



The Environmental NGO Sector in Northern Ireland

October 2010

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September 2010

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Appendices

Note: The comprehensive survey of the eNGO sector undertaken as part of this assignment has generated very detailed information and analysis – on individual eNGOs, and on the sector in aggregate. The key strategic messages to be taken from this information and analysis is presented in the main body of the report (sections 1 – 9 above). However, additional detailed information is provided for reference in a series of supporting appendices. The more detailed appendices are provided in Excel files to allow the Steering Committee to scrutinise the data / analysis.

Appendix I	eNGO Mapping Data
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Envision Management Consultants was commissioned to carry out independent research and to produce a report into the current position of and the future prospects for the environmental Non-Governmental Organisation (eNGO) Sector in Northern Ireland. This report was completed on behalf of the Northern Ireland Environment Link (NIEL), Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (CNCC).

The main aim of the project, as stated in the terms of reference, was to develop a report which:

maps the roles, remits, resources and support services of the individual organisations, and analyses this information - identifying gaps, overlap, opportunities for delivering economies of scale and increasing the 'value for money' which the sector delivers to government in return for the funding it receives.

Methodology

The key stages of the approach adopted to address the above requirements were:

Stage one: Review & analysis of the environmental NGO sector in Northern Ireland

Envision conducted a substantial survey of eNGOs in Northern Ireland involving 38 eNGO participants providing detailed information on key issues such as remit, status, role, expertise, activities, resources, assets and funding models.

Stage two: Completion of mapping exercise and analysis of funding

Based on the 38 eNGO responses received, Envision was in a position to 'map out' the sector in order to identify areas of overlap, gaps in service as well as opportunities for improving efficiencies. The findings also allowed Envision to identify ways of delivering economies of scale and increasing the 'value for money' which the sector delivers.

Stage three: Key consultee engagement

Envision conducted interviews with a select number of key government consultees and stakeholders in order to gain their views on the current and potential role of eNGOs in the NI environmental sector.

Stage four: Contextual analysis

A combination of targeted, up-to-date desk research on the key issues facing the eNGO sector (as well as funding issues across the sector) with information gleaned from the key informant interviews detailed above to complete a comprehensive contextual analysis for the project.

Key Research Findings

The following sub-section presents an overview of the key findings of the research. More detailed findings and conclusions are outlined in Section 8 of the report.

- Contextual Analysis (Report Section 3)
 - Recent and proposed cuts in government funding have necessitated urgent action at all levels of government. The impact on the Department of the Environment (DoE), the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and the environmental NGOs funded to assist government in delivering its environmental work has been particularly severe.
 - NIEA has indicated that with the reduction in funding they will be focusing on key priorities / objectives which meet legislative requirements, rather than funding projects that would be 'good' to do.
 - Research into how other 'issue focused' sectors are responding to cuts in government funding has identified a number of potential options for eNGOs as a means of reducing costs such as shared services, mergers and collaborations.
- Profile/Map of the Sector (Report Section 4)

The eNGO profiling / mapping has shown that based on the feedback of 38 organisations:

- The sector sample employs over 720 full-time staff members. The largest proportion of eNGOs operate solely in Northern Ireland with the vast majority being 'locally run and autonomous' organisation.
- Policy development, campaigning / lobbying and education are particularly common areas of focus for eNGOs in Northern Ireland.
- It is clear from the report that many key environmental themes are represented by multiple eNGOs in NI - thus presenting potential areas of collaboration, or overlap. Also, there are a number of themes that are covered by fewer organisations – but nevertheless collaboration and co-operation may still be possible.

Potential 'closer working' areas for eNGOs

- A collective approach to specific areas of remit is likely to benefit both organisations and the sector as a whole.
- The sharing of contacts / information and knowledge will undoubtedly be of mutual benefit for organisations with common goals.
- Collaborations can present some risks and some real opportunities for eNGOs. These overall risks of collaboration do, of course need to be balanced with the ultimate risk – that of a potential loss of financial viability, due to the reduction in funding available to the sector.
- On the positive side, it must also be recognised that collaboration between eNGOs can involve a number of positive benefits, including financial savings, sharing of expertise, sharing (reduction) of risk, better co-ordination of activities across organisations (particularly within common interest areas), the presentation of a more coherent voice to audiences including Government and the public.

- eNGO Contribution to Government Targets (Report Section 5)

It is clear that there is a high-level of value provided to the client through eNGO activities. This value spans central government and local government. eNGO outputs also provide strong benefits that are outside of the scope of the “environmental” sector.

This is supported by the fact that (based on the sample of participating eNGOs):

- The vast majority of eNGOs that participated in the Study stated that all or some of their work contributes to government objectives. Despite this, a third of eNGOs involved in the Study receive no funding from government to deliver activities.
- A wide range of government departments and specific government targets would be negatively affected if the delivery of eNGO outputs was reduced.

Government funding is essential for the survival of many eNGOs – to allow them to operate to seek additional, highly competitive and increasingly scarce funds where possible. In order to both survive and continue to work efficiently, eNGOs recognise that it is essential to find other funding mechanisms and sources.

- eNGO Funding Analysis (Report Section 6)

The funding analysis shows that a high level of reliance is placed by eNGOs on external sources of funding. From the analysis it is clear that:

- It is very important to note that many organisations rely heavily on funding from government in order to have the ability to attract any other forms of funding.
- However, eNGOs have drawn from a wide range of external funding sources in order to raise the funds needed to help them effectively support delivery of government environmental targets.
- Also, the significant time resources required by many key eNGO contacts in order to secure both government and non-government funding restricts time which should be utilised in meeting targets and delivering activities ‘on-the-ground.’
- In addition, the ‘continuity’ of funding is also crucial for eNGOs in implementing projects. The quality and efficiency of projects can be hampered by the stalling of funds and the overall implications for organisation management brought about through uncertain funding timetables.
- The voluntary sector clearly provides significant benefits, efficiencies and ‘value for money’ to the environmental sector as a whole.

The funding analysis highlights the significant value brought about through eNGOs implementing government objectives and helping to meet targets with relatively low government funding input.

- The total value of funding from non-government sources when the estimated size of volunteer input is added is approximately £21.7m. This figure is approximately £16.4m when the eNGOs which receive larger amounts of government funding for specific projects are excluded.

- Based on every £1 invested by government, **£1.46** (including the two recipients of large levels of government funding for specific tasks) or **£3.37** (excluding the two recipients of large levels of government funding for specific tasks) is delivered by eNGOs availing of “other” sources of funding.

Although the forecasts for eNGO funding are undoubtedly bleak, the organisations have a sense of realism in relation to this. The proactive eNGOs recognise the need to adapt to survive and the stronger eNGOs are building cases for funding and implementing strategies for securing future funds. Some direct support in maximising funds and working collaboratively to do so will be highly valuable to these eNGOs.

A government role in working with the eNGOs will significantly boost the chances of the sector continuing to bring real, tangible benefit to all Government departments and the environment as a whole.

- Key Consultee Opinion (Report Section 7)

There is evident disparity between how the consultees view the current role of eNGO/NGOs and how the eNGO/NGOs view their role.

While the consultee responses would suggest that they see the NGOs in largely an advisory capacity, NGOs feel their role is much more than this. They feel they have a more active role, delivering projects which will contribute to government targets.

The findings from the majority of consultee interviews demonstrate a lack of understanding/appreciation of how the work carried out by NGOs currently contributes to meeting government targets.

While there is some disparity between how the key informants and the NGO/eNGOs view the current role of NGO/eNGOs in the Northern Ireland Environment sector, there is clearly a common view between both parties as to how their role should not only develop in the future but also how they might perform better.

Based on the findings of the report, a comprehensive list of recommendations has been presented in Section 9 of the report. A selection of key recommendations is presented below:

1. A strategic approach by eNGOs is essential in order to aid survival. Whilst it may be argued that organisations can only plan confidently when their fundamental core costs are securely funded, there is a view that in the current climate, core funding will only be secured by organisations that display clarity of thinking in relation to objectives, strategy, and action.

Part of this clarity of thinking will increasingly involve collaboration between organisations with shared objectives, and shared focus in relation to either themes, or geography.

2. As a consequence of the funding situation, organisations should be working together to deliver more efficiently with less funding. This should bear in mind the fact that organisations will receive funding as part of a new and more efficient delivery partnership which can deliver on key environmental and sustainability issues and targets.

3. The mapping exercise has identified a number of areas within the sector where collaboration on the delivery of specific environmental tasks/targets is plausible. eNGOs should consider working in partnership / collaboration to identify potential links that may create opportunities for each organisation, for example, in terms of the maximisation of funding.
4. A new and more efficient delivery partnership between government and eNGOs which can deliver on key environmental and sustainability issues and targets is emerging. eNGOs have to become proactive in adapting to this changing situation.
5. As well as a strategic approach from government in dealing with and maximising the benefits gained from eNGOs, a strategic approach from eNGOs as a partner to Government should be considered. There are more opportunities for developing further partnerships and co-operative delivery arrangements between government and eNGOs to the benefit of the environment.
6. A Government role in promoting partnership and collaboration between eNGOs will be highly valuable, adding credibility to the process. However it is vital that the process be initiated by the eNGO sector – involving:
 - A degree of rationalisation and collaboration of the sector
 - Development of a coordinated message to government
 - Harnessing the input of government in key strategic area
7. It is important that one organisation takes a clear leadership role, to progress the issues emerging from this Study.

Subject to sectoral agreement, NIEL could take this role. Key challenges to be progressed are as follows:

- (i) The facilitation of collaboration between individual eNGOs, indeed groups of eNGOs.
- (ii) The provision of information and direction to eNGOs in relation to sources of funding, matching of eNGOs and funding sources, and the provision of advice on the approach to be taken to successfully secure funding.
- (iii) Increased communication with Government in relation to the role being fulfilled by eNGOS, the funding already being raised by eNGOS, the level of volunteer commitment already secured, and the critical importance of government funding as the trigger to attract additional sources of funds.
- (iv) The fostering of skills development within the eNGO sector – at management and board level. This could in part be achieved through collaborative skills development or skills – resource sharing. The organisation could also take the lead in relation to the promotion of / indeed completion of the skills review and training needs assessment recommended above.

1.0 INTRODUCTION TO THE STUDY

Envision Management Consultants was commissioned to carry out independent research and to produce a report into the state of the Environmental Non Governmental Organisation Sector in Northern Ireland on behalf of the Northern Ireland Environment Link (NIEL), Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA) and the Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (CNCC).

The main aim of the project, as stated in the terms of reference, was to develop a report which:

maps the roles, remits, resources and support services of the individual organisations, and analyses this information - identifying gaps, overlap, opportunities for delivering economies of scale and increasing the 'value for money' which the sector delivers to government in return for the funding it receives.

This document begins with a short background to the current funding crisis in the sector, which has triggered the need for this study.

1.1 Background

There is a large and diverse eNGO sector in Northern Ireland, covering all aspects of the environment and ranging in size from local community groups up to international organisations. Remits vary across the environmental field (built and natural heritage, environmental protection, rural issues, etc.) and can be very restricted (specific site or theme) to very general.

The funding situation for environmental NGOs (eNGOs) in Northern Ireland is becoming increasingly restricted and this will lead to significant pressures on the sector. At a time when the need for environmental awareness and activity among politicians and the general public are crucial, the sector is suffering from significant resourcing issues. This is beginning to impact on the work of organisations in the sector, and particularly on the delivery of services by these organisations.

There is a perception amongst the public and politicians that the sector is 'large, diverse and not giving a coherent message'. This perception is a concern for the organisations in the sector, in the current financial environment, and hence needs to be addressed. Work by NI Environment Link (NIEL), the networking body for the sector, has tried to address this over the years, but with limited success. Organisations have separate and distinct remits, are very keen to promote their particular points of view and wish to maintain their independence and identity. Competition for limited funds over the years appears to have led to some organisations broadening their remit in response to funding availability. This has led to further confusion in the sector in relation to 'which organisation specialises in what', and may have led to even greater confusion amongst external audiences and duplication of effort.

While many organisations profess an interest in cooperative working, and there have been some partnerships developed for delivery of particular projects to date, there is limited evidence of longer term strategic partnerships to date. A greater degree of cooperation could be beneficial in the current financial environment, which is likely to remain challenging for several years. The challenge is to identify opportunities for co-operation, to indicate how they might be realised, and to consider the impacts that might result – e.g. a more coherent sector, clearer messages, greater collaboration, and more focused targeting of funds.

As an input to the thinking of the sector, of government, and of the Natural Heritage Directorate in NI Environment Agency, a full ‘mapping’ / analysis of the sector has been undertaken. This report, which maps the roles, remits, resources and support services of the individual organisations has been prepared as a first step in the process of identifying how the sector can be sustained through the next 5 years to support delivery of government and wider objectives for the environment.

This will facilitate the identification of gaps, overlap, opportunities for delivering economies of scale and increasing the ‘value for money’ which the sector delivers to government in return for the funding it receives.

The findings of this research should be considered in the context of how other organisations including local and central government and the private sector deliver on environmental objectives.

The key elements of the project as stated in the terms of reference are to:

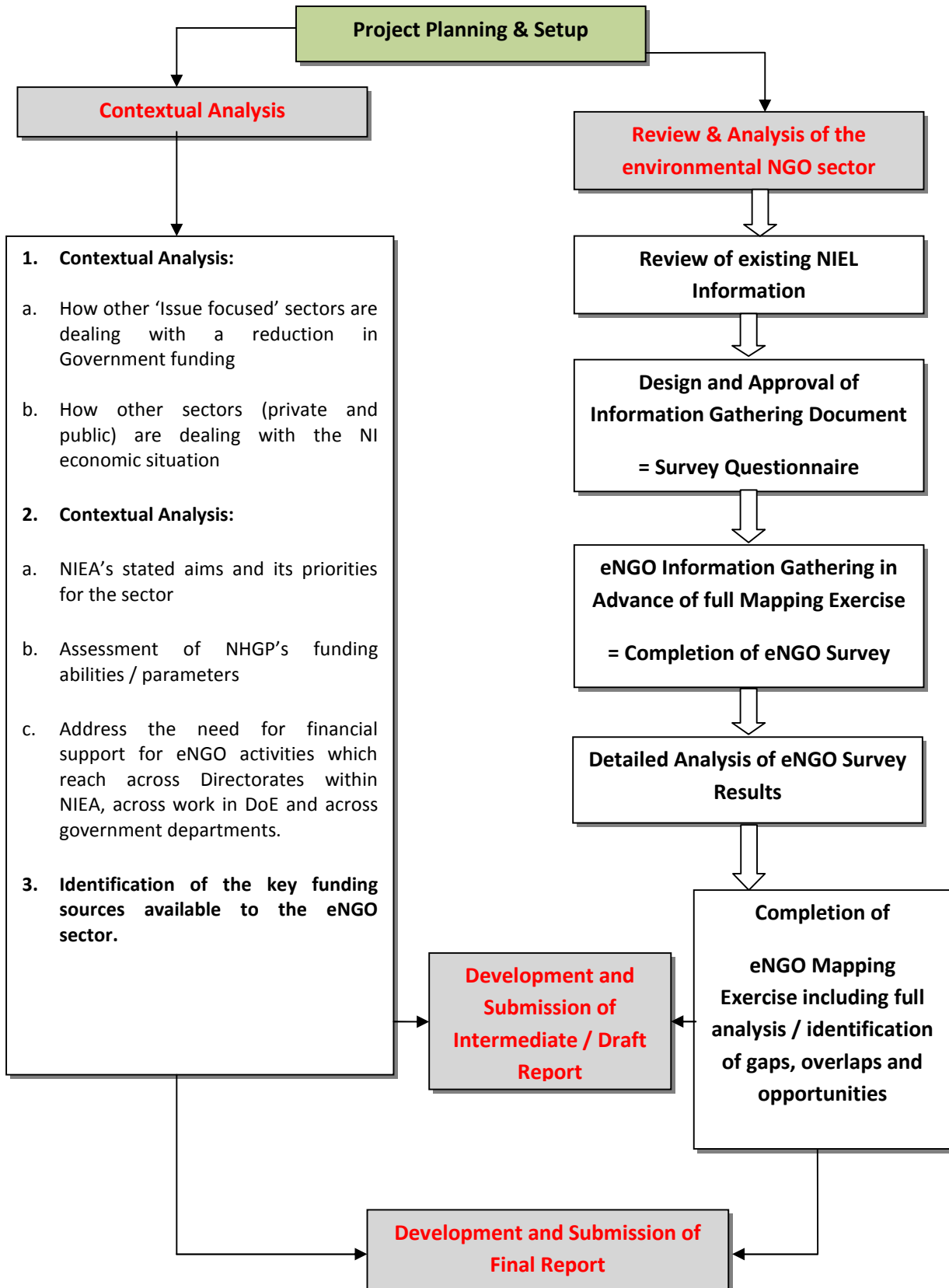
- Conduct a review of the environmental NGO sector including remits (geographical and thematic), role, expertise/ specialisms, activities, staffing complement, funding models, status (local, regional, UK branch etc), commercial activities, assets and support services.
- Analyse this information and identify areas of overlap (potential or actual), gaps and opportunities for improving efficiencies and effectiveness.
- Look at this information and identify areas where improved collaboration may be of benefit; looking at all levels from cooperative projects to shared services to full merger. The Report should not be specific or prescriptive but merely identify the types of areas where closer working could be beneficial to the sector and individual organisations.
- Include a contextual analysis of how other “issue focused” sectors are dealing with a reduction in government funding, and a contextual analysis of how other sectors (private and public) are dealing with the NI economic situation including local and central government and non-environmental NGOs, where this impinges significantly on the environmental sector. This should include the potential impacts of changing governance arrangements; in particular the Review of Public Administration, but given the uncertainties on the timescale of this it should be kept as ‘potential’ impacts.
- Analyse context of the NIEA’s stated aims and priorities for the sector, including an assessment of the ability of NHGP to fund new and innovative projects within the sector where little or no policy exists to support these, or they do not fall within the remit of their corporate objectives. This also needs to address the need for financial support for eNGO activities which reach across Directorates within NIEA, across work in DoE, and across government departments.
- Identify the key funding sources available to the eNGO sector.

Table 1a below identifies each distinct element of the project (as stated in the terms of reference), and indicates the section of the report in which each is addressed.

Table 1a: Project Requirement (As per terms of reference)	Report Section
<p>Conduct a review of the environmental NGO sector including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Remits (geographical and thematic) • Status (local, regional, UK branch etc) • Role • Expertise/ specialisms • Activities 	4.0
<p>Conduct a review of the environmental NGO sector including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staffing complement • Assets • Support services 	Appendix I
<p>Conduct a review of the environmental NGO sector including</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding models • Commercial activities 	6.0
<p>Analyse this information and identify areas of overlap (potential or actual), gaps and opportunities for improving efficiencies and effectiveness.</p>	4.0
<p>Look at this information and identify areas where improved collaboration may be of benefit; looking at all levels from cooperative projects to shared services to full merger. The Report should not be specific or prescriptive but merely identify the types of areas where closer working could be beneficial to the sector and individual organisations.</p>	4.0
<p>Include a contextual analysis of how other “issue focused” sectors are dealing with a reduction in government funding, and a contextual analysis of how other sectors (private and public) are dealing with the NI economic situation including local and central government and non-environmental NGOs, where this impinges significantly on the environmental sector. This should include the potential impacts of changing governance arrangements; in particular the Review of Public Administration, but given the uncertainties on the timescale of this it should be kept as ‘potential’ impacts.</p>	3.0
<p>The context of the NIEA’s stated aims and its priorities for the sector should also be analysed including an assessment of the ability of NHGP to fund new and innovative projects within the sector where little or no policy exists to support these, or they do not fall within the remit of their corporate objectives.</p>	3.0
<p>Identification of the key funding sources available to the eNGO sector and the need for financial support for eNGO activities which reach across Directorates within NIEA, across work in DoE and across government departments.</p>	3.0 & 6.0

2.0 METHODOLOGY

The project work plan follows:



2.1 Project Planning & Set Up

Following appointment, Envision attended a project planning and setup meeting with the steering group to confirm the following:

- Methodology
- Outputs
- List of environmental NGOs
- Topics to be addressed in the eNGO survey
- Planning of NIEL correspondence with eNGOs to inform them of the Study
- The approach to project consultees– including contact names and details

2.2 Review & Analysis of the Environmental NGO Sector in Northern Ireland / Mapping Exercise

As part of the mapping exercise a number of key tasks were carried out:

Questionnaire Development

- As an initial step in the questionnaire design process, Envision reviewed all relevant information on eNGOs held / provided by NIEL.
- A first-draft questionnaire was developed based on the terms of reference, and information received from NIEL. Initial review by NIEL resulted in a request that significant additions be made to the questionnaire – beyond the scale of the questionnaire, and the survey envisaged in the project proposal.

These additions were agreed by Envision, and incorporated into the questionnaire – this essentially provided a comprehensive audit of the eNGOs completing the questionnaire.

- The enlarged questionnaire was forwarded to the steering committee for final review and approval was received without modification. The questionnaire is included as Appendix V.

Survey Implementation

- Envision sent a personalised email directly to all 64 eNGO contacts in the sample agreed with NIEL. This email followed within days of an initial introductory message sent by NIEL. The questionnaire was attached to the cover email and recipients were offered 3 options:
 - Complete the document electronically and email back to Envision
 - Print the document, complete and fax back
 - Contact Envision to complete over the phone

A clear, realistic deadline was emphasised on the cover email.

- A reminder email was sent to the target contacts a number of days prior to the deadline.
- At deadline stage, any organisations which had not completed the document were contacted by telephone in order to maximise the response rates and strengthen the validity of the overall mapping exercise.

- Following email approach, a total of four rounds of telephone calls were made to those who did not initially respond. The length of the questionnaire (and the length of time required to complete it) were the main reasons cited by initial non-respondents.
- A further targeted round of phone calls were carried out - to specific eNGOs prioritised by Sue Christie. These specific eNGOs subsequently completed questionnaires with the support of Envision.
- In order to accommodate a small number of eNGOs a summary questionnaire was completed with them on the telephone, in order to secure their participation (and in recognition of the fact that they would not be in a position to complete the full questionnaire). This document requested responses on the areas agreed to be most important to the overall survey results. These eNGOs are highlighted with an asterisk below.

Sample

A total of 38 completed questionnaires were returned, combining full and summary questionnaires. This is a very strong representative sample which includes responses from the majority of key eNGOs, as follows:

- Action Renewables
- ARENA Network, Business in the Community
- Belfast Healthy Cities
- Belfast Hills Partnership
- British Council NI
- Bryson Recycling
- Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust
- Cavehill Conservation Campaign
- Chartered Inst for Environmental Health NI
- Colin Glen Trust
- Countryside Access & Activities Network
- Conservation Volunteers NI*
- Ecoseeds
- Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group NI
- Field Studies Centre
- Forest of Belfast
- Friends of the Earth
- Grass Roots Conservation Group
- Green Action
- Holywell Trust
- Lough Neagh Partnership
- Mourne Heritage Trust
- NI Cycling Initiative
- NI Energy Agency
- NI Environment Link
- National Trust
- RSPB*
- Rural Community Network*
- Speedwell Trust
- Sustainable NI
- The Rural College & Derrynoid Centre
- Tidy NI
- Ulster Angling Federation*
- Ulster Architectural Heritage Society
- Ulster Wildlife Trust
- Woodland Trust
- WWF NI
- WRAP NI *

*Summary questionnaire completed

Appendix IV contains full lists of the eNGOs that participated, and also those that did not participate in the study – the latter are broken down as follows:

1. eNGOs that Completed Questionnaires as part of the Study (38 organisations)
2. eNGOs that were not in a position to Complete a Questionnaire (13 organisations)
3. eNGOs that did not respond to requests to participate in the Study (13 organisations)

2.3 Completion of eNGO Mapping Exercise & Analysis

On completion of 38 questionnaires, Envision focused on mapping of the eNGO sector including analysis of:

- Key areas of overlap (potential or actual)
- Gaps in the services provided by organisations
- Opportunities for:
 - Improving efficiencies and effectiveness
 - Delivering economies of scale
 - Increasing the 'value for money' which the sector delivers to government and other funders in return for the funding it receives

Based on this mapping of the sector, Envision has been in a position to:

- Identify areas where improved collaboration may be of benefit to the sector; looking at all levels from cooperative projects to shared services to full merger.
- Identify the types of areas where closer working could be beneficial to the sector and individual organisations.

In addition to the above, a detailed analysis of how eNGOs contribute to Government objectives and targets and a complete funding analysis across all 38 eNGOs has been carried out.

The findings of this analysis are contained in sections 4.0, 5.0 and 6.0.

2.4 Consultee Engagement

As part of the contextual analysis for the study, 26 key informants across a series of government organisations / divisions / agencies (and identified as priority by Sue Christie) were identified for interview. These key informants were targeted by telephone, and one to one interviews completed.

The key informants were asked to provide views on the following issues:

- The current role of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) within their department / division / agency.
- The potential future role for NGOs within their department / division / agency – and the specific areas in which they anticipate NGOs may be involved within their department / division / agency.

Comprehensive feedback (on the areas above) was obtained from a total of 16 key informants.

The findings from this activity are compared with relevant responses from the eNGO research and this comparative analysis is contained in section 7.0.

2.5 Contextual Analysis

Envision has combined targeted, up-to-date desk research on the eNGO sector (as well as funding issues across the sector) with information gleaned from the key informant interviews detailed above to complete a comprehensive contextual analysis for the project.

The contextual analysis, in line with the terms of reference focuses specifically on:

- How other 'Issue focused' sectors are dealing with a reduction in Government funding
- How other sectors (private and public) are dealing with the NI economic situation
- Northern Ireland Environment Agency's (NIEA) stated aims and its priorities for the sector
- Natural Heritage Grant Programme's (NHGP) funding abilities / parameters

A number of key observations and recommendations for the sector have been developed - based on the findings of this contextual analysis combined with the findings from the eNGO mapping exercise. These recommendations are presented in section 9.0.

3.0 THE NI ENVIRONMENTAL NGO SECTOR – A CONTEXTUAL ANALYSIS

3.1 Introduction

As a result of the cuts announced in the Conservative - Liberal Democrat emergency Budget in May 2010, economists believe that a massive 20,000 public sector jobs in Northern Ireland are under threat. Northern Ireland is facing cuts of £128m in the current year – the region's share of the £6.2bn of savings set out in Chancellor George Osborne's emergency budget. The impact of these cuts will be significant for Northern Ireland, given the dependence of the economy on the public sector. The public sector accounts for 60% of the economy. Hundreds of thousands of private sector jobs rely on the public sector via contracts, and the spending power of public sector and its workers. It is expected that there will be 20% cuts over the next 4 years impacting on the public sector directly and on its funding for eNGOs.

The cuts announced to date for the Department of the Environment and its agencies within Northern Ireland, which arose from the decreased income for Planning Service as a result of the recession, have had significant impact on the Environmental NGO sector and its work in 2009/10 and it is anticipated that cuts arising from public spending cuts will continue to have impacts on the sector for some years into the future.

The eNGOs have fulfilled many roles in support of delivery of statutory obligations and government targets within and beyond the Department of the Environment. There are further opportunities for developing partnerships and cooperative delivery arrangements between government and eNGOs to the benefit of the environment and to deliver on government targets.

A strategic approach to future planning will allow the sector as a whole to survive, albeit potentially at a smaller overall scale, and continue to produce strong, efficient outputs. Without this strategic approach, the sector could well be under threat of severe decline and losing critical parts, and this will have negative consequences for the delivery of government outputs, and ultimately for the environment. This could be in the context of public sector spending cuts also reducing capacity to deliver within government.

The following presents a contextual analysis of the issues facing the eNGO sector in Northern Ireland by looking at how other sectors are responding to the current economic crisis and cuts in government funding.

The analysis covers the following areas:

- How other 'issue focused' sectors are dealing with the reduction in government funding.
- How other sectors (private and public) are dealing with the Northern Ireland economic situation including local and central government and non-environmental NGOs, where this impinges on or provides useful lessons for the environmental sector.
- The context of NIEA's stated aims and priorities for the sector, including an assessment of the ability of the Natural Heritage Grants Programme to fund new and innovative projects within the sector where current policy does not support these, or they do not fall within NIEA corporate objectives.

Each of the above areas is discussed in detail below.

3.2 Reaction of Other 'Issue focused' Sectors

'How other 'issue focused' sectors are dealing with the reduction in government funding'

In the current economic climate a number of other 'issue focused' sectors/organisations are also experiencing difficulties as a result of the reduction in government funding. Some of these sectors have already reacted to this by implementing new, more efficient processes as a means of reducing costs. A selection of these is detailed below:

The Third Sector - Voluntary & Community NI

In April 2010 NICVA (Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action) conducted a review (*Impact and Reaction of the Voluntary and Community Sector to the Recession in Northern Ireland*) to investigate how the impact of the recession was affecting organisations within the voluntary and community sector, and how these organisations were dealing with these effects.

This review presented a number of case studies which demonstrate that the voluntary and community sector is very alert to the dangers facing it, and that it is responding in a positive way, taking a number of difficult measures. Some indicative voluntary and community organisation responses include:

- Mencap has undertaken a number of actions across the organisation, including reducing variable spend through central procurement, establishing a shared service centre to reduce processing, attendance management and retention strategies, reducing the number of offices across the organisation by enabling remote working, working from home and organisational restructuring.
- For Co-operation Ireland the first impact was evidenced in a rapid reduction in corporate donations and sponsor support. Fundraising was heavily dependent on the larger banks and financial institutions and was effectively lost 'overnight'. In response, any new work being undertaken was done in collaboration with others or in partnerships and consortia which allowed for the development of hybrid programmes with innovative elements, shared learning from other organisations and the spread of risk. This has proven to be a very positive development. The biggest cost to the organisation within its own control is payroll, so vacant posts were not filled. A pay freeze was agreed with staff at the start of 2009 and mid year a voluntary reduction in hours was introduced. This action postponed the need to make posts redundant and had a positive impact on staff moral and security of employment - recognising and valuing staff commitment was critical and helped with staff retention and motivation.
- NICVA has developed a number of 'Collaboration and Merger Newsletters' which provide advice for organisations on the different levels of collaboration and how to manage these effectively. On 1 April 2010 the Volunteer Development Agency merged with 9 volunteer centres to form a new volunteering organisation called Volunteer Now. Volunteer Now combines the economies of being regional with the effectiveness of local delivery and will be in a position to significantly contribute to the delivery of the new Volunteering Strategy for Northern Ireland which is currently being developed.

The Third Sector in Sutherland

In May 2010 The Centre for Remote and Rural Studies interviewed 16 third sector organisations active in the Helmsdale area to add to current understanding of how the recession is impacting the sector. The following presents an overview of the findings:

- Potential cuts in funding – both public and from private foundations – are the main medium term impacts of the recession that these organisations are experiencing.
- As a response to this there is a growing culture of networking and mutual support among third sector organisations across Sutherland. This takes various forms:
 - ✓ Complementary working: organisations referring clients on to each other to assist with different types of needs simultaneously.
 - ✓ Pooling resources e.g. sharing training opportunities with other organisations.
 - ✓ Staff integration: people working in more than one organisation.

The study identified how these organisations are planning in advance to weather the storm of funding reductions and are succeeding.

The Sustainable Development Commission

It was announced in July 2010 that the Sustainable Development Commission will lose its core annual funding of £1.9 million from the Department for the Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) from April 2011. Defra has said the department will carry out the commission's functions in-house. The Commission receives the remainder of its income from the devolved governments of Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, which are expected to make individual arrangements for continuing the commission's work. It has an annual budget of £3 million and a remit that includes developing policy on sustainable construction and reporting on the environmental performance of existing buildings.

Defra's announcement came on the day the SDC published a report claiming its work saves the Government up to £70 million every year, and has the potential to save hundreds of millions more. Commenting on the UK Government's decision to end funding, the Head of the SDC in Northern Ireland said:

"We are deeply disappointed that the UK Government has decided to withdraw its funding from the Sustainable Development Commission. We believe, however, that there is still much for us to contribute here in Northern Ireland as trusted independent advisors to the Executive'.

Consortium with almost 900 charity members to bid for prime role in Work Programme

A Group led by 3SC and including Groundwork UK, the National Housing Federation and the Shaw Trust is to bid for contract work from the Department for Work and Pensions, as a means of generating funding. A consortium of charities will bid for a role as a prime contractor in the Work Programme, the employment programme provided by the Department for Work and Pensions. The group is led by 3SC, a bidding consortium that has almost 900 charity members. The other major partners involved in the bid are Groundwork UK, the umbrella body for environmental regeneration charities, the National Housing Federation, the umbrella body for housing associations, and the Shaw Trust, which specialises in finding employment for disabled people. 'We are fielding a strong consortium approach with other lead organisations to enable us to get as much funding to the front line in the most straightforward way," said Michael O'Toole, chief executive of 3SC. He said that 3SC had strengthened its offer to make it easier to meet the "challenging financial arrangements of the new contracting environment".

Summary

The examples detailed above demonstrate that other 'issue focused' sectors are actively making changes to their internal processes in order to offset the effect of reduced government funding in a number of ways. These are summarised below:

- Establishing shared service arrangements
- Organisational restructuring
- Remote working
- Pay freezes
- Voluntary reduction in hours
- Collaboration in work delivery
- Collaboration on funding bids
- Sharing staff
- Mergers

The organisations are still facing a tough economic future but are effectively putting the processes in place to deal with it.

3.3 Reaction of Statutory Bodies

'How other sectors (private and public) are dealing with the Northern Ireland economic situation including local and central government and non-environmental NGOs, where this impinges significantly on the environmental sector'

As a result of the recession there have been disproportionate cuts to date in the Department of the Environment and its agencies within Northern Ireland. These cuts have had significant impacts on the Environmental NGO sector in 2009/10 and it is anticipated that funding cuts will continue to have impacts on the sector into the future.

At the time of writing, there is a degree of budgetary re-allocation within the executive (based on the recovery of 'unallocated' funding from some departments, and hence, the extent to which cuts (current and future) will impact on the DOE and the NIEA (and in turn eNGOs) is unclear. However there will be a major announcement on funding for government (UK and NI) in October which will have a huge impact on the future of the whole sector and beyond.

It is fair to assume that these cuts will be extensive and that there will be increasing pressure on the sector to achieve increased efficiency while maintaining organisational effectiveness and the delivery of services focused on government targets.

The New Programme for Government

The Programme for Government is currently being revised for the period 2011-2014. This will be a major revision of the current programme for government and may not only have new financial targets but also may have specific changes in relation to programmes and targets that will impact on the DOE and the eNGO sector. This revised Programme for Government may be available in the Autumn of 2010. However, this may be an interim Programme for Government for a short period with a full, new, Programme for Government (probably for the period from April 2012) after the elections in May and the new Executive which will come into place after that.

The Review of Public Administration & Local Authorities

At the time of writing there is significant uncertainty in relation to the RPA and the Local Authority sector. However it is clear that no significant change will happen prior to May 2011, when elections are scheduled to take place within the existing council boundaries.

However it is likely that some aspects of RPA will be implemented - a new review of the status of RPA is expected from the Minister in the early autumn, and this will address key questions in relation to the structure and roles of councils, and the timing of any changes to be introduced. This will have an impact on environmental services delivered locally and it is very important when considering both the future funding of eNGOs, and the output that eNGOs may be expected to deliver.

The eNGOs should engage with Government in relation to this RPA re-evaluation as soon as decisions on its future are made.

DOE/NIEA

The Northern Ireland Environment Agency has undertaken a review of external funding which made four recommendations, which have been adopted by the board of the agency, but specific future action is still awaited. The recommendations are as follows:

1. There will be an NIEA external funding group
2. There will be an NIEA external funding support team
3. There will be an effort to identify and share information on funding
4. There is a recommendation to set up a sustainable development fund in Northern Ireland.

At this time these have been agreed by the directors but specific future action is still awaited.

The NIEA Natural Heritage is also reviewing its mechanism of support to outside organisations. It is unclear what the future of the NHGP will be in terms of format, application process, and funding priorities. It is intended that this will be announced in early 2011.

The Sustainable Development Strategy and its Implementation Plan

The Northern Ireland Sustainable Development Strategy was published in May of 2010 and its implementation plan is under consultation during Summer – Autumn 2010. It is not clear to what extent the Sustainable Development Strategy (and its implementation plan) will influence the priorities of Government in the preparation of the new Programme for Government.

However, it is hoped that it will be strongly integrated into the thinking of all Government departments as they develop their new programmes. There is a hope that it will provide a structural framework within which funding for all environmental programmes, initiatives and organisations can be taken forward.

The challenge for the sector is to actively work with Government to promote this approach, and to advocate that the Strategy should be reflected fully in the new Programme for Government.

There is no specific indication at present that there will be funding, however it is possible that NIEA's desire for a sustainable development fund could be integrated into the implementation

plan from the DOE, and become part of the Sustainable Development implementation over the coming or years.

Local Biodiversity Officers

Since 2004 local authorities, locally based wildlife organisations, business sectors and trusts have begun to employ Biodiversity Officers (helped by funding from Northern Ireland Environment Agency) and to develop Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs).

3.4 NIEAs Stated Aims & Priorities

'The context of NIEA's stated aims and its priorities for the sector including an assessment of the ability of the Natural Heritage Grants Programme to fund new and innovative projects within the sector where little or no policy exists to support these, or they do not fall within their corporate objectives'

The NIEA's 2010-2011 business plan states that the organisation aims to be recognised as the leading body responsible for protecting, conserving and promoting the environment and heritage in Northern Ireland and is working towards four long term environmental outcomes:

- The sustainable use and protection of our natural resources;
- Improved conservation and management of our natural heritage;
- Improved conservation and protection of our built heritage; and
- Better public awareness and understanding of the environment.

The organisation's key objectives for the period 2010-2011 are as follows:

- To lead the way in increasing understanding and appreciation of the environment and commitment to its protection and enhancement.
- To control pressures on the environment by fulfilling statutory and international obligations.
- To support the development of a sustainable NI economy.
- To provide an efficient and effective service to all our customers.

NIEA provides financial support to partners who contribute in full or part to the delivery of its objectives through grant aid, contracts and service level agreements.

Additional discussions with Susanna Allen (Assistant Director, Countryside and Coast), Maia Taylor (Grants Team Manager), Graham Seymour (Director of Natural Heritage) and Brian Williams (Assistant Director, Built Heritage Directorate) of the NIEA have indicated that that while historically the role of the eNGOs in Northern Ireland was to deliver projects of benefit to the environment, NIEA available budget to support this is becoming more restricted. The NIEA is keen for eNGOs to provide added value through attracting more funding, attracting volunteers and to reach niche areas that NIEA cannot reach.

With funding pressures, this may require eNGOs to adopt some of the survival strategies adopted by other issue based sectors noted earlier in this section.

Natural Heritage Grants Programme

Northern Ireland Environment Agency administers the Natural Heritage Grant Programme (NHGP) to:

Encourage the conservation and enhancement of key elements of the environment and its wildlife, and the provision of facilities which help as wide a range of people as possible to enjoy and appreciate our natural heritage.

Organisations can currently apply for a grant to support actions contributing to three Priority Themes:

- **Nature - Biodiversity and Geodiversity**
Conserving the diversity of wildlife, geology and landforms
- **Tomorrow's Landscapes**
Maintaining and improving the landscape quality of the countryside and supporting its sustainable management
- **Countryside Access**
Providing and promoting opportunities for sustainable access and countryside recreation

Grants are awarded for activities contributing to each of the priority themes within three Criteria:

- Site Action
- Awareness, Inspiration and Involving People
- Planning for the Future

The budget available for the NHGP is subject to change as a result of the financial challenges facing the public sector which means that 2010/11 and beyond will see increasing pressure on all departments as they seek to achieve their objectives and targets with more limited resources.

NIEA Natural Heritage is currently reviewing how it should provide financial support to partners in the future.

Discussions with NIEA have indicated that with the reduced funding they will be focusing on key priorities/objectives which meet legislative requirements with the projects they fund rather than funding projects that would be 'good' to do.

Additional NIEA Funding

NIEA also provide funding and grant aid in other areas including the Listed Building Grant Scheme, research and development and, research partnerships and contracts.

Other Funding Sources

There are a number of other funding options available to eNGOs in Northern Ireland, outside of what is available from NIEA.

The following presents an overview of the key funding sources available to the eNGO sector. This is explored further in section 6.0.

a. EU Programmes

There is potential funding for priority areas of environmental policy under EU Programmes. The current EU programmes most relevant to the environment are INTERREG IVA Programme (2007-2013), PEACE III, LIFE+ and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD). NIEA has investigated these thoroughly through its review of

external funding options. NIEA is hoping to investigate these possibilities further through a structured support team and funding group, which may facilitate improved access to these funds to eNGOs in the future. Having said this, some EU funding can be restricted to geographic area and therefore NI eNGOs may not be eligible to apply for them. There may also be capacity issue within the eNGOs in both applying for and monitoring such grants.

b. Government

Funds are available from a variety of government departments for environmental work. This can be through direct grant aid for environmental programmes / projects, or through work such as is carried out under the Rural Development Programme, the Woodland Grant Scheme or the Environmentally Sensitive Areas Programme of DARD. An integrated approach across all government departments is highly desirable with integration of goals and techniques and procedures for funding so that eNGOs can easily avail of information on what funding there is available and how to apply for it and how it will integrate with existing aspects of funding which they receive from other sources including DOE or NIEA.

One way of achieving this would be to develop an information portal which details all available funding sources and provides information for organisations on how to apply for these. Support and coordination is needed for organisations to identify, work together and access funding.

c. The Lottery

The main aspects of the lottery which are available for environmental work include the Heritage Lottery Fund, the Big Lottery Fund and Awards for All. These have varying aims and sizes of awards, targeted at different types of organisations, but there is significant uptake already by eNGOs for environmental work from the lottery and this can continue (and is likely to expand over the coming years).

d. Private Sector Sponsorship

It is relatively difficult to access private sponsorship as it takes significant time and effort on the part of organisations to develop programmes that are acceptable and attractive to the private sector. However there is still funding available in the private sector which can deliver environmental benefits and eNGOs are becoming increasingly keen to identify ways to deliver environmental outputs while also meeting the needs of corporate donors or sponsors. This is particularly relevant to the green technologies, clean technologies, waste, and renewable energy sectors.

There are however problems of green washing and the potential of tarnishing the independence of an eNGO image with regard to accessing commercial sponsorship. There is also the risk of low financial return for the significant time and effort which goes into private sponsorship. This area does however offer significant potential for the future.

e. Charities & Trusts

These areas have long been significant providers of environmental funding for eNGOs and will continue to be so although in many cases the amounts available from trusts are decreasing due to the global financial situation and increased competition.

f. Membership & Voluntary Donations

eNGOs can also access additional funding through membership and other voluntary donations.

3.5 Summary

Recent and proposed cuts in government funding have necessitated urgent action at all levels of government. The impact on the DoE, the NIEA and the environmental NGOs funded to assist government in delivering its environmental work has been particularly severe.

Discussions with the NIEA have indicated that while historically the role of the eNGOs in Northern Ireland was to deliver projects of benefit to the environment, NIEA available budget to support this is becoming more restricted. The NIEA is keen for eNGOs to provide added value through attracting more funding, attracting volunteers and to reach niche areas that NIEA can't reach.

NIEA has indicated that with the reduced funding they will be focusing on key priorities/objectives which meet legislative requirements, rather than funding projects that would be 'good' to do.

There are however a number of other funding options available to eNGOs in Northern Ireland, outside of what is available from NIEA, though all require significant time commitment. They may also require more collaboration than is currently the case.

In the meantime, organisations need to focus on cost savings – based on the modes adopted in other issue based sectors. This in turn is likely to require a combination of commitment and compromise on the part of eNGOs. There also needs to be support for organisations to identify and access funding.

Research into how other 'issue focused' sectors are responding to cuts in government funding has identified a number of potential options for eNGOs as a means of reducing costs. These are listed below:

- Establishing shared service arrangements
- Organisational restructuring
- Remote working
- Pay freezes
- Voluntary reduction in hours
- Complementary working
- Collaboration in work delivery
- Collaboration on funding bids
- Mergers

These processes have been successfully implemented by similar organisations in other parts of the United Kingdom as a reaction to the current economic climate and should therefore be considered by Northern Ireland eNGOs going forward.

4.0 PROFILE / MAP OF THE eNGO SECTOR

4.1 Introduction

The Terms of Reference stated that one of the key aims of the Study is to complete “a full ‘mapping exercise’ of the eNGO sector ... as a first step in the process of supporting the sector through the next five years.” The mapping exercise was based on a strong sample of 38 eNGOs operating in Northern Ireland – and the analysis of information provided by those 38 organisations in relation to:

- ✓ Remit (Geographical and Thematic)
- ✓ Status (local, regional, UK branch etc)
- ✓ Role
- ✓ Expertise/ specialisms
- ✓ Activities
- ✓ Resources / staffing complement
- ✓ Commercial activities
- ✓ Assets
- ✓ Funding models and sources
- ✓ Support services

Appendices I & II present a profile of the 38 respondent eNGOs focusing on the following:

General Profiling Information

- Geographical coverage
- Thematic coverage
- Organisation status
- Key areas of activity
- Employees
- Assets

Objectives and Activities

- Core objectives
- Short, medium and long-term activities planned to meet objectives
- Organisational role and responsibilities
- Specific areas of expertise
- Barriers to achieving objectives
- Current live projects / activities

Whilst the profiles are initially appended individually, subsequent paragraphs of this report provide an analysis of this profile information – to identify potential areas of complementary activity, and potential overlap.

The analysis of ‘funding models and sources’ as well as ‘support services’ (an additional requirement from the Terms of Reference) is provided in Section 5 of the report.

Based on the information received across all 38 eNGOs, it is possible to:

- Identify key areas of overlap amongst eNGOs in NI
- Identify gaps in the activities of eNGOs
- Identify opportunities for:
 - Improving efficiencies and effectiveness
 - Delivering economies of scale
 - Increasing the 'value for money' which the sector delivers to government in return for the funding it receives
- Identify areas where improved collaboration may be of benefit to the sector; looking at all levels from cooperative projects to shared services to full merger.
- Identify the types of areas where closer working could be beneficial to the sector and individual organisations.

This section of the report is broken into two parts:

- i. Detailed collation and analysis of the findings from the various elements of the mapping exercise (Section 4.2).
- ii. Summary of the clear gaps, overlaps and opportunities for the eNGO sector (Section 4.3).

Prior to presentation of this analysis, a number of important observations are set out:

- All analysis carried out and recommendations made in relation to the future of the eNGO sector also draw on the findings of the contextual analysis (section 3.0).
- The mapping of the sector, and the assessment of areas of overlap and complementary activity is based on two major dimensions:
 - The key areas of activity that eNGOs report being involved in;
 - The themes (or environmental areas of interest) pursued by the eNGOs;
- These 'key areas of activity' and 'themes' were reported by eNGOs themselves as part of the survey.
- It is undoubtedly the case that some eNGOs may be involved in activities for which they have not been given full credit. However it should be noted that:
 - eNGOs themselves provided information on activities and themes provided here; and
 - The information provided by the respondents has already provided evidence in relation to 'areas of complementary activity' and overlap. The extension of this exercise to include other potential areas of activity and themes (for which organisations may not be given full credit) would just serve to add further weight to the argument presented in relation to overlap.

4.2 Key Findings from the eNGO Mapping Exercise

4.2.1 Introduction

The following sections provide a complete analysis of the geographic coverage, organisation status (e.g locally run, regional affiliate of UK organisation), thematic coverage, key activities, staffing and assets across the 38 eNGO respondents. Trends and broad findings within each area are identified through the analysis and are presented below.

4.2.2 Geographic Coverage

All 38 eNGOs indicated the geographic coverage / scope of their activities – table 4a below presents the findings across all respondents:

Table 4a: Geographic Coverage of eNGOs		
Geographic Area Covered	Number of Organisations	Specific organisations
NI Wide	14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ecoseds • NI Cycling Initiative • NI Environment Link • Tidy NI • Ulster Wildlife Trust • WWF NI • Sustainable NI • Countryside Access & Activities Network (CAAN) • ARENA Network, Business in the Community • Bryson Recycling • NI Energy Agency • Ulster Angling Federation • Rural Community Network • Conservation Volunteers NI
Belfast only	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast Healthy Cities • Cavehill Conservation Campaign • Colin Glen Trust • Forest of Belfast
Specific NI Area Covered	7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belfast Hills Partnership (Belfast; Lisburn; N'abbey, Antrim) • Holywell Trust (Derry; Cross Border) • Lough Neagh Partnership (Lough Neagh) • Mourne Heritage Trust (Mournes) • Grass Roots Conservation Group (Belfast and surrounding areas) • Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust (Causeway Coast & Glens) • Speedwell Trust (West of Bann / mid-Ulster)
Ulster wide	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ulster Architectural Heritage Society
Ireland wide*	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Action Renewables • Chartered Institute for Environmental Health NI • The Rural College & Derrynoid Centre • Field Studies Centre • WRAP NI
UK wide*	8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WRAP NI • The Rural College & Derrynoid Centre • Action Renewables • Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group NI • National Trust • Woodland Trust • British Council NI • Green Action
Worldwide	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RSPB • Friends of the Earth
Total	41*	

*3 organisations cover UK & ROI

The largest proportion of eNGOs (25 or 66%) operate solely in Northern Ireland whilst a group of 16 organisations operate in NI as well as other countries / regions.

With a significant number of eNGOs focusing solely on environmental activities in NI, decision-making and overall strategic direction of these organisations is determined within the region.

However, with the number and scope of organisations operating both in NI and other geographic regions, this group of eNGOs is also crucially important to the environmental sector in NI, but strategic control is not entirely within NI. This does not, however mean that these organisations cannot be part of a meaningful debate on the future structure of the sector – these organisations will be subject to the same financial and developmental pressures in other regions of the UK, Ireland, and internationally - hence are likely to be open to meaningful discussions on the future of the sector.

4.2.3 Organisation Status

In order to assist the eNGO mapping process, organisations were asked to identify whether they are:

- Locally run & autonomous
- The regional affiliate of a UK / wider organisation
- The NI branch of a larger UK / global organisation

Table 4b below provides a summary of the responses across all 38 organisations:

Table 4b: eNGOs in Northern Ireland - Local versus External Autonomy	
Organisation Status	Number of Organisations
Locally run & autonomous	26
The NI branch of a larger UK / global organisation	8
The regional affiliate of a UK / wider organisation	4
Total	38

The vast majority of participating eNGOs (26) are “locally run and autonomous” organisations. In addition:

- Eight organisations are local branches of larger UK / global organisations.
- Four organisations categorise themselves as regional affiliates of UK / wider organisation.

This broadly reflects the geographic coverage figures and reinforces the fact that a significant proportion of eNGOs – 68% - make decisions locally. Most of the larger eNGOs (for example National Trust, RSPB, WWF) with considerable support and resources are branches of UK / international organisations that have specific objectives and roles in NI.

Table 4c below presents further details of organisation type in relation to whether they have ‘Limited by Guarantee’ and/or ‘charity’ status.

Table 4c: eNGOs in Northern Ireland - Organisation Type	
Organisation Status	Number of Organisations
Both a Company Limited by Guarantee and a Charity	17
Charity	8
Company Limited by Guarantee	7
Other status	6
Total	38

The largest proportion of organisations (17) are both ‘company limited by guarantee’ and ‘charity’. There is also a split between the organisations that describe themselves as a charity (8) and those that operate as a ‘limited company’ (7).

This is relevant as a charity can only get involved in the activities it is permitted to do by its objects and powers. However a charitable company can set up a trading arm by creating a wholly owned subsidiary which is a private limited company, and which can make a profit.

There is a key funding-related advantage (in practical terms) for companies limited by guarantee. A company is governed by the requirements of the Companies Act (either the 1985 or the 2006 Acts). This gives a readily accepted and understood legal framework for governing the Company, one that Grant giving bodies know and understand. Currently it is easier for Companies Limited by Guarantee to attract certain types of funding, such as Lottery Board Funding.

This raises one of a number of important issues in relation organisational / legal structure, and Governance structures – these strongly influence:

- (i) The ability of organisations to target new funding;
- (ii) The facilitation of collaboration between organisations: and the degree of flexibility (or rigidity) involved in different organisational / legal structures;

This of course is influenced not only by the legal structure of the organisation, but also:

- The views of the membership in relation to core mission and objectives, Vs the pragmatism that may be required in some instances to facilitate longer term viability;
 - The specific memorandum / articles / constitution of the organisations concerned, and the extent to which these may be flexible – to reflect a changing market, a changing regulatory environment, and / or a changing financial environment.
- (iii) Organisational ability (at board level, and at management level) to manage new challenges – such as the identification of new funding channels, more complex financial management / reporting, bid preparation, increased liaison with complementary organisations (ranging from one-off project cooperation through to more enduring and more complex joint ventures).

These issues are addressed further later in this report.

4.2.4 Staffing & Assets

Appendices I.5 and I.6 detail the responses from all 38 eNGOs regarding staffing levels and current assets. The key observations are as follows:

- eNGOs manage significant areas of land. In total, four eNGOs specified the level of land owned. Of these four organisations a total of over 30,000 acres of land is owned. The maintenance and use of this land relies on the levels of funding received.
- 22 buildings are owned by the responding eNGOs across NI, with an additional 300 owned by the National Trust.
- In relation to staffing, there are approximately 720 full-time employees within the participating eNGOs. Staff roles include: policy; conservation; education; management; administration / support and visitor services.

eNGOs operate an important role in managing and maintaining land as well as acting as a significant employer within Northern Ireland as a whole.

4.2.5 Key Areas of Activity

An important aspect of the Study was to identify what eNGOs reported as their key areas of activity and to identify potential areas of overlap and opportunity within this. Each organisation was asked to identify the activities they are involved in across eight broad categories. Table 4d below highlights the activities that are covered by eNGOs in NI:

Activity	Number of Organisations
Policy development	21
Campaigning / lobbying	20
Education	19
Volunteering	18
Research	15
Training	14
Practical conservation	12
Funding	6

Some organisations specialise in a small number of activities, whereas others are engaged in a broad range of pursuits.

From the findings presented above, it is apparent that policy development, campaigning / lobbying and education are particularly common areas of focus for eNGOs in NI.

Volunteering, research, training and practical conservation are also important areas of activity for eNGOs in the NI

It is worth noting that a number of organisations indicated their involvement in five or more key activities. These organisations include:

- RSPB
- Belfast Hills Partnership
- Woodland Trust
- Countryside Access & Activities Network
- Ulster Wildlife Trust
- Rural Community Network
- Friends of the Earth
- Tidy NI
- National Trust
- British Council NI
- Action Renewables
- NI Environment Link

On the other hand, there are some organisations that have indicated a focus on one or two activities, including:

- Ecoseeds
- NI Cycling Initiative
- Grass Roots Conservation Group
- WWF NI
- Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group
- Green Action
- Sustainable NI
- Speedwell Trust
- Holywell Trust
- Field Studies Centre
- NI Energy Agency
- Bryson Recycling
- WRAP NI

As indicated earlier in this section, it may be the case that some eNGOs are involved in other activities for which they have not been given full credit. However it should be noted that eNGOs themselves provided the information on activities provided here.

Table 4e provides a 'map' of the activities undertaken by respondent eNGOs. This table clearly outlines the areas of overlap / complementary activity between organisations.

The possible extension of this exercise to include any other potential areas of activity (for which organisations may not be given full credit) would serve to add further to the identification of potential areas of overlap and complementary activity.

Table 4e: Key Areas of Activity by eNGO										Total No. Key Activities by eNGO
Organisation	Campaigning /Lobbying	Policy development	Funding	Training	Volunteering	Research	Practical Conservation	Education	Other	
Action Renewables	X		X		X		X			4
ARENA Network, Business in the Community	X	X		X				X		4
Belfast Healthy Cities		X		X		X			Inter-sectoral action	4
Belfast Hills Partnership	X				X	X	X		Development & community planning	5
British Council NI		X		X	X	X		X	Cultural relations nationwide	6
Bryson Recycling					X				Direct service delivery for govt	2
Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust	X	X						X	AONB / sustainable devtment management	4
Cavehill Conservation Campaign	X				X		X			3
Chartered Inst. for Environmental Health NI		X		X				X		3
Colin Glen Trust				X	X			X	Social economy	4
Conservation Volunteers NI				X	X		X	X		4
Countryside Access & Activities Network		X	X	X	X	X		X	Product development, info & marketing	7
Ecoseeds						X	X		Community engagement	3
Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group NI							X			1
Field Studies Centre		X		X				X		3
Forest of Belfast	X	X				X		X		4
Friends of the Earth	X	X			X	X			Activism	5
Grass Roots Conservation Group					X		X			2
Green Action	X									1
Holywell Trust									Community dev'tment & peace building	1
Lough Neagh Partnership		X	X				X			3
Mourne Heritage Trust		X			X		X		Visitor management	4
National Trust	X	X			X	X	X	X	Direct management of land & historic buildings	7
NI Cycling Initiative	X	X								2
NI Energy Agency				X					Installation and promotion of energy efficiency and microgeneration	2
NI Environment Link	X	X						X	Networking, information provision	4
Rural Community Network	X	X		X	X	X			Community development	6
RSPB	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		8
Speedwell Trust								X		1
Sustainable NI						X			Practical help for sustainable development	2
The Rural College & Derrynoid Centre	X			X				X	Rural & community development	4
Tidy NI	X	X		X	X	X		X		6
Ulster Angling Federation	X	X			X	X		X		5
Ulster Architectural Heritage Society	X					X		X	Publishing, organising lectures & visits	4
Ulster Wildlife Trust	X	X	X		X		X	X		6
Woodland Trust	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		7
WRAP NI				X						1
WWF NI	X	X								2
Total Number of eNGOs	20	21	6	14	18	15	12	19	18	

4.2.6 Thematic Coverage of NI eNGOs

Each of the eNGOs were asked to identify the various themes covered by their activities and operations. The most common themes selected by eNGOs in NI are displayed in table 4f below. A number of key themes are represented widely in NI. The most common eNGO themes are:

- Biodiversity / wildlife
- Nature conservation
- Education
- Sustainable development
- Legislation & policy

Theme	Number of Organisations
Biodiversity / wildlife	19
Nature conservation	17
Education	16
Sustainable development	16
Legislation & policy	14
Landscape / ecosystems	13
Climate change	12
Countryside Access, Recreation, Tourism	12
Rural development	12
Trees & Forestry	12
Community development	11
Energy / renewable energy	11
Planning	11
Built / cultural heritage	10
Agriculture	9
Freshwater and wetlands	9
Waste / resource management	9
Marine / coastal	8
Transport	7

There are a number of environmental themes that are covered to a much lesser extent in NI - according to the survey findings – including the following:

Theme	Number of Organisations
Food	6
Health	6
Pollution	6
Fish / fisheries	5
Local environmental quality	4
Environmental health	4
Business environmental performance	4

Some themes in table 4g above are fairly specialist; hence the need for numerous organisations delivering on them is not necessary.

Despite organisations identifying and selecting a range of interests or themes, most tend to have a particular specialist theme or area of interest, or a distinct geographic focus.

It is worth noting that a number of organisations indicated their involvement in 10 or more themes. These organisations include:

- National Trust
- WWF NI
- Belfast Hills Partnership
- Causeway Coast & Glens Heritage Trust
- RSPB
- Colin Glen Trust
- ARENA Network
- Action Renewables
- Tidy NI
- NI Environment Link
- Friends of the Earth

On the other hand, there are some organisations that have indicated a focus on up to three activities, including:

- Grass Roots Conservation Group
- Field Studies Centre
- Speedwell Trust
- Holywell Trust
- Forest of Belfast
- NI Energy Agency
- Chartered Institute of Environmental Health NI
- Bryson Recycling
- WRAP NI
- Green Action

The above analysis clearly indicates that there are significant reported areas of overlap between eNGOs in Northern Ireland in terms of thematic coverage. Table 4h below details a 'map' of the themes covered by individual eNGO, and the areas of overlap.

Table 4h: Thematic Coverage of eNGOs

Organisation	Agriculture Biodiversity /wildlife	Built/ Cultural Her	Business Environ. Performance	Nature conservation	Climate change	Community Development	Countryside, Access, Recreation, Tourism	Education	Energy / Renewable Energy	Environmental Health	Fish / Fisheries	Food	Freshwater & Wetlands	Health Legislation & Policy	Local Environmental Quality	Marine & Coastal	Planning	Pollution	Landscape /Ecosystems	Rural Dev'tment	Sust Dev'tment	Transport	Trees & Forestry	Waste / Resources M'tment	Total No. Themes by eNGO	
Action Renewables		X		X	X		X	X					X						X	X	X	X	X		10	
ARENA Network	X		X			X		X	X					X	X			X			X	X		X	12	
Belfast Healthy Cities					X								X				X					X			4	
Belfast Hills Partnership	X	X	X		X		X		X								X		X	X				X	10	
British Council NI		X			X	X		X									X				X				6	
Bryson Recycling																								X	1	
Causeway Coast & Glens Her. Trust	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	22	
Cavehill Conserv. Campaign		X		X															X				X		4	
Chartered Inst. for Env'l Health NI														X											1	
Colin Glen Trust	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X										X		X		X		11	
Conservation Volunteers NI	X			X				X					X								X		X		6	
C'side Access & Activities Network						X	X	X					X	X						X					6	
Ecoseeds		X		X		X		X											X						5	
Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group	X	X							X			X													4	
Field Studies Centre		X						X														X			3	
Forest of Belfast																							X		1	
Friends of the Earth			X	X				X						X		X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	11	
Grass Roots Conservation Group		X		X																			X		3	
Green Action																	X					X			2	
Holywell Trust						X																			1	
Lough Neagh Partnership	X	X	X				X					X								X					6	
Mourne Heritage Trust		X	X	X			X						X		X				X	X			X		9	
National Trust	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	16	
NI Cycling Initiative					X					X											X	X			4	
NI Energy Agency								X																	1	
NI Environment Link	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	21	
RSPB	X	X		X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	18	
Rural Community Network						X								X						X					3	
Speedwell Trust		X						X																	2	
Sustainable NI					X				X	X				X							X			X	6	
The Rural College & Derrynoid Ctre						X		X												X	X				4	
Tidy NI			X		X	X	X	X	X			X		X	X	X					X	X		X	13	
Ulster Angling Federation		X		X							X	X						X							5	
Ulster Architectural Heritage Soc			X											X			X				X				4	
Ulster Wildlife Trust	X	X		X							X	X		X		X	X		X						9	
Woodland Trust				X	X		X			X				X				X					X		8	
WRAP NI																								X	1	
WWF NI	X	X		X					X		X	X	X			X				X	X				10	
Total	9	19	10	4	17	12	11	12	16	11	4	5	6	9	6	14	4	8	11	6	13	12	16	7	12	9

4.2.7 eNGOs by Core Objective / Key Theme

In addition to key activities and themes, eNGOs were asked to identify core objectives – as well as short, medium and long-term activities. This section groups eNGOs by core objective – as indicated within the returned questionnaires and the organisation’s websites. The core objectives by individual organisation are detailed in Appendix II.

Based on this assessment of core objectives across all 38 eNGOs, there are a total of 17 common themes in terms of environmental focus areas (see Table 4i).

Table 4i: Core Objective Theme across all 38 eNGOs			
Core Objective	eNGOs	Core Objective	eNGOs
1. Biodiversity, preservation, conservation and promotion of sustainability in areas of natural beauty, built heritage <u>across NI</u> .	4	9. Lobby / inform businesses on environmental issues	1
2. Biodiversity, preservation, conservation and promotion of sustainable development in areas of natural beauty, built heritage in <u>specific NI areas</u> .	6	10. Lobby / inform Government, general public and business on energy-related issues	2
3. Biodiversity, preservation, conservation and promotion of <u>specific plants/flowers</u> across NI.	1	11. Environmental health	3
4. Sustainable development	1	12. Recycling	2
5. Wildlife / species	2	13. Environmental campaigning	2
6. Environmental education – All Environmental education - Children & young people	2	14. Transport	1
7. Community development – specific region / sector; Cultural relations	3	15. Angling	1
8. Countryside / rural development Trees & woodland Environmental practice amongst Farmers	6	16. Sector strategy & direction	1
		17. Rivers	1

There are clearly common core objective themes between the 38 eNGOs that participated in the Study. The information in the table 4i above illustrates that there are parallels in relation to key activities, thematic coverage and core objectives between organisations.

Appendix II provides a top-level analysis of common goals and objectives of eNGOs based on the core objectives, roles and responsibilities specified by each organisation.

Although this analysis provides a potential methodology for identifying collaborative opportunities within the sector in the future, it does not take into account all areas of eNGO activity. There may be links between organisations in different thematic groups, for example, involvement in environmental education or community development may not be a core objective for an organisation, however, organisations across numerous thematic groups do focus on these activities.

4.3 Summary of Gaps, Overlaps and Opportunities

4.3.1 Introduction

The aims of the profiling / mapping exercise were to:

- Identify key areas of overlap (potential or actual)
- Identify gaps in the activities of eNGOs
- Identification of opportunities for:
 - Improving efficiencies and effectiveness
 - Delivering economies of scale
 - Increasing the 'value for money' which the sector delivers to government in return for the funding it receives
- Identify areas where improved collaboration (from co-operative projects to shared services to full mergers) may be of benefit to the sector;
- Identify the types of areas where closer working could be beneficial to the sector and individual organisations.

These areas of overlap and opportunity have been addressed within the previous subsections (and through Appendices I, II and III), without being directive or specific in relation to specific organisations, or in relation to any specific measures to be taken (as per the Steering Committee instructions at the project presentation and set-up meeting).

The summary below reinforces the key findings and suggestions for adding value to the sector and maximising opportunities.

4.3.2 Summary Findings of eNGO Mapping Exercise

- 38 eNGOs employ over 720 full-time staff members.
- 30,000 acres of land is owned by four eNGOs. In addition, 22 buildings are owned by the responding eNGOs across NI, with an additional 300 owned by the National Trust.
- The largest proportion of eNGOs (25 or 66%) operate solely in Northern Ireland.
- The vast majority of participating eNGOs are "locally run and autonomous" organisations.
- Most eNGOs that took part on the Study are "company limited by guarantee with charitable status."
- Policy development, campaigning / lobbying and education are particularly common areas of focus for eNGOs in NI.
- Research, volunteering, practical conservation and training are also common areas of activity for eNGOs.
- A number of organisations indicated their involvement in five or more key activities – providing an insight into potential levels of overlap.

