

Northern Ireland Environment Link

Annual Report

2010-2011

Northern Ireland Environment Link (NIEL) is the forum and networking body for organisations interested in the environment of Northern Ireland. It assists members to develop views on issues affecting the environment and to influence policy and practice impacting on the natural and built environment of Northern Ireland. Its 56 Full Members represent over 90,000 individuals, 262 subsidiary groups, have an annual turnover of £70 million and manage over 314,000 acres of land.

This report is laid out according to the main aims identified for NIEL in its strategic plan. It includes the major activities and accomplishments for the year within each theme. More detailed information is available in a comprehensive report on activities undertaken to address the main objectives within each theme available in the NIEL office.

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Chairman's Report

I am delighted that, as a result of good news received in March regarding funding from both the NIEA and Esmee Fairbairn Foundation, NIEL is once again in good heart and looking forward in a positive, though still somewhat over-pressed, way. However, even such good news cannot take away the very anxious times that the organisation has been through during the year upon which we are reporting now.

Despite the enormous difficulties caused by the funding uncertainties for NIEL and across the eNGO sector during the period under review, several significant events were organised and run by our staff, all to the high standards by which the organisation has come to be known. Key among our activities were the 2010 AGM; NIEA/NIEL conferences, including the presentation of the Envision Report on eNGO funding; and the very successful Hustings Event. A prestigious and major undertaking during the period was the preparation, by a team led by Sue Christie, of the Northern Ireland contribution to the National Ecosystems Assessment document. Addressing the constant stream of Consultation documents (which at times seems more like a deluge) was and remains a difficulty which is shared by many of our colleague-organisations. Clearly, ways need to be found whereby

meaningful and useful responses can be made within reasonable time-frames. Much time and great effort was necessarily devoted to securing adequate funding for NIEL to continue after March 2011 and, although now known to have been successful, this did impact on other activities.

We are extremely grateful to NIEA for their on-going support, without which NIEL could not function as it does. We welcome furthering our working partnership with them. We also continue to benefit from the generous support of the Esmee Fairbairn Trust.

Funding does not continue at previous levels and accordingly, we have had to reduce our core staff. This is always a painful process, both for those who leave and those who remain. Congratulations are due to our Chief Executive for the successful bid to Building Change Trust about which a lot more will be heard over the next year. And as NIEL moves into the period 2011-2014, the results of the Elections to a new Northern Ireland Assembly and the consequent changes in Ministerial roles within the new Executive will influence our activities.

For the past number of years I have had reason to acknowledge, on behalf of the Board, the outstanding contributions made

by our Staff and this year it is perhaps particularly pertinent. They have continued to work extremely hard but under the additional pressures of uncertainty caused by the funding crisis and I can only reiterate the tributes paid in previous Chair's Reports. The circumstances upon which I commented in our previous Annual Report placed great strains upon all our staff personally, but especially upon our Chief Executive. I wish to acknowledge this, on behalf of the Board, and say that it was a matter of concern to each of us individually and staff collectively. Similarly, I wish to repeat my thanks to members of the Board for their support, both to me and to the organisation. Representing as they do the immensely impressive calibre of people committed to the environment in Northern Ireland, one can only be hopeful for the future.

As this is my final 'annual Chair's report', I wish to thank everyone with whom I have been associated through NIEL. You have been helpful and tolerant and always good company and you have taught me so much that I now need to go away and think about it all!

**Pat Jess
Chairman**

Chief Executive's Report

2010 had two major work areas which took place alongside our other work, and will provide a focus for our work for some years to come.

The funding crisis facing the environment – and the environmental NGO sector in particular – continues and there is no real sign of improvement. We are not dealing with a short term issue to be 'bridged' but a major shift which will require significant changes in how we all do our business. The key theme to emerge is a greater partnership between NGO and government sectors to deliver real benefits to the environment. NIEL has been concentrating on this issue and during 2010 the Environmental Sector Report (see p11) and December Members' Meeting took an objective look at the sector and the options facing it. NIEL was successful in its bid for Building Change Trust funding to help the sector through this transition and to simultaneously improve our 'messaging' around environmental issues and behavioural change. This award was announced in December and work began in January on the 18 month project, including a number of conferences (7 March, see p10) and working meetings. In addition liaison continues with the NIEA and DOE about how to improve our collective work on environmental matters.

The NIEA requested NIEL to lead a major exercise to provide the Northern Ireland input to the UK National Ecosystem Assessment process, a project that 'grew like Topsy' into a huge report involving contributions of over 70 Northern Ireland scientists and officials and which will be the basis of much future work following its local launch in autumn 2011. It provides a baseline of information on habitats, ecosystems and the services they provide to the people of Northern Ireland and develops a framework within which action to protect the environment is seen as integral to delivering improved human wellbeing.

