

# **Review of Ireland's National Biodiversity Plan**

## **Request for proposals: preparation of a briefing paper to inform Biodiversity Forum input to the second National Biodiversity Plan**

### **1. Background**

Comhar Sustainable Development Council (SDC) is inviting proposals from interested individuals and organisations to prepare a briefing paper to inform the Biodiversity Forum input to the second National Biodiversity Plan which is to be published by Government in 2008.

### **2. About Comhar SDC and the Biodiversity Forum**

Comhar SDC was established in 1999 as Ireland's forum for national consultation and dialogue on all issues relating to sustainable development. Comhar SDC works in partnership with stakeholders across Irish society and advises Government on policies that support sustainable development. Comhar SDC works in three-year cycles and began its third term in January 2006. Comhar SDC's 25 council members are drawn from five pillars: the State sector, economic sectors, environmental nongovernmental organisations, social/community nongovernmental organisations and the professional/academic sector. Comhar SDC is supported by a full-time executive and secretariat based in St. Andrew Street, Dublin 2. Further information is available at

[www.comharsdc.ie](http://www.comharsdc.ie).

The Biodiversity Forum was set up in early 2006, under the ambit of Comhar SDC, to provide a mechanism for consultation and input from stakeholders in relation to the implementation of actions identified in the National Biodiversity Plan. The Forum has an important all-island dimension with representation from Northern Ireland biodiversity interests. The terms of reference of the Biodiversity Forum and current membership are set out in the Annex.

### **3. Context for the briefing paper**

Ireland's first National Biodiversity Plan (NBP) was published in 2002 in response to the UN Convention on Biodiversity. The Plan committed to ninety-one actions aimed at conserving biological diversity in Ireland over the five years from 2002 to 2006.

In 2004, Comhar was invited by the Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government to establish a Biodiversity Working Group to bring stakeholder input to the mid-term review of the National Biodiversity Plan. The Comhar Report Recommendations on the Implementation and Review of the National Biodiversity Plan was published in May 2005. Following this, the Department of the Environment Heritage and Local Government (DOEHLG) published its own review of progress on the implementation of the Plan in November 2005.

DOEHLG has now commenced the process for developing Ireland's second National Biodiversity Plan which will be published in 2008. Public consultation on the new

plan will be undertaken in January 2008; DOEHLG will organise two stakeholder workshops in mid-January, one in Dublin and one in the midlands. DOEHLG will publish a short discussion paper, in advance of public consultation, on the background to the development of the Plan. This will address factors affecting biodiversity in Ireland and the key issues to be addressed in the lifetime of the next plan as well as Ireland's obligations under the Convention on Biological Diversity and the EU Action Plan on Biodiversity. The paper will be available from the National Parks and Wildlife Service website and by request from the Biodiversity Unit of the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

#### **4. Scope of the project and timeframe**

In preparing the briefing paper, the commissioned author will be asked to make early contact with the members of the Biodiversity Forum to invite inputs to the document. The briefing paper should take account of:

- Recommendations that remain relevant from the earlier Comhar Report published in 2005.
- Other issues identified by Biodiversity Forum members (from the record of minutes of Forum meetings and through contact with members).

The briefing paper should also have regard to the outcomes from the two public consultation workshops which will be organised by DOEHLG in January 2008.

*Timeframe for delivery:* Thursday 28th February 2008

*Length:* Approximately 8,000 words excluding annexes

*Budget:* maximum €5,000 plus any travel and related expenses for attendance at the two stakeholder workshops

#### **5. Skills required**

Interested organisations and individuals submitting proposals should have appropriate qualifications and demonstrated experience in undertaking policy research and analysis, including qualitative and quantitative survey methodologies and interviewing. Previous experience of research into issues related to biodiversity is preferred.

#### **6. Submission of proposals**

Interested organisations and individuals are invited to submit proposals to Comhar SDC, preferably by email (hard copies will be accepted if accompanied by an electronic version), by Thursday 20th December 2007. Comhar SDC will assess the proposals and select the successful proposals by Friday 4th January 2008. Comhar SDC is not obliged to accept any proposal and is not liable for any costs incurred.