- A number of key themes are represented very well in NI, the most common being:
 - Biodiversity / wildlife
 - Nature conservation
 - Education
 - Sustainable development
 - Legislation & policy
- Themes that are covered by slightly fewer eNGOs are:
 - Agriculture
 - Built/cultural heritage
 - Freshwater and wetlands
 - Waste/resources management
 - Transport
 - Marine and coastal
- However, there are a number of environmental themes that are covered to a much lesser extent in NI - including:
 - Local environmental quality
 - Business environmental performance
 - Environmental health
 - Fish / fisheries
 - Health
 - Pollution

The promotion of support around these themes may be required in order to prevent gaps from emerging within them. However, it is worth noting that some of these areas are specialist, hence it may not be necessary to have numerous organisations operating within them.

4.3.3 Common Themes / Overlaps / Potential Co-operation Areas

Based on the detailed profiling and analysis of the 38 eNGOs, a series of common / shared themes have been identified.

The key observations and suggested next steps are summarised as follows:

- There are clear overlaps in eNGO activity areas, common objectives and similar areas of activity.
- Clearly the potential for overlapping is stronger amongst organisations within particular themes, however, there is also more potential scope for co-operation and shared services in these groups.
- There are also levels of potential overlap between organisations that are focused on different themes, for example, Sustainable NI is focused on the promotion of sustainable development in NI which is also an aspect of the workings of many biodiversity, preservation, and conservation-focused organisations.
- Despite the fact that the vast majority of participating eNGOs are “locally run and autonomous” organisations, it is important for NI-based organisations to open links with UK / global organisations operating within a similar remit. Such links between locally focused and national/global organisations can be maximised through dialogue and increased collaboration to reduce overlap.

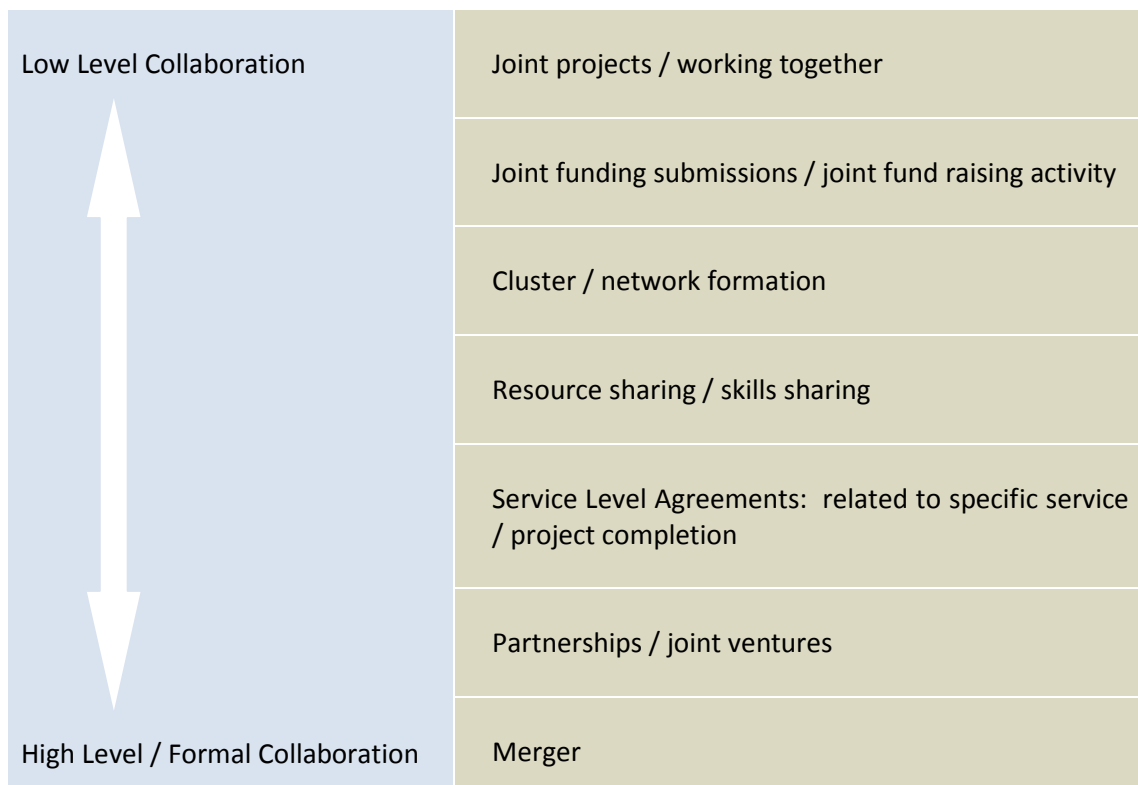
- Organisations have their own remits, however, in some cases, ‘pooled’ or shared resources would be beneficial in, for example, developing policies, campaigning/ lobbying, volunteering. This is possibly more achievable where there is local autonomy of all organisations.
- A collective approach to specific areas of remit is likely to benefit both organisations and the sector as a whole, hence, for example locally run organisations within certain themes can assess their medium and longer term objectives in parallel to avoid overlap and improve capabilities and efficiencies.
- In addition, organisations may consider working in partnership / collaboration to identify potential alliances / links that may create opportunities for each organisation, for example, in terms of the maximisation of funding.
- The sharing of contacts / information and knowledge will undoubtedly be of increasing mutual benefit for organisations with common goals.
- Relationships should be promoted or facilitated where a number of organisations are concentrated on a particular theme and have shared roles, however, are restricted by barriers such as lack of local autonomy.

4.4 The Challenge & Opportunity of Collaboration

4.4.1 Forms of Collaboration

Collaborative arrangements between eNGOs can take many forms, and indeed can evolve from ‘lighter’ forms of collaboration through to more structured or formal collaborative arrangements.

Options in the eNGO sector include the following:



Lower level collaborative arrangements will tend to be time-limited, and involve a significantly lower level of perceived risk for eNGOs all of which will have their own specific objectives.

4.4.2 Risks of Collaboration

Collaboration can involve a number of risks for eNGOs including:

- Loss of brand identity and associated membership and volunteering;
- Loss of membership income - there could be a loss of income to the sector from membership if organisations merge or lose their distinct identity;
- The investment of significant management time – and the risk that outcomes do not (if not successful) justify the time invested;
- The loss of focus on core objectives / themes – and resultant mission creep;
- A clash of objectives and / or of cultures – and the resultant consumption of management time in managing ‘non-core’ issues.
- A loss of flexibility – arising from the introduction of more complex management and / or governance structures – due to the need to report to a collaborative / Joint Venture partner, in addition to the eNGOs own Board.
- A future danger is that fewer organisations produce a less robust sector – the loss of one much larger, merged organisation would have a much greater impact on the sector than the loss of a smaller organisation.

These potential risks do, of course need to be balanced with the ultimate risk – that of a potential loss of financial viability, due to the reduction in funding available to the sector.

On the positive side, it must also be recognised that collaboration between eNGOs can involve a number of positive benefits:

- Financial savings;
- Sharing of expertise;
- Sharing (reduction) of risk;
- Better co-ordination of activities across organisations – particularly within common interest areas;
- The presentation of a more coherent voice to Government;
- A reduction in duplication – real or perceived;
- The provision of a wider range services for the specific eNGOs ‘constituency’.

4.4.3 Management of Collaboration

Any potential collaboration will involve management challenges in the eNGO sector, on two levels:

- (i) The **skills and experience** required to successfully:
 - a. identify collaborative opportunities;
 - b. open, progress, and conclude negotiations on collaborative arrangements – from low level to high level collaboration
 - c. implement and manage collaborative relationships

- (ii) The **management time** commitment required in relation to (a) to (c) above.

This must be added to the emerging skills challenges being faced by eNGO in relation to bid management (for new funding sources), audit and financial reporting, marketing etc.

These new management challenges can only be embraced effectively if the Governance / Board structures of eNGOs:

- Involve people with a range of skills and experience that reflect the new challenges emerging;
- Provide the flexibility required to balance core objectives / themes, with the need to develop a viable 'business model'.

Hence, eNGO may need to review governance structures and management structures in the light of new emerging challenges.

4.4.4 Supporting the Management Challenge

In order to help the eNGO sector begin to address the challenges currently faced, it is recommended that a comprehensive training needs assessment and skills review be undertaken – recognising that the assessment of skills suitability must be viewed in relation to the changing environment.

This review / assessment should span both management and board levels.

4.4.5 Fostering of Collaboration

While some eNGOs have the capacity to initiate collaboration themselves, others may benefit from support. In line with the points above is the need for a suitable body that can further assess common ground, overlaps and collaborative opportunities identified amongst eNGOs based on closer examination of staff resources, current assets and specific objectives. Such a body will, ideally, be fully equipped to:

- Establish correct "fit" amongst the organisations

- Facilitate discussions regarding the way forward
- Facilitate the development of partnerships and collaborations

The details in this section of the report and appendices I, II and III will be crucial for this purpose.

Ultimately, the foundations for this exercise have been provided through the information gathered, hence it is up to the sector itself to take the information provided to the next stage in order to identify and plan specifically for accelerating collaboration and improving closer working.

In addition, it should be noted that there are potential opportunities for local councils to take on wider remits in partnership with eNGOs. For example, AONB management has been delivered through local councils applying for and being offered funding for an AONB officer.

Based on the findings presented in Section 4.0, there is an appetite amongst eNGOs for further co-operation and collaboration based on acknowledgement of need and to make the sector even more efficient, providing increased value for money.

Further detailed analysis of eNGO funding, funding sources as well as the 'value for money' which the sector delivers to government in return for the funding it receives is documented in the following sections of the report.

5.0 eNGOs & GOVERNMENT OBJECTIVES

5.1 Introduction

The eNGO sector in NI is committed to increasing the ‘value for money’ which it delivers to government in return for the funding it receives. In current economic circumstances the sector is determined to remain vibrant and diverse, contributing directly to government goals and targets.

The eNGO sector in NI continually aims to:

- Deliver high levels of outputs relative to the amount of money invested.
- Leverage large amounts of money from outside (e.g. lottery funds, European funding, business sponsorship, private donations, trusts or foundations), in comparison to what government invests. Frequently this non-government funding is from sources unavailable to government.
- Respond rapidly to changing needs and demands.

The eNGOs have fulfilled many roles in support of government targets both within and beyond the Department of the Environment. The current extent of this as well as the relationships between eNGOs and Government is examined in this section of the report.

Through the extensive survey of eNGOs carried out, the Study was successful in capturing responses (from a significant sample of eNGOs) in relation to the following aspects of eNGO relations with Government:

- Proportion of eNGO work which contributes to specific Government objectives
- Specific government objectives which eNGO activities contribute to
- Types and Level of Government funding received by eNGOs
- The extent to which Government funding covers the cost of eNGO delivery
- eNGO delivery / administration of grant programmes for Government & other Bodies
- Identification of Government grant programmes
- Non-eNGO delivery - the impact on central and local Government
- Non-environmental outputs delivered by eNGOs

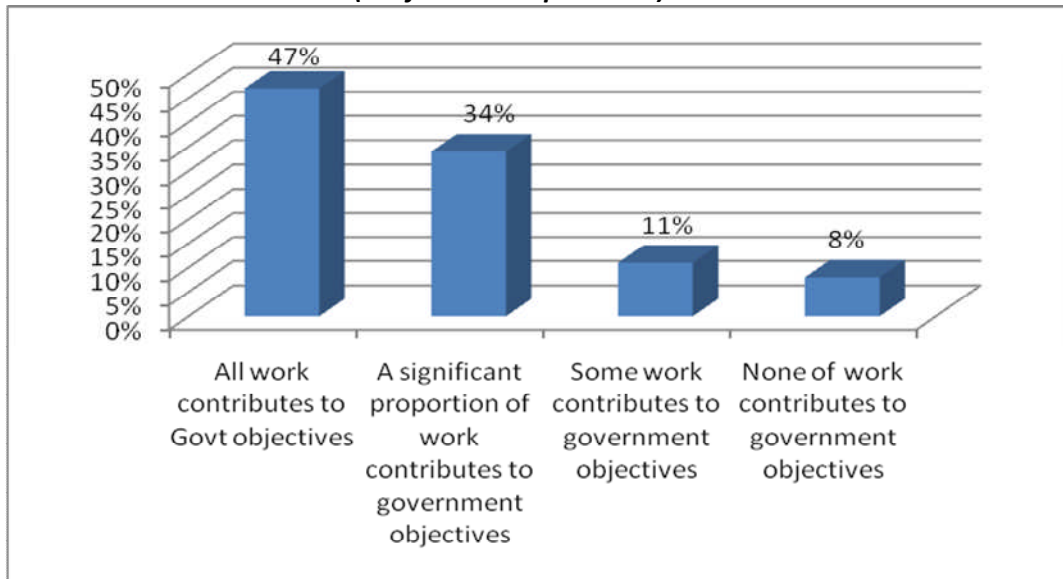
Full, detailed responses by organisation are presented in Appendix III (eNGOs and Government Objectives Data). The key findings are presented in the following sub-sections.

5.2 Proportion of eNGO work which contributes to specific Government objectives

Each of the 38 eNGOs were asked to identify “what proportion of your work contributes to specific government objectives”. It should be noted that the findings in the graph below represent the responses across all 38 eNGOs, however, interpretations of the question may vary.

The combined response from participating eNGOs is as shown below in figure 5a:

Figure 5a
What proportion of your work contributes to specific government objectives?
(% of eNGO Respondents)



- A large proportion of responding eNGOs (81%) stated that “all or a significant proportion of our work contributes to government objectives”.
- 11% of eNGOs stated that “Some of our work contributes to government objectives.”
- 8% of eNGOs stated that “none of our work contributes to government objectives.”

In total, 92% of responding eNGOs claim to contribute in some way to government objectives through their activities.

5.3 Specific Government Objectives which eNGO Activities Contribute to

As a follow-on to eNGOs identification of their contribution to government objectives, they were asked to “outline the specific government objectives which your activities contribute to, and which Department where appropriate.” Again, individual organisation responses are shown in Appendix III, with aggregate results presented below.

Government Departments Assisted through eNGO Activities

Many eNGOs (as shown in Appendix III) contribute to the objectives of numerous government departments and divisions. The list below shows the broad scope of government departments that benefit from eNGO activities – as identified by 38 eNGOs participating in the survey of the sector.

- Planning & Natural Resources Division, Department of the Environment (DOE)
- NI Environment Agency (NIEA), Department of the Environment (DOE)
- Planning Service (DOE)
- Department of Enterprise, Trade and Industry (DETI)

- Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (DARD)
- Department of Education (DE)
- Department of Employment & Learning (DEL)
- Office of the First & Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM)
- Foreign & Commonwealth Office (FCO UK)
- Department for International Development (DFID UK)
- Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS UK)
- Department for Social Development (DSD)
- Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS)
- Department of Culture Arts & Learning (DCAL)
- Department of Finance & Personnel (DFP)
- Local councils

Specific Government Objectives which eNGOs Contribute To

Through the eNGO survey, organisations were asked to outline specific government objectives that they contribute to. The responses received by eNGOs are listed below in table 5a. Again, some objectives are acted upon by numerous eNGOs.

Table 5a

Department	Specific Government Targets Contributed to by eNGOs
DOE (including NIEA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commitments to reduce significantly the loss in biodiversity by 2010 and halt biodiversity loss by 2016, and ensuring all Natura 2000 sites are in favourable conservation status by 2013 under the Habitats Directive. It also contributes significantly to delivery of the NI Biodiversity Strategy 2002. • Preservation of biodiversity. • Biodiversity strategy. • Delivery of cross-community educational programmes - related to 'Shared Future' policy document; Biodiversity Education - related to government Biodiversity Strategy. • To plan and manage development in a sustainable way which is responsible to the needs of the community (DoE Core & Planning Service). • Protect and conserve NIs natural heritage and built environment. • Increasing areas of native flora habitats, increasing populations of key native flora (DOE & DARD). • Waste infrastructure. • Environmental protection • Sustainability objectives - Sustainable Development Strategy • Promote the wider appreciation of the environment and best environmental practices. • Improve the condition of monuments and listed buildings, including structures currently on the Built Heritage at Risk Register (BHARNI) • Access and recreation • Reduction of carbon emission targets • Reduction in GHG emissions • Air quality improvement and noise reduction • Landfill Directive • Achieving high recycling rates, recycling and climate change; and • European Landscape Directive
DETI	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Energy Division, policy and strategy • Activity tourism • NITB destination promotion • Renewables policy and targets • Enhanced tourism for Northern Ireland, sustainable economic development based on strong brand
DSD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Modernisation of community sector for new building proposals • Reduction of poverty & support for community & voluntary sector • Volunteering • Cohesion Sharing & Integration (CSI) - Community Relations Council • Regeneration of Villages and Towns

DCAL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inland waterways development • Sport and use of the waterways • Water quality • Interpretation of cultural heritage, Outdoor, Recreation and Sport opportunities
DARD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti Poverty Strategy for Rural Communities & Education & skills of rural communities • Rural regeneration • Agri-environment targets • Rural Development, • Countryside Management, • Forestry
DE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education through leave no trace • Outdoor and environmental education
DHSSPS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health & well-being • Investing for Health objectives • Social inclusion
OFMDFM	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contribution to peace building and a shared future • Sustainable development • Programme for Government objectives regarding sustainable development and environment • Strong, internationally recognised clean, green image for Northern Ireland
DRD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regional Development Driver, Development of Silent Valley Mountain Park

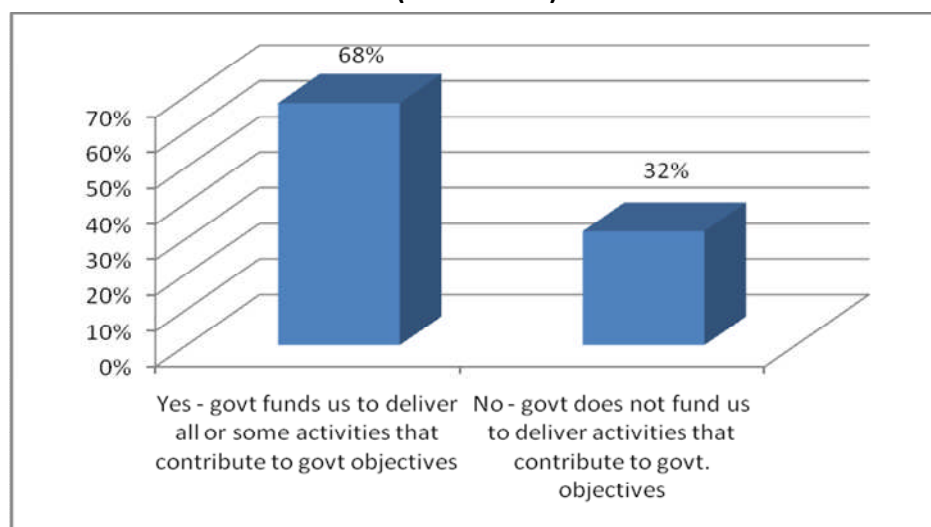
5.4 Government Funding to eNGOs

5.4.1 Level of eNGO Funding

In order to gauge the level of Government funding received by eNGOs all 38 eNGOs were asked to identify whether they receive government funding to deliver activities that contribute to government objectives.

Figure 5b below presents the responses from all organisations.

Figure 5b
Does government fund you to deliver all or some of these objectives?
(% of eNGOs)



The findings in figure 5b above show that (according to the 38 eNGOs):

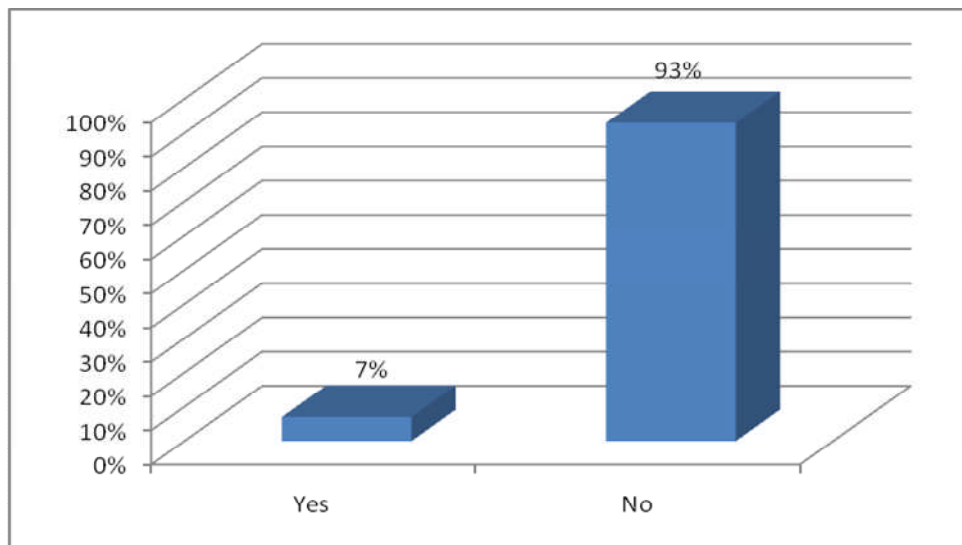
- Most eNGOs receive funds from government in order to help them deliver activities that will contribute to government objectives. It is worth noting that the level of funding is not specified, hence it could vary from high levels of funding to minimal funding support.
- A large proportion of eNGOs receive no funding from government to deliver activities – despite many contributing directly to government objectives.

5.4.2 Level of Government Funding - Cover Full Cost of Delivery?

To determine the extent of government funding amongst the 63% of organisations that identified that they receive some funding, organisations were asked whether government funding received “covers the full cost of delivery?”

It should be emphasised that this refers to “delivery” of work contributing to government objectives. Figure 5c below outlines the response across the 68% of relevant eNGOs.

Figure 5c
Does government funding received to deliver work that contributes to government objectives cover the full cost of delivery? (% of eNGOs)



According to the eNGOs that receive government funding to deliver government objectives:

- The vast majority of eNGOs that receive funding from government do not receive funding to cover the **full cost** of delivering activities that contribute to government objectives.

Although the funding received from government is vital, it is apparent that eNGOs must seek funding from other sources in order to deliver work that contributes to government objectives.

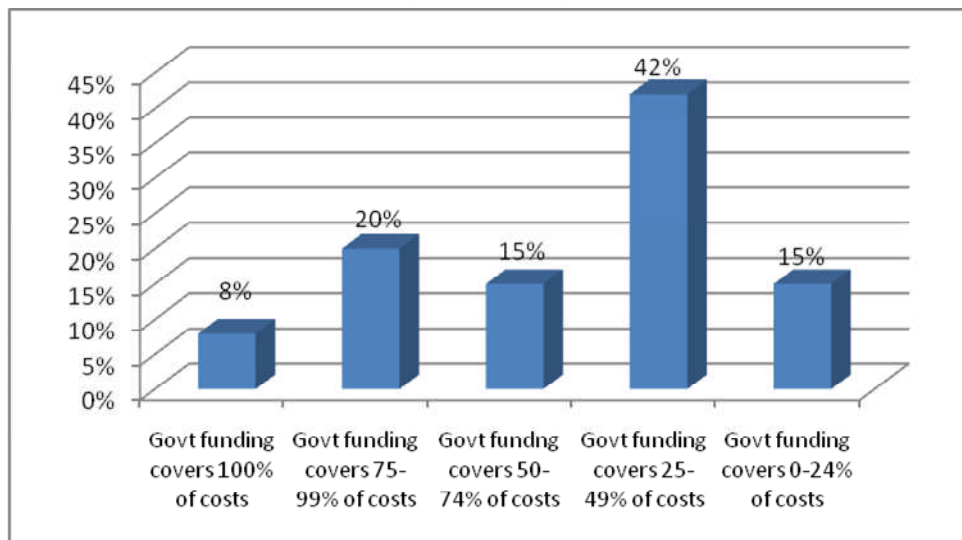
5.4.3 Extent of Government Funding to Cover the Cost of All eNGO Delivery

This section assesses government funding contribution to the costs of all eNGO delivery / activities – not just activities that contribute to the delivery of government objectives.

eNGOs were asked to indicate the percentage of their total costs that is covered by government funding, specifically, “to what extent does government funding cover the costs of you delivering your activities (not just those which deliver government objectives)?”

68% of eNGOs receive funding from government, hence figure 5d captures the response from these particular government funded organisations.

Figure 5d
(Of those that receive some government funding) To what extent does government funding cover the costs of you delivering your activities (not just those which deliver government objectives)?
(% of eNGOs)



In total, 57% of eNGOs receive less than 50% funding.

Based on the figures above, it is apparent that although some eNGOs are enjoying high levels of government funding, a significant proportion of eNGOs are evidently finding funding from other sources in order to implement their programmes of activity (including those activities dedicated to achieving government objectives).

5.5 Delivery / Administration of Grant Programmes for Government & Other Bodies

The 38 eNGOs were asked to identify whether they “deliver / administer grant programmes for government and other bodies?”

Figure 5e shows the response from all participating eNGOs:

Figure 5e
Do you deliver / administer grant programmes for government and other bodies?
(% of eNGOs)

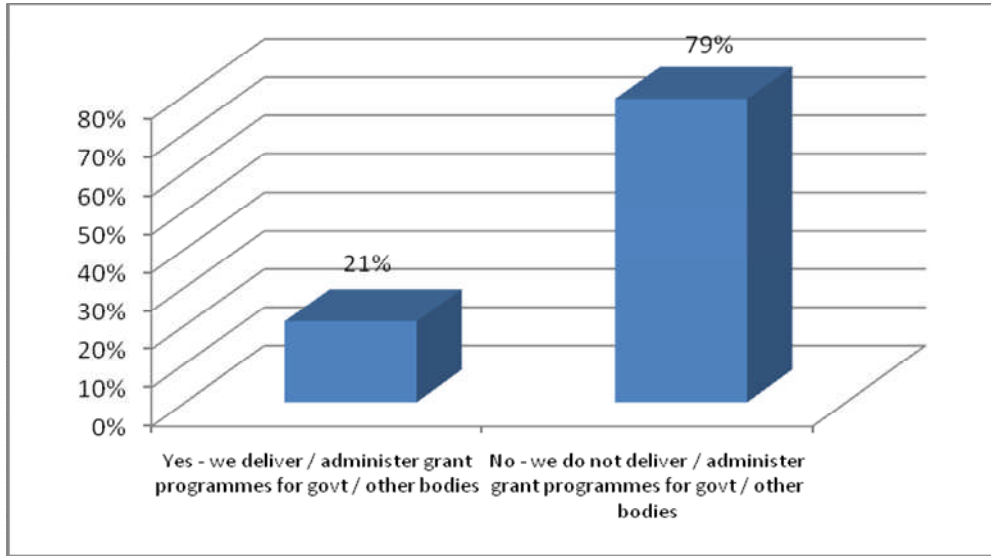


Figure 5e shows that 21% of eNGOs are involved in the delivery / administration of grant programmes for government and in partnership with other bodies.

Table 5b below provides examples of some grant programmes and services delivered / administered by eNGOs:

Table 5b: Grant Programmes & Funding Partnerships	
Government Grant Programmes Delivered / Administered with eNGO involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • European Commission programmes such as 'My City' • Department of Foreign Affairs (ROI) Teenage Kicks • Heating & insulation installations; advice provisions • Programmes for: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Department for International Development ○ Department of Education & Learning ○ Department of Culture, Arts & Learning
eNGO Partnerships with other organisations in relation to Grant Delivery / Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arts Council of NI (ACNI) • Community Relations Council; • Northern Ireland Tourist Board (Music Heritage Project) • Probation Board NI (Teenage Kicks) • Peace III (Theatre of Witness) • Partnership of all stakeholders around Lough Neagh • Advice provision / grant administration • Secretariat for NI Biodiversity Group • Big Lottery funding to social economy enterprises as part of the Transforming Waste project.
eNGO Partnerships with charities in relation to Grant Delivery / Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irish Aid
eNGO Partnerships with trusts in relation to Grant Delivery / Administration	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Charitable Trust funding for marine policy work • Landfill Community Fund

5.6 Government Targets Impacted upon if eNGOs did not Exist

In order to measure the importance of the eNGO sector to the achievement of government targets (from the perspective of eNGOs themselves) the 38 eNGOs were asked “if your organisation did not exist, what government targets would be impacted upon, and to what extent?”

Table 5c below group the responses by government target type and also separate local and central government targets that eNGOs believe would be affected if they did not exist.

Table 5c: Central Government Targets impacted by Non-existence of eNGOs

Target Area	Government Target(s) Impacted if eNGOs did not Exist
General Targets Impacted Upon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NIEA targets - substantial in a local context • Commitments in NIEA corporate plan • Environmental protection: water, land, air, habitats, species. • Energy reduction targets • Sustainable development - no sustainable development and protection of our biggest natural resource • Water quality • Renewables targets • Agri-environment targets • Funding programme targets • Improving government spending decisions
Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change targets • CO2 reduction targets • Carbon emission targets, major carbon reduction target would not be met • UK Climate change Bill - target of 80% reduction; • GHG emissions and climate change
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preservation of biodiversity and habitats • Biodiversity targets • Biodiversity strategy • Delivery of NI Biodiversity Strategy – delivery of SAPs. • Management of sites - Bringing designated sites into favourable condition
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Practical management of the Mourne AONB
Environmental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and capacity building within health and environmental health and wider workforce
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental education
People & Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Relations • Poverty • Equality and social inclusion • Cohesion sharing and integration • Public participation • Activity tourism • Volunteering • Education
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and well-being
Rural & woodlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rural regeneration • Woodland creation • Woodland protection
Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste targets - diversion from landfill • NI Waste Management Strategy • NI Landfill Allowance Scheme
Recycling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recycling rates

Local Government Targets impacted by Non-existence of eNGOs

Target Area	Government Target(s) Impacted if eNGOs did not Exist
General Targets Impacted Upon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Various ad hoc programmes which eNGOs have delivered on behalf of a range of local authorities would either not proceed or require another partner to be found.
Climate change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate change targets • CO₂ reduction targets
Biodiversity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preservation of biodiversity and habitats • Biodiversity Action Plan • Biodiversity education targets • Sustainable development, planning, biodiversity duty etc.; • Biodiversity targets and tourism • 5 local council Biodiversity Action Plans would not have being produced. • 2 local council's would not have being able to designate a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) within their area, and a further local council would have reduced ability to designate LNR's within their area. • Local councils would not be doing anything to comply with the Duty for Sustainable Development • Sustainable development and protection of existing Council facilities
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • AONB management.
Access	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintenance of rights of way, access, car parks, amenity sites etc.
Environmental Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and capacity building within health and environmental health and wider workforce
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Environmental education
People & Communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Community Relations • Community involvement • Community relations work • Poverty • Equality and social inclusion • Cohesion sharing and integration • Public participation • Activity tourism • Volunteering • Education
Health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health and well-being
Waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Waste targets - diversion from landfill

A wide variety of government targets would be impacted upon to varying degrees if eNGOs were unable to fulfil their own objectives and implement their own activities. These targets are not solely environment related, but span across a number of central and local government areas.

5.7 Non-Environmental Outputs Delivered by eNGOs

As part of the analysis into value and benefits brought about through eNGOs, participating eNGOs were asked to “provide details of the non-environmental outputs you deliver, particularly those that impact on government targets.”

The eNGOs identified a series of non-environmental outputs delivered through their activities (some of which are included in the previous section) including:

- Planning, social and recreational outputs
- Promotion of active lifestyles, sport
- Health and well being through daily integrated physical activity

- Health benefits through our recent community-based sustainable development project
 - Community involvement, ownership;
 - Health - promoting access to the countryside and outdoor activities;
 - Tourism interpretation / visitor experience improvement
 - Community relations work - bringing children together from controlled and maintained sectors to participate in community relations focused work
 - Community cohesion projects
 - Community relations
 - Community development.
 - Social inclusion and employability through targeted volunteering
 - Employment, Jobs and business creation
 - Development of community facilities
-
- Educational benefits associated with outreach and learning work.
 - Training e.g Renewable obligation certificate trading
-
- Economic development through tourism, social development, volunteering and community pride
 - Attraction of new visitors to tourist attractions
 - Volunteering and the contribution to the overall strength and breadth of the voluntary sector

In addition to environmental-focused activities, eNGOs deliver projects and provide outputs that benefit a wide variety of other key economic and social areas.

5.8 Summary of eNGO Contribution to Government Objectives

Based on the assessment of the relationship and connection between eNGOs and government, it is clear that there is a high-level of value provided through eNGO activities. This value spans central government departments and local government. Apart from the immediate focus on environmental support, eNGO outputs also provide benefits well beyond the environment – into areas of health, community development, education, economic development, etc.

Evidence for this contribution is based on the fact(s) that:

- The vast majority of eNGOs that participated in the Study stated that all or some of their work contributes to government objectives. Despite this, a third of eNGOs involved in the Study receive no funding from government to deliver activities.
- A wide range of government departments and specific government targets would be negatively affected if the delivery of eNGO outputs was reduced.
- A lot of the work carried out by eNGOs is either not funded by government or only partly funded. A small percentage of organisations receive complete funding for the delivery of work that is dedicated to assisting government objectives and helping government meet environmental targets. Frequently this non-government funding is from sources unavailable to government.

eNGOs contribute to the key objectives of **all** NI government departments. The achievements of eNGOs focus on environmental targets, however, their activities transcend across other government targets / departments including health and education.

Government funding, to date, is often inflexible in the holistic support it can give from across departments and therefore across a range of related aspects of an interdisciplinary topic such as environment. Such inflexibility restricts collaborative and innovative ways of dealing with the environment.

In the vast majority of cases, eNGOs must be successful in receiving external funding in order to deliver its activities. This is usually in the form of a percentage of match funding required by government funding packages.

Of those organisations that receive government funding to help implement activities to support government objectives just over half receive enough funding to cover 49% of total activity costs. On the other hand, 32% of participating eNGOs receive no government funding to support activity costs.

Government funding is essential for the survival of many eNGOs – to allow them to operate to seek additional, highly competitive and increasingly scarce funds where possible. In order to both survive and continue to work efficiently, NGOs recognise that it is essential to find other funding mechanisms and sources. Match funding from other sources is a crucial requirement of government funding and support to find additional sources of match funding is important.

The next section of the report outlines in detail the current funding situation amongst eNGOs including how they are sourcing the funds that will allow them to continue to help government meet environmental and non-environmental targets.

6.0 eNGO FUNDING ANALYSIS

6.1 Introduction

As outlined earlier in the report, funding for eNGOs in Northern Ireland is becoming increasingly restricted and this will lead to significant pressures on the sector. At a time when the need for environmental awareness and activity by politicians and public is increasing, the sector is suffering from significant resourcing issues affecting its work and the delivery of services and programmes.

Competition for limited funds over the years appears to have led to some organisations broadening their remit - in response to funding availability.

One of the Study requirements was to review funding models within the environmental NGO sector. To date, the report has addressed the following funding issues:

- Commentary on how other issue related sectors are dealing with government funding reductions.
- The identification of 'other' funding sources.
- Analysis of what eNGOs deliver in terms of government objectives and targets in return for the government funding received.

In order to determine specific details of eNGO funding status in NI, participating eNGOs were asked to provide details of their funding models and to provide opinion on the current and future funding situation. This section outlines the responses across 38 eNGOs in relation to a wide range of funding-related issues including:

- Annual Income & Levels of Income covered by Government Funding
- Volunteers – Capacity & Value to the Sector
- Current Sources of Funding, by Type
- eNGO views regarding:
 - Adequacy of current funding provision
 - The benefits eNGOs provide to Government
 - Areas of work that have had to be abandoned due to lack of funding
 - Barriers in accessing core or project funding in NI
 - The future of the funding situation
 - Arguments developed to build a case for future funding.
 - Additional measures planned to secure funding
 - Additional sources of funding
 - Success in accessing additional funds
 - Barriers to receiving additional funds
 - Commercial / fundraising activities/ projects

The findings are presented and analysed in the following paragraphs, with key findings, observations and themes summarised at the conclusion of section 6.

All eNGOs were not in a position to answer or comment on all areas, however, this is indicated in the findings below, where applicable.

It is also important to note that certain questions / terminology may have been interpreted in different ways by the responding eNGOs, hence this should be considered when reviewing the findings.

6.2 Annual eNGO Income & Levels of Funding Received

6.2.1 Annual Income covered by Government Funding

The 38 respondents were asked to outline the organisation's annual income (including projects) over the last three years and the percentage covered by government funding.

Table 6a below shows the number of organisations receiving varying levels of government funding – from zero, to 81-100%.

Table 6a: Annual Income Covered by Government Funding

% of eNGO Income Covered by Govt Funding	Number of eNGOs		
	2007-08	2008-09	2009-10
0	12	11	12
1-20	1	5	3
21-40	6	1	6
41-60	2	4	2
61-80	4	1	3
81-100	4	5	4
Total Responses Across the 38 Organisations	29	27	30

Table 6a above shows that the levels of funding provided to cover eNGO income has not varied significantly in the last three years.

- 40% (12 out of 30) of those eNGOs that responded received no funding from government to cover income in the most recent year.
- 13% (4 out of 30) of eNGOs received income from government which covered 81%-100% of total annual income.

Table 6a also shows that 50% (9 out of 18) of eNGOs that receive funding from government only obtain enough to cover 40% or less of income. Therefore, it is clear that a large proportion of eNGO income is being sourced from non-governmental sources – showing the value of such leverage, often from sources unavailable to government. This requirement is likely to increase further. Much government funding is dependent on match funding. If one fails, both fail.

6.2.2 Specific Areas of Overall Income Expenditure

In order to identify what eNGO incomes are being spent on, the organisations were asked to outline what their most recent annual income was spent on; for example, staff, offices, other current assets, direct delivery (outputs), and support services.

Again, although the various types of spend are generally understood by eNGOs, there may have been slight variations in the interpretation of the expenditure areas by eNGOs. The findings directly reflect the information that was returned by the individual eNGOs.

Table 6b below shows the responses across 22 eNGOs.

Table 6b: Specific Areas of Expenditure Across eNGOs (Most Recent Financial Year)

% of Annual Income Spent on: (most recent year)	Number of eNGOs					
	Staff Costs	Office Costs	Other Current Assets*	Direct Delivery (Outputs)	Support Services**	Other***
1-20%	1	16	5	5	9	2
21-40%	1	1	-	6	-	2
41-60%	9	2	-	2	-	-
61-80%	7	-	-	1	-	-
81-99%	1	-	-	-	-	-
100%	-	-	-	1	-	1

* Current assets include: vehicles, equipment fixtures & fittings etc.)

** Support services may include one of some of the following: Cleaning services; Computers and electronic office equipment repair; Event organisation and management; Garden and landscape maintenance; and Security services

*** Other areas of expenditure include: Ucit Loan Repayments; Recruitment, Retained Office, Training, Conferences, managing volunteer rangers, marketing and own expenses.

The key findings from the expenditure analysis are set out overleaf.

Staff Costs

- Staff costs make up the largest area of eNGO expenditure.
- 47% of eNGOs identified staff costs as making up between 41-60% of the most recent years expenditure.
- 42% of eNGOs declared that staff costs cover more than 61% of expenditure.

Office Costs

- 84% of eNGOs stated that office costs make up less than 20% of total expenditure.

Costs of Direct Delivery of Outputs

- 69% of eNGOs stated that direct delivery of outputs account for 40% or less of total expenditure.
- Most respondents indicated that direct delivery of outputs accounts for between 21% and 40% of total spend.

Support Services

- None of the eNGOs spent over 20% on support services.

Based on the findings of this aspect of the funding analysis, it is apparent that staff and office costs, followed by direct delivery (of outputs) costs are the main areas of expenditure by eNGOs in NI. This indicates that increased collaboration between eNGOs could possibly result in some savings – particularly in relation to that portion of staff costs that is directed towards administration.

Utilisation of Staff Costs – Direct Delivery vs Administration & Support

As identified in the previous section, staff costs are a significant area of expenditure for eNGOs. These costs may include the following:

- Recruitment, salary and benefits
- Organisation insurances
- Employer taxes
- Training
- Infrastructure costs
- Consumables
- HR overheads
- Software licences

Each eNGO may have provided different staff cost information based on how they are defined internally and how they are recorded in accounts. However, in order to further analyse staff costs, and to establish what proportion of staff costs are focused on direct delivery in comparison to administration and support, eNGOs were asked to estimate what proportion of staff costs are attributable to:

- (i) The delivery of outputs
- (ii) Administration and support

In the main, eNGOs report that staff costs are mainly associated with direct implementation of outputs. All 19 eNGOs that identified staff costs as an area of expenditure responded to this part of the questionnaire - the results are presented in table 6c below:

Table 6c: Utilisation of Staff Costs by eNGOs

% of Staff Costs	Number of eNGOs	
	Direct Delivery of Outputs	Support / Administration
0	-	-
1-20	2	11
21-40	1	3
41-60	1	3
61-80	9	-
81-99	6	2
100	-	-
Total Responses Across the 38 eNGOs	19	19

- 78% of eNGOs (15 organisations) stated that direct delivery constitutes 61% or more of total staff costs.
- In contrast, 11% of eNGOs stated that support / administration comprises more than 61% of staff costs.

These findings provide a strong sign that although staff costs make up a significant proportion of eNGO expenditure, most of this is focused on direct delivery of outputs.

6.3 Volunteers – Capacity & Value per Annum

6.3.1 eNGO Usage of Volunteers

All 38 eNGOs were asked: “Do you use volunteers i.e those who take a voluntary part in physical, administrative or fund-raising activities? (for example, management committee members, conservation workers, visitor guides, etc.)” Table 6d below provides the summary of responses to this question.

Table 6d: Use of Volunteers Amongst eNGOs

	Number and % of eNGOs	
	Yes – Use volunteers	No – do not use volunteers
Number of eNGOs	29	9
% of eNGOs	76%	24%

The majority of eNGOs involved in the study (29 organisations, 76% of the sample) use volunteers to meet objectives and deliver outputs.

6.3.2 Value, Type & Capacity of Volunteers

The 29 eNGOs that use volunteers were asked:

1. "In what capacity / what type of volunteers do you use?"
2. "What is the estimated value of the voluntary work completed per annum?"

Table 6e below shows the estimated value of volunteer inputs to eNGOS in total, and by type of input across 26 eNGOs (note: 3 eNGOs that use volunteers did not detail the type of activity contributed, or the value).

While this is not a full picture of all of the eNGOs, the key organisations that utilise volunteers contributed to the study.

Table 6e: Type, Capacity and Value (Per Annum) of Volunteers across Sample of eNGOs

Type / Capacity of Volunteer	No. Of Organisations	Value Range Per Annum (£)	Combined Estimated Value Per Annum (£)
Committee; Committee members; Management committee; policy formulation, project steering; sub-committee membership Chairman; Director; Board of Directors; Board members; Trustees	12	1,000 - 50,000	261,000
Students – research, publications etc.	3	5,000 - 50,000	73,000
Admin, Campaigning & Office support	6	1,000 - 30,000	51,000
Project research & co-ordination, Research assistance	2	1,000 - 50,000	51,000
Others			
Environmental & visitor management	1	15,000	15,000
Authoring and editing books	1	10,000	10,000
Organising lectures and events	1	5,000	5,000
Organising Groups	1	45,000	45,000
Advice & support	1	12,000	12,000
Recruitment & marketing	1	5,000	5,000
LEQ & coastal officers	1	45,000	45,000
Assessors for eco-schools	1	7,500	7,500
Community practical action	1	82,500	82,500
Practical conservation work	1	120,000	120,000
Environmental education	1	30,000	30,000
One-off events	1	2,000	2,000
Volunteer rangers	1	40,000	40,000
Expert input	1	1,500	1,500
Practical policy work (consultations)	1	3,000	3,000
Volunteer work on Lough Neagh	1	100,000	100,000
Park management services	1	600,000	600,000
Conservation field work	1	1,000	1,000
Domestic Assistant	1	12,000	12,000
Catering	1	6,500	6,500
All activities	2	275,000	275,000
Sub-Total		£1,844,000	£1,844,000
CVNI			
Ambassadors (7)	CVNI	£1,800,000	£1,800,000
Volunteer Officers (5)			
Registered volunteers (23,500)			
Total Value of Volunteers Across 26 eNGOs			£3,654,000

The total value of volunteer support to the eNGO sector (for these 29 organisations) per annum has been estimated as £3.7m. It is worth noting that Conservation Volunteers NI's contribution to this total is a significant £1.8m (49%) with volunteer value from other organisations totalling £1.85m.

Volunteers have a wide range of roles within eNGOs. The broader categories of volunteer roles –outside of CVNI - are as follows (with approximate value per annum in brackets):

- Committee; Committee members; Management committee; policy formulation, project steering; sub-committee membership; Chairman; Director; Board of Directors; Board members; Trustees (£261,000 per annum)
- Students – research, publications etc. (£73,000)
- Administrative, Campaigning & Office support (£51,000)
- Project research & co-ordination, Research assistance (£51,000)

There are also a series of additional volunteer types that are specific to certain eNGOs, such as:

- Park Management Services (£600,000)
- Practical Conservation Work (£120,000)
- Volunteer work on Lough Neagh (£100,000)
- Community practical action (£82,500)

The findings of this sub-section also highlight the ability of the eNGO sector to engage and attract people to contribute to the implementation of environmental focused projects.

The voluntary sector clearly provides significant benefits and improved efficiencies to the environmental sector as a whole. It allows the eNGO sector to make a strong 'Value for Money' statement to government and other funding bodies. The wide spectrum of volunteer types and roles as well as the value of work implemented must be protected and promoted.

6.4 Current Sources of Funding for eNGOs in NI

6.4.1 Introduction

Each of the eNGOs were asked to list current sources of funding, approximate value of the funding provided and current funding by type. The general definitions of funding types used in the Study are described below.

- Core Funding

Core funding is generally defined and accepted as funding for expenditure budgets that are not connected with the levels of activity undertaken by an organisation. It is used for costs that are difficult to associate with any specific outputs – ie fixed costs. Core funding is fundamental to the organisation's survival, but cannot be directly associated with any specific outcome.

- Grant Aid (for Specific Projects)

Ultimately, these funds have to be used for the purpose for which they were granted – and generally vouched / accounted for specifically in relation to the specified project.

- Contracts (for Specific Projects)

The recipient organisation is obliged to meet the terms of the contract but can make a surplus on a contract which it may keep and add to its core funding or reserves.

- Service Level Agreements (General Funding for a Range of Activities)

A service level agreement is funding which is a performance-related grant. It may be part of a service contract where the level of service is formally defined.

- “Other” Funding Sources

Other funding sources include, for example, membership and donations or investment income.

- Match Funding

Often there is a requirement from government for eNGOs to find match funding. In this way, a grant-providing body stipulates that the recipients of a grant raise a certain percentage of the money they require, generally a sum more or less equal to that of the sum of money being granted. For example, many European funds meet only a proportion of the cost of any project, the rest of the cost of a project has to be funded from other sources, which can be either public or private sector

The funding analysis completed as part of the Study has aimed to secure responses based on the definitions above being used by eNGOs.

6.4.2 Sources of Funding & Approximate Value Analysis

The information in this section summarises the findings in relation funding sources by funding type and value.

Core Funding

According to the responses across all 38 eNGOs, the total value of core funding received from all sources in the last year is approximately £3.5m. Some sources of core funding identified include:

- NI Environment Agency (NIEA)
- Department of the Environment
- Department of Agriculture and Rural Development
- Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure (Inland Waterways)
- Councils / Local Authorities
- Northern Ireland Tourist Board
- Sport NI
- Community Relations Council

- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Esmee Fairbairn Foundation
- Group Environmental Health Organisation
- Centrally core funded through the organisation

In total, eight of the 38 eNGOs receive almost £1m of core funding from NIEA.

Grant Aid (for Specific Projects)

The total value of project-related grant aid funding received from all sources in the last year is approximately £5.3m. Some sources of grant aid funding identified by eNGOs include:

- NIEA
- Big Lottery Fund
- Rural Development Programme Peace II
- Atlantic Fund
- Community Relations Council
- Peace III
- Dept of Enterprise, Trade & Industry
- NITB
- Heritage Lottery Fund
- Dept of Agriculture & Rural Development
- National Trust
- European Social Fund
- Landfill Communities Fund
- Rural Payments Agency
- Dept. of Culture, Arts & Leisure
- International Fund for Ireland
- Northern Ireland Archaeology Forum
- NI Museum Council
- Dept of Education & Learning
- Wildlife Trust Strategic Development Fund
- Biffaward
- Tubney Charitable Trust
- Esmee Fairbairn Foundation
- Sport NI
- Children in Need
- Lafarge Aggregates
- Waterways Ireland

Contracts (for Specific Projects)

The total value of funding received for specific contracts from all sources in the last year is approximately £11.1m. The eNGOs that participated in the Study stated that this funding was provided by the following sources:

- NIEA (BHARNI and Environmental Education Forum for built / cultural heritage and legislation / policy work)
- Local authority contracts
- Dept of Social Development - Housing Budget
- Department of Education & Learning
- Dept of Agriculture & Rural Development
- Peace III
- Private sector

Service Level Agreements (General Funding for a Range of Activities)

A number of eNGOs have received funding through Service Level Agreements (SLAs) in the last year – totalling a funding value of £2.3m. SLAs are not currently utilised by NIEA as a funding mechanism for any of the eNGOs that participated in the Study. The SLAs are utilised in projects involving a number of eNGOs and the following organisations:

- Utilities (significant proportion of the total)
- Health Trusts
- NITB
- Sponsorships; and
- Probation Board

“Other” Funding Sources

Total funding from these “other sources” was a very substantial £10.6m over the last year – the second largest funding category. ‘Other’ eNGO funding sources identified by the organisations include:

- Sales of recyclables
- Land owner income
- Private sector sponsorship
- Memberships / donations
- Visitors
- Rent
- Investments
- Department of Foreign Affairs
- Conferences & Creative Breaks

6.4.3 Summary of eNGO Funding Values

Table 6f below provides a summary of the funding information received across the 38 eNGO participants with a direct comparison between funding received from Government and non-Government sources.

Table 6f: Summary of Funding Value Across 38 eNGOs in Northern Ireland, by Source (in the Last Financial Year*)						
Funding Area	Government Funding Received by eNGOs				Non-Government Funding Received by eNGOs	Total Value By Funding Area (£)
	NIEA	Central Government (outside NIEA)	Local Government	Total Government Funding	Total Non-Government Funding	
Core Funding	976,000	1,462,000	195,000	2,633,000	884,000	3,517,000
Grant Aid for Specific Projects	1,028,000	641,000	173,000	1,842,000	3,479,500	5,321,500
Contracts (for Specific Projects)	144,000	4,201,000 (101,000)	6,013,000 (113,000)	10,358,000 (358,000)	787,500	11,145,500 (1,145,500)
Service Level Agreements	-	-	6,000	6,000	2,295,000 (195,000)	2,301,000 (201,000)
Other Funding Sources	33,000	-	1,000	34,000	10,595,500 (7,395,500)	10,629,500 (7,429,500)
Total Value by Funding Source	£2,181,000 (£2,181,000)	£6,304,000 (£2,204,000)	£6,388,000 (£488,000)	£14,873,000 (£4,873,000)	£18,041,500 (£12,741,500)	£31,914,500 (£17,614,500)

*The last financial year varies by organisation

N.B Figures in brackets refer to total figures after removing the funds received from the two organisations that receive a very large proportion of funding from government for specific tasks - NI Energy Agency and Bryson Recycling.

Table 6f shows that a large proportion of eNGO funding is received from non-Government sources. The findings should, however, take into consideration the possible variations in eNGO interpretations of the grant terminology.

Core Funding Sources

Based on eNGO responses, it has been found that 25% (£884k) of core funding for eNGOs in the last year was provided specifically by non-Government sources. 75% of funding was received from government sources as follows:

- 42% – Central government departments (excluding NIEA)
- 27% – NI Environment Agency, specifically
- 6% - Local government

Grant Funding Sources (for specific projects)

A total of 65% (£3.5m) of eNGO grant-aid funding for specific projects in the last year was received from non-Government sources. A breakdown of the remaining 35% of grant aid funding for specific projects (which is received from Government sources) is as follows:

12% - Central government departments (excluding NIEA)
19% - NI Environment Agency, specifically
4% - Local government

Funding for Specific Contracts

A total of £11m of funding is received by eNGOs for specific contract activities, however, £10m of this is received by two eNGOs from central and local government sources. A significant proportion of funding (£790k) involving contracts is provided by non-Government sources.

Service Level Agreements

Virtually all Service Level Agreements are funded by non-government organisations. eNGOs receive approximately £2.3m worth of funding through Service Level Agreements, however, most of this (£2m) is received by one eNGO.

Other Funding Sources

eNGOs have received approximately £10.5m of funds from 'other', non-governmental sources in the last financial year. It is worth noting that around £6m of this was received by two eNGOs.

Value for Money Multiplier Effect of Funding Analysis

Table 6g outlines the value which the sample of 38 eNGOs provide to government. Based on the findings of table 6f, table 6g compares the value of all government funding received by eNGOs with the value of non-government funding (including the value of voluntary support) provided by organisations.

Due to the scale of funding received for specific government-related tasks by two eNGOs (NI Energy Agency and Bryson Recycling) two separate multiplier effect calculations have been made (see Table 6g) – one with and one without the value of funding received by NI Energy Agency and Bryson Recycling.

Both calculations include the contributory value of volunteers, which has been established earlier in the report (section 6.3) as £3.7m across the 38 organisations.

Table 6g: The Value for Money, 'Multiplier Effect' of eNGOs				
Calculation 1	Value of Government Funding	Value of Non-Government Funding	Value of Volunteer Contribution	Multiplier Effect
Funding Received by all eNGOs	£14,873,000	£18,041,500	£3,700,000	For every £1 that Government invests into the eNGO sector through funding, £1.46 is delivered by eNGOs availing of "other" sources of funding
		£21,741,500		
Calculation 2	Government Funding	Non-Government Funding	Value of Volunteer Contribution	Multiplier Effect
Funding Received by 36eNGOs (excl. two large organisations that receive high levels of funding from government for specific projects)	£4,873,000	£12,741,500	£3,700,000	For every £1 that Government invests into the eNGO sector through funding, £3.37 is delivered by eNGOs availing of "other" sources of funding.
		£16,441,500		

6.5 Funding for Specific eNGO Activities

Out of the 38 eNGO respondents, 25 organisations provided details on who provides funding for particular activities. The findings from this part of the research are presented in the table 6h.

In some cases, a particular funding source has been identified by numerous eNGOs within one activity type, for example, six eNGOs have received funding from NIEA for 'biodiversity / wildlife'-related activities.

Table 6h: Funding Source by Environmental-related Activity

End-use Activity	Funding Source (1 organisation funded, unless stated otherwise)
Agriculture	Local Councils; Heritage Lottery Fund; Department of Agriculture & Rural Development (DARD)
Biodiversity / wildlife	NI Environment Agency (NIEA - 6 organisations); Heritage Lottery Fund (2 organisations); Local Councils; Heritage Lottery Fund; Landfill Communities Fund; Biffaward; Corporate / businesses; Private sector
Built / Cultural Heritage	NIEA x3 organisations; Rural Development Council (RDC); Local Councils; Heritage Lottery Fund; Belfast City Council; NI Archaeological Forum
Business Environmental Performance	Dept of Enterprise Trade and Industry; Private sector
Nature conservation	NIEA x2 organisations; Local Councils; Heritage Lottery Fund
Climate Change	Sponsorship; Private sector
Community Development	Local Councils; DARD; Rural Development Council (RDC); EU projects; Community Relations Council; Dept. of Foreign Affairs; Probation Board NI; Peace III; Sponsorship & Council
Countryside, Access, Recreation, Tourism*	NIEA x2 organisations; Local Councils x2 organisations; Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) x4 organisations; Alpha; Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF); Dept of Culture Arts & Leisure (DCAL); Sport NI; National Trust; Rural Development Programme (RDP); Waterways Ireland; La Farge Aggregates; Big Lottery; Loughs Agency
Education	NIEA x4 organisations; Private sector; Environmental Education Forum (EEF); DARD; International Fund for Ireland; Local Councils; Sponsorships; Corporates; Big Lottery Fund; HLF; Peace III; Translink; Private donations
Energy / renewable energy	DETI; DSD Housing Budget; Energy Companies; Private sector
Environmental Health	Private sector
Environmental Management	NIEA x2 organisations; Local Councils; NITB; HLF
Fish / Fisheries	Local Councils; HLF
Food	DARD
Freshwater and Wetlands	Local Councils; HLF
Health	Big Lottery
Legislation and Policy	NIEA; Private sector
Local Environmental Quality	DoE; Local Councils
Marine and Coastal	Loughs Agency; Local Councils; Beach operators; Tubney Charitable Trust; Esmee Fairbairn Foundation
Landscape / Eco Systems	NIEA; Local Councils; HLF
Rural Development	Rural Development Council (RDC) Local Councils; HLF; NITB
Sustainable Development	NITB x2 organisations; EU projects; Sponsorship; Local councils; Esmee Fairbairn; Group Environmental Health organisation

End-use Activity	Funding Source (1 organisation funded, unless stated otherwise)
Transport	Sponsorship
Trees and Forestry	HLF; Donations / sales
Waste / resources management	Sponsorships; Local councils; Private sector

*Embraces health, well-being, education, activity, tourism, volunteering and rural development

Table 6h shows that the most commonly funded eNGO activity types (across all funding types) are:

- Countryside, Access, Recreation, Tourism
- Education
- Community Development
- Biodiversity / wildlife
- Sustainable Development

NIEA has supported the following environmental activities most frequently:

- Built / Cultural Heritage
- Biodiversity / wildlife
- Countryside, Access, Recreation, Tourism
- Education
- Environmental Management

6.7 Work above and beyond Government Capacity or Priority

All eNGO respondents were asked to provide comments on the following: “What do you do that government cannot do or could only do with great difficulty or at much greater expenditure?” This topic is covered in detail in Section 5 – eNGOs and Government Objectives. The key responses combined across participants are as follows:

- eNGO advocacy and challenge work by definition cannot be done within government.
- eNGOs provide an input to public consultations on planning policy and legislation.
- Government has no organisation geared to producing high-quality publications about, for example, built heritage. For example, it would cost NIEA considerably more to run the BHARNI project in-house, as salary levels and overheads would be considerably higher.
- eNGOs co-ordinate the voluntary sector very well.
- They bring a non-governmental voice that is respected to decision makers and the public; government can be seen as biased, pushing its own agenda so the voluntary sector is more ‘trusted’.

- eNGOs represent high ‘value for money’ in delivery of practical work/services, consultations etc. Government departments cannot ‘lobby’ the politicians about issues or resource requirements for delivery; they serve the Minister, not drive policy so an external voice is required to influence policy.

Other eNGO strengths in relation to government have been identified as follows:

Cost-Effectiveness

- eNGOs provide independent and impartial expertise and advice, at any time and speedily.
- Cheaper with lower administration costs
- It is work for which there is no budget, and no council etc. is prepared to fund, and so can only be undertaken by committed volunteers.
- eNGOs introduce private and corporate funding not available to government.

Working with General Public at Local Levels

- eNGOs have a greater level of trust with the general public and can engage their support and involvement much easier than government.
- Provide creativity in terms of delivery and provide education, training and capacity building in areas where communities require delivery.
- eNGOs provide “Local” coordinated AONB Management, for example. eNGOs provide a link between local community/local stakeholders and government.
- eNGOs can translate some government targets and EU directives into engaging programmes that involve thousands of volunteers.

Working in Partnership with Numerous Stakeholder Groups

- eNGOs can work in partnership in a very flexible and effective way, with:
 - Central government;
 - Local government;
 - The business sector; and
 - The general public

“

Other Key Activities delivered by eNGOs (which assist Government) include:

- Practical management of nature reserves and direct conservation work on sites.
- Sharing best practice on conservation management etc. with other partners/public.
- Advocacy on environmental issues such as climate change/energy reduction/protected landscape management.
- Research & development work

6.8 Projects Affected by Lack of Funding

Each of the eNGO respondents were asked to provide comments on the following: “Have there been any substantive areas of work that have had to be abandoned, significantly scaled back or deferred as a result of a lack of funding?”

A snapshot of activity areas were pinpointed by eNGOs as under threat from funding reductions including:

- Education-related funding;
- Community and business support programmes;
- Proposed programme to restore degraded woodlands.
- Built heritage and traditional skills training
- Local produce and cultural heritage interpretation
- Sustainable tourism initiatives.
- No dedicated resource to implement AONB Management Plan
- The BIG Spring Clean
- Local Environmental Quality (LEQ) work
- Energy Advice funding

Other responses from eNGOs include:

- There has been a reliance on one-off fund-raising activities and legacies to sustain current staffing and activity levels, however, this is not sustainable in the longer term – there is a need to secure recurrent core funding from one or more sources.
- All activity areas are adversely effected by the amount of time spent securing and reporting on funds from the vast range of sources – and that includes core not just project.

6.9 Main Barriers in Accessing Core or Project Funding in NI

The participating eNGOs were asked to outline, “What are the main barriers for your organisation in accessing core or project funding in Northern Ireland?”

A number of common themes emerged from eNGO responses regarding barriers to accessing core or project funding. They include:

- Lack of mechanisms within Central Government for allowing eNGO partnership.
- Lack of ‘joined up’ approach by funders e.g. DOE and DARD not streamlining funding programmes.”
- Lack of leadership from NIEA to facilitate partnerships. The current legislative basis for grant aid, especially for natural heritage, appears to constrain NIEA in what it can support, and does not currently encourage or facilitate partnership working across organisations. *In order to qualify this point, it must be acknowledged that NIEA is active in encouraging partnerships, where possible, for example the NIEA has incentivised local councils through collaborating to employ Biodiversity Officers.*
- The need for a core organisation to organise, administer, direct and ensure quality delivery.

- Short-term funding strategies - short term projects, with little security of where future funding might come from.
- Increasing numbers of applicants for funds versus a shrinking stream.
- Limited availability of other sources of funding from other grant-bodies, charitable trusts etc.
- Time and capacity issues.
- Government delays and bureaucracy.
- Procurement issues including the way contracts are structured.

Additional issues identified as barriers to accessing funds are:

- Issues in timing between different funding sources available to 'match fund' projects
- Competing for funding against larger organisations
- Risk aversion in government and lack of trust of NGOs
- Assembly procedures – lack of Cabinet and 'Opposition' system can lead to difficulties.

6.10 Views on Future eNGO Funding

The eNGOs were asked, "Do you feel that the (funding) situation is likely to become worse in the near and medium future?" and to provide comments to support responses. Table 6i below shows the combined responses:

Table 6i

	Yes	No	No Answer / Don't know
The funding situation is likely to become worse in the next year (% of eNGOs)	77%	3%	18%
The funding situation is likely to become worse in the next 2-3 years (% of eNGOs)	72%	6%	22%

It is clear that the vast majority of eNGOs expect the situation to become worse in the short and medium term. These expectations are supported by the pessimistic views expressed below:

Views on the Funding Situation in the Next Year

- Further cuts on public spending and therefore less government grants available and more competition for non-government grants.
- Anticipation that severe cuts in public spending will impact, disproportionately, on the environment sector.

- There will be a 20% cut in core funding, meaning more likelihood of failure to secure project funding.
- The Rural Development Programme has been very slow in coming through on the ground.
- The economic downturn resulting in less Government spend means that Government does not subcontract out but brings all in-house at extra cost but protects public service jobs.
- The Department must make limited funding go further by funding fewer organisations to deliver more value for money.
- Underspend in government departments should be used to supplement eNGOs to deliver vital work which targets our joint aims and objectives for the good of the environment, economy and quality of life.

Views on the Funding Situation in the Next 2-3 Years

- There will be further cuts in public spending and therefore less government grants available and more competition for non-government grants.
- Additional 30%+ cuts in core funding and much keener competition for non-government funders.
- Education and health are 'protected' while the environment is vulnerable as its issues are seen as longer term and less 'crucial' than other areas.
- Only the barest minimum of services will be delivered and this will, in every way, impact heavily on the charity sector, given that it is 'at the end of the food chain' when it comes to funding.

A more positive outlook is envisaged through the following points; however, this is based on certain measures being put in place by Government:

- Funding within Government should improve with further efficiency measures within the Department. There may be less overall funding but it will be targeted to deliver more efficient outcomes.
- There will most likely be fewer environmental NGOs to fund and they should be working together to deliver more efficiently with less funding.
- Government should be making the most of European funding which is available but difficult for smaller organisations to secure. Government should also be applying for EU funding in partnership with eNGOs to deliver on specific areas.

6.11 Building a Case for Continued Funding

In order to gauge the responses of eNGOs in light of the funding issues, the Study asked: “In a time of serious financial cutbacks, what arguments has your organisation developed to build a case for continued funding?”

The points below outline the key benefits and strengths which eNGOs use to further their case for funding:

- Importance of the environment and its intrinsic links to future economic prosperity.
- Cost effective delivery of Government targets through partnerships.
- Ability to deliver across all sectors avoiding the need for NIEA or DOE funding.
- One stop shop for business and community engagement on key environmental and sustainability issues and targets.
- Professional and unique expertise with proven track records of delivery.
- Value for money due to low overheads.
- Ability to meet several objectives at once including environmental, social, aesthetic, sustainability.
- Consequences for Government through non-implementation of eNGO activities including fines for failing to meet its targets, costs of tendering for consultancy work.
- Relevance to tourism.
- Ability to deliver on community development needs.

6.12 Measures being Taken to Secure Funding

Participating eNGOs were asked: “What additional measures are you planning to take in order to secure funding to meet your organisation’s short, medium and long-term objectives?”

The measures being taken by eNGOs to secure funding include:

- Ongoing measures to diversify income whilst ceasing applications for funding that does not provide for full cost recovery.
- More focus on marketing / networking
- Investigation of all possible new sources of funding in the public and private sectors, in particular charitable trusts that might be willing to contribute to the core funding.
- Identification of specific funding targets.
- Private sector targeting including sponsorship opportunities.

