitiveness – factors that influence the siting of business and industry
- Sensitively tending the landscape brings cultural, ecological, environmental, social and economic benefits
- Landscape influences the quality of life of all people whether urban, suburban or rural within their everyday areas
- It is a founding component of natural and cultural heritage which contributes to human well-being and identity

The Convention contains a new and comprehensive approach to landscape protection, management and planning which acknowledges that landscapes change over time and it enshrines effective and democratic decision making on landscape issues. It provides many useful tools and processes to assist a nation understand its landscape and landscape manage change effectively.

The Convention notes that agriculture, forestry, industrial and mineral production techniques, infrastructure and transport, spatial planning, tourism and recreation, and

generally changes in the world economy, are in many cases accelerating the transformation of landscapes.

The European Landscape Convention notes that there is a public wish to enjoy high quality landscapes as a key element of individual and social well-being, and to play an active part in the development of landscapes, and it notes that this protection, management and planning of landscapes brings with it rights and responsibilities.<sup>6</sup>

The Convention has been framed to satisfy the need of populations to have policies affecting national territory that have regard to the quality of their surroundings. Human interaction means there is a psychological attachment and emotional response to the landscape, which has led to an awareness of the quality and diversity of many landscapes. The Convention aims for the treatment of landscape to be democratic, with citizens given an active role in decision-making and framed so as to make landscape actions the concern of all.

The policies to be adopted cover the whole of the national territory and are concerned with all cultural, man-made and natural components of landscape and how they interconnect. Therefore it is necessary that measures should be adaptable to particular types of landscape, which, depending on their specific characteristics, will range from specific conservation to the creation and managing of new landscapes either urban, peri-urban or rural. Reference to be made here generally to trans-boundary context.<sup>7</sup>

### **3.0 The European Landscape Convention in practice:**

To date the European Landscape Convention has been ratified by thirty four countries of the forty-seven member states of the Council of Europe. Some countries which have not yet ratified it have nonetheless proceeded to put in place policies and approaches that follow its principles. The Convention implementation body is the Spatial Planning and Landscape Division of the Council of Europe.

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<sup>6</sup> 2.2.3 and 2.2.4 referenced from Section 1.2 of Recommendation CM/Rec(2008)3 of the Committee of Ministers to member states on the guidelines for the implementation of the European Landscape Convention)

<sup>7</sup> 2.2.5 and 2.2.6 referenced from Section II paragraphs 26, 27 and 28 of European Landscape Convention (ETS no. 176) Explanatory Report)

#### **4.0 Relevant conventions and directives, strategies and initiatives**

As noted in the preamble to the European Landscape Convention, previous Council of Europe and United Nations Conventions also relate to landscape, and to public participation in debate about environmental matters. Ireland is a signatory to the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern 1979, ratified by Ireland 2002); the Convention on the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada, 1985, ratified by Ireland 1997); the Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valletta, 1992, ratified by Ireland 1997); the Convention concerning the Protection of the World Cultural and Natural Heritage (Paris, 1972, ratified by Ireland 1991); the European Outline Convention on Transfrontier Co-operation between Territorial Communities or Authorities (Madrid, 1980); the UN Declaration on Environment and Development (Rio, 1992) and Agenda 21; the Convention on Biological Diversity (Rio, 1992); the Convention on Access to Information, Public Participation in Decision-making and Access to Justice on Environmental Matters (Aarhus, 1998). In addition to these conventions, European Union Directives on resources and habitats; the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change; recommendations of the Council of the European Union; the EU Sustainable Development Strategy 2006; EU and UN sectoral guidelines, declarations and resolutions; and the UN principle of eco-systems goods and services provide the international legislative and philosophical context in which the National Landscape Strategy is framed.

## **APPENDIX II**

### **Membership of National Landscape Strategy Steering Group<sup>8</sup>**

Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government (chair)  
Department of Tourism, Culture & Sport  
Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food  
Department of Communications, Energy and Natural Resources  
Department of Community, Equality and Gaeltacht Affairs

Heritage Council  
Irish Landscape Institute  
Coillte  
Teagasc  
University College Dublin  
Dublin Institute of Technology  
Meath County Council  
County and City Managers Association  
Landscape Alliance Ireland  
An Taisce  
Fáilte Ireland  
Farming representative

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<sup>8</sup> Department configurations above applies at date of final meeting of group at 25/05/2010