Submissions should include the following details:

- Names and qualifications/experience of the researcher(s)
- Price (inclusive of VAT)

- Information on participation on relevant previous research or similar projects
- Outline of the briefing paper including description of the methodology and a summary of the main issues (maximum 1500 words) from the author's perspective.

All correspondence should be e-mailed to *noel.cassery@environ.ie* and copied to *comhar@environ.ie*

## **7. Freedom of information**

Comhar SDC undertakes to use its best endeavours to hold confidential any information provided by you in response to this invitation to tender, subject to obligations under law, including the Freedom of Information Act, 1997, which came into force on 21 April 1998. If you believe that any of the information supplied by you should not be disclosed because of its commercial sensitivity, you should identify this information and state the reasons for its sensitivity. Comhar SDC will consult with you about this sensitive information before making a decision on any Freedom of Information request received.

*Annex*

### **Biodiversity Forum**

#### **Terms of Reference (March 2006)**

1. The Biodiversity Forum shall operate in accordance with the guidance for working groups set out in the Comhar Members' Handbook.
2. Membership of the Biodiversity Forum shall be for an initial period of 3 years with effect from the date of its establishment.
3. The Comhar Council shall determine the membership of the Biodiversity Forum for the following period.
4. The function of the Biodiversity Forum shall be to:
  - (i) Oversee independent monitoring of progress in the ongoing implementation of the Convention on Biological Diversity and the National Biodiversity Plan, highlighting progress and bottlenecks;
  - (ii) Ensure an ongoing input into the development of National Strategies to promote biodiversity conservation including inputting into the second National Biodiversity Plan to cover the period 2007-2011; and in addition to:
  - (iii) Work with the interdepartmental committee on Biodiversity towards the sectoral integration of biodiversity planning;
  - (iv) Improve stakeholder awareness and understanding of biodiversity;
  - (v) Promote North/South co-operation in the context of the island as a single bio-geographical entity; and it will provide progress reports to the Comhar Council as appropriate.

These analyses should be informed by international best practice.

The chairperson in consultation with the members is encouraged early on to identify a modus operandi and activity programme that involves key stakeholders and maximises the potential for a productive outcome. Indicators of success at end of years one and two should be specified, and feedback provided based on these. If resources additional to those which would routinely be incurred in convening

meetings are required, this issue should be addressed in conjunction with the Comhar Secretariat and the National Parks and Wildlife Service.

We also need to raise budgetary issues, ensuring that there will be a budget and a secretariat to facilitate the activities of the Forum, and to provide a small budget for each representative to disseminate information back to the stakeholders they represent and to provide feedback to the forum as to how received. The latter is a necessary prerequisite for the maximising the efficacy of the forum in terms of actual stakeholder involvement and representation.

## **Biodiversity Forum Membership (2007)**

Pillar

Membership

*Chairperson*

Dr. Peter Wyse Jackson (Director National Botanic Gardens)

1.

Dr. Liam Lysaght (National Biodiversity Data Centre)

Dr. Ken Whelan (Marine Institute)

Gerry Clabby (LA Heritage/ Biodiversity Officers )

Cliona O'Brien (Heritage Council)

2.

Niamh Hunt (Chambers of Commerce/ Jansen Pharma)

Ruaidhri Deasy (IFA)

3.

Karin Dubsy (Coastwatch)

Siobhan Egan (Birdwatch Ireland)

Anja Murray (An Taisce).

4.

Ornagh Darcy (IRDA)

5.

Professor Emer Colleran (UCG)

Professor Richard Moles (UL)

Northern Irl.

Bob Browne (NIBG)

Ken Bradley (DOENI)

Louise McAlavey (EHS)

Others: ex-officio

Ciaran O'Keeffe (DOEHLG)

Colman O'Criodáin (DOEHLG)

David Kelly (DOEHLG)

Noel Casserly (Comhar)

Paschal Stephens (Comhar)

<http://www.comharsdc.ie/>