- Targeting of EU funds.
- Development of partnerships in funding applications.
- Complete re-examination of strategy covering the spectrum from complete exit to merger.
- Targeting of charitable trusts.
- Implementation of cost-cutting measures including the streamlining of operational efficiencies and staff salary cuts.
- Increase in innovative thinking and new approaches.
- Structured business planning.

6.13 Additional Sources of Funding

The participating eNGOs were asked: “What additional sources of funding are you aware of that might be used to fund the work carried out by your organisation?” Table 6j lists the responses by number of organisations, followed by some additional comments:

Table 6j

Additional funding sources being pursued by eNGOs
• NI and UK charitable trusts and foundations
• Other government departments
• Heritage Lottery Fund
• Private sector / corporate/business support
• EU money
• BiG Lottery Change Management programme
• Legacy support
• EU Life funds
• Occasional grant or project schemes such as Shell Better Britain
• Further Private Sector funding sponsorship opportunities
• Landfill Tax
• International Business movements
• Local Authorities
• Esmee Fairbairn
• Interreg
• Life+
• Rural Development Programme
• Community based funding streams
• Lifelong education and learning
• Individuals / major donors

Few new additional sources of funding were identified above indicating that eNGOs may not have capability and / or knowledge to access funding from a range of new sources. However, some eNGOs are taking steps to become more proactive in relation to identifying and sourcing additional funding through, for example:

- Implementing a funding focused scoping exercise.
- Targeting more non-government funding applications.
- Seeking private sponsorship.

In line with this, and in order to determine the levels of effort put into trying to access additional funding, eNGOs were asked: “Have you tried to access any of this additional funding?”

Table 6k shows the responses across 27 eNGOs:

Table 6k: Number of eNGOs that have made Efforts to Access Additional Funds

	Yes	No
% of eNGOs	78%	22%

The clear majority of eNGOs have tried to access additional funds; hence they were asked what levels of success that have had. Table 6l summarises the responses from eNGOs regarding success levels in accessing additional funds.

Table 6l: Success Levels Amongst eNGOs in Accessing Additional Funds	
Success	Limited Success / Under Review
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Big Lottery - 2 organisations • Landfill Tax - 2 organisations • Heritage Lottery Fund • EU Funding • Carbon Trust Networks (National not NI) • Local Authorities (match funding) • Private sector sponsorship • RDP • Esmee Fairbairn • Lloyds TSB 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Youth Council • Public Health • Trust sector • Major Esmee Fairbairn grant - being reviewed this year • Interreg project developed and awaiting feedback – long process • Crown Estate Marine Communities Fund • Life+ to be submitted when programme opens

Although it is important for eNGOs to try to find additional funding, they must combine this with attempting to determine new methods, for example, collaboration; to access those funds.

6.15 Barriers to Accessing Additional Source of Funding

eNGOs were asked “what barriers exist to accessing the additional sources of funding?” The key barriers identified by eNGOs are as follows:

- Time / resource constraints versus lack of guarantee of success.
- Significant level of detail required.
- Timing of funding sources when co-ordinating different projects and match funding.
- The need for and difficulty of finding Match funding.
- Decision-making processes and lead times.
- Competition for limited funds.
- Too many groups doing the same thing in NI.
- Lack of partnership approach between eNGOs.

6.16 Commercial / Fundraising Activities to Attract Additional Funding

As the final part of the eNGO funding analysis, the organisations were asked:

“What commercial or fundraising activities/projects are you involved in to attract additional funding for the organisation? Do you think this can be increased to fill any gaps in government funding?”

Commercial / fundraising activities undertaken by eNGOs have included:

- Commencement of an association with paid membership
- Run competitions for companies like TESCO and Belfast Harbour Commission
- Seek tenders from the private sector
- Seek sponsorship from the private sector
- Sponsored walks & abseil, Friends Group
- Membership recruitment
- Small scale fund-raising
- Service delivery
- Secure private sector sponsorship.
- Corporate sponsorship opportunities through CSR is being sought presently

Many eNGOs, however, feel that any fundraising will not be enough to “fill the gaps” and a lot of work carried out by eNGOs is not the type that would attract a sponsor. In addition, it is difficult to raise funds in the current economic context.

Some eNGOs believe that fundraising is not worth the time and effort – especially when they may be losing staff.

Other eNGOs are striving to do what they can to improve finances, but are limited. They believe that long-term funding problems can only be addressed through securing new core and / or project funding.

6.17 Summary

The previous section of the report asserted that there is a high level of value provided to government through eNGO activities. This funding analysis shows, however, that a high level of reliance is placed by eNGOs on external sources of funding. Key findings from the funding analysis are as follows:

- Organisations that receive core funding from government rely heavily on it in order to have the ability to exist to attract other forms of funding.
- However, this core funding from government is increasingly limited meaning that eNGOs have had to draw from a wide range of, again, increasingly limited external funding sources in order to raise the funds needed to help them effectively meet environmental targets many of which support the achievement targets set by government.
- There also often a requirement from government / EU to find match funding for projects carried out using grant aid.
- The significant time resources required by many eNGOs in order to secure both government and non-government funding restricts time which could be utilised in meeting targets and delivering activities 'on-the-ground.'
- In addition, the 'continuity' of funding is also crucial for eNGOs in implementing projects. The quality and efficiency of projects can be hampered by the stalling of funds and the overall implications for organisation management brought about through uncertain funding timetables.
- Based on the Study, staff costs are the largest expenditure area amongst eNGOs, and they are mostly concentrated on direct delivery of outputs.
- The voluntary sector provides significant benefits and efficiencies to the environmental sector as a whole. It allows the eNGO sector to make a strong 'value for money' statement to government and other funding bodies and highlights the ability of the sector to engage and attract people to work on the implementation of environmental-focused projects.
- A large proportion of eNGO funding is received from non-NHGP sources. The funding analysis highlights the significant value brought about through eNGOs implementing government objectives and helping to meet targets with relatively low government funding input.

Most eNGOs recognise the need to be creative and innovative in accessing future funding. Many understand their worth and the advantages they provide to government and the wider environment including:

- Cost effectiveness;
- The ability to work with the general public at local levels;
- The ability to work in partnership with numerous stakeholder groups including central and local government, business and the general public;
- Practical management;
- Research & Development work

The forecasts for eNGO funding are bleak and the organisations have a sense of realism in relation to this. The more proactive eNGOs recognise the need to adapt to survive and the stronger eNGOs are building cases for funding and implementing strategies for securing future funds.

The funding analysis section identified some useful feedback directly from eNGOs in relation to actions being taken as well as plans that have been set in place to secure future funding. These viewpoints are referred to in the recommendations and will assist with determining ways of supporting the eNGO sector in the next 5 years.

7.0 KEY CONSULTEE VIEWPOINTS

7.1 *Consultee Responses*

As part of the contextual analysis for the project a number of targeted questionnaires were forwarded to 26 key informants across a series of government organisations. These were followed up with telephone calls and a selection of one to one interviews.

The key informants were asked to provide views on the following issues:

- The current role of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) within their department / division / agency.
- The potential future role for NGOs within their department / division / agency – and the specific areas in which they anticipate NGOs may be involved within their department / division / agency.

Comprehensive feedback (on the areas above) was obtained from a total of 16 key informants:

Table 7a: Organisation	Contact
Northern Ireland Environment Agency	Susanna Allen
	Maia Taylor
	Graham Seymour
	Brian Williams
Department of the Environment – Local Government	Wesley Shannon
Department of the Environment – Waste	Maggie Smith
Department of Agriculture & Rural Development	Keith Morrison
Department of Regional Development	Ian Raphael
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety	Keith Miller
Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure	Edgar Jardine
Rivers Agency	Judith Bankhead
Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside	Peter Archdale
Historic Buildings Council	Frank Robinson
Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action	Stephen Bloomer on behalf of Seamus Mc Aleavey
Department of Social Development (Voluntary & Community Unit)	Michael Donnelly
Department of Enterprise Trade & Industry (Inc NITB)	David McCune

This section of the report presents a summary of their responses and sets these against the responses of the eNGOs/NGOs who were asked similar questions as part of the mapping phase of the project.

7.1.1 Current Role of NGOs/eNGOs (Consultee Perspective)

There was a large degree of overlap between the respondent organisations with regards to their view of the current role of Non Governmental Organisations in the Northern Ireland Environment sector. The following provides an overview of their responses:

The role is:

- To act as stakeholders / consultees
- To advise on policy issues
- To act as lobbyists
- To act as site managers for designated sites
- To provide environmental information
- To provide sustainability training to government departments
- To provide expertise on specific projects
- To identify rural policies which will improve NI as a whole.
- Promotion of access / recreation / countryside
- Biodiversity / conservation

The responses received from the consultees would suggest that they see the current role of NGOs/eNGOs in a largely advisory capacity. While the respective government departments clearly use eNGOs in a more active capacity e.g. contributing to the delivery of government targets, this did not come across strongly in their responses.

The following are some specific comments from respondents:

'To support networks that allow the development of guidance and policy development within their specific field of interest'

DHSSPNI

'Role as consultees both for capital works and on our ongoing maintenance works. We have a list of statutory consultees which includes a number of province wide eNGOs as well as site specific ones. They are consulted as standard on Agency work as required'

DARDNI

'Historically their role was to deliver projects of benefit to the environment – however now funding is not as free for them to do this'

NIEA

'RSPB, Ulster Wildlife Trust and the National Trust are represented on the NI Biodiversity Group, a non statutory advisory group sponsored by this Department. The NIBG comprises of several sectors including NGOs who play an active role within the group; culminating in the recent report to government on many strategic and cross cutting issues such as climate change, data collection and the forthcoming statutory biodiversity duty on public bodies. The NIBG has also played an important role in advising DOE on many aspects of the Wildlife and Natural Environment Bill currently going through the NI Assembly's legislative process.'

DOE

'NITB works with a number of NGOs across different service areas. NITB operates Service Level Agreements with some of these NGOs, whereas with others the relationship is more informal'

NITB

The consultees who responded clearly see NGOs/eNGOs in a largely advisory capacity. There is an evident lack of understanding / appreciation of how NGOs/eNGOs contribute to the **delivery** of government targets. This contrasts sharply with how the NGO respondents view their role.

7.1.2 Future Role of NGOs/eNGOs (Key Informant Perspective)

Key Informants were then asked what they felt the future role of NGOs/eNGOs should be. The following presents some general future roles mentioned by respondents:

- To continue in an advisory / consultee capacity
- To play a more coordinated role – with an agreed commonality (interpreted as a more coherent and coordinated voice on environmental issues)
- Will have an important role to play in supporting rural communities

Respondents also suggested some more specific roles for NGOs/eNGOs in the future. A selection of these is detailed below:

- eNGOs should assist DARD with formulating thinking on renewable energy.
- Scrutiny of salmon and inland fisheries conservation and protection policy, specifically salmon conservation policy over next few years.
- Scrutiny of strategy on biodiversity duty and sustainability.
- Contribution to WFD delivery.
- Contribution to NI Marine Bill.
- DARD will have closer links with NGOs due to the water framework directive and floods directive.
- Should have a stronger link with DARD in a biodiversity role
- The development of partnership projects is likely to make both consultation and active input more likely.

A number of the key informants also offered a few recommendations for NGOs going forward:

- NGOs should collaborate to access EU funding
- They should consider combining resources such as administration to reduce costs
- Integration between NGOs and government departments is important.
- The centralisation of NIEA / Corporate Services will have to be almost mirrored by the NGO sector.
- NGOs should continue to deliver against Tourism targets within the Tourism Strategy Northern Ireland 2020.

Consultees feel that NGOs/eNGOs should not only continue to be involved in an advisory role but should be getting more involved in the major environmental strategies, currently being developed by government.

7.2 eNGO Responses

While eNGO views have been explored in detail in section 5.0 of this report, a selection of their views has been included in this section by way of comparison with the views of the key informants interviewed.

It is interesting to note both the differences and similarities between how the informants and NGOs view the current and future role of NGOs. For this reason, the following section presents the NGO perspective, as taken from the NGO questionnaires, by way of comparison.

7.2.1 Current Role of NGOs/eNGOs (NGO Perspective)

As part of the mapping process, the NIEL members were asked what they felt their current role is. A summary of their responses is detailed below:

- The sector is delivering across a range of programmes for government targets/statutory requirements.
- Providing leadership in the need to protect the NI environment and to take action
- Have an essential role in raising public awareness of their respective areas and lobbying government on the basis of expert-in depth knowledge of those area's requirements.
- Deliver a range of important projects in partnership with central and local government.
- Land management
- Education
- Profile raising with assembly, civil service and local authorities.
- To carry out a number of functions that should be carried out by government and plugging the gaps.
- Have a crucial role in showing the direction that government policy should develop.
- Delivering successful programmes on waste, energy and biodiversity.
- Empowering local community leaders to take action whether it be on the uptake of recycling schemes, enhancing biodiversity and promoting renewable energy.
- Providing a range of projects/information on improving communities and reducing the carbon footprint.
- Significant contribution to practical conservation work, research and education.
- Successfully engaging people to take local ownership for local issues.

There is an evident contrast between the views of the key informants and the NGOs on their current roles. While the majority key informants see the NGOs in largely an advisory capacity, NGOs feel their role is much more than this - they have an active role, delivering projects which are contributing to the achievement of government targets.

7.2.2 Future Role of NGO/eNGOs (NGO Perspective)

NGOs were also asked what they felt their future role should be. A summary of their responses is detailed below:

- Should be given a formal role in policy development and implementation in their respective area.
- Continue lobbying
- Have a key role to play in engaging businesses and the wider community on issues such as climate change, waste and biodiversity.
- Show government how the eNGOs can be a leading body in helping meet UK climate change targets. More on the ground activity.

- To ensure there is creative and strategic thinking taking place at both government and political levels to ensure the future of the environment.

NGOs feel that they should have a more active role in helping government meet environmental targets.

The NGO respondents also offered some recommendations as to how the sector might perform better going forward:

- NGOs should deliver projects in a more effective and coordinated way.
- Closer cooperation between organisations would lead to a stronger voice.
- Should explore partnerships and avoid duplications

These recommendations mirror those from the key informant interviews. There is a common view that NGOs should be working more closely and should pool resources to avoid duplication.

7.3 NICVA Feedback

Seamus McAleavey, Chief Executive of the Northern Ireland Council for Voluntary Action was also contacted as part of the key informant exercise. Stephen Bloomer responded on behalf of Mr McAleavey. NICVA was asked provide information on:

- How organisations within the voluntary sector have dealt with funding reductions ;and
- Examples of successful cooperation amongst organisations in voluntary sector.

Mr Bloomer provided some interesting information. This is summarised below.

Impact of the Recession

NICVA published a new piece of research on the impact of the recession on the voluntary and community sector, following a survey in September 2009.

Key findings of the research include:

- Just over half of respondents stated that the recession has yet to have an impact on their funding streams.
- Nearly three quarters of respondents are unsure of the impact the recession will have on sectoral funding in the future.
- An overwhelming majority of respondents believe that the demand for services has increased as a result of the recession.
- 71.4% of organisations have had no additional financial support from their funders to increase their capacity to deal with additional demand on services.
- 13.1% of organisations have had to initiate staff redundancies. 21.4% believe they may have to enforce this.
- 20.2% of organisations stated that they have introduced or will soon have to introduce a wage freeze.

The research highlights how organisations in the sector have responded to difficult financial circumstances.

Mergers/Collaboration

In a recent NICVA Member survey 63% of respondents recognised that mergers would play a part in counteracting the recession fallout.

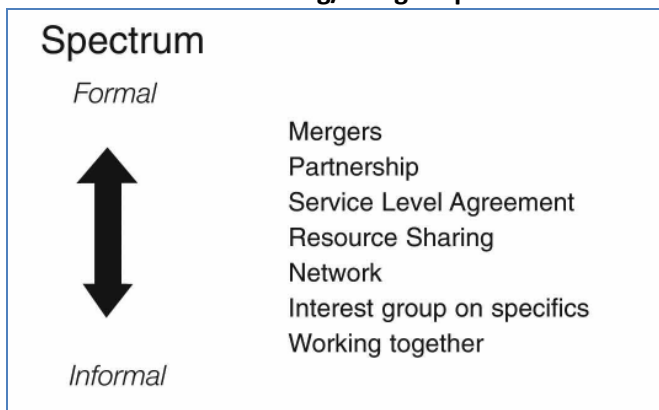
Mergers are not easy and will not work for all, so with this in mind, NICVA has developed a number of services to help Chief Executives consider and act on their options.

NICVA has produced a regular publication giving information and advice on collaborative working and mergers. The newsletters provide information on different merger options and case studies from organisations who have already agreed to pool their resources and work together.

An extract from one of the newsletters discusses the various levels of merger and collaboration available to organisations as well as exploring the risks and benefits of these arrangements:

Organisations can work together in a range of ways, from the informal, as contract partners, through to joint delivery of a service with a formal service level agreement to, finally, merger.

The Collaborative Working/Merger Spectrum



Benefits and risks of collaboration or merger

Mergers and working together more collaboratively have a number of advantages including:

- Improved or wider range of services for the beneficiaries
- Financial savings and better use of resources
- Knowledge and information sharing
- Sharing of risks in new projects
- Stronger united voice
- Better co-ordination of activities.

However, there are risks:

- Outcomes do not justify time and resources invested

- Loss of flexibility in working practices
- Loss of autonomy
- Cultural mismatch between organisations
- Mission drift
- Damage to the organisations if merger is unsuccessful.

The newsletter also reports on specific merger/collaboration success stories exploring the key challenges experienced and how they were overcome.

The NICVA feedback shows how organisations, who are experiencing serious financial difficulties, can successfully collaborate/merge to weather the storm.

7.4 Summary of Key Informant Recommendations

There is evident disparity between how the consultees view the current role of eNGO/NGOs and how the eNGO/NGOs view their role.

While the consultee responses would suggest that they see the NGOs in largely an advisory capacity, NGOs feel their role is much more than this. They feel they have a more active role, delivering projects which will contribute to government targets.

The findings from the majority of consultee interviews demonstrate a lack of understanding/appreciation of how the work carried out by NGOs currently contributes to meeting government targets.

In terms of the future role of eNGO/NGOs in the Northern Ireland Environment sector there are some common recommendations which have emerged from discussions with both consultees and NGOs. These are detailed below:

- NGOs should collaborate to access EU funding.
- They should consider combining resources such as administration to reduce costs and deliver projects in a more effective and coordinated way.
- The NICVA information on collaboration/merger presents some useful advice and positive suggestions for the eNGO sector in Northern Ireland.
- Integration between NGOs and government departments will be important.
- NGOs should be getting more involved in the major environmental strategies, currently being developed by government.

While there is some disparity between how the key informants and the NGO/eNGOs view the current role of NGO/eNGOs in the Northern Ireland Environment sector, there is clearly a common view between both parties as to how their role should not only develop in the future but also how they might perform better.

8.0 SUMMARY & CONCLUSIONS

The following section presents a summary of the research findings, with related conclusions.

8.1 Contextual Analysis

Recent and proposed cuts in government funding have necessitated urgent action at all levels of government. The impact on the DoE, the NIEA and the environmental NGOs funded to assist government in delivering its environmental work has been particularly severe.

Discussions with the NIEA have indicated that while historically the role of the eNGOs in Northern Ireland has been to deliver projects of benefit to the environment, NIEA budget to support this activity is becoming more restricted. The NIEA is keen for eNGOs to provide added value through attracting more funding, attracting volunteers and to reach niche areas that NIEA cannot reach.

NIEA has indicated that with the reduced funding they will be focusing on key priorities / objectives which meet legislative requirements, rather than funding projects that would be 'good' to do.

There are a number of other funding options available to eNGOs in Northern Ireland, outside of what is available from NIEA though all require significant time commitment. They may also require more collaboration than is currently the case.

This study highlights the fact that eNGOs are already attracting significant levels of volunteer commitment, and significant levels of funding from a wide range of sources. However, this fact has not been fully communicated to Government, and it is critical that core Government funding be maintained if the eNGO sector is to continue to attract other funding, and to continue to harness (and indeed increase) the level of volunteer commitment.

Although eNGOs have been attracting this additional non-government funding, the sector will nevertheless need to review all aspects of income generation, and potential cost savings – possibly based on the modes adopted in other issue based sectors. This is likely to require a good deal of time commitment, and potentially significant compromise on the part of eNGOs.

Research into how other 'issue focused' sectors are responding to cuts in government funding has identified a number of potential options for eNGOs as a means of reducing costs. These are listed below:

- Establishing shared service arrangements
- Organisational restructuring
- Remote working
- Pay freezes
- Voluntary reduction in hours
- Complementary working
- Collaboration in work delivery
- Collaboration on funding bids
- Mergers

These processes have been successfully implemented by similar organisations in other parts of the United Kingdom as a reaction to the current economic climate and should therefore be considered by Northern Ireland eNGOs going forward.

8.2 Profile/Map of the eNGO Sector

The eNGO profiling / mapping has shown that based on the feedback of 38 organisations:

- The sector sample employs over 720 full-time staff members. 30,000 acres of land is owned by four eNGOs. In addition, 22 buildings are owned by the responding eNGOs across NI, with an additional 300 owned by the National Trust.
- The largest proportion of eNGOs operate solely in Northern Ireland with the vast majority of participating eNGOs being “locally run and autonomous” organisations. In addition, most eNGOs that took part on the Study hold “company limited by guarantee with charitable status.”
- Policy development, campaigning / lobbying and education are particularly common areas of focus for eNGOs in NI with other areas having strong focus within the region.
- Many organisations are also involved in more than five key activities – providing an insight into potential levels of overlap.
- Many key environmental themes are represented by many eNGOs in NI (thus presenting potential areas of collaboration, or overlap). Also, there are a number of themes that are covered by fewer organisations – but nevertheless collaboration and co-operation may still be possible. It is also important that activity in these ‘theme areas’ that are represented by relatively few eNGOs should not be jeopardised by an interruption to funding.

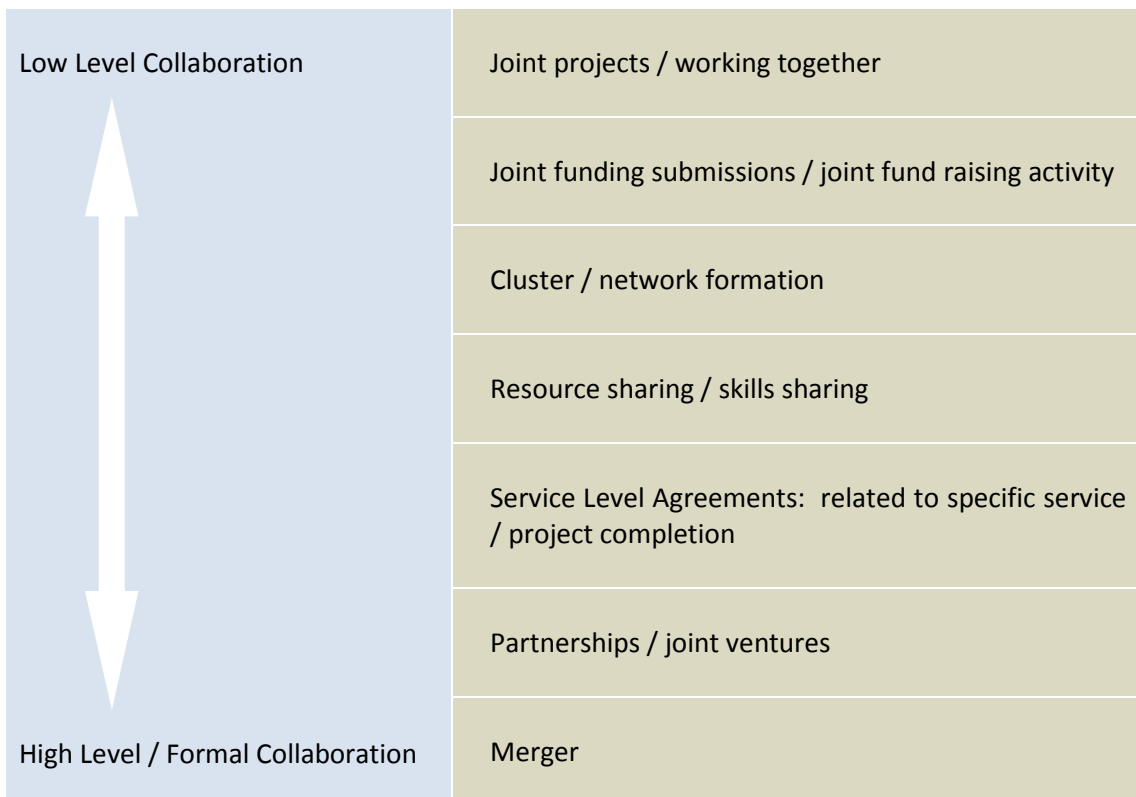
Whilst there are distinct areas for potential collaboration and cost saving, it is important to stress that continuity of funding is important (particularly in areas / themes that are not over-represented), and core Government funding is required to attract funding from other sources.

8.3 Potential “Closer Working” Areas for eNGOs

- There are clear overlaps in eNGO activity areas, common objectives and similar areas of activity.
- Clearly the potential for overlapping is stronger amongst organisations that focus on particular themes, however, there is also more potential scope for co-operation and shared services within these groups.
- There are also levels of potential overlap between organisations that are focused on different themes, yet carry out similar activities, for example, Education or promoting sustainable development.
- Although the vast majority of participating eNGOs are “locally run and autonomous” organisations, it is important for NI-based organisations to open links with UK / global organisations operating within a similar remit.

- Organisations have their own remits, however, in some cases (especially where there is local autonomy), ‘pooled’ or shared resources would be beneficial in, for example, developing policies, campaigning/ lobbying, volunteering.
- A collective approach to specific areas of remit is likely to benefit both organisations and the sector as a whole, hence, for example locally run organisations within certain themes can assess their medium and longer term objectives in parallel to avoid overlap and improve capabilities and efficiencies.
- In addition, organisations may consider working in partnership / collaboration to identify potential links that may create opportunities for each organisation, for example, in terms of the maximisation of funding.
- The sharing of contacts / information and knowledge will undoubtedly be of mutual benefit for organisations with common goals. There are examples of this in NI and further afield that can be used as a guideline.
- Relationships should be promoted or facilitated where a number of organisations are concentrated on a particular theme and have shared roles, however, are restricted by barriers such as lack of local autonomy.

Collaborative arrangements between eNGOs can take many forms, and indeed can evolve from ‘lighter’ forms of collaboration through to more structured or formal collaborative arrangements:



Collaboration will of course involve a number of risks for eNGOs, such as the investment of significant management time (and the risk that outcomes do not justify the time invested), mission creep, a clash of objectives or cultures, loss of brand identity and associated membership and volunteering, loss of membership income and a loss of flexibility.

These potential risks do, of course need to be balanced with the ultimate risk – that of a potential loss of financial viability, due to the reduction in funding available to the sector.

On the positive side, it must also be recognised that collaboration between eNGOs can involve a number of positive benefits, including financial savings, sharing of expertise, sharing (reduction) of risk, better co-ordination of activities across organisations (particularly within common interest areas), the presentation of a more coherent voice to audiences including Government and the public.

In particular, collaboration could involve the sharing of expertise in new areas that will challenge eNGOs in the coming months and years – skills / expertise in relation to bid management, fund raising, marketing / sales, and the taking of a more commercial approach to governance and the management of collaborative / Joint Venture relationships.

This is particularly important as potential collaboration will of course involve management challenges in the eNGO sector, on two levels:

- ❖ The **skills and experience** required to successfully identify collaborative opportunities, conclude negotiations, and implement and manage collaborative relationships.
- ❖ The **management time** commitment required.

In line with the points above is the need for a suitable body that can further assess common ground, overlaps and collaborative opportunities identified amongst eNGOs based on closer examination of staff resources, current assets and specific objectives. Such a body will, ideally, be fully equipped to:

- Establish correct “fit” amongst the organisations
- Facilitate discussions regarding the way forward
- Facilitate the development of partnerships and collaborations

The details in this section of the report and appendices I, II and III will be crucial for this purpose.

Ultimately, the foundations for this exercise have been provided through the information gathered, hence it is up to the sector itself to take the information provided to the next stage in order to identify and plan specifically for accelerating collaboration and improving closer working.

8.4 Summary of eNGO Contribution to Government Objectives

It is clear that there is a high-level of value provided through eNGO activities. This value spans central government and local government. eNGO outputs also provide benefits that are outside of the scope of the “environmental” sector.

This is supported by the fact that (based on the sample of participating eNGOs):

- The vast majority of eNGOs that participated in the Study stated that all or some of their work contributes to government objectives. Despite this, a third of eNGOs involved in the Study receive no funding from government to deliver activities.
- A wide range of government departments and specific government targets would be negatively affected if the delivery of eNGO outputs was reduced.
- A lot of the work carried out by eNGOs is either not funded by government or only partly funded. A small percentage of organisations receive complete funding for the delivery of work that is dedicated to assisting government objectives and helping government meet environmental targets. Frequently, non-government funding is from sources unavailable to government.

eNGOs contribute to the key objectives of **all** NI government departments. The achievements of eNGOs focus on environmental targets, however, their activities transcend across other government targets / departments including health and education.

Government funding, to date, is often inflexible in the holistic support it can give from across departments and therefore across a range of related aspects of an interdisciplinary topic such as environment. Such inflexibility restricts collaborative and innovative ways of dealing with the environment.

In the vast majority of cases, eNGOs must be successful in receiving external funding in order to deliver its activities. This is usually in the form of a percentage of match funding required by government funding packages.

Of those organisations that receive government funding to help implement activities to support government objectives just over half receive enough funding to cover 49% of total activity costs. Around a third of participating eNGOs receive no government funding to support activity costs.

Government funding is essential for the survival of many eNGOs – to allow them to operate to seek additional, highly competitive and increasingly scarce funds where possible. In order to both survive and continue to work efficiently, eNGOs recognise that it is essential to find other funding mechanisms and sources.

Match funding from other sources is a crucial requirement of government funding and support to find additional sources of match funding is important.

8.5 Funding Analysis Summary

There is clearly a high level of value provided to government through eNGO activities. This funding analysis shows, however, that a high level of reliance is placed by eNGOs on external sources of funding. From the analysis it is clear that:

- It is very important to note that many organisations rely heavily on funding from government in order to have the ability to attract any other forms of funding.
- However, eNGOs draw from a wide range of external funding sources in order to raise the funds needed to help them effectively support delivery of government environmental targets.
- NIEA Natural Heritage operates a grant programme to support the delivery of its priorities. Not all of the works undertaken by the organisations involved in this study are eligible to seek funding from the Natural Heritage Grant Programme. There is, however, a significant funding gap in the availability of grant for cross-cutting NIEA themes and wider environmental activity.
- Also, the significant time resources required by many key eNGO contacts in order to secure both government and non-government funding restricts time which should be utilised in meeting targets and delivering activities ‘on-the-ground.’
- In addition, the ‘continuity’ of funding is also crucial for eNGOs in implementing projects. The quality and efficiency of projects can be hampered by the stalling of funds and the overall implications for organisation management brought about through uncertain funding timetables.
- Staff costs are the largest expenditure area amongst eNGOs, but they are mostly concentrated on direct delivery of outputs.
- The voluntary sector provides significant benefits, efficiencies and ‘value for money’ to the environmental sector as a whole.
- In total, eight of the 38 eNGOs receive almost £1m of core funding from NIEA.
- A large proportion of eNGO funding is received from non-NIEA sources.
- The funding analysis highlights the significant value brought about through eNGOs implementing government objectives and helping to meet targets with relatively low government funding input.

The total value of funding from non-government sources when the estimated size of volunteer input is added is approximately £21.7m. This figure is approximately £16.4m when the two organisations that receive a very large proportion of funding from government for specific tasks are excluded.

Therefore, based on every £1 that Government invests into the eNGO sector through funding, £1.46 is delivered by eNGOs availing of “other” sources of funding. This figure is increased to £3.37 when the two organisations that receive a very large proportion of funding from government for specific tasks are excluded.

Most eNGOs recognise the need to be creative and innovative in accessing future funding. Many understand their worth and the advantages they provide or potentially provide to government and the wider environment, however, are not necessarily adept at promoting their strengths – to Government, or to other funders. For example, the impressive figures above in relation to funding, volunteer contributions, etc needs to be more actively ‘promoted’.

The forecasts for eNGO funding are, undoubtedly, bleak and the organisations have a sense of realism in relation to this. The proactive eNGOs recognise the need to adapt to survive and the stronger eNGOs are building cases for funding and implementing strategies for securing future funds. Some direct support in maximising funds and working collaboratively to do so will be highly valuable to these eNGOs.

8.6 Key Informant opinion - Summary

Due to the fact that the Study gathered a lot of eNGO feedback, it was very useful to obtain the views of non-eNGO key informants in the sector.

There is evident disparity between how the consultees view the current role of eNGO/NGOs and how the eNGO/NGOs view their role.

While the consultee responses would suggest that they see the NGOs in largely an advisory capacity, NGOs feel their role is much more than this. They feel they have a more active role, delivering projects which will contribute to government targets.

The findings from the majority of consultee interviews demonstrate a lack of understanding/appreciation of how the work carried out by NGOs currently contributes to meeting government targets.

In terms of the future role of eNGO/NGOs in the Northern Ireland Environment sector there are some common recommendations which have emerged from discussions with both consultees and NGOs. These are detailed below:

- NGOs should collaborate to access EU funding.
- They should consider combining resources such as administration to reduce costs and deliver projects in a more effective and coordinated way.
- The NICVA information on collaboration/merger presents some useful advice and positive suggestions for the eNGO sector in Northern Ireland.
- Integration between NGOs and government departments will be important.
- NGOs should be getting more involved in the major environmental strategies, currently being developed by government.

While there is some disparity between how the key informants and the NGO/eNGOs view the current role of NGO/eNGOs in the Northern Ireland Environment sector, there is clearly a common view between both parties as to how their role should not only develop in the future but also how they might perform better.

9.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

This final section of the report presents a number of recommendations for the eNGO sector going forward, based on the research findings from all aspects of the project. These are detailed below:

eNGO Specific

Internal eNGO changes / developments

1. A strategic approach by eNGOs is essential in order to aid survival. Whilst it may be argued that organisations can only plan confidently when their fundamental core costs are securely funded, there is a view that in the current climate, core funding will only be secured by organisations that display clarity of thinking in relation to objectives, strategy, and action.

Part of this clarity of thinking will increasingly involve collaboration between organisations with shared objectives, and shared focus in relation to either themes, or geography.

2. Complete assessments of internal costs and efficiencies will undoubtedly be required by a large number of eNGOs. In light of funding reductions, this exercise should be clinical and realistic – based on the clarity referred to above regarding objectives and strategy. The exercise should also be undertaken with a view to identifying potential areas of cost sharing between organisations.
3. Organisations must have clear, measurable, achievable goals that are dedicated to delivering on key environmental objectives, and implementing tangible programmes on the ground. Whilst the bulk of all eNGO income and expenditure is focused on deliverables (even staff costs), there is still scope for the saving of ‘establishment’ costs, and the re-direction of further budget to deliverables / implementation.

There is also however a major need to communicate this effectively to Government.

4. The promotion, marketing and selling of the organisation should be considered within the strategic objectives. Key benefits, and areas of strength should be emphasised as part of an ongoing communication strategy with Government and other key informants / influencers, and then reinforced in future grant submissions.

Working Together as a Sector

5. As a consequence of the funding situation, organisations should be working together to deliver more efficiently with less funding. This should bear in mind the fact that organisations will receive funding as part of a new and more efficient delivery partnership which can deliver on key environmental and sustainability issues and targets.
6. Some eNGOs are not aware of many additional sources of funding. Support and co-ordination is needed for organisations to identify, work together and access funding.
7. Although it is important for eNGOs to try to find additional funding, they must combine this with attempting to determine new methods, for example, collaboration to access such funds.

8. As well as networking with other eNGOs, engaging with stakeholders and the wider public is required in order to promote organisational capabilities and seek collaborative partnerships.
9. It is clear from the research carried out that there is a major misconception in Government (among key informants / influencers) in relation to the active role of eNGOs. There is also little awareness of the tangible value of the contribution made by the sector i.e for every £1 invested by government, £1.46 (including the two recipients of large levels of government funding for specific tasks) or £3.37 (excluding the two recipients of large levels of government funding for specific tasks) is delivered by eNGOs availing of “other” sources of funding. This should be addressed and promoted more effectively.
10. Organisations have their own remits, however, in some cases, ‘pooled’ or shared resources would be beneficial in, for example, developing policies, campaigning/ lobbying or volunteering.
11. The sharing of contacts / information and knowledge will undoubtedly be of mutual benefit to organisations with common goals. There are examples of networked organisations which come together to share expertise in NI and further afield that can be replicated.
12. The mapping exercise has identified a number of areas within the sector where collaboration on the delivery of specific environmental tasks/targets is plausible. eNGOs should consider working in partnership / collaboration to identify potential links that may create opportunities for each organisation, for example, in terms of the maximisation of funding.
13. A collective approach to specific areas of remit is likely to benefit both organisations and the sector as a whole, hence, for example locally run organisations within certain themes can assess their medium and longer term objectives in parallel to avoid overlap and improve capabilities and efficiencies. The findings of this Study may facilitate some of these collaborative possibilities.
14. Despite the fact that the vast majority of participating eNGOs are “locally run and autonomous” organisations, it is possible for NI-based organisations to open links with UK / global organisations operating within a similar remit in order to achieve common goals, ensure overlapping activities are limited and to improve the environmental performance of the region.

Additional Funding Opportunities

The Public Health Agenda

15. The latest annual report published by the NI Public Health Agency in July 2010 states that one of the key public health challenges is ‘Promoting the need for physical activity to improve health and wellbeing’. There are clear opportunities for the eNGO sector to work in partnership with the Public Health Agency to address this challenge. With the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty currently managed by eNGOs, they could approach the PHA with a view to working together on specific programmes which will help ‘promote the need for physical activity’ using these AONBs. This could attract additional funding into the sector.

Social & Community Development

16. The Department of Social Development delivers a range of funding programmes which could present opportunities for eNGOs. These are detailed below:

- Local Community Fund: One of the specific objectives of the fund is 'to help communities improve their local environments'.
- Community Support Programme: One of the programme's aims is to contribute to 'a sustainable community, through the creation of the conditions for social and economic development and promotion (within district councils and outside) of a long term, integrated systems approach to developing and achieving vibrant communities by jointly addressing social, health, environmental, economic and community relations issues'.

Increased communication with the Department will identify how these opportunities might be accessed.

European Funding

17. There is potential funding for priority areas of environmental policy under EU Programmes. The current EU programmes most relevant to the environment are INTERREG IVA Programme (2007-2013), PEACE III, LIFE+ and the European Agricultural Fund for Rural Development (EAFRD).

In order to access this funding, organisations will have to be more proactive in lobbying to their Euro MPs as well as to the Northern Ireland Government. A central and accessible organisation will also have a role in educating organisations on the European funding available to them and how best to access this.

One way of achieving this would be to develop an information portal which details all available funding sources and provides information for organisations on how to apply for these.

Government Specific

18. A new and more efficient delivery partnership between government and eNGOs which can deliver on key environmental and sustainability issues and targets is emerging. eNGOs have to become proactive in adapting to this changing situation.

This is particularly the case as Government (and key informants) appear to be poorly informed by the sector.

19. As well as a strategic approach from government in dealing with and maximising the benefits gained from eNGOs, a strategic approach from eNGOs as a partner to Government should be considered. There are more opportunities for developing further partnerships and co-operative delivery arrangements between government and eNGOs to the benefit of the environment.

20. Communication between government departments and eNGOs should be improved in order to assist eNGO planning and boost productivity within the sector in the face of uncertain futures. This communication will help to overcome the misconceptions noted previously.

21. A Government role in promoting partnership and collaboration between eNGOs will be highly valuable, adding credibility to the process.

However it is vital that the process be initiated by the eNGO sector – involving:

- A degree of rationalisation and collaboration of the sector
 - Development of a coordinated message to government
 - Harnessing the input of government in key strategic areas
 - Informing government of the value contributed by the sector for £1 of government funding invested i.e for every £1 invested by government, £1.46 (including the two recipients of large levels of government funding for specific tasks) or £3.37 (excluding the two recipients of large levels of government funding for specific tasks) is delivered by eNGOs availing of “other” sources of funding.
22. Government should proactively identify targets that eNGOs can deliver then actively seek partnerships.
23. Various parts of government need to work together to identify common or complementary targets and eNGO partners.
24. In the absence of this pro-active approach by the sector, there is a danger that funding constraints in Government combined with the lack in-depth understanding of the contribution being made by the sector may result in government driving the change process, in a direction that may reduce the contribution of eNGO sector.
25. Exploring partnership options with government is of great strategic importance and should be pursued with speed.
26. The role of Biodiversity Officers within local government could be expanded to include assistance with AONB management.
27. It is especially important to look at areas which span Agencies or Departments, such as environmental education or waste management, where delivery by third parties can be especially effective in delivering multiple goals and benefits.
28. Government and, of course, specifically, NIEA should consider where its funding can maximise leverage within the sector whilst concentrating on achieving the environmental priorities and objectives.
- Government as a whole should also work towards identifying opportunities where their funding can maximise leverage of other funding sources. This can be achieved through discussions between government and other funders or between eNGOs and other funders.
29. Match funding from other sources is a crucial requirement of government funding. Support to find additional sources of match funding is important to the eNGO sector.
30. In parallel, Government should be working more actively with the sector to secure EU funding - to deliver on specific environmental projects and targets. Northern Ireland in particular does not make the most of EU opportunities, and this would help the Department secure funding to carry out work in partnership with eNGOs.

Skills & Experience

31. As is abundantly clear from this report, the changing funding environment presents skills and experience challenges for the eNGO sector – at management level, Board level, and at sector - representative level.

In order to help the eNGO sector begin to address the challenges faced, it is recommended that a comprehensive training needs assessment and skills review be undertaken by an external / third party organisation – recognising that the assessment of skills suitability must be viewed in relation to the changing environment, and future skills / experience needs.

This review / assessment should span management level, board level, and sector-representative level.

Governance

32. These new management skills and experience challenges can only be embraced effectively if the Governance / Board structures of eNGOs:

- Recognise the need to respond positively to the changing funding environment;
- Involve or draw in people with a range of skills and experience that reflect the new challenges emerging;
- Provide the flexibility required to balance core environmental objectives / themes, with the growing need to develop a viable ‘business model’;
- Adopt a legal structure that allows for the attraction of new sources of funding i.e if possible, seek to become a ‘company limited by guarantee’.

This of course raises important questions for the membership of eNGOs in relation to core mission and objectives, versus the more commercial view that may be required in some instances to facilitate longer term viability.

Hence, it is recommended that eNGOs may need to review governance structures and management structures in the light of new emerging challenges – and in order to prepare them to embrace change.

In addition, as noted above, the skills / training needs review recommended above should embrace Board level in addition to management level.

Leadership Role in The eNGO Sector

33. It is important that one organisation takes a clear leadership role, to progress the issues emerging from this Study.

Subject to sectoral agreement, NIEL could take this role. Key challenges to be progressed are as follows:

- (i) The facilitation of collaboration between individual eNGOs, indeed groups of eNGOs.

- (ii) The provision of information and direction to eNGOs in relation to sources of funding, matching of eNGOs and funding sources, and the provision of advice on the approach to be taken to successfully secure funding.
- (iii) Increased communication with Government in relation to the role being fulfilled by eNGOS, the funding already being raised by eNGOS, the level of volunteer commitment already secured, and the critical importance of government funding as the trigger to attract additional sources of funds.
- (iv) The fostering of skills development within the eNGO sector – at management and board level. This could in part be achieved through collaborative skills development or skills – resource sharing. The organisation could also take the lead in relation to the promotion of / indeed completion of the skills review and training needs assessment recommended above.

It must also be recognised that in order to fulfil this leadership role, NIEL or another lead organisation will need to address its own skills and resources – in relation to the challenges faced by the sector, and the changes to be facilitated.