



National Heritage *Plan*



**An Roinn Ealaíon, Oidhreachta,
Gaeltachta agus Oileán**
Department of Arts, Heritage,
Gaeltacht and the Islands





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Foreword

The increased focus on, and public support for, protecting our heritage is a reflection of the more self assured, prosperous and educated society which has emerged in Ireland in recent years. Heritage is valued by the people of Ireland not only for its intrinsic value but for its economic benefits through tourism; the educational benefits of studying monuments, archives, flora and fauna; and the cultural and recreational benefits of castles, museums, canals and parks.

The publication for the first time of a National Heritage Plan is one of my key achievements as Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. Signalling a new more coherent approach, it sets out a comprehensive strategy and framework for the protection and management of heritage over the coming five year period.

The Government Policy Statement on Heritage, contained in the Plan, states *it is an objective of Government to ensure the protection of our heritage and to promote its enjoyment by all.* This underscores the recognition which the Government accords to heritage and provides the impetus for the actions which are contained in the Plan.

The Plan is the fruit of much preparatory work and consultations at many levels: with members of the public; with interest groups and non-governmental organisations; with other Government departments and public bodies including, in particular, the Heritage Council; and, not least, with the dedicated staff in my own Department. I thank all who have made submissions and who have contributed in any way to the preparation of the Plan for their support and interest.



Síle de Valera, T.D.

Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands

April, 2002

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The National Museum of Ireland

The Office of Public Works

Cavan County Museum

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Introduction

While our heritage is inextricably intertwined with our sense of identity, it also affirms the historic, cultural and natural inheritance which is shared on the island of Ireland. For present and future generations who will live in Ireland that inheritance has the ability to enhance and enrich the context of everyday existence. It has the capacity to vividly convey to visitors and those living in Ireland alike what it means to be Irish. In short, our heritage is a presence which physically expresses the essence and the heartbeat of our collective historical identity.

There is little doubt that our heritage faces serious challenges and threats, but there is also cause for great optimism. Such threats and such promise affect us all, for the people of Ireland are not only the proud possessors of our heritage, we are also its guardians. Each one of us, as individuals and as a nation, has a duty to carry the responsibility for protecting and enhancing our heritage to succeeding generations. The National Heritage Plan provides us all with the means and the direction to fulfil that duty.

For the purposes of preparing the National Heritage Plan, natural heritage, archaeological and architectural heritage, moveable, documentary and archival heritage, and inland waterways were considered. Notwithstanding the fact that the Irish language is a unique and vital part of our heritage it was considered appropriate it should remain outside the remit of this Plan. The promotion of the Gaeltacht and of Irish as a spoken language are issues that are being addressed in their own right in accordance with existing policy and with the commitments contained in *An Action Programme for the Millennium*. It remains an underlying principle of this Plan that actions proposed for the benefit of heritage should, wherever possible, encompass the use of, or presentation of, the Irish language in integrated and meaningful ways.

THE PLAN IN CONTEXT

The purpose of the National Heritage Plan is to set out a clear and coherent strategy and framework for the protection and enhancement of our heritage over the next five years. This is a new approach. Never before has the task of preparing a single vision for the protection of our heritage been attempted. The preparation of the National Heritage Plan establishes clear priorities across the sector and enables everyone who is interested in our heritage to work towards common goals. These goals are focussed on the core objective of protecting our heritage, as well as promoting it as a resource to be enjoyed by all. They are in line with the principles underlying the Government's Policy Statement on Heritage, which is outlined in the following pages and provides the context for the publication of this Plan.

This Plan is a national plan. It is published with the endorsement of the Government, in fulfilment of a clear commitment in the Government's *Action Programme for the Millennium*. The National Heritage Plan spells out a range of measures, involving significant costs, and the time-scale within which they might be implemented. These measures will be considered in due course in the context of available resources.

Every action in this Plan is founded on the principle of sustainable development which states that the needs of the present generation must be met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Nowhere is this principle more important than in managing our heritage where the challenges are numerous. Archaeological monuments are being bulldozed, architectural heritage is being demolished or simply left to decay, and bird and animal species are struggling for survival as their habitats come under threat. In many areas we lack the detailed baseline information to evaluate precisely what is happening and what is under threat. The actions we take to meet those challenges in the immediate future must not prejudice our commitment to the long-term protection of our heritage.

Introduction

The actions and targets identified are realistic and achievable and represent the priorities for the management and protection of our heritage over the next five years. The financial and personnel resources available to the heritage sector are not unlimited and this document does not represent itself as a panacea for every difficulty that has arisen in managing our heritage. There are many worthwhile actions which, although not included here, may be considered as priorities for future Heritage Plans. Nevertheless, the bold and ambitious actions identified here will, when implemented, represent the greatest advance in the protection and enhancement of our heritage in the history of this State.

DRAWING UP THE PLAN

The National Heritage Plan is the product of a long and detailed consultative process. Over 350 responses were received to the request for public submissions and every submission was carefully examined and analysed. While the detailed proposals made by many contributors may not be reflected in the Plan, their commitment to the protection of heritage has pointed the way forward. A Steering Group comprising officers of the heritage and cultural divisions of the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, together with representatives of the Heritage Council, took the preparations a step further by examining their own work areas, the challenges they faced, and the opportunities presented through the formation of the Plan. The Heritage Council contributed a valuable series of policy papers on heritage. Different perspectives on the various issues surrounding heritage have been provided by other Government Departments. Bringing together all these contributions has served to emphasise the complexity of the relationships between different aspects of our heritage and to reinforce the value of preparing a single strategy and framework for its management.

The publication of the National Heritage Plan should not be seen as the end of a process of collaboration, however, but rather the beginning. This Plan contains 163 actions, some of which can

be achieved by staff working in the State heritage sector, but many of which will require direct action by others. The success of this Plan will depend entirely on the enthusiasm with which its objectives and actions are embraced by individuals, communities, volunteer and professional organisations, the private sector, local authorities, statutory bodies, and by all levels of Government.

THE ECONOMIC DIMENSION

Heritage is a solid and substantial reality, deserving of protection for its intrinsic value. Our natural heritage, archaeology, architecture, inland waterways, and cultural heritage combine to provide Ireland with resources of tremendous social, educational, recreational, and aesthetic value. In economic terms, our heritage is of fundamental importance to our tourism industry in a wide variety of ways. The quality of scenery in Ireland has been identified as the single greatest attraction we have to offer overseas tourists, who in 2000 contributed almost €3.8 billion (£3 billion) to the economy. A 2000 survey demonstrated that over 50% of overseas tourists had engaged in cultural or other heritage activities during their holidays, while other surveys showed that in 1998 over 600,000 overseas visitors engaged in outdoor activities such as hill walking, cycling, angling, or cruising on our inland waterways. Of course, these activities are available to all and, apart from the social and recreational benefits, the value of domestic trips by Irish residents is estimated to have been over €1,092 million (£860 million) in 2000.

Ireland's physical environment has also been identified as a major attraction for the international film industry, which in 1999 generated over €116.82 million (£92 million) for the economy through productions in Ireland as well as providing valuable work experience for those employed in the Irish film industry. The use of Irish locations in major international film productions also provides a further boost for overseas tourism. Our heritage plays an economically valuable, if unquantifiable, role in other areas of activity. For

example, Ireland's food and beverage exports, which were valued at over €6.35 billion (£5 billion) in 2000, are assisted greatly by the reputation of our unspoilt natural environment, while Ireland's arts and craft sectors continue to draw inspiration from our natural and cultural heritage. Economic considerations primarily influence the choice of location to invest capital and create employment, but our quality of life, the richness of our cultural heritage, and our local environment should not be underestimated in this respect. In this and in other regards, our heritage in all its manifestations is one of Ireland's key assets.

The full benefits of investment to achieve economic objectives will not be realised in terms of living standards and life-styles unless accompanied by investment aimed at cherishing the richness and diversity of our cultural heritage and the preservation of our environment.

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

One of the key concepts underlying this Plan is reflected in the wording of the Government Policy Statement and in the title of the first chapter, both of which refer to "placing heritage at the heart of public life". This concept is not limited to 'official' public life, as in, for example, the actions of elected representatives, or of Government Departments or other State agencies. It is not limited to the work of local authorities, although such work in relation to heritage represents a very important theme of this Plan. The concept is intended to be all-embracing and to encompass the actions of individuals, communities, the private sector, non-governmental organisations, and regional and local bodies - all of which have a critical role to play in the protection and promotion of our heritage. As the protection of heritage is everybody's common goal, it makes sense - and is an underlying principle throughout this Plan - to proceed in all cases through consultation and in a spirit of partnership.

While the actions proposed in this Plan correspond to the themes of the Government Policy Statement, priority actions or themes are also identified at the beginning of each chapter. These priorities include key actions relating to:

- Local Heritage Plans, supported by enhanced levels of heritage expertise within local authorities;
- increased levels of assistance for the protection of the archaeological and architectural heritage;
- the implementation of the National Biodiversity Plan and addressing the conservation of habitats, species, genetic diversity and the natural heritage;
- the initiation of a heritage inventory programme and establishment of a central heritage archive and library;
- the establishment of new structures in Dúchas, the Heritage Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, to provide a more efficient, integrated and regionalised service;
- the provision of total additional financial allocations of €123.16m (£97m) on a phased basis over the life of the Plan; and
- the deployment of a total of 102 additional staff to enhance existing heritage programmes and to operate the new structures proposed in the Plan.

THE FUTURE

This Plan sets out actions to be achieved over the coming five year period. As stated above, it does not purport to resolve all of the difficulties facing our heritage at this time. What it does seek is to set in place a framework within which priority actions can be taken for the benefit of our heritage over successive periods, each of five years duration. This Plan includes mechanisms for monitoring and review, to ensure the next Plan can build on the achievements - and take into account the new challenges - that will occur over the next five years.



Government Policy Statement

It is an objective of Government to ensure the protection of our heritage and to promote its enjoyment by all

In seeking to meet this objective, the Government will:

- place the protection and enjoyment of heritage at the heart of public life;
- promote the measures required for the protection of our heritage;
- encourage the accumulation of the knowledge necessary to protect our heritage;
- promote awareness and enjoyment of our heritage; and,
- play an active role in heritage protection in a cross-border and international context.

