



Working to enhance and protect our natural and built environment

NORTHERN IRELAND ENVIRONMENT LINK MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

ORGANISATION

NOMINATED REPRESENTATIVE

Position

Address

Postcode

Telephone

E-mail

Website

ALTERNATIVE CONTACTS

Name

Position

Address

Postcode

Telephone

Email

Website

MISSION/AIMS OF THE ORGANISATION

Year established:

Limited company **YES/NO** Company Number

Charity **YES/NO** Charity Number

What are your environmental interests?

Do you manage land

YES/NO

If so, how much and for what purpose?

Do you have staff ?

YES/NO

If so, how many and what are their roles?

What is your management structure?

Are you affiliated to a parent body?

YES/NO

Do you have local subgroups?

YES/NO

What are your environmental interests?

How is your organisation funded?

What do you hope to gain from your membership?

What do you hope to contribute to NIEL?

Category of Membership

Full

Associate

Signed..... Date.....

PLEASE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING WITH YOUR APPLICATION:

- **Constitution**
- **Current Annual Report and Accounts**
- **Any other relevant information**



Do not send payment at this time.

Applicants must, in the view of existing members, be able to make a contribution to the work of the organisation.

Membership is subject to approval of the existing Members.



Creating opportunities to save the environment

NORTHERN IRELAND ENVIRONMENT LINK



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. It represents 58 full members (voluntary organisations) and 52 associate members (statutory organisations, companies or individuals).

Full members collectively represent over 84,000 individuals, 262 subsidiary groups, have an annual turnover of nearly £100 million and manage over 314,000 acres of land. Members are involved in environmental issues of all types and at all levels from the local community to the global environment.

MISSION

NIEL facilitates understanding of environmental issues and enhances the capacity of groups and individuals to speak and act in a co-ordinated way in the interests of the natural and built environment

AIMS

Strategic Leadership

Enhance the credibility of NIEL's role through instigating debate and discussion amongst Members and those whom it seeks to influence.

Policy

Influence regional, national and international policy that can impact on the natural and built environment.

Information

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.

Networking

Achieve a fully informed and co-ordinated environmental sector.

Membership Services

Increase membership and provide efficient and effective services that meet Members' needs.

MEMBERSHIP

Full Membership

Open to voluntary organisations whose aims include promoting the conservation of the environment of Northern Ireland.

Full Members have the right to vote at NIEL meetings and serve on the Executive Committee. They are the primary focus for NIEL work, and are involved in sub-committees, working groups, consultation meetings and all other activities. When NIEL makes a comment or statement, it is on behalf of, and after consultation with, the Full Members.

Associate Membership

Open to statutory organisations, companies or individuals with environmental interests.

Associate Members obtain information and may become involved in working groups. Associate Members provide a valuable source of information and are an important outlet for NIEL information. They are not involved with the governance of the organisation (they cannot vote and are not allowed to serve on the Executive Committee).

Membership Fees

The Membership fee is related to the organisation's income (ability to pay) with consideration given to additional factors such as the degree to which the group wishes to be actively involved in NIEL's work. Subscriptions are a significant and vital source of income, but we do not wish the fee to be a barrier to participation for any group genuinely interested in becoming involved in NIEL's work.

Membership Fees 2009–2010

Band	£
1	25
2	110
3	160
4	250
5	525

MEMBERSHIP

Benefits

The key virtue of NIEL is the influence afforded by being part of a strong voice for the environment. Members gain from the values, expertise, knowledge and diversity of each other. They gain strength and recognition from working together in coalition.

Being a part of the NIEL network brings many tangible benefits — publications and information, conferences and meetings, and opportunities to interact with government and policy makers at many levels. It is also beneficial to share ideas and perspectives. Owing to its varied Membership, NIEL can bring together experts from different groups to work together. It provides a useful forum for discussion and a safe environment for airing concepts and getting feedback before presenting ideas to the wider public or government. NIEL also offers its Members the opportunity to broaden their coverage by keeping informed about, or getting involved in, additional issues. Perhaps the greatest benefit of working with others is the increased credibility that a co-ordinated and combined approach offers. The broad Membership increases the strength of the environmental voice.

Membership of NIEL is a two-way process: to enjoy the benefits, Members need to engage and commit resources. The input of Members' time and energies is the true investment from which they gain added value. NIEL's Communication and Membership Officer is devoted to communicating with and servicing the needs of the Members.

At a glance

Members have the opportunity to:

- Contribute to Consultation documents and receive drafts to inform their own responses.
- Shape NIEL policy (through meetings and consultations, and *The Way Ahead* document).
- Attend meetings with policy makers.
- Participate in Members' meetings.
- Access Members' section of website with additional information.
- Contribute to Members' News section of website.
- Circulate details of their events, activities and publicity announcements via website and e-mail.
- Receive discounts at NIEL conferences.
- Avail of discounted access to office services, including video conferencing and printing.

ACTIVITIES

Networking

NIEL is a networking body facilitating its Members to work together, holding events and providing advice and assistance. It surveys what Members want and arranges appropriate activities, including training. A major strength of the network is its size and influence and we welcome new Members to increase the breadth and strength of the environmental voice.

Meetings and Conferences

NIEL organises many events each year. Environmental issues and policies of current interest are discussed and **Reports** are produced to encourage positive change. Conferences are organised with or on behalf of partners on relevant topics to increase the profile of environmental issues with a variety of specific audiences, including politicians. Notable recent conferences include 'Climate Change — Dealing with the Reality', 'European Environmental Policy: The Northern Ireland Dimension' and 'Sustainable Transport'.

Publications

NIEL produces several different types of publications. **Environmental Reports** are booklets that contain in-depth analysis of topical issues by expert contributors. **Fact Sheets** are shorter, more focused analyses of specific issues. **Briefing Notes**, which contain background information and policy proposals, are aimed at politicians and government agencies. An **Assembly Guide** is continuously updated as changes in the government and committees occur. Additional documents that explore current environmental issues are also produced, such as the **Sustainable Food Guide**.

NIEL produces policy documents aimed at local and regional government. **The Way Ahead** identifies environmental policy changes that NIEL members feel are important if Northern Ireland is not only to improve environmental performances, but also to address the economic and social challenges we currently face. It is produced to influence the the policy making agenda and is reviewed annually.

Recent Publications

- *A Future for Northern Ireland's Built Heritage*
- *Climate Change: Dealing with the Reality*
- *Sustainable Transport Report*
- *Climate Change — the Energy Issue*
- *Food, Farming and the Environment*
- *Sustainable Food Guide, Northern Ireland*
- *Badgers and Bovine TB*
- *Sustainable Development in the Countryside*
- *Sustainable Energy*

ACTIVITIES

E-zine

Each month NIEL produces **Re:Source**, an e-zine for Members with information on Members' activities and events; current environmental events and issues; local, national and European news roundups and listings of recent publications. This e-zine evolved from the popular *NIEL News*, a monthly magazine that was sent out to Members. It is available as a printed document for those Members not on e-mail.

Representation

NIEL is asked to nominate someone to represent environmental issues on governmental or other policy and implementation committees, boards or initiatives. Such representatives come from either Members or staff and report back to the Executive and to the entire Membership. NIEL represents the environment on approximately 20 groups at any one time.

Consultation Comments

Submitting an environmental viewpoint to government and other consultation exercises is an important aspect of NIEL's work. Members' views are sought and comments agreed for submission on behalf of Full Members in response to significant environmental policies, strategies, legislation and other proposals.

Working groups

NIEL, through a variety of groups, develops policy and activities on significant environmental issues. These groups involve other NGOs, environmental or not, and may be for a specific purpose or for ongoing issues such as planning or climate change.

Current Representation	Recent Responses and Consultations
Northern Ireland Climate Change Impacts Partnership	Wildlife Order
Regional Development Strategy Stakeholder Group	Rural Champion and Proofing
Rural White Paper Stakeholder Group	NI Strategic Energy Framework
Waste Learning and Communications Forum	PPS21 (Sustainable Development in the Countryside)
Joint Forum for the Voluntary and Government sectors	Environment Committee Inquiry into Climate Change
Built Heritage Forum	Forestry Act proposals
Strangford Lough Management Committee	PPS18 (Renewable Energy)

ACTIVITIES

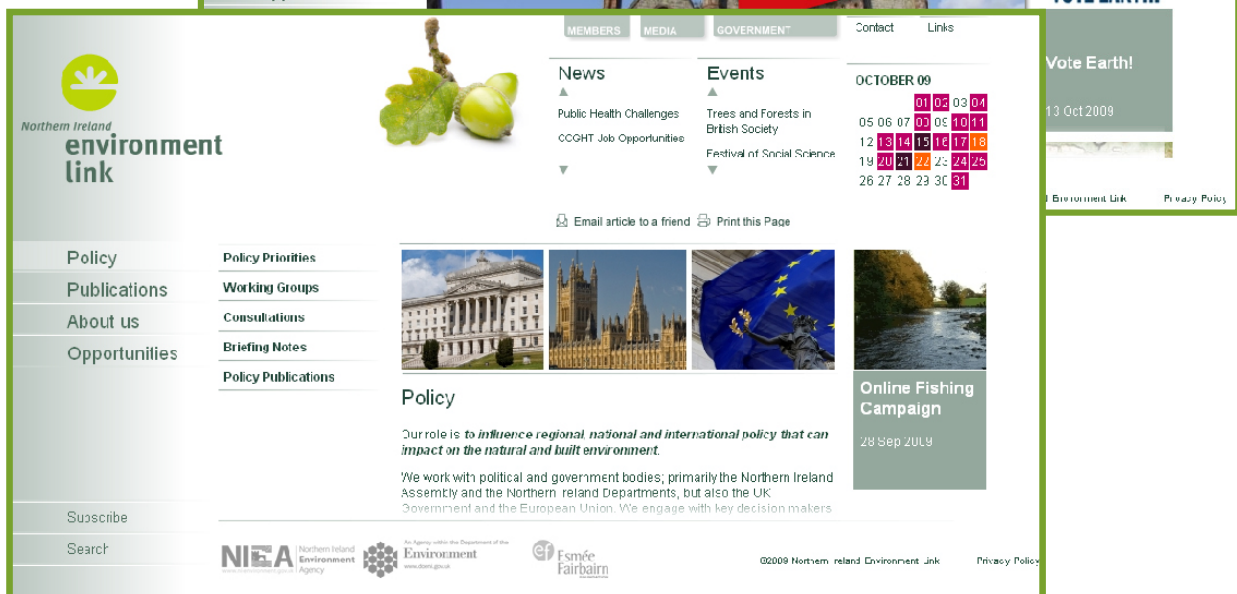
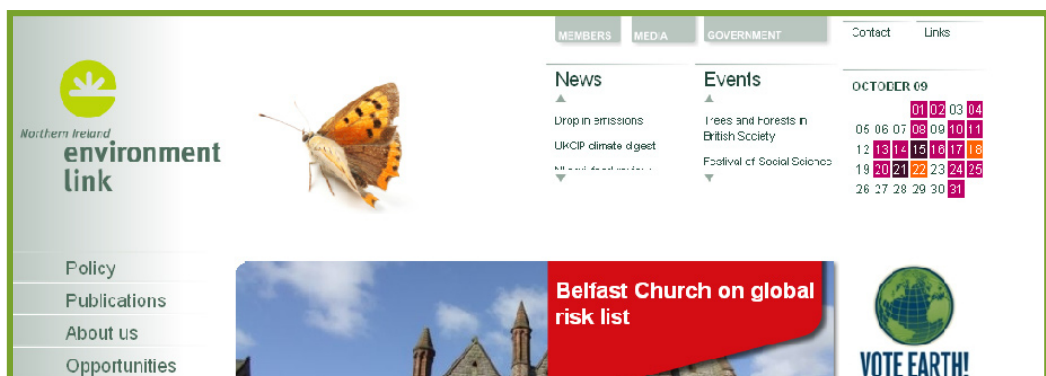
Website

NIEL's website provides information about NIEL, including activities, publications, current work areas and policy priorities. It also provides information on its Members, their work and how they engage with NIEL, and contact information.

The website, recently redesigned to facilitate Members' communications and interests on a variety of tiers, contains topical news areas — such as Members' News, Assembly News and Environmental News — as well as an Events calendar that contains details on all environmental events. Members can contribute to each section to publicise their news and events.

The website also contains a Publications page, designed for easy access to NIEL's latest publications. Information about Members' publications is also available on the website, with links to relevant sites.

Online areas aimed at providing information tailored towards the Members, Media and Government are other important features of the site, designed for ease of use by those seeking information on the environment in Northern Ireland.



STRUCTURE AND MANAGEMENT

NIEL is managed by an Executive Committee, elected annually at the AGM, which consists of officers plus representatives of Full Members. The Committee meets four to six times per year to discuss operational matters and plan activities and publications. Two sub-committees (Strategic, Information and Membership, and Finance and Human Resources) meet to address specific work in their relevant management areas. These sub-committees report directly to the Executive Committee.

Officers are elected annually at the AGM. All must have a strong interest in the environment and in NIEL's work and methodology. Although most will be representatives of Member organisations, some officers, and the Chair by preference, are not closely identified with a specific Member to ensure full commitment to NIEL and its independence. Nominations for officers are solicited from amongst the Membership before each AGM and a vote is taken on all candidates put forward.

NIEL's staff works closely with the subcommittees and liaises frequently with the Members.

FUNDING

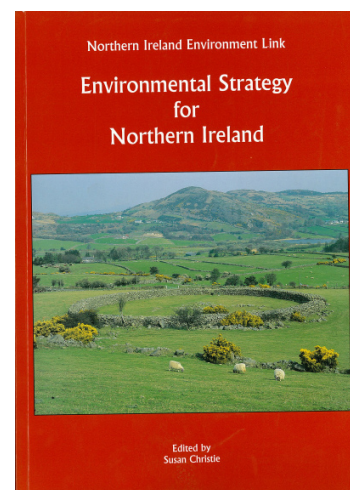
NIEL is core funded by the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and also receives funding from The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation. NIEL also receives a significant contribution to its finances from its Members' subscriptions.



HISTORY

NIEL arose in the late 1980s from a discussion group of environmental NGOs who saw the need for a more formal co-ordination and networking mechanism. After a one-year study, the organisation was formally launched in April 1990, and became the final 'Link' in the UK-wide system of Links. NIEL was immediately recognised as a charity by the Inland Revenue and has received core funding from the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (and its predecessors) since its inception, recognising its important role in facilitating the work of the NGO sector.

In 1997 NIEL's work and employer commitments had expanded to the point where it became a limited company. In 2000, NIEL Members embarked on a strategic review of the work of the organisation, looking at the needs and how NIEL could best meet these. Accordingly, the then Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) was asked to contribute to this review, as it was hoped that they would contribute significantly to the increased funding required to deliver this improved service. This was ultimately followed by a letter of offer from the EHS in 2005 that granted significantly improved funding for the organisation, allowing it to expand from one or two core staff to four from early 2005. In 2008, this funding was reviewed and the staff grew once more to the current eight.



Milestones

- 2009 **Sustainable Transport** conference and **Report**
- 2009 **Climate Change – Dealing with the Reality** conference & **Report**
- 2009 **The Way Ahead 2009** policy document
- 2008 **The Way Ahead 2008; Policy Priorities for Northern Ireland’s Environment**
- 2008 **‘70% recycling target’** and **‘Adapting Northern Ireland to Climate Change’** conferences
- 2008 **Sowing the Seeds** conference
- 2008 **Sustainable Food Guide** for Northern Ireland
- 2008 **European Environmental Policy: The Northern Ireland Dimension** conference
- 2007 **The Way Ahead – Policies for Northern Ireland’s Environment**
- 2007 **Valuing Our Environment** report from Green NGOs
- 2007 Northern Ireland Archaeology Forum launched
- 2006 **Introducing Community Planning to Northern Ireland** Fact Sheet published
- 2006 **Planning and the Future of the Countryside in Northern Ireland**
- 2005 Increased core funding from EHS and from Esmee Fairbairn Foundation secured
- 2005 New office premises, website, NIEL News renovated, Task Forces
- 2004 **Building Rural Futures** Conference
- 2003 **Worth the Paper?** Policy document
- 2001 **Directory of Environmental Organisations in Northern Ireland** produced
- 2000 Environment Open Day at Assembly
- 1996 **Environmental Strategy for Northern Ireland** produced
- 1996 Sustainable Northern Ireland Programme established
- 1995 Environmental Education Forum established



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NIEL is core funded by:

