

Iarnród Éireann's operating mandate is to deliver safe and efficient rail passenger and freight services, whilst also serving as the Port Authority of Rosslare Europort. The national heavy rail network and Rosslare Europort are regarded as critical national infrastructure.

Iarnród Éireann understands that our network traverses a diverse mosaic of natural habitats and ecosystems. We acknowledge that the choices we make today have consequences for the protection and enhancement of our natural capital. Whilst we will seek to continue to deliver economic value for our stakeholders and funders, we must also consider environmental protection and the ecological value of our lands when conducting our business activities.

The aim of this Biodiversity Policy is to set out the context in which Iarnród Éireann endeavours to manage our activities to avoid significant impacts on habitats, species or other natural capital aspects.

Iarnród Éireann commits to:

- Conduct our activities, and those undertaken on our behalf, in a responsible manner and in accordance with all applicable legal obligations and in support of Ireland's 4<sup>th</sup> [National Biodiversity Action Plan, 2023-2030](#).
- Collaborate with relevant stakeholders to achieve the national objectives and targets included in the National Biodiversity Action Plan, 2023-2030.
- Act responsibly, and in alignment with the UN Sustainable Development Goals and Targets, when conducting our maintenance improvements and operations along our network, including minimising the consumption of natural resources, chemicals, energy and water.
- Consider environmental and biodiversity implications in the planning and execution of works. To this end, we will comply with Iarnród Éireann's "[Biodiversity Guidelines for infrastructure Staff](#)" or other control/mitigation measures identified in project-specific documents to minimise impacts on biodiversity.
- Valuing and appreciating the established and historic hedgerows along the railway corridors which provide sanctuary for a wide range of wildlife and plants. We will seek to quantify and evaluate the value of this natural capital existing within our operational landholding. We will also map and prioritise our most sensitive habitats to ensure we focus attention and resources on these areas.
- Recognise the importance of all European and National habitat designations and conservation interests, where such areas are in close proximity to the railway, e.g. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Natural Heritage Areas (NHAs), etc. All necessary legal documentation shall be prepared in advance of works in these areas.
- Deliver appropriate biodiversity training and awareness programmes for staff members so there is a greater awareness of our biodiversity obligations. Specialist technical staff and external consultancy will provide advisory support in relation to specific biodiversity-related queries from across the company.
- Develop and strengthen long-term monitoring programmes and intelligent mapping systems that will underpin and strengthen future decision-making to protect and enhance biodiversity whilst maintaining a safe operating rail environment.
- Monitor, control and eliminate invasive species and unsuitable vegetation along the railway in an environmentally responsible and safe manner. Whilst authorised chemical pesticides will continue to be utilised, we will seek to progressively reduce our chemical loading and reduce our environmental impacts.
- Develop a company Biodiversity Action Plan that will have defined strategic objectives and targets so that Iarnród Éireann positively contributes to National and European biodiversity initiatives.

- Plant 40 hectares (100 acres) of land by 2030 with native Irish broadleaf trees.
- Develop and implement biodiversity initiatives at each railway station by 2030. This will support the All-Ireland Pollinator Plan 2021 – 2025. This biodiversity initiatives will include, amongst other measures, planting pollinator friendly flowers throughout the 145 stations and the creation of habitats for solitary bees and insects.
- Create biodiversity gardens in key locations to enhance the local natural capital and to promote staff wellbeing.
- Inform our suppliers and contractors of our Biodiversity Policy and provide them with the necessary training and support required to meet our biodiversity objectives.
- Communicate our biodiversity status, in relation to the requirements of this Policy, to the Executive Board, our employees and external stakeholders on a regular basis.
- Make this Policy statement available to all staff, contractors, the public and all interested stakeholders.

Iarnród Éireann commits its employees to actively support this Policy and to implement it at all levels throughout the organisation. This policy has the endorsement of the Executive Group.



July 2024

---

**Jim Meade Date**  
**Chief Executive Officer, Iarnród Éireann**

---

**Date**