Actions in support of the Government's heritage objective are proposed in the context of the following principles which have been adopted by Government:

- the conservation of heritage, many forms of which are non-renewable, is essential for sustainable development and for maintaining the quality of human life;
- each form of heritage is unique and is of value in its own right;
- all sectors and actors are responsible for advancing the conservation of heritage in their respective areas; and,
- due regard will be had to the 'polluter pays' principle and to the precautionary principle.



Placing

Heritage at the Heart of Public Life

I



Placing Heritage at the Heart of Public Life: Priorities

Increase community ownership of heritage by:

- empowering local communities to become more involved in heritage issues;
- enhancing the role and resources of local authorities in the protection of heritage;
- setting up local heritage fora through the local authorities;
- identifying the way forward through the preparation of Local Heritage Plans; and,
- providing a fund of €12.7m (£10m) over five years to assist in the preparation and implementation of Local Heritage Plans.

Develop partnership between Governmental and non-governmental organisations on heritage issues.

Ensure heritage issues are fully integrated into the work of all Government Departments.

Seize the opportunities provided by economic development to enhance the protection of heritage.



Heritage is communal and we all share a responsibility to protect it. This reality is of fundamental importance to the task of handing to future generations a heritage as rich and varied as that which we enjoy today. On an individual level we each recognise some aspect of our heritage which is of particular significance to us. Communities are often defined by the presence in their locality of natural or built features of renown. As a nation we are the inheritors of a proud and distinctive heritage, encompassing both the natural and cultural worlds. Individuals, communities, non-governmental organisations, regional and local authorities, and Government Departments and agencies all play a role and share responsibility in protecting heritage. Without the co-operation and active involvement of all concerned, there is little chance of success. To facilitate this co-operation and to enhance communication, a national heritage forum, representative of community, non-governmental and State interests will be held each year.

PROVIDING FOR HERITAGE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

Protection of heritage must begin at the local level, enabling everybody to become actively involved in preserving and enhancing that which belongs to us all. The key to achieving this goal is the preparation and adoption of Local Heritage Plans involving local heritage fora, bringing together communities, local authorities and the Government. Local Heritage Plans will identify the steps necessary for the protection and enjoyment of heritage at the local level. Taken together with the actions proposed in this Plan for promoting interest in heritage issues and with the increased emphasis on sustainable development in Local Development Plans, Local Heritage Plans will provide the means for a significant broadening of community participation in the protection of heritage.

To assist in the preparation and implementation of Local Heritage Plans, the Government will provide a fund of €12.7 million (£10 million) over five years. This fund will give substance to the commitment to protect heritage at local level and to allow communities to identify and conserve those aspects

of heritage of greatest significance to them. A key aspect of the fund is that it will be used only in the context of Local Heritage Plans, ensuring that the projects it supports will have been carefully evaluated and will have local support.

The role of local authorities, which already act to protect heritage through the planning system, will become increasingly important. One of the key actions required for the integration of heritage conservation at local authority level is the provision of appropriate heritage expertise. Heritage officers have already been appointed by 18 local authorities in partnership with the Heritage Council and this programme will be extended throughout the country. While the specific responsibilities of heritage officers will reflect local circumstances, their primary functions will be to promote the conservation of heritage at the local level and to assist in the preparation of Local Heritage Plans. Guides to best practice for local authorities and heritage will be prepared as an essential support measure.

Over the past decade, the planning process has become a central element in the protection of heritage. This has arisen, in part, because of an increasing awareness of the importance of preventing damage to heritage. Amendments to the planning code in recent years have seen significant advances in the protection of heritage. Such protection will be further enhanced by the application of heritage appraisal to all local authority draft development plans.

In recent years, there has been an improvement in the number and quality of local museums across the country. Since 1999, in recognition of the strengthening of this sector, the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands has designated a number of local museums for the holding of archaeological objects under the terms of the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997. These museums will continue to receive support and further designations will be made as appropriate. The impetus for the development of local museums must come from the local level, and in future, Local

Placing Heritage at the Heart of Public Life

Heritage Plans will determine the priorities for museum development for each area. For the purposes of this plan, museums are defined as including heritage libraries and archives and as being not-for-profit institutions that collect, safeguard, hold in trust, research, develop and interpret collections of original objects and original objects on loan, for the public benefit. They are places where the public learn from and find inspiration and enjoyment through the display and research of original objects.

INTEGRATING HERITAGE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

At Government level, all Departments must ensure heritage considerations are fully integrated into policies and project implementation strategies. The Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, together with the Heritage Council, will continue to advise and assist Departments on the appropriate integration of heritage. One significant action in this regard will be the preparation by Departments and agencies of inventories of heritage sites, artefacts, and archives in their ownership and the development of appropriate management plans.

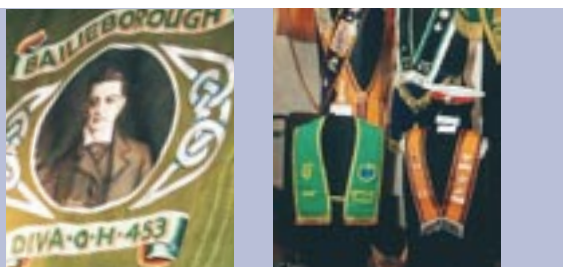
A wide range of different legislation has implications for heritage and it is necessary to ensure all such legislation provides for heritage conservation in an appropriate manner. There is, and will continue to be, a need for close collaboration between all Departments in the implementation of the National Heritage Plan, as well as the National Biodiversity Plan and many other policies, programmes and measures. A number of structures which are already in place to facilitate co-operation and consultation amongst Government Departments on heritage issues, and between the Government and heritage and environmental interests, will be further developed.

The full protection of the natural heritage and the fulfilment of Ireland's obligations under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity will require co-ordinated action from all Government

Departments and agencies. Each Department and agency must ensure the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity is taken on board as a component of their responsibilities. This can be achieved by reviewing the impact of their activities on biodiversity and taking action to minimise or eliminate adverse impacts and encourage beneficial impacts.

The concept of integrated coastal zone management has come to the fore in recent years, including under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity, as a key means of providing for the conservation of heritage, including marine biodiversity. Ireland has commenced the process of developing an integrated coastal zone management strategy, which will have sustainable development as a core objective and which will play a critical role in co-ordinating action to conserve heritage in coastal and marine areas.

The pace of economic activity and development in Ireland has accelerated dramatically over the last decade and it is recognised that the achievement of balanced economic growth in accordance with the principles of sustainable development is of vital importance. The challenge to heritage posed by economic activity is significant and will continue to increase but so too will the opportunities such development provides. These challenges can be met and the opportunities exploited with proper co-ordination and where the implications of economic development for heritage are addressed as a core part of development planning. The 1998 agreement for the protection of wetlands archaeology between the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, the Department of Public Enterprise and Bord na Móna, and the 2000 agreement between the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands and the National Roads Authority in relation to road developments demonstrate that development can proceed apace in a manner that is sensitive to the demands of both our heritage and of economic investment.



During the course of the National Development Plan, the Government will invest over €50.8 billion (£40 billion) in the economy through a number of operational programmes, whose timely and efficient delivery is crucial. Heritage considerations will be fully addressed from the earliest stages in infrastructure project planning and in the environmental impact assessment process and, in addition, strategic environmental assessment will be applied to all programmes to ensure that

heritage considerations are taken into account. Such measures, and indeed the full implementation of this Plan, will accelerate the delivery of infrastructure development through the avoidance of costly delays at the advanced stages of projects. Significant resources have been, and will continue to be, expended on heritage mitigation and protection during the course of infrastructure development such as the water, waste water and road network programmes.

ACTIONS

PROVIDING FOR HERITAGE AT THE LOCAL LEVEL

1. Each local authority will establish a local heritage forum, including elected representatives and representatives of communities and non-governmental organisations, to prepare a Local Heritage Plan in consultation with the County/City Development Board and other relevant statutory bodies.
2. Establish a fund of €12.7m (£10m) over five years to assist in the preparation and implementation of Local Heritage Plans.
3. Develop and strengthen partnership between the Government and local authorities in the protection and management of heritage.
4. Local authorities will appoint heritage officers to promote the conservation of heritage, and will also acquire the expertise, on a shared basis where appropriate, to deal with the natural, archaeological and architectural heritage.
5. Develop guides to best practice regarding heritage for local authorities.
6. Enhance the protection of heritage through the environmental impact assessment (EIA) process by issuing guidelines on EIA and the archaeological, architectural and natural heritage.
7. Assess the impact on heritage of prescribed projects in all sites of national heritage importance.
8. Apply heritage appraisal to all local authority draft development plans.
9. Support, on a partnership basis with local authorities, those museums designated under the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997 for the holding of archaeological objects.
10. Ensure the provision of capital funding for museum development at regional and local levels will be based on adherence to Local Heritage Plans.
11. Examine with local authorities the means by which investment, including investment by local authorities, in the waterways network and waterways corridors can act as a catalyst for greater development in local areas and define the extent of waterways corridors.
12. Convene an annual national heritage forum representative of relevant governmental and non-governmental organisations.

Placing Heritage at the Heart of Public Life

13. Develop and strengthen partnership between the Government and relevant non-governmental organisations in the protection and management of heritage.
14. Assist, in accordance with Local Heritage Plans, communities, user groups, and the private sector to participate in the protection of heritage by:
 - encouraging more widespread participation in the care of the archaeological and architectural heritage;
 - promoting greater involvement by landowners in the conservation of Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas;
 - funding local heritage events and community heritage projects through the expansion of the Heritage Council's Community Grants Scheme;
 - assisting the development of a network of community groups involved in heritage issues;
 - encouraging communities and volunteers to participate in the conservation and management of heritage sites;
 - ensuring that local heritage schemes which receive grant aid have appropriate professional supervision; and,
 - encouraging, through the provision of advice and training by relevant State bodies, the utilisation of heritage as a resource in community development.
15. Work in partnership with sports and outdoor pursuits groups in the development and adoption of conservation objectives and codes of practice.