As well as this, it was time for NIEL to re-apply to both of its major core funders – NIEA and the Esmee Fairbairn Trust. The partnership we have developed with both served us well, and we attained full funding from both. Although this still results in a net decrease in funds on the previous three years, we feel we will be able to continue to deliver a strong service to our members and to our funders by concentrating on strategic and fundamental issues, refocusing our efforts to deliver our Strategic Plan (also revised this year) but more importantly the strategic integration which is required by the environment and the sector

if we are to work effectively with the Assembly, civil servants, local government and all other sectors to the benefit of Northern Ireland's environment.

As can be seen from this Annual Report, it has been another busy year, and many many thanks to the staff and Executive who have all worked so hard to bring success. Particular thanks to our core funders, NIEA and Esmee Fairbairn Foundation for continuing to believe in us and to provide the funding base necessary to our very existence. Thanks too to all NIEL members – it is only because we work on behalf of all of you that we are able to deliver anything!

I'd like to express my deepest thanks to Pat Jess who is leaving the Chair after shepherding NIEL through several trials and tribulations over the past few years, as well as many happy times. Pat has been a huge benefit to NIEL, and of great support to me personally, during her time as Chair. I will miss her, but she will remain a member so we'll hopefully still see her at many of our events.

Sue Christie
Chief Executive

Strategic Leadership

To enhance the credibility of NIEL's role through instigating debate and discussion amongst its members and those whom it seeks to influence

MANIFESTO 2011



In preparation for the election in May 2011 NIEL prepared an **Environmental Manifesto** with 12 points agreed by members as making practical and significant contributions to protecting Northern Ireland's environment. We met with all political parties to promote these, as well as circulating them to all MLAs, and they formed the basis for our Hustings event held on 31 March. The report on the event, coupled with an analysis of the environmental commitments in the parties' manifestos, will form the basis of our work with the incoming Assembly.



Meetings early in the year promoted the recommendations in the **Way Ahead 2010** to both politicians and civil servants. While no new **Way Ahead** document was prepared for January, the information was compiled to form the basis of a document which will be devised over the summer of 2011 for use in efforts to get environmental considerations included in the next Programme for Government.

ENVIRONMENTAL HUSTINGS



NIEL brought the environmental spokespersons for each of the main political parties in Northern Ireland to put forward their agenda in the run up to the Stormont elections in May at their **Environmental Hustings Event** (31 March 2011). The event was attended by NIEL members as well as other groups and individuals eager to address each of the parties on the policies outlined in each of their manifestos. The politicians stated their views on questions raised by the audience and provided clear indications of party priorities and personal commitments.



Strategic leadership...

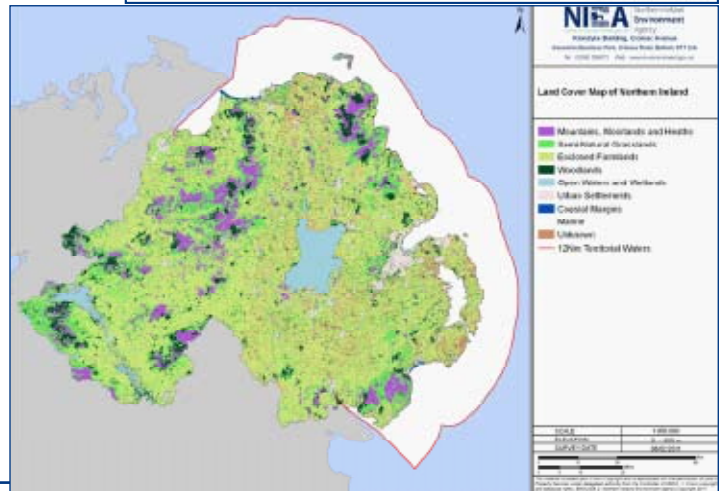
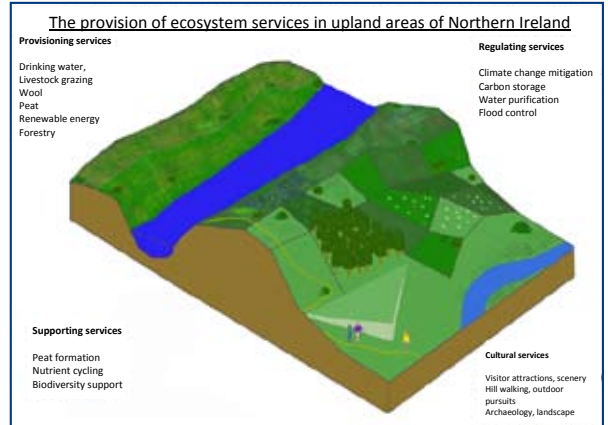
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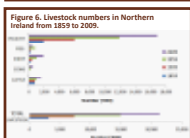
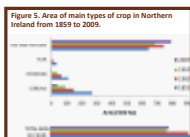
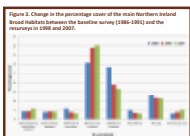
NIEL was asked by NIEA to lead the process on developing the Northern Ireland

chapter on this major UK project. A collaborative approach was adopted, with over 50 scientists and government officials involved in providing information for the final document which will be formally published in the UK in June and launched in Northern Ireland in the early autumn of 2011. This required a large amount of effort by NIEL staff, ably assisted by temporary workers, students and volunteers in addition to the major efforts by the contributors

themselves. This is an important assessment of the current state of Northern Ireland's habitats and ecosystems, the services they provide to people and human well being and the value of those services. It will form a base of much future work as it provides a clear analysis of what is needed to optimise the functionality of Northern Ireland's land and seas.