INTEGRATING HERITAGE AT THE NATIONAL LEVEL

16. Ensure all relevant legislative proposals and all development plans likely to have a significant impact on heritage, at national, regional and local levels, incorporate appropriate provision for the protection of heritage.
17. All Government Departments and relevant agencies will include actions for the protection of heritage in their Statements of Strategy and Business Plans.
18. All relevant State bodies and agencies will prepare an inventory of heritage sites, artefacts and archives in their ownership and develop management plans for them in agreement with Dúchas or the national cultural institutions, as required. Such bodies will allocate appropriate resources towards meeting stated heritage obligations.
19. Create, within relevant Government Departments and State agencies, biodiversity units or positions whose functions will include the preparation of biodiversity action plans within the framework of the National Biodiversity Plan.
20. Prepare and adopt, on a cross-Departmental basis, a National Coastal Zone Management Strategy making specific provision for conservation of heritage.
21. Ensure heritage considerations continue to be fully addressed in the implementation of the operational programmes of the National Development Plan, and the mid-term review of the National Development Plan contains an assessment of its impact on heritage.
22. Draw up, in partnership with relevant Government Departments, strategies for the protection of heritage in key spheres of economic activity and development, including infrastructural and housing development, tourism, and agriculture.



Protecting

Our Heritage

2



Protecting Our Heritage: Priorities

- Establish a framework for State involvement in the management and protection of heritage sites, through, inter alia, partnership with relevant interests, conservation management planning, grant assistance, and acquisition.
- Provide comprehensive and up to date legislation for the protection of heritage.
- Ensure the protection of heritage sites, including through the establishment of an enhanced monitoring programme.
- Implement the National Biodiversity Plan and address the key issues of the conservation of habitats, species, genetic diversity, and the natural heritage in agricultural, forest and marine ecosystems.
- Implement the programme in the National Development Plan for the conservation of archaeological and architectural monuments in the care of Dúchas.
- Increase the annual architectural conservation grants scheme for protected structures administered by the Department of Environment and Local Government to €12.7m (£10m).
- Ensure the protection of heritage is an integral part of the development of the waterways system.
- Provide support for museums across the country.
- Establish a heritage fund to enable the national cultural institutions to acquire moveable heritage material of national importance.



◁ Gold Collar, Late Bronze Age

◁ Previous Page Image: Yew Woods, Killarney National Park

The protection of heritage represents an ongoing commitment by the people of Ireland. It demands careful and balanced strategies be combined with decisive actions. The protection of heritage also requires constant vigilance, as much of what we possess is fragile or non-renewable. If a building or archaeological monument is destroyed, then it is lost forever. If the balance of an ecosystem is disturbed by outside forces, then the flora and fauna it supports may disappear. As caretakers of this resource we must ensure we not only set ourselves ambitious objectives for the protection of our heritage, but that we also make the necessary commitments for the effective achievement of those objectives.

The vast majority of heritage sites are in private ownership. It is neither feasible nor desirable for the State to acquire all heritage sites. The conservation of heritage sites in private ownership or in the ownership of local authorities can be satisfactorily achieved through Local Heritage Plans with proper management and a good level of co-operation between the owners and Dúchas. There may also be opportunities in a limited number of cases for heritage properties to be protected and managed through partnership between the State and the owners. However, in certain circumstances State acquisition of heritage sites may represent the only viable option for their protection and it is necessary to ensure clear criteria for acquiring heritage sites are developed.

The need for proper management of heritage sites is not confined to those that are privately owned. The public sector, and particularly the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, must set an example by following best practice in the protection and management of heritage sites in its care.

HERITAGE LEGISLATION

In recent decades attitudes in Ireland to the conservation of our heritage have changed substantially and there is a greater awareness at all levels of the need to move towards a more active approach. There have been, or are in train, significant legislative changes in relation to the protection and management of heritage.

The planning code and the Environmental Impact Assessment process are valuable tools in the protection of heritage. While the steps taken to date have been very positive, much remains to be done in reviewing current legislation.

The Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000, greatly strengthens the protection given to Ireland's flora and fauna and provides a statutory basis for Natural Heritage Areas. It also provides, for the first time, a means of giving statutory protection to sites of great importance for the geological heritage by allowing their designation as Natural Heritage Areas. The National Monuments legislation has been amended on a number of occasions since the original Act was passed in 1930, and, in tandem with planning legislation which has recently been significantly enhanced, has provided a strong basis for the protection of the archaeological and architectural heritage. However, the increasing pace of development in recent years has posed new challenges, and in order to ensure full protection of our archaeological and architectural heritage, revised and consolidated legislation will be prepared.

NATURAL HERITAGE

The establishment of protected area networks is a fundamental step for the conservation of the natural heritage. About 10% of Ireland's land and freshwater territory, together with marine areas equivalent to a further 4%, or close to 1 million hectares in total, have been identified as being of prime importance for nature conservation and are included in the protected areas programme - whether as proposed Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Natural Heritage Areas (NHA), National Parks, Nature Reserves or other sites of special ecological importance. The majority of the 1,100+ sites involved will require or allow human intervention in order to maintain their ecological interest, and only in the case of a minority of sites will the appropriate conservation strategy involve the prevention of direct human use.

Protecting Our Heritage

In order to conserve protected areas it is essential to work with interested parties, especially farmers and others who are directly involved. Management of land in these areas should take place within the context of a conservation plan for each area, while monitoring of designated areas to detect any changes in their status will be essential to secure their long-term conservation.

The actions proposed in the National Heritage Plan will complement the measures which have been outlined in the National Biodiversity Plan. That plan will assist the protection of the natural heritage in areas outside protected areas and provides for action in relation to agriculture, afforestation, wetlands, the marine and coastal sectors, alien species, access to genetic resources and the sharing of benefits arising from such access.

As referred to above, geological sites of national importance will in future be protected through incorporation into the Natural Heritage Area network. In addition, geological sites of local or regional importance will be classed as County Geological Sites. These will have no statutory protection, but the nomination of such sites will ensure that the geological features are considered by local authorities in reaching planning decisions.

HERITAGE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

In order to ensure the protection of heritage, conservation is required throughout the wider countryside and not only in respect of sites and features that are protected or are of particular importance. It is necessary to maintain, and where possible enhance, heritage in the broader countryside. Apart from ensuring that human activities avoid or minimise adverse effects on heritage, in many circumstances such activities provide opportunities to maintain and enhance its status.

Hedgerows are a particularly prominent feature of the Irish countryside and deserve protection for their ecological, archaeological and landscape value. They provide important habitats for a variety of species and act as linking corridors between

habitat patches, while hedgerows forming townland boundaries may be of great age and be of particular archaeological significance.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

Just as individual aspects of heritage are an important part of our quality of life, so too, and perhaps to a greater degree, is the less tangible perception of landscape, which applies not only to outstanding areas but also to ordinary districts, whether they are urban or rural. A wide range of measures are targeted at conserving various elements of the landscape. Very many of the actions set out in this Plan will contribute to and enhance the protection applied to specific elements of the landscape and consequently its overall quality. In particular, the Plan sets out measures and mechanisms to contribute to the conservation of the natural, geological, archaeological and architectural facets of the landscape. The measures set out in the previous chapter seek to integrate heritage considerations, including those that contribute to landscape quality, into other sectors, while the aesthetic quality of the landscape is largely dealt with through planning legislation.

Planning Guidelines on Landscape and Landscape Assessment, published in draft form by the Department of the Environment and Local Government, are designed to provide guidance on the conservation of important landscapes through the development plan process. The final guidelines are expected to be published in 2002. Landscape conservation areas, provided for under the Planning and Development Act, 2000, will provide a new mechanism for the protection of specific important landscapes. In addition, the Heritage Council's pilot landscape characterisation project for County Clare is a significant development in the identification of landscapes and deals with all aspects of the landscape in a holistic manner. It provides important insights into how the objective of identifying and characterising our landscapes on a national basis may be achieved.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

The completion of the Record of Monuments and Places across the State in 1998 provided for the first time a basic level of statutory protection for all known archaeological sites and monuments. However, the work of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland and research carried out on behalf of the Heritage Council has indicated an ongoing problem of damage to, or destruction of, rural archaeological sites and monuments. To combat this problem, an enhanced programme of monitoring of archaeological monuments will be established and landowners will be advised, on a phased basis, of the presence of archaeological monuments on their properties.

In light of their central role in the protection of the archaeological heritage, local authorities should have their own professional archaeological expertise directly available to them. In particular, local authority archaeologists would have important roles to play in the protection of the archaeological heritage through the planning process, developments by local authorities themselves, conservation of archaeological monuments in the care of the local authorities, and educational work.

Ongoing liaison between Dúchas, the Forest Service of the Department of the Marine and Natural Resources, and Coillte has resulted in significant improvements in the last decade in the level of consideration given to archaeological issues in the course of afforestation. However, the extent of the current afforestation programme requires that increased attention, building on the guidelines on forestry and archaeology published in 2000 by the Department of the Marine and Natural Resources and on the proposed Indicative Forest Strategies, be given to its archaeological implications.

There has been considerable progress achieved in recent years in relation to strengthening the legislative protection for the architectural heritage and putting in place the supporting administrative structures.

The new legislation and supporting structures have established a baseline system of protection through the planning process, and this now needs to be built upon through the employment of architectural conservation officers by local authorities and the publication of conservation guidelines for local authorities.

Local authorities also have a key role in the grants scheme for the conservation of privately owned heritage buildings and this scheme, funded through the Department of the Environment and Local Government, will be expanded. The Heritage Council will also assist community groups in architectural conservation projects.

To date, State action in the promotion and development of historic parks and gardens has involved taking a number of historic parks, gardens, and designed landscapes into State ownership, providing financial support through tax relief for designated sites, and funding the Great Gardens of Ireland Restoration Scheme through the European Union Operational Programme for Tourism. Building on these actions, a legislative and strategic framework will be prepared to promote further the conservation of historic parks, gardens and designed landscapes in both private and public ownership.

INLAND WATERWAYS

While inland waterways are important as a part of heritage in their own right, they also support significant natural and industrial heritage, and it is essential that the conservation of heritage is an integral part of the development of the waterways system. Following a long period of time when they were seldom used, the inland waterways have undergone considerable development in recent years. Both the further development of the waterways system and the ongoing management of existing waterways have considerable implications for the heritage of inland waterways. However, the protection of heritage can be achieved through careful planning and appropriate co-operation.

Protecting Our Heritage

At present there are a number of disused and derelict waterways across the country. It is necessary to learn from past experience and ensure that no actions are taken which would prevent or hinder the possibility of restoring those navigations at some future date.

MOVEABLE, DOCUMENTARY AND ARCHIVAL HERITAGE

There is already a strong legislative basis for the protection of moveable, documentary and archival heritage. The long-term conservation of that heritage depends on the effective implementation of that legislation, and the creation of appropriate

institutional structures at national, regional and local level. The conservation of artefacts is an integral part of the protection of heritage, and in particular of the archaeological heritage, but at present there is a significant backlog of unconserved artefacts arising from the lack of appropriate facilities. A comprehensive policy will be devised to deal with issues relating to the conservation, storage, display and interpretation of the collections of the national cultural institutions, artefacts recovered during excavations by Dúchas, artefacts recovered by private sector archaeologists, and archival material.

ACTIONS

HERITAGE SITES

1. Establish a framework for State involvement in the management and protection of heritage sites that meet appropriate criteria and which are not in the care of Dúchas. State involvement could include, depending on circumstances, partnership with relevant interests, conservation management planning, grant assistance, or acquisition.
2. Publish and implement management plans for significant heritage sites in the care of Dúchas.

HERITAGE LEGISLATION

3. Continue to review the adequacy of wildlife legislation to further the objectives of strategies for biodiversity following the enactment of the Wildlife (Amendment) Act, 2000.
4. Revise and consolidate the National Monuments Acts.
5. Review the effectiveness for the protection of the architectural heritage of the provisions of Section 482 of the Taxes Consolidation Act, 1997, and amend the legislation as appropriate.
6. Establish a legislative and strategic framework for the management of State heritage properties, including national parks, historic parks, gardens and designed landscapes.
7. Implement the provisions of the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997, relating to:
 - the move to autonomous status for the National Library and the National Museum;
 - the introduction of the Register of Cultural Objects;
 - export licensing; and,
 - the mandatory deposit of library material.
8. Review the Heritage Act, 1995, which provides the statutory basis for the Heritage Council.

NATURAL HERITAGE

9. Complete the establishment and ensure the conservation of networks of protected areas for the natural heritage at the national, European and international levels of importance.
10. Continue to provide compensation for farmers and other landowners for losses incurred in managing their property in a manner compatible with the conservation of the natural heritage.
11. Continue and enhance programmes to provide effective conservation for protected area networks by:
 - preparing site specific conservation plans and other plans, with particular reference to Natura 2000 sites, Nature Reserves and National Parks, in consultation with affected landowners and the public; and,
 - issuing guidelines and providing advice to local authorities and other licensing authorities such as the Department of the Marine and Natural Resources on the conservation of Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Natural Heritage Areas, and other protected areas.
12. Continue or establish measures to provide for consultation with and the participation of those affected by the designation of protected areas.
13. Adopt and implement the National Biodiversity Plan.
14. Identify species of highest conservation concern in Ireland and prepare species action plans for them.
15. Establish a comprehensive programme of monitoring of the conservation status of habitats and species and of changes in the condition of designated areas.
16. Prepare, in consultation with Northern Ireland authorities, strategies, including risk assessment procedures, to control introduced species and to prevent future introductions of alien species which might threaten biodiversity.
17. Establish a national advisory committee, with the participation of all stakeholders, to:
 - report on a co-ordinated programme on the conservation and utilisation of genetic resources for food, agriculture and forestry, including the need to:
 - characterise and inventory genetic resources for food, agriculture and forestry both in-situ and ex-situ;
 - identify genetic resources in greatest danger of extinction and co-ordinate appropriate preservation initiatives;
 - ensure what is already held in existing collections is maintained; and,
 - promote activities to assist the conservation of genetic resources for food, agriculture and forestry through, inter alia, on-farm conservation;
 - examine the need for, and where required propose strategies for the conservation and sustainable use of wild genetic diversity, including the need to:
 - undertake genetic characterisation and analysis of genetic variability for priority wild species;
 - conserve wild genetic resources ex-situ; and,
 - support species conservation and recovery programmes for certain priority species.
18. Prepare a comprehensive strategy on access to genetic resources.

Protecting Our Heritage



◀ Emo Court

19. Control overgrazing through the completion and implementation of commonage framework plans and by the implementation of other appropriate measures.
20. Seek, in any future revisions of the Rural Environment Protection Scheme, the prioritisation of the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity.
21. Increase the level of total annual afforestation consisting of broadleaf species and achieve a target of 30% within five years.
22. Implement guidelines on forestry and biodiversity, and enhance the value for biodiversity of all other forestry guidelines.
23. Implement the biodiversity woodland scheme for native woodlands.
24. Provide that all significant drainage, including both initial drainage and maintenance drainage, will require assessment of its implications for heritage, and particularly for wetlands.
25. Consider further initiatives for the conservation of freshwater fish species and communities, and review the practice of translocation of fish between catchments.
26. Draw up a strategy for the use of machine cutaway and cutover raised bogs as wetland or woodland habitats, taking into account the archaeological implications of such usage.
27. Continue seeking to ensure through research and other appropriate means that the Common Fisheries Policy and marine fisheries provide for the conservation of fish species and marine biodiversity generally.
28. Draw up guidelines and a code of best practice on aquaculture and biodiversity.
29. Develop a partnership programme between the National Botanic Gardens and private owners to enable greater co-ordination in the inventory and development of plant collections.
30. Designate County Geological Sites for the consideration of local authorities in the context of development plans and planning decisions.
31. Control geological collecting of fossils and minerals in key locations through the use of partnership agreements, education and the restriction of collecting in sites designated as Natural Heritage Areas.

HERITAGE IN THE COUNTRYSIDE

32. Seek to ensure all agricultural incentive and support schemes operate in a manner compatible with the protection of heritage.
33. Provide in new forestry legislation for the appropriate protection of heritage.
34. Ensure the protection and enhancement of hedgerows as a natural and archaeological heritage resource through the use of regulatory, educational, and financial measures as appropriate.

NATURAL AND CULTURAL LANDSCAPES

35. Identify and carry out an inventory of nationally important landscape conservation areas from a heritage perspective.
36. Promote the protection of the landscape under the planning process through implementation of the Landscape Guidelines issued by the Minister for the Environment and Local Government and the designation of landscape conservation areas to protect specific important landscapes.
37. Examine the benefits of adopting a cross-Departmental approach to the development of integrated landscape policies, following assessment of the Heritage Council pilot project in County Clare.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

38. Establish an enhanced programme of monitoring of archaeological monuments.
39. Implement the programme in the National Development Plan for the conservation of archaeological and architectural monuments in the care of Dúchas.
40. Develop a network of local authority archaeologists.
41. Initiate the establishment of a database of owners of archaeological monuments and advise owners, on a phased basis, of the presence of monuments on their properties.
42. Issue guidelines on aspects of the archaeological implications of planning and development, including advice notes on archaeological excavations.
43. Strengthen the protection of the archaeological heritage during afforestation, building on the guidelines published by the Department of the Marine and Natural Resources in 2000.
44. Establish a programme to inspect archaeological excavations and to evaluate reports and publications prepared in fulfilment of licence conditions.
45. Assess the number, condition and legal status of medieval churches and graveyards in local authority ownership or care and address their management and conservation in the context of Local Heritage Plans.
46. Review the policy on dealing with human remains in archaeological contexts.
47. Develop the capacity within Dúchas to investigate underwater and inter-tidal archaeological sites and monuments.

Protecting Our Heritage

48. Integrate policies and actions, including the publication of guidelines, for the identification and protection of the vernacular and industrial heritage into existing and future mechanisms for the protection of the archaeological and architectural heritage.
49. Increase the annual architectural conservation grants scheme administered by the Department of the Environment and Local Government to €12.7m (£10m).
50. Complete the programme of employment of architectural conservation officers by local authorities.
51. Publish conservation guidelines for local authorities and for other organisations which provide grant-aid for the restoration or repair of historic buildings and provide a conservation advisory service to assist the protection of the architectural heritage at local authority level.
52. Publish guidelines for the use and maintenance of buildings of architectural significance in the ownership of public authorities.
53. Provide assistance, through the Heritage Council, to local communities for architectural heritage conservation projects.

INLAND WATERWAYS

54. Ensure the conservation of the natural, archaeological and architectural heritage is an integral part of the future development of the waterways system.
55. Undertake surveys of the natural, archaeological and architectural heritage prior to any expansion of the waterways network.
56. Examine the measures required for the protection of disused and derelict waterways, to preserve the option of restoring those navigations at a future date.
57. Undertake the conservation of maps and historic documents relating to the waterways through co-operation between Waterways Ireland, the National Archives, the National Library, and the National Gallery.
58. Review the different systems of bye-laws which apply across the waterways network with a view to developing an integrated and cohesive system.

MOVEABLE, DOCUMENTARY AND ARCHIVAL HERITAGE

59. Examine the feasibility of establishing an independent Museums Council to provide support for museums not funded centrally by the State.
60. Establish a system of quality assurance for museums (from local to national level).
61. Provide capital funding for new museums based on specialist collections, where those collections complement and do not duplicate the collections held or proposed to be held by the National Museum, the National Library or museums designated under Section 68 of the Cultural Institutions Act.
62. Ensure a Heritage Fund of €12.7m (£10m) over five years is available to the national cultural institutions to acquire material of national importance.
63. Encourage the expansion of collections of the national cultural institutions through co-operative agreements with other collecting institutions, in particular into new types of collections of national importance, including:
 - collecting twentieth century artefacts;
 - collecting new forms of library material; and,
 - supporting integrated oral history projects.
64. Examine the means by which the electronic records of public bodies may be preserved.
65. Continue the Irish Genealogical Project under the supervision of the National Library, having regard to the conclusions of the business plan currently in operation and the role of the Genealogical Office of the National Library.
66. Prepare a strategy for the conservation of archaeological and other heritage artefacts. Following consultations with the appropriate national cultural institutions, this will require:
 - the development of laboratory space and resources to facilitate the provision of an artefact conservation service to private sector archaeologists and to Dúchas;
 - the development of a programme to deal with unconserved material from excavations carried out prior to the establishment of full developer funding;
 - the development of an integrated conservation service at national level for books, paper, manuscripts and parchment, led and co-ordinated by the National Library acting in co-operation with Marsh's Library and other cultural institutions;
 - the development of specialist conservation facilities for visual arts material at the National Gallery; and,
 - the development of a small-scale conservation facility within Dúchas to meet its own immediate requirements.
67. Develop further partnership with the State Laboratory in respect of access to analytical facilities, and improve awareness among archaeologists and architects of artefact conservation issues and the availability of conservation and analytical facilities.



Acquiring

Knowledge

3



Acquiring Knowledge: Priorities

- Commence a ten year inventory programme to provide baseline data across all areas of our heritage.
- Develop and co-ordinate enhanced levels of research activity on heritage issues.
- Establish, in consultation with existing archive institutions, a central heritage archive and library for the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands which will be accessible to heritage professionals and to members of the public.
- Review the level of heritage skills available to the State sector and put in place an ongoing programme to meet priority requirements.

It is now well accepted that we can only hope to successfully plan for the protection and management of our heritage if we do so on the basis of reliable and up-to-date information and research. We must record what we have through research and identification, and review and monitor such information on an on-going basis if we are to have the necessary information and knowledge to achieve the objectives set out in this plan. The actions set out in this chapter seek to build on existing activity and initiatives in this area and to outline new areas of action which will help to provide the knowledge we require.

HERITAGE ARCHIVE AND LIBRARY

Over recent decades there has been a tremendous increase in the amount of information gathered by the State on heritage issues, partly generated by the need to protect our heritage in the context of increased economic activity, but also arising from the growing awareness of the value of such information. However, information is of little use if it is not made accessible to those who require it. To provide professional and public access to the wealth of heritage data held by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, a central archive and library will be established within the Department, using appropriate technology to allow efficient retrieval of information. The heritage archive will contain material from the inventory work of the Department, planning advice to local authorities on heritage sites, archaeological excavation reports and documentation, the Department's photographic collection and other relevant papers. Advice and assistance on the curation of material will be provided by the National Archives and there will be ongoing liaison with appropriate organisations such as the National Museum, the National Library and the Irish Architectural Archive to ensure co-ordination of approach.

TRAINING

The task of protecting our heritage has become increasingly complex in recent years as a result of the challenges and opportunities presented by

economic development. As this trend is set to continue it is vital that all those who work for the protection of heritage are equipped with sufficient levels of knowledge and practical training to allow them to carry out their roles to the greatest advantage. This requirement will apply with equal importance to those working for the public and private sectors. The preservation of traditional conservation skills is also of great importance.

As the protection of heritage becomes better integrated across a range of sectors, a much wider group of people than those traditionally associated with heritage will have to include the protection of heritage as an integral part of their work. This can only be achieved if training in heritage protection is extended to all who will be expected to work towards this end. The induction training for Heritage Officers provided by the Heritage Council could serve as a model for other sectors.

NATURAL HERITAGE

Knowledge in relation to habitats, species, and genetic diversity is fundamental to the conservation and sustainable use of the natural heritage. In the last decade, a major survey was undertaken to identify areas that were of importance for the natural heritage. Based on that survey, almost a million hectares were incorporated in a network of protected areas, including a wide variety of habitat types, such as peatlands, woodlands, grasslands, limestone pavement, sand dunes, turloughs and estuaries. Surveys were also undertaken in the marine environment, including the Biomar survey which has provided the basis for the proposal of marine Special Areas of Conservation. Baseline surveys to establish the status and distribution of a variety of species have also been undertaken during the last twenty years, while there are a number of research programmes concerned with the conservation of the natural heritage which are being carried out by Dúchas, the Heritage Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, and by third level institutions.

Acquiring Knowledge

Although various programmes have been carried out to date and considerable progress has been made, there are many gaps in our knowledge and much remains to be done in relation to inventory, survey and research. In particular, there are still large gaps in our knowledge of the marine environment. The principal requirement is to determine the natural heritage that exists in Ireland, and while completing basic inventories on all species groups and habitats in Ireland is an onerous task, it is so fundamental to the conservation of the natural heritage that this must be the long-term goal. There is a need in the first instance to establish what work is being done and by whom. Equally, there is a clear need to determine what needs to be done, to prioritise actions, to assign responsibilities, and to provide support.

The Irish Geological Heritage Programme, which commenced in 1998, is a partnership developed between Dúchas and the Geological Survey of Ireland to assess geological sites on a national basis and to recommend a selection of the most important sites for designation as Natural Heritage Areas. The sites will be selected on the basis of their national importance and exceptional features, and to ensure that a representative sample of Ireland's natural geological heritage is protected.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

Identification and recording is essential in achieving the protection of the archaeological heritage, although inventories cannot be exhaustive. In 1992, the Archaeological Survey of Ireland completed the Sites and Monuments Record which was based on documentary,

cartographic, and aerial photographic sources and identified up to 120,000 archaeological sites and monuments across the country. At present, work is well advanced on a follow-up programme of fieldwork which will be completed within five years. A programme of inspection of earlier survey work will then be established to ensure the information available is up to date. Consistent with the need to provide appropriate protection to all archaeological monuments, consideration will be given to the value of categorising their relative importance.

Despite the tremendous efforts of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland, there are still significant gaps in our knowledge of the archaeological heritage. There are many environments, such as peatlands, uplands, intertidal areas, and underwater environments, which have not been comprehensively surveyed and which have the potential to contain large numbers of previously unidentified archaeological sites. Many of these areas are now being developed through land reclamation, afforestation or peat production, and the archaeological heritage they contain is under threat.

The promotion of archaeological research has long been fostered and is in accordance with the terms of the European Convention on the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage. At present, the State provides funding, both directly and indirectly, to archaeological research through a number of different organisations. A review of present funding arrangements will be undertaken to ensure they achieve the greatest benefit for the protection of the archaeological heritage.



Since its establishment in 1990, the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage (NIAH) has made progress in identifying and recording the architectural heritage through a systematic, nationwide survey programme. In 1999, it was placed on a statutory basis and provided with extra resources for an accelerated programme of recording. The information provided by the NIAH allows the Minister for Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands to advise local authorities on the protection of the architectural heritage through the planning system. The survey material is also available to members of the public at large, as well as to professionals and educational institutions.

Soundly based heritage conservation is guided by research and there is a clear need to establish greater capacity for research on architectural conservation. To meet this need, a research resource will be established within the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands and an analysis of research requirements prepared. As well as conducting its own programme, the research resource will co-ordinate its efforts with other interested organisations and build on the results of projects already under way.

To date there has been no formal inventory carried out of the major historic parks and gardens in the State. In 1988, the International Council on Monuments and Sites compiled a list of 70 Irish gardens, which it considered to be of either national or international importance, although this list did not provide any detailed record of the gardens in question. The Great Gardens of Ireland Restoration Scheme recorded 26 gardens but there is no single comprehensive record.

The work carried out in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales in recent years provides a useful basis from which to develop a strategy for the identification and recording of historic parks and gardens.

INLAND WATERWAYS

The development of a programme for the conservation and enhancement of the inland waterways requires the creation of a record of all its heritage elements, including architecture, wildlife, and underwater and industrial archaeology, to allow a plan for their future management to be put in place. Similarly, an information and education programme for the waterways can only be effectively developed on the basis of a record of its heritage and its historical context.

MOVEABLE, DOCUMENTARY AND ARCHIVAL HERITAGE

An integral and ongoing function of the national collecting institutions is the survey and inventorying of the moveable heritage, including collections in their care. The degree of inventorying that can be achieved will vary greatly according to the nature of the material involved. Many other organisations also possess or are actively collecting archives and artefacts, and the number of moveable heritage items runs into millions. By its nature, the inventorying of our moveable heritage will continue indefinitely into the future, and the long-term goal is the basic listing and identification of the more important moveable heritage material available within the State. More immediately, much can be achieved by supporting both the needs of the State's collecting institutions

◀ Stone Masonry, Iniscaltra ▶



Acquiring Knowledge

and other bodies also engaged in such work. The experience of the computerisation project in county museums undertaken by the Local Authorities Curators' Group could prove of use in this regard.

PLACENAMES HERITAGE

The Placenames Branch researches the placenames of Ireland in order to provide correct Irish-language name-forms for official use, in consultation with the Placenames Commission, the Government advisory body on policy matters relating to Irish-language placenames. As part of

its research, the Placenames Branch has compiled an extensive archive of placenames recorded orally at local level. Much work remains to be undertaken, however. Given the fact that the Placenames Commission has been in existence since 1946 and the Placenames Branch since 1956, and that they have now become part of the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, it is considered that the time is appropriate for a re-evaluation of their roles.

ACTIONS

1. Establish a co-ordinated programme of research on heritage issues in co-operation with third level and research institutions and the private sector.

HERITAGE ARCHIVE AND LIBRARY

2. Establish a central heritage archive and library within the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, which will cater for the research requirements of the Department's staff, heritage professionals and members of the public.

TRAINING

3. Develop programmes to ensure that appropriate levels of training are provided:
 - to those who work directly for the protection of heritage; and,
 - to those whose work may have a significant impact on heritage.
4. Establish a national architectural skills forum and assist in the development of conservation skills among the trades and professions.
5. Provide enhanced training and guidance to the Gardaí and Customs Officers to enable them to play an effective role in enforcing heritage legislation, including the protection of wildlife and the archaeological heritage.
6. Draw up and put in place an education and awareness strategy to promote the maintenance and enhancement of heritage by farmers and others involved in the agricultural sector.
7. Provide a heritage training programme for local authority environmental information officers.

Killarney National Park >



NATURAL HERITAGE

8. Prepare a programme of baseline inventories, surveys and research, and implement the first phase of the programme. Priority will be given to habitats and species which are endangered or threatened, about which little is known, or which are of special conservation importance.
9. Strengthen the capacity of relevant State institutions to undertake work to broaden and consolidate our knowledge of wildlife species and to maintain biological records.
10. Complete the National Soil Survey.
11. Complete the process of identification of sites of geological importance within five years.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL AND ARCHITECTURAL HERITAGE

12. Complete the Inventory Stage of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland within five years, and establish a programme of inspections to update inventory level surveys, with particular emphasis on those areas of the country which were first surveyed.
13. Initiate surveys of the archaeological heritage, as part of the Archaeological Survey of Ireland, with priority given to environments which have a high potential for containing previously unrecorded sites and which are under threat. On this basis, surveys of the following categories will be initiated:
 - peatlands - to include completion of the first round survey of Bord na Móna production bogs and initiation of a survey of private peatlands;
 - uplands and marginal lands;
 - inter-tidal zones and coastal areas subject to erosion; and,
 - geophysical and dive surveys of known and potential underwater archaeological sites in coastal and inland waters.
14. Assess the value of categorising the relative importance of archaeological monuments, consistent with the need to provide appropriate protection to all archaeological monuments.
15. Prepare guidelines for the publication of results of archaeological excavations which will address standards of reports, appropriate media for their publication and the target audience of the published results.

Acquiring Knowledge

16. Evaluate the effectiveness of all funding provided by the State for the purpose of archaeological research and, in particular, review the roles of the Discovery Programme, the Heritage Council, the Royal Irish Academy, and the universities in this regard.
17. Complete and publish within 10 years the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage, to cover all aspects of the built heritage, including vernacular and industrial heritage, and complete interim county surveys within 3 years.
18. Publish guidelines for the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage to enable local authorities to carry out surveys.
19. Complete the inventory of carved stone at national monuments within 3 years and initiate a programme to provide secure storage facilities.
20. Establish a research resource within the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands relating to all areas of architectural heritage conservation, supported by a planned programme of research and publication, including the publication of reports on architectural conservation projects undertaken by Dúchas. The resource will build on research projects currently being undertaken in co-operation with other organisations.
21. Designate the Irish Architectural Archive as the archival repository for records generated as conditions of planning permission for works to protected structures, and for local authority development plans.
22. Establish, as a practical guide to accurate building preservation and conservation, a national reference collection of three dimensional architectural artefacts in the Irish Architectural Archive, with the assistance of the National Museum.
23. Undertake an inventory of historic parks, gardens, and designed landscapes, and incorporate it in the National Inventory of Architectural Heritage.

INLAND WATERWAYS

24. Undertake an inventory of the natural, archaeological and architectural heritage of the inland navigable waterways.

MOVEABLE, DOCUMENTARY AND ARCHIVAL HERITAGE

25. Compile, using the archives of the National Museum, a database of archaeological objects of national significance.
26. Undertake survey projects of cultural objects held in the private or voluntary sectors, to be financed through a dedicated fund of the National Museum and administered or supervised by the National Museum, as appropriate.
27. Undertake survey projects of archival and heritage material held in the private or voluntary sectors, to be funded via the National Library.

PLACENAMES HERITAGE

28. Review the work and role of the Placenames Commission.



Promoting

Awareness and Enjoyment of Our Heritage

4



Promoting Awareness and Enjoyment of our Heritage: Priorities

- Increase awareness and enjoyment of heritage and enable the public to access information on heritage issues.
- Enhance existing levels of public participation in heritage issues, including through the expansion of the programme of activities during National Heritage Week to reach 250,000 people per annum over the period of this Plan.
- Co-ordinate the development of practical resources to support the integration of heritage awareness into the education system.
- Provide increased access to heritage sites and to the moveable heritage held by the national cultural institutions.
- Contribute to the development of sustainable tourism through investment in visitor services at heritage sites.



Early Historic Bucket

◀ *Previous Page Image:*
National Museum of Ireland, Turlough Park House

Securing greater public awareness and enjoyment of heritage is a priority of equal importance to any outlined in this Plan. The objectives of the Plan are closely inter-connected and the successful protection of heritage in Ireland will depend on the degree of public support it receives. For conservation to succeed it is vital that local communities are fully aware of the importance of what is being conserved, why it has this importance, and how the activities of local people can impact on conservation. It is also vital that those officially responsible are aware of the views of local people, and that conservation is implemented taking due account of the impacts on the activities and lifestyles of local people.

PROMOTING PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE OF HERITAGE

A large number of State institutions and voluntary organisations are directly involved in education and raising public awareness in respect of heritage. The considerable number of activities currently underway and the additional initiatives which will be developed require the preparation of a coherent strategy. A representative group will be established to assume responsibility for the co-ordination across all areas of the public sector of an effective strategy for increasing heritage awareness and education.

National Heritage Week serves as a successful example of a co-operative approach to the promotion of heritage and already provides the means of focussing awareness on heritage through its programme of activities each year. That programme will be expanded to reach 250,000 people per annum over the period of this Plan.

The education system has a critical role to play in raising awareness of heritage issues, particularly at primary and second levels where a dedicated programme of heritage education for young people is required, but also at third level where the potential exists to expand heritage education across broad sectors of society through appropriate out-reach and extra-mural courses. In order to achieve these goals, a strategic

approach encompassing a wide range of educational material is required. The Library Service can also be of major assistance in providing wider access to information on heritage issues.

PROVIDING ACCESS TO HERITAGE SITES AND TO MOVEABLE HERITAGE

Dúchas, the Heritage Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, manages a large number of heritage sites in Ireland, and there is a long tradition of providing access to heritage sites in State care, subject to the principal conservation duty of securing the long-term protection of sites. This principle extends to the manner in which individual sites are promoted in conjunction and consultation with the tourism industry. Over the last number of years there has been major investment in the presentation of selected sites and the provision of visitor facilities, with funding sourced, to a large extent, through the European Union Operational Programme for Tourism. In future years, access will be provided to a broader and more representative range of sites across the country through the provision of basic information and facilities.

The vast majority of sites of heritage significance, including archaeological monuments, historic buildings and natural heritage habitats, are in private ownership or in the ownership of State agencies, including the local authorities and semi-state companies, and Government Departments other than the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. While some of these organisations already provide a high level of access to heritage sites in their care, there is a need for all public bodies to improve the service they provide in this regard. Access to heritage sites in private ownership can only be developed through partnership and consultation with landowners. It is a condition of tax relief for the maintenance of architectural heritage in private ownership that reasonable access is provided to the public.

The development of appropriate access to moveable heritage is closely linked to the development of the national cultural institutions

Promoting Awareness and Enjoyment of our Heritage

and of museums at local and regional level.

As such development takes place, there will be increasing scope for providing greater access to the collections of the national cultural institutions through co-operation with accredited museums and visitor centres, allowing more people the opportunity to experience the moveable heritage without compromising its protection. Great strides in providing access to the collections of the national cultural institutions have already been

taken in recent years. The Museum of Country Life at Turlough Park House, Co. Mayo is the first branch of the National Museum to be located outside of Dublin. Other developments of major significance include the expansion of the National Museum's collection at Collins Barracks in Dublin, the opening of the New Millennium Wing of the National Gallery, the relocation of the Chester Beatty Library to Dublin Castle, and the ongoing development work at the National Library.

ACTIONS

PROMOTING PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE OF HERITAGE

1. Establish a representative group to increase awareness and education about heritage. This group will prepare a strategy to achieve this task and will, inter alia, take actions to:
 - promote and co-ordinate the development by all Government Departments and public bodies of heritage education and awareness raising activities relevant to their sectors; and,
 - support the development by institutions which provide continuing education of heritage related out-reach programmes and extra-mural courses.
2. Expand the programme of activities during National Heritage Week to reach 250,000 participants per annum within five years, and host European Heritage Week in 2005.
3. Establish a task-force - with representation from the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, the Department of Education and Science, and other relevant organisations - to review the role of the formal education system in heritage education and awareness. The task-force will co-ordinate the development of practical resources to support the integration of heritage awareness into the education system.
4. Initiate the co-ordination of relevant heritage databases, using geographical information systems where appropriate, to allow greater public and professional access to information and statistics across every sector of heritage, whilst taking into account security and privacy considerations.
5. Support the use of the Internet as a means of promoting public knowledge of heritage.
6. Evaluate the pilot project for the Public Libraries Heritage Initiative which designates libraries as access points for information on local and national heritage, and enhance the role of the Library Service in promoting knowledge of, and interest in, heritage.
7. Include the promotion of public awareness and the communication of findings as an integral part of the survey and inventory functions of Dúchas.
8. Recognise significant achievements in the conservation of heritage properties in private sector ownership through a system of heritage certification.
9. Establish an annual award for a heritage related schools project.



PROVIDING ACCESS TO HERITAGE SITES AND TO MOVEABLE HERITAGE

10. Publish a comprehensive access policy for heritage sites in the care of Dúchas to guide the provision of new visitor facilities at such sites as well as the use of existing facilities. The access policy will address issues such as:
 - site presentation;
 - guide recruitment and training;
 - use by local communities;
 - access for visitors with special needs; and,
 - market research and site promotion.
11. Continue the development of links at the local level between heritage sites operated by Dúchas, other public bodies, community groups, and the private sector having regard to the commitment under the National Development Plan to support the development of a number of clearly identified, geographically coherent and financially sustainable clusters of existing attractions.
12. Improve access, where practicable, to heritage sites in the ownership of State bodies and agencies.
13. Initiate a consultative process on improving access to sites of heritage interest in private ownership, having full regard to the property rights of owners.
14. Support, through advice from Dúchas on recruitment and training policies, the provision of guide services to heritage sites and areas in the ownership or care of local authorities and communities.
15. Promote increased access to the moveable heritage held by the national cultural institutions by:
 - upgrading, as necessary, physical access, interpretation and opening arrangements at the national cultural institutions to facilitate, in particular, young people and visitors with special needs;
 - supporting the loan of artefacts to accredited museums and visitor centres operating at local and regional level;
 - staging exhibitions by the national cultural institutions at museums and visitor centres at regional level; and,
 - supporting the development of museum and exhibition facilities at regional level to enable them to accommodate exhibitions from the national cultural institutions.
16. Improve heritage access to records currently held in the General Register Office.
17. Provide greater access to the waterways system, and from the waterways system to local areas, by improving the existing facilities and infrastructure. Ensure that such access is inclusive and is carried out in partnership with local authorities, local communities and other relevant groups.
18. Place interpretative panels containing information on aspects of heritage occurring locally at appropriate locations along the waterways system.



Participating

In Cross-Border and International Heritage Protection

5



Participating in Cross-Border and International Heritage Protection: Priorities

Enhance existing levels of cross-border co-operation in relation to heritage.

Participate in the international protection of heritage by:

- participating in the preparation of European Union policies and international agreements for the protection of heritage;
- ratifying international agreements on heritage which are of significance to Ireland; and,
- ensuring effective implementation of international agreements in an Irish context.

CROSS BORDER CO-OPERATION

Given the commitment of the Government to the ongoing Peace Process in Northern Ireland, it is considered particularly appropriate to take every opportunity to enhance the existing levels of co-operation with the relevant Northern Ireland authorities and bodies in relation to heritage issues. This will be done by expanding engagement with a range of heritage bodies in Northern Ireland.

An active process of promoting cross-border co-operation in areas relating to heritage has been in hands for some years, in relation to, for example:

- the Ulster Canal feasibility study;
- traditional thatch;
- underwater archaeology; and,
- biodiversity and other natural heritage issues.

The establishment, under the terms of the Good Friday Agreement, of a cross-border body - Waterways Ireland – for the development of navigable inland waterways in the island of Ireland represents a quantum leap in the area of cross-border heritage co-operation. Waterways Ireland has responsibility for the management, maintenance, development and restoration of approximately 1,000 kilometres of the inland navigable waterway system.

Further opportunities for enhanced cross-border co-operation exist in a number of areas at present. In relation to biodiversity, a number of areas of potential co-ordinated action have been identified in the context of the draft biodiversity strategies being drawn up North and South. Opportunities also exist in relation to the management and presentation of heritage sites and, through co-operation between collecting institutions, of heritage material.

PROTECTION OF HERITAGE AT THE INTERNATIONAL LEVEL

Ireland is a party to most major international and regional agreements concerned with the protection of heritage. These agreements provide benchmarks for our efforts to conserve our heritage and set standards which, at a minimum, must be reached,

but which we should also seek to surpass. The significance of such international agreements lies both in the process of signature and ratification and in the ongoing commitment to conservation which they demand.

Ireland is required under the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity to participate in international endeavours for the conservation of biodiversity and to provide appropriate support for the conservation of natural heritage in other countries. Ireland is already party to a number of natural heritage conventions, including the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Berne), the Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals (Bonn), the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar) and the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna (CITES). Ireland is committed to the ratification of the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds.

Ireland will continue to participate in the framing of European Union policies and instruments for the conservation of biodiversity and to work with Member States and the European Commission to secure the conservation of biodiversity across the Community.

Ireland is a party to the principal international conventions for the protection of cultural heritage. In recent years, Ireland has ratified the European Convention for the Protection of the Archaeological Heritage (Valetta) and the Convention for the Protection of the Architectural Heritage of Europe (Granada). Ireland is also active in on-going policy development for the protection of the cultural heritage at international level through working parties and meetings convened by the United Nations Education, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the Council of Europe and the European Commission. Ireland is involved in co-operation and exchange with organisations and institutions working in the cultural heritage field, both formally and informally, on an on-going basis. To date, two heritage sites in the State, Brú na

Participating in Cross-Border and International Heritage Protection

Boinne and Scelig Mhichíl, have been designated as World Heritage Sites by UNESCO. Designation as a World Heritage Site is a recognition of a site's global significance and imposes stringent conditions on the ongoing management and conservation of the site. There are strict criteria to be met before a site can be designated and other outstanding heritage sites in Ireland will be assessed to determine if they fulfil the criteria.

In the developing world there is ongoing pressure on heritage, particularly in relation to biodiversity, and Ireland must play its part in seeking to achieve its protection. Official development assistance is a key factor and it is necessary to refocus development co-operation to cater for heritage conservation along with established goals. It is a key principle that development aid projects do not contribute to the destruction of heritage, but where possible, actively enhance its protection.

ACTIONS

CROSS-BORDER CO-OPERATION

1. Take all steps to ensure the effective operation of Waterways Ireland and seek opportunities to build on its success in other areas of heritage.
2. Develop joint actions for cross-border co-operation in the context of the publication of biodiversity strategies, both North and South.
3. Compile and periodically revise, in collaboration with Northern Ireland authorities, Irish Red Data Books for important species groups.
4. Support the establishment of networks of co-operation between museums on a 32 county basis.
5. Develop a structure for joint consultation and co-operation in regard to the management and presentation of heritage sites.
6. Examine the feasibility of publishing on the internet the 1901 Census for Ireland as a joint project between the National Archives and the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION

7. Participate in international endeavours for the protection of heritage.
8. Continue to work with European Union Member States and the European Commission to secure the conservation of biodiversity across the Community.
9. Ratify the Agreement on the Conservation of African-Eurasian Migratory Waterbirds.
10. Ensure, in co-operation with other relevant States, that the Greenland White-fronted Goose Conservation Plan is finalised, adopted and implemented.
11. Seek the adoption by the European Union and the subsequent extension to Irish waters of the provisions of the Agreement on the Conservation of Small Cetaceans in the North and Baltic Seas (ASCOBANS).

12. Ensure that the required measures are taken to enable the State to ratify Annex V to the 1992 OSPAR Convention on the Protection and Conservation of the Ecosystems and Biological Diversity of the Maritime Areas.
13. Sign and ratify the European Landscape Convention.
14. Ratify or accede to, as appropriate, the following international conventions for the protection of cultural heritage:
 - Hague Convention on the Protection of Cultural Property in the Event of Armed Conflict, 1954, and the Protocols of 1954 and 1999;
 - Unidroit Convention on Stolen or Illegally Exported Cultural Objects, 1995; and,
 - UNESCO Convention on the Protection of the Underwater Cultural Heritage, 2001.
15. Support international efforts aimed at identifying strategies for the preservation of electronic records.
16. Encourage the establishment of networks of co-operation between the main collecting institutions, by way of the Council of National Cultural Institutions, with equivalent bodies in the U.K. and elsewhere.

Shannon-Erne Waterway >



Participating in Cross-Border and International Heritage Protection

17. Maintain the designation of Brú na Boinne and Sceilig Mhichíl as World Heritage Sites and, in consultation with Northern Ireland authorities, examine the suitability for designation of further heritage sites in Ireland.
18. Continue and improve co-operation with waterways authorities abroad through Waterways Ireland's continued involvement in Voies Navigable d'Europe and the Permanent International Association of Navigation Congresses.
19. The conservation of heritage will be made a specific objective of Ireland's official development assistance. This will be achieved by:
 - providing funding for heritage specific projects in developing countries; and,
 - ensuring that all support to, and co-operation with, developing countries shall take account of the conservation of heritage.



Supporting

the Plan Through Improved Structures and Resources

6



Supporting the Plan Through Improved Structures and Resources: Priorities

Support the implementation of the Plan through the provision over the period of the Plan of €123.19m (£97m) in additional financial resources and 102 additional staff.

Enhance the protection of heritage by ensuring that organisations charged with heritage protection have the appropriate structures to fulfil their responsibilities. This will be done by:

- restructuring Dúchas, the Heritage Service of the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, to provide a more efficient, integrated and regionalised service;
- reviewing the structure and functions of the Heritage Council to ensure they are complementary to the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands;
- placing the National Museum of Ireland and the National Library of Ireland on an autonomous basis; and,
- developing local authority structures to respond better to heritage needs.

Ensure effective monitoring and implementation of the Plan throughout the period of its operation.



Shrine of St. Lachlin's Arm

◀ Previous Page Image:
Iveagh Gardens

The actions proposed in this Plan, together with the local and community-based activities that are to be generated as a result, will undoubtedly place new demands on the structures that exist at present to cater for our heritage. This chapter looks at some of the ways in which structures may be improved so as to facilitate the delivery of targets, both of this Plan and of the Local Heritage Plans that will be developed. It also seeks to outline the additional resources - both financial and staffing - that will be required to allow for the effective implementation of this Plan.

THE DEPARTMENT OF ARTS, HERITAGE, GAELTACHT AND THE ISLANDS

The Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands is the primary national authority responsible for the protection of heritage. Its Mission Statement, which is contained in its Statement of Strategy, sets out the broad scope of its overall responsibilities in relation to heritage and culture:

“To enrich the quality of life and sense of identity of all our people through the conservation and promotion of our heritage and culture, including the Irish language, and the sustainable development of our inhabited offshore islands.”

The Department’s Mission Statement also contains its Core Policy Goal in relation to heritage:

“To conserve, and promote appreciation of, the built and natural heritage.”

In structural terms, the Department’s resources for carrying forward its Core Policy Goal in relation to heritage are located within Dúchas, the Department’s Heritage Service, its Cultural Institutions Division and its Heritage Policy Division. Dúchas itself contains a number of Divisions – National Monuments and Architectural Protection, National Parks and Wildlife, and Historic Properties and Education and Visitor Services.

Over the past decade there has been an unprecedented rise in the demands placed on Dúchas, whose task it is to protect heritage. This increasing pressure has been largely caused by the economic boom which poses considerable challenges to the protection of heritage, while the greater awareness of the value of our heritage resource at both the national and European level has also been a significant factor. The need to support the work of Dúchas through the provision of new structures and a greater level of resources has been recognised for some time. A process of analysis by senior management of the Department has led to the formulation of a proposed new structure for Dúchas, which it is considered will allow for a more effective and efficient approach to the Department’s responsibilities in relation to heritage. The proposed new structure, which it is intended to introduce in full consultation with staff interests, envisages a more coherent and integrated structure that is set out below.



Supporting the Plan Through Improved Structures and Resources

In general terms, the structure proposes to allocate responsibility for the built heritage (including both archaeology and architecture) and the natural heritage along functional lines into two Divisions. These will be supported in turn by four 'service' Divisions:

- Building Works and Services, dealing with all building and conservation works;
- Regional Operations, dealing with the regionalisation and integration of staff outside headquarters;
- Education and Properties, dealing with the property portfolio in an integrated way and co-ordinating education and site visitor services; and,
- Legislation and Co-ordination, dealing with policy and legislative issues, the integration of heritage across the Department and other sectors, and the provision of integrated planning advice. This division will replace the existing Heritage Policy Division.

This proposed structure envisages a much greater degree of regionalisation and functional integration within Dúchas. It is proposed that internal co-ordination and integration will be achieved through the operation of Heritage Management Teams.

WATERWAYS IRELAND

Waterways Ireland was established on 2 December 1999 as a North/South Implementation Body as defined in the Good Friday Agreement. Since 1 April 2000, it has responsibility for the management, maintenance, development and restoration of approximately 1,000 kilometres of the inland navigable waterways system, including the Shannon-erne Waterway, the Erne System, the Shannon Navigation, the Royal and Grand Canals, including the Barrow Navigation, and the Lower Bann Navigation. Waterways Ireland reports to the North/South Ministerial Council and, through the Council, to the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands and to the Department of

Arts, Culture and Leisure respectively. Waterways Ireland will have a regional structure with its headquarters in Enniskillen and regional offices in Dublin, Scarriff and Carrick-on-Shannon.

NATIONAL CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

The Cultural Institutions Division of the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands provides the legal and policy framework and the Exchequer funding for the operation of Ireland's national cultural institutions. The Core Policy Goal of the Division, as set out in the Department's Statement of Strategy, is:

“To enable the national cultural institutions to preserve, protect and present our moveable heritage and cultural assets.”

The national cultural institutions operating under the aegis of the Department are the National Museum, National Library, National Archives, National Gallery, Irish Museum of Modern Art, National Concert Hall and Chester Beatty Library. Certain other related cultural institutions are also assisted by the Department, notably Marsh's Library, the Irish Architectural Archive, and the Irish Manuscripts Commission.

The main structural issues to arise in this area during the timeframe of this Plan will flow from the ongoing steps being taken to place the National Museum and the National Library on an autonomous footing under the terms of the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997.

It is accepted that the core national collecting institutions need to be strengthened in resource, organisational and structural terms to enable them to carry out their statutory functions and broad leadership roles, and to provide the public with a service relating to the moveable heritage that adequately meets the varied requirements of a sophisticated society operating on a par with other members of the European Union in the 21st century. At the same time, however, and no less important, is the need to put in place appropriate new structures to facilitate the development and

sustaining of museums at regional and local levels. The essential requirements at all levels encompass both the need for adequate care and management of artefacts and the maximum benefit to the community for whom the artefacts are kept.

Underlining the case for strengthening the core collecting institutions is the parallel need to avoid further fragmentation in terms of allocation of existing resources, as such fragmentation merely serves to ensure that no collecting institution or museum is in a position to adequately fulfil its role and function.

Achievement of these objectives will require:

- much sharper delineation in operational terms and further strengthening, as appropriate, of the roles of the State's core collecting, presenting and associated advisory institutions; and,
- the creation of new funding structures capable of meeting evolving needs, at national, regional and local levels.

THE HERITAGE COUNCIL

The Heritage Council is a statutorily independent body, established under the Heritage Act, 1995, and funded by the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands. The Council's statutory functions are:

- to propose policies and priorities for the identification, protection, preservation and enhancement of the national heritage;
- to promote interest, education, knowledge and pride in, and to facilitate the appreciation and enjoyment of the national heritage;
- to co-operate with public authorities, educational bodies and other organisations and persons in the promotion of the functions of the Council; and,
- to promote the coordination of all activities relating to the functions of the Council.

The Heritage Council provides an independent and expert voice in relation to heritage and has published a series of valuable policy papers and reviews on various aspects of the national heritage. It is essential that an effective working relationship be maintained between the Heritage Council and the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands to ensure that the functions and work programmes of both operate in a complementary manner for the overall benefit of the national heritage. The Heritage Act, 1995, will be reviewed to increase the effectiveness of the Heritage Council's role in the protection of heritage.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS AND STATE AGENCIES

The Office of Public Works (OPW) plays a very important role in relation to heritage. Critical issues in this context include the wide-ranging architectural conservation expertise of the OPW, its role as guardian of a series of buildings of major heritage importance, and its function in the upkeep and maintenance of buildings occupied by the national cultural institutions. Given the radical reshaping of heritage management that has taken place over the last decade, this Plan offers an opportunity to review and clarify relationships and lines of responsibility in this context.

This Plan emphasises the need to integrate heritage considerations into the policies and work programmes of other Government Departments and agencies, many of which can potentially have major impacts on heritage. While, as noted, a number of structures are already in place to facilitate co-operation and consultation between Government Departments and agencies in respect of heritage and environmental issues, it is proposed that such structures be developed, particularly in a cross-Departmental/agency context.

LOCAL AUTHORITY STRUCTURES

One of the chief priorities of this Plan is to promote involvement in heritage at the local level, thereby enabling everybody to become actively involved in preserving and enhancing something that belongs to us all. Reference has been made to the crucial role

Supporting the Plan Through Improved Structures and Resources

of local authorities, which already act for the protection of heritage through the planning system. This Plan envisages an increasingly important role for local authorities, which are considered to be ideally placed to promote heritage conservation generally in local plans and programmes. There can be no doubt that local authority structures are already responding to the urgent call of the heritage imperative. Equally, however, it is clear that further change will be necessary. A number of key steps that might be taken in this regard have already been identified in this Plan.

RESOURCES

This Plan proposes a coherent framework for the protection of our heritage, and, in particular, the promotion of local involvement in the care and enjoyment of that heritage. The programme of actions envisaged to achieve those and other aims will only be achieved through the allocation of adequate resources, both staffing and financial.

The Government Policy Statement on Heritage, which is set out at the beginning of this document, gives clear expression to the context in which it is a legitimate objective – and indeed a compelling one – for us as a society to seek to provide support, including financial support, for the purposes of ensuring the protection of our heritage and its enjoyment by all. Reference has already been made to the significant, if at times unquantifiable, economic benefits that flow from our heritage. We must also have regard to the less tangible benefits accruing to us as a nation from the wealthy store of heritage that we have been fortunate to inherit. We are charged with holding this store of heritage in

trust for passing on to future generations. In this way, our heritage is not only the heartbeat of Irish society today: it is a formative pulse for the society that we will have in the future. In overall terms, there can be little doubt but that the fostering of a conservation ethos built on sustainability will bring widespread benefits to our society, both in social and economic terms.

Some of the actions proposed under the main chapter headings can be achieved within the current levels of financial resources. Other actions will, however, require additional resources and over 5 years the Government will commit additional resources of €123.16m (£97m) to the protection of heritage. These additional resources will be required progressively, as existing programmes are enhanced and as the actions and initiatives proposed in the Plan are introduced on a phased basis. Additional resources required for the implementation of actions relating to the natural heritage have already been committed through the National Biodiversity Plan.

Considerable progress has been made in meeting some of the staffing deficits in the heritage area through the recruitment of 66 staff in the National Parks and Wildlife and Architectural Heritage Protection divisions of Dúchas. Even so, it will not be possible to achieve a number of the key actions proposed in this Plan without the allocation of additional staff resources. During the period of this Plan, 102 positions will be created within the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, the national cultural institutions and the Heritage Council.

	ACTION	€M	(£M)
Built Heritage and Education	Provision of additional staff in Dúchas	12.70	(10)
	Employment of archaeologists in Local Authorities	7.62	(6)
	Programme of monitoring of archaeological monuments	6.35	(5)
	Heritage Archive and Library	7.62	(6)
	Actions relating to education and awareness raising	2.54	(2)
	Expansion of architectural conservation grants scheme	20.32	(16)
		57.14	(45)
Local Heritage Fund	Facilitate the implementation of Local Heritage Plans	12.70	(10)
Moveable Heritage	Partnership funding of local authority museums	6.35	(5)
	Expansion of collections of national cultural institutions	6.35	(5)
	Provision of national conservation facilities	12.70	(10)
	Surveys of moveable, documentary and archival heritage	6.35	(5)
	Facilitating exhibitions at regional and local levels	3.17	(2.5)
	Cross-border and international co-operation	1.90	(1.5)
	Expansion of activities of cultural institutions	6.35	(5)
		43.17	(34)
Heritage Council	Heritage appraisal of development plans	0.63	(0.5)
	Expansion of Community Grant Scheme	4.44	(3.5)
	Landscape characterisation studies	3.81	(3)
	Strategy for heritage education and awareness raising	1.27	(1)
		10.16	(8)
Total		123.16	(97)

Detail of additional resources required to implement actions contained in the Plan

Supporting the Plan Through Improved Structures and Resources

REVIEW AND MONITORING

It will clearly be necessary to review and monitor the implementation of the Plan in an effective manner, not only to ensure the achievement of its objectives but also to assist in shaping, in due course, the preparatory work for the next Plan for the period 2007-2012.

It is envisaged that the proposed Legislation and Co-ordination Division, to be located within a

restructured Dúchas, will be responsible for establishing performance indicators and monitoring the achievement of the objectives in this Plan. A specially convened Inter-Departmental Group will undertake an annual review of the operation of the Plan and present a report to the Minister on its deliberations. In addition, the Dáil Select Committee on Heritage and the Irish Language will be requested to monitor the ongoing implementation of the Plan.

ACTIONS

A number of actions relating to structural issues have been identified in earlier chapters. These include:

- providing local authorities with appropriate heritage expertise to enable them to carry out the actions in this Plan;
- placing the National Museum and the National Library on an autonomous footing under the terms of the National Cultural Institutions Act, 1997;
- reviewing the terms of the Heritage Act, 1995, which provides the statutory basis for the Heritage Council;
- putting in place appropriate new structures to aid the development and sustaining of museums at regional and local levels;
- the convening of an annual national heritage forum representative of relevant governmental and non-governmental organisations;
- establishing a representative co-ordination group to increase awareness and education about heritage;
- creating, within relevant Government Departments and State agencies, biodiversity units or positions whose functions will include the preparation of biodiversity action plans;
- establishing a national advisory committee for the conservation and sustainable use of genetic resources, including wild genetic diversity; and,
- establishing a task-force - comprising of the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht, and the Islands, the Department of Education and Science, and other relevant organisations - to review on an ongoing basis the role of the formal education system in heritage education and awareness.

A range of additional structural actions are set out below.

THE DEPARTMENT OF ARTS, HERITAGE, GAELTACHT AND THE ISLANDS

1. Restructure Dúchas the Heritage Service, in full consultation with staff interests, to provide a more efficient, integrated and regionalised service for the public.

COLLECTING CULTURAL INSTITUTIONS

2. Implement a common mechanism for funding the National Museum, the National Library and the National Gallery through grant in aid subheads to include all public funding to the institutions.
3. Put in place a new funding plateau for the National Museum and the National Library capable of meeting the needs of the sectors at national level, and of providing the public with a service relating to the moveable heritage that adequately meets the requirements of a sophisticated society operating on a par with other members of the European Union in the 21st century.
4. Review arrangements under which the National Archives collects the records of Government Departments to ensure appropriate levels of staff to match the growth in the Archives' holdings.

THE HERITAGE COUNCIL

5. Ensure higher levels of effectiveness and enhanced communication at the interface between the Heritage Council and the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands.

STRUCTURAL ISSUES RELATING TO OTHER DEPARTMENTS, OFFICES AND AGENCIES

6. Carry out a review in co-operation with the Office of Public Works of its interface with the Department of Arts, Heritage, Gaeltacht and the Islands, the national cultural institutions and the Heritage Council, with a view to establishing a clearer structure for heritage management by the respective bodies, including the issue of service agreements where appropriate.
7. Review the need for further structures to facilitate co-operation and consultation between Government Departments and agencies in respect of heritage and environmental issues, particularly in a cross-Departmental/agency context.

LOCAL AUTHORITIES

8. Each local authority will examine the feasibility of establishing a strategic policy committee with a defined role in relation to the preservation and promotion of heritage.

REVIEW AND MONITORING

9. Review the implementation and effectiveness of the Plan on an annual basis.