<p>MOUNTAINS MOORS AND HEATHS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 13% of Northern Ireland Carbon sequestration in peat Low intensity livestock grazing Scenic and recreational value Water storage/flood alleviation Renewable energy 	<p>SEMI-NATURAL GRASSLANDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 18% of Northern Ireland – mostly natural grassland. Low intensity grazing Valuable carbon store In major decline 	<p>OPEN WATERS, WETLANDS & FLOODPLAINS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7% of Northern Ireland Detoxification of pollutants Lakes for biodiversity and tourism Internationally important bird populations Water storage/flood alleviation 	<p>COASTAL MARGINS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 0.25% of Northern Ireland High biodiversity value 75% officially protected Important for recreation, tourism and cultural heritage. Flood alleviation
<p>WOODLANDS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 4% of Northern Ireland Carbon sequestration Timber production Scenic and recreational value Biodiversity 	<p>ENCLOSED FARMLAND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 44% of Northern Ireland - mostly improved grassland Food and energy production Field boundaries for biodiversity (wet drains and hedgerows etc.) Soil and water aid carbon sequestration and pollutant detoxification 	<p>URBAN SETTLEMENTS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 7.5% of Northern Ireland Green spaces for healthy recreation, tourism and biodiversity Green spaces also help detoxify air of pollutants. Built and cultural heritage. Centres for education. 	<p>MARINE</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To 12NM. 450,000ha in total. Around half of all biodiversity in Northern Ireland. Renewable energy provision. Cultural heritage, recreation and tourism. Major role in carbon balance and nutrient/water cycles



Strategic leadership...

ASSEMBLY LIAISON

The Assembly significantly increased its level of activity in 2010-11 and processed some extremely important environmental legislation with the Forestry Bill, CAP Reform and the Planning Bill all being completed during the term. NIEL fully contributed to all of these, speaking to Committees as well as submitting written evidence. We also contributed to Committee Inquiries on Barriers to Renewable Energy (DETI) and Transport (DRD).

REPRESENTING AND PROMOTING THE SECTOR

NIEL representatives speak for the environment and/or the environmental sector on a variety

of committees and groups, organised by government or others. There was representation on 21 groups during the year, and Isabel Hood, the NIEL representative, was selected to Chair the new Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership. NIEL also attends conferences and events to gather information for the sector and gives occasional lectures to promote various environmental issues.

CONSULTATION COMMENTS

NIEL plays an active role in responding to a wide array of consultations, and submitted 59 responses in 2010-11. NIEL submissions are a central reflection of the stance of the eNGO sector as our submissions

combine the opinions of many member organisations. The effort expended on consultations has been increasing over recent years, and has reached the stage where a new approach is required as the current system requires far more staff time than is available given other calls on our time. This procedure has been devised through a working group of the Executive and will be put in place following agreement by the Executive in early 2011. Increasing effort will be spent on attempting to influence the content of proposed legislation and policy through early intervention on working groups and individual meetings with those involved in devising the documents.

Examples of representation, public engagements and consultation comments, 2010-2011

Representation	Public Engagements	Consultations
Agri-Rural Forum	NEA Seminars	Clean Neighbourhoods
Joint Forum - Government and Voluntary Sector	Healthy Food for All Advisory Committee	Enforcement Policy
NI Climate Change Impacts Partnership (NICCIP)	Presentation on Way Ahead to Council TAG	Planning Bill
Strangford Lough and Lecale Partnership Committee	DOE waste event – workshop chair	Revised Waste Framework Directive
Waste Programme Board	TAG Waste Seminar	SD Implementation Plan
Green New Deal	Environment Research Funders' Forum presentation	NI & Dept Budgets

Policy

To influence regional, national and international policy which can impact on the natural and built environment

POLICY PRIORITIES

The **Way Ahead 2010** priorities and the **Environmental Manifesto** recommendations provide a major focus in both proactive meetings and a base for our comments on developing issues. Work during the year developed information (Briefing Notes and Fact Sheets) which will support future policy work and provide information for the website. Increasingly work is reactive to the Assembly's evolving work programme and having a 'pre-prepared' position is important given the time that is required to obtain agreement by all members.

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

Sustainable Development is one of NIEL's priorities within its policy document '**The Way Ahead**' and most of our work in this area is done in collaboration with **Sustainable Northern Ireland** who is also a member of NIEL. SNI is an independently run organisation with a remit dedicated to the advancement of sustainable development. Their close working relationship with NIEL is facilitated by working from the same offices and rather than duplicate activities, NIEL endorses SNI's Strategic plan and annual work programme to promote



and enhance the understanding of sustainable development across government. In 2010/11 Sustainable Northern Ireland has undertaken considerable work in support of local



government, especially with regard to their role in the NI Sustainable Development Strategy and Implementation Plan. SNI produced a series of briefing notes to help councils develop their own response to the consultation exercise. SNI's revamped website (www.sustainableni.org) has been used to promote sustainable development and has been updated to contain all the recent sustainable development activity in relation to the Strategy and Implementation Plan.

SNI has continued to roll out their Sustainability Audit Matrix (SAM) to local government and currently has 12 councils actively engaged with the Programme with several more waiting to start. Adjustments have been made to the application of the SAM and the spreadsheet used

to calculate the results now does extra calculations on how a council is helping to contribute to the achievement of the objectives within the NI Sustainable Development Strategy and each of the six priority areas. Most of the core work activities of SNI are now centred on the SAM and how it can be used to measure sustainable development across Northern Ireland.

WORKING GROUPS

STOP CLIMATE CHAOS NORTHERN IRELAND

This group continues to carry out activities in two primary areas, 1) political and policy, where the primary aim is to obtain a Climate Change Act and 2) promoting public awareness of the need for personal action through big public events. Work in both these areas has been on-going with the group continuing to undertake a number of activities designed to encourage the NI Assembly to introduce a local Climate Change Act, while public awareness of the need for individual action on climate change was promoted via a number of locally organised events to mark the global day of action on climate change on Saturday 4 December. The day coincided with the latest round of UN climate negotiations which took place in Cancun, Mexico.



By working together the group hopes that it can help people here recognise that individual and political action in Northern Ireland can make a difference both here and internationally.

FRESHWATER TASK FORCE

It has been a busy year for the Freshwater Task Force (which is



serviced by the WWF). The 2010 NIEL Conference had a freshwater theme and highlighted the important work that is on-going in this key area of sustainable management of our resources and ecosystems. The current agenda is focused on the draft Water Resource Management Plan, CAP Reform and developing the Forward Work Programme for the Task Force over the coming months.

MARINE TASK FORCE

This group has been part of a UK-wide campaign (including Joint Links efforts) for effective marine protection centred around the campaign for a Marine Bill. The group is continuing to lobby for Marine legislation for Northern Ireland as we continue to lag behind other parts of the

UK. Much work is being done on getting an effective Bill and



supporting legislation, structures and practice. In addition to submitting responses to a number of important consultations including the UK Marine Policy Statement and Policy Proposals for a Northern Ireland Marine Bill, meetings have also been held with all the main political parties in advance of the 2011 Assembly elections and it is now anticipated that a Marine Bill will be introduced in the new NI Programme for Government in 2011. This year has also seen a changeover in staff with support for the campaign coming from The Tubney Charitable Trust and Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, which support the officers employed by MTF members in NI.

PLANNING TASK FORCE

The Planning Task Force has had an active year networking with government to stress the importance of a robust set of Planning Policy Statements, on the reform of planning, accountability within the system,

a community infrastructure levy as a funding mechanism and the status of RPA. Consultation responses were made in relation to the review of PPS 15 Planning and Flood Risk, PPS 16 Tourism, proposals for change in Planning fees, the review of the Regional Development Strategy and the Planning Bill, which completed its final stage on 23 March 2011.



TRANSPORT WORKING GROUP

The Transport Working Group continued its work during 2010-11 and produced a joint response on the Assembly Committee Enquiry Transport Bill in August 2010. It also met to discuss the implications of the review of the Regional Transportation Strategy which is due in 2011. As the budget cuts for transport continue, this group has discussed the implications for public



Policy...

transport and infrastructure and has liaised with the Regional Development Committee on our priorities for government.

WASTE

Work on waste management during the year involved participation in the Waste Programme Board and the Communications and Learning Forum. An Addendum is being developed for the Waste Management Strategy to take account of new legislation and a draft Recycling Strategy will be out for consultation in early 2011.

GREEN NGOS

This group is an informal meeting of the CEOs of nine of Northern Ireland's larger organisations concerned primarily with the natural environment. It has been meeting since the early 2000s on an informal basis to share information and discuss issues of general importance, and continues to meet every two months.

NIEL – NIEA LIAISON

In addition to meetings at many levels, NIEA has collaborated fully on the work around collaboration including the Envision Report and the Building Change Trust work. The annual NIEL-NIEA conference was held on 7 March with two aspects; the morning looking at ways to influence behavior change and the afternoon workshops looking

at several aspects of upcoming environmental legislation and policy.

BUILDING CHANGE TRUST - COLLABORATION FOR EFFECTIVE MESSAGING

NIEL was successful in its application for an Exploring Change award from the Building Change Trust to look at improving environmental messages while addressing the funding and structural changes facing the sector. Funding began in January 2011 on an 18 month project, in collaboration with NIEA and the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside. The project builds on the Envision Report and had its first major event at the 7 March conference. The project will be a major focus for NIEL's work, tying together many of our major themes to improve the ability of the sector as a whole to make its message understood and acted upon by decision makers.

FROM MESSAGE TO BEHAVIOURAL CHANGE

NIEL joint hosted a conference with NIEA at NICVA in Belfast with the theme of **From Message to Behavioural Change** (7 March 2011). Expert speakers were



invited to present to attendees, in particular, David Fell of behavioural economics consultancy firm Brook Lyndhurst, sustainability specialist Dr. Demitrios Xenias from Cardiff University, Dr. Eddie Rooney from the Public Health Agency as well as Jim Kitchen of the Sustainable Development Commission, Marella Fyffe from Omagh Transition Town and Environmental Manager of IKEA Belfast Nigel McGarry. These talks set the scene for numerous



workshops in the afternoon which were designed to help inform policy at NIEA on issues such as environmental legislation and enforcement.



Networking

To achieve a fully informed and co-ordinated environmental sector

AGM CONFERENCE



The 25th AGM took place at Agriculture, Food and Biosciences Institute in Hillsborough

(23 June 2010). With a theme of **Rivers Don't Run Free**, the conference looked at how divisive issues and solutions to environmental problems can be approached to better achieve consensus. Speakers included NIEL CEO Sue Christie, Senior Policy Advisor to the Strategic Group



at NIEA Noel Bell, Head of Water Procurement at NI Water Paul Davison, Angus Mc Robert from the Water Management Unit at NIEA, and Archaeologist for the National Trust Malachy Conway.

These talks were followed by a panel and discussion session on working together to promote healthier water environments.



THE ENVIRONMENTAL SECTOR IN NORTHERN IRELAND



The NIEL commissioned report **The Environmental Sector in**

Northern Ireland (see pg 13) was discussed at a conference in Crawfordsburn (6 Dec 2010). The report looked at the current position of and the future prospects for the sector, particularly in light of the looming cuts announced in the HM Treasury Spending Review earlier in the year. One of the main conclusions was that public policy would be forced to focus primarily on issues of legislative compliance as opposed to more discretionary initiatives over the coming years.

The Report, prepared by Envision consultancy, will form a basis for follow-up NIEL work on promoting collaboration, including work with NIEA and the Building Change Trust programme.

ENVIRONMENTAL DATABASE

The database continues to expand and has recently undergone a major overhaul in design. The database now contains over 3,500 entries with details of organisations and individuals with environmental interests in Northern Ireland. These details include comprehensive NIEL, ESDF and NIAF Membership information and details of events held and who attended.

PARTNERSHIP ACTIVITIES

NIEL over the years has been involved in setting up a number of forums and organisations to take forward specific aspects of the environmental agenda. These include the Education for Sustainable Development Forum (ESDF) and the Northern Ireland Archaeology Forum (NIAF). It was also contracted from April 2008 to March 2011 to the DOE as part of its work under NIEA grant funding to deliver secretariat services to the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Group (NIBG).

EDUCATION FOR SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT FORUM



After the AGM in June 2010 the name of the organisation was changed from EEF to ESD Forum. The ESD Forum continued to deliver for the members. Two editions of the Forum Newsletter were produced and sent into every school in Northern Ireland and eleven e-bulletins were sent.



Networking...

With severely limited funding the Forum is now much more web based although it was possible to attend a number of member events.

The Forum continued with the Education for Sustainable Development training days for trainee teachers, which continue to be a valuable way to reach new teachers with the messages of environmental and sustainable development education. Work has started on updating the Resource Guide which will be completed over the summer of 2011.

NORTHERN IRELAND ARCHAEOLOGY FORUM



The Northern Ireland Archaeology Forum (NIAF) continued to function but with no specific funding in place it was at a much lower level. The NIAF Website continues to be the main contact for members and for promoting members' events and news. The Forum Newsletter **InSite** was produced in the winter. A



conference in Hillsborough Courthouse in March on **Heritage in Hard Times**, looked at 'Are we doing enough? Are we sending information to the right people? Who in the Assembly supports Archaeology?' We had a variety of speakers and the overall consensus was that we need to get the message out to the people who matter, MLAs, civil servants, etc.

The Management Committee met regularly during the year and it is the long term aim of the Committee to get the profile of the Forum and archaeology itself raised with the various committees in Stormont.

NORTHERN IRELAND BIODIVERSITY GROUP



NIEL was funded by the DOE Planning and Environmental Policy Group to act as secretariat to the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Group for one quarter of a Policy Officer's time. NIBG coordinates and monitors the implementation of the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy and its associated action programmes. NIBG holds six plenary meetings each year and undertook the development of a new NIBG Workplan as well as a review of its current membership. Throughout the year NIBG also contributed

to a number of important consultations including: the Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill (including the development of a new Biodiversity Duty for Public Bodies); the Sustainable Development Implementation Plan; Northern Ireland Marine Bill; and the Northern Ireland Revised Regional Development Strategy. NIBG helped coordinate a major conference held on 3 March 2011 entitled: **Biodiversity In Ireland: Towards New Targets And Indicators** to consider the implications for Ireland, North and South, of outcomes of the Convention on Biological Diversity held at Nagoya, Japan in October 2010 and of the new EU policies, targets and actions.



The workshop also considered new key biodiversity targets and indicators to feed into the review of the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy; and the implementation of Ireland's National Biodiversity Plan.

At the end of the three year contract period DOE decided to deliver secretariat functions to NIBG in-house.

Information

Providing information to its members and other audiences, including decision makers, is a key area of NIEL's activity, underpinning and supporting all of its policy work. NIEL is acknowledged to deliver high quality information, easily understood and accurately targeted at the audience.

REPORTS

The headline report of 2010 commissioned by NIEL and carried out by research consultants Envision was entitled **The Environmental Sector in Northern Ireland**. The report was well received and helped to bolster the arguments put forward to prepare the sector for looming spending cuts.

Also in 2010 NIEL published a report looking at the issues surrounding food production in Northern Ireland and the various initiatives underway to

address the sustainability of the systems we currently have in place. Carried out by Bronagh O' Hagan,



Food in Northern Ireland put forward examples of good practice and outlined some limitations of existing public policy.

FACT SHEETS

In 2010-2011 a factsheet was published summarising the findings in the report: **The Environmental Sector in Northern Ireland**, that was commissioned by NIEL, NIEA and CNCC. This factsheet was entitled: **Environmental NGO: Remit and Funding**.

BRIEFING NOTES



NIEL produces a number of Briefing Notes on timely environmental issues, summarising each issue

and its background, as well as outlining key recommendations for improvements. The prime target of the **Briefing Notes** is decision makers in the Assembly and civil service, but they are also available on the website and are useful background and position papers for other policy uses. NIEL produced 3 briefing notes this year: **Planning Bill Committee Stage, Northern Ireland Budget**



To have a better informed membership by providing an effective means of collecting, processing and disseminating relevant information on environmental matters to and from members and government

2011-2014 and Common Agricultural Policy 2013-2020.

re:SOURCE



At the beginning of 2010 we were developing and expanding our newly designed website and re:Source, our monthly members' newsletter summarising recent events of environmental note at a local and wider level. We were in the process of learning about and refining this new technology.

Over the course of the year the website was developed into a beneficial and valuable source of information for users and re:Source was developed into a highly informative publication which covers all aspects of environmentally related news, including Assembly developments, climate change news, members' news, regional/national and European environmental news, funding as well as news from NIEL, consultation summaries and information on environmental events or developments.

Information...

re:Source is circulated to over 500 individuals, including NIEL members, politicians and governmental contacts in all departments.

FACEBOOK

A Facebook profile was also created so that members and friends could receive more instant news from NIEL and other developments in the environmental, government and funding sector.

NIEL WEBSITE

NIEL publishes all its major work online, providing an easily accessible medium for the public, government and environmental sectors to enhance their knowledge and understanding of current environmental issues. The website also provides links to

NIEL member organisations, sister Links and other environmental organisations and websites throughout the UK, giving easy access to both organisations and information on issues of environmental interest. NIEL also reports on the most recent environmental news items as they appear in the media, and provides a calendar of forthcoming environmental events. The major revision of the website from 2009 continued to be refined with the addition of special sections for Members, Government and the Media. Work continues on developing the policy areas to be more easily used.

MEDIA

NIEL wishes to become known to the media as a reliable source of information on environmental issues and a point of contact for identifying suitable organisations from within its Membership to comment on issues and provide stories. The current layout of the website helps to further this aim, with specific sections for members of the media and government to access environmental information tailored to their needs. It is planned that NIEL will try to establish a higher profile with the media over the coming months, encouraging them to use the new website to access information on environmental issues and to contact NIEL Members for responses on stories.



Membership

To increase membership and provide efficient and effective services which meet members' needs

FULL MEMBERS

Voluntary organisations whose aims include promoting the conservation of the environment of Northern Ireland

MEMBERSHIP

NIEL now has 56 Full Members and 48 Associate Members. There was one new Full Member in 2010: Lecale Conservation. The Membership drive continued with a large number of organisations being targeted for Full Membership, but the financial situation led to a net loss of members - The Rural College, LNLBAC and The International Tree Foundation, all of which ceased operation in Northern Ireland.

Improving our services to Members, especially in light of the funding crisis beginning in late 2009, is always a priority and will be a major aspect of NIEL's work in 2011.

ASSISTING MEMBERS

NIEL assists its members in a variety of ways, including the Director sitting on their Boards or Management Committees when that is deemed mutually beneficial. This has been the case for many years with Action

Renewables, Forest of Belfast, Rural Community Network, Sustainable Northern Ireland and Tidy Northern Ireland. In addition, there is the opportunity for subletting to be provided to other small members needing just one or two desks.



ASSOCIATE MEMBERS

Statutory organisations, companies or individuals with environmental interests

Zoe Anderson
Peter Christie
Robin Curry
Jean Forbes
Bill Foster
Frances Green
Isabel Hood
Brian Jack
Tom Jennings

Pat Jess
David Knott
Nick Mack
Jim McAdam
Paul McCann
Alyson McElroy
Ken McGregor
Heather Moorhead
William Mullan

Roy Nelson
Leah O'Neill
Julian Orford
Karl Partridge
Marcus Patton
Gordon Reid
Jim Saunders
Gary Sims
Jude Stephens
Dawson Stelfox
Primrose Wilson
Tom Woolley
Sacha Workman



Internal Processes

To put in place an operational plan and performance management system to enable members, funders and other stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of NIEL in implementing its plan and achieving its stated outcomes

The Executive Committee meets at least four times each year to oversee the work of the organisation and make major policy and practical decisions. There are two subcommittees of the Executive (such that all Executive members serve on at least one) which meet between Executive meetings and report to those; the Strategic, Information and Membership Committee and the Finance and Human Resources Committee. Core staff consists of the CE, Policy Officer, and Office Manager, with four additional staff members, three full-time and one part-time, to deliver on all of the programmes. In 2011 two members of staff, our Policy and Research Assistant and our Communications and Membership Officer left the organisation to take up work abroad. The Executive appointed a new full-time Policy and Projects Officer to join the team in April 2011. NIEL continues to avail of the support of the Gibson Institute at Queen's University whose MSc students take up placements for a period of two months or more on a regular basis. These students have proven highly useful in developing

publications and other aspects of our work and have contributed significantly to NIEL's output. We also host undergrad placements from QUB, Agri-Food and Landuse.

A new Strategic Plan was developed which went forward to NIEA and to Esmee Fairbairn Foundation in support of our

bids for continued funding. Both bids were successful, leading to a relatively small decrease in our funding for the next few years. Coupled with the BCT grant (see p 18) this allows for continued strong outputs for the next year, although additional funding will be required from April 2012 to maintain current staff levels.

Executive Committee		
Chair	Pat Jess	
Vice Chairs	Isabel Hood	
	Diane Ruddock	National Trust
Treasurer	Jim Saunders	Mourne Heritage Trust
Secretary	Ben Simon	Forest of Belfast
Directors	Eammon Keaveney	ARENA Network
	Gary McFarlane	CIEH
	Geoff Nuttall	WWF
	Heather Thompson	UWT
	Ian Humphreys	Tidy Northern Ireland
	John Moore	UAS
	Lizzy Pinkerton	Belfast Hills Partnership
	Michael Hughes	Rural Community Network
	Murray Watt	Supporting Communities NI
Auditor	Terry Waugh	Action Renewables
	Nigel Skillen	Diamond & Skillen

Staff			
Chief Executive	Sue Christie	Networks and Events Co-ordinator	Iona Meyer
Policy Officer	Sean Kelly	Information and Publications Assistant	Karen Nicholson
Communications and Membership Officer	Catherine Cassidy	Research Officer	David McCann
Finance and Office Manager	Sandra Kilpatrick		

Summary Financial Statement

YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2011

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT ON THE SUMMARY FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The directors present herewith the summary financial statement of Northern Ireland Environment Link for the year ended 31 March 2011 and confirm the following:

- the summary financial statement is only a summary of information derived from the charity's annual accounts;
- the summary financial statement does not contain any additional information derived from the director's report;
- the full annual accounts, the independent auditor's report and the trustees'/directors' report can be obtained on application to Northern Ireland Environment Link Ltd;
- the annual accounts were approved by the Board on **22 June 2011**.

This directors' statement was approved by the board of directors on **22 June 2011** and signed on its behalf by:

Sue Christie
Secretary

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S STATEMENT TO THE MEMBERS OF NORTHERN IRELAND ENVIRONMENT LINK LTD

We have examined the summary financial statement of Northern Ireland Environment Link Limited.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF DIRECTORS AND EXAMINER

The directors are responsible for preparing the summary financial statement in accordance with applicable law. Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summary financial statement with the full annual accounts and Directors' Report, and its compliance with the relevant requirements of Section 427 of the Companies Act 2006 and the regulations made thereunder. We also read the other information contained in the summary financial statement and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the summary financial statement.

BASIS OF OPINION

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general directions given by the Charity Commission for Northern Ireland. An examination includes

a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

OPINION

In my opinion the summary financial statement is consistent with the full annual accounts and directors' report of Northern Ireland Environment Link Ltd for the year ended 31 March 2011 and complies with the applicable requirements of Section 427 of the Companies Act 2006, and the regulations made thereunder.

Diamond & Skillen

Chartered Accountants and
Registered auditor
Sinclair House
89/101 Royal Avenue
Belfast
BT1 1FE

22 June 2011

Northern Ireland Environment Link Ltd
Extracted Statement of Financial Activities (fund breakdown) for
the year ended 31 March 2011

	General Fund <i>(unrestricted)</i> £	Building Change Trust <i>(unrestricted)</i> £	NIAF <i>(unrestricted)</i> £	Other Projects <i>(restricted)</i> £	2011 Totals £	2010 Totals £
Incoming resources						
Grant	220,895	14,800	5,000	-	240,695	305,266
Subscriptions	17,788	-	-	-	17,788	15,780
Members' servicing & accommodation	4,599	-	-	-	4,599	4,496
NIAF & ESDF servicing & accommodation						17,485
Other income	10,202	-	-	-	10,202	530
Project income	1,400	-	-	-	1,400	4,809
Investment income	253	-	-	-	253	152
Total Incoming Resources	255,137	14,800	5,000	0	274,937	348,518
Resources expended						
Employee costs	199,469	3,000	5,946	-	208,415	253,829
Premises costs	29,759	-	-	-	29,759	30,220
Advertising costs	957	-	-	-	957	1,679
General administration costs	21,931	-	294	-	22,225	24,371
Legal & professional fees	1,820	-	-	-	1,820	1,205
Programme costs	13,735	877	247	-	14,859	36,943
Other expenses	330	-	-	-	330	282
Total Resources Expended	268,001	3,877	6,487	0	278,365	348,529
Net incoming / (outgoing) resources	(12,864)	10,923	(1,487)	-	(3,428)	(11)
Depreciation of fixed assets	-	-	-	-	0	(3,301)
Transfers between funds	-	-	-	-	0	0
Net movement in funds	(12,864)	10,923	(1,487)	0	(3,428)	(3,312)
Fund balances b/f at 1 April	111,761	0	1,487	10	113,258	116,570
Fund balances c/f at 31 March	98,897	10,923	0	10	109,830	113,258

**Northern Ireland Environment Link Ltd
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2011 and
Expenditure and Income Charts 31 March 2011**

	2011	2010
	£	£
Fixed Assets		
Tangible Assets	-	-
Current Assets		
Debtors	12,159	13,223
Cash at bank and in hand	99,171	101,623
	111,330	114,846
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	(1,500)	(1,588)
Net Assets	109,830	113,258
Accumulated funds		
<i>Unrestricted Income funds:</i>		
General funds	98,897	111,761
Building Change Trust	10,923	-
NI Archaeology Forum	-	1,487
	109,820	113,248
<i>Restricted Income funds:</i>		
Other projects	10	10
Total funds	109,830	113,258

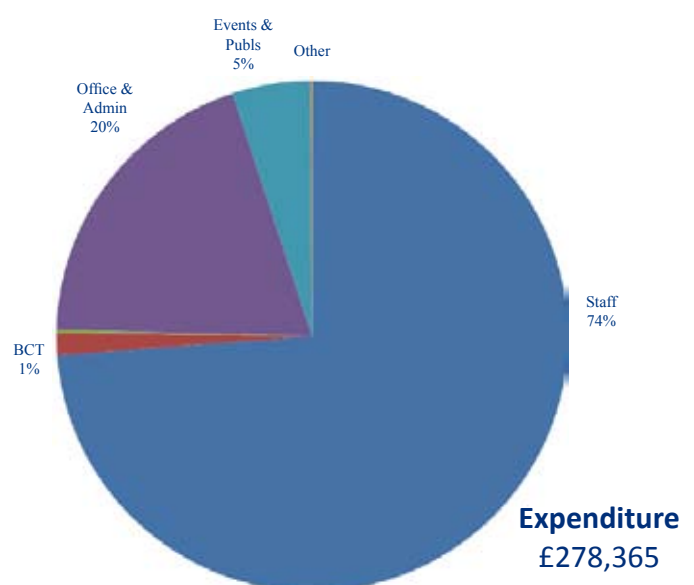
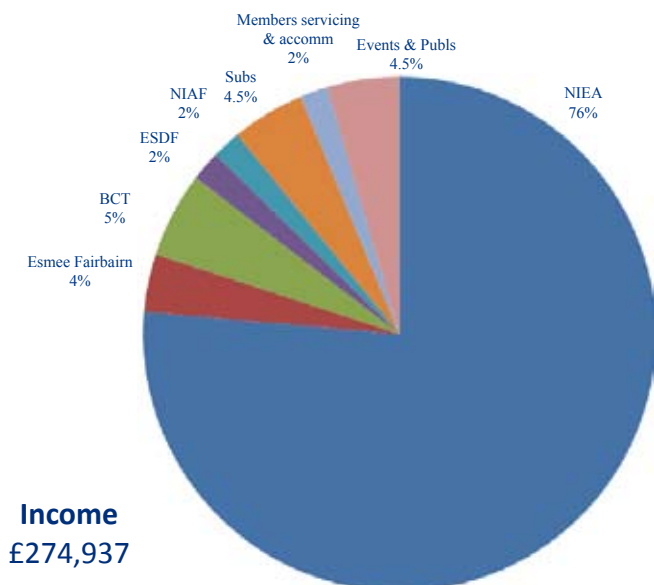
The summary financial statement was approved by the Board of Directors on 22 June 2011 and signed on their behalf by:

Pat Jess

Chairman of Directors _____

Jim Saunders

Director, Hon Treasurer _____





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Supported